The Unitarian Contribution

to Social Progress in England

by

RAYMOND V. HOLT

B.LITT., M.A. (OXON)

This study of the public opinion of a small but influential religious group should be of interest to all those who wish to understand the deeper movements of thought which lie behind the political and social changes that have transformed the England of the eighteenth century into the England of the present day. This book aims at bringing out the characteristic spirit or ethos of Unitarians by showing how their faith has found expression in social life and thought.

(Continued on flap)

The Lindsey Press

Some Notices of this Book

Mr. Holt's "book is a valuable contribution to its subject and nobody can fail to appreciate the main lesson he seeks to teach." *The Times Literary Supplement.*

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B.Litt., M.A. (Oxon.)

Stanhope Historical Essay Prizeman in the University of Oxford, 1906
Principal of the Unitarian College, Manchester
Lecturer in the History of Doctrine in the University of Manchester

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

THIS book aims at bringing out the spirit or ethos of the members of a religious group by describing the ways in which their faith found expression in social life and thought.

There are two methods of treating the contribution of a religious group to the social life of a larger community. One is to compile what must become, more or less, a catalogue of all the particular activities of the members of such a group; the other is to place these activities in a wider context. Though this second method demands more space, it has been adopted because the life of a group is only seen in its true perspective as part of the larger life of the nation.

The history of English life can only be adequately written after much further investigation both into family history and into local history and the writer hopes that this book may stimulate further research in both these directions.

In a book of this kind, there must be many references to political parties and to religious bodies and these references must often be of a critical nature. All these must be understood, of course, to refer only to the parties and groups as they existed at the time in question and not to parties and groups bearing the same names which exist at the present day. For everyone has learnt something in the last hundred years, and the historian at least has to learn a wide tolerance, for he sees again and again how even the most enlightened men and women have been blind to some things which, later, everyone could see and how even the blindest people have had a vision of some truth worthy of preservation for the good of mankind.

To prevent endless repetition of the word Unitarian, the names of Unitarians and of Unitarian Congregations are placed in italics. In some cases this raises problems, the nature of which is explained in the last two chapters on "The Creation of the Unitarian Tradition," and "Nineteenth-century Changes." In this book the word is used in the widest sense to include every variety of Unitarian. Only in exceptional circumstances are the names of the living Unitarians included.

The book was originally equipped with several appendices containing a full series of notes on the text, together with lists of Unitarian congregational histories, Unitarian biographies, and books on social subjects by Unitarians. In order to reduce the cost of publication, these have been omitted. One of them, a complete list of Unitarian congregational histories, will appear in the "Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society." The others may be published later as part of a more detailed study.

The author wishes to express his thanks to the Hibbert Trustees and to their Secretary, *Dr. W. H. Drummond,* both for the publication of this work and for much consideration shown to the author in its preparation. The thanks of the author are due also to *Principal Herbert McLachlan, D.D.*, and to the *Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.*, for correcting the whole of the proofs, and to *Mr. Ernest Axon, F.S.A.*, and *Mr. Lawrence Hall* for revising the sections dealing with Manchester and Liverpool respectively.

RAYMOND V. HOLT

OXFORD
July 24th, 1937

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Some explanation of the lay-out of the book has been found advisable. The first chapter contains a general sketch of the Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in broad outline, picking out some of the most outstanding illustrations. Most of the information given in this chapter is repeated in the fuller treatment of each aspect which follows.

The last two chapters deal with the creation of the Unitarian tradition and the structure of Unitarianism. On a strict interpretation of the title these two chapters might seem to be out of place, but they are necessary to complete the picture and have been found helpful.

The author regrets that it has not been found possible to print the lists of books on Unitarian congregations and of books on and by individual Unitarians.

RAYMOND V. HOLT

MANCHESTER
January 12th, 1952

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL PROGRESS IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER 1

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL PROGRESS—A GENERAL SURVEY

Unitarians have been leaders in most of those changes which have transformed the England of the eighteenth century into the England of the present day. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century they thought of themselves as "the Vanguard of the Age." This is the title given to the collection of portraits painted on the walls of the main hall in the building that was once University Hall, London, and is now the home of Dr. Williams's Library. This fresco has recently been reproduced in Edith J. Morley's *Henry Crabb Robinson*. The claim to be the vanguard of the age was not an arrogant one and was not unjustified, though it would be ridiculous, as well as untrue, to pretend that Unitarians shared none of the limitations of their age. Civil and Religious Liberty, Education in all its forms, Local Government, and better Public Health have been objects of their special concern. They were also among the men who changed the economic life of England in the long-drawn-out Industrial Revolution. This Chapter will illustrate the nature of their contribution. The value of the changes they helped to bring about will be discussed each in its proper place.

The English "Dictionary of National Biography" gives the biographies of over two hundred Unitarians. But in many cases there is no indication that the men and women in question were Unitarians. There are several reasons which explain this omission.

Part of the explanation is that many of the oldest Unitarian congregations which sprang out of the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century were known for a time

as Presbyterians and this has misled historians not versed in the complexities of Unitarian history.

Part of the explanation is that Unitarians have been known by a variety of other names. Unitarians would have preferred to be called just "Christians," but this was not to be. Contemporaries tried to label them according to their supposed resemblance to certain early Christian heretics like the Arians or called them Socinian after the Italian leader of the Unitarian Church in Poland. Many Unitarians dislike the word Unitarian because it seems to them to emphasize a particular doctrine rather than a spirit. They forget that the significance of a word is given by its life history not by its etymology or by the definitions that compilers of dictionaries try to impose upon it.

In this book the word Unitarian is used to include all the different shades of opinion which resulted from rapidly changing thought, but it is applied particularly to those members of English dissenting congregations who developed heretical views after the middle of the eighteenth century, and, of course, to members of those congregations founded later which were Unitarian from the outset.

The rest of the explanation why many distinguished Unitarians are not recognized as such is that until recent times an intense prejudice against Unitarians existed. This prejudice had been preceded by active persecution and what began as persecution persisted as prejudice. Even as late as the nineteenth century, biographers often felt that to have been a Unitarian was a stain on the reputation of the subject of their biography and in characteristic fashion strove to conceal this stain. So that what began as persecution and persisted as prejudice now survives as ignorance. The father of parliamentary reform, *Major John Cartwright*, was a Unitarian. His niece wrote his life and was rather ashamed of this fact. She only admitted it to rebut a worse charge that he was of no religion at all.

Josiah Wedgwood, famous as the creator of "Wedgwood" pottery, and as a political and social reformer, was a Unitarian. Eliza Meteyard wrote a life of him in 1865 at a time when prejudice was still strong. From her two large volumes

the reader can only discover with extreme difficulty the fact that *Wedgwood* was a Unitarian.

The great factory owner, *John Fielden, M.P.*, who, along with Shaftesbury, led the agitation for the Factory Acts, was a Unitarian. His sons built the Unitarian Church at Todmorden. Professor J. H. Clapham, in the "Cambridge Economic History of Great Britain," has described him as a Quaker. The explanation of the mistake is that *Fielden's* father was a Quaker. *William Smith, M.P.*, who, along with Wilberforce and Clarkson, led the movement for the emancipation of the slaves, was a Unitarian. Professor Sir Reginald Coupland in his life of Wilberforce described *William Smith* as a Quaker. To write the life of a man who had been a Unitarian Minister and founded the Scottish Unitarian Association without mentioning the word Unitarian would appear to be a rather difficult task, but even this feat was accomplished when Mrs. Lewes wrote the life of her grandfather, *Dr. Southwood Smith*. The word Unitarian was not even mentioned in it. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge published as recently as 1912 a life of *the Rev. Joseph Priestley, F.R.S.*, the discoverer of oxygen. The writer has failed to mention the fact that the dominating passion of *Priestley's* life was his Unitarianism.

Recently F. B. Millett's "Contemporary British Literature" described *R. H. Mottram* as "born in Norwich of a Quaker family." An explanation of this mistake is no doubt to be found in the fact that the banking firm which the *Mottram* family served for several generations was originally Quaker, and the book was published in 1935, just before *Mottram's* study of the life of his Unitarian grandfather had appeared under the title, "Portrait of an Unknown Victorian."

On the other hand, Joseph McCabe, well known as the writer of many works published by the Rationalist Press Association, has acknowledged the humanitarian services of Unitarians but has explained them by stating that Unitarians were only on the fringe of the Christian world.

At the present day, when intolerance finds expression in social and political affairs, rather than in theological, men

and women find it difficult to understand why Unitarians should have been held in such horror by other professing Christians. The essential religious principles of Unitarians rather commend themselves to thoughtful men and women of the present day. Unitarians believe the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life and so attach less importance to assent to the Creeds than to the lives that men live. In the words of one of the early Unitarians, *Michael Servetus*: "To be a Christian is to be like Christ," yet *Servetus* was put to death at the instigation of John Calvin. Unitarians believed in toleration at a time when hardly any one else did. They believed that truth mattered supremely, that men should use their reason to discover it and that without freedom of thought this was not possible. They believed also in man, for they were humanitarians. Nowadays this may seem a very strange belief to hold, but surely not a very wicked one, at least for professing Christians.

But Protestants and Catholics united to try to exterminate these beliefs. In the seventeenth century, Convocation under Archbishop Laud enacted a canon to stop the mischief done "by the spreading of the damnable and cursed heresy of Socinianism." Eight years later a Puritan Parliament passed an Act imposing the penalty of death upon those who denied the doctrine of the Trinity. The last two persons to be put to death in Britain for heresy suffered for anti-Trinitarian utterances; one in England in 1612 and one in Scotland in 1697. Unitarians were excluded from the benefits of the so-called Toleration Act of 1689, and in 1698 an Act was passed making the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity a penal offence. It was not until 1813 that Unitarians had a legal right to exist. In Poland at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they had a flourishing Church which was entirely exterminated by persecution.

Only men of deep faith and strong character can stand up to continued persecution without becoming bitter. And their faith must be all the deeper if they do not believe that they alone have an infallible revelation of truth. Such men are the stuff pioneers are made of, and Unitarians have been pre-eminently leaders.

Civil and religious liberty has always been one of the watchwords of Unitarians. In the old days, when to hold a dinner was a recognized way of furthering any good cause, the Toast of Civil and Religious Liberty occupied a prominent place at Unitarian gatherings.

It was natural that they should take the lead in all movements for religious freedom, for that is of the essence of their faith. They were pioneers of toleration in days when most religious men loathed and feared it. There has only been one Unitarian king in history, *John Sigismund*, King of Hungary and Prince of Transylvania, but he has the distinction of having granted religious toleration to different religious bodies as early as 1568. In 1609 the Polish Unitarians published a Preface to their Catechism, in which they explained that their Catechism was not intended as a yoke to be laid upon Christians, or as a rule of faith from which anyone who deviates is to be assailed as a heretic. "Whilst we compose a Catechism, we prescribe nothing to any man: whilst we declare our own opinions, we oppress no one. Let every person enjoy the freedom of his own judgment in religion . . . who are you . . . who strive to smother and extinguish the fire of the Holy Spirit in those in whom God has thought fit to kindle it."

When Unitarians had won freedom for themselves they still went on working to obtain a like freedom for Catholics and Jews, and for agnostics and others. This desire to extend freedom to others might be taken for granted, were it not that experience shows that men's enthusiasm for freedom so often dies when they have won their own. This does not mean, of course, that Unitarians shared none of the prejudices of their time, but it does mean that changes which elsewhere were only brought about after desperate resistance and animosity took place among them not altogether without friction, but with the minimum of friction and bitterness. In time, to impose no restrictions on the ministers or members of a congregation came to be an essential characteristic of Unitarian congregations.

The freedom they sought was a freedom not merely to think but also to act. In the campaign to abolish slavery,

Wilberforce and Clarkson and Granville Sharp towered above others. In Parliament, the second in command to Wilberforce was a Unitarian, *W. Smith, M.P.*, and in the country Unitarians were solidly behind this movement throughout the nineteenth century. A common criticism of reformers is that their zeal is greatest against those evils from which they do not profit and the charge has often been made that enthusiasm for abolition of the slave trade was strongest in those parts of the world which had nothing to lose by it. But *William Roscoe, M.P.*, sat for Liverpool, and Liverpool was a city which profited by the slave trade. *Roscoe* voted for the Act abolishing the slave trade, knowing he would lose his seat for so doing.

Their political contribution began as part of the common heritage of all Protestant Dissenters. In spite of the fact that Protestant Dissenters still suffered many legal and social disabilities in the eighteenth century, they were devoted supporters of the constitutional settlement of 1689 and were Whigs to a man. When this settlement seemed to be threatened by the Jacobite Risings, they took an active part in the defence of the Hanoverians. Many of their chapels were destroyed because of this loyalty. At the time when Dr. Sacheverell was inciting the mobs to riots against Dissenters and other Whigs, and again in 1715 and 1745, some more of their chapels were destroyed. To this day the Royal Arms hang on the walls of the chapels at *Friar Gate Chapel, Derby*, and at *Shrewsbury*.

It may be mentioned as illustrating the many-sided complexity of Unitarian history that this same chapel at *Shrewsbury* contains also a tablet commemorating the fact that the great scientist, Charles Darwin, attended services there as a boy, and another tablet recording the fact that the poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, preached in it as a young man.

Between 1760 and 1832 the basis of the government of England was changed, and the first steps were taken to transform the semi-feudal government into a political democracy. This change was made for the most part peacefully, through the pressure of public opinion, and so the

change was followed, not by reaction but by a series of further Reform Acts culminating in adult suffrage in 1918.

The early stages of this movement owed more to Unitarians than to any other group. The outstanding Radicals who first appealed to public opinion and organized public opinion in favour of the Radical Reform of Parliament were Unitarians. This fact was recognized by their enemies. When this movement was interrupted by the French Revolution of 1789 and the wars with Napoleon which lasted till 1815 and hysteria seized both the Government and the mob, everywhere Unitarians were the chief victims of the English Terror. The burning of the house and laboratory of *the Rev. Joseph Priestley, F.R.S.*, was typical of the hatred felt for them. When the Reform Bill became law, the Duke of Wellington spoke of it as a victory for the Unitarians.

When the movement for women's freedom began, many Unitarians were among its earliest supporters. First women's education, then the extension of the franchise found both men and women among them ready to devote themselves to these unpopular causes. Women have been admitted to their ministry since the beginning of this century.

The extension of the franchise, which they had helped to bring about, weakened their political influence because they have always been a minority movement rather than a mass movement. But nearly a hundred Unitarian Members of Parliament are mentioned in this book.

Reforms like proportional representation have always had a special attraction for them because they rest on an appeal to persuasion and sweet reasonableness. *T. W. Hill*, the father of the Sir Rowland Hill who was the creator of the penny postage, worked out a scheme of minority representation early in the nineteenth century, and many Unitarians have been and are active in the movement.

Because they believed profoundly that the only sound basis of government was an educated public opinion, journalism has proved extremely attractive to them, and a considerable number of editors of local newspapers have been Unitarian. *H. Crabb Robinson* was foreign editor of "The Times," and his activities in the Peninsular War earned

him the description of the first War Correspondent. "The Manchester Guardian," from its earliest foundation to the twentieth century, was owned and edited by Unitarians, and one of these, *C. P. Scott, M.P.*, won national and international distinction. Others worthy of mention are *John Lalor*, an early editor of "The Morning Chronicle" and of "*The Inquirer*"; *the Rev. P. W. Clayden; the Rev. Harold Rylett* of "The Tribune"; and *the Rev. H. W. Perris* and his sons. Along with them were many less well-known local journalists who have held to the tradition that the Press should be a responsible instrument of truth and freedom.

Unitarians have showed an enthusiasm for education that has amounted to a passion. They have devoted time, energy, and money to the spread of education in every form except denominational education—University education, women's education, Sunday Schools, night schools, day schools, and adult education. This is quite natural, for if men are to be freed from reliance on external authority they must be educated to be independent in judgment, and if men are to be responsible citizens they must be given knowledge.

Principal Herbert McLachlan has told the story of their contribution to University and Higher Education in a companion volume to this one, "The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England, Its Contribution to Thought and Learning" (London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.). The section on education in that volume occupies a third of the book and is divided into chapters on Nonconformist Academies, Schools, and Modern Universities. The Nonconformist Academies had their origin in the exclusion of Nonconformists from Oxford and Cambridge, but they were attended by members of the Church of England as well as by Nonconformists.

These Academies did not confine themselves to theological subjects. Some of them had a particular interest in natural science. Competent scholars have expressed the opinion that these Academies gave the best education to be found in England in their time. The Radical Dissenters had also a close connection with the Scottish and the Dutch Universities.

Many of the ministers educated at these Academies kept boarding and day schools whose influence went deep in the early part of the nineteenth century. Not only did they introduce new methods of education, but at these schools many close friendships were formed which helped to link together the leaders of progress. One old student when he entered the House of Commons said that it was like being at school again: he saw so many of his old school-fellows there.

Manchester College, Oxford, was founded at Manchester in 1786 as the successor of Warrington Academy, with the dual purpose of providing a college education for laymen and an educated ministry for the Radical Dissenters, now Unitarian. When English Universities were opened to Dissenters, the Arts side was dropped and the College became a Theological College, open to all who wished to study theology in an institution where neither staff nor students were subject to credal tests. The College has always been supported mainly by Unitarians, and most of its students enter the Unitarian ministry.

Unitarians played an active part in founding the modern Universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield, and the University Colleges of Leicester and Nottingham. They have supported them by generous contributions and many Unitarians hold and have held leading positions on their governing bodies.

They have always regarded a high standard of education as an essential qualification for their ministry. In particular they have had a deep interest in the study of science and of comparative religion. And in the days when life was less complicated and specialized, and it was possible for one man to master several subjects, many of their ministers were distinguished Fellows of learned societies, like the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the Linnaean, the Zoological, and the Geological Societies. The British Association for the Advancement of Science has received much support from them and the first Secretary of the Society of Arts was a Unitarian.

In many towns they established the first libraries, sometimes attached to their own congregations, sometimes not.

Under their influence Manchester was one of the first cities to adopt the Public Library Act. The existence of Literary and Philosophical Societies in many towns was due to them. The Tate Gallery was given to the nation by *Sir Henry Tate*. These leaders of the commercial and industrial life of their districts cared profoundly for education and the things of the mind.

They were among the first to open Sunday Schools and Night Schools. In 1788 they founded at *Nottingham* the first unsectarian school in England, and in 1789 the first Mechanics' Institute. Later in the middle of the nineteenth century a Unitarian minister, *the Rev. Henry Solly*, founded the Working Men's Club and Institute Union. *Mary Carpenter* founded the first Industrial Reformatory School, and another Unitarian, a poor cobbler, *John Pounds*, conducted the first Ragged School himself. A picture of *John Pounds* in his workshop listening to children learning to read inspired Dr. Guthrie to provide Ragged Schools on a larger scale. *Mary Shipman Beard* was an early worker for nursery schools. Later she became Treasurer of the Nursery Schools Association, of which her sister, *Mrs. H. J. Evelegh*, was first chairman, Miss Margaret McMillan being President. *Mary Dendy's* work for defective children not only called attention to the urgency of the need of dealing with these children, but pointed out the right methods. When the Government recognized its responsibility, *Mary Dendy* was appointed a Commissioner under the Act passed to deal with them.

Among those who strove against the opposition of both educated and uneducated people to make healthy the overgrown towns of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, *Dr. Thomas Percival*, *Dr. James Currie*, *Dr. John Jebb*, and *Dr. Southwood Smith* were prominent.

Dr. Southwood Smith was also one of the founders of nursing homes, and a Liverpool Unitarian, *William Rathbone, M.P.*, was a pioneer of district nursing. *Florence Nightingale* herself was the granddaughter of *William Smith, M.P.*, who did so much to end the slave trade. The endowment of hospitals has been a favourite object of Unitarian philanthropists.

Many doctors of national or local fame have been Unitarians, and as a rule they have won fame not only in their profession but in their public-spirited efforts to improve the health of the nation.

Sir James Stansfeld, M.P., should be placed alongside Josephine Butler for his work in securing the abolition of the Contagious Diseases Acts. He had done great work as the first President of the Local Government Board but he sacrificed his career for this cause.

When the opportunity came, Unitarians threw themselves into the work of local government with great enthusiasm. Before 1829 opportunities were limited by the Acts passed against Protestant Dissenters. Just after these Acts were repealed, the Municipal Corporations Act transformed the local government of the towns. Under the new Act, the first Mayor of Manchester, the third Mayor of Liverpool, the first five Mayors of Leicester, the first two Mayors of Bolton, the first Mayor of Derby, the second Mayor of Leeds, and the third Mayor of Birmingham were Unitarians. These great industrial towns owe a debt to Unitarians which is still commemorated by the portraits hung in Town Halls, by statues in public places, and by Art Galleries and Parks bearing their names.

The hymn, "The Fathers built the City," which is now increasingly used at civic celebrations, was written by a Unitarian Minister, *the Rev. W. G. Tarrant*, for many years the editor of "*The Inquirer*."

The first Mayor of Manchester, (*Sir*) *Thomas Potter*, was largely responsible for the establishment of the first municipal gasworks in England. In the Central Square of the City of Birmingham stand the statues of *the Rev. Joseph Priestley*, the *Rev. George Dawson*, and *Joseph Chamberlain*. The historians of the city have recorded the part played by these men and by people bearing well-known Unitarian names like *Lee, Nettlefold, Kenrick, Martineau, Osler*, and *Crosskey*. *Joseph Chamberlain's* work there set a new standard and gave a stimulus to better local government everywhere. Unitarians were largely responsible for the success of the Birmingham waterworks and Birmingham pioneer town-

planning schemes. In Liverpool the names of *Roscoe*, *Rathbone*, *Armstrong*, and *Jones* are also part of civic history, and in Leeds those of *Kitson* and *Lupton*. Unitarians strove to make these new towns not merely healthy but to give them the amenities of civilization. They presented parks and open spaces. Under their influence Manchester was one of the first towns to adopt the Public Library Act, which allowed the towns to support libraries out of the rates. Unitarians took the lead in demanding that parks and libraries should be opened also on Sundays.

In more recent times they have been active workers with such bodies as the Co-operative Holidays Association, the Holiday Fellowship, and the Youth Hostels Association, and the Workers' Educational Association.

To humanitarianism in its narrower sense they have contributed much. The Humane Society in London was instituted in 1774 at the suggestion of *Mr. Hawes* and *Dr. Cogan*, who had translated from the Dutch a Memoir on the subject in 1733. The prison reformer, John Howard, received great help from *the Rev. Richard Price*. "He befriended John Howard, the prison reformer, with inspiration, encouragement, and help." He "assisted him to write his book on prisons." "I am ashamed," Howard told *Price*, "how much I have accumulated your labour." Later, *Mary Carpenter* and *M. D. Hill* continued the work, and in the twentieth century *Mary Dendy* showed the nation how to care for the feeble-minded. *M. D. Hill* and *E. Wilkins Field* were two lawyers active in the cause of law reform.

All religious groups have had some men and women in them who have supported one reform or another, but many of those who have supported one reform have been opposed to some other reform also necessary. Men who worked to free the slaves were often hostile to Catholic emancipation or to the extension of the franchise. Men who supported the Factory Acts opposed Government action for public health. A characteristic of the Unitarian contribution is that Unitarians are found taking an active part in all these causes. They supported the abolition of slavery, Catholic and Jewish emancipation, the extension of the franchise, public

health reform and better local government. On one issue only were they seriously divided—on the legal limitation of the hours of work by adults in factories.

They have been generous in their contributions to libraries and art galleries and museums and hospitals. Some of these bear their names like the *Tate* Gallery in London and the *Tate* Library in *Manchester College, Oxford*.

Unitarians would not have been able to do so much had it not been for the wealth and influence won by their position as the most enterprising and efficient as well as the most humane leaders of the Industrial Revolution. For those qualities which made them leaders of religious changes made them leaders in industrial change also. They were ever ready to adopt new methods and invent new processes in an age when this attitude of mind was less common than it is to-day. Many of the developments above all in the cotton industry and in the engineering and railway and chemical industries were due to them. The names of *Strutt, Potter, Henry, Greg, Ashton, Fairbairn, Hawksley, Brunner, Rathbone, Holt, Heywood, Booth*, may be singled out. They founded and managed two of the earliest Insurance Companies, the Rock and the Equitable.

Though the Industrial Revolution brought with it not only a higher standard of living, but a rise in the whole scale of life for the great majority of Englishmen, it was accompanied by evils from which England has not yet recovered, and it has left a legacy of many problems to the present day. One of the greatest of these problems is the prevailing economic insecurity. The existence of this problem has led to a reaction in which the results of that revolution are assumed to be entirely evil. The view is widespread to-day that the freedom about which men spoke in the nineteenth century was merely freedom to exploit people. There were, indeed, only too many successful men in the Industrial Revolution who were ignorant, soulless, greedy, and indifferent to the welfare of the men they employed. But there were others and Unitarians provided some of the outstanding examples. As employers, men like the *Strutts*, the *Fieldens*, the *Ashtons*, the *Gregs*, stood out far above the level

of their day. This was recognized in their own time, and has been confirmed by later historians. And if there had been more men like them, some of the worst problems of the present day would never have arisen.

On factory legislation Unitarians were divided into opposite camps. There was a struggle between their humanitarian ideals and the political economy which they believed to be a scientific expression of inviolable law. Some trusted their humanitarian instincts. The second reading of the Factory Act was moved by a Unitarian. *John Fielden, M.P.*, deserves to be remembered with Shaftesbury in the campaign which resulted in the Factory Act of 1803. *John Fielden* was himself a factory owner and a successful one. As such, even hard-headed business men had to listen to him, especially when he met their prophecies of ruin by pointing out that in his factory the hours worked were shorter than those demanded by the reformers at that time and still large profits were being made. *John Fielden* was a friend of Robert Owen, in whom also humanitarian sympathy went with great business ability. *Mrs. Gaskell* and *Charles Dickens* (who for a time at least was Unitarian) helped to rouse men's consciousness to the situation. But for the most part Unitarian employers of this period accepted the prevailing theory of the iron law of wages and sought to improve conditions by other reforms.

Of these Free Trade was the chief. On Free Trade, Unitarians were unanimous. To them the agitation to repeal the Corn Laws was not merely an attempt to raise the standard of living but a religious crusade.

The Co-operative movement won their sympathy and support. Some of the Rochdale Pioneers were connected with the Methodist Unitarian Church at *Rochdale*. When co-operators were refused the use of buildings for meetings, Unitarians helped them. *J. C. Farn*, the editor of one of their early papers and *E. O. Greening* were Unitarians.

The social philosophy of Unitarians was first that of *John Locke*, and then that of *Jeremy Bentham*. *Jeremy Bentham* was a Unitarian in theology. His secretary and the editor of his works, (*Sir*) *John Bowring, M.P.*, was a Unitarian and

author of the well-known hymn "In the Cross of Christ I Glory." *Bentham's* principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number was suggested to him by a passage in *Joseph Priestley*. Though imperfect in many ways, this principle was one of the great transforming forces of the century. By it the value of old customs and practices could be tested. *Bentham's* utilitarianism was often associated with barren individualism for reasons which will be explained later, but it was also one of the great influences that led to the increasing social control which characterized the nineteenth century.

This social control was forced on men by an increasing knowledge of the actual facts. Unitarians helped men to discover these facts. They helped to found the Manchester Statistical Society in 1833, the first of its kind, which was followed in 1834 by the London Society and in 1836 by the Bristol Society. The importance of the collection of information can perhaps be better realized if it is remembered that until 1801 no one knew the exact population of England, and that at this period there was no Civil Service in the modern sense of the term.

Later in the century *Charles Booth* was responsible for the survey of social conditions in London, which was not only a model in itself, but resulted in the production of other surveys.

Walter Bagehot and *Stanley Jevons* began the modification of the earlier abstract and rigid theories. Beatrice Webb (Lady Passfield) is a collateral descendant of the *Potter* family already mentioned. *Philip Henry Wicksteed* was not only a great mediaeval scholar but a great economist. Through the influence he exerted on Bernard Shaw, which found expression in Bernard Shaw's contribution to the Fabian Essays, he exercised a wide if indirect influence on twentieth-century thought. His book on economics was so much before its time that few copies were sold and the book went out of circulation. After second-hand copies had reached fantastic prices, the book was reprinted with an introduction by Professor Lionel Robbins. *Philip Henry Wicksteed* was one of the founders of the Unitarian and Free

Christian Union for Social Service, out of which ultimately sprang the Conference on Politics, Economics, and Citizenship, usually called Copec.

The contribution of Unitarians is not exhausted by the services of those whose names have been preserved. To them should be added all those members of congregations who have kept alive this spirit in their different localities, but who have not won national fame. The histories of many of these congregations are full of interest and form one of the most important sources for this book. The large and influential congregation at *Cross Street, Manchester,* has had fifteen Members of Parliament and seven Mayors among its members.

But small congregations in isolated districts like those in the mining district of *Park Lane,* near Wigan, or at *Lye* near Stourbridge on the borders of the Black Country, have had a hardly less important contribution to make in their own way.

The story of the American contribution to social progress lies outside the scope of this volume. There also, a small minority did a great work. No fewer than five Presidents of the United States have been Unitarians. One-third of the few American men and women who have been elected to the Hall of Fame have been Unitarians. The famous phrase of Abraham Lincoln, "Government of the people, by the people, for the people" was taken with a slight alteration from *Theodore Parker's* sermon on Slavery. (R. D. Richardson: "Abraham Lincoln's Autobiography," and H. S. Commager: "Theodore Parker.")

CHAPTER 2

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

RELIGION AND INDUSTRIALISM—LOSSES AND GAINS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION—UNITARIANS IN THE COTTON INDUSTRY—UNITARIANS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES

UNITARIANS took an active part in bringing about all those changes which transformed the semi-feudal mainly agricultural England of the eighteenth century into the densely populated industrial England of the nineteenth century. The term, the Industrial Revolution, is usually given to these changes. The term has been criticized as tending to conceal the fact that these changes were spread over a long period and were linked up with earlier changes. Yet the term is justified. These changes are, of course, part of a process which goes back for centuries—indeed they are the culmination of a process which began when man invented the first tool. But from the middle of the eighteenth century the process went on at such an increased pace as to merit the description revolutionary. The population of the country had been increasing as a result of increased security and of improving conditions of life. Partly to meet the needs of a larger population, changes were taking place in the traditional methods of agriculture and industry. In agriculture these changes were accelerated by the vast extension of enclosures of land and in industry by the use of machinery, worked first of all by water power and then by the steam-engine. In the hundred years from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, the ways in which men and women earned their living were in fact revolutionized.

RELIGION AND INDUSTRIALISM

In working for these changes Unitarians were following a tradition of their Protestant and Puritan ancestors. That

Protestants, especially left-wing Protestants (the Puritans, Quakers, and Unitarians), have been associated with these changes in a peculiarly close way is a fact, whatever the explanation may be. Protestants themselves attributed much of their prosperity to the greater tolerance which existed among them. Professor Laski in the "Rise of European Liberalism" has argued that they were tolerant because it paid them to be tolerant. This is to stand the argument on its head. The toleration came first. At the present day, if there is one thing upon which all economists are agreed, it is that world prosperity would be increased by the lowering of those barriers which have everywhere been erected to hinder the course of trade. But in spite of this almost unanimous opinion, trade barriers are not lowered. Men's ideas must be altered before they can alter their way of life.

Perhaps the most important truth of the matter is this—the same spirit as made men pioneers in theology and in religion made them pioneers also in industry and in education. Men of the present age have become so used to scrapping old methods and old machinery that they find it difficult to realize the resistance that had to be overcome in times past. Yet the history of every new invention, whether applied to agriculture or to industry, is the history of either contempt, indifference, or hostility.

Unitarians shared the common tradition of Dissenters in their attitude to the Industrial Revolution. The connection can be seen clearly when the geographical and occupational distribution of the Protestant Dissenters who were the ancestors of Unitarians is examined. Unitarian congregations were and are found chiefly in the industrial areas. The oldest Unitarian congregations grew out of Puritan congregations of the seventeenth century, and these were mostly in places which were centres of commerce and industry. The new Unitarian congregations which sprang up after the end of the eighteenth century were entirely in the new industrial districts. A glance at a map marking towns and villages where Unitarian congregations exist reveals the situation in striking fashion. And it was in the big towns of Manchester

and Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield, Leicester, Nottingham and Newcastle, that Unitarians were able to make their most effective social contribution.

To eighteenth-century Protestant Dissenters it was a matter of pride that the new industries of the country were so largely the result of their efforts. The title-page of a book published by *Israel Worsley* in 1816 stated their view that England's greatness was due to its manufacturers and that these had been created by Protestant Dissenters. "Observations on the State and Changes in the Presbyterian Societies of England during the last half Century: also, on the Manufactures of Great Britain which have been for the most part established and supported by the Protestant Dissenters: Tending to illustrate the importance of Religious Liberty and Free Inquiry to the Welfare and Prosperity of a People. . . ." Even as late as 1873 *R. A. Armstrong* gave two lectures at *High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham*, on "The Religious Pursuit of Wealth and Wisdom." To Protestant Dissenters it was a proof of the superiority of the Protestant Religion that Protestant countries were more prosperous and better educated and enjoyed more freedom than others. The people who strove to bring about these changes were serenely confident that the results would be all to the good and that through them the world would progress to an age of peace and freedom. Unitarians shared this pride and optimism. Belief in progress has always been congenial to them and in this case they felt proud that they had done so much to bring about these changes.

LOSSES AND GAINS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Up to the middle of the last century, most Englishmen shared this view and took it for granted that the Industrial Revolution was an achievement to be proud of. To have been among its pioneers was accepted as a lasting contribution to social progress. A high price was paid for it, but the gains were real. To-day the improvement in the conditions under which most men and women live is even more obvious. Where three Englishmen died in 1735, two died a hundred years later in 1835 and only one in 1935.

Where three out of twenty infants died in their first year in 1885, two died in 1910 and one in 1935. (W. H. Wickwar: "The Social Services.") Men and women not only live longer, but while they are alive they are better clothed and better fed and live in better houses. They are better educated and have more leisure. The very fact that present-day problems are often due to abundance rather than to scarcity is highly significant. The fact, too, that present-day writers are beginning to single out the problem of leisure as the problem of civilization is also significant, though some of them are apt to forget that most people do not yet enjoy such leisure. The changes of the nineteenth century have made it possible for a widespread culture to be available to everybody, and its existence no longer depends on a system in which all hard and dirty work is done by a slave class. For this reason these changes may ultimately prove to be for the good of mankind.

These achievements no longer win general admiration. To-day men are faced with new problems and new dangers —the urbanization of life, the insecurity of employment at home, and the threat of war abroad. Men have indeed the means of solving these problems and of shaping life to their ideals as they never have had before. But for a time they have lost that robust faith and optimism which enabled their ancestors to face the problems of their age. What will come of it all, no one knows. Meanwhile men are frightened. So they tend to disparage those achievements—if not to regard them as a curse rather than a blessing. Some long for a simpler age when the rate of change was slower and the problems less bewildering, when the status of men in society was fixed, and government was from above, and men had not the responsibilities of freedom.

In this mood of disillusionment the Industrial Revolution is now represented as a mere disaster, and attention is concentrated on the mass of misery and degradation which accompanied it. The change began in the villages where the words of the contemporary poet Oliver Goldsmith have been illustrated by the historian:

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.

J. L. and Barbara Hammond, in their series of volumes on the period, have described the conditions under which men lived with such wealth of detail and great literary skill that thousands of readers are familiar with them. Professor J. H. Clapham and other critics have maintained that their picture is based too largely on conditions in the occupations that were decaying, especially hand-loom weaving. But there is no doubt that in the towns masses of people were crowded together without any of the physical and spiritual amenities of civilization. Child labour was exploited. And many of the men who became rich and powerful through the Industrial Revolution were brutal, insensitive, and ignorant. The worst of these particular evils have now been overcome through the means provided by the Industrial Revolution itself, but English men and women are still suffering from the conditions existing in the early part of the nineteenth century.

In so far as these criticisms of the Industrial Revolution represent the new sensitiveness to evils which were once taken for granted, they are all to the good. In so far as they profess to be a complete judgment on the effects of the Industrial Revolution, they are grotesquely false. Very different judgments have been expressed on the eighteenth century world which the Industrial Revolution helped to destroy. To some writers the period was one of the most glorious in English history. The truth seems to be that there were two worlds of people and affairs. For some people life was indeed both spacious and full; for others life was cramped and miserable. But these other men and women were not heard—they suffered in silence. The fact is, that only in recent times have ordinary men and women been allowed to express themselves about the conditions under which they live, and the pictures of their conditions in the past have been based on the opinions of those who did not share them. Life in the Middle Ages has been pictured as a kind of golden age whose felicity was broken up by the disaster of the Protestant Revolution and then of the Industrial Revolution which followed from it. As a matter of fact most of those evils which accompanied the Industrial

Revolution were a legacy from the past. The Industrial Revolution concentrated them, made them manifest and for a time intensified some of them. But in the end they were cured rather than created by that Revolution. Nothing shocks us more than the cruel way in which the labour of children was exploited. This was a direct legacy from the past. The standard of living was poor, but it began to rise at once and went on rising through the greater part of the nineteenth century. In the villages the standard of living was so low that it helped to keep down the standard in the towns to which the villagers flocked in their desperate need.

On the other hand, though the village labourers enjoyed few of the amenities of civilization and even less freedom than the town labourer, they were at least surrounded by fields and trees. The price paid for the pace at which the Industrial Revolution took place is still to be seen in English towns. Yet the example of towns like Nürnberg and Düsseldorf show that ugliness is not an inevitable accompaniment of industrialism.

The population of England was increasing, though in the eighteenth century men did not know this. Even the pioneer of life insurance, *Richard Price*, basing his calculations on imperfect information, thought the population was decreasing. The first census of population was not taken till 1801. The population of England and Wales increased from nearly six millions in 1700 to nearly nine millions in 1800. This increase was due far more to life saving than to a reckless increase in the size of families. The crude birth rate was either fairly steady after 1740 or rose only slightly, but the expectation of life was increasing as a result of increased cleanliness and better health. This is a fact of profound importance. What would have happened, if there had not been that great increase of production caused by the Industrial Revolution? Would the death rate have been as high as that made clear by the tombstones in many a churchyard? Would the standard of living have been forced down to a cabin and potato standard of life? The only way of avoiding both these evils was the improvement of the methods of production which resulted from the Industrial Revolution.

But this increase of population was unevenly distributed. The population of a small town like Bolton increased from nearly six thousand in 1775 to eleven thousand in 1791 and thirty-one thousand in 1821. The big towns increased even more rapidly. In many districts there was a large migration of people from the villages to the nearest town; for the population in the rural areas was generally increasing (though William Cobbett refused to believe this) while the demand for labour there was decreasing. A period of acute agricultural depression had followed the enclosures of the eighteenth century. But these Enclosure Acts were passed not by the members of the Reformed Parliament, by those whom G. R. Stirling Taylor has described as pirates, but by the Unreformed Parliament.

The following chapters will show how men became aware of the problems and sought to meet them. The new feature of the times was not callous insensitiveness to these evils. The new feature was the rising humanitarianism. The Reform Parliaments, with all their limitations, did set on foot those investigations which revealed the greatness of the evil and attempted to deal with the problem though belatedly and too slowly.

It was indeed a misfortune that these changes took place at a time when there was no idea of planning, and that the social philosophy of the reformers was antagonistic to social control because they distrusted the State of that period. The reasons for this distrust are quite easy to understand. State intervention as exercised in the eighteenth century was usually misguided in principle, inefficient in its methods, and often corrupt in its practice. Reformers, therefore, concluded that all would be well if they abolished the restrictions of the past and left men free to act as they wished—believing that each seeking his own good worked for the good of all. "Man was born free but is everywhere in chains." Strike off the chains and man would be free. Even if they had wished to exercise social control at the time, the machinery did not exist. The increasing humanitarianism of the early days thus took a negative form. Very soon, however, a change began to take place and a later chapter will describe how

the same spirit drove men to realize the necessity of social control. In the nineteenth century they began to create the machinery by which social control could be made effective without being tyrannical. A planned society is impossible without a highly efficient civil service, and the creation of such a civil service was one of the achievements of the nineteenth century. Before the beginning of that century, men could do little more than guess how many people there were in the country. There were no police: there were no workingmen's organizations; there was no popular education. All these were the creation of the nineteenth century.

Unitarians were active not merely in bringing about the Industrial Revolution, but in endeavouring to meet the problems the Industrial Revolution brought in its train and in promoting the physical and spiritual amenities of life. These activities may be studied in most detail in the industrial districts of the North and of the Midlands, where the Industrial Revolution made the greatest changes. And it was in these districts that Unitarians were able to exercise their greatest influence.

UNITARIANS IN THE COTTON INDUSTRY

The Transformation of the Textile Industries—The Character of the Employers—Unitarian Merchants—Inventors—Factory Owners—In Commerce

The importance of Unitarians in the North is due to the fact that the textile industries came to be located there during the Industrial Revolution and that Unitarians took a particularly active part in developing these industries. In this they were acting in a tradition which went back to their Puritan ancestors of the seventeenth century and even to sixteenth-century Protestantism. The textile industries were more affected by the Industrial Revolution than any others, and this gave opportunities to men more open to new ideas and with determination to make use of the opportunities thus opened to them. This may help to explain the traditional connection between Protestants and the textile industries.

Spinning and weaving are, of course, the oldest industries in the world—they were carried on in every household. Because they were domestic industries, the new methods of concentration of capital and labour brought more far-reaching changes in them than in the iron industries which had been conducted on capitalistic lines from the earliest period.

At the time when the textile industries were located in the South and West and the East of England, many of the members of the Protestant Dissenting Congregations which later became Unitarian were engaged in them. The first mill for silk spinning was built near Derby in 1712 by a foreigner, Mr. John Lombe, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century it had come into the hands of a Unitarian. One of the oldest silk mills was owned by *James Noble* at Lancaster.

Later the industries became concentrated in the North where they were built up largely by Puritans and Dissenters.

The geological and geographical reasons for the concentration of these industries were the existence of water free from lime, and of water power for the mills, then of coal for the steam-engines, together with easy access to the sea.

The sociological reasons are also important. In the North a more flexible society and a more ambitious and active working class existed. Many factors gave opportunities to men prepared to make use of them. "Perhaps the prevalence of the small yeoman capitalists had something to do with the success of Lancashire." In Lancashire, those agricultural changes which elsewhere had decreased the number of smallholders had tended for various reasons to increase them. And a close connection grew up between industry and agriculture which persisted till the final stage of the hand-loom weavers' decline. These yeomen were, of course, more independent than the broken-spirited villagers of the South.

Very many manufacturers were originally yeomen, small or large. But the average size of the holding was small and the independence of these smallholders must not be exaggerated. The leading authorities on the history of the cotton industry have arrived at different conclusions. G. W. Daniels

thinks that only a small number of the eighteenth-century weavers were part-time agriculturists. A. P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann believe that the proportion was larger, but agree that "even the farmer weavers were wage workers and not independent producers."

In the North industry was free from some of the restrictions which hampered industry in those days. Whatever view may be taken of the wisdom or unwisdom of the social control of industry at the present day, there is little doubt that such control as was exercised in those days was not for the general good but had become a device for maintaining the monopolies of the privileged. Woollen merchants for instance caused a statute to be passed that corpses should be buried in wool. The entry of such burials can still be seen in the registers of parish churches. The woollen merchant got a prohibition of the importation of cottons from India. The result of these monopolies and privileges was to prevent the growth of the trade. A statute of Edward VI ordered wool growers to sell their wool only to merchants of the staple or to the actual manufacturers, with the result that the poor cottagers could not buy it. In 1572 the Lancashire clothiers petitioned against this. That this Act of 1555 did not apply to the Northern Counties was a great advantage to the new industry.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century various Acts were passed to prevent the use of calico. In 1736 when the Manchester Act was passed allowing people to use cotton goods made in Great Britain, the Company of Weavers opposed this Act. The skilled craftsman in the town tried to keep out the competition of agricultural labourers by restricting apprenticeship. These restrictions were exercised partly through the corporations of towns, and at this date Liverpool was the only corporate town in Lancashire. One reason why the French cotton trade was less successful than the cotton trade of Lancashire was that in France there was more government control, the corporations were more powerful, there was less technical skill and there was a lower standard of life.

The method of financing the industry was also in process

of change. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Mosley family and the Chetham family were already financing spinners and weavers who were dependent on them. Even at the end of the seventeenth century, before the invention of power machines, the spinners formed an unorganized mass of sweated labour, and by the middle of the eighteenth century the greater portion of fustian weavers were the workpeople of capitalist employers.

The woollen industry developed before the cotton. As early as the sixteenth century Manchester and Bolton, Kendal, York, and Halifax were seats of the woollen trade. In the seventeenth century Bolton was so Calvinist that it was called the Geneva of Lancashire. Manchester was a Presbyterian stronghold, though there the important group of Whig Protestant Dissenters was fiercely opposed by Tory Churchmen, as will appear in the chapter on Local Government. Later the woollen industry came to be settled in Yorkshire and the cotton industry in Lancashire.

The cotton industry seems to have been brought to Lancashire and other parts of England in the first place by Protestant refugees from the Spanish persecution in the Netherlands in 1581.

The cotton industry rather than the woollen industry was the first to be transformed, not because its traditions were less strong, but because cotton was more adaptable to the new technique and because "the brilliant prospects of the cotton trade made the causes for resistance weaker."

The industry continued to grow slowly but steadily from the early part of the eighteenth century. The first cotton mill in England was erected at Leominster in Herefordshire in the middle of the eighteenth century by *Daniel Bourn* and was built partly by Lancashire men. Lancashire was familiar with factories without power and also with the driving of machinery by water power a generation before Arkwright's spinning factories. Smallwear looms were collected in one factory and power was applied to them. This, of course, was a different system from the later one when power looms were in use. The great merchants were themselves still manufacturers and provided the capital needed for the new

inventions. It was not so easy at this period to obtain adequate capital, in spite of the fact that it was an age of invention. But new inventions often met with opposition because men's minds had not become acclimatized to them. The records of *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester*, contain the names of many famous merchanting and manufacturing houses.

After the middle of the eighteenth century, the pace became more rapid and the industry grew by leaps and bounds. After the end of the century, the wars with France, which lasted almost continuously from 1793 to 1815, gave it an artificial stimulus. These wars, it has been said, with little exaggeration, were paid for by the expanding cotton industry. In 1781 five million pounds of raw cotton were imported: ten years later, five times as much, and in 1801 fifty-six million pounds. Figures such as these justify the term Industrial Revolution.

Professor G. W. Daniels regards the great distress of this period as due not to the greater power of production but to the wars and says: "Notwithstanding much confused thinking the fact was occasionally recognized at the time." Professor C. R. Fay thinks this "unjustifiable as a general statement."

The artificial stimulus of the wars certainly intensified the worst evils of the Industrial Revolution, even if they were not wholly responsible for the distress which accompanied the transition from domestic to factory industry. The textile industries were almost completely localized in one part of the country, and this concentration brought with it the crowding together of large populations in overgrown villages, and in new towns destitute alike of the physical and the spiritual amenities of civilization. These industries also found a special scope for the use of child labour. Thus all the evils of the Industrial Revolution were not only intensified but exposed to the public eye in the cotton districts. Coal miners lived under far worse conditions, but these did not attract the same popular attention.

Townships like Bolton grew into towns: hamlets like Dukinfield grew into townships: new places like Gee Cross

appeared on the map. In 1700 Liverpool and Manchester–Salford were the only towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants. By 1770 Liverpool and Manchester had grown to over 30,000 inhabitants, but no other town had reached 10,000. Thirty years later in 1801 Liverpool had nearly 85,000 inhabitants and Manchester with Salford 100,000. In 1770 at Gee Cross (Hyde), there was only one house beside the chapel. In 1797 the place looked like a little town. The *Ashtons* had their mills at Hyde. Chowbent (Atherton) doubled its population between 1710 and 1795.

These great changes took place just at the time when the Unitarian movement was extending and when many of the Old Protestant Dissenting Congregations were changing over to Unitarianism. The congregations grew with the new towns. In 1851 there were thirty-five Unitarian places of worship in Lancashire with seating accommodation for 12,000 and twenty-seven Quaker places of worship with seating accommodation for 8,000.

All these conditions gave great opportunities to men who were enterprising and inventive, and also to men without much enterprise but who were prepared to work like slaves. And so two types of employers grew up. One hard and ruthless—caring for nothing but getting on, working themselves hard and working others not less hard and the more able to do this because destitute of any other interest in life. Many—perhaps most—of the men who came to the front in this period were self-made men, ruthless to themselves and others, living solely for the purpose of getting on, almost heroic in some ways in their desperate determination to rise above the conditions in which they started life, but with no interest in and no care for beauty and for the things of the mind, their spiritual needs satisfied by a religious quietism which showed an indifference to elementary humanity that shocks the modern mind and is difficult to distinguish from hypocrisy, conscious or unconscious.

An interesting correspondence took place between the Rev. Charles Kingsley and *J. A. Nicholls* of Manchester. *Nicholls* had given a lecture to working men on the folly of strikes. Kingsley wrote to congratulate him on his bold-

ness in exposing "the tyranny of union strikes," but he went on: "I cannot, in justice to the working men, forget the temper of the *nouveaux riches* of Manchester, during the forty years ending, say 1848—who were not even free-traders, till they found that cheap corn meant cheap wages, and of whom, certainly, the hardest masters and the most profligate men were to be found among those who had risen from the working classes. . . . Let us honestly call a spade a spade, and recollect this fact, and the other fact that these mill-owners had been, for the last forty years, collecting vast heaps of people from every quarter (even bringing labourers from Ireland to degrade the civilized labour-wage to the level of what the savage Irishman would take), without the least care as to their housing, education, Christianizing or anything else, till the manufacturing towns became sinks of unhealthiness, profligacy, ignorance, and drunkenness. The mere fact that life in Manchester was shortened seventeen years, in comparison with life in the country, is very awful. . . . But don't carry away the notion, that I think the young manufacturer's relation to the lower classes one whit worse than the young squire's. I should be inclined to believe it a great deal better. . . . As to what I think of the squires (and I have lived among them all my life, from the great English 'princes' to the Irish or Welsh squireens), you may see what I think in a little book called 'Yeast.' It is sketched from life, every word."

There were so many of this kind of employers that the existence of a better type has almost passed unnoticed. There is still a widespread impression that all the pioneers of the industrial revolution were of this kind—with perhaps a few exceptions like Robert Owen and *John Fielden*. There were, however, other men who owed their wealth to qualities and services which made a real contribution to the well-being of the nation rather than to their readiness to take advantage of the needs of their less enterprising or less fortunate or less able or less strong fellows.

The Unitarians whose names have come down to us as a rule belong to the better type. This was recognized at the time and has been confirmed by later historians. The

Fieldens, the *Gregs*, the *Ashtons*, and the *Strutts* were singled out by Government inquiries and contemporary observers as exceptions to the general condemnation. These Unitarians developed the industry as merchants and inventors and manufacturers, but they cared also for the things of the mind. They had a tradition of culture and a pride of the right kind, "eidos," as J. L. Hammond has put it. Only in one respect did many of them fail and that was in their attitude to the Factory Acts which will be described in a later chapter. A general characteristic of all these men was their readiness to make use of the new inventions and methods which were developing at such a rate. This progressive spirit must not be assumed to have existed as a matter of course at that time. The eighteenth century was not yet machine-minded: there was still resistance to be overcome. The opposition to new inventions may be quite intelligible as due to a natural desire for self-preservation, but it would be a mistake to regard it as dictated by anything higher—to assume for instance that it was due to those doubts which disturb many people at the present day. The opposition usually took the form of trying to keep such machinery as was already in use, but to prevent this machinery from being improved.

In many of these families the tradition went back to the earliest days of Protestant Dissent. Others came of yeomen stock like the *Fieldens* and the *Strutts*, but they, too, valued education, and their sons were often sent to *Manchester College*. The question has been raised how far these men were typical Unitarians of the period. Professor G. M. Trevelyan has distinguished between mill owners of two generations—the first generation of self-made men and the second generation with more education and a wider outlook.

"By the time the war [with Napoleon] came to an end men and their manners were changing. A mill owner of the second generation had been born and bred a bourgeois, but of a new and enterprising type. With more education and wider outlook than his grim old father, the young man looked about him for the uses, obligations, and privileges

of wealth, as they were understood in that generation. He cast an eye on the world of gentry and clergy around him, with the result sometimes of alliance, more often of mutual repulsion. As likely as not he became a Unitarian to express his intellectual and social independence, while his workmen sought simple salvation as Baptists or Wesleyans. As a young man, he believed in Mr. Brougham, slavery abolition, the 'march of mind,' hated Church Rates, Orders in Council, Income Tax, and Corn Laws, and read the Edinburgh Review. His coming battle with the Tory borough-owners and landlords, delayed by the long struggle with Napoleon, was a thing as inevitable as the feud with his own workmen that he had inherited from his father. But his war on two fronts never degenerated into class-war pure and simple; with its constant re-groupings, cross-currents, conversions and compromises, it was the destined method of evolution for the political and intellectual life of the new Britain."

There were no doubt many of this kind and it was something that they developed a civic spirit even in the second generation. But the statement hardly describes most of the men whose contribution will now be examined. These include some of the greatest figures in the cotton trade in all its departments—merchants, inventors, manufacturers, shippers, and bankers.

UNITARIAN MERCHANTS

Very many of the leading merchants and manufacturers of Manchester were members of *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester. Cross Street Chapel* had been founded by Protestant Dissenters as a result of the Ejection of 1662, and after the middle of the eighteenth century its ministers and members became Unitarian. The connection of some of the families like the *Hibberts*, the *Touchets*, and the *Bayleys* went back to the earliest period. Many of them were buried in the Chapel or the burying ground attached to it.

Robert Hibbert (1684–1744) and his son, another *Robert Hibbert* (1730–1780), had close associations with Jamaica. His elder brother lived in Jamaica and was one of the merchants to whom Liverpool slavers consigned their cargoes.

A daughter, Elizabeth, married *Nathaniel Philips*, the grandfather of the M.P. for Bury.

The *Touchet* family maintained its connection with *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester*, for over a century. The founder of the family, Thomas Touchet (1678–1744), was a pin-maker of Warrington, who came to Manchester early in the eighteenth century and set up as a dealer in and manufacturer of linen and cotton goods, which he exported to the West Indies. "The Daily Advertiser" described him as "the most considerable Merchant and Manufacturer in Manchester, remarkable for great abilities and strict integrity and for universal benevolence and usefulness to mankind." The family fortunes were nearly wrecked by the "enterprise" of Samuel Touchet, who does not seem to have been possessed of the "strict integrity and universal benevolence" of the founder of the family. But according to *James Heywood* "his brothers in Manchester, respected Dissenters, won back their positions and their families carried on a trade there until the early nineteenth century."

Thomas Touchet's son, *John Touchet* (1704–1767), married *Sarah Bayley*. Their son, *John Touchet*, was educated at Manchester Academy. He died in 1837 and was buried in *Cross Street*, but he left no sons and the connection with *Cross Street* ceased at his death. A daughter, Anne, married the minister of *Cross Street, the Rev. Ralph Harrison*, the composer of the hymn tune called "Warrington." Their son, *John Harrison*, was a Manchester merchant and the father of *the Rev. Dr. John Harrison*, minister of *Chowbent* and *Brixton*. One of his sons, *John Thomas Harrison*, "as a shipowner did a great deal to develop English trade with Antwerp and Normandy, the Port of Tréport being largely the creation of his organizing skill." *John Thomas Harrison* with his brother *William Gowland Harrison* took a large part in raising the *National Conference* Fund for increasing the salaries of poorer ministers.

Thomas Butterworth Bayley (1744–1802) was an early prison reformer and a magistrate. Sidney and Beatrice Webb have given him as an example of the enlightened administrator and "benevolent leader of the county." He was one of the

promoters of the Warrington Academy and the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society.

Another Manchester merchant family was that of the Gaskells. *Daniel Gaskell* of Clifton Hall had a son *Benjamin Gaskell* (1715–1780). His son *Daniel* (1746–1788) was educated at Warrington Academy and buried at *Cross Street, Manchester*. He married the daughter of the Lancaster silk merchant, *J. Noble*, and their son *Benjamin Gaskell* of Wakefield was Member of Parliament for Maldon from 1812 to 1826. The *Rev. William Gaskell*, the husband of the famous writer, *Mrs. Gaskell*, was not of kindred stock.

The firm of Philips was established in 1747 in North Staffordshire and came to Manchester, where "the firm of *John* and *Nathaniel Philips* became the largest manufacturers of tapes in England." The latest historians of the cotton trade, A. P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann, in their book, "The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600–1780," give the *Philipses* a high place in the history of the trade. "To write the history of this great merchanting and manufacturing house would be to epitomize the intense and varied activity of the years of the industrial revolution, when members of the family were engaged simultaneously in every branch of the Manchester trade."

Nathaniel Philips married the daughter of *Robert Hibbert*. His nephew, *Sir George Philips*, sat for Wootton Bassett, but was described as the unofficial member for Manchester. Two of *Nathaniel's* grandsons were Members of Parliament. When Manchester was enfranchised in 1832, *Mark Philips* was one of its first two members. His brother *R. N. Philips* was Member of Parliament for Bury in 1858. *Mark Philips* and his cousin *Robert* were entrusted with the selection of the first Hibbert Trustees. For a considerable period there were three separate firms of Philips.

The *Potter* Brothers were among the greatest warehousemen of the time. *Thomas Potter* came to Manchester about 1802. He was the first Mayor of Manchester and some of his activities are described in the chapter on Local Government. He was one of the promoters of the First Manchester Joint Stock Bank in 1828. His son, *Sir John Potter*, was also

Mayor of Manchester, and as Member of Parliament took an active part in the campaign to repeal the Corn Laws. He was one of the opponents of the Factory Acts. Another son, *Thomas Bayley Potter*, succeeded Richard Cobden as Member of Parliament for Rochdale. He was the Founder and President of the Union and Emancipation Society, which championed the cause of the North in the American Civil War.

The firm of A. and S. Henry was founded by Alexander & Samuel Henry. *Alexander Henry* came to Manchester from Scotland via Ulster and in Manchester became a Unitarian. He was Member of Parliament for South Lancashire from 1847–1857. Two of his sons, *J. S.* and *M. Henry*, were also Members of Parliament.

UNITARIAN INVENTORS

Kay's invention of the flying shuttle in 1733 increased the output of looms to such a degree that spinners could not keep pace with the weavers. Most of the important textile inventions of the following hundred years therefore were devoted to improving spinning processes, to meet the increased demand for yarn by the weavers.

After 1760, three outstanding inventions followed in quick succession. Hargreaves invented and improved the spinning-jenny between 1764 and 1770, and made it possible for a spinner to work several spindles at once—the number rose rapidly from eight spindles to one hundred and twenty. But the thread produced by the jenny was not strong enough to be used as warp and could only be used as weft. This defect was overcome in 1769 by the spinning-frame of Richard Arkwright, which produced threads strong enough to be used for warp. And in 1779 Samuel Crompton invented a machine which combined both processes and was therefore called a mule.

Arkwright was able to develop his invention through the help of *Jedediah Strutt*, who entered into partnership with him. *Jedediah Strutt* (1729–1797) did more than provide Arkwright with the necessary capital—he was also an inventor himself. He had already solved the problem of pro-

ducing ribbed stockings, and some of the improvements in Arkwright's invention were due to him.

Arkwright's machine was too elaborate to be worked by hand. At first horses provided the power, but this method was costly and limited in application. Arkwright and *Strutt* therefore built a large mill at Cromford in Derbyshire where there was a good supply of water and used a water-mill for power. A silk mill near Derby had been worked by water power fifty years before. In 1776 they erected mills at Belper near Derby.

The interest aroused by these inventions was immense. The grandfather of Charles Darwin, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, celebrated the event by writing a poem on them. Erasmus Darwin was perhaps the first modern scientist to develop a theory of evolution. He was intimate with many Unitarians of the period, above all with *Josiah Wedgwood* whose daughter married his son. An appeal was made to the Government to help Crompton, and among those who supported it was the botanist, *Sir Joseph Banks, F.R.S.*, President of the Society of Arts.

The way of the inventor was not easy in those days. Rivals tried to steal the invention or to get Parliament to protect them against it, or refused to make use of it. *Strutt* and Arkwright had experience of all these three methods of opposition. *Strutt* took out patents in 1758 and 1759, but he had to bring several actions at law to protect them. Though the yarn produced by their machine was especially suitable for warp, the Lancashire manufacturers refused to buy this yarn. So Arkwright and *Strutt* began to manufacture calicoes themselves. Then the Lancashire manufacturers took advantage of an Act which had been passed in 1720 to protect the woollen manufacturers of England against calico from India. Under this Act calicoes were liable to an extra duty of 3d. a yard. *Strutt* appealed to the House of Commons. He told the House of Commons Committee that his firm had expended £13,000 and employed 600 persons (mostly children), and succeeded in obtaining exemption from the extra duty. In 1779 the distress resulting from the war with America led to a series of riots

in which all kinds of cotton machinery were destroyed. Arkwright's factory at Chorley and the factory at Birkacre owned by Arkwright & *Strutt* were among those attacked. *Sir George Savile, M.P.*, arrived with three companies of the York militia while the building was in flames. *Josiah Wedgwood* was also an eye-witness of the scene. The rioters destroyed a small engine at Chowbent and some machinery at Bolton.

In 1782 the partnership between *Strutt* and Arkwright was dissolved. On the dissolution of partnership the *Struttts* kept the mill at Belper, which has remained in their hands to this day. Francis Espinasse has given a vivid description of the worldwide fame of the products of the *Strutt* factories. "From Moscow . . . lines of two wheeled carts, each laden with its bales marked with the well-known brand of this firm, may be seen on their way to Novgorod Fair and from thence may it be again passed on the route to Kiacht, the Russian frontier market, for the Chinese North-West Provinces. Everywhere these marks on bale and bundle are accepted as the unfailing pledges of the integrity of the article in every respect."

The inventive genius of the father passed on to his son *William Strutt* (1756–1830). His son *Edward Strutt* (later Lord Belper) claimed that *William Strutt* was the first to invent a self-acting mule, but "the inferior workmanship of that day prevented the success of the invention."

The *Strutts* were connected with the Chapel at *Derby* where they were buried. *William Strutt* was a friend of the Quaker chemist, John Dalton, who was a Professor at Manchester Academy from 1793 to 1800. His son *Edward Strutt* was a student at *Manchester College, York*, from 1817 to 1819. Another son, *Joseph Strutt*, was the Mayor of Derby and presented the town with one of the earliest pleasure gardens, but with the condition attached that no intoxicants should be used in it. He was an intimate friend of the poet Thomas Moore and of the novelist Maria Edgeworth.

It was the fine yarn produced on Crompton's mule that enabled *Samuel Oldknow* to make British fine muslins at

Stockport. *Oldknow* copied Indian fabrics and was very successful until the French Revolution created a panic. He then abandoned this branch of the trade, which was taken up by the famous firm of Horrocks of Preston. *Oldknow* transferred his activities to his water-mill at Mellor, built in 1790.

Baines in his "History of the Cotton Manufacture" has recorded that "*Peter Marsland*, of Stockport, an enterprising spinner, took out a patent for a power loom, with a double crank, in 1806; but from its complexity it was not adopted by anyone but himself. Superior cloth, however, was made by it."

Better methods of dyeing and bleaching were invented by *Thomas Henry, F.R.S.*, and *Edmund Potter, F.R.S. Thomas Henry* (1734–1816) was a friend of *Joseph Priestley*. He was President of the Literary and Philosophical Society, Manchester, and his portrait was hung in their rooms Chlorine had been discovered in 1774 and *Thomas Henry* made a series of experiments in bleaching with it. In 1788 he "made known the result to the Manchester bleachers by the public exhibition of the bleaching of half a yard of calico. He was also one of the first to discover that the addition of lime would take away the smell of the chlorine without injuring its bleaching property. Some of his results were published in the Memoirs of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Modern historians have testified to the importance of his work. "The papers which Wilson, Charles Taylor and *Henry* gave to the Literary and Philosophical Society mark the beginning of the application of scientific method in the dyeing and finishing trades, just as the lectures on dyeing, bleaching, and calico printing held under the auspices of the Society may be said to be the beginning of technical education in Manchester."

Four generations at least of the ancestors of *Edmund Potter, F.R.S.*, were members of *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester*. He married the daughter of the stalwart Radical *Abraham Crompton*, who narrowly escaped being imprisoned in the days before the Reform Bill

Samuel Courtauld (1793–1881), a descendant of a Huguenot refugee, was the founder of the famous firm Courtaulds

and was the first to introduce silk throwing into Essex. He was born in the United States, but came to England as an infant, and developed the business of crêpe manufacturer at Bocking. He was a keen Liberal politician, and in 1837 he raised the question of the legality of a Church rate in Braintree and fought the case to a successful conclusion in the House of Lords in the year 1855. *John Biggs, M.P.*, took out a patent for lace making. *John Wilson* of *Ainsworth* in the eighteenth century developed the velvet industry on its dyeing and finishing sides.

UNITARIAN FACTORY OWNERS

These new inventions led to the development of the factory. Most of them could not be worked by hand and power could only be applied to them when they were concentrated in factories. Horse power, water power, and steam power followed one another in quick succession. The first mill driven by water power was built in 1742 at Northampton by Lewis Paul and John Wyatt. Samuel Touchet, who was connected with *Cross Street, Manchester*, had association with Lewis Paul. And another was built by *Daniel Bourn* at Leominster in 1748. The *Strutts* built factories in Derbyshire and the *Gregs* at Wilmslow in Cheshire because water power was available there. The steam-engine was first used in a cotton mill in 1785. The *Ainsworths* were among the first cotton manufacturers to make use of the steam-engine.

Power looms were expensive and this made it more difficult for the worker operative to own them. The condition of things was already passing away under which it was possible for the hand-loom weaver to become himself a factory owner. The hand-loom weavers attributed their distress entirely to the new machinery. As a matter of fact, in 1813 there were only 2,400 power looms in use and the distress was really due more to the wars with France and with the American Colonies.

Conditions in the best factories were probably much better than in the domestic industry, but there were not many of these best factories. *Samuel Oldknow*, the *Fieldens*, the *Gregs*, the *Ashtons*, the *Strutts*, among Unitarians and Robert Owen

were singled out in their own day as setting a high standard and having a high sense of responsibility. They built houses for their workpeople. They employed apprentices obtained from Poor Law Institutions, but their treatment of these apprentices set a new standard. *Samuel Oldknow* has already been mentioned. *Professor G. Unwin* wrote his biography. "Of another model employer, *Samuel Oldknow* of Mellor by Stockport, local tradition preserves a fragrant memory. In the apprentice house of the early nineteenth century they had 'porridge and bacon for breakfast, meat every day for dinner, puddings or pies on alternate days.' Tradition also stands to the declaration that 'no one ever had owt to complain of at Mellor.'" *Oldknow* seems to have got most of his children from Clerkenwell Parish, the Duke of York's Orphanage at Chelsea, and other metropolitan sources. J. L. Hammond has pointed out that, quite early in the nineteenth century, the *Strutts* provided schools and a library and even a swimming-bath with an instructor, and a dancing-room.

The most famous manufacturer of the day was, of course, Robert Owen. He was on terms of friendship with many Unitarians, of whom *John Fielden* was one. He was a guest of *William Rathbone*. He offered *M. D. Hill* the management of one of his communities. *M. D. Hill* visited the mills at Lanark in 1828 and found a very happy community there, but he was careful to explain that Owen's success was not an argument for a remodelled society on socialist lines since "he and his partners were proprietors of the mills."

Members of the *Greg* family have continued to contribute to the industrial life of England down to the present day. *The Gregs* migrated from Ayrshire to Ulster early in the eighteenth century. Thomas Greg of Belfast in 1742 married Elizabeth Hyde of Manchester and later sent two of his sons to England. One of them, *Samuel Greg*, the first (1758–1834), was adopted by his uncle, a Manchester merchant, and took over his uncle's business in 1783. "Instead of sharing the brutish animosity of the manufacturers of Lancashire to the new processes which were destined to turn their country into a mine of gold, Greg discerned their immense importance. The vast prospects of manufacturing industry grew upon his imagination" (John Morley). He built a mill at Wilmslow in 1784 in Cheshire and made his home there at Quarry Bank. This mill remains standing to this day. He had mills also at Lancaster and Bury.

Samuel Greg (the first) married Hannah Lightbody of Liverpool, a great-great-granddaughter of Philip Henry, who was one of the ejected Ministers of 1662. John Morley (later Lord Morley) in his "Critical Miscellanies" has reprinted a charming account of the home life of the *Greg* family by the mother of Dean Stanley, though the picture is somewhat marred by a touch of the patronizing attitude which was adopted towards industrialists in those days.

"The Gregs had always been distinguished for their efforts to humanize the semi-barbarous population that the extraordinary development of the cotton industry was then attracting to Lancashire. At Quarry Bank the sedulous cultivation of their own minds had always been subordinate to the constant and multifarious demands of their duties towards their workpeople. One of the curious features of that not very distant time was the Apprentice House. The employer procured children from the workhouse and undertook the entire charge of them. The Gregs usually had a hundred boys and girls between the ages of ten and twenty-one in their apprentice house, and the care of them was one of the main occupations of the family. They came from the refuse of the towns, yet the harmony of wise and gentle rule for the young, along with dutifully adjusted demand and compliance between the older hands and their employers, ended in the transformation of the thin, starved, half-dazed creatures who entered the gates of the factory into the best type of workpeople to be found in the district. The genial side of the patriarchal system was seen at its best. There is a touch of grace about the picture of the pleasant house with its old beech-trees and its steep grassy lawns sloping to the river, with the rhythmic hum of the mill, the loud factory bell marking the hours like the voice of time itself, the workers pouring through the garden in the summer morning on their way to Wilmslow church, and

receiving flowers and friendly salutation from the group at the open door of the great house."

One son, *John*, took over the mill at Lancaster. He was three times Mayor of Lancaster.

Three other sons of this *Samuel Greg* have found a place in the "Dictionary of National Biography."

Robert Hyde Greg (1795–1875) took a leading part in the politics of the industry and in the agitation against the Corn Laws, and was also interested in farming and the history of antiquity. In 1839 he was elected Member of Parliament for Manchester in his absence and without desiring it, and he did not seek re-election in 1841. In 1837 he wrote a pamphlet on the Factory Acts. He was President of the Chamber of Commerce and one of the founders of the Manchester Royal Institution and the Mechanics' Institute.

Samuel Greg the second (1804–1876) was famous for the way in which he conducted his mill near Bollington. The letters of Leonard Horner, the Inspector of Factories, have preserved an account of it. *Greg* established there a gymnasium, a library, baths, Sunday School and other classes. Unfortunately in 1847 he had troubles with his workpeople over the introduction of new machinery, and soon after that retired from business a comparatively poor man.

William Rathbone Greg (1809–1881) obtained the widest fame as a writer on politics, economy, and theology. He was educated under *Lant Carpenter*, the Bristol Unitarian minister, and married a daughter of *Dr. W. Henry* of Manchester. *William Rathbone Greg* took part in the first election at Manchester held under the Reform Act of 1832; his description of it reads like a parody of the election at Eatanswill described by *Charles Dickens*. He himself stood as candidate for Lancaster in 1837, but "he was much too scrupulous for that exceedingly disreputable borough." A song written about him at the election attacked him not only for his "atheist creeds and Radical lies," but as a traitor bringing "bloodshed, commotion, and ruin."

In the earlier part of his life he took an active part in the cotton industry at Bury. "With his workpeople," said his friend John Morley, "his relations were the most friendly,

and he was as active as he had ever been before in trying to better their condition. A wider field was open for his philanthropic energies. Lancashire was then the scene of diligent social efforts of all kinds. *Mr. Greg* was an energetic member of the circle at Manchester (Richard Cobden was another), which at this time pushed on educational, sanitary, and political improvements all over that important district. He fully shared the new spirit of independence and self-assertion that began to animate the commercial and manufacturing classes in the north of England at the time of the Reform Bill. It took a still more definite and resolute shape in the great struggle ten years later for the repeal of the Corn Laws. 'It is among these classes,' he said, in a speech in 1841, 'that the onward movements of society have generally had their origin. It is among them that new discoveries in political and moral science have invariably found the readiest acceptance; and the cause of peace, civilization, and sound national morality has been more indebted to their humble but enterprising labours, than to the measures of the most sagacious statesman, or the teachings of the wisest moralist.' "

When his brother *Samuel* broke down, he took over the management of his affairs also, but in 1850 both his own mills at Bury and his brother's were closed down. He then devoted his energies to literary work, but later occupied posts in the Civil Service. He was full of fears for the future of democracy. "Rocks Ahead" is the significant title of one of his works. In modern terminology he would be called a die-hard. "In politics he was one of the best literary representatives of the fastidious or pedantocratic school of government. In economics he spoke the last word, and fell, sword in hand, in the last trench of the party of capitalist supremacy and industrial tutelage" (John Morley).

"Before he was one-and-twenty years old, *Greg* was possessed by the conception that haunted him to the very end. When the people complain, their complaint savours of rebellion. Those who make themselves the mouthpieces of popular complaint must be wicked incendiaries. The

privileged classes must be ordained by nature to rule over the non-privileged. The few ought to direct and teach, the many to learn. That was *Greg's* theory of government from first to last. It was derived at this time, I suppose, from Burke, without the powerful correctives and indispensable supplements that are to be found in Burke's earlier writings. . . . What is to be said for *Mr. Greg*, now and always, is that he most honourably accepted the obligations of his doctrine, and did his best to discharge his own duties as a member of the directing class."

W. R. Greg's pessimistic views were probably due to that touch of melancholy in his disposition which went with a growing scepticism in religion. In his later life, he should be included rather among the reverent agnostics than among Unitarians.

Henry Philips Greg died in 1936. A long obituary notice in "The Manchester Guardian" recorded his many activities. He was "Chairman of the cotton spinning and manufacturing firm of R. Greg & Co., Ltd., of the Albert Mills, South Reddish; Chairman of Messrs. Ashton Brothers, Ltd., of Hyde, Chairman of the British Northrop Loom Company, Ltd., of Blackburn; and a Director of the Eccles Spinning and Manufacturing Company. He was a pioneer in the introduction of the automatic loom into this country. On behalf of Ashton Brothers he visited the United States in 1904, and, not without some difficulty, was responsible for the importation of five hundred of those looms. This visit resulted in the formation of the British Northrop Loom Company and in the adoption of the automatic loom by many other firms. With J. W. McConnel, *H. P. Greg* also had much to do with the formation of the British Cotton Industry Research Association and the establishment of the research laboratories of the Shirley Institute at Didsbury. At an early stage they secured the support of the Federation of Master Cotton Spinners' Associations, and this paved the way for the co-operation of the other important organizations, including those of the finishing branches and the workers' unions. And all through his association with the cotton industry he took a prominent part in the work of

the Textile Institute. He was a keen debater in the discussions at the Institute's annual conferences, but although his views were not always popular and were often expressed with uncompromising conviction, he was always so ready to listen to all his opponents had to say and to reason quietly with them that he never antagonized them." *H. P. Greg* took a great interest in boys' clubs. He established one in Reddish more than forty years ago, and a village club in Styal thirty-six years ago.

Thomas Ashton was another factory owner who stood out above the level of his time. His mills were at Hyde, which before that had a small population consisting chiefly of colliers, hatters, and weavers. He introduced machinery in 1801 and by 1831 the hamlet had grown to over 7,000. Dr. Kay's Report showed what could be done "by a humane and enlightened manufacturer for the happiness of his work-people." *Thomas Ashton* communicated the tables of earnings at his mills to Edward Baines for his "History of the Cotton Manufacture," and these were later published by the Factory Commissioners. "No one," he said, "can see without admiration the extensive and admirably managed Works of *Mr. Ashton*, whose work-people display both in their persons and in their dwellings, as much of health, comfort, and order, as can, perhaps, be found in any equal number of the operative classes of the United Kingdom." Professor Clapham has quoted the opinion of McDouall, the young Chartist doctor from Ramsbottom near Bury, who said "that the difference between the workers at the *Ashtons'* mills, where there was no truck, and the Grants' mills, where it was very bad indeed, was obvious. The *Ashtons'* people saved and some owned their houses. He knew one worth £200 to £300." "The result was," *Ashton* told the British Association, "that the people formed local attachments, and, during a period of thirty-seven years, they had only had one turn-out of a week's duration."

The family tradition was maintained by the second *Thomas Ashton* and his children *Lord Ashton of Hyde* and *Councillor Margaret Ashton. Margaret Ashton* was a member of the Manchester, Salford and District Women's Trade

Union Council from the start and an enthusiastic worker in its cause.

The *Ainsworth* family also provided several examples of a type of employer very different from the great majority. *David Ainsworth* and his brother *Thomas* were one of the first to instal engines built by Boulton and Watt in their mills. His son *Thomas* was educated at schools conducted by Unitarian ministers, *the Rev. William Lamport* at *Lancaster* and *the Rev. J. Corrie* at Birmingham. He began flax spinning at Pennybridge. "Neither then nor at any other period of his life, however, did he allow himself to be wholly absorbed in his business. He regularly hunted in winter, which was always his great relaxation. . . . His concern for the spiritual aspect of life, and the earnestness of his religious consistency as a Unitarian, were manifested in his riding and driving over to Kendal—a distance of fifteen miles—on alternate Sundays in order to join in public worship. He was very fond of music, and an excellent musician and frequently played the organ in the chapels at Kendal and Preston." "In those days, Preston was an important town socially and politically, as well as commercially. . . . Party spirit ran high, the Corporation being in the hands of the Tory Party, while the Whigs and Radicals were led by the Stanleys, who in the present day are represented by Lord Derby. The Ainsworths, of course, belonged to the latter party, and the interest in politics which has since been hereditary in the family, no doubt owed much to the stimulus it then received."

He purchased the mills at Cleator in Cumberland and went to live near them. "He was one of the pioneers in the commercial development of West Cumberland, and also one of the first to commence the iron-mining which has since assumed such large proportions in that district. He was also a large farmer, and introduced many agricultural improvements into his neighbourhood. Extremely fond of country pursuits—riding, driving, and hunting—he yet contrived to keep up with the times, and was especially interested and well-read in theology, politics, education, and all questions of social improvement then coming to the front. To

Manchester New College he was particularly attached by both sympathy with its objects and principles, and admiration and friendship for its Professors, *the Revs. J. J. Tayler* and *Dr. Martineau*. He filled the office of President of the College for some years, and made a point of attending the examinations and annual meeting of Trustees. . . . He was always ready to assist his neighbours of the various denominations, and was chiefly instrumental in restoring the parish church, where he for some time attended service in the afternoon." . . . He "arranged with ministers . . . to conduct monthly services in the school room. . . . In addition to the family, a few neighbours and some of the work-people attended the services, *Mr. Ainsworth* taking charge of the music. A friend once asking him what was the average attendance of adults at these services, received the characteristic reply, 'I can't tell you, for I never look round. I don't want my work people to think that they may please me by coming here. They come if they wish, but only if, and when, it suits them'" (*J. Harwood*: "Memorial of *William M. Ainsworth*").

There was a Peter Ainsworth, not related to the above, who was Member of Parliament for Bolton and seconded the second reading of the Ten Hours Bill moved by *J. Fielden*. He had a dining-room and library for his quarry men and, supported by John Fletcher, started a movement to establish an Athenaeum at Bolton. *Samuel Robinson*, of Dukinfield, who founded the Library and Institute there in 1838, had been a Student at *Manchester New College*. *Ashtons* kept their mills going during the cotton famine. *Caleb Wright* of *Chowbent* was a Member of Parliament. *Charles Eckersley* of *Chowbent* in his early days was a Unitarian Lay Preacher. *John Biggs, M.P.*, took out a patent for lace making.

UNITARIANS IN COMMERCE

The development of the cotton industry brought with it the development of Liverpool as a port and commercial centre. The first recorded importation of cotton into Liverpool was in 1757, when twenty-eight bags of Jamaica cotton were sold! The first cotton broker properly so-called was

Joshua Holt a generation later. He was not related to the *George Holt*, who was the first President of the Cotton Brokers' Association founded in 1841. Its first Secretary was *Studley Martin*.

Cotton was first shipped to Europe from the United States in 1784, and was consigned to William Rathbone & Son, and eventually sold to *Strutt* & Company of Belper.

George Holt was a member of the Liverpool Town Council, and furnished a house for one of the first Girls' Public Schools in England. His sons, *Alfred* and *Philip*, founded the shipping firm of Alfred Holt & Company, and his son *George* the firm of Lamport and Holt, in partnership with the son of *the Rev. W. Lamport* of Lancaster. *Sir Richard Durning Holt, Bt.*, of the firm of Alfred Holt & Company, was appointed Chairman of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in 1927. He was President of the *Unitarian College, Manchester*.

Banking and insurance numbered many Unitarians among the pioneers. In 1771 the first Manchester Bank was founded. A year later the firm of *John Jones*, bankers and tea dealers, was founded. *John Jones* married *Sarah Mottershead*, the daughter of the minister of *Cross Street, Manchester*. His sons, *Samuel* and *William*, continued the banking business in Manchester. *Samuel* was educated at Warrington Academy and married the daughter of *the Rev. Joseph Bourn*. He left £10,000 to increase the salaries of Dissenting ministers—preference being given to those who had been students at Manchester Academy, now *Manchester College, Oxford*. The brothers, with their father and mother and sister, were buried in *Cross Street Chapel*. His sister married *the Rev. Lewis Loyd*, who left the ministry to enter the Bank and founded the London Branch of Jones Loyd & Company, afterwards merged in the Westminster Bank. He was the father of Samuel Jones Loyd of London, the banker who was created Lord Overstone in 1850.

Two sons of *Benjamin Heywood* of Liverpool, *Benjamin Arthur* and *Nathaniel Heywood*, established the Bank of Heywood Brothers & Company, Manchester. Nathaniel married *Ann*, the daughter of *Thomas Percival*, the famous Manchester

doctor. One son, *Benjamin Heywood*, was Member of Parliament in 1831 for the County of Lancashire and first President of the Manchester Mechanics' Institute, where his portrait was placed. He was created a Baronet in 1838. He was President of *Manchester College* from 1840 to 1842. Another son, *Thomas*, was Boroughreeve of Salford, and edited the Diary of the first minister of *Cross Street*, the Rev. Henry Newcome, for the Chetham Society. Another son, *James Heywood*, was the first President of the Manchester Athenaeum and President of the Statistical Section of the British Association. He was one of the Trustees appointed by John Owens, the founder of Owens College, Manchester, now Manchester University. He also was President of *Manchester College, Oxford*. He was active in the movement for opening libraries and museums on Sundays, and established a Free Lending Library at Notting Hill. He wrote works relating to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and academical reform. He was Member of Parliament for the Northern Division of Lancashire in 1847 and 1852, and in 1854, when the Oxford University Bill was in the House of Commons, he carried clauses removing religious restrictions from matriculation and from the B.A. degree. *Sir Thomas Potter* was one of the promoters of the first Manchester Joint Stock Bank in 1828.

Among the Directors of the first Joint Stock Bank in Liverpool in 1826 was *George Holt*.

To these should be added the names of the *Pagets* at Leicester and of *Fellows* at Nottingham. In London *Samuel Rogers* and *Samuel Sharpe* were bankers early in the nineteenth century.

In 1774 a Liverpool Fire Insurance Office was established, of which *B. A. Heywood* and *B. Heywood* were Directors, and in 1802 the Liverpool St. George's Fire Office was opened, of which *George Booth, James Currie*, and *William Rathbone* were Directors. *Swinton Boult* was one of the founders of the Liverpool Fire and Life Insurance Company in 1836, which became one of the largest fire insurance offices in the world, changing its name first to the Liverpool and London Insurance Company and then to the Liverpool

and London and Globe. He originated the Liverpool Salvage Committee. *Philip Henry Rathbone* (1828–1859) was Chairman of the Salvage Association and the Liverpool Underwriting Association, and set on foot an agitation for the reform of underwriting. He was President of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.

The Rev. Richard Price, F.R.S., and his nephew, *Thomas Morgan, F.R.S.*, were insurance experts connected with the Equitable Insurance Company, as was also *Thomas Cooper*. *The Rev. William Frend*, who left the Church of England at the end of the eighteenth century and whose prosecution will be mentioned in the next chapter, was connected with the Rock Life Insurance Company. The same *William Frend* suggested a penny postage in 1790. The idea was carried out through the activity of (Sir) Rowland Hill, the son of a Unitarian, who, however, ceased to be a Unitarian in his later life. The Unitarian weekly, "*The Inquirer*," organized a penny subscription to him as a national memorial, which raised £13,000. The Committee included *Dr. John Bowring, J. A. Yates*, and *the Rev. W. Hincks, F.L.S.*

Many of these names will appear again in the accounts of the work done to improve local government and to provide better education.

UNITARIANS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES

Protestant Dissenters were often engaged in the manufacture of iron in the days when fuel from the forests of the south of England was used for smelting iron ore. Some of the old Protestant Dissenting Churches in the south which are now Unitarian still show relics of the industry. As the forests which provided fuel for smelting began to be used up, and coal and coke came to be used for smelting iron, the industry moved to the Midlands, where Protestant Dissenters and Quakers were prominent in the industry. In 1767 the trustees of the Church at *Cradley* (now Unitarian) included a number of "ironmongers."

Birmingham was the centre of the industry in the Industrial Revolution, and William Hutton described the people there as "a species I had never seen before . . . so

full of activity and life were they." The trustees of the *New Meeting Church* in *Birmingham* (now the *Church of the Messiah*) included nine ironmongers and five sword or knife cutlers. The great development of the industry there was largely due to Matthew Boulton, F.R.S., and to James Watt, F.R.S., who made the early steam-engine a practical proposition. They were members of the Lunar Society, of which *Joseph Priestley, F.R.S.*, and Erasmus Darwin, F.R.S., were members, and of which *Josiah Wedgwood, F.R.S., Sir Joseph Banks, F.R.S.*, and John Wilkinson were guests. The religious orientation of the Wilkinsons is difficult to decide. If John Wilkinson had theological sympathies with the Unitarians, they were probably more with what Unitarians denied than with what they affirmed. Certainly he does not seem to have shared their Puritan characteristics, for his "domestic arrangements were of a most peculiar character." T. S. Ashton has given his opinion that "John Wilkinson was reputed to be a good master" according to the not very high standards of those days, but J. L. and B. Hammond have given their opinion that John Wilkinson does not seem to have been above the standard of his fellow ironmasters.

Priestley married the sister of this John Wilkinson, whose father was one of the greatest ironmasters of the period—John Wilkinson, 1728–1808, "the father of the South Staffordshire iron trade." His father had been a small farmer in Cumberland, and combined farming with the charge of a small iron furnace there. John was educated at the Dissenting Academy of Dr. Caleb Rotheram at Kendal. *Priestley* claimed that the prosperity of Birmingham was due to *Mr. Taylor*, who was one of the victims of the riots of 1791, and to Mr. Wilkinson. John Wilkinson was suspected of sedition in 1792, and one of the arguments used to prove this was the fact that his sister had married *Dr. Priestley*; that he paid his workmen in paper money, to which the French name *assignats* was given; and that the "Presbyterian tradesmen received (these notes) in payment for goods, by which intercourse they have frequent opportunity to corrupt the principles of that description of man, by

infusing into their minds the pernicious tenets of Paine's Rights of Man, upon whose book, I am told, public lectures are delivered to a considerable number in the neighbourhood of Wrexham, by a Methodist. The bad effects of them are too evident in that Parish" (quoted by T. S. Ashton: "Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution").

The revolution in the screw industry brought about when *Joseph Chamberlain* became a partner with *J. H. Nettlefold* is described at length in J. L. Garvin's "Life of *Joseph Chamberlain*." From 1869 almost the whole of the screw trade of Birmingham passed into the hands of the firm. This was an early instance of the rationalization of an industry to prevent cut-throat competition. In 1874 he and his brothers left the firm, which then became the firm of Nettlefold. *J. H. Nettlefold* retired from this business in 1872 and became a manufacturer and a colliery proprietor.

The improvement of transport was one of the most urgent needs of the Industrial Revolution. *Josiah Wedgwood* was active in promoting the construction of canals, and, when the Duke of Bridgewater was raising funds to build his famous canal, the firm of *J. & N. Phillips* was one of those which made loans to him before its success had been demonstrated.

George Stephenson, the maker of the Rocket railway engine, owed much to *the Rev. William Turner* of Newcastle. *Henry Booth* was one of the chief promoters of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway from 1822 on. He became Secretary of the Northern Section of the London and North-Western Railway in 1846, and was presented by the Company later with 8,000 guineas. Many of his own inventions were used by railway companies. *Sir William Fairbairn* was an engineer with a wide range of inventiveness. *Frederick Swanwick* was acting engineer for the North Midland Railway, and has left some record of his experiences in building that railway. *S. Barton Worthington*, a trustee of *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester*, in 1828, was civil engineer for the London and North-Western Railway.

Samuel Beale was Chairman of the Midland Railway from 1858 to 1864. He was Member of Parliament for Derby

from 1857 to 1865. *Timothy Kenrick* was Deputy Chairman of the Midland Railway, and *W. P. Price, M.P.*, was Chairman from 1870 to 1873 and Railway Commissioner from 1873 to 1891. He presented windows to the Chapel of *Manchester College, Oxford. Richard Potter* (1817–1892), only son of *the Richard Potter, M.P.*, already mentioned, was Chairman of the Great Western Railway (1863–1865) and established a superannuation fund for workmen. Many distinguished engineers have been Unitarians. *Thomas Hawksley* (1807–1893) "was engineer or consulting engineer to most of the chief water schemes in England (such as Liverpool, Sheffield, and Leicester) and Scotland, and the gas developments of the time, and was associated with many important engineering works in foreign countries. He was President of the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1872–1873, and of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in 1876 and 1877. In 1878 *Mr. Hawksley* was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was the recipient also of many foreign decorations" ("Biographical Catalogue of Portraits . . . . *The High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham*"). A reproduction of his portrait by Hubert Herkomer hangs on the walls of the schoolroom of *High Pavement, Nottingham*. Curiously enough, he was descended from a Mayor of Nottingham (1715) who was an ardent Jacobite and was removed from his office and imprisoned.

His son, *Charles Hawksley* (1839–1917), carried on his father's work and was also a Fellow of the Royal Society and President of the Society of Civil Engineers. Near Leeds in Yorkshire *James Kitson* (1807–1885) founded the Mark Bridge Iron Works. His son, *Sir James Kitson, M.P.*, became *Lord Airedale. R. D. Darbishire* of Manchester was one of the trustees of the Whitworth Trust, whose engineering scholarships have kept Whitworth's name alive.

At the end of the eighteenth century *J. Cooper* won distinction as a chemist. *Samuel Parkes* was one of the first practical chemists of his day. *Sir John Brunner*, the son of *the Rev. John Brunner*, was one of the founders of the chemical firm of Brunner, Mond, now part of Imperial Chemical Industries. *A. F. Osler, F.R.S.*, developed the glass

industry at Birmingham, and the *Partingtons* the paper industry at Glossop. *Sir Henry Tate* founded the firm of sugar refiners which bears his name, now Tate & Lyle. He presented the Tate Galleries to the nation and Libraries to *Manchester College, Oxford*, and to Liverpool University.

Josiah Wedgwood (1730–1795) deserves a place to himself. His name has been preserved by his pottery. Wedgwood pottery was once the rage all over Europe, and the Wedgwood works were one of the show places to which crowned heads and other distinguished foreign visitors were taken. His genius as an inventor of new methods in the making of pottery deserves more space than can be given here. He was an actual craftsman, working the material himself, as well as an inventor of new methods and an organizer. So many attempts were made by foreign manufacturers to bribe his workmen to reveal the secrets of his processes that an Act of Parliament had to be passed to safeguard them.

His relations with his workmen were a mixture of the fraternal and the paternal. His ability transformed the conditions under which they lived. During the troubled times of the war with America there were riots due to bad trade, and *Wedgwood* wrote a pamphlet, "An Address to the Young Inhabitants of the Pottery," in which he urged them not to try rioting as a cure for their grievances, but rather to talk over the situation with the magistrates and employers. He was one of the first employers to institute a free library and a sick fund for his workmen. He discussed the question of lead poisoning with *Dr. Percival*, the Manchester doctor.

He took an active part in the making of roads in his district, and of the Trent and Mersey Canal. With his partner, *Thomas Bentley*, he discussed the draining of Chat Moss between Liverpool and Manchester, and made some experiments on a small scale with success. Some of this work remained when George Stephenson made his railway along this route in 1830. He even wanted the canals not to be constructed in a straight line but to have a line of grace.

In commercial policy he was in general a disciple of Adam Smith and a free trader. But he qualified his policy when it

seemed to conflict with his interests in France and Ireland, and he tried to obtain a monopoly of clay in Carolina.

Wedgwood was interested in all the great changes of the day, intellectual and religious as well as industrial. He contributed generously to help individuals and to assist the cause of Parliamentary Reform and slave emancipation. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and in close touch with the most advanced thinkers of the day. His friends included men like the great botanist *Sir Joseph Banks* and *Joseph Priestley*, the latter of whom he helped to subsidize and for whom he made scientific instruments. The medallions of *Dr. Priestley* which he executed were frequently found in the homes of Protestant Dissenters of the time.

His mother was the daughter of a Protestant Dissenting minister who had been ejected in 1662, and his wife was a sister of another Protestant Dissenting minister who shared that interest in science so frequent among the Unitarian Protestant Dissenters of this time. He shared the advanced theological outlook of that section of the Protestant Dissenters to which the name Unitarian is now given. Though attached to the Protestant Dissenting Congregation at *Newcastle-under-Lyme*, he was buried in the Parish Church at Stoke-upon-Trent. *Wedgwood's* daughter married the son of Dr. Erasmus Darwin of Shrewsbury, and their son Charles Darwin accompanied *Josiah Wedgwood* to the Chapel at *Newcastle-under-Lyme* and in his early days attended services at *Shrewsbury*. Erasmus Darwin was "a deeply religious man," but perhaps more of the Deist type. He was the author of the phrase that Unitarianism was a feather-bed for falling Christians.

Later *Wedgwood* went into partnership with *Thomas Bentley* of Liverpool. *Bentley* was the son of a Derbyshire country gentleman, but he lived at a time when commerce was ceasing to be regarded as degrading. *Bentley's* father was "a member of one of the most liberal sections of dissent." *Bentley* had been educated at the Dissenting Academy at Findern, near Derby, and later helped to found Warrington Academy, where *Priestley* was one of the tutors. At Liverpool he was one of the founders of the *Octagon Chapel*, where the

attempt was made to combine radical theology with the use of a liturgical service. *Wedgwood* seems to have sympathized with this movement, for he wrote to *Bentley*: "When your Prayers are published, I should be glad to buy two or three copies of them. I wish they had been published two or three months ago; we should have stood a chance of having them made use of in our neighbourhood." And later: "Your account of the opening of your Octagon gives me great pleasure, both as a friend to your Society and a lover of rational devotion." Later *Bentley* moved to London and helped to found a Church in London "upon a still more noble and liberal plan."

One of *Wedgwood's* sons, *Tom*, has the distinction of being "the first photographer." "He spent much of his fortune in aiding men of genius. When in 1798 Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a candidate for the pastoral charge of the Unitarian Chapel at Shrewsbury, in order to enable him to devote himself entirely to philosophy and poetry, *Wedgwood* and his brother offered him an annuity of £150 a year, the value of the emolument, the prospect of which he abandoned by accepting this offer." The radical and adventurous tradition of the founder of the family has been maintained by many of his descendants.

CHAPTER 3

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO PARLIAMENTARY REFORM AND OTHER MOVEMENTS FOR FREEDOM

THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—GROUPS IN FAVOUR OF REFORM—THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION—AS A WHOLE—IN THE PIONEER PERIOD—IN THE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION—IN THE POPULAR PERIOD

THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Civil and religious liberty to Unitarians is not merely part of a political programme but an expression of their deepest faith. Unitarians were the only group of people who supported every one of those movements for political freedom which began after the middle of the eighteenth century and ended with the establishment of parliamentary democracy.

In the course of centuries Englishmen had acquired a personal freedom which was unknown to the rest of the world. In the seventeenth century Puritans and Dissenters had done much to make autocracy and absolutism impossible in England. The time had come when further changes had to be made, if only to safeguard gains already won. Most Englishmen in the eighteenth century and most foreign visitors to England would have agreed that England was the freest country in the world. Dissenters, though deprived of many of the rights which go with full citizenship, shared this view, and were devoted to the Constitution which they had done so much to establish and preserve. *Joseph Priestley* was an exception, but he disagreed mainly because he thought that this view made people complacent and blind to the need of change.

In the past the Constitution could have been defended, in spite of all its defects and limitations, on the ground that it was the best working arrangement possible under the prevailing conditions and modes of thought. In the course of time, however, existing defects had become accentuated,

and after the middle of the eighteenth century men were becoming aware of the inadequacy of the existing system to meet the needs of the time and the changing conditions which the Industrial Revolution helped to produce.

The system of representation which existed at the middle of the eighteenth century had become fantastic. In 1781 *John Jebb* calculated that there were 214,000 voters in England (not Great Britain) and that 6,000 of these might return a majority of members to Parliament. In 1793 it was reckoned that 300 out of 530 Members of Parliament were returned by 162 people and that, of these 300, 88 were nominated directly by peers. There were a number of constituencies like Yorkshire and Westminster where public opinion could be made effective, but these constituencies cost thousands of pounds to contest. In all Yorkshire there was only one polling station. The agricultural labourer, the town operative, and the non-freeholding farmer were not represented.

Yet there is no doubt that the system was accepted without criticism, not merely by those who benefited under it but also by those who were excluded from any share in it. The basis of the system was accepted, and that basis was the possession of property, and especially property in land. "There is scarcely a blade of grass which is not represented," said Lord Chatham. And the system could be defended, and was, on the ground that it worked. Public opinion when roused was able to make itself felt. Men of talent were sometimes given early opportunities for service, and the return of men of independent mind was easier than it is to-day.

So long as public opinion accepted the system, the interests which profited by it were irresistible, but in the sixty-five years from 1768 to 1832 public opinion was changing. New interests were coming to the front. New problems were arising before which the old ideas and the old machinery were helpless. These were the problems created by the agricultural and industrial revolutions. And the statement that the system worked required several qualifications. It worked well only for certain people, the

people who counted at that time. It is obvious now, for instance, that the system did not work well for the village labourer or for the town labourer. Both the people who regard the agricultural and industrial changes of the eighteenth century as, on the whole and in the long run, beneficial, and the people who regard these changes as disastrous, can agree that it was a misfortune for England that these two economic revolutions took place quite as they did. The system worked, perhaps, so long as the economic situation changed only slowly. In the period under review, the arguments for it became less cogent. Even the argument that it represented property was weakened, because a new kind of property was becoming more important—property in factories and workshops. The number of people whose property was in warehouses and in factories and in the skill of their hands was increasing, and they were excluded for the most part from any share in the system. Above all, the system worked so long as people's ideas remained unchanged. And apathy, indifference, and complacency were giving way to new ideas and a new enthusiasm.

Three or four groups of people combined to bring about this change in public opinion. A few Radicals believed in democracy as an idea and an ideal. A number of aristocratic and middle-class Whigs supported them, and behind them was a popular movement of artisan Radicals. As the movement went on, the relative importance of these groups changed.

Apart from the idealist Radicals, the groups supporting reform were not entirely disinterested. Some Radicals and Whigs supported reform mainly because the existing arrangements excluded them from influence rather than because they really shared democratic ideas and ideals. The great Whig families had been the rulers of England from the death of Queen Anne in 1714 to the accession of King George III in 1760, partly because the Tories were suspected of Jacobitism. The Whig monopoly of power came to an end soon after George III became king. There is little doubt that many of these Whigs would have remained blind to the inadequacies of the Constitution if they had not been

deprived of power. Yet some of them had a certain saving grace of inherited outlook or unconscious statesmanship which helped to save England from the civil war that might have taken place if all the members of the older parties had opposed a die-hard resistance to all change. Though without a vestige of democratic feeling in the real sense of the term, they had a sense of obligation to the Constitution, and in the end they intervened to make the transition from the old order to the new without a revolution. Though the old issues between Whig and Tory had lost their significance and the terms had to acquire a new meaning, it is true to say that many Whigs supported the reform while Tories were opposed to it.

In the long run the men whose demand for reform was rooted in certain principles were really more important. The early leaders of the Radicals were men of this type. If class interest had been dominant, they would have been against reform. It is true, however, that even the finest of these Radical reformers shared the prejudices and ideas of their age. *Major John Cartwright* and *Sir George Savile* may be instanced. And a liberty was allowed those Radicals who came from the aristocracy of the landed gentry which was denied the popular leaders. Charles James Fox was a great man, but if he had been a middle-class manufacturer or a Unitarian minister or an artisan he would have found himself in the dock alongside his comrades. He admitted this himself.

Among the middle classes, reform was supported by manufacturers and by idealists. Certain modern dogmatists like to pretend that in such cases the idealism is an unconscious rationalization of self-interest. But generalizations of this kind are based rather on abstract dogmas than on acquaintance with the actual character of the men in question. The leading figures among these people were Protestant Dissenters. As a rule the Old Dissenters were mostly on the side of reform. Unitarians, whether they came from the Old Dissent or from the Church of England, were unanimous on the question (the last chapter of this book will make clear the different origins of the Unitarians of this period).

Behind these middle-class reformers were many of the disfranchised and the dispossessed, whose support was of a turbulent character. These different groups co-operated with each other perforce, but they did not always love one another, and there was friction at times. Some of the leaders of the popular movement, like William Cobbett, were fundamentally conservative in their thought and outlook. William Cobbett seems to have had as strong a detestation of Unitarians as had members of the Church of England and Methodists, who as a rule at this period were against reform. In the end the Reform Act of 1832 was passed by a leader of the Whigs, not by a Radical.

The reform was carried in the end by the pressure of public opinion. This public opinion was roused and educated by methods which have now become a commonplace both of democracy and of dictatorships, but which were then new and revolutionary inventions. Up to that time the only machinery of politics had been newspapers, petitions, and election speeches at the hustings. The reformers set out deliberately to create a public opinion. That was a new thing. In the eighteenth century "the people, as a political factor, had to be created" (P. A. Brown: "The French Revolution in English History"). The reformers invented methods which were not only original in form but rested on new presuppositions. They organized petitions; they drew up a programme; they issued publications; they founded societies; they linked their supporters together by correspondence; they held national conferences. More details will be given later.

The movement begun in the middle of the eighteenth century took over sixty years to achieve success. Not one of those who started the campaign lived to see the results of the work they had begun. These died, not having received the promises. They might, perhaps, have achieved success earlier, but their work was cut across by the panic and hostility created by the French revolution.

Three periods may be distinguished—a pioneer period, a period of persecution, and a popular period. The first period, the pioneer period, lasted from the beginning of the

movement, about 1768, to the reaction which began in 1791 after the French Revolution of 1789. The second period was a period of persecution of different degrees of severity through the greater part of the wars with France, and lasted, with breaks, from 1791 to 1815. The worst persecution took place during the English Terror of 1793 and 1794. The third period was the popular period, when the movement was carried to success by popular enthusiasm and the persecution which took place then only fanned the flames. This is the period after peace was made in 1815. This was also marked by hysteria, but this time the people and the Government were on opposite sides.

Unitarians of all kinds were entirely on the side of Radical reform in all the three periods. Some favoured reform because they were among the classes with little or no representation under the existing system, but more supported it from deeper conviction. Their contribution is seen most clearly when the different periods of the movement are clearly recognized.

In the first two of these periods many of the most outstanding personalities and leaders were Unitarians. In the third period, when the movement became popular, this was not so much the case—a characteristic of Unitarian history which continually recurs. The lead then was taken by more popular politicians, using the methods created by the pioneers. The idealism was not quite so profound, and political and economic interests played a larger part.

It was natural that Unitarians should have made their greatest contribution in the first two periods of the movement. Men of character and principle count more in the pioneer period of a movement, when the demands on vision and courage are highest. Those who worked for these reforms needed courage of every kind. In the early days they needed the courage of hope and the courage of patience when apathy fell upon the movement. None of them lived to see the actual accomplishment of the changes for which they had worked. In the second period, the period of persecution, Unitarians were the chief victims both of the mobs and of legal injustice. They showed the courage to

bear physical attack after the French Revolution, when they had to face not only mobs but judges who shared the prejudices of the mobs. Though isolated individuals belonging to other religious groups supported the movement, both the High Church party and the Evangelicals of this period were as a rule Tory and opposed to parliamentary reform as well as to Catholic Emancipation.

Unitarians appealed to reason and to natural right, and this explains what seemed to be the extreme form of their demands, for the existing system stood a very small chance once the touchstone of reason was applied to it. Their philosophy was based on a combination of *Locke* and Rousseau with Hobbes. They used the argument that men as men had certain natural rights. The theory of natural rights has often been criticized very shallowly, for though it was imperfectly expressed, it did contain a profound truth. What was vital in it can be simply expressed without using the ambiguous word "rights." No society is likely to develop the highest qualities of its members unless freedom of thought and expression is permitted. When once these are refused, every kind of corruption and violence may come to the top, unchecked by whatever decency or sanity may remain among the minority or even among the majority.

Like all reformers, no doubt, Unitarians did hope too much from the effects of these political changes. They expected that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear. Except annual parliaments, all that they asked for has been granted, but, if they were alive to-day, it is not probable that they would feel particularly satisfied.

UNITARIANS

The names of eight Unitarians occur again and again in Professor G. S. Veitch's indispensable account of this subject, "The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform":—

The Rev. Richard Price (1723–1791); *the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey* (1723–1801); *Sir George Savile* (1726–1784); *Josiah Wedgwood* (1730–1795); *the Rev. Joseph Priestley* (1733–1804); *the Rev. Dr. John Jebb* (1736–1786); Rev. Christopher Wyvill (1740–1822); *Major John Cartwright* (1740–1824); *Sir William Jones* (1746–1794).

This list of names illustrates one of the difficulties of writing the history of the Unitarian movement, as opposed to that of a well-defined group like the Quakers or Methodists or an organization like the Church of England. Most of these leaders arrived at Unitarianism by different paths. That is one reason no doubt why writers on this period have failed to recognize them as Unitarians. They formed a group of friends, though their views were not identical in politics or in theology.

Those Unitarians who came out of the Church of England at this time tended to be more radical than those who had grown up among the Protestant Dissenters with their profound belief in the constitutional settlement of the glorious revolution of 1689. But they had certain principles in common. Their demands were radical because they were rooted in their philosophy and their faith, not in self-interest. Their methods were those of persuasion and education. Their character was of the highest and their courage never failed.

The Rev. Richard Price, F.R.S., and *the Rev. Joseph Priestley, F.R.S.*, may be taken as typical representatives of that section of Protestant Dissenting opinion which at this time was becoming Unitarian. They were contemporaries for fifty-eight years and friends for the greater part of that period. Both had been converted to some form of Unitarianism from Calvinism. *Priestley* had been an Independent; *Price's* ancestry seems to have been Independent, but he joined the Presbyterians. In theology *Priestley* had gone further than *Price*, and in philosophy they held different theories. This did not disturb their friendship. Their formal theological and philosophical theories were both inadequate to the real springs of their lives.

Both were first and foremost ministers of religion, with talents and energies which found expression also in other fields. Both were Fellows of the Royal Society. *Price* won distinction as a philosopher and as a pioneer of life insurance, and *Priestley* as a chemist, an electrician, and an educationalist. Both wrote political pamphlets which were widely read and had an extensive influence. Yet neither was a

politician, but both were ministers of religion driven into politics by the needs of their time. *Price* refused an appointment as secretary to Lord Shelburne (later Marquis of Lansdowne), but recommended *Priestley* to him later, and *Priestley* became his librarian. Both held moderate rather than extreme views, yet they became the chief targets of the hatred of the time. All the hysteria and hatred which burst forth in the early years of the French Revolution were directed against them. *Price* died before the worst happened, and *Priestley* bore the chief brunt of it. The caricaturists pictured them as dangerous plotters intent on destruction.

Priestley preached *Price's* funeral sermon, and when *Priestley* was driven out of Birmingham he found refuge for a time in *Price's* old Church at *Hackney*.

The memorial tablet erected in 1841 to *Richard Price* in the Unitarian Church at *Stoke Newington* described him in words which seem to be as exaggerated in their praise as were most of the memorial tablets of earlier ages. Yet in his case they were hardly an exaggeration. "To the Memory of Richard Price, D.D., F.R.S., Twenty-six years Minister of this Chapel, born at Tynton, Glamorganshire, February 23, 1723; died at Hackney, Middlesex, April 19, 1791. Theologian, Philosopher, Mathematician; friend to freedom as to virtue; brother of man; lover of truth as of God; his eminent talents were matched by his integrity, simplicity, and goodness of heart; his moral dignity by his profound humility. Few have been more useful in their generation, or more valued by the wise and good; none more pure and disinterested. Honoured be his name! Imitated his example!"

A complete list of his writings fills five pages and contains forty-four items. "Observations on Reversionary Payments" are found next to "Dissertations on Providence and on Prayer."

Price was one of the founders of life insurance in this country; that is, he first placed life insurance on a sound actuarial basis. His "Observations on Reversionary Payments," first published in 1769, created an immense sensation. He showed that insurance business had been conducted

on plans "alike improper and insufficient" and based on inadequate or inaccurate data and calculation. There was much dishonesty and people's savings were lost. *Price* was engaged for many years in reconstructing the Equitable Society which had been founded in 1762. It is in this Company that Unitarian ministers are nowadays insured for their pensions. *Price's* nephew and biographer, *William Morgan*, was actuary of the Company from 1775 to 1830. In his expert opinion, the Northampton Tables of Assurance which *Price* drew up "remained for a century by far the most important tables of mortality employed as a basis of calculation by leading companies in Great Britain and adopted by the courts as practically a part of the common law. Parliament, followed by some state legislatures and many courts in America, even made them the authorized standard for valuing annuity charges and reversionary payments."

Price was also a pioneer of Old Age Pensions and of terminable annuities. *Price's* work "gave to Old Age Pensioners, as it gave to Life Insurance, a secure foundation. . . . The provision of such pensions by the State on a contributory basis became a practical question." In 1773 a pamphlet on the subject was published by *Francis Maseres*, Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer. *Price* gave him advice and help, and was actively associated with him in the attempt to carry into execution the design explained in it. A Bill, with suitable Tables annexed, was introduced into Parliament. It passed the House of Commons without much opposition, though it did not become law.

Price did much to warn the public of the dangerous rate at which the National Debt was increasing as a result of the American War. His writings on finance also influenced the French statesmen, Turgot and Necker. He published an Appeal to the Public in 1772 which was spoken highly of in Parliament. He was an ardent advocate of the establishment of a sinking fund. One plan he suggested was the creation of terminable annuities, but he preferred the plan of the re-establishment of a sinking fund. In 1783, while Pitt was Premier, *Price* published "The State of Public

Debts." Three years later Pitt established a sinking fund. Unfortunately, Pitt's sinking fund has become a by-word in folly, for Pitt paid off money borrowed at a low rate of interest by borrowing money at a higher rate. Whether this was due to a mistake by *Price* or to Pitt's altering *Price's* scheme has not yet been clearly established.

During times of emergency the Government of those days was in the habit of declaring certain days to be fast days, and sermons were preached on public affairs. These were the only occasions on which *Price* preached what are called political sermons. *Theophilus Lindsey*, also, was not a politician, but on these occasions he, too, treated the affairs of the nation from the pulpit.

Joseph Priestley was one of the most famous and most respected men of his time. After the Birmingham Riots of 1791 he left England, and passed the last ten years of his life in America. Much of his fame was due to the importance of his scientific discoveries in chemistry and electricity. These discoveries were perhaps due more to his genius for experiment than for abstract thought. He discovered oxygen, but to his dying day maintained a quite wrong theory about the nature of his discovery. He was first and foremost a Christian minister with a passion for truth and freedom and a profound belief in humanity, dealing with the problems of his own age and intervening in politics only when compelled to do so. While preaching the gospel and catechizing children, he found time to conduct his experiments and to write on theology, history, politics, and education.

J. T. Rutt collected "the Theological and Miscellaneous Works of *J. Priestley*" in twenty-five volumes, and the quotations in this section are from this edition—except where otherwise acknowledged. A considerable number of his scientific works has been published separately. A complete bibliography of his works is being prepared at Yale University by J. F. Fulton and C. H. Peters.

Priestley's love of truth involved him in one controversy after another, but in them all he showed a rare fairness of mind. He was attacked by the rationalist Gibbon as well as by the orthodox Horsley, by the Conservative Edmund

Burke, and by the Radical William Cobbett. He himself wrote with such single-minded devotion to the truth that he could not understand the hostility he roused. He was not one of those people who like to be different. When he found himself for once on the same side as the crowd he was delighted. He had this pleasant experience when he was supporting the abolitionist movement in harmony with his brethren of the Established Church. "We are zealous and unanimous here," he wrote in 1788, "and next Sunday, previously to a town's meeting, we all preach on the subject (churches and meeting-houses alike), not to collect money, but to give information to such as may have been inattentive to the subject." *Priestley* thoroughly enjoyed being on the popular side. "With the greatest satisfaction should I always *go with the multitude*, if a regard for the sacred rights of truth did not, on some occasions, forbid it."

His passion for liberty forced him to take part in the political struggles of the day. Of his collected works only a small proportion deal with politics, but these had a wide circulation. Many went into several editions, and some were translated into Dutch and French and smuggled into France.

He strove to extend liberty to all those deprived of it—to slaves, to Catholics, to Protestant Dissenters, and to ordinary Englishmen. "He stood alone among his friends in advocating complete toleration for 'papists,' against the opinion of *Lardner* and Kippis." He went beyond *Locke* in his demand for toleration. He had no patience with the men who begged for a little relaxation of the terms on which they were tolerated.

His chief writings on political subjects were called forth by the two crises which began in 1768 and in 1789. The first crisis was caused by the new orientation of politics under George III, when it looked as if the gains of the past half century were to be lost. The second crisis resulted from the French Revolution. *Priestley* was not a politician in any sense, though he incurred as much hostility as if he had been one. He had not, indeed, much respect for the politicians of his day, and when Lord Shelburne wished to appoint him his librarian he hesitated before accepting.

The ultimate source of his political and social philosophy was his religion. Professor H. J. Laski has called him the Nonconformist Rousseau. *Priestley* had read Rousseau, as he had read almost everybody, but it is doubtful if Rousseau really had much influence on him. *Priestley* only referred to him once or twice and then to differ from him. The fact is that ideas generally attributed to Rousseau can be found in *John Locke*, and it was *Locke* who was really the great influence on *Priestley*. But behind *Locke* lay Protestantism, and behind Protestantism lay Christianity. *Priestley's* essential faith came from his religion, though many of the details of his political philosophy came from *Locke*. "The theory of natural rights is simply the logical outgrowth of the Protestant revolt against the authority of tradition, the logical outgrowth of the Protestant appeal to private judgment, that is, to the reason and conscience of the individual" (Professor D. S. Ritchie: "Natural Rights").

Priestley was dealing with specific problems of his own age in the light of certain principles, and was not spinning abstract theories or devising abstract systems. He believed in Man with a big "M." The point of view is significant. Believing in the perfectibility of man, as every Christian is supposed to believe, he asked this question: If human life has a divine purpose, and if something of this purpose can be discovered by reason, what form should human life take? If man is to be perfect, what ought to be the form of government? On what principles should government be founded? *Priestley* in 1769 thus anticipated *Franklin*, *Price*, Condorcet, and Godwin in their doctrine of the perfectibility of the species.

Bound up with this belief in the divine purpose of human life was his belief in reason and liberty. They are indeed essential to one another. Without freedom man is not man but a slave without self-respect. *Priestley* applied to institutions the test of reason. The test was the well-being of the community, and the community itself should be the judge of its own well-being. The State was made for man, and not man for the State. That form of government is best in which man is most free. He used the language of natural rights.

To speak of man's natural right to freedom is to affirm that an essential condition of the well-being of a community is the freedom of all its members. The phrase, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, can be restated as the well-being of all the non-privileged. The test of any proposal was not its age, but the happiness of the whole community, which is the ultimate end of government. This explains the influence that *Priestley* had on the progressive spirits of his time. It was fitting that it should have been in *Priestley's* works that *Jeremy Bentham*, one of the most fruitful thinkers of the nineteenth century, should have hit upon his great principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. *Bentham* himself stated that he was indebted for the phrase to a pamphlet of *Dr. Priestley's*. The exact words are not to be found in any of *Priestley's* works. *J. T. Rutt* suggested that the passage referred to was the following: 'The good and happiness of the members, that is, the majority of the members, of any state, is the great standard by which everything related to that state must finally be determined.' Priestley had obtained it directly or indirectly from an Italian writer Beccaria."

Priestley's contribution can only be understood if this fact is grasped. He was not really an abstract thinker, and the writers who have tried to treat him as one have failed to grasp his greatness because they have divorced his thought from his religious faith. Sir Leslie Stephen's account quite fails to explain *Priestley's* influence on his own time. It is too formal and occupied too much with the terms *Priestley* used rather than with what *Priestley* was trying to express. No doubt *Priestley's* use of terms was defective and his thought did suffer from the inadequacy of its expression. To show that would have been more legitimate criticism. But not to see more than imperfections of expression is a failure of understanding.

For instance, *Priestley's* form of philosophy was on the surface a form of materialistic determinism. Sir Leslie Stephen so described it. But this "is a little misleading, for he had adopted, from Boscowich, the theory that matter consists but of points of force. As *Channing* interprets him,

he changed matter 'from a substance into a power.' His resultant doctrine of the homogeneity of man was execrated as atheism. Yet surely to affirm that the Creator of all can elevate physical force to thinking power is to raise rather than to depress the conception of the marvels of omnipotence" (*A. Gordon*). And in so far as he was a determinist, his determinism certainly did help him to bear with calm dignity the outrages of the Birmingham Riots.

Sir Leslie Stephen made the criticism that *Priestley* had no historic sense. There is some truth in this: it was the weakness of all the rationalists of this period. Yet *Alexander Gordon* found the essence of *Priestley's* contribution to theology in his "adoption of the historical method of investigating the problems of doctrine and in his special handling of that method."

Priestley's faith in man and in reason reflected both the strength and the weakness of his age. Such faith in man and in reason seems very naïve, if not blind, to-day. It certainly blinded men to the complexities of human nature. This was one of Burke's criticisms. *Priestley* was always willing to examine the evidence for any statement and to reconsider it; and if he was mistaken to abandon it (except in the case of oxygen). He thought his openness of mind was a characteristic of human nature, though he was fully aware that "as yet little was known of the structure of the human mind." The weakness of his position was that he over-simplified the problem. He assumed that all men were as open to conviction as he was, and did not allow for the inertia of custom and the blindness of selfishness. Though *Priestley* suffered from these, not only in England but, later on, in America, they did not destroy his faith. But the over-simplification of the problem, due in part to the particular circumstances of the time, resulted in a conception of freedom that tended to express itself negatively.

In the generation that followed this over-simplification led inevitably to a reaction, because it seemed untrue to the facts. The Aufklärung was succeeded by the romantic reaction and an orthodox revival. Belief in the perfectibility of man was abandoned for belief in original sin.

Though *Priestley* could never have imagined that the time would come when the public opinion of a great nation would be proud of losing all those liberties which were once regarded as the main achievement of European civilization, much of what he wrote can be read to-day with new significance.

Priestley was afraid, and rightly, of the abuse of arbitrary power. "For such is the state of mankind, that persons possessed of unbounded power will generally act as if they forgot the proper nature and design of their station, and pursue their own interest though it be opposed to that of the community at large."

If ambitious men abused their power, the people might be driven into rebellion. *Priestley* refused to be driven into panic by talk of revolution. The people of this country seldom complained without reason, and always bore extreme oppression before they rebelled. So he did not hesitate to express his approval of the execution of Charles I, which had dealt the death-blow to the divine right of kings, though he regretted there was no way by which it could have been done legally, and he did not approve of Cromwell. When the French Revolution came he welcomed it. But he recognized that arbitrary power might exist under any form of government. He was realist enough to know that no form of government in itself can prevent the abuse of power. He recognized that a republican democracy might be as oppressive and tyrannical as a monarch or an aristocracy, and that an elected body may have less sense of shame than a single person. "And a large body of men would venture upon things which no single person would choose to do of his own authority; and so long as they had little intercourse but with one another, they would not be much affected with a sense of fear or shame." And so under certain circumstances liberty was less likely to exist under a widely extended franchise because a crowd had less sense of shame unless there was a minority able to oppose the majority.

Ultimately the only check on arbitrary and unjust power is the force of public opinion. Rulers, "being men, cannot but have in some measure the feelings of other men. They

could not, therefore, be happy themselves if they were conscious that their conduct exposed them to universal hatred and contempt. . . . The more civilized any country is, the more effectual will this kind of guard to political liberty prove; because, in those circumstances, a sense of justice and honour (has) got firmer hold upon the minds of men; so that a violation of (it) would be more sensibly felt, and more generally strongly resented."

But public opinion would only be effective in certain circumstances. The privileged classes were subject to the public opinion of their friends, but they oppressed the poor because the public opinion to which men are subject is not general public opinion but that of the circles in which they move. Public opinion could be poisoned by bad education. *Priestley* could hardly have been aware of the enormous power of that form of propaganda miscalled education, yet in fact his views on education were the result of fears that the modern world has seen realized. *Priestley* was in favour of compulsory payments for education and public provision for reading and writing. But apart from this, he believed that education was one of those things in which the State should not interfere. *Priestley* was writing against dangers, real in his time, and even more real to-day. It was only a generation since the reactionaries under Queen Anne had tried to close Dissenting schools and academies, "the most odious measure of the most odious ministry that ever sat at the helm of the government."

Priestley's concrete proposals for reform were extremely moderate. He was not a Utopian like Godwin. Like most of his contemporaries, *Priestley* admired the British Constitution, and most foreign observers shared this admiration. In England, in spite of all the imperfections of the Constitution, there was more respect for human personality than in any other country in the world. One reason that the English reformers welcomed the French Revolution was that they thought the French were going to copy their own Glorious Revolution of 1689. Even when forced by mob violence to become an exile in America, *Priestley* refused to be naturalized there.

But *Priestley* shared the widespread view that the British Constitution had become corrupted, and he wanted to put it right again. He naïvely assumed that, whereas in the past the British Constitution had represented public opinion, now absolutism was being restored. In most ages reformers have thought that they were merely recovering lost rights, and that belief was held by many reformers of the day (for instance, by *Cartwright*). It is of course a myth, but myths may express profound truths, and once they are believed, they are powerful. His particular proposals were mostly those of the reformers of the day. Parliament had been removed from public opinion by infrequent elections and by the corruption of place-men. To make public opinion effective, he favoured shorter Parliaments, either triennial or annual. Like all reformers of the period, he regarded the Act by which Parliament had extended its own life as unconstitutional. The small boroughs should be abolished and the franchise should be on a county basis; voting should be by ballot.

Priestley was not as advanced as the most radical reformers of the day. He did not even think it necessary that all people shall have a vote. And he would have restricted high office to those possessed of a moderate fortune because they are generally "better educated and have consequently more enlarged minds, and are . . . more truly independent than those born to great opulence." His reasons were clear. He was afraid that to give votes to those who are economically dependent on others would be throwing more votes into the hands of those persons on whom they depend. These facts show how completely *Priestley* was thinking of the immediate situation with which he was confronted.

Priestley's views developed on this subject, as on others, particularly in America. Though in America he had again to learn the painful lesson that even people who have liberty may easily abuse it.

The moderateness of *Priestley's* views makes it more difficult to understand why he should have incurred such intense hostility. A leaflet distributed in London described

him as " a damned rascal, an enemy both to the religious and political constitution of the country, a fellow of a treasonable mind, consequently a bad Christian: for it is not only the duty, but the glorious ambition, of every good Christian to fear God and honour the King."

Priestley himself ascribed this hostility to his theological views. And he was probably right. But the hostility went so deep because men felt that the tests he applied would be fatal to the corruptions of that or any other age.

Theophilus Lindsey, *John Jebb*, and *William Frend* were clergymen who had left the Church of England as a result of the failure of the effort to alter the terms of subscription. *Lindsey* became minister of *Essex Street Chapel*, the first English Unitarian Church- to be founded as such. *The Lindsey Press* is named after him.

The Rev. John Jebb, M.D., stood midway between *Priestley* and *Price* on the one hand and *Sir George Savile* and *Major John Cartwright* on the other. He did not devote his life to politics as they did. He had been a Fellow of a Cambridge College, Lecturer in Mathematics and candidate for the Chair of Arabic, and at Cambridge he had been active in his efforts to obtain much needed educational reform. He did not resume the ministry as a Unitarian, though an attempt was made to secure him as *Lindsey's* successor. He became a doctor and obtained distinction in his new profession, though political and theological prejudice was great enough to prevent him from being appointed physician to a metropolitan hospital. In his political views he was far more active and radical than *Priestley*. "Show me a moderate man," he said, "and I will show you a rascal." He was one of the great men of this period, though perhaps one of the least known.

Christopher Wyvill, on the other hand, would have been a politician had he not had the misfortune to be excluded from the House of Commons by the fact that in his early days he had taken Holy Orders. Theologically, he had developed Unitarian views and had ceased to act as a clergyman. He did not give up his benefice but placed the living in charge of a curate, to whom he paid over the full

amount of the income—an act which was regarded as a very rare piece of scrupulosity.

Sir George Savile, M.P., and *Major John Cartwright, M.P.*, were two Members of Parliament who redeemed politics from the charge of place-hunting. They gave their lives with disinterested devotion to the cause of reform.

Sir George Savile was one of the most respected Members of Parliament. From 1769 till his death he was Member for the county division of Yorkshire, which at that time formed one constituency. In that age of political corruption no suspicion attached to his name. He won and held the respect of his countrymen. He could have obtained office in the Rockingham Ministry, but he preferred to remain an independent Member. *Savile's* position was more that of a Moderate. He only became fully convinced of the more radical demand for reform slowly, but he was "the wisest friend and best adviser of the Reformers" (G. S. Veitch). He was in favour of Roman Catholic Emancipation, and in 1780 his house was plundered by the Gordon rioters. He was one of the prime movers in the effort to obtain religious equality for Protestant Dissenters and Catholics. He was a subscriber to the building of *Essex Street Chapel* for *Lindsey* and to the fund which enabled *Priestley* to go on with his scientific work.

Cartwright and *Jebb* were the main inventors of the new methods used to educate public opinion. They were the originators of the radical programme of parliamentary reform and discovered the methods which carried it to victory.

Major John Cartwright was the brother of Rev. Edmund Cartwright, the inventor of the power loom. He took up the cause of radical parliamentary reform in 1769, when a young man, and remained faithful to it till he died in 1824, fifty-five years later. He thus earned the title of the father of parliamentary reform. Though he died eight years before the Reform Bill became law, he linked together all the three periods of the movement. Even in 1797 he never lost faith in "the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the cause."

His political principles were simple. That was their strength and their weakness. "I ought to have a vote because I am a man." His single-mindedness often proved embarrassing to his fellow workers. He had little historical sense and, like many of the reformers of the time, he believed that the changes he was demanding were a return to a past order grown corrupt rather than a step forward. But there was, indeed, this truth in the idea, that the changes in distribution of population had made the system more grotesque than otherwise it would have been.

He left the Navy because he would not take part in the war against the American colonies. Later he was deprived of his commission in the Militia because of his sympathy with the French Revolution, but his position as a country gentleman saved him from the worst consequences of his views. He went bail for a friend who went bankrupt, and though not legally bound to pay the money, he sold his estate to do so.

He was a devoted admirer of *Jeremy Bentham*, even though *Bentham* in theory repudiated the natural rights which formed the basis of *Cartwright's* philosophy.

A typical contrast between the Unitarian reformers and the Evangelical reformers may be illustrated by a conversation between him and William Wilberforce, the Evangelical leader of the movement to emancipate the slaves, in which *Cartwright* was also a pioneer. *Cartwright* met Wilberforce in 1801, and "among other friendly expressions Wilberforce said he hoped we should meet in a better world: I answered that I hoped we should first mend the world that we were in." It was Wilberforce who gave currency to the famous statement about *Cartwright*: "He had been, he said, of thirty religions, and should, perhaps, be of thirty more." His niece, who wrote his Life and tried to conceal the fact that he was a Unitarian, wrote to the "Morning Chronicle" to declare that, if *Cartwright* ever used these words, they must have had a different meaning. "My uncle was, it is true, a Unitarian, and much as I regretted that one so dear to me should have held opinions of which I did not partake, yet it is my bounden

duty to declare that he was one of the most conscientious men that ever lived, that he was regular in his private devotions, that he believed in and studied the Scriptures as the revealed word of God, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, his opinion in religion and politics remained through life substantially the same." (This statement was made in a letter sent to the Rev. Robert Wilberforce by Frances Dorothy Cartwright on August 10, 1838. The writer is indebted to A. E. Eaglestone, B.Litt., who has written a Life of Cartwright, for a copy of it.) Like many other laymen of this period who were Unitarian in theology, he did not formally leave the Church of England. The explanation of this will be made clearer in a later chapter.

Sir William Jones was one of the first Europeans to discover the sacred literature of India and to make Indians themselves reacquainted with it. While still in India he wrote home to *Price* expressing his delight in a volume of sermons preached by him.

THE FIRST PERIOD—THE PIONEER PERIOD (1768–1791)

If a particular moment is to be selected as marking the beginning of the reform movement, the year 1768 or 1769 may be chosen. 1768 was the year in which the Government sent troops to Boston; 1768 was the year in which John Wilkes returned from his exile in Paris and was elected Member of Parliament for Middlesex and not allowed to take his seat. *Priestley* wrote his first political pamphlet on the Middlesex election in 1768, but published it anonymously.

In 1769 John Wilkes was elected Member for Middlesex three times—in February, and again in March, and again in April—and on each occasion the election was declared null and void. In the same year coming events cast their shadows before, for 1769 was the year in which Napoleon was born and the year in which his chief military and diplomatic opponents, who did so much to defeat him, the Duke of Wellington and Viscount Castlereagh, were born. In 1769 Arkwright patented a spinning-frame, an

invention more important than the spinning-jenny. In 1769 the inadequacy of existing methods of local government was recognized by the appointment of commissioners to undertake duties hitherto neglected. And in 1769, it may be mentioned, *Priestley* began to issue "*The Theological Repository.*" In 1769 the new methods of political agitation began to be used and the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights was founded.

The period opened with the affair of John Wilkes, which revealed in glaring colours the defects of eighteenth-century government and the precariousness of those constitutional gains which men had assumed were securely won. But the deeper cause of the reform movement was the increasing inadequacy of the old constitutional forms and practices to the new conditions and new ideas.

At intervals from 1763 to 1774 the Government of the day had been pursuing a vendetta against John Wilkes because he had said in his paper, "The North Briton," that "the Ministry had put lies into the King's mouth." In the course of the struggle innocent men were arrested without a warrant and shot down without redress. Forgery and corruption were employed by the Government to obtain convictions, and the judges helped by bullying juries. Wilkes had the courage to see the thing through, and refused to be intimidated by his enemies or bribed by his friends, and so he became the hero of the reformers of the day. He had the wit to devise schemes for continuing the struggle which covered his opponents with ridicule. He was genuinely tolerant and humane, and sacrificed his popularity for his principles when the moment came. So he became for a time the hero of the reformers of the day, in spite of his defects of personal character. *Jebb* spoke of him as "that intelligent and inflexible asserter of English liberties." When he was in prison even the Methodist Whitefield prayed for his release. *Savile* was one of the Members of Parliament who took up his cause.

During the struggle four victories were won for what may be called constitutionalism.

In 1763 the Government issued a warrant for the authors,

printers, and publishers of "The North Briton," but without specifying any of them by name. This kind of warrant was called a general warrant, and, since it named no particular person, might be used for the arrest of innocent people. Wilkes contended that general warrants were illegal and prosecuted the Government for damages. City juries being favourable to him, he won his case (December 1763), and thus established the principle that general warrants, under which anybody might be arrested, were illegal. This was his first victory. In 1764 *Savile* introduced into the House of Commons a declaratory motion condemning general warrants.

In 1769 a bookseller was prosecuted for selling a pamphlet in favour of Wilkes, and a second victory for constitutionalism was won; the jury refused to accept the ruling of the judge, that all they had to do was to decide the fact that the pamphlet had been published and that they had no right to decide whether the contents were libellous.

In 1771 Wilkes scored another victory when the Government tried to suppress the reporting of parliamentary debates. Reporting was in theory illegal but existed in practise. The House of Commons ordered two London printers to appear before it for publishing the reports of the debates. Wilkes arranged for the printers to go into hiding, and, when the House of Commons offered a reward for their arrest, Wilkes then arranged for them to be brought before him as alderman of the City of London, and discharged them. The House of Commons sent a messenger to the City to arrest the printers, but the messenger himself was arrested and brought before the Lord Mayor and Alderman Wilkes, M.P., and Alderman Oliver, M.P., who ordered the messenger to give bail or to be committed to gaol. The House then ordered the Lord Mayor and the two alderman to appear before it. Wilkes refused. The other two appeared in their places as Members of Parliament and, coached by Wilkes, defended their action against the illegal acts of the messenger. The House of Commons sent them to the Tower, and ordered Wilkes to attend on April 8th, but, knowing that he would refuse, adjourned till the day after. The Members of Parlia-

ment were released, and in fact the freedom to report the Commons debates was won.

The chief struggle took place when the Government overrode the verdict of the electors who had elected Wilkes as Member of Parliament for Middlesex in 1768. In 1764 the Government had brought pressure on the House of Commons to expel Wilkes from the House. Wilkes was in Paris at the time, and, as he had good reason to believe that if he returned to England he would be sentenced to imprisonment for life, he remained abroad, and a sentence of outlawry was passed upon him. In February 1768 he came back to England, though still an outlaw and with the previous charges hanging over him. In March 1768 he was elected Member of Parliament for Middlesex, which was one of the few constituencies which really represented public opinion at the time.

The Government was afraid of the enthusiam displayed for Wilkes and would have preferred to take no action for a time at least, but Wilkes forced it to arrest him (April). The crowds rescued him, but he escaped from them and sought and obtained admission to the prison. Immense crowds surrounded the prison, and the Government decided to make up for past feebleness by "strong action." The result was a riot in which six people were shot dead. The guard then lost its head, and in pursuing the ringleader came across a quite innocent man and murdered him (May 10, 1768). This was known as the Massacre of St. George's Fields, and occupied a place in the early history of the movement similar to the Peterloo Massacre at St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, in later history (1819).

A technical excuse was found for reversing the outlawry of Wilkes, but he was sentenced to imprisonment on the original charges and was in prison from June 1768 to April 1770.

While he was in prison, another election took place for the second seat for Middlesex. One of the supporters of the Wilkes candidate was killed by a gangster, who was convicted of murder but was pardoned by the Government. The Government had given instructions to the military, which looked like a suggestion that they should not hesitate

to fire on the crowd. In December 1768 Wilkes published a leaflet on this murder, in which he printed these instructions of the Government to the military. The Government brought pressure to bear on the House of Commons, and Wilkes was expelled on February 2nd. He was re-elected on the 16th, and on the 17th he was expelled again and declared incapable of ever being a Member of Parliament. In March he was elected a third time and expelled a third time. In April he was elected a fourth time, and in May the Government declared the candidate whom he had defeated to be duly elected.

Under the stimulus of these events, in a few years all the machinery for popular education and popular agitation, which is now associated both with democratic government and with agitations against it, was created. Petitions were organized, public meetings were held, pledges were demanded from candidates, societies were formed, publications were issued, programmes were drawn up, and delegate conferences or conventions were organized. These methods are now commonplace and have been extended to a degree which defeat their own object, but used by people with a sense of truth and responsibility they are essential elements for educating public opinion. Most of them were new then, and their invention marks the beginning of a new era. Up to this time freeholders' meetings and the sending of an occasional petition had been the only way through which public opinion tried to influence Parliament—apart from occasional mob action in the case of some particular grievance that roused public opinion.

The right to petition was of course an ancient one. It had been freely used by Pym at the opening of the Long Parliament, and under Charles II, when an attempt had been made to suppress it. Wilkes and his friends proceeded to organize petitions in ways which were in fact a novelty. His supporters travelled through large parts of England to secure them. Sixty thousand signatures were procured, which was a large number for those days. In Yorkshire the freeholders drew up a petition in support of their member, *Sir George Savile*, protesting against the House of Commons

overriding the election of John Wilkes. The Summer Assizes thanked *Savile* for upholding the rights of the electors. Next year, when the Sheriff refused to summon a meeting of the freeholders, they met on their own initiative.

A society was formed in 1769 to further the cause. Its title, "The Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights," indicates its purpose. The Bill of Rights was, of course, the Act of 1689 which resulted from the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, and one clause in it laid down the principle that elections must be free. This Society was founded by moderate Whigs three days after Wilkes had been expelled from the House of Commons.

The personal deficiencies of John Wilkes led to a split in the Society for Supporting the Bill of Rights, and in 1771 many of the chief Supporters split off and founded the Constitutional Society.

The foundation of these societies, in which the leading Unitarian politicians took part, proved to be events of lasting importance. The founders may have "had no idea that they were inventing an important piece of political machinery," but in fact they were creating "a form of political organization which has become as essential a part of the English Constitution as Crown or Cabinet." Other societies followed.

Another method of influencing public opinion was to issue pamphlets at cheap rates and distribute them widely. *Priestley's* first political pamphlet was published in 1768. The methods invented for this campaign were adopted by the crusaders against slavery, and it was appropriate that Granville Sharp, known to fame for his share in this crusade, published in 1774 a book with the title "A Declaration of the People's Natural Rights."

If the year 1769 may be regarded as the beginning of the moderate *reform* movement, the year 1776 may be selected as the beginning of the *radical* movement. Like 1769, it was a year of vital happenings. In 1776 the American Declaration of Independence was issued. In 1776 Adam Smith published his book, "The Wealth of Nations," which was destined to exercise such a prodigious influence over

English life and thought. In 1776 also *Jeremy Bentham* published his "Fragment of Government." The influence of Benthamism has been even more lasting than that of Adam Smith, and its significance will be explained in the next chapter.

The leaders of the radical movement were Wilkes, *Cartwright*, and *Jebb*. Under the existing system property was the basis of representation. The Radicals urged that a stake in the country was not property but a wife and children. The Radicals' demands were embodied in a Bill for the just and equal representation of the people of England in Parliament which was brought in by Wilkes (April).

In October 1776 *Cartwright* published his pamphlet, "Take Your Choice." His proposals went beyond those of Wilkes. He advocated adult male suffrage and one man one vote, the secret ballot, and in certain cases payment of Members of Parliament, but he retained a property qualification for Members of Parliament. To bring pressure on Parliament he also proposed to call together a "Grand National Association for Restoring the Constitution," in other words a Conference of Delegates. *Cartwright* "thus foreshadowed the most familiar and most fertile devices of modern times" (G. S. Veitch). These societies became a model for the agitation against slavery and other evils. This publication brought *Cartwright* the friendship of *Jebb*.

Jebb seems to have hit upon the same idea about the same time. Before the publication of *Cartwright's* book, *Jebb* had sent to *Savile* proposals similar to *Cartwright's*, though they were not published till 1779. *Jebb's* proposals were very far-reaching. He did not hope for anything from Parliament itself unless pressure was brought to bear upon it by public opinion, and this pressure he hoped to bring by calling a convention of delegates which should represent the people of England. The convention was to be based on universal male suffrage, and representatives were to be allocated to the constituencies in proportion to their population. The representatives were to be delegates pledged to carry out their instructions. This system of delegation he defended by an illustration which the most

extreme advocate of the opposite theory could hardly challenge. Suppose a body of men were elected to free the slaves, and when they were elected changed their opinions and claimed the right to do the opposite. *Jebb* had to defend his proposals against the charge that they placed power in the hands of a fourth estate and so amounted to a breach of the Constitution. Later, when the French Revolution broke out, the use of the word Convention was a source of trouble.

Three years later, at the end of 1779, a radical programme was drawn up which was largely the work of *Jebb*. An address which *Jebb* gave at the meeting called for this purpose was printed as a pamphlet, and four editions were sold in two years. In the following year (March 11, 1780) a Conference of Delegates actually took place in London. Eighteen counties and cities and towns were represented. *Jebb* was there as deputy for Hampshire. Later in the same month the Yorkshire Association was formally organized. The example was followed by other counties, and it even looked as though the "General National Association for the Purpose of Public Reformation" might come into being. A meeting of the electors of Westminster appointed a sub-committee which presented as a report a fully worked-out scheme called the Westminster Programme (May 27, 1780). The Chairman was *T. Brand Hollis*. The scheme was the work of *Jebb*. Electoral districts were to be equal. Elections were to be annual, and on one fixed day: all adult males except aliens and criminals were to be eligible to vote. A roll of voters was to be kept. Voting was to take place at the principal towns and villages of the district by a secret ballot. No holder of office, place, or pension was eligible to be Member of Parliament; there was to be no property qualification for membership and members were to be paid. The programme "became an article of faith with democrats ten years later, and its six points formed a Charter of Radical Reformers in the early Victorian period" (P. A. Brown: "The French Revolution in English History").

In the same year and month (April 1780) a Society was formed for Promoting Constitutional Information. Its four-

teen original members included *Jebb*, *Cartwright*, and *Sir William Jones*. *Jebb* and *Cartwright* were two of its most active members. The first Chairman, *T. Brand Hollis*, was a wealthy amateur, remarkable among parliamentary reformers as one who had been unseated for bribery. The main work of the Society was the issue of publications, but it also helped to set other societies going in different parts of the country. *Cartwright* and *Jebb* proposed to link them together by correspondence and by a convention of delegates. "It is probable that he (*Jebb*) was the first man in England to advocate political societies federated by a regular system of correspondence and a convention of delegates, which could assume to the House of Commons the attitude of master to servant."

These earlier societies had been confined entirely to the middle classes with a sprinkling of the aristocracy and the gentry. The members of the Society for Promoting Constitutional Information were elected by ballot and paid a subscription of one guinea, but the programme and the ideas of the Society were Radical. Reformers soon extended their appeal to the artisans also. In the next period of the movement Hardy formed a society of artisans as a result of reading about this movement.

The question has been raised whether the Radicals set back the movement by asking for too much. *Cartwright* said "moderation is criminal . . . in my opinion the spirit of accommodation will ruin all." Their programme was Radical and seemed extreme, but that was because it was based on principle and not on selfish interests. And with it all they were not unreasonable. Though they did not put their faith in the politicians, they did not refuse to work with them. But the politicians realized better than did the reformers how long it takes to change public opinion. When the politicians were quite convinced that public opinion had changed, they were quite ready to give expression to its desires.

The issue of definite Radical proposals revealed the essential differences among the reformers. There were indeed at least three groups—the Radicals on the extreme left, the

economical reformers on the extreme right, and the moderate reformers in between. The leader of the moderate reformers at this time was *Sir George Savile*, though he advanced to the Radical position in a few years. He sat for Yorkshire, and Yorkshire was one of the strongholds of the movement. The Marquis of Rockingham had his family seat in the county, and the immense influence wielded by the family has lasted down to modern times. Christopher Wyvill also lived in Yorkshire, but, though he himself was in favour of further reform, he was willing to accept a tiny instalment of it.

Yorkshire gave a lead to other counties by organizing a petition of freeholders. *Savile* spoke at the meeting at the end of 1779 which adopted a petition to Parliament. This was signed by 8,000 freeholders and presented to the House of Commons by *Savile*. When a statue of *Savile* was erected in York Minster, he was represented as holding in his hand a scroll on which was written this petition. Committees formed to carry on the work met together in London to consider common plans and common objects. There were precedents for such meetings of freeholders, but opponents regarded them as a dangerous and unconstitutional way of bringing pressure to bear on Parliament.

The demands of the petition were moderate.

The Yorkshire Committee under Wyvill's influence did include in its objects the more equal representation of the people and shorter Parliaments, and members of the Association were asked to refuse to vote for any candidate who declined to pledge himself to these reforms. But the minority against the extreme programme proved so strong that Wyvill did not press it.

Moderate reformers shaded off on their right wing into the economical reformers. These were so called because they favoured a more economical administration; they favoured this not merely for economic reasons but to prevent the government's bringing pressure on Members of Parliament and others by giving them paid administrative posts or profitable contracts. As many as 260 out of 558 Members of Parliament held places of profit under the Crown or government contracts. They were called placemen. Some

of them would now be regarded as ordinary Civil Servants. Nearly fifty held downright sinecures. A very high proportion of them—perhaps as many as a third—were liable to lose their places of profit or their contracts if they opposed the government.

When the Whigs held office, they had availed themselves without scruple of the power this gave them. Now they were no longer the Court party they sought to put limits to the practice. *Jebb* described Burke's Bill for economical reform as making a tempest to drown a fly in. But it was the economical reformers who got what they wanted in 1782.

The fact was that the Radicals greatly over-estimated the strength of their movement. They assumed that the temporary excitement produced by events like the Wilkes affair and the loss of the American Colonies was the expression of deep-seated convictions like their own. Their proposals were so far ahead of the ideas of the time that Wilkes's Bill for Radical reform was received in the Commons with joking contempt rather than with anger and no division was taken. The course of events was soon to make clear to them how little root the Radical reform movement had yet acquired.

The outbreak of war with the American Colonies in 1775 was followed by a wave of patriotic enthusiasm. The first effect of the war was as usual a quickening of trade to supply its needs, and the belief in an early victory was general. Later this hope disappeared. Trade declined, debt mounted up, taxes were raised and the general mismanagement of the struggle roused such discontent that in Parliament things looked more favourable to the reform cause than they really were. In February *Savile* succeeded in obtaining a list of all places given for life, and of all pensions granted by the Crown, and Burke obtained leave to introduce his Bill for Economical Reform. In April, Dunning carried his famous resolution that the power of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. With this was coupled a resolution affirming the right of the House to inquire into every branch of public expenditure. But *Savile* wrote to Wyvill that Dunning's motion was carried because it was merely "theoretical" and general. A Bill for

more radical reform, drawn up by *Cartwright*, was introduced by the Duke of Richmond on June 3, 1780, and was rejected the same day. On the previous day the Gordon Riots had broken out.

The Gordon Riots were the reply of the ultra-Protestants to the measure of Catholic Emancipation which *Savile* and others had succeeded in obtaining in 1778. They were called after their leader, Lord George Gordon, the President of the Protestant Association, and are fairly well known because *Charles Dickens* described them in "Barnaby Rudge." The mobs which had threatened to riot in favour of Wilkes and Radical reform now rioted against a cause which all the Radical reformers supported—religious toleration. The riots were a serious blow to the Radical cause. They ended the public career of Wilkes to his credit, for Wilkes was both tolerant and courageous enough to enforce the law in his capacity as magistrate. As a result of them he lost the support of the two forces on which he had depended, the merchants and the artisans. The merchants were alarmed by the riots, and the mob was surprised to find that Wilkes would act against them and maintain order even when his enemy Lord Mansfield was their victim.

The Government profited by the Gordon Riots. Burke's Bill for Economical Reform was rejected in June 1780 and a General Election followed in September. The reformers in general did badly, though Fox was returned for Westminster and *Savile* was returned in great triumph on a more Radical programme, to which he was now converted. "Hitherto I have been elected in Lord Rockingham's drawing-room. Now I am returned by my constituents." *Savile* was a "slow convert, but no weathercock, and an earnest reformer throughout the short remainder of his life" (G. S. Veitch).

The new House now proceeded to throw out all the measures of Radical reform. The Radicals held a second convention in March 1781, at which *Jebb* gave a report of his work as delegate of Hunt's Committee. But these activities had little or no influence on the Government.

The surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1782

changed the situation for a moment. Lord North resigned and Lord Rockingham took his place as Prime Minister (March). Burke's Bill for Economical Reform passed the House of Commons without a division (May 1782), and in the House of Lords only nine peers voted against it. The proceedings against Wilkes were expunged from the records. Pitt nearly carried a resolution in favour of Parliamentary Reform—he was only defeated by twenty votes. The cause of reform seemed to be on the point of success in 1782.

This hope stirred the reformers to greater efforts. Pitt as well as *Cartwright* and *Jebb* and Wyvill were present at a meeting at which it was decided to apply to Parliament by petition from the collected body of the people. The Society for Constitutional Information was very active in organizing local societies and urging its county correspondents to obtain private petitions from individuals and from societies in favour of Radical reform. Two of its publications were *Cartwright's* "Take your Choice," and "The Principles of Government" written by *Sir William Jones* but published anonymously.

These hopes were soon dashed and it was fifty years before so favourable a division was obtained again. Rockingham died the same year and Lord Shelburne (later the Marquis of Lansdowne), the patron of *Priestley*, became Prime Minister. Fox and Burke resigned but Pitt became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Great Britain acknowledged the independence of the United States of America and peace was signed in 1783. *Savile* made his last appearance when he spoke in favour of the Reform Bill. At the end of his speech he fell unconscious and died shortly after in January 1784. An unholy alliance between Fox and North compelled Shelburne to resign and then the King managed to get rid of Fox. Pitt formed an administration which the Whigs called the mincepie administration because they expected that it would not last over Christmas, but in fact it lasted till 1801. On the whole the reformers trusted Pitt more than they trusted Fox, but Pitt soon abandoned the cause that he had taken up. In 1787 and in 1789 (that is, before the outbreak of the French Revolution) he even opposed the abolition of

the Test and Corporation Acts. All he did for Parliamentary Reform was to bring in a Bill to compensate the owners of those parliamentary seats called rotten boroughs as though they were private property. Some of the reformers were prepared to get rid of the rotten boroughs in this way, but not men like *Jebb*, though he declared his readiness to support any reasonable plan, even though much more limited than his own.

The effect of these hesitations and desertions was to make men lose heart. Even the Society for Constitutional Information relaxed its exertions. Simple men of principle regarded themselves as betrayed and the Radical element tended to lose all confidence in the politicians. *Jebb* said no man who did not make reform his first object was worthy of being called a friend of reform. But he never wavered in his belief that "the cause would ultimately prevail."

A revival took place in 1788. This was the year of the centenary of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The occasion produced a crop of celebrations which helped to rouse attention to the danger of losing what had been gained one hundred years before. Dissenting ministers took a leading part in the celebration and many sermons were preached on liberty and the "peculiar excellency of the British Constitution." On the other hand, some Church of England clergymen preferred to offer up special prayers on the following day, November 5th, which happened to be the date of the Gunpowder Plot.

The Revolution Society of 1688 held a dinner on November 4th. The London Revolution Society, which was more definitely organized in 1788, has been described as "a knot of dissenting politicians." The leaders of this revival in 1788 were Lord Stanhope and *Price*. Societies were formed in the provinces also. When the French Revolution broke out a year later, the title of these societies was one cause of offence to the mob. The Revolution they celebrated and after which they were named was the Glorious Revolution of 1688, but the mobs did not stay to weigh subtle points like this. Besides, did they not speak of holding a convention? What could be more French than that?

The failure of the reformers to gain their aims at this time has often been attributed to the outbreak of the French Revolution. That opinion is based on the assumption that there was already a deep and widespread demand for the reform—an assumption shared by the reformers in 1782. They thought victory was in sight then and that it was the politicians who betrayed them. But the politicians understood the state of public feeling better than the idealists did. At this time even in towns unrepresented in Parliament, for instance, in Manchester and Birmingham, there was little zeal for reform except among a small minority. The reformers thought that they had only to organize a wide demand for reform; in fact, they had to create one. They did not realize that they were trying to create a new mentality. The task they had set themselves was far greater than they imagined with their simple faith. So far were *Cartwright* and *Jebb* from realizing the revolutionary nature of their proposals that they thought they were restoring the ancient practice of the Constitution. They shared the defect of the rationalist school of thought of that age in that they had a complete lack of the historical sense. And so they failed to appreciate the fact that time is required before a new idea takes root and becomes active. But time was on their side, for the old system could neither satisfy these new demands nor meet the situation created by the Industrial Revolution.

THE SECOND PERIOD—THE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION, 1791–1815

A second period began after the French Revolution, which broke out in 1789. The French Revolution was followed by wars with France and Napoleon which lasted with a few breathing spaces from 1793 to 1815. The first effect of the French Revolution was to stimulate the reform movement, but horror at the course of the Revolution and the wars with Napoleon led in the end to a long period of reaction. An outbreak of hysteria took place which contained some of the most disgraceful chapters in British history, when even those who were pledged to the service of the law proved

unfaithful to their trust. Something like a reign of terror took place in England, although not with anything like the intensity and frenzy of the Terror in France.

This period may therefore be called the Period of Persecution and treated in three sections—before the Terror, during the Terror, and the recovery from the Terror.

The news of the French Revolution was received in England with sympathy. People at that time did not understand its real significance in the way that the modern student does. They thought that the French peasantry had risen in revolt because they were more oppressed than any other peasantry. As a matter of fact, in many ways they were better off than the English agricultural labourer, for they had kept their land. But attached to this land were many burdens both grievous and irritating, and these burdens were felt more keenly because the nobles had become a functionless class performing no services in return for their privileges and because no adequate constitutional machinery existed for the reform of grievances.

The immediate effect of the French Revolution in England was to intensify both the hopes of the reformers and also the fears of its opponents. At first, however, the reform movement benefited more than the reaction from this stimulus. On the minds of those capable of generous emotion, the effect was electric. There was nothing like it till in 1917 the news came of the downfall of Czarism. *C. P. Scott*, of "The Manchester Guardian," wrote in that year, "the revolution is a wonderful and glorious event. I've telegraphed the salutation of 'The Manchester Guardian' editor and staff to the President of the Duma. . . . Don't you feel the Russian Revolution rather stirring in your bones, and making the growing invasion of personal liberty here more intolerable? Alas! the hopes roused were soon to be disappointed as imperialism succeeded revolution."

Unitarians welcomed the French Revolution with enthusiasm. *Hazlitt* spoke for them all in his famous account of the first impression made by the French Revolution:

"A new world was opening to the astonished sight.

Scenes, lovely as hope can paint, dawned on the imagination; visions of unsullied bliss lulled the senses, and hid the darkness of surrounding objects, rising in bright succession and endless gradations, like the steps of that ladder which was once set up on the earth and whose top reached to heaven. Nothing was too mighty for this new-begotten hope; and the path that led to human happiness seemed as plain as the pictures in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' leading to Paradise."

Priestley's sermon on the subject in 1789 was printed and published at the request of seven congregations of Dissenters.

All Unitarians of whom there is any record were in warm sympathy with the French Revolution.

Dr. William Shepherd, at Liverpool, who was a close friend of Lord Brougham, *the Rev. Isaac Worsley*, at Bristol, *the Rev. John Holland*, at Bolton, *Lewis Loyd*, the celebrated banker, at that time a "Presbyterian" minister at *Dob Lane*, near Manchester, may be instanced. *Theophilus Lindsey* and *Thomas Belsham* were at the Revolution Club when the anniversary of the French Revolution was celebrated in 1790 and 1791. *Lindsey's* presence at the dinner of the Revolution Club was more remarkable because he was a quiet, retiring man, disliking publicity and controversy though he had plenty of them. Toplady said he was no more qualified to figure as head of a party than to take command of the Navy. *The Rev. Lant Carpenter*, in 1791, when he was a boy, shared in the political excitement of the time—though "not entirely free from the sceptical spirit." *Crabb Robinson*, "writing his reminiscences in middle age, a cool professional looker-on, remembered his boyhood as coloured by a unique excitement." The students at the Academies of Warrington and Hackney welcomed the Revolution with enthusiasm. At Hackney, indeed, their enthusiasm was tempered with so little discretion that their behaviour hastened the closing down of that institution.

The reformers set to work with extra zeal. The existing societies took on a fresh lease of life and new ones were formed. In these societies Unitarians took an active part. *Price* and *Priestley* became figures of national interest—*Price*

because Edmund Burke wrote a reply to his sermon on the French Revolution; *Priestley* because the rioters at Birmingham burnt down his church and his house.

The societies carried on a correspondence with the French which led to trouble later. The judges as well as the mob forgot that at this time the French still hoped to establish a constitutional monarchy on the English model. When *Price's* colleague at Hackney, *Dr. J. Towers*, wrote a reply to Edmund Burke, the future King of France, Louis Philippe, himself undertook to translate it into French. The London Revolutionary Society, through *Cartwright*, sent its congratulations to the States General. On November 4, 1789, *Price* moved a Resolution to be sent to the French National Assembly, congratulating it on the prospect open to England and France of a common participation in the blessings of civil and religious liberty. *Price* also composed the address sent to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld.

Price was further chosen to deliver the sermon before the London Revolutionary Society on November 4, 1789, to make the chief speech at the dinner which followed, and to draw up the address to the French. His sermon expressed the faith and hope of the reformers. Truth, virtue, and liberty, he said, were the greatest of human blessings. He thanked God that he lived to see thirty millions of people spurning slavery and leading their kind in triumph; a general amendment in human affairs; and the dominion of kings and priests giving way to the rule of law, reason, and conscience. "You cannot hold the world in darkness," he warned the despots, while he summoned the friends of freedom to behold kingdoms "starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors."

"Price, an old man near his death, made history on that afternoon" (P. A. Brown). The address formed a memorable precedent for correspondence between English societies and the French revolutionaries. The sermon and speech were the occasion which provoked Edmund Burke to write his "Reflections on the French Revolution," but, as this took nearly a year to write, it was not published till 1790.

Price's sermon was published and four editions were

quickly sold. To the fourth edition *Price* added an introduction in which he replied briefly and with dignity to Burke. A translation of the added matter was given in the French Government paper. *Price's* colleague, *Towers*, also replied with "Thoughts on Commencement of a New Parliament."

The taking of the Bastille in 1789, though not in itself of profound importance, quickly acquired a legendary symbolic significance and in the following year its anniversary was celebrated. *Price* made a speech in proposing the toast, in which he looked forward to the harmony of France and England as essential to the liberty and happiness not only of these two nations but of the whole world. When he died on March 19, 1791, the French societies went into mourning for him and his death was the occasion of many tributes. The venom displayed by that chief of placemen, Horace Walpole, was hardly less valuable a testimony to *Price's* influence.

Edmund Burke's reply to *Price* gave rise to an intense controversy. The Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge welcomed the stir thus produced. The toast was proposed: "Mr. Burke, and thanks to him for the discussion which he has provoked." No one could have anticipated the harm that Burke's work was to accomplish. *Priestley* was right when he said that Burke had gone mad. If Burke had not fallen a victim to hysterical panic and done his utmost to induce hysteria in others, the generous enthusiasm with which the French Revolution was met might have been maintained and Europe would have been saved from those interminable wars whose consequences have still not worked themselves out. But he roused the fears of the timid and stimulated the selfishness of the reactionaries. That the "rationalist," Edward Gibbon, the author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," should express his agreement with Burke and unite with him in attacking Unitarians suggests the reflection that Gibbon was influenced more by the fact that he was a placeman holding a sinecure than by his intellect. Burke's opposition to the war with the American Colonies had given a false impression of his real position. Even in 1782 he spoke of those who wanted a reform of

Parliament as though they wanted to overturn the Constitution. If Burke's views had prevailed, the changes that took place in England would have been accomplished only by a violent explosion instead of by persuasion. For Burke held not merely that society was a partnership, but that everyone's place in this divine order had been allotted to him by "a divine tactic." Burke's principles would have made any fundamental change impossible. *Priestley* went to the heart of the matter when he pointed out that, on Burke's principle, Church and State once established must remain the same for ever. Burke, in fact, did oppose the attempt to modify the terms of subscription so as to make the English Church more inclusive. He was ready, however, to support a modification of the terms on which Dissenters outside the Church should be tolerated but this toleration he was not prepared to extend to Unitarians.

To-day it is fashionable to praise Burke and to despise his opponents. It is said that he had an organic conception of society and a regard for history, as opposed to the atomistic conceptions of the rationalists. This judgment mirrors the current fashion of admiration for the totalitarian State, in support of which many of Burke's arguments could have been used, and are being used to-day.

It is true, of course, that the rationalists, to whom he was opposed, were blind and defective in their sense of history, but the defects of the rationalists were not made good by the defects of Burke's view, which was static rather than historical. An organism is a living thing responding to new situations. Burke's organism was a dead organism. His history was mere antiquarianism or he would have recognized in the explosion of 1789 the consequences of past failures. Burke was right, of course, in thinking that man cannot cut himself off from his past so easily and completely as the Radicals of his time believed. But he was wrong in trying to make them slaves of that past.

Burke's reflections provoked many replies. *Price's* own reply has been mentioned already. *Priestley's* reply went through three editions in a year. Most of it was directed against Burke's defence of the State establishment of religion.

Priestley was indeed a little troubled by the fact that *Price's* address had been delivered as a sermon, but he reconciled himself to this by recalling all the other sermons preached in favour of things as they are.

One of the most famous women of the period, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, a friend of *Price* and a member of his congregation, wrote a "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" in reply. "That it has been forgotten is the world's loss."

Her husband, William Godwin, wrote his "Political Justice" in 1793, a book that influenced men like Wordsworth, Malthus, Shelley, *Crabb Robinson*, Francis Place, and Chalmers.

The most influential of the replies to Burke was "The Rights of Man," by Thomas Paine (March 13, 1791), one of the best loved and most hated books that have ever been written. By 1793, 20,000 copies had been sold and the total number of sales has been estimated at one and a half million. It became the Bible of the Radical working classes and the bogy of almost everyone else, and has remained this almost to the present day. It is to the credit of *Theophilus Lindsey* and other Unitarians that they welcomed Thomas Paine's work. A recent editor of "The Age of Reason" has, indeed, complained that *Priestley* made four mistakes in citing half a page of the book in replying to it, and adds: "If this could be done, unintentionally by a conscientious and exact man, and one not unfriendly to Paine, . . . it will not appear very wonderful . . . that in a modern popular edition of 'The Age of Reason' five hundred deviations from the original are to be found."

The mobs often associated the Unitarians with "Tom" Paine and both with atheism—of course, quite wrongly. When the crowds wanted to relieve their feelings by burning someone in effigy, "Tom" Paine was usually chosen. At Bolton the figure of the Unitarian minister was burnt in effigy with him. Actually Paine was of Quaker ancestry and desired peace and a constitutional revolution. He was a republican but he happened to believe that the English Constitution was republican, though his republicanism took a more uncompromising form in the second part of "The

Rights of Man." To Paine a Declaration of Rights was by reciprocity also a Declaration of Duties. "Whatever is my right as a man is also the right of another; and it becomes my duty to guarantee as well as to possess." His thinking was in advance of that of other Radicals in that he recognized that man was a social animal. He exposed the falseness of Burke's romantic admiration of the chivalry of the French kings when he coined the phrase that Burke pitied the plumage but forgot the dying bird, thus countering one piece of rhetoric with another but one more to the point.

THE BIRMINGHAM RIOTS

Burke's reflections on the French Revolution helped to produce that wave of hysteria which later developed into an English Terror. The first symptoms were riots in Birmingham and other towns. At Birmingham the two Unitarian churches, the *New Meeting* and the *Old Meeting*, were burnt down, together with the church at *Kingswood*, just outside Birmingham. *Priestley's* house was burnt down with most of the contents, which included not only valuable books and scientific instruments but completed manuscripts. The houses of prominent supporters of *Priestley* like *William Hutton*, *T. E. Lee*, *John Taylor*, *William Russell*, were burnt down. *T. H. Ryland* has left an account of it. The *Lee* family has preserved the remembrance of the escape to *Kingswood* after the fire in which the family manuscripts were destroyed. The *Russells* eventually sought refuge in America and were taken prisoners by the French on the way there.

Like the affair of John Wilkes, these riots revealed the inefficiency and crude party spirit of eighteenth-century government.

The occasion of the riots was a dinner held to celebrate the French Revolution on the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, July 14, 1791.

There is little doubt, however, that the flaring up of mob violence was not entirely spontaneous. *Priestley* thought that the actual proceedings were directed by a leader in disguise, and it may well have been so. Certainly the discrimination shown in the choice of buildings to be destroyed,

supported this idea. There is little doubt also that the Justices of the Peace, Mr. Joseph Carles and the Rev. B. Spencer, Vicar of Aston, gave encouragement to the rioters. The suggestion that the meeting-houses should be burnt came from the mob, but the mob had every reason to believe that the magistrates would take no action against them. Their cry was: "Mr. Justice Carles will protect us." The Government refused an inquiry into the riots and so the matter was never properly examined by an independent court.

In the subsequent proceedings against the rioters and in the award of compensation, the same flouting of justice was observed. The first judge sent to try the cases was replaced by one more in sympathy with the prevailing spirit. A few unfortunate wretches were hanged, but most of the prisoners were acquitted. The mockery of the trial led to a new proverb being coined. "Nothing but a Birmingham jury can save him." The King wrote to Dundas: "I cannot but feel better pleased that *Priestley* is the sufferer for the doctrines he and his party have instilled, while deploring the means used." The Marquis of Buckingham wrote, "I am not sorry." Lord Auckland thought the rioting was opportune because the hands of the executive would be strengthened and other political controversies would be overshadowed by quarrels between Church and Dissent. "The Times" reported that at the dinner, *Priestley* gave the toast: "The King's head on a charger," whereas *Priestley* was not in fact present at the dinner at all.

The chief caricaturist of the day, James Gillray, drew a cartoon representing *Priestley* and *Price* as two leading conspirators seated in a room filled with barrels of gunpowder. The whole series of Gillray's cartoons had a powerful effect in getting ignorant men to associate Radical opinions with red revolution.

The historian of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," whose views were hardly those of a shocked defender of orthodoxy, threatened *Priestley*. *Priestley*, he said, had better devote himself to his scientific experiments or "his trumpet of sedition may at length arouse the magistrates of a free country."

Unfortunately, some indiscreet expressions of *Priestley* had given their enemies their opportunity. He had used a metaphor which brought in the word gunpowder. The passage had been circulated as a leaflet to Members of Parliament before the debate on the Test and Corporation Acts. Burke read them during the debate and the words stuck. *Priestley* became known as Gunpowder Joe. And yet Priestley would not even let his friends defend his house because he did not believe in the use of force, though he recognized that it might have to be used in civil affairs!

Priestley himself did not believe that the cause of his fantastic hatred was primarily political. It was quite untrue to say that he preached or taught politics, or that he was even a theoretical republican. And if he had been, he was both by temperament and on principle opposed to violence. And in Birmingham he tried to use his influence to see that the Protestant Dissenters who were in control of the local offices gave a share to the Churchmen. He could not believe that they would not respond to this generous trust in them. That typical faith of his in the reasonableness of man may be regarded as a strength or a weakness.

The real cause, *Priestley* thought, was religious bigotry, especially the bigotry due to the vested interests of a State establishment. He felt keenly the fact that his fellow scientists proved as reactionary or as timid as the mob. Even the Philosophical Society of Manchester turned down a proposal to send him an address of sympathy. He never sent any further contributions to the Proceedings of the Royal Society.

Dissenters had more courage than the scientists, and from them he received a large number of addresses of sympathy.

Priestley showed a Christian spirit. *Martha Russell* "was much impressed by Priestley's behaviour. 'No human being,' she wrote, 'could, in my opinion, appear in any trial more like divine, or show a nearer resemblance to our Saviour, than he did then. Undaunted, he heard the blows which were destroying the house and laboratory that contained all his valuable and rare apparatus and their effects, which it had been the business of his life to collect and use. . . . Not one hasty or impatient expression,

not one look expressive of murmur or complaint, not one tear or sigh escaped him; resignation and a conscious innocence and virtue seemed to subdue all these feelings of humanity.'" His sense of an over-ruling Providence combined with his charity in a noble way. He wrote a sermon on the duty of forgiveness to one's enemies, but was unable to preach it himself. He published a pamphlet entitled an "Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the Riots in Birmingham," and in a second edition he replied to criticisms. His friend, *Josiah Wedgwood*, thought that his reply was too bitter, but that is not the impression made on reading it to-day.

Even in America, *Priestley* had a difficult time. He was welcomed both by the Democratic President, *Thomas Jefferson*, and the later Republican President, *John Adams*. But he was to discover that a democracy in which there is no State Church and no privileged class could be as intolerant as one with both these institutions. In America his views on suffrage became more advanced and he favoured wider extension of the franchise than he had done in his earlier writings.

There were signs of the coming storm in places other than Birmingham. The Anniversary of the Revolution was celebrated in other towns in 1791 and there were disturbances at Manchester and at Norwich. At Manchester the riots were prevented from becoming serious by the action of the Boroughreeve, *Thomas Walker*. At Norwich, the house of the Rev. Dr. Parr, a clergyman who showed friendliness to Unitarians, was besieged for three days by the mob (Parr's life was written by a Unitarian minister, *W. Field*). In Liverpool, the *Nicholson* family were mobbed in the street.

The reaction showed itself also in the setback of the movements for the abolition of the Slave Trade and for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Indeed, the attempt at this time to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts further inflamed the reactionaries. In 1792 Church and King mobs attacked *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester*.

The moderate Society of Friends of the People declined to correspond with the radical Constitutional Society and even tried to expel *Cartwright*, but failed owing to Whitbread's opposition. So Lord John Russell and his few followers resigned.

In March 1792, *Samuel Rogers*, then a young banker, was named as a candidate for the Constitutional Society, but withdrew. The Manchester Patriotic and Reformation Societies were founded in the same year, 1792, in which the mobs attacked the Unitarian Churches. But these societies "were strictly moderate and easily frightened."

As early as March 1792, Wyvill recognized that the situation was getting dangerous. Yet as late as August 1792, after the British Ambassador had been withdrawn from France, French citizenship was conferred upon *Priestley* and other distinguished men, including *Bentham*, Clarkson, and even William Wilberforce. *Priestley* and *Price* were elected deputies to the Convention. *Priestley* regarded the offer as a great honour, though he refused to accept membership.

The situation grew worse after the exiled Royalists succeeded in stirring up governments to take action against France, for this led to the September Massacres of 1792. Even after these, in October 1792, the London Corresponding Society and in November the Society for Constitutional Information sent addresses to the Convention. The Friends of the People at Stoke Newington, where *Price* had been minister, sent an address to the French Convention, which was presented on November 10, 1792. "The faithful remnant of the Revolution Society met on the 5th November, 1792, under the presidency of *the Rev. Dr. Towers*, colleague of *Price*, and celebrated the Revolution of 1688 with their wonted fortitude, the members drank forty toasts beginning with the Rights of Man" (G. S. Veitch).

By this time the English Reign of Terror had begun. The first trials for sedition began in 1792. Holt of Newark was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for the offence of printing the Works of "Tom" Paine and an Address of *Cartwright* published ten years earlier. One of the earliest

victims was a Baptist Minister, the Rev. William Winterbotham, who was arrested in December 1792, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment in July 1793 for a sermon in which he said "every man in a land of liberty had a right to know how his money was applied." He further declared "that in this country we wanted no revolution . . . because it would produce anarchy and bloodshed." The trial was a shocking farce, but, as *Robert Aspland* said, "truth was seditious." Unitarians rallied round him. *William Shepherd* visited him in prison. *Lindsey* and others collected to keep his family, and a letter giving his thanks to them has been preserved. Winterbotham's trial took place before war had broken out with France, and before the execution of the French King in 1793, and before the growing excesses of the revolutionaries had frightened even the friends of the Revolution.

Unitarians as Victims of the Terror

Unitarians were singled out as special objects of attack. Religious antipathies combined with political antipathies to explain the situation. Religious bigotry had much to do with it, as the *Priestley* Riots showed. The attempt to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts about this time roused considerable indignation. At the same time the evangelical revival was taking place and the evangelicals of this period, whether in the Church or out of it, the Methodists in particular, were bitter enemies of the Unitarians. The rapid spread of Unitarian views, especially among distinguished men at Cambridge, caused great alarm. A number of Unitarians tried for alleged sedition were clergymen who had left the Church to become Unitarians. *The Rev. W. Frend*, formerly Fellow of Jesus College, *the Rev. T. Fyshe Palmer* of Queens' College, and *the Rev. J. Jebb* of St. John's College.

The Rev. William Frend got off lightly. He had been in France at the time of the French Revolution, which he supported, though he deplored the massacres and the bloodshed which followed. In 1793 he published a pamphlet: "Peace and Union recommended to the Associated Bodies of

Republicans and Anti-Republicans." The Cambridge University Authorities recommended his expulsion from the University. He was a friend of *Priestley* and his translation of part of the Pentateuch was one of the manuscripts destroyed by the Birmingham rioters. His contribution to the theory and practice of insurance has already been mentioned.

On the other hand, another Cambridge Fellow, *the Rev. T. Fyshe Palmer*, of Eton, and Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, who had become a Unitarian minister at *Dundee*, was sentenced to transportation as a convict to Australia. His offence was that he corrected the proof of a handbill by a member of the Society of Friends of Liberty at Dundee. This pamphlet demanded a reform of Parliament to save the nation's liberty. "Is not every new day adding a new link to our chains? Is not the executive branch daily seizing new, unprecedented and unwarrantable powers? Has not the House of Commons (your only security against the evils of tyranny) joined the coalition against you? Is the election of its members either free, fair, or frequent? Is not its independence gone, while it is made up of pensioners and placemen? Nothing can save this nation from ruin . . . but a reform in the House of Commons founded upon the eternal basis of justice, fair, free, and equal." His trial took place in Scotland before the notorious Judge Braxfield, the Judge Jeffreys of the age, whom Robert Louis Stevenson immortalized in his novel "Weir of Hermiston." The outrageous conduct of the judge shocked all decent feeling. *Cartwright* made a personal appeal for the assistance of the Duke of Richmond. *Lindsey* "had expected the sentence to be mitigated." While *Palmer* was a prisoner in the hulks awaiting deportation, he was visited by *Lindsey* and others. On his voyage out he was shockingly treated, and on his return the ship was wrecked and as a result of these privations he died. "We were all mad," said a member of the jury thirty-five years afterwards.

Fifty-one years later, in 1844, a monument to the memory of *Fyshe Palmer* and the other victims was erected at Calton Hill, Edinburgh, where it still remains. On one side these words were placed: " 'I have devoted myself to the cause

of the People; it is a good cause; it shall ultimately prevail; it shall finally triumph'—Speech of Thomas Muir in the Court of Justiciary on the 30th of August, 1793. 'I know that what has been done these two days will be rejudged!' Speech of William Skirving in the Court of Justiciary on the 7th of January, 1794." The Dukes of Bedford and of Norfolk subscribed to the erection of this monument but Macaulay, though Member of Parliament for Edinburgh, refused even to be present at the the stonelaying.

In Scotland the situation was worse even than in England, for the system on which Members of Parliament were appointed was more vicious than in England. The management of politics was in the hands of H. Dundas, whose statue now adorns Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. The Lord Advocate in charge of the trials was his cousin, Robert Dundas of Arniston. Dundas wrote to the city authorities giving them a hint that, if *St. Mark's Chapel* were burnt down, he would see that the guilty persons were protected. In Edinburgh, even in 1814, it was considered a great event that an anti-slavery meeting could be held. It was the first public assembly for twenty years.

The judges in England were better than Lord Braxfield, but the trials in England are equally discreditable to the Crown lawyers who instituted them.

Thomas Walker, of Manchester, a friend of *Priestley*, had to defend his house against the rioters. The evidence against him was so obviously manufactured that he was acquitted and the chief witness was sent to prison instead. But this instance of decency, though refreshing, was not common. The character of the spies, used as witnesses, was one of the great blots upon the character of the trials. In May 1794, seven members of the Corresponding Society and six members of the Constitutional Society were arrested. Horne Tooke and Hardy were the most prominent of these. One of them was *the Rev. Jeremiah Joyce*, a Unitarian minister. *Joyce* was tutor to the sons of Lord Stanhope, one of the Radical peers and a friend of *the Rev. William Shepherd*, and it was at Lord Stanhope's house that *Joyce* was arrested. There was no evidence against him, because he had committed no offence

but that of having been in favour of Parliamentary reform. He followed Horne Tooke's example and refused to answer questions. The accused were defended by the great lawyer Erskine, and by *John Gurney*. One of the witnesses for him was *the Rev. Joseph Towers, Price's* colleague, as minister at Hackney, who for ten years had been a member of the Society for Constitutional Information. "The Delphic oracle itself could not have given less informing answers than were to be got from *Dr. Joseph Towers*" (G. S. Veitch).

The trial has become a classic. The treatment of the prisoners was "often quite brutal," and in court they were bullied and browbeaten. Hardy was acquitted. Early next morning young *Crabb Robinson*, later foreign editor of "The Times," was running through the streets of Colchester, knocking on doors and crying "not guilty," from the news printed an inch high on the newspaper sheets. Horne Tooke's acquittal followed and the trial of *Joyce* was not proceeded with.

The Prime Minister, Pitt, having failed to obtain convictions under the law, proceeded to suspend the law. In 1794 and 1795, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended and a series of Acts was passed which removed most of the remaining vestiges of civil liberty. At Manchester a "Thinking" Club was formed—men could not be prosecuted for thinking. (They can nowadays.) At its first meeting there were three hundred present and silence prevailed for an hour. In 1797 the Terror was at its height. Some incidents of it now seem ludicrous, though similar ones took place in the years from 1914 to 1918. Coleridge and Wordsworth on a walking tour in Somerset were suspected of being spies "because they looked out intensely towards the sea." To humbler people, the consequences of slight indiscretions were serious. One man was sent to a man-of-war for laughing at the awkwardness of a Volunteer Corps. At Bolton *the Rev. John Holland* was burnt in effigy along with "Tom" Paine and "Tom" Paine was burnt in effigy before the door of *the Rev. J. Toulmin* at Birmingham. At *Bank Street, Bolton*, the precaution was taken of having the licence of the Church renewed in order to prevent the possibility of a vexatious prosecution

on some technicality. *Abraham Crompton, J.P.*, of Chorley Hall, narrowly escaped being charged with high treason.

In 1798 the trial took place of *the Rev. Gilbert Wakefield*, a former Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, who had adopted Unitarian views, though he did not become a member of a Unitarian Congregation. He was at one time tutor at Warrington Academy, the predecessor of *Manchester College, Oxford*, and at Hackney College. Some of his views were peculiar to himself. For instance, in 1791, he published a book maintaining that public worship was countenanced neither by Christ nor by the apostles, to which *Mrs. Barbauld* replied: "His example of absence from religious services, which followed his precept, was judged to be not particularly edifying to young men, especially those designed for the ministry, and the resignation of his office was shortly after accepted." He was primarily a scholar, not a politician, but in 1794 he had published "The Spirit of Christianity compared with the Spirit of the Times in Great Britain." He showed that the spirit of the Gospel was wholly incompatible with the principles on which the statesmen of *Christian* nations (so called) were accustomed to engage in wars not merely of defence, but of aggression. . . ."I profess myself," he said, "a son of peace; a lowly and insignificant, but conscientious follower of that Saviour, at whose coming peace was sung, and at whose departure peace was bequeathed. No consideration, I humbly hope, not even of life itself, unless in personal defence, could induce *me* to shed the blood of a fellow-creature, *even of a continental tyrant;* . . . Let those who have brought us to this alarming crisis step forward in the day of danger, and fight the battles of their Baal and their Mammon; let these buckle on their panoply in defence of monarchy against republicanism, and stand up for domestic robbers against a foreign spoiler." According to prevailing standards, language like this gave more excuse for taking proceedings against *Wakefield* than existed in the other cases. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Dorchester jail. Though the place was "chosen to be inconvenient" and out of the way, he was visited there by *Shepherd* and other Unitarians.

Shepherd took *Wakefield's* children into his house and friends raised £5,000 for the support of his family. He came out of prison in 1801 but died in the same year. Fox believed that the conviction of this harmless scholar gave a final blow to the liberty of the Press. In 1799, *Benjamin Flower* was imprisoned. He had founded "The Cambridge Intelligencer," which was the only paper that for a time defended the Revolution. "It was for one paragraph in his paper that he was sent to prison by the House of Lords." His paper was widely read and one of its readers was a hearer of *Priestley* and *Price*, a *Miss Eliza Gould*. She visited *Flower* when in prison and on his release they were married. *Sarah Flower Adams*, the author of the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," was the daughter of this marriage.

These persecutions do much to explain the sympathy with which to the end many English Radicals regarded Napoleon. *Hazlitt*, for instance, continued to look upon Napoleon as a great liberator from the tyrants of the old regime. This view was not typical of Unitarians, but it helped to provide an excuse for persecution. But those who could not persuade themselves that Napoleon was continuing the work of the Revolution did not allow their disappointment at the course events were taking in France to abate their Radicalism or turn them from their principles. "During the dark years of the war, the small body of English Unitarians . . . played an astonishingly large part in keeping, at the constant risk of violence or of imprisonment, thought and the hope of progress alive" (Professor Graham Wallas).

Evidence about the attitude of the ordinary members of congregations, who did not write pamphlets, is not easy to get on subjects like this. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association of those days did not pass resolutions on any political or social questions except those concerned with religious liberty, though it was prepared to make an exception, if need be, on this question. But all evidence supports the view that in their attitude the outstanding Unitarians were representative of the rank and file. Letters of Dissenters, particularly Unitarians, were very commonly opened for inspection at the Post Office. In 1793 all the people at

Failsworth, near Manchester, were for the war except the members of the *Dob Lane* congregation, who were attacked for their opposition. The congregations at *Bolton* and *Dukinfield* may also be instanced as opposed to the war.

Unitarian ministers did not as a rule preach what were called political sermons. But the government was in the habit of appointing fast days on the occasion of certain public events, such as events connected with the war. Ministers of religion were then expected by the government to use their pulpits for the support of the war and as a rule the expectations were justified. Since ministers were expected to preach on public events, some of them used the occasion to put forward their point of view even when it was opposed to the government. *Price* did this and later *Robert Aspland*. Writing on April 1793, three months after the execution of Louis XVI, and two months after France had declared war on England, *Lindsey* remarked: "Everything seems afloat in France, and I fear a sea of bloodshed and misery to be waded through before they can come to any good settlement. I trust that in the result Divine Providence will secure to them their liberties, of which many among them have shown themselves unworthy. . . . I am, however, afraid that all our tampering, as hitherto, will only serve to keep up a most bloody war, which, without our interference, might never have begun, and certainly would have much sooner ended, as at present. We are the principals and prime agents in it. And the blessing of peace to the world is, by our means, withheld." For some years after this, *Lindsey's* extant correspondence contains little reference to the war with France, save as it affected the persecution of Radicals in England.

Dr. Toulmin went even further. "He entertained, in common with probably most of his brother ministers, a strong disapprobation and abhorrence of war. This led him most conscientiously to abstain from everything which, in his esteem, could at all countenance it. He was on this account scrupulous of contributing to those subscriptions which have been set on foot for the direct purpose of relieving distresses occasioned by a state of hostilities, because

he believed that success in such schemes encourages Governments to persevere in warfare. . . . As applied to our recent struggle, he disapproved of them; because he thought the war was in direct opposition to the dictates and design of Christianity, and that the probable result of it would be a considerable infringement on the liberties of all Europe. These sentiments he expressed the very day before his death, on being informed of the capture of Bonaparte; one standing by observed, 'Now the war will certainly end.' 'I fear not,' said he. 'Bonaparte has been an excuse for war; and if he is removed from the scene of action, while resources for carrying it on can be obtained I am apprehensive there is a spirit predominant in those in power which cannot rest in peace, but will find out some other plea for war, war, war!' He sighed as he finished speaking, at the impoverished state to which our fine country is reduced, and the moral injury it has sustained from the long continuance of hostilities."

The Peace of 1801 and 1802 was welcomed, even though it was not expected to last. *Dr. Lant Carpenter* has described its reception at Birmingham. The sermon preached by *the Rev. W. Wood, F.L.S.*, at *Leeds*, "deeply affected the hearts of his hearers" and was printed.

War was resumed in May 1803, and in October the Government issued a proclamation enjoining the observance of a fast day. *Aspland* observed that sermons preached on these occasions were usually "open to the charge of befitting the mouth rather of a general leading his troops to battle than of a Christian minister, and of strengthening the hands of those who were disposed to abridge rather than extend constitutional freedom." The sermons preached by Unitarian ministers, *Aspland*, *Belsham*, *Rowe*, *Wright*, and *Corrie*, were free from these defects. *Aspland* "denied the magistrate's right to interfere with the religion of his people" and "vindicated his obedience to the Royal Proclamation as a simple act of patriotism." His attitude was probably fairly general. He did not share the tendency of some of the Radicals to look upon Napoleon with sympathy, but on the other hand he can place no reliance on the Government. "I hope as earnestly for their downfall as I do for that of

Buonaparte." He took as his topic divine judgments on guilty nations and he wrote out his sermon for fear of being charged with sedition. The greater part of his sermon was devoted to a protest against the incredible severity of the penal laws of England. "If we inure the people to scenes of blood, under the forms and sanctions of justice, can we wonder that in periods of riot and convulsion, they should practise in return all the unsparing ferocity which the juridical institutions and practice of their country have taught them?"

The sermon by *the Rev. J. Corrie, F.R.S.*, was printed with the title "Reflections on the State of Public Affairs, a Sermon delivered in the *New Meeting House, Birmingham*, on . . . the Day appointed for a General Fast." *Lant Carpenter* "resolved to avail himself of his profession to claim an exemption from the 'army of reserve'; but intended to join the 'levy *en masse*,' and addressed a letter to one of the Liverpool papers, to show the injurious effect of the gentlemen separating themselves from the lower orders in this levy. 'If (he wrote) defensive war be justifiable—I would rather say if self-defence be (for then *a fortiori* fighting for the defence of others must be), it is a duty for every citizen to endeavour to defend his country.' "

From 1790 to 1806 the reform movement was in abeyance. A revival began about 1806 when Grenville and Fox combined to form a more liberal administration. Fox, however, died in the same year. One of his last acts was to move the resolution in favour of the abolition of the slave trade, which was passed into law in the following year. The death of Fox was felt deeply by Unitarians—"ever to be lamented," said *the Rev. W. Wood*; "a noble soul," said *the Rev. Lant Carpenter*.

In 1807 the Whig Government fell because its attempt to relieve Catholic and Dissenting officers in the Army and Navy from their disabilities was disliked by the King. But new allies were coming forward. In 1806 Cobbett published his "Letters to the Electors of Westminster." The famous Radical tailor, Francis Place, began to use his genius for organization. In 1809 even the retiring *Bentham* became an

ally, though it was not till 1817 that he took an active part in political life. He wrote to *Cartwright*, "the Kingdom of Reform is yours; I am not worthy to set a foot on it. Govern it your own way."

The Rev. Robert Aspland took a very active part in politics at this time. He was present at the Nottingham election of 1807, and gave evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons at a subsequent inquiry into its conduct. He was one of a party consisting of Lord Holland, Lord Grey, Whitbread, *William Smith, M.P., the Rev. Thomas Belsham*, and others who met to discuss the question of Parliamentary reform.

The year 1809 was celebrated as the Jubilee of George III, and this caused a certain amount of trouble since some ministers were not anxious to preach on the occasion. The minister of the *New Meeting, Birmingham, Joshua Toulmin*, was one of these, and in a letter to *Aspland* he gave an interesting account of the situation in his district. At *New Meeting* eventually *the Rev. J. Corrie* read a sermon of Bishop Hoadly on the accession of Queen Anne. "There was no service at *Mr. Field's* in Warwick, nor at *Mr. Emans'* in Coventry." "Friend *Bransby* was reluctantly prevailed on to preach. His text was 'They shouted, God save the King!' His sermon, it is reported, was a *lamentation* on the reign."

New political societies were formed in 1811 and 1812, but they were important rather as showing a faint revival of the spirits of the reformers than for what they actually accomplished.

Peace was declared in 1814. *Belsham's* sermon on the occasion was printed. Extracts from *Aspland's* are given in his Memoir. "When on various occasions during the late dreadful war, the supreme authority of the nation invited the people to fast and pray for success to our fleets and armies, we found ourselves unable to comply with the request: for we worship not the God of Britain merely, but the God of the whole earth; and we should have feared the Divine rebuke by the mouth of the holy prophets, and especially of the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Life, if we had dared to implore from heaven the destruction of our fellow-

creatures. On these days we chose rather that the shutting up of the doors of this House of Prayer should expose us to hard surmises, than that we should seem to approve and countenance war, the greatest of all evils under the sun, and the most subversive of the design of our religion. Here the command of God and the command of man seemed to us to be at variance, and we thought it right, acting, under the responsibility of our Christian character, to obey God rather than man. . . . But on this happy day our judgment and our feelings, our patriotism and our piety, concur to urge us to listen to the call of our rulers, and to join the multitude, and to come up to the House of God in company."

This period may be described as the second heroic period of English Unitarianism. Unitarians had against them, not merely the mobs and the magistrates, the Church and the King, but men like Edmund Burke and Edward Gibbon. The tradition remained a living one till the end of last century. As late as 1896 *J. J. Bradshaw* of Bolton remembered being told as a boy of the hymn sung by *the Rev. T. Fyshe Palmer* on his way as a convict to Botany Bay, "the man who was crowned with thorns." In 1879 *James Heywood* of Manchester remembered the inscription "Peace and Plenty" placed in coloured lamps on Bank House.

These outrages on justice and on liberty made a lasting impression on many minds which bore fruit later in life-long devotion to the cause of freedom. Such was the effect on the mind of *the Rev. Russell Scott.*

On the other hand, as Place observed at the time: "Infamous as these laws were, they were popular measures." This exhibition of human fear and cruelty was a blow to those whose view of human nature had not taken into account that dark side which was emphasized by those who found an explanation in the doctrine of original sin. A letter of William Rathbone, at that time a Quaker, has preserved an account of the effect of these events on his faith and hope. "I confess my politics are taking a turn which I once little expected; and the scenes which are passing in England, as well indeed as some of those which have been acted in France, lead me to think less and to hope less of the

dignity of Human Nature and of the quantum of Virtue in individuals than I have hitherto done or would now wish to do. . . . . I begin to think that the Government of England is as good as the People deserve, and from late symptoms it certainly appears that it is as good as the majority wish it; and if this really be the case we reformers cannot consistently wish more than to enlighten our fellow-creatures, as one step towards Reform, for before this be done the reform itself ought not to be wished for, if Government is only the organ of a majority of the People's will . . . that those who pay many taxes should voluntarily promote measures by which they are to be continued and increased; that those who have not the elective suffrage should prefer the degradation of being without it; that Englishmen should wilfully surrender the Liberty of the Press, become spies on each other's conduct, and submit to become agents in restraining even the Freedom of Speech; that the *great mass* of the people should willingly endure the injustice and oppression of the *few* . . . that a Nation exulting in its own freedom should be influenced to calumniate the French for obtaining theirs, and finally to sanction a war against them without even the pretext of injuries received;—these, I fear, are symptoms of a *national depravity*, and do not wholly originate in the corruptions of Government. I ask myself, if the right of suffrage were (as I think it ought to be) universal, would it at this time make the Government more the organ of the Nation's will than it already is? If it would not, the evils we now suffer are to be attributed to the ignorance, the prejudice and perhaps the luxury and riches of individuals, and would not be removed by political Reform, though I still hope this would help to lessen them. Our most effectual reformer must, I fear, be a national Calamity, and till then I despair of much being done either politically or individually as Citizens."

THE POPULAR PERIOD (1815–1832)

The war was followed at first by extravagant hopes as the shadow was lifted and then by a reaction. The naïve optimism and faith in human nature of the rationalists and Unitarians was succeeded by the evangelical revival with

its belief in the depravity of man and then by the High Church movement with its authoritarianism and growing mediaevalism, and these were accompanied by the romantic reaction in literature. "The most famous of the young men who had believed in liberty and perfection at the time of the French Revolution became Conservative Nationalists in middle age" (P. A. Brown). Coleridge was "in a peculiar sense a type of the reaction," though perhaps he was right when he said later, that he had never been a true Jacobin. "The great spiritual sin of the French Revolution, to him, as to Burke, was the audacity which claimed to explain the world by the methods of science and to reject that moral and spiritual part of life which could not be so explained. His personal experience of life inclined him to believe in human depravity and fallibility. Theory and personal conviction thus brought him to a conclusion almost diametrically opposite to that with which the men of the French Revolution had flattered themselves. Far from believing that the highest truths are within the reach of all, Coleridge held that the majority of mankind cannot reach real principles in philosophy, religion, or politics" (P. A. Brown: "The French Revolution in English History").

The transformation of the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity into the imperialism of Napoleon had indeed proved a bitter disappointment, even to those who did not give up their faith in the cause. "For my part," wrote *Hazlitt*, "I started life with the French Revolution, and I have lived, alas! to see the end of it. But I did not foresee this result. My sun arose with the first dawn of liberty, and I did not think how soon both must set. The new impulse to ardour given to men's minds imparted a congenial warmth and glow to mine; we were strong to run a race together, and I little dreamed that long before mine was set, the sun of liberty would turn to blood, or set once more in the night of despotism. Since then, I confess, I have no longer felt myself young, for with that my hopes fell." *Hazlitt*, "in the bitterness of defeat, came to worship Napoleon as the scourge of tyrants."

It was natural, however, after nearly twenty years of war,

that the struggle for reform should take on more bitter forms. On the one hand, the movement became more popular and among the popular supporters of reform the threat of physical force played a larger part. And, as the Government became more afraid of the movement, it resorted to measures which further stimulated the bitterness and the hatred. The two repressive Acts of 1795 became the four Acts of 1817. Coleridge in 1817 even went so far as to write to Lord Liverpool approving the renewed suspension of the Habeas Corpus Acts. After the Manchester massacre in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, the four Acts became the six Acts of 1819. The Government did not shrink from the use of agents provocateurs. Yet the movement continued to advance. *Bentham*, who had merely expressed sympathy in 1809, came out into the open in 1817 with a plan of Parliamentary reform.

After the war individual Unitarians no longer occupied the same prominent position in the movement. Of the pioneers only two survived, *Cartwright* and Christopher Wyvill. In the popular agitation, the most prominent names are those of men like William Cobbett and Orator Hunt. To men like Hunt and Bamford, *Cartwright* and others were members of a privileged class. The movement had passed on to its next stage where the pressure of interests and fears was perhaps as important as a vision of a new world. Yet in the end the Reform Bill was actually carried by the Whigs and on the whole it was a victory for public opinion. Men like Lord Grey and Lord John Russell perhaps saved England from civil war. Lord John Russell was a former pupil of *Cartwright's* brother and was in religious sympathy with Unitarians.

Though Unitarians no longer appeared as leaders, their influence was still felt. The work of *Price* and *Priestley* was continued by *Aspland* and *the Rev. W. J. Fox*, and other ministers like *Lant Carpenter* were willing to help though not to take part in public meetings. (On the other hand "The Manchester Guardian" at this time supported Peel and Wellington.) Up and down the country Unitarians provided centres for the movement and continued to bear the brunt of unpopularity. At Sheffield, *William Fisher* was called the

Father of Reform. A speech by *Joseph Swanwick* was published. At Liverpool *William Rathbone* took action to stop bribery at elections, and *M. Nicholson* was hooted in the streets. *Abraham Crompton* found that other gentlemen would not speak to him because of his views. William Horne in prison wrote to *Aspland* that, while others talked and gave abundance of well-meaning advice, he alone gave practical suggestions, and again in 1818 he wrote that he would have been deserted except for *Aspland*. Even at the time of the severest repression, the Non-con Club was founded in 1817 "to promote the great principles of truth and liberty as avowed and acted upon by the enlightened and Liberal Nonconformists or Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England." More than half the original members were Unitarians.

The feeling of the country was strongly in favour of the Reform Bill. Even in Tory Liverpool, the mob cheered *William Rathbone*, though two years later he was hissed on Change for his attack on profitable electioneering corruption. At Bristol, in the 1831 election, two Liberal members were returned for the first time for half a century. The Bristol mob showed a particular dislike to the Bishop and burnt down his palace during the riots. *Lant Carpenter* was a witness of the Bristol riots and gave evidence in the subsequent trial of the Mayor. At Nottingham the rioters burnt the castle. The alarm created by these riots helped to carry the Bill. Revolution was sure to follow if the Bill were rejected, but it might be postponed if the Bill were passed. Even the Duke of Wellington had to meet this dilemma—in spite of his fears about the ultimate consequences expressed in a popular rhyme:

> If I say A, I must say B,
> And so go on to C and D;
> And so no end I see there be,
> If I but once say A B C.

But it is too much to say that "it was this nervousness that really decided the issue" (O. F. Christie: "Transition from Aristocracy").

As has been stated, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association at this period of its history did not as a rule make pronouncements on political questions, except those referring to religious liberty. At this time it was particularly concerned about the civil disabilities of the Jews, but it decided to suspend petitions in favour of a measure for their relief in view of the political crisis. Its opinion on the subject appears in its report. "When the Reform in the Legislature shall have been realized, which the country is now so confidently anticipating, the cause of Religious Liberty will not, it is hoped, require the interposition of petitions to advance its progress. If it should, you and your future Committees will, we doubt not, always be found at your post, foremost in the struggle for its universal and equal enjoyment. . . . trusted that a time was coming when the All-wise would break every yoke, and that the attainment of a just representative system will, under His blessing, be the means of giving to religious liberty securities hitherto never conceded, to truth of every kind a far freer course, and to virtue and pure religion encouragements, advantages, and honours, far surpassing any which have hitherto attended them in this country."

In the end victory came suddenly, as *Cartwright* had prophesied that it would. The Tory Party was weakened by internal quarrels over Catholic Emancipation: George IV had died in 1830 and a revolution had taken place in France. All these factors helped to weaken the opposition, and the Prime Minister, Lord Grey, was pledged to reform.

The victory when it came looked like a victory only of class interest. The victory was won by a combination of interests and ideals and principles, but it looked as if the interests had won most. But "Kingsley Martin has recently dismissed the sillier part of the quarrel with the sensible remark that ideas and interests would appear to co-exist within human consciousness, and that the real service of the historian of ideas is to trace the complex interplay of thought and desire in action" (Professor C. Brinton: "English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century"). The actual number of voters enfranchised under the Reform

Act was under half a million—a number that seems insignificant when compared with the millions of voters of the present day. The working men whose agitation had frightened the forces of conservatism into giving up their resistance obtained little representation. The modern way of thought emphasizes the working of class interests and tends to undervalue the idealism and the ideals which had led to the victory. In doing so it is short-sighted, for the victory was really revolutionary, and its effects have not been worked out yet. "Though the Reform Bill was not a good Bill, 'it was a great Bill when it passed.'" . . . It "was carried because public opinion demanded it, and the success of 1832 was in that sense a tribute to the men who had failed in the eighteenth century; for public opinion was roused by the aid of the political machinery which they had invented and educated by the men whom they had inspired and taught" (G. S. Veitch). If in times past writers have lived too much in the realm of abstract ideas, modern ways of thinking tend to underestimate the power of ideas (even of false ones). There is only one basis for any change, and that is a change in the imagination and the mind of man.

The Bill was passed as the result of the long attempt to educate public opinion. *Jebb*, *Savile*, Wyvill, and *Cartwright* had not laboured in vain. No less a person than the Duke of Wellington attributed the victory to the Unitarians. "The Revolution is made . . . that is to say, power is transferred from one class of society, gentlemen professing the faith of the Church of England, to another class of Society, the shopkeepers, being Dissenters from the Church, many of them Socinians, atheists." Because public opinion lay behind the Reform Bill when it was passed, it was accepted and became the basis of future advance. The fantastic prophecies of disaster were not realized. The victory led to the creation of a tradition accepted for a whole century and still giving a basis for the needed reconstruction of to-day. The method of persuasion requires infinite patience and patience requires faith, but it is the only method which produces lasting results that are worth while. Nowadays the method has come to be discredited.

What was intended to be education, has become propaganda. And in some countries only one set of opinions and only certain facts are allowed to be propagated. But democracy is in fact the opposite of demagogy. The demagogue flatters and panders to hatred and vanity. The democrat tries to show reason and to persuade. Yet P. A. Brown declared that the Tory instinct was justified in the long run. Surely not. If there is still less hatred in England than in most parts of the Western world of the present day, it is because the Whig aristocracy knew how to make concessions to the middle classes and the middle classes in turn to others.

THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

The Acts for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1806) *and the Emancipation of Slaves* (1833)—*Slavery in America*

It was not until the latter part of the seventeenth century that men began to perceive that the slave trade and slavery were wrong. The great Puritan leader, Richard Baxter, declared in words later quoted by Thomas Paine, "that slave traders should be called devils rather than Christians." The Mennonites and Quakers in America were the earliest group of people to make the discovery, and having seen the light they acted upon it.

The organized movement for the emancipation of slaves falls into four periods:—the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire and the European world: the abolition of slavery itself in the British Empire: and the abolition of slavery in the United States of America. The abolition of slavery over large parts of the world has still to be accomplished.

In England the movement opened in that eventful year 1769 with the publication of Granville Sharp's book "A Representation of the Injustice of Tolerating Slavery." In 1776 the subject was first brought before Parliament when D. Hartley moved and *Savile* seconded the motion "that the slave trade is contrary to the laws of God and the rights of man." *Priestley* preached a sermon on the subject in 1788 which was published at the request of his congregation, and

Lindsey reported that it was selling well. Later at the time of the setback due to the French Revolution, this pamphlet by *Priestley* was quoted against him in the House of Lords.

The names of the leaders of the movement are still more widely known in the twentieth century than any other names of the period except Napoleon and Wellington, though *J. R. Lowell* once wrote that Clarkson would stand where Wellington had stood. Thomas Clarkson was a friend of *Thomas Madge*. Granville Sharp, on the other hand, explained to *Jebb* that there was no possibility of salvation for Unitarians unless they changed their sentiments before they died. William Wilberforce was one of the chief evangelical leaders of the period and M.P. for Hull. A hundred years later *Professor Courtney Kenny, M.P.*, created some sensation by telling a meeting of negroes that he represented in Parliament the same town as Wilberforce. The cause enlisted in its support men and women of every political and religious point of view, from extreme evangelicals like Wilberforce to a man like Erasmus Darwin, but the great body of support came from Protestant Dissenters and not from the Church of England. The Managers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1783 refused to give Christian instruction to their slaves in Barbados. The Unitarian foremost in the movement at this time was *William Smith, M.P.* He was one of the small body of Members of Parliament who led the movement in the House of Commons in its early days. He was Chairman of the Anti-Slavery Society, though bigots tried to remove him. He was a robust, cheerful supporter of all movements for freedom and would no doubt have won greater fame had he been a more powerful speaker. As it is, he is chiefly remembered now as the grandfather of *Florence Nightingale* and of Barbara Leigh Smith, two of the great fighters in the cause of women's freedom.

The methods of propaganda invented by the little group of Radical reformers were brought to greater perfection in the crusade against slavery. *Cartwright* and *Jebb* of course took up this cause also. *Wedgwood* was a member of the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society, contributed largely

to its funds, and helped to organize meetings. The seal of the Society was modelled at his works. His friend *Bentley* made himself unpopular in Liverpool on behalf of the same cause. At the founding of the African Institution in 1807, *J. T. Rutt, William Roscoe, M.P.*, and *W. Smith, M.P.*, took an active part. Later, *Jeremy Bentham* was moved to take action in the same cause.

It is especially characteristic of the Unitarian contribution that Unitarians stood out against the slave trade in the very towns which profited most by it, Liverpool and Bristol. Liverpool had become the chief slave-trade port and even among Unitarians a sermon against slavery by *the Rev. John Yates* in 1788, "gave great offence to many influential members of his congregation." In the same year a Spanish Jesuit, the Rev. Raymond Harris, wrote a pamphlet to prove "the conformity of the slave trade with the principles of natural and revealed religion delineated in the sacred writings of the Word of God." This pamphlet pleased the Liverpool Town Council greatly by the cogency of its reasoning, and the Common Council of the town presented the author with a gratuity as a token of their esteem. *William Roscoe* wrote a reply pointing out that on the same principles polygamy was in accordance with the principles of natural and revealed religion delineated in the sacred writings of the Word of God. Later, in the enthusiasm for the distinction *Roscoe* had brought upon the town by his literary fame, he was elected M.P., though he was a Liberal and the city was Conservative, but he lost his seat almost at once by voting for the abolition of the slave trade. The cause enlisted men like the *Rathbones* (the early Rathbones were Quakers), *the Rev. William Shepherd, Dr. James Currie* and his son William Wallace Currie. The abolition of the slave trade in British possessions in 1806 prepared the way for complete emancipation. Many of the vested interests had been weakened and many of the arguments used to support slavery had been disproved by the abolition of the slave trade.

Chesterfield congregation bought two skins of parchment for an anti-slavery petition. "*The Monthly Repository*" made caustic comments on Admiral Nelson's argument for slavery

that the shipping employed in the trade was of service as a training ground for the Navy. There was an "*Inquirer*" in those days also and Clarkson contributed to it. Among Unitarians especially active in the cause may be mentioned *the Rev. L. Carpenter, the Rev. G. Armstrong, the Rev. James Yates, T. B. Potter* of Manchester, *T. A. Ward* of Sheffield, *W. Beale* of Birmingham, and *Crabb Robinson* of London. The *Hatfield* family decided to give up the use of sugar and cotton because they were produced by slave labour.

There was a certain divergence on the question of compensation. *M. D. Hill* thought it was the slaves who should be compensated. *T. E. Lee* on the other hand seconded an amendment for compensation.

One famous Unitarian, the founder of the Hibbert Trust itself, *Robert Hibbert*, owned four hundred slaves in Jamaica. His biographer *Jerom Murch* explained *Hibbert's* attitude on this question with scrupulous fairness, but without approving of it.

SLAVERY IN AMERICA

English Unitarian ministers felt themselves very much the keepers of their brothers' consciences in respect to American slavery—and rightly so. The fugitive slave law, under which slaves who had managed to escape were restored to their owners, in particular roused passionate condemnation. They stirred up their American brethren by every means in their power. The American Unitarian Association did not formally declare against slavery till 1843. Then it was discovered that they had elected a slave-owner as Vice-President. The Americans explained that the Vice-Presidents were often elected in absence of mind, since the names of dead men were included, and decided to abolish the office. It was not until 1847 that the American Unitarian Association adopted a Resolution declaring slave holding to be in direct opposition to the law of God.

The English ministers complained that none of the American Unitarian ministers who lived in slave states had signed the memorial against slavery. The Americans pointed out that in spite of certain hesitations the abolitionist move-

ment in America had drawn most of its life-blood from Unitarians, and this seems to have been the case.

In 1847 the dignified calm of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association annual meetings was broken by a storm on this question. An invitation had been received from certain American Unitarians Anniversary Meetings. All present were agreed that slave holding was an unchristian thing and the extremists wished the Association to have no communion with the criminals guilty of it. *The Rev. Travers Madge* described the abolitionists as intolerant bigots, and *the Rev. J. R. Beard* said he was not prepared to sunder himself from men however abandoned. The activities of the English abolitionists led to a certain amount of ill-feeling and recrimination. But there seems to be no doubt that the strong feeling exhibited in England did something to stir up the weaker brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, even though some Americans suggested that they should retaliate by refusing to have anything to do with English Unitarians while the English Game Laws existed.

In England Unitarians were active in the abolitionist cause. William Lloyd Garrison on his visit to England was a guest of *the Rev. George Armstrong* in Bristol and of *William Rathbone* in Liverpool.

The existing Anti-Slavery Society was subjected to much criticism and on W. Lloyd Garrison's visit a new society was formed. At a meeting in Leeds, *the Rev. Charles Wicksteed* was the only minister there. *John Bowring* took the chair at its first general meeting. Many other honoured names of Unitarians recur—*William Shaen, the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, George Harris, Thomas Hincks, William Crosskey, the Rev. H. Solly, Francis Birks*, and at Bristol *Mary Carpenter, the Rev. R. L. Carpenter, the Rev. George Armstrong, J. B. Estlin, Samuel Worsley*, and *C. J. Thomas. The Rev. Philip Carpenter*, though active in the cause, refused to sign a memorial, on the ground that Unitarians as a body had not taken such a stand in the unpopular reforms of the day as to give them a right to lecture other people.

There was no support for slavery as such among English Unitarians, but *J. A. Nicholls* on a visit to America allowed

himself to be persuaded that American slave owners were as much maligned as English factory owners. *James Martineau*, though against slavery, did not wish the Provincial Assembly to pass a resolution on the fugitive slave law.

Martineau supported the slave-holding South when the Civil War broke out. *Martineau*, however, was not typical, for Unitarians as a whole sympathized with the North in the Civil War. Technically the issue in the Civil War was not one of slavery or anti-slavery. But the conclusion of a modern student of the subject may be accepted: "Had there never been a black or a slave on the continent it is unlikely that the war would ever have occurred. . . . Every political question between North and South had its immediate origin in either slavery or the tariff, mostly in slavery" (J. T. Adams: "America's Tragedy").

Lancashire and Lancashire Unitarians suffered severely from the economic distress due to the cotton famine caused by the Civil War, but this did not weaken their support of the cause. W. O. Henderson has recently argued that in some ways the Lancashire cotton famine benefited the health of the Lancashire operatives, but there was an enormous amount of distress and Unitarians were active in trying to relieve it. *Charles Beard* brought home the situation to the country as a whole by his articles in "The Daily News." In 1862 the District Provident and Charity Organization Society of Manchester and Salford (in which many Unitarians were active) were dealing with five thousand cases a week.

THE REMOVAL OF RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES

During the nineteenth century, most religious disabilities were removed one by one from Unitarians and other Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Agnostics. Unitarians were the only organized religious group which supported absolute religious equality. In 1813 the "Act for the more Effectual Suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness" by denying the Holy Trinity or the truth of the Christian religion was repealed so far as it applied to Unitarians. The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed in 1828 and the Catholic Relief Bill was passed in 1829.

Jews were allowed to vote for Parliament in 1835, but the House of Lords would not allow them to sit as Members of Parliament till 1858. In 1837 Nonconformists were allowed to perform the marriage ceremony in their own places of worship, though not yet on equal terms with Anglicans. When *the Rev. J. R. Beard* was married in 1826, "the day after the marriage ceremony, following the practice borrowed by Unitarians from the Free Thinking Christians, the newly-married pair handed to the officiating clergyman their signed declaration embodying a 'protest against such parts of the service as imply our credence in the unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity' " (*H. McLachlan:* "The Records of a Family"). In 1844 Parliament passed the Dissenters' Chapels Act, which secured for Unitarians the old Chapels which had been founded at a time when Unitarianism was illegal, but whose congregations had since developed Unitarian views. In 1854 and 1871 most of the religious tests which excluded Protestant Dissenters from the Universities were abolished.

Unitarians refused to get panic-stricken in 1850 when a Papal Bull was issued creating Roman Catholic dioceses in England, and in 1880 when the agnostic, Charles Bradlaugh, claimed the right to substitute an affirmation for the Oath in Parliament on the ground that the words "So Help Me God" had no meaning for him.

Unitarians were divided on the question of the disestablishment of the Church, and even of Church control of education, for reasons which will appear in later chapters.

THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Reform Bill of 1832 was important chiefly as the first and most significant step towards a wider democracy. The first Parliament elected after it did some useful work, but realized neither the fears of the opponents of the Bill nor the hopes of its supporters. The Act of 1832 is generally regarded as a triumph of the middle classes and in a way rightly, but large qualifications have to be made. The Act gave them the vote, but they did not at once take control of the administration. Every Cabinet from 1830 to 1874 was wholly or almost wholly aristocratic. *Sir James Stansfeld* was one of the first

members of the middle class to receive a Cabinet appointment when he became President of the Local Government Board.

The Government was Whig, not Radical nor even Liberal. In its treatment of the Tolpuddle Martyrs of 1834 a Tory Government would not have acted worse, though it is foolish to pretend that it would have acted better.

The Government continued to employ informers, to limit the freedom of the Press, to practise corruption at elections, and to oppose voting by ballot. The Radicals believed that the reformers would be powerless without the all important protection of the secret ballot, but the Ballot Bill was rejected in 1835.

Politically-minded Unitarians like *the Rev. William Shepherd*, *the Rev. Lant Carpenter*, and *the Rev. Robert Aspland* were disgusted at the Whigs.

Their views were shared by most of the little band of Liberal Members of Parliament who had been returned under the influence of the wave of reform.

John Bowring unfortunately was defeated at five elections between 1832 and 1841—in most cases by majorities of less than one hundred votes. In those days a member was often returned to Parliament by a few hundred votes. He was returned for Bolton in 1841 and maintained close relations with his constituents in a way which was without precedent in those days.

One expression of the Radical hostility to the Government was a strong hostility to the Income Tax. *Aspland* drew up a petition against it in 1842 and *William Rathbone* refused to serve as Income Tax Commissioner.

The first zeal for reform which showed itself after 1832 was soon exhausted, and in 1841 a Tory Government was in power again. "*The Inquirer*" realized that there could be no standing still: "We must either go forwards or backwards."

If middle-class reformers felt so dissatisfied, working men had even more reason for dissatisfaction, for they found themselves left out of the Act which their agitation had done so much to secure. A new agitation therefore began for the extension of the franchise. The six points of the people's

charter adopted in 1838 by the Chartists were entirely political in their nature: Universal suffrage, vote by ballot, annual Parliaments, payment of members, abolition of the property qualification, and equal electoral districts. All these except annual Parliaments have now been obtained. But though these demands were political in form, the driving force behind them was the intense economic distress of the period and the hope of obtaining a better standard of living through the possession of political power. In general the movement was a working-class movement and it was especially powerful among hand-loom weavers. The spread of the physical force group among the Chartists did much to frighten many who might otherwise have supported its demands. Yet the Chartists seem to have had a considerable number of sympathizers among Unitarians. *James Stansfeld* sympathized with them, though Fergus O'Connor described him as "a capitalist wolf in sheep's clothing." In Parliament the motion that the Chartist petitioners should be heard was supported by *John Fielden* and *John Bowring*.

The Rev. J. W. Morris of *Dean Row* was in touch with a Chartist Church in 1839. *H. Solly* knew some Chartists at *Lancaster*; *William Wrigley*, who later became one of the first Mayors of Oldham, was a Chartist. The great Corn Law rhymer, *Ebenzer Elliott*, came out of a Unitarian Sunday School. He is known to-day mainly by his hymn "God Save the People." This hymn is now found in most modern hymn books. When it was written it was regarded as rather dangerous, and when *Ebenezer Elliott's* son (a clergyman) collected his father's poems for publication he added a long note to this hymn, "God Save the People," explaining that by "the people" must be understood the ratepayers, not all human beings.

Among working-class Unitarians, there was probably far more sympathy than has often been recorded. No biographies of them were written, but here and there a later obituary notice gives a few hints. Even an opponent like *J. A. Nicholls* did not get wild over it. "If I revolutionize, it must be but small: I have no Chartist itch."

In general, Unitarians favoured the extension of the franchise, but at this period they were by no means entirely in favour of universal suffrage. This was due, not so much to the desire of a privileged minority to keep its privileges, but rather to their belief that education should be extended before the franchise.

James Martineau, the most influential of Unitarian religious leaders of the nineteenth century, was not altogether typical in his attitude to political and social questions. He somehow managed to combine belief in the mind, conscience, and soul of man as a seat of authority in religion with a profound distrust of the mind, consciences, and souls of most men in politics. He even proposed that extra votes be given to men of property. On the other hand he was opposed to the *laissez-faire* social theories of many of the Liberals of the day, and he even maintained that no rents should be paid till labour had been fed. "By temperament and sympathy," wrote *J. Estlin Carpenter*, "*Mr. Martineau* was an aristocrat of the platonic type, though birth and education had made him a Whig . . . he conceived the state as an organized expression of justice and dreaded the approaches of democracy."

Early in life, his political hero had been the Whig, Lord John Russell, after whom his son, *Professor Russell Martineau*, was named. Later he became a follower of the Tory Disraeli. Disraeli had been educated at a school kept by a Unitarian minister.

In 1866 Lord Russell's Bill to extend the franchise was defeated by the Conservatives and by Liberal abstentions, and in 1867 Disraeli "dished the Whigs" by introducing a Reform Bill which gave a somewhat wider franchise. Disraeli was perhaps the first Conservative to realize that the extension of the franchise might result in an extension of Conservatism rather than of Radicalism, especially if it were accompanied by a certain amount of social legislation. The main effect of the Reform Bill of 1867 was to set up household male suffrage in the boroughs. John Stuart Mill's amendment in favour of women's suffrage was rejected.

With the death of Palmerston in 1865 and the Reform Bill of 1867, "all at once a new generation started into life; the pre-'32 all at once died out" (Walter Bagehot). The conversion of English government into a political democracy followed. The results of this changing outlook on social practice and theory are described in the next chapter.

A link between the social and political aspects is found in the effort to create a Civil Service independent of political favour. The first examinations for Civil Service appointments had been held in 1855. These, however, were qualifying examinations, not competitive. But in 1870 the majority of Civil Service appointments were thrown open to competition. There is little doubt that a certain fear of the consequences of the extension of the franchise lessened the resistance to this change of those who hitherto had monopolized the service. The establishment of an efficient and incorrupt Civil Service is one of the great creative achievements of the nineteenth century. Without it, all those measures of health and planning which have done so much to increase the health of the nation would be impossible. A Civil Service which develops too much the bureaucratic spirit may become the chief enemy of democracy, but democracy under modern conditions is impossible without an efficient Civil Service.

In 1870 also the Elementary Education Act was passed. "We must educate our masters." And in 1872 the Ballot Bill at last passed the House of Lords, though its operation was at first limited to eight years.

In 1884 the franchise was extended to the agricultural labourers and in 1919 to women. Some plural voting, however, still remains. In 1891 *Sir James Stansfeld* moved an amendment of one man one vote and was opposed by *Joseph Chamberlain*, who had advocated it in his Radical days.

What might have been the course of development if *Joseph Chamberlain* had remained a Radical leader, it is impossible to say. In 1886 Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill and the Liberal Party split into two. Other issues played their part in this division.

"You may say that if you talked to the first educated man

you met in the street in the '70's, it was as likely as not that you would find him to be a Liberal. In the '80's you would be wise to assume that he was a Conservative" (J. L. Hammond).

Joseph Chamberlain became the leader of the new party of Liberal Unionists. J. L. Garvin has unravelled the causes of this change probably as well as anyone can ever hope to understand the inner motives of another man. On both sides there was a clash, both of principle and of personal feeling.

The far-reaching effects of this division on national history and world history cannot be traced here. It was a profound misfortune both for England and for Ireland, and for the world. *Chamberlain* was the first great English statesman to realize that the questions of the future would be social questions. "The politics of the future are social politics," he had written to Sir Edward Russell, editor of "The Liverpool Daily Post." His close friend and fellow worker, *the Right Honourable Jesse Collings, M.P.*, had taken up the cause of the agricultural worker years before. *Chamberlain's* immense driving power, his courage, boldness, and vision were deflected to other purposes. He was gradually forced into positions which were inconsistent not only with his early declarations, but with his real temper. Urgent social reforms were delayed for years.

Unitarians were divided on the Home Rule issue and to many of them the division was heart-breaking. Even *the Rev. H. W. Crosskey*, ardent politician though he was, took no further part in politics. The division on this question was followed by division on others. When *Chamberlain* began his agitation against the Free Trade system, the Midlands in general followed *Chamberlain* and Manchester and Liverpool continued to support Free Trade.

There had been divisions before among Unitarians but, except on the Factory Acts, these divisions did not really result in their being in opposite camps. In the old days a Unitarian Member of Parliament might be a Radical or a Liberal or a Whig, but nothing else. When *John Fielden's* son, *Joshua Fielden, M.P.*, became a Conservative, "some politically-minded critic of the denomination expressed

surprise at the 'possibility of a Unitarian being a Tory.' *Mr. Fielden* replied with a directness and dignity, which left nothing more to be said on the point" (*A. W. Fox*). In the nineteenth century, it was taken for granted when a minister of religion appeared on a political platform, as was often the case, that a Nonconformist would be on the Liberal platform and an Anglican on the Conservative platform. The Church of England of those days has been described as the Conservative Party at prayer and Nonconformist churches could be described as the Liberal Party at prayer. In the twentieth century this ceased to be so, and the social changes that were made in the later part of the century were the work of men in both parties.

This division tended naturally to weaken the direct influence of Unitarians on the political life of the nation, and the extension of the franchise created a new situation in which minorities counted less. In the old days a Member of Parliament for a borough constituency could be personally acquainted with the whole of the electorate, and daily papers thought it worth while to give full reports of parliamentary debates even when there was no row on. All that has changed. Mass movements are the order of the day and mass movements require organization, and organization, though it is essential to life, always tends to kill the spirit that it was created to serve. *Joseph Chamberlain* began a modern organization of political parties. His opponents called the organization a caucus, but they proceeded to copy it. His organization gave him a powerful instrument for his purposes, but the dangers involved in such organization appeared even in his own life-time. Since then, the party machine has become even more powerful.

The adoption of the system of Proportional Representation or the single transferable vote would give a greater opportunity to men and women of independent mind and character to use their powers in the service of the nation. Under the system of Proportional Representation, majority and minority alike would receive representation in proportion to their numbers, and they would be represented by their chosen leaders. A democratic system of government

more than any other system needs to make sure that its minorities are adequately and worthily represented and, above all, in time of crisis, when masses of people are stampeded. The movement in favour of the system has many enthusiastic supporters among Unitarians. The *Lewisham Unitarian Christian Church* claims that the Proportional Representation Society came to birth at a meeting of its Literary Society. A member of that church, the Secretary of the Proportional Representation Society, *John H. Humphreys*, devoted his life to the cause with single-minded devotion.

In the cause of peace, Unitarians have not borne a distinctive witness, as have the Quakers. In the nineteenth century few Unitarians were absolute pacifists with the early exception of *Captain Thrush, R.N.*, who resigned his Commission in the Navy on this account and whose life was written by *the Rev. C. Wellbeloved*. But the cause of international arbitration and international law has always won their sympathy and support. *Hodgson Pratt* (1824–1927) was one of the founders of the International Peace and Arbitration Association and President up to his death. *F. Maddison, M.P.*, was Secretary of the International Arbitration League, *H. S. Perris* was particularly active in the cause of Anglo-American friendship.

The cause of nations struggling to be free has appealed to them. The Hungarian Kossuth and the Italian Mazzini were guests of leading Unitarians on their visits to England. The antipathy of Unitarians to despotisms led them to share the enthusiasm for the Crimean War. *The Rev. John Hamilton Thom* preached a sermon with the title "The Religious Spirit that befits this Crisis; not the Spirit of Humiliation: War with Russia being the Nation's highest sacrifice to God and Duty; else, to be abstained from as iniquity." *James Martineau's* sermon on "The Right of War" written at this time was reprinted in 1914.

THE CAUSE OF WOMEN'S FREEDOM

The Change in Outlook—Women's Legal Position—The Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts—Women's Suffrage

THE CHANGE IN OUTLOOK

Probably no religious body except the Quakers has given such wholehearted support as the Unitarians to the cause of women's freedom in all its forms. *Mary Wollstonecraft* (1759–1797) opened the struggle for women's freedom with her book "Vindication of the Rights of Women," published in 1792. Her tragic life is known to many from the fact that her daughter married the poet Shelley, whose ideas on the equality of men and women reflect hers. In recent years her life has attracted numerous biographers. *Mary Wollstonecraft* was befriended by *Richard Price* and she was a warm admirer of his religious and moral principles. At the time her book was written, most women were unaware that they had any rights to vindicate, and the very title of her book "sounded a little shocking and also a little absurd" (I. B. O'Malley: "Women in Subjection"). Many years passed before any serious effort was made to improve their position, and such improvements as were made were due rather to the general increase of humanitarianism than to new ideas. A woman was burned to death as a legal punishment as late as 1784. In 1817 and 1820, first the public and then the private flogging of women was abolished.

A few exceptional women overcame the limitations placed on women's activities. "The bulk of these people came from among the new Radicals, and particularly from the Unitarian and Quaker families, and from that important and interesting group which made so brilliant a contribution to scientific thought at that epoch" (R. Strachey: "The Cause"). *Mrs. Somerville*, Harriet Martineau, *Mary Carpenter, Frances Power Cobbe*, and *Florence Nightingale* were the most famous of these, and the work they did was not only of value in itself but did much to change the prevailing attitude.

They were helped by an equally fine number of spirited

men of whom *M. D. Hill, M.P., W. J. Fox, M.P., Sir James Stansfeld, M.P., William Shaen,* and *P. A. Taylor, M.P.,* were the most notable Unitarians.

The mentality of centuries had to be changed. Even *Mrs. Barbauld* was not in favour of women's higher education. *Mary Carpenter* would have felt unsexed to have spoken at a Conference she herself organized in 1851, though later she overcame this feeling. *B. Kirkman Gray* has contrasted this attitude of *Mary Carpenter* with that of the Quaker prison reformer, Mrs. Fry. "Mrs. Fry may have had to overcome a sense of strangeness in those whom she worked among. She may have had some sentiment of reserve in her own breast to break down, but it could never have occurred to her as improper to take part in public life. It was otherwise with *Miss Carpenter,* who belonged to a religious society which has always compensated for its rashness in thought by its observance of social conventions. Thus it was that *Mary Carpenter* could only do her Reformatory work at the cost of inward conflict. The really distinctive and original contribution of *Miss Carpenter* would seem to proceed from this inward struggle. She vindicated the right of woman to be troublesome. In doing so the ranks of agitation were doubled, and no numerical coefficient describes the increased élan of the attack." *Florence Nightingale* described herself as "brutally indifferent to the rights and wrongs" of her sex. In 1840 women were refused admission to the Anti-Slavery Convention in accordance with the Word of God, and so the guest of honour, William Lloyd Garrison, went up into the gallery to share their exclusion. The struggle roused evil passions to fever heat. Women medical students and women members of the Salvation Army in their early days were mobbed by gangs of hooligans, educated and uneducated.

The struggle was many-sided—legal, moral, educational, professional, and political.

WOMEN'S LEGAL POSITION

The first success was won in the legal field. Before 1839 married women had no rights at all to the custody of their children or to their property. The first step to remedy this

was taken in 1839 by the Infants' Custody Act. This Act was passed largely owing to the exertions of *T. N. Talfourd, M.P.,* and was often called *Serjeant Talfourd's* Act.

The first Feminist Committee was called into existence in 1855 for the purpose of giving women some rights in their own property. The spirit behind the movement was the granddaughter of *William Smith, M.P.,* Barbara Leigh Smith, a friend of Harriet Martineau and a pioneer also of women's education. She wrote a "Brief Summary in plain Language of the most important Laws concerning Women." *M. D. Hill, M.P.,* the Recorder of Birmingham, placed it before the Law Amendment Society, an organization he had himself helped to found.

Up to 1857 divorce could only be obtained in England by the passing of a special Act of Parliament. In 1857 the first Divorce Law was passed. This imposed different conditions for men and women. Twenty-one years later, in 1878, Alfred Hill, the son of *M. D. Hill,* drafted a Bill for *Frances Power Cobbe,* making it possible for a woman to obtain legal separation from a brutal husband.

The effort to provide higher education for women and to open the professions to them will be described in the chapter on Education.

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS

One special aspect of the struggle for women's equality was the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts. The first of the Contagious Diseases Acts was passed in 1864. These Acts gave power to the police and magistrates in certain towns to have any woman suspected of leading an immoral life arrested, compulsorily examined, and detained in hospital. The Act was passed to save the Army and Navy from the ravages of venereal disease. The supporters of it wished to extend the system to all towns and the opponents wished to repeal them altogether.

Many noble men and women gave their lives to destroying this degrading system. Probably no other cause demanded such profound heroism in the England of the period. The crusaders in this cause had to fight more than the mere

opposition of vested interests—the whole subject was unsavoury and some of that unsavouriness hung round the crusaders.

Mrs. Josephine Butler and *James Stansfeld* were the outstanding leaders of the movement. The Life of *Stansfeld* has recently been written by J. L. and Barbara Hammond with the sub-title of "A Victorian Champion of Sex Equality."

James Stansfeld was a close friend of Mazzini and a fellow worker with him in the cause of Italian freedom. He had been President of the Local Government Board and had done some fine work there. He sacrificed his political prospects when he took up the cause. So unpopular was the subject that even Mrs. Fawcett, a pioneer of Women's Suffrage, refused to take part in it lest she should prejudice the women's cause.

"The causes that made *Stansfeld's* task so disagreeable and difficult have served by a curious injustice to rob him of the crusader's crown." The subject was too distasteful to be mentioned. But "in carrying that cause to victory he did more than put an end to a vicious system, he helped to change the outlook of his age."

In 1886 the Acts were repealed so far as they applied to Britain. But by that time *Stansfeld* had sacrificed his chance of further office by his crusade against the Contagious Diseases Acts. In the words of a fellow worker, W. T. Stead: "Right Honourables who could risk reputation, position, career, for a cause such as this, there was only one; and his name was *Stansfeld*."

Later, Whitbread in the House of Commons said of him:

"The House . . . knew the sacrifices which his right hon. friend had made upon this question. He had sacrificed time, peace, money, and every other ambition, in order to deal with this one question. He did not know any other instance, within his own experience, or that he had read of, of a man who had occupied the position of his right hon. friend who had so completely severed himself from every object of ambition in order to devote himself to one question in which he felt a deep interest."

Yet he himself said: "I have been obliged to speak largely and mainly of hygiene; but I revolt against the task. I have had the weight of this question upon me now for some ten years past. I loathe its details; I have had to steep myself in the knowledge of them to the lips."

The system was defended by many leading doctors and social workers on the ground that it was morally beneficial to its victims and that it was effective for its purpose. The repealers said truly that it was morally degrading and led to even worse evils. *Stansfeld* urged this, but he also urged that it was totally ineffective. The facts claimed to support it, he said, were not facts. The statistics were worthless.

Mrs. Butler had made a mistake here. When she came before the Royal Commission of 1871, she was challenged to prove certain statements she had made and her reply was that "the facts did not concern her, because her case was against the system and did not depend on the facts." Later she became wiser and learned that the position could not be carried by storm but only by a siege.

"The Acts raised a moral issue and *Stansfeld* put that issue with a passion and sincerity that had great effect in the House of Commons and on the platform. But they raised also issues of hard fact and *Stansfeld* saw that if the repealers were ever to win their battle they must beat the supporters of the Acts on their own ground" (J. L. and B. Hammond).

The repealers had to show that the Acts were not merely degrading, but also that they were ineffective. A Committee of Inquiry was appointed in 1879 and 1880. *Stansfeld* was on it. It reported in 1882. The report of the Majority praised the system wholeheartedly. The Minority report, largely the work of *Stansfeld*, was against it and its criticism of the system was so devastating that it carried the day. In 1883 *Stansfeld* carried a resolution against the Acts and in 1886 they were repealed.

The system had come from the Continent to England and its defeat in England helped to put an end to it on the Continent.

It is no disparagement to the work of the other leaders

to say that *Stansfeld* gave the movement what it needed. Its weakness had been a certain fanatical onesidedness, seen, for instance, in a tendency to insinuate the worst motives in those who disagreed; a disregard for facts which gave the opponents many opportunities to score; and a failure to combine the innocence of the dove with the practical wisdom of the serpent. Some of the crusaders (not Mrs. Butler herself) showed a certain hostility to measures designed to cure the unfortunate victims. *Stansfeld* could not agree with this attitude. "I entirely differ from those who look askance at human misery because it is the consequence of vice." *Stansfeld* combined the moral earnestness of the devoted band with great self-control and patience and a complete mastery of the facts. He was, as Mrs. Butler said later, "a born *forlorn hope* leader. . . . The love of justice and liberty was born in him; it was in his bones, so to speak."

Stansfeld found many helpers among his fellow Unitarians. The Chairman of the National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts was his friend *William Shaen*. In 1874 *Shaen*, along with *the Rev. W. H. Channing* and Professor Warr of King's College, helped to found the Social Purity Alliance which was the first of those agencies which now bear the symbol of the White Cross. Among laymen should be mentioned *Professor F. W. Newman*, *Mrs. Thomasson*, *Miss Estlin* of Bristol, and later *C. P. Scott* (*Scott* was at first in favour of the Acts). *Sir John Bowring*, *M.P.*, *R. Briggs*, *M.P.*, *T. Burt*, *M.P.*, and among ministers, *R. L. Carpenter* and *S. A. Steinthal*.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

The first recognition of women's political equality with men came from the humanitarian and rationalist movement of the eighteenth century. As early as 1794 the cause found a supporter in *the Rev. William Shepherd* of Liverpool. About that time *Sir George Philips*, *Bt.*, *M.P.*, advocated the admission of women to the franchise in his pamphlet, "The Necessity of a Speedy and Effective Reform in Parliament." In the early nineteenth century, women were allowed to vote

at the meetings organized by Radicals in favour of the Reform Bill. *Jeremy Bentham* was perhaps the first writer of distinction to advocate the cause and so provoked an outburst from William Cobbett. *Bentham's* writing led to the publication of an article by an unknown woman in 1831 in "The Westminster Review," and this was followed in the next year by one from *W. J. Fox*, *M.P.*

In the election of that year *M. D. Hill*, *M.P.*, always one of the greatest friends of the movement, declared his support of women's suffrage when he stood as candidate for Hull. This was probably the first time that women's suffrage was brought before English electors.

Mrs. Fawcett, in her book "Women's Suffrage," mistakenly gave the honour to John Stuart Mill a generation later, in 1865. Women's suffrage was included in the demands made in the first drafts of the Charter, but later it was taken out from motives of prudence. In 1848 Joseph Hume moved a Resolution in Parliament in favour of the franchise for all householders including women.

The organized movement began in 1866 when the first women's suffrage committee was organized by Barbara Leigh Smith (later Mrs. Bodichon). Barbara Leigh Smith was the granddaughter of *William Smith*, *M.P.*, and daughter of *Benjamin Smith*, *M.P.* She had been brought up in that circle of Radicals and Unitarians whose ideas were many generations ahead of their contemporaries on these and other subjects. Her father had made her financially independent when she came of age.

In the previous year, 1865, John Stuart Mill had made women's suffrage an election issue when he was a candidate for Westminster. He wished to present a petition to the House of Commons and a committee was organized to obtain signatures. The signatories included *Florence Nightingale* and *Mary Somerville* and Harriet Martineau. This committee then formed itself into a provisional committee with *Mrs. Peter Taylor* as treasurer. *Mrs. Peter Taylor* and her husband, *Mr. Peter Taylor*, *M.P.*, were Unitarians, cousins of the *Mallesons* and the *Courtaulds*, and friends of *W. J. Fox*, Mazzini, and all the Radicals of the day. Later

still this committee was reconstituted at a meeting at which *Frances Power Cobbe* was in the chair. *Mrs. Peter Taylor* presided at the first public meeting held in London in favour of the suffrage, "a startling novelty" (R. Strachey).

The *Taylors* remained friends of the movement and later received the support also of *Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.*, and *J. P. Thomasson, M.P.*, and his son Franklin, and of *C. P. Scott, M.P.*, of "The Manchester Guardian," and *Sir T. G. Ashton, M.P.* The movement received the support of the Members of Parliament already mentioned and of men like *Professor F. W. Newman. H. G. Chancellor* (later M.P.) was first treasurer of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. The services of *F. Pethick Lawrence, M.P.*, and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence are still fresh in memory.

Many Unitarian ministers were active in the cause. *Dr. H. W. Crosskey* was for ten years President of the Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society, and he succeeded in persuading the National Liberal Federation to adopt women's suffrage as a plank of Liberal policy. "Unhappily men combining like conviction with equal courage" were rare, and the plank was allowed to drop out of the official platform of the party. *James Martineau* here as so often was out of touch with the democratic feeling of his fellow Unitarians and was opposed to the granting of the vote to married women.

Women were allowed to serve as Poor Law Guardians as early as 1834 under the Poor Law Amendment Act, but actually none were elected till the middle of the seventies. The first women Poor Law Guardians in Bolton and in Liverpool and in Southport were Unitarians—*Mrs. W. Haslam, Miss Bowring, Mrs. Holland*, and *Miss Lucy Hollins*. After 1869 a series of Acts was passed by which, first, single women and widows and then married women were allowed first to vote for local government authorities and then to be members of them. *Councillor Margaret Ashton*, the daughter of *Thomas Ashton*, and a descendant of the *Ashtons* who have been mentioned favourably as model employers at the time of the Industrial Revolution, won distinction on the Manchester City Council. The admission of women to local

government was one of the causes to which *Miss Annie Leigh Browne* devoted her life. In 1888 she founded the Women's Local Government Society. In 1919 women received the right to vote, and to sit as Members of Parliament. Among the first elected Members of Parliament, however, were few of those who had devoted their lives to the cause.

CHAPTER 4

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO A NEW SOCIAL ORDER

THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE REFORM BILL—THE POOR LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1834—THE DISTRESS OF THE TIME AND THE REMEDIES ADVOCATED—UNITARIAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL THEORIES—HEALTH AND HOUSING—THE FACTORY ACTS—THE ANTI-CORN LAW AGITATION—THE CO-OPERATIVE AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS—THE CHANGING SOCIAL OUTLOOK

THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE REFORM BILL

The passing of the first Reform Act in 1832 was followed by a series of measures which justify the description of this period as the beginning of a new order.

The work of the emancipation of slaves begun in 1806 was continued by the Act of 1833, which abolished slavery in the British Empire. In 1833 the first government grant in aid of education was made. In that year also a beginning was made in effective factory legislation by the appointment for the first time of factory inspectors. Previous legislation had proved quite inoperative because inspection by government officials was not included in it.

In 1835 the Municipal Reform Act was passed. An account of this will be given in the following chapter on Local Government.

These firstfruits of reform were the more remarkable in view of the fact that the Cabinet was not Radical or Liberal, but was composed for the most part of Whigs and confined to the aristocracy.

Perhaps even more important than any particular Act was the use of Commissioners to find out the facts. This may be regarded as one of the outstanding inventions of the period. Nowadays Commissions are often regarded as ways of postponing action, but in those days they were a novelty, and the limited public exercising the franchise, with all its defects, was both conscious of its responsibilities

and capable of some intellectual exertion. So these reports often forced the hands of the Government by their revelations of the conditions under which men were living.

Most men are anxious to persuade themselves that no serious evils exist, but, when this way of escape is made impossible for them, they can often be persuaded to deal with the evils, and so the reports of the various Commissions were quickly followed by action of some kind.

Statistical societies supplemented the work of the Commissions by their own inquiries. In 1833 also the Manchester Statistical Society was founded, followed by similar societies in London and elsewhere. Unitarians were active in their formation.

It may help modern readers to understand how difficult effective social legislation was in those days, if they realize that the first census of the population of Great Britain was only taken in 1801.

THE POOR LAW AMENDMENT ACT

The first attempt to deal with the problem of poverty was not a happy one. The Poor Law Amendment Act passed in 1834 was no cure for the prevailing distress, but tended rather to increase it.

The Act was passed as the result of the Report of a Poor Law Commission appointed in 1832 to report on the subject. The driving spirit of this Commission was Edwin Chadwick. Chadwick was a friend of *Jeremy Bentham* and his literary secretary. He was one of the group to which *Southwood Smith* belonged, which did so much to introduce a new spirit in dealing with these problems. Many of the details of the report were taken from the Constitutional Code of *Bentham*, in preparing which *Bentham* had been assisted by *Southwood Smith*.

Modern students have criticized the report as made up of loose generalizations backed by dramatic instances of cases assumed to be typical, but to the men of that age the report seemed a model of scientific analysis and was absolutely convincing. The evils the Commissioners sought

to cure were real enough, even though the examples selected by them were extreme ones.

The Poor Law system of the preceding fifty years had developed into a system by which Poor Law relief was used as a subsidy in aid of low wages. The demoralization and degradation thus produced were eating like a cancer into British life, turning villages into colonies of paupers.

This was the evil the Commissioners sought to cure by making those who received relief suffer worse conditions than those who did not. The Poor Law authority was to be the worst paymaster and the hardest taskmaster. In practice this meant that able-bodied poor in distress were to be refused outdoor relief and forced to enter the workhouse. Since the Commissioners could not depend on local administration to carry out these proposals, a central authority was created to make uniform the conditions on which relief was given.

The Commissioners failed to distinguish the distress existing in rural villages from the distress prevailing in the manufacturing districts of the North. They had no conception of the new problems that were arising out of the fluctuations of employment. They did not recognize that the cyclical trade depression then as now was one of the chief causes of unemployment. They shared the prevailing view that poverty was the result of personal deficiency, and so they had no proposals for curing the poverty which lay at the root of these evils. Yet the House of Commons passed the Bill by a majority of 319 to 20, and the Act received the warm approval of the vast mass of the electors—that is, of nearly everyone who did not come under it and was not affected by it. The Bill received the support of both Whigs and Tories. Francis Place, the famous tailor leader of the Radical classes, who did know how the artisans lived, was for it, as was Harriet Martineau who did not. Harriet Martineau was the sister of *James Martineau*, the most distinguished Unitarian minister of the nineteenth century. But Harriet had abandoned her religious faith. She was the authoress of many widely read popular stories depicting economic truths or untruths in popular fashion. In her Poor

Law tales she "could naïvely depict . . . the complete success of an absolutely inflexible offer of 'the House' to every applicant without exception; the result being an entirely depauperized parish, and the overseer turning the key in the door of an absolutely empty workhouse" (S. and B. Webb). She had the courage of her convictions and towards the end of her life refused the offer of a government pension. Her admirers made up for it.

Though the Act met with the approval of the newly enfranchised classes, it was severely criticized by men like Michael Sadler the Tory churchman, by Charles Kingsley (one of the inspirers of the Christian Socialist movement), and by Unitarians like *John Fielden*, the factory owner, and by ministers like *the Rev. J. Fullagar* who filled several columns of the Unitarian weekly, "*The Inquirer*," with very sound criticism. Later writers have supported these criticisms.

The Act was effective in stopping the particular evil the Commissioners had in mind, but at the cost of a cruelty which shocks the more sensitive conscience of the present. They may have been cruel to be kind, but the victims were more conscious of the cruelty than of the kindliness. The most revolting instance of this was the separation of married couples, even of aged married couples, when they were forced into the workhouse by destitution. Yet the writer remembers as a boy being told by a humane and progressively-minded man how unreasonable working men were in objecting to this. All those who came under the Act hated it. The workhouses were called bastilles and the Commissioners the three Pashas, popular imagery thus suggesting a comparison with the Bourbons and with the Turks. Such a fury of indignation was felt in the less subservient North that the government had to give way to the storm and recognize that distress was due to the fluctuations of employment. The attempt at uniformity was abandoned, and a large number of Unions of Parishes, formed under the Act, were allowed under certain conditions to give outdoor relief, but not in aid of wages.

The Act had its good points as well as its bad ones. The introduction of control by a central authority was a step

in the right direction, though this feature of the Act was regarded as one of its most objectionable features by its opponents.

Those supporters of the Act whose humanity had not been overcome by abstract theory or simple ignorance maintained that the defects in the Act were due not to the Act itself but to its administration. There was much truth in this. This was the position taken up by the editor of "*The Inquirer*" in 1846 and 1847. He protested against keeping the standard low in the workhouses because standards were low outside, and urged that it was not the actual quantity of physical necessities provided but the dreadful wastage of life, the monotonous hopelessness that were most to blame.

The Unitarian periodical, "*The Christian Reformer*," of 1807 urged that the Poor Laws were so bad that the best thing to do was to repeal them. They came from Elizabeth and not from Malthus.

At the beginning of the twentieth century another Poor Law Commission issued reports which illustrate the enormous advance made in the century. The moving spirit behind the Majority Report was *Mrs. Bernard Bosanquet (Helen Dendy)*. The Minority Report was largely the work of Sidney and Beatrice Webb. In a book entitled "By What Authority?" Professor J. H. Muirhead examined the principles common to and at issue in the two reports.

In the eighteenth century *Price* had prepared a scheme for Old Age Pensions. In the nineteenth century, *the Rev. H. W. Crosskey* was an early supporter of a scheme for State-aided Old Age Pensions.

The Rev. Henry Solly was one of the founders of the Charity Organisation Society, which received the support of many Unitarians such as *the Rev. J. T. Whitehead, the Rev. William Ainsworth, the Rev. Charles Hargrove* at Leeds, and *Miss Margaret Gimson, M.B.E.*, at Leicester.

THE DISTRESS OF THE TIME AND THE REMEDIES ADVOCATED

The intense misery of the time was soul destroying as well as body destroying. It was from his observations of

this period that Engels wrote his famous book "The Condition of the Working Classes." Yet even during this period of distress, the actual level of real wages was certainly not falling. But, as one set of people left the domestic industries to enter the factories, others came from a still lower level of existence to take their places. In particular, large numbers of Irish emigrants came to England, hoping to find in the domestic industries a better living than they could obtain at home. But there were many working people who could not or would not go into the factory, and even where the actual standard of living was higher, the conditions under which men and children worked were as appalling as the conditions under which they lived at home were disgusting.

Many explanations of this misery have been given and accepted, according to the prevailing fashions of thought and temperaments of writers. Perhaps the truest picture is that of an age called upon to face new problems without any preparation for them in the ideas of the time, and without any of the equipment or machinery of civilization which has been invented since. The men of that age were called upon to create a new order while still busily engaged in putting an end to the old, and the ideas which helped them to put an end to the old order made it more difficult for them to realize the needs of the new. Reformers of the day were busy destroying the last vestiges of the old mediaeval society which had survived into the nineteenth century and which were utterly out of place there. One of their weapons was the philosophy of self-help as portrayed by Samuel Smiles. The doctrine of self-help is intelligible as a reaction from the charitable philanthropy of the past with its nauseating patronage. But it is clear now to everyone that what was needed was more social control of the process. The age was indeed characterized not less by the misery than by the attempts to deal with it, and side by side with the apparent dominance of *laissez-faire* theories went the first efforts at social control. But all the means by which social control could be exercised had still to be invented and brought into being. Before 1801 there were no exact statistics even of the population of the country. It is not

surprising, therefore, that the solutions of the problem of the misery of the period were many and varied. But the variety of the agitations that arose revealed at least a consciousness of something wrong.

The working men who had not received votes began an agitation for the Charter and the chief of the six points of the Charter was the demand for adult male suffrage. The Chartists' demand for representation was recognized both by themselves and by others, for instance "*The Inquirer*," to be the symbol of something else—the sense of the loss of manhood. The Charter was really only a symbol. The political demands were prompted by economic distress and, if granted, would have meant the transfer of power. Whether, in the given circumstances of imperfect education and lack of organization, that transfer of power would have been adequate to the situation is not provable or disprovable. Among the Chartists there were different schools of opinion: some were in favour of using any methods however violent and others wished only for a constitutional agitation. Some were prepared to support the anti-corn law agitation and others regarded it as side-tracking the movement.

The cruder minds then, as now, argued: "Destroy the machinery!" This solution has been revived to-day. The fear of this destruction was one reason why "*The Inquirer*" opposed the complete suffrage movement till popular education had been improved.

There was a certain amount of theoretical communism, sometimes called Christian Socialism, but more directly due to Robert Owen. The very immensity of his conceptions prevented them from having great immediate influence but for generations he stimulated the imagination of men. His own factories were model factories for the day and the conditions of living in his village very much above the average, though they would probably now rouse a revolt.

Liberals began an agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, hoping to cure the distress by reducing the cost of living. Humanitarians, both of the evangelical and of the rationalist school of thought, began an agitation for the limitation of the hours of work of children and adults. A

few took up the less popular agitation for measures of public health.

There is probably no period in English history in which there were more cross-currents in thought and action. There is certainly no period in which isolated quotations about one man or a group can more easily give a false impression.

Take the case of Lord Shaftesbury, the leader of the agitation for the Factory Acts, a really great and good man. He was opposed to Catholic Emancipation as was Michael Sadler, another leader of this movement, though in the end Shaftesbury came to accept it as at the very last moment he came to accept the repeal of the Corn Laws. He was opposed to the Reform Bill, though his critics pointed out that if the working men had had votes they would have been able to speak for themselves. Though he led the factory workers in their demand for the Factory Acts, he dreaded popular agitation and he "disliked and feared the Trade Unions as much as did Bright and Cobden." As an evangelical, he regarded Unitarians as lost souls and paid only grudging tribute to the work of *John Fielden* in the same cause. Another Tory leader of the factory agitation, Oastler, was opposed to the measures taken to improve public health.

Robert Owen, a Communist, was prepared to organize a form of trade union which, at that time, under prevailing conditions, was bound to fail, yet he would not take part in political action.

William Cobbett was such a good hater that his particular hatreds perhaps do not count for much. He disliked Unitarians in particular. Though he was the Radical leader, his Radicalism was only a form of intense Conservatism. He disliked education, though his power depended on the Press. He disliked facts and he disliked the rationalists who thought them important. To the end of his life, no statistics would convince him that the population in the villages was not declining. Naturally, therefore, he disliked Unitarians, who liked facts and believed in reason and whose great passion was education. Yet William Cobbett's colleague in the representation of Oldham was *Fielden*, and *Fielden* eventually lost

his seat for Oldham because, when William Cobbett died, *Fielden* demanded that Cobbett's son should be returned along with him. Naturally, also, Cobbett disliked men like *Bentham* and Edwin Chadwick. So did the evangelicals. Yet "with all their energy, warm feeling, and noble gifts, they (the evangelicals) had not as clear an insight into the facts of social life, and the real needs of the case as had (Chadwick) the very different and less romantic figure who was to supply the defects in this work, and justify its importance in social reform" (B. L. Hutchins).

When Lord John Russell threw Chadwick to the wolves in 1854, the minority which supported Chadwick included the Radical individualist Hume, M.P., men like *the Rev. W. J. Fox*, together with Peelites and Whigs. The majority opposed to Chadwick included two such opposites as Disraeli and John Bright. "The Times" rejoiced that Mr. Chadwick and *Dr. Southwood Smith* had been deposed, and said, "we prefer to take our chance of cholera and the rest, than to be bullied into health." The publicist, *Toulmin Smith*, was also against public health legislation, but on grounds quite peculiar to himself.

John Bright opposed many social reforms, but he also opposed the Crimean War, though nearly all the progressives supported it under the impression that it was a crusade against the despotism of the Czar.

Many anti-slavery evangelicals did not care to work with a Unitarian like *W. Smith* to free the slaves, and even as late as 1840 women were refused admission to an anti-slavery meeting.

Facts such as these may provoke scorn or mirth or pity in the observer, but they should serve rather as a warning against the idea that any one man is right in everything or wrong in everything and thus afford a lesson in tolerance. Life can only become humane and civilized under conditions which allow this conflict of opinion and insight to be fought out without recourse to physical violence.

If individuals were thus divided in themselves, much more so were parties, and all the more misleading therefore are the usual labels. On the whole, however, it can be said that

the Church of England and the Methodists at this time, with certain very important exceptions, were against reform.

Tory landlords when in opposition displayed great concern about factory conditions, but when in power proved less favourable to reform than the Whigs were. No group comes well out of it as a whole, but as a rule a Whig Government was somewhat more amenable than a Tory Government to pressure from the reformers—as the Tory Lord Shaftesbury found out.

UNITARIAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL THEORIES

Unitarians were less divided than most other groups. Their humanitarianism was not hampered by any belief in the depravity of man and original sin. They cared profoundly for freedom, though they tended to think of freedom negatively rather than positively. They believed in man: in a way they believed in him too much, for they failed to realize how deep in the past lie the roots of men's actions and how profoundly men are influenced by the society in which they live. They tended to regard men as isolated individuals: their view of life tended to be atomistic. Present-day tendencies will hardly allow man any life of his own: they made the opposite mistake. If a perfect balance cannot be maintained, the error was an error on the right side, but unfortunately the error was exaggerated by their very faith in science, for they believed that the generalizations of contemporary economists were as much statements of natural laws as generalizations made by chemists and geologists from their observations. So, though they were not torn asunder by the contrast between their theological views and their humanitarianism, they were to some degree torn asunder by the divergence between their humanitarian and their economic and social theories.

The prevailing economic theories were the theory of population and the wage-fund theory. These theories paralysed men into inaction even if they did not harm men's hearts, for they convinced them that it was not possible to cure distress by raising wages.

These theories are associated with the names of Thomas

Malthus, *David Ricardo*, and Nassau William Senior. Malthus, though he was a clergyman of the Church of England, had been partly educated at a Dissenting academy, and *David Ricardo* was born of Jewish parents but held a Unitarian theology and attended *Essex Chapel*. Arnold Toynbee traced *Ricardo's* views back to Malthus, but Malthus and *Ricardo* criticized each other. James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, popularized *Ricardo's* theories in his "Elements of Political Economy" in 1821. *Bentham* said indeed that Mill was the spiritual father of *Ricardo* and that he (*Bentham*) was the spiritual father of Mill. Later, Nassau William Senior gave a pseudo-scientific expression to the wage-fund theory, proving by mathematical demonstration to the satisfaction of his own age that all the profits of the manufacturer were made in the last hour of the day's work, and that, therefore, if hours were reduced by one, there would be no profits and therefore no fund to replace capital, and therefore no fund out of which to pay wages. (A more favourable account of Nassau Senior's work has recently been given by Marian Bowley in "Nassau Senior and Classical Economics.")

The wage-fund theory was accepted at the time as capable of strictest scientific proof, but is now cited with amusement as baseless in fact and absurd in theory. Men believed that the economic laws of which economists wrote were equivalent to natural laws. They did not realize that what economists described as laws were at best generalizations from contemporary practice and at worst bad.

Sir Josiah Stamp has recognized that two great employers were actually doing at this moment what the economists proved by their theories could not be done (Foreword by Sir Josiah Stamp to J. W. Bready: "Lord Shaftesbury and Social-Industrial Progress"). These were Robert Owen and *John Fielden*. Professor Nassau Senior should have known of the work of these men. In the end the theory lost its power when an increase in men's sensitiveness to inhumanity made some men say, "if those are the only conditions under which industry can pay, so much the worse for industry." Even at the time, however, there were Unitarians who did

not accept the authority of the prevailing economic theories. In "*The Inquirer*," the maxim "Buy in the cheapest, sell in the dearest market" was described as "naked diabolism." Another writer suggested that the New Testament would be a better guide than Malthus and McCulloch, an economist who had edited *Ricardo's* writings. Coleridge in "Church and State" put the matter very well when he said: "On the distinction between things and persons all law, human and divine, is grounded. It consists in this: that the former may be used as mere means, but the latter must not be employed as the means to an end without directly or indirectly sharing in that end."

Later in the century *Professor Stanley Jevons* was one of those who began the exposure of these theories. *Jevons* wrote: "That able but wrong-headed man, *David Ricardo*, shunted the car of economic science on to a wrong line, a line, however, on which it was further urged towards confusion by his equally able but wrong-headed admirer John Stuart Mill." Later John Stuart Mill departed from his father's teaching.

The theory of population associated with Thomas Malthus does not deserve all the scorn that has been poured upon it, though it has many imperfections. The theory was not so wrong or so foolish as it has come to seem in an age of abundance. Right down the ages, migrations of population have been going on, caused in part by pressure of population. And at the present moment in both Europe and the East, if pressure of population is not the most potent cause of war and the hotbed of nationalism, at least it is used to provide an excuse for them. The subject both of the position taken up by Malthus and of the influence of his work is far more complicated than is often realized. J. M. Keynes contributed an article to the Malthus Commemoration number of "The Economic Journal" in 1935, in which he contended that the life and work of Malthus fell into two divided parts and that the second part was an unavailing effort to upset the theory of *Ricardo* and his school. The dividing line was given by the situation before and after the Battle of Waterloo. But he admitted that Malthus's work, as completed by

Ricardo, did provide an intellectual foundation to justify the *status quo*, and that it was "not entirely unfair that the memory of Malthus should be thus associated."

But whatever truth there may be in the theory of Malthus on population as stated by himself with its qualifications and limitations, the theory as popularized, without the qualifications, worked great mischief. Suffering and poverty were readily explained as nature's remedy for over-population. Observation might have shown that it was more often among the very poor that the largest families were found.

In its social philosophy, the period has usually been labelled the period of non-interference, the period of *laissez-faire* and individualism, as opposed to modern collectivism. Yet it was also a period in which the community began to concern itself with the well-being of the great majority of its members.

While it is true that the age was characterized by certain individualistic assumptions, it is also true that it was characterized by the break-up of these assumptions. Many of the men who held those individualist assumptions had more respect for men and women than their opponents or their present-day critics. The terms individualist and collectivist may each cover very different outlooks. The term "individualist" may be used to describe the selfish seeking by individuals of their own welfare, no matter what higher interests go down in the struggle, or it may be applied to the assumption that every individual seeking his own interests necessarily seeks the good of all—which was one of the current delusions of the age. But it may also express that deep sense of the value of the individual personality which lay behind the deepest movements of the time and without which no high quality of life can long endure.

So, also, the term "collectivist" may be applied on the one hand to those who believe that no selfish material interest of a group ought to be allowed to override the well-being of the whole community, and on the other hand to the totalitarian who believes that the individual exists only for the state. The sooner the labels individualist and collectivist are abandoned in dealing with this period the sooner it is likely to be understood.

The prevailing social philosophy among Unitarians was that of the rising school of *Jeremy Bentham*, modified by certain criticisms of his ethics. The connection between *Bentham* and the Unitarians was a very close one. In theology he may be classed as a Unitarian, though not as a worshipping Unitarian. This distinction is explained in the last chapter. "He became entirely Unitarian in his theological views, though he never in any way identified himself with Unitarianism or Unitarians." Under the pseudonym of Gamaliel he wrote a book with the characteristic title "Jesus not Paul." He shared the idea long popular among Unitarians that it was St. Paul who corrupted Christianity from its original simplicity. The idea is, of course, based not so much on St. Paul's own writings as on their use by later theologians. Such a view is also quite typical in that it is related to the chief defect of *Bentham*. For Paul had a tremendous sense of the solidarity of the human race or at least of Christian solidarity. We are all members one of another and if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. And it was this sense that was lacking in *Bentham* and in all rationalists before the days when the discovery of the fact of evolution began to transform man's thinking.

Bentham was closely connected with many leading Unitarians. A Unitarian, *Dr. John Bowring*, later *Sir John Bowring, M.P.*, was the editor of the collected edition of his works. A Unitarian, *Dr. Southwood Smith*, was his secretary, and helped him when he was writing his constitutional code in 1830. The great reforms in health and housing which *Southwood Smith* helped to bring about are described in the next section. Another Unitarian, *the Rev. W. J. Fox, M.P.*, preached his funeral sermon. The men who came under his influence included *Benjamin Flower*, the father of Sarah Flower Adams, the authoress of the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and *Sir James Stansfeld, M.P. Stansfeld* always kept his reverence for *Bentham*, even after he had discovered flaws in the master.

His influence lay behind many of the great changes of

his own and later generation. His followers were more than a school: they were a sect like that of the Claphamites. *Bentham* was one of the most fertile thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Modern students are often surprised to discover how many of the ideas and some even of the actual schemes of the present day are to be found in his writings and can be traced back to his inspiration. He applied to the institutions of his time that test of reason which they applied in theology and religion.

Laws must be made so as to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This he called the principle of utility, and from this word the school has often been called the Utilitarian School. Mention has been made of the fact that the phrase "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" was suggested to Bentham while reading Priestley. In 1760 *the Rev. Samuel Bourn* published a sermon in which this sentence occurred: "As the supreme and ultimate end which the all-wise Creator and Ruler has in view . . . it can be no other, than the greatest good or happiness of the Universe in general" (J. H. Colligan: "Arian Movement").

In theory *Bentham* rejected the idea of natural rights which had been such a powerful force in freeing mankind from outworn traditions and slavery. This theory, like all theories, has suffered from inadequate statement and has been strongly criticized, but it can be restated in a form which invalidates most of these criticisms simply like this: there are certain conditions necessary, if men are to live the best life. One of these is freedom to think. "*The Inquirer*" of this period was also opposed to the theory of natural rights, because it seemed to oppose rights to duties.

At its worst, the principle of the greatest good of the greatest number is infinitely preferable to the standard existing at the time, which was the greatest good of the smallest number, and the smallest number was that of the privileged few. The principle of utility did as a matter of fact provide just the instrument the age needed for hewing a way through those time-honoured abuses so dear to Burke, which look so

picturesque to people who have not to live under them. It set men asking questions why should these things be. The spirit it had to break down or dissolve found perfect expression when *Bentham's* followers were trying to substitute drainage for filth diseases. "Let us have cholera; we prefer it to government interference with drains."

There were two sides to his work, and it is necessary to understand their connection. On the one hand, utilitarianism has been regarded as the height of selfish individualism and on the other hand as a forerunner of collectivism. But to a religious-minded reformer like the Quaker, Sturge, the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number appeared to be only a restatement of the golden rule.

"I am a selfish man," said *Bentham*, "as selfish as any man can be, but in me somehow or other selfishness has taken the form of benevolence!" His disciple, Edwin Chadwick, was largely responsible for the new Poor Law, which rightly or wrongly has been regarded as the supreme instance of a bleak and narrow individualism, yet he was also responsible for the appointment of inspectors to enforce the Factory Acts and for Public Health Acts which were only carried in the face of bitter hostility on the one side and lukewarm support on the other. He defined *laissez-faire* as "letting evils go on when they do not affect ourselves." It is probably true that *Bentham* had no conception of society as a whole—that society was to him just an accumulation of individuals. His philosophy might be described as atomistic rather than organic. In mediaeval terms, he would be regarded as a nominalist rather than as a realist. But the nominalist was very often a scientist and a reformer, whereas the realist was an authoritarian and conservative.

Modern writers have often looked upon *Bentham's* appeal to reason as his weak spot. Yet all those facts about the nature of man which are now used to demonstrate man's irrationality were only discovered by the use of reason, and, if the old rationalists were often guilty of some very superficial thinking, the only cure for bad thinking is better thinking. No one who believes in a planned society can afford to hold

reason cheap, for what is a planned world but a triumph of reason?

Much sounder was the criticism made at the time of his ethical principle. "Nature has placed mankind," he explained, "under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure." *The Rev. George Armstrong* criticized this on the ground that, if it were true, nothing would warrant a man's sacrificing his life for a cause, and that it made morality into a mere calculation of consequences. The great Unitarian preacher, *William Ellery Channing*, spoke of its blighting influence. And later *James Martineau* brought all the weight of his criticism against it.

HEALTH AND HOUSING

No man did more to make living conditions healthy and decent in the early nineteenth century than did Edwin Chadwick. He was probably the most unpopular man in England in his own time. He was hated both by the poor and by the rich. Disraeli described him as a "monster in human shape," and one section of the reformers shared this hatred. His official superiors both feared and hated him and in the end managed to get rid of him with a pension when he had still years of activity in front of him. Later he was knighted, and received many honours, but belated honours are a poor compensation for being deprived of the opportunity of effective service. Whether he was heartless as well as tactless, or merely a man overmastered by a passionate desire to make the world cleaner and healthier, is a question which perhaps cannot now be solved.

But there is little doubt that the treatment he received was due as much to his virtues as to his defects. Public health was an unpopular subject and the means taken to improve it were also unpopular, perhaps most of all among those who were to be helped by them. Public health reform cut across all the prejudices of the time. A character in Charles Kingsley's novel "Two Years Ago" gave expression to the creed of those who worked for it: "You hate sin, you know. Well, I hate disease. Moral evil is your devil, and physical evil is mine. I hate it, little or big; I hate to

see a fellow sick, I hate to see a child rickety and pale; I hate to see a speck of dirt in the street; I hate to see a woman's gown torn; I hate to see her stockings down at heel; I hate to see anything wasted, anything awry, anything going wrong; I hate to see water-power wasted, manure wasted, land wasted, muscle wasted, pluck wasted brains wasted; I hate neglect, incapacity, idleness, ignorance, and all the disease and misery which spring out of that. There's my devil; and I can't help it, for the life of me, going right at his throat, wheresoever I meet him."

Second only to Edwin Chadwick was his colleague, *Thomas Southwood Smith*—a Unitarian minister and doctor. Barbara L. Hutchins has given twenty-six pages to his work in her brilliant book, "The Public Health Agitation, 1833–1848." An account of *Southwood Smith's* life was written by his granddaughter, Mrs. C. L. Lewes, but there is no full-scale critical biography of him. *Southwood Smith* had been brought up a strict Calvinist and had intended to enter the Baptist ministry, but his views changed when he was eighteen. Mrs. C. L. Lewes seems to have been ashamed of her grandfather's religious views, and did not mention the word Unitarian in her biography. She was forced to refer to his conversion to Unitarianism, but avoided the use of the word in this way: "The change in his opinions, in leading him to take a more loving view of the Divine nature, had increased his ardour for the truth, and his own personal sorrow had heightened his faith and made him wish to carry its comfort to others."

He gave up a scholarship he held as a student for the ministry and his family would have nothing more to do with him, but friends came to his assistance. His change of views was perhaps due to the influence of the Unitarian minister, *the Rev. William Blake* (1773–1821), of whom he wrote a touching Memoir. *William Blake* encouraged him to study for the Unitarian ministry. *William Blake's* brother was a doctor whose services to the Somerset Hospital at Taunton were recognized by the hanging of his portrait there. *Southwood Smith's* wife died soon after marriage, and this turned *Southwood Smith's* thoughts to medicine. He went to Edin-

burgh to study medicine, and, while he was there, took charge of the congregation of *St. Mark's*: under his ministry the congregation greatly increased. He assisted in the formation of the Scottish Unitarian Association on July 28, 1813, and published an appeal in 1815 in defence of its cause At Edinburgh he gave a course of evening lectures which were published in 1816 with the title "Illustrations of Divine Government." The book was admired by men like Byron, Moore, Wordsworth, and *Crabb Robinson*, and as late as 1866, fifty years later, a sixth edition of it was published. After taking his degree of M.D., *Southwood Smith* left Edinburgh and settled in Yeovil. There, too, he occupied the double position of minister and doctor from 1816 to 1820. This double capacity of physician to body and soul did not appear to him to be incompatible. In the eighteenth century, it had not been uncommon for a Unitarian minister to be also a doctor. In 1820 he gave up the ministerial side of his work and moved to London, though he continued to preach occasionally. He published a few sermons of merit, and his funeral sermon (1821) on the death of *Thomas Howe* received favourable mention from *James Martineau* in "The Study of Religion."

In London he managed to combine the work of a large private practice with public work of a very exacting character. He was a physician to the London Fever Hospital, to the Eastern Dispensary, and to the Jews' Hospital. In this way he acquired a deep experience of the conditions of life among the poor. He was one of those men who used to be more common than they are to-day (*Joseph Estlin Carpenter* was another), who seem to be able to work sixteen hours a day without becoming mere automata. He began work at four o'clock in the morning and continued till eight o'clock at night. In this way he managed to combine his professional duties with wider interests. He was a member of that little group of reformers which gathered round *Bentham*. He was a close friend of *W. J. Fox*, who had left the Unitarian ministry to take charge of the South Place Church and to enter the House of Commons. In 1824 he helped to found "The Westminster Review," and contributed

an article to the first number of *Bentham's* "System of Education." In 1825 he was one of the original Committee of the Useful Knowledge Society and wrote for it.

In order to overcome the prejudice against dissection, *Bentham* left his body to be dissected by *Southwood Smith*. The dissection took place in public and was witnessed by Lord Brougham, John Stuart Mill, and the banker-historian G. Grote. Afterwards *Bentham's* skeleton, dressed in *Bentham's* clothes, was kept in *Southwood Smith's* consulting-room, and is now in University College, London. *Southwood Smith's* lecture on *Bentham* on this occasion went through two editions in the same year, and has been printed in the collected edition of *Bentham's Works*.

In April 1832 *Southwood Smith* published an article on "The Use of the Dead to the Living," in which he urged that unclaimed bodies should be used for dissection. This was a few years after Burke and Hare had been found guilty of murdering people in order to supply the hospitals with material for dissection. The article was reprinted as a pamphlet and helped to secure the passing of an anatomy Act which, from that time to the present, has regulated the supply of subjects for dissection in medical schools.

In 1832 *Southwood Smith* was appointed a member of the Committee whose report on conditions in the factories led to the beginning of the first effective reform.

The next thirty years of his life were devoted to a crusade against the insanitary conditions under which most townspeople lived. He made the great discovery that these insanitary conditions were the cause of epidemics like cholera. Up to that time these epidemic diseases were thought to be spread by contagion and were treated by isolation and quarantine of the victims, not by removal of the causes. The doctors had not got beyond "a fluffy sort of generalization that the disease was peculiarly attracted by a needy and squalid state of life." In 1825 he published two articles in "The Westminster Review" on the subject, and in 1835 he followed these up with "Philosophy of Health," a work which in thirty years went through eleven editions.

He showed that these epidemics were due to causes which

could be ascertained and removed, but that these evils could not be cured by individual action. Working men and women living in the middle of large towns could not provide themselves with proper water supply and drainage. If these were not provided, they could not move to some other place; they had to live where they could get work. In time some gave up the struggle against their surroundings. Some people took to drink. Intemperance was like a drug by which people tried to drown their sorrows and like other drugs made things worse. The insanitary conditions under which poor people lived increased their poverty by destroying their health. And this in turn rendered other efforts ineffective. "Until the dwellings of the poor are rendered capable of affording the comforts of a home, the earliest and best directed efforts of the schoolmaster and clergyman must be in vain."

He set out to alter these conditions and had to fight the powerful vested interests of all those who profited by bad houses and insanitary conditions, but these vested interests were only powerful when allied with the prejudice and ignorance of the time. The only way in which local authorities could be brought to take effective action was by pressure from some central body, and central control was hated by some of the keenest reformers of the day. Some of them had opposed the use of Government inspectors under the Factory Acts, though without them the Factory Acts would have remained a dead letter. Some of them continued their opposition to central control in health matters, but there were others like J. Hume who, though one of the leading individualist Radicals, defended both the Public Health Bill of 1848 and the paid Board.

Southwood Smith was helped by the recurrence of the outbreaks of cholera. "We prefer to take our chance of cholera," said "The Times," but when cholera came this magnificent indifference disappeared. The death-rate due to the outbreak of cholera was probably less than the death-rate due to constant fevers, the result of the same insanitary conditions. But a cholera epidemic was more spectacular in its effects than the steady toll of fever and so made up for men's

lack of imagination—just as to-day the daily toll of deaths on the road excites less interest than a spectacular railway accident, though it is more dangerous to walk about the streets than to travel on the railway,

In an independent supplement to the report of Arnott and Kay, *Southwood Smith*, "with that accuracy of description and command of language, which characterized all his writings . . . exposed for the first time the shameless character of the water supply and the extent which it contributed to disease and death in the capital of the world" (B. W. Richardson: "The Health of Nations").

Southwood Smith forced reluctant Members of Parliament and others to face the facts of the housing conditions, which seemed too terrible to be believed. Any attempt to state them seemed an exaggeration, so *Southwood Smith* took people and made them see the conditions with their own eyes. He visited every clergyman privately in the East of London and the Bishop of London gave his support to the movement. *Charles Dickens* was a friend of his and he enlisted his powerful pen in support of the movement. *Dickens* wrote to him: "I am so perfectly stricken down by the blue book you have sent me, that I think . . . of writing and bringing out a very cheap pamphlet called 'An Appeal to the People of England on behalf of the Poor Man's Child.' . . . Suppose I were to call on you one evening. . . ."

In 1840 *Southwood Smith* gave evidence before a Select Committee. In 1841 the Home Secretary, the Marquis of Normanby, read his Report to the Poor Law Commissioners with "horror and incredulity." *Southwood Smith* persuaded him to come and look at the houses for himself. A Bill was introduced which would have prohibited the building of back-to-back houses, but a new Government came in under Peel and this reform was not effected till 1909.

In 1843 *Southwood Smith* "gathered together the men who formed the original directors of 'The Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Working Classes.' " He was chosen as spokesman to wait on the Prime Minister and ask for the grant of a Charter.

A Commission on the Health of Towns was appointed in

1844 and Chadwick wrote its report. While it was sitting, *Southwood Smith* got together a number of public men like Lord Shaftesbury to rouse and organize public opinion by forming a Health of Towns Association.

Unitarians were active in forming branches of this Association in many towns—*the Rev. P. P. Carpenter* at Warrington, *the Rev. W. J. Odgers* at Plymouth, and *T. W. Tottie* at Leeds. Bills were introduced in 1844 and in 1847 and again rejected, but in 1848 at last the first Public Health Act was passed. This Act had many defects due to the enormous mass of prejudice felt against such legislation, but "in its full recognition of the need for central control and a standard of efficiency in urban cleansing and sanitation it may almost be regarded as the new birth of the modern city." Two years later *Southwood Smith* was added as its medical adviser to the General Board of Health created under the Act. In 1854, however, the attacks on it were successful. By 74 votes to 65 the House of Commons refused to continue it. Radicals like Joseph Hume, M.P., *W. J. Fox, M.P.*, and W. Brotherton, M.P., voted to continue it; John Bright and Disraeli voted against it. Edwin Chadwick's official career came to an end. Forty-one years later his services were recognized by the K.C.B. *Southwood Smith* continued to write and to lecture on the subject of public health. In 1857, towards the close of his life, a bust of him, now in the National Portrait Gallery, was presented to him at the house of Lord Shaftesbury. Among the subscribers were J. Brotherton, M.P., *Charles Dickens, James Heywood, M.P.*, and *Thomas Thornely, M.P.*

The secret of the work that *Southwood Smith* was able to do was that he was a realist and an idealist in one. He had the sympathy which comes from knowledge and the knowledge which comes from sympathy. This sympathy enabled him to realize the significance of facts to which others were blind. His book, "Illustrations of Divine Providence," revealed the basis of his faith, but later in life he refused to reprint it because "he thought he had passed too lightly over the scene of misery and crime that there was in the world; he thought that there was rather too much of the bright hope-

fulness of youth about it." Yet he retained a certain serene cheerfulness to the end.

Southwood Smith's granddaughter, Octavia Hill, continued her father's work as a housing reformer. In particular she was a pioneer of the system of combining the collection of rents with the supervision and care of the property by lady rent collectors. Early in life she came under the influence of F. D. Maurice and was received into the Church of England, but remained friendly to Unitarians, who helped her in her work.

The Domestic Mission Societies brought Unitarians into close contact with the actual conditions under which people were living in the large towns. "The Sanitary Report had disclosed a state of things which ought no longer to be tolerated in a Christian country" (Annual Report).

In the great towns where Unitarians were influential in local government, better housing conditions were among the reforms they were active in promoting. Something of the work they did will be described in the next chapter on Local Government. *James Kitson* published the "Sanitary Lessons" he had given to working women in Leeds in 1872 and 1873, and *John Sutton Nettlefold*, of Birmingham, published "A Housing Policy" (1905), "Practical Housing" (1908), "Practical Town Planning" (1914), and "Garden Cities and Canals" (1914).

Schemes for providing decent houses for weekly wage-earners at reasonable rents have appealed to Unitarians. As early as 1847 *J. R. Beard* and *Abel Heywood* helped to promote the Working Men's Benefit Building Society in Manchester. In the twentieth century housing societies have been formed in which the necessary capital is lent at low rates by men and women animated by philanthropic motives. *P. M. Oliver, M.P.*, has given his assistance to such a scheme at Manchester.

THE FACTORY ACTS

The worst blot upon the Industrial Revolution was the use of child labour in the factories. A long and bitter struggle took place before this blot was removed by the Factory Acts,

and in this struggle Unitarians were found on both sides. This is a rare instance of Unitarians being behind instead of in advance of the best humanitarian feeling of their time. When the Factory Act was passed in 1846, the second reading was moved by a Unitarian, *John Fielden, M.P.*, who had done so much for its success. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ainsworth. (The writer has not yet been able to discover whether this Mr. Ainsworth was one of the Unitarian *Ainsworths*.) On the other hand, the Bill was opposed by *Mark Philips, M.P.*, *John Bowring, M.P.*, and *Edward Strutt, M.P.* There is no doubt that the men who opposed the Bill did so not because they were insensitive to the horrors suffered by the children but because the children's hours could not in practice be regulated without regulating the hours worked by adults. To do this by Act of Parliament seemed to one school of thought like trying to break the laws of nature, from which only worse evil would result,

Mark Philips said that "he had no personal interest in the passing or rejection of this Bill; but he was bound to look at the position of the vast mass of operatives. . . . Could these operatives live upon ten hours' pay for ten hours' work? He was confident that if the question were put to the ballot, the operatives would be against it. Why did not the workmen combine to compel the masters to try the experiment? He was about to retire into private life. . . . It might be said that in voting against it he did not sympathize with the working classes; but he appealed to his conduct through life for a refutation of this assertion." *Bowring* earlier had said that he "thought that the ten-hour limitation must be tried, as the operatives themselves demanded it, though he feared the consequences would be injurious to them, and was resolved to be no party to it." *Bowring* explained his position to a general meeting of factory operatives in his constituency of Bolton. Though they were in favour of a reduction of hours, they passed a vote of confidence in him.

Insensitiveness to the conditions of child labour was part of the legacy of the eighteenth century, but the use of power machinery had intensified the evil to such a degree that it seems impossible to exaggerate it. A child of seven worked

from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m., with one break of thirty minutes at noon. "The small and nimble fingers of little children being by very far the most in request, the custom instantly sprang up of procuring apprentices from the different parish workhouses of London, Birmingham, and elsewhere." These little children were placed in charge of overseers paid by results and to obtain these results the little children were "flogged, fettered, and tortured in the most exquisite refinement of cruelty; they were in many cases starved to the bone while flogged to their work and . . . in some instances they were driven to commit suicide" (*John Fielden*: "The Curse of the Factory System," 1836).

As early as 1782 and 1795 *Dr. Thomas Percival* and the Manchester Justices had made certain suggestions for reform. In 1802 Sir Robert Peel had passed an Act putting some restrictions on child labour, but without efficient Government inspection this became a dead letter. The suggestions of *Percival* and the legislation of 1802 "were expanded by Robert Owen in 1815 into a general principle of industrial development, which came to be applied in tentative instalments by successive generations of Home Office Administrators' (S. Webb).

This desultory struggle was succeeded by an organized campaign and in 1831 an Act was passed reducing the hours of work of children, in cotton mills only, to twelve hours a day. The Manchester masters themselves formed an association to lay information against all who should infringe the law. But when informations were laid there were few convictions and much perjury, so the attempt to enforce the law soon ceased.

In December 1831, Michael Sadler, Tory M.P. for Leeds, introduced a Ten Hours Bill. By this Bill children under nine were not to be employed, and persons between nine and eighteen years of age were not to work more than ten hours a day with two hours less on Saturday. No one under twenty-one was to do night work. The struggle to pass this Act lasted over twenty years till 1853, and a further twenty years elapsed before really effective protection was given to children in 1874. This Ten Hours Bill had the enthusiastic

support of the factory workers, both for the sake of the children and for their own sake. A reduction in the hours of child labour meant a reduction in their own hours of labour. This was one reason why the Bill was so strongly opposed.

Many men deserve to be remembered for their part in the struggle. Michael Sadler was a Tory M.P. for Leeds and a bitter opponent of Catholic Emancipation. He was the ancestor of Sir Michael Sadler, formerly Master of University College, Oxford, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, and of Michael Sadleir, the novelist. Sadler said that he thought it would be better for the workers to be the property of their employers, for then they would be valued and their lives and hands would be of some consideration. Richard Oastler was a Tory land-agent and was dismissed from his post as steward of the Fixby Estates for his anti-Poor Law campaign. J. R. Stephens was a Wesleyan minister who had been removed from the ministry for his activities. It should be added that both these men gave opportunities to their opponents by the violent abusiveness of their language. The Rev. G. S. Bull was Vicar of Brierley. John Doherty was a Trade Union leader and John Wood was a spinner of Bradford. Space only permits more detailed mention of two of the most outstanding leaders, the evangelical Lord Shaftesbury and the Unitarian manufacturer, *John Fielden, M.P.*

Anthony Ashley Cooper took the style of Lord Ashley from 1811 and became Earl of Shaftesbury in 1851 on the death of his father. Ashley was one of the finest representatives of the evangelical movement, though he shared most of their prejudices. He was a strong Sabbatarian and was opposed to Catholic Emancipation though in the end he voted for it. Unitarians were even more obnoxious to him. In 1838 he wrote to the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, in consternation, because a learned Unitarian had been allowed to dedicate to the young Queen a book on the Harmony of the Gospels. Unlike William Wilberforce, however, "he was absolutely free from the persecuting spirit" (J. L. and B. Hammond). He was elected as Anti-Reform Bill Member

of Parliament for Dorset in 1831, and voted against the Reform Bill.

His life has recently been rewritten from different angles by J. W. Bready and by J. L. and B. Hammond. Bready has charged the Hammonds with being unjust to the religious motives animating the evangelicals. It might be retorted that Bready has characteristically ignored the contribution of the unorthodox. For instance, he mentions that *Fielden* taught in a Sunday School, but he fails to mention that it was a Unitarian Sunday School. Moreover, a careful observer will come to the conclusion that, while the Hammonds were rightly critical of the defects of the evangelical type of piety, they appreciate it when it is seen at its best. "The difference between Shaftesbury and such evangelicals as Hannah More was like the difference between a hero and a villain in one of Dickens' novels. Hannah More reminded the starving labourers that they could have as much of the Gospel as they liked for nothing; Shaftesbury never looked on distress in this spirit, and he never thought that the rich had fulfilled their duties to the poor when they had given them a cheap copy of the Bible and a few improving tracts."

Though Shaftesbury disliked popular agitation and dreaded the Trade Union movement, which he regarded as "the tightest thraldom the workman had ever endured," yet he was one of the most trusted leaders of the workers.

The services of *Fielden* were second only to those of Shaftesbury, but the name of *Fielden* has not been so well remembered. *Fielden* was of a very different type. He was a successful manufacturer who knew from personal experience what it was to work as a child in the factory. There was also this difference between him and Shaftesbury, as he himself pointed out. If ruin was to be the result of the legislation he proposed, he would be one of the first to be ruined. "Ashley, great as his sacrifices and splendid as his patience had been, did not draw a penny of his income from the industry which he asked Parliament to control; *Fielden* did not draw a penny of his income from anywhere else" (J. L. and B. Hammond). Unlike Shaftesbury also, *Fielden* was not an enemy of Trade Unions, and he even tried to use the weapon

of the strike to obtain a reduction in the hours of labour. And his support of the Factory Acts did not blind him to the value of the repeal of the Corn Laws as a way of improving the standard of living.

Fielden's father, Joshua Fielden, was a stout old-fashioned Tory, and originally a member of the Society of Friends.

John Fielden early in life became dissatisfied with the Quakerism of his father, for the Quakers at that time were still passing through a period of rigid orthodoxy very often accompanied by conservative quietism. *Fielden* tried first the Methodists and then the Church of England. He found what he wanted in 1818, when *Richard Wright*, the Unitarian missionary, preached at Todmorden. "Those views," said *Fielden*, harmonize more with my ideas of what Christ Himself has taught than any other I have yet heard." *Fielden* joined the Methodist Unitarians at Todmorden and taught a Bible Class in the Sunday School, of which he was a Superintendent. He helped to build the Old Chapel in 1824, and, when it got into difficulties, took over its liabilities and became its owner.

"Fielden's father carried on a small woollen business which he united with farming, at Edge End, where his forbears had lived for several generations. In 1782, thinking with some justice that there were better prospects in the cotton industry, he started a small factory at Laneside" (*A. W. Fox*: "Annals of the *Todmorden* Unitarian Congregation").

"I well remember," wrote *Fielden*, "being sent to work in my father's mill when I was little more than ten years old; my associates, too, in labour and in recreation, are fresh in my memory. Only a few of them are now alive," and they are mostly crippled. "I know the effect which ten hours' labour had upon myself. . . . I know, too, from my own experience that the labour now undergone in the factories is much greater than it used to be," owing to the increased speed of the machinery.

Fielden's position as a successful manufacturer persuaded many to listen to him who would have paid no attention either to working men or to rural landowners, and the

profits of his business enabled him to find a large part of the funds of the movement. To help on the movement, *Fielden* became a Member of Parliament. "When I consented to become a Member of Parliament it was not with a view to joining party men or aiding in party movements, but in order to assist by my vote, in doing such things as I thought would benefit the labouring people as well on the land as in the factory and at the loom. I have all my years of manhood been a Radical reformer because I thought reform would give the people a power in the House of Commons that would secure to them that better condition of which they are worthy. There is no natural cause for our distresses. . . . I am a manufacturer; but I am not one of those who think it time we had dispensed with the land. I think that these interests are all conducive to the prosperity of the nation; that all must go together and that the ruin of either will leave the others comparatively insecure. . . . I cannot believe it necessary that the manufacturers should work their labourers in the manner they do . . . the proposition of my Lord Ashley to diminish the excessive labour of those who work in factories . . . I know . . . to be of bare justice and humanity. . . . As my home trade and my export trade is almost exclusively of that sort in which the Americans attempt to compete with us, I must be one of the first to be ruined, if foreign competition is to ruin us. . . . The object of the following pages is to show that the work-people have been and are cruelly treated; that they have not idly asked for protection, but that humanity and justice require it; that we shall do ourselves no harm by granting it to them; but always avowing that I would cast manufacturers to the winds rather than see the work-people enslaved, maimed, vitiated, and broken in constitution and in heart, as these pages will but too amply prove that they are now." These words are part of the Preface of the pamphlet he wrote in 1836 entitled "The Curse of the Factory System." This might be described almost as the Handbook of the Movement and was followed in 1845 by a further pamphlet, "Selection of Facts and Arguments in favour of the Ten Hours Bill." In 1832 he had published a pamphlet on "The Mischiefs and

Iniquities of Paper Money," with a Preface by William Cobbett.

The occasion of the 1836 pamphlet was interesting. The master spinners and manufacturers of Oldham had drawn up a memorial against the coming into operation of the Act passed in 1833 restricting to forty-eight hours a week the employment of children under thirteen, and they asked *Fielden* as Member of Parliament for Oldham to support this memorial. The pamphlet was *Fielden's* reply. Machinery itself was not a curse but the way in which men used it, or rather the way in which they used their fellow men to attend to it. The pamphlet gave an account of the conditions in the factories and of the way in which various Acts passed to remedy these conditions were evaded.

In support of his contentions, *Fielden* quoted: "an extract from a Pamphlet which has been generally attributed to *Mr. Greg* of Manchester, and published in 1831, in which that gentleman who is connected with establishments, which I believe consume more cotton than any other house in the kingdom says as follows. 'As a second cause of the unhealthiness of manufacturing towns, we place the severe and unremitting labour.' *Mr. Greg* gives a frightful picture of the immoralities of Manchester, but he very properly attributes them to the factory system . . . he says: 'we hope we shall not greatly offend the prejudices either of political economists or practical tradesmen when we state our firm conviction, that a reduction in the hours of labour is most important to the manufacturing population and absolutely necessary to any general material amelioration in their moral and spiritual condition.' "

Fielden was not a typical manufacturer, though he was not quite alone. As a rule, the manufacturers were against the reform. They strongly resented the cotton industry's being singled out as though it were an offender above all other industries. *Mark Philips* "of Manchester has asked, as many had asked before and since, why there should be this indirect limitation of adult labour in one field only" (Professor J. H. Clapham). And those employers who were above the average resented the general denunciation of

their class. *J. A. Nicholls*, travelling in America, was almost persuaded to forget the evils of the slave system in his indignation at the widespread idea that every slave owner was a Simon Legree. He was really thinking of the way in which the worst faults of the worst employers were often treated as typical of all.

The opposition was supported by the dominance of the prevailing economics. People believed it to be capable of mathematical proof that the hours of factory labour could not be reduced to ten a day without ruining the industry and leaving no work at all. Their arguments were twofold. On the one hand, they appealed to the natural law of economics and the natural right of every man to make the best bargain he could for himself. On the other hand, they argued that the operatives would be thrown out of work by foreign competition if the Bill were passed. These common arguments of the time were repeated in "*The Inquirer*," as elsewhere. "*The Inquirer*" pointed out the dangers of interfering with the freedom of men to make the best bargain that they could. *R. H. Greg* wrote to "The Manchester Guardian" against Ashley's motion, pointing out that the Americans were now competing even in the home trade.

Mark Philips argued that the result of trying to interfere with the natural law of economics could only be a loss of wages. To meet this, *Fielden* endeavoured to show that a restriction of the hours of labour would lead to a rise of prices and this in turn would lead to an increase of wages rather than a reduction. *Mark Philips* disputed the soundness of this argument and, as a matter of fact, it was as mistaken as the arguments against which it was directed.

The Factory Acts were not, in fact, followed by a reduction of wages, but this was due, not to a limitation of output, but to its increase as a result of further improvements in the machinery. A better argument would have been that factory conditions were the result, not of any natural law, but of a mixture of human enterprise, human capacity, human shortsightedness, and human selfishness. William Cobbett poured scorn on those who had discovered that the might of England lay neither in her navy, nor in her mari-

time commerce, nor in her colonies, nor in her banks, but in thirty thousand little girls; that, if these little girls worked two hours a day fewer, our manufacturing superiority would depart from us. Gibes about the conditions of the black slaves abroad working 48 hours a week and the little white children at home working 69 hours a week may not have been altogether justified, but they were certainly not pointless.

The manufacturers were supported by leading Whig and Liberal politicians like Lord Brougham, John Bright, and Richard Cobden. On the other hand, many Tories supported the Bill. Some supported it to get their own back on the manufacturers with their Anti-Corn Law agitation; others, for better reasons. Disraeli voted for the reform, though he had not the courage to speak for it until after victory was won. Shaftesbury and Michael Sadler and Oastler were Tories, and it has often been assumed, especially since the modern reaction, that the Tory Party of this period had a more sensitive conscience on this point. There is no truth in this. The Tory Party was in power during the greater part of the period in which these conditions existed. It was the House of Lords that rejected the Factory Bill of 1818. Shaftesbury himself, though a good Tory, had no delusions on this subject. "It is manifest," he wrote, "that this Government is ten times more hostile to my views than the last, and they carry it out in a manner far more severe and embarrassing." He reflects bitterly that he will soon be summoned to the House of Lords, where he will be powerless. For Peel, "cotton is everything, man nothing; the House is flippant or hostile."

The fact is, that no party has anything to be proud of in this chapter of English history. The reform was forced on the politicians by an increasingly informed public opinion. All that can be said is that the Whigs were prepared to bow to the public opinion when it was strong enough. In one way, indeed, they helped to create this public opinion, for, in order to stave off action, they set up committees to investigate the problem further and each committee brought forward devastating evidence of an irrefutable character

which more than confirmed all that the propagandists had said. Once again it was a victory of knowledge and conscience. It took a long while for this knowledge to enter public consciousness, but, when it did enter, action followed.

Unitarians were found on both sides of the struggle. As a rule those Unitarians who were engaged in industry or politics opposed the Factory Acts. The names of *Mark Philips* and *Edward Strutt*, and *John Bowring* and *R. H. Greg* have been mentioned already. *Sir John Potter* even opposed the legislation in favour of the chimney-sweeps. On the other hand *Fielden* repeatedly quoted *Mr. Greg's* pamphlet in favour of a reduction of hours. And Ashley quoted *Thomasson* of Bolton about the bad quality of the last hour's work done in the mill.

The non-manufacturing Unitarians were also divided. Late in the eighteenth century *Dr. Percival*, of Manchester, had been one of those who first aroused public attention to the matter. Harriet Martineau carried her ideas of political economy so far that, like the Quaker, John Bright, she was opposed not only to the Factory Acts, but to compulsory fencing of machinery. But Harriet Martineau, though she retained her Radical political faith, had lost her Radical religious faith. Her brother, *James Martineau*, on the other hand, while becoming less Radical in his political views, had become more Radical in his social views, and had revolted against the prevailing ideas on this subject as expressed in popular utilitarianism. The novelist, *Mrs. Gaskell*, published "Mary Barton, a Tale of Manchester Life." This was returned by one publisher unread, but when it appeared it was an immediate success. "*The Inquirer*" described it as an attempt to describe faithfully and simply the lives of the very poor. W. R. Greg disliked it intensely, but he also had lost his religious faith. A modern critic, Lord David Cecil, has found it defective as a work of art. "It would have been impossible for her, if she had tried, to have found a subject less suited to her talents. It was neither domestic nor pastoral. It gave scope neither to the humorous, nor the charming. Further, it entailed an understanding of economics and history wholly outside the range of a Vic-

torian feminine intellect and the only emotions it could involve were masculine and violent ones. *Mrs. Gaskell* makes a creditable effort to overcome her natural deficiencies; she fills her pages with scenes of strife and sociological argument, with pitiless employers and ragged starving cotton spinners, but all in vain. Her employers and spinners are wooden mouthpieces not flesh and blood individuals; her arguments are anthologies of platitude, her riot and strike scenes are her usual feeble melodrama." But "Mary Barton" and "North and South" succeeded in spite of all these defects in bringing home to people something of what the lives of factory workers meant. *Charles Dickens* in "Household Words" and "The Daily News" helped.

Ministers, too, were divided. *T. Hincks* worked for peace and free trade, but was opposed to the factory legislation. *Philip Carpenter* lectured at the Mechanics' Institute at Radcliffe and "the people expected a tirade against the masters."

"*The Inquirer*" spoke with an uncertain voice, some of the uncertainty being due to changes of editorship. A leader in 1842 was in favour of Ashley's Bill. At another time "*The Inquirer*" explained that to pass such a Bill was like trying to enact a law that water should run up hill. Letters to the editor showed that these views were not shared by all its readers. There was even one letter from a Factory Operative. The writer suspects that there was more support for the Factory Acts than would be imagined from the preceding analysis of the views of those whose written word has remained. This would be particularly the case among the artisan members of the newer congregations. Only a few casual references have survived, sufficient to give a hint but not for definite proof.

The chief points in the struggle may be made clear. Sadler's demand for the Ten Hours Bill in 1831 was met by the appointment of a Select Committee, which reported in 1832. This Report became one of the main sources of information on the condition of factory life at the time. At the first general election under the Reform Act of 1832, Sadler stood for Leeds but was defeated by Macaulay. Next year (1833) his Bill was brought forward by Ashley.

The opponents of the Bill asked for a Commission and one was appointed. *Southwood Smith* was one of the three Commissioners. Edwin Chadwick was another. They reported the same year, and the Act of 1833 was passed as a consequence of their report. The reformers were hostile to the Commissioners and to the Act of 1833. The Hammonds have criticized this Act very severely, and in a veiled reference to *Southwood Smith* have suggested that he "was better employed in dissecting the body of *Bentham* than in legislating for the bodies of" the workers' children. B. L. Hutchins has come to a much more favourable conclusion and with good reason. "In 1833 *Dr. Smith* was appointed one of the Commissioners to inquire into the employment of children in factories. This was his first appearance as an investigator under government. With all its weaknesses, the Factory Act of 1833 was the foundation on which all subsequent legislation of the same kind has been based, and was a far more practical and effective measure than the Ten Hours Bill, in that it made provision for inspection. It would be impossible at this time of day to disentangle the share of the work due to *Dr. Smith*, as distinguished from his colleagues Tooke and Chadwick. But the importance of their report, with its explicit recognition of the need of supervision of industry by government, and the duty of the state to care for the children, should be more fully recognized."

"The attentive reader will perceive that although these recommendations are couched in very cautious, unemotional language, they do, in fact, carry the war into the enemy's camp, they go further in reality than the excited harangues of Oastler and others. As long as the philanthropic agitators (all honour to them) mainly appealed to pity and compassion, they could be apparently confuted by the argument that it would be worse for the children to starve than to work. But Chadwick took the discussion on to the plane of social economics, and showed that the ordinary conditions of factories where children were compelled to work the same hours as grown persons were tending to deteriorate the population both morally and physically by excessive labour" ("Public Health Agitation"). In spite of their criticism, the

Hammonds would agree that "in several respects the new Act represented a great advance on previous legislation."

The two sides of the agitation must be distinguished. As applied to *children*, the Act went far beyond the demands of the Ten Hours Bill, but, in so far as it failed to reduce the hours of *adult* labour, it was inferior to Ashley's Bill. The employment of children under nine years of age was forbidden not only in cotton mills but in most other textile mills except silk mills. The number of hours a child under thirteen could work was limited to forty-eight a week, of which not more than nine were to be in one day, and the children were to attend school for at least two hours daily. Persons under eighteen were not to work more than sixty-nine hours a week and twelve hours a day.

Government inspectors were appointed to enforce the Act. This was a change of tremendous importance. For want of government inspection, previous attempts at legislation had failed to accomplish even the little they tried to do. The reformers themselves did not realize the importance of this at the time, partly because they were full of suspicion that the inspectors would be the servants of the owners. *Fielden* shared this suspicion, for which there was, indeed, only too much reason. Nowadays this provision of paid government inspectors is recognized as one of the most important inventions of the period. It is not clear to whom the credit for it should be given. "Robert Owen had foreseen the need of appointing officials who should be responsible for the work of inspection instead of leaving it to the chance goodwill of the unpaid Justices. In the Bill drafted by him, in 1815, there was a provision that the Visitor of Mills should not be the Justice and the clergyman, as heretofore, but the Clerk of the Peace, or his deputy, or some other qualified person, who should be paid for his trouble and have full power to enter factories and inspect at any time during working hours that he should think fit. Whether Chadwick had ever heard of this proposal of Owen's, it is impossible to say. He might have done so through Bentham, who had at one time been on terms of friendship with Owen" (B. L. Hutchins).

The school clauses were not of much value, though here and there men like *Fielden* and the *Gregs* took the trouble to see that efficient schoolmasters were appointed.

When the Act had been in operation a few years, "its fiercest critics soon discovered that it was not altogether the retrograde measure they had supposed. . . . Oastler and Bull had come to recognize its value, and Bull urged the factory workers, 'to hold fast, as for life itself, to the eight-hour clause, the education clause, and the inspection clause of the present' " (J. L. and B. Hammond).

The Act came into operation in stages, and in 1835 an attempt was made to prevent its application to children between twelve and thirteen. This was when the cotton masters of Oldham asked *Fielden* for his support and he wrote instead "The Curse of the Factory System." Poulett Thompson, Member of Parliament for Manchester, tried to undo the work of 1833 by making children of eleven work eight hours a day. *Fielden* spoke against the motion and pointed out that the threat to dismiss 35,000 children was an idle threat, because the manufacturers could not carry on their business without them. *John Potter* and *Mark Philips* were on the other side. The Government actually won the division by 178 votes to 176. The majority for restricting the Act included Radicals like Joseph Hume, Whigs like Lord John Russell, and Tories like Sir Robert Peel. The minority included the then Tory Gladstone. Richard Cobden was not in Parliament at this time, but wrote that, had he been, he would have opposed with all his might the measure for postponing the operation of the clause restricting the hours of infant labour.

A year before, in 1835, the operatives' delegates had met the local M.P.s, and *Mark Philips* and *John Potter*, "the most uncompromising opponents" of the Ten Hours Bill, had promised to visit some of the mills and find out more about the conditions in them. It was in the course of this debate that *Fielden* stated "that he had found from actual experiment that the factory child walked twenty miles a day in the course of his work in the mill. *Philips*, who had been present at a similar experiment, denied that it was possible to make a

precise estimate, but he added: 'I believe the distance was proved to be very considerable, and I do not say that the factory system is not open to many serious evils.' "

The weak point of the 1833 Act was, that it did nothing to limit the hours of adult operatives. Chadwick would have limited children's work, even further, to six hours a day, but he would not have given any protection to adults. *Fielden* next planned to obtain by a strike the reduction of hours Parliament would not enforce. He had in a way received the suggestion for this from Lord Althorp, who had said to him and the short-time delegates, "that he would rather see the adult workers make a short-time Bill for themselves than interfere with their hours by Act of Parliament." *Fielden* took up the idea with Owen, who replied that it was the best plan he had heard of. A Society for Promoting National Regeneration was formed with a Committee and an office in Manchester. The Committee included *Fielden* and his brother and Robert Owen. "The three objects of the Society were thus defined in a letter from *Fielden* to Cobbett . . . published in the 'Pioneer' of December 21st, 1833. (1) An abridgement of the hours of daily labour, whereby a sufficient time may be afforded for education, recreation, and sleep. (2) The maintenance of at least the present amount of wages, and an advance as soon as practicable. (3) A system of daily education, to be carried on by the working people themselves, with the gratuitous assistance of the well-disposed of all parties who may have time and inclination to attend to it."

The policy of a general strike of the textile workers failed, as Robert Owen's General Union had failed. Such action to be effective required a far higher degree of education and development than had been attained at this stage.

In 1843 a second report on children's employment revealed the fact that conditions in the potteries, in the calico trade, and in nail-making, were worse than in the cotton factories. A Factory Bill was introduced and dropped, and introduced again in 1844. This 1843 Bill had proposed to establish factory schools and place them under

the control of the Church. Two million Nonconformists petitioned against it.

In 1844, for the first time, Ashley won a majority for the ten hours day, but the Tory Government exerted all its pressure against it, and the ten hours clause was removed. The Bill thus weakened passed by 136 votes to 7—the minority including *Mark Philips*. By it the working hours of children were reduced to six and a half hours per day. But, to make it possible to shorten the hours of children's labour, while not interfering with the hours of adults, the system under which children spent half a day in the factory and half a day in school was made part of the educational and factory system. At the time it was a great improvement on the shift system which had been invented for the same purpose, but for half a century the half-time system remained one of the greatest curses on Lancashire life.

In 1846 Ashley again introduced the Ten Hours Bill. Two days later he resigned, because he had been elected for a protectionist constituency, and he had come to realize that the Corn Laws must go. So it fell to *Fielden* to move the second reading, which was defeated by ten votes. Peel's Government was replaced by the Whig Government of Lord John Russell in July, and in January 1847 *Fielden* introduced the Bill again and received the Government's support. The Government announced that it would support the Bill with an amendment substituting eleven hours for ten. The second reading was carried and the Government announced that if the ten hours clause were carried in committee, it would not oppose the third reading and so the Bill became law. *Dr. Bowring* voted against it.

Just before his death *Fielden* lost his seat at Oldham because he had demanded in too high-handed a fashion that Oldham should return as second member with him the son of his old friend William Cobbett (afterwards his son-in-law). The curious cross-currents of this time received an illustration from this election. The Radical Unitarian *Fielden* lost his seat, but the poll was headed by another Radical Unitarian, the orator, *W. J. Fox, M.P.*

Fielden "was not a great speaker or a great statesman,

but there is no man of his time whose record is more to be envied," is the summing-up of the Hammonds.

His three sons, *Samuel* (1816–1889), *John* (1822–1893), and *Joshua* (1827–1887), who carried on the family tradition, built the existing Unitarian Church at *Todmorden* in 1869, a noble building in memory of their father, and presented a Town Hall to the town in 1875. They fought against the building of a workhouse, and, in the dreadful time of 1861, when the cotton famine in Lancashire, caused by the Civil War in the United States, was reducing Lancashire to destitution, they "paid their work-people half wages for cleaning the machinery."

Samuel was one of the founders of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company. He married *Sarah Jane Yates*, the granddaughter of *the Rev. John Yates*. His wife was keenly interested in education and herself taught. She founded the *Sarah Fielden* Chair of Education in the University of Manchester.

John and *Joshua Fielden* returned to the "Conservative politics of their grandfather," and *Joshua* sat in Parliament as a Conservative. Perhaps the opposition they had met from so many Liberals of their time over the Factory Acts helped to bring about this change, for *Joshua Fielden* had assisted his father in the campaign.

After the Ten Hours Act had been passed, an ambiguity was discovered which was used to render it innocuous by the establishment of a relay system. The agitation was therefore resumed. When *Fielden* was buried in 1849, the mourners went from his graveside to a meeting, demanding the ten hours day. *Samuel Fielden* took his father's place. There was an unfortunate misunderstanding with Ashley, who had said that he would agree to a compromise of half an hour a day if the workers would. Ashley was accused of treachery, and a Committee hostile to him was formed. *Samuel Fielden* was against Ashley. In fact, it was the Government which had acted falsely and, as *W. J. Fox* told them, had compromised "nothing but the faith and honour of Parliament." The new Bill was passed unamended and was followed by a series of further Acts in 1853, 1861, 1867, and

1874. But it was not until 1874, under Disraeli's Government, that the workers obtained the ten hours working day that Parliament had meant to give them in 1847.

None of the evil effects prophesied followed from the Act. Output rose and wages were practically untouched, and not many years elapsed before the leading opponents of the Bill admitted their mistake.

In 1841 a Royal Commission on Mines was appointed and *Dr. Southwood Smith* was one of the Commissioners. Their report revealed the horrible and disgusting conditions under which women and children worked. *Southwood Smith* obtained wide publicity for this report, adding illustrations showing women crawling on all fours harnessed to coal waggons, which they were dragging through tunnels too low to allow them to stand upright. Some people condemned the method as sensational. Lord Londonderry and others bitterly attacked the Mines Bill, but the House of Lords durst not throw it out.

THE ANTI-CORN LAW AGITATION

The movement which later expanded into the Anti-Corn Law League was begun by Manchester Unitarians. The contemporary historian of the movement, A. Prentice, dated it from a meeting in 1826, promoted by *(Sir) T. Potter*, at which *Mark Philips* made his first appearance before the public. At the first election after Manchester had become a constituency in 1832, *Mark Philips* made it a political issue. In 1834 a meeting of merchants and manufacturers was called, at which speeches were made by *R. H. Greg*, *R. Potter, M.P.*, *Mark Philips, M.P.*, *J. B. Smith* (later M.P.), and J. Brotherton, M.P. Nothing came of this meeting, for trade at the time was good. The Anti-Corn Law Association was formed in London in 1836. The Committee included *B. Hawes, M.P.*, *R. Potter, M.P.*, *E. W. Field*, *John Ashton Yates*, and *Samuel Bailey*, of Sheffield. The Manchester Anti-Corn Law Association was formed in 1838 as a result of the activities of *John Bowring*. A large number of Unitarians were actively associated with this as members of Committee and in other ways. *J. B. Smith* was first Treasurer and then Presi-

dent. He was followed as Treasurer by *W. Rawson*. Other supporters included many men whose names have already been mentioned in the chapter on the Industrial Revolution, *Peter Eckersley*, *Alexander Henry*, *Robert Philips*, and *Thomas Potter*, together with *Jeremiah Garnett* and *John Edward Taylor* of "The Manchester Guardian." The most active workers of the cause were *John Bowring*, *R. H. Greg*, and *J. B. Smith*. Later, when the local Anti-Corn Law Associations were combined to form the Anti-Corn Law League, the Manchester Committee was made the Executive of the League.

In other local associations, Unitarians were also active: at Liverpool *T. Thornely, M.P.*, *Christopher Rawdon*, *Henry Booth*, *J. Molineaux*, *Ottiwell Wood*, and *R. Rathbone*: at Leeds, *Hamer Stansfeld* and *J. Lupton*: at Bolton, *J. P. Thomasson*, whose son was the founder of the ill-starred "Tribune": at Leicester, *W. Briggs*: at Bury, *E. Grundy*, and at Nottingham, *William Lawson* and *T. Wolley*. To Unitarians the movement was almost a crusade. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce was won over. The motion of Richard Cobden, seconded by *R. H. Greg*, was carried. *Greg* said that, if the Corn Laws were not repealed, he might be compelled to carry his capital to foreign lands. The President of the Chamber of Commerce was *G. W. Wood, M.P.*, who was in favour of repeal, but was willing to accept it gradually. At a meeting of delegates in London this attitude roused the delegates to such anger that he was removed from office in spite of the protests of *J. E. Taylor*, of "The Manchester Guardian," and *J. B. Smith* was elected President.

Then came the foundation of the League in 1838. In those days travel and communication were still difficult, and thus it was that the Executive of the Manchester Association was made Executive of the National Corn Law League. The Secretary of the League was *James Hickin*, formerly a member of the *Walsall* Congregation and a teacher in the Sunday School there and later a member of the *Strangeways* Congregation. His portrait appeared, though in a mutilated form, in the engraving of Herbert's picture of the Executive of the League, which used to be found hanging in many Manchester houses.

The Leaguers began by raising funds. A subscription was raised on the motion of *J. B. Smith*, seconded by *R. H. Greg*. Several times during the course of the campaign they raised enormous sums. And these funds were raised in amounts that now seem comparatively small. Some of these funds were used to buy freeholds with which to obtain county votes.

With these funds they set on foot an immense propaganda for the conversion and organization of public opinion. The Parliamentary reformers had invented these methods, the Abolitionists had developed them, and now Free Traders roused and organized public opinion in a way which was still a novelty in those days.

They distributed leaflets by the million, among them *Ebenezer Elliott's* Corn Law Rhymes, the speech of *R. H. Greg* in the House of Commons in April 1840, a Prize Essay by his brother, *W. R. Greg*, and *Philip Harwood's* six Lectures.

Outside Parliament they held meetings, passed resolutions, and organized petitions to which they got large numbers of signatures. At these meetings the star speakers were Richard Cobden, John Bright, and *the Rev. W. J. Fox, M.P. The Rev. W. J. Fox* was a Unitarian minister whose views had proved too Radical for his contemporaries. For this and other reasons he had left the Unitarian ministry and ministered to South Place Church, now the South Place Ethical Society. He took a very active part in politics, and was Member of Parliament for Oldham. Though he was no longer a Unitarian minister, he remained a subscriber to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Richard Cobden, a Quaker, had received his early training in speaking at the society attached to *Cross Street Chapel*, *Manchester*. *Dr. John Bowring, M.P.*, *T. Thornely, M.P.*, and *J. Rawson* were frequent speakers. In their efforts to convert the agriculturists they received the help of a pioneer Scottish farmer, a Unitarian, *George Hope*, of Fenton Barns, who had been deprived of his farm for his political views. They even broke so far with tradition as to allow a woman Unitarian to speak at their meetings, *Juliana Gifford*, sister of Admiral Gifford.

Men without any political ambitions fought hopeless elections in order to further the cause. In one way, fighting an election was easier then than now. The number of voters was small; in some cases, a poll vote of 300 or 400 could win a seat. Even in Manchester 2,000 votes returned a member. One of the grievances of the political reformers was the fact that small places had the same representation as large ones, and in small places bribery and corruption were still prevalent on a large scale. *J. B. Smith* stood for Walsall against J. N. Gladstone and was defeated by 335 votes to 362.

The Free Traders organized the ministers. Most of the English Church clergy were on the other side, with a few important exceptions. Most of the Methodists refused to take part in political agitation. In spite of this a meeting of ministers was held at Manchester. Only two Church of England clergymen and one Methodist were present, and the bulk of those who attended were Congregationalists and Scottish Presbyterians. A number of Unitarians were present, of whom the best known were *the Rev. George Armstrong* of Bristol, *the Rev. Charles Wicksteed* of Leeds, *the Rev. C. Berry* of Leicester, and *the Rev. J. Colston* of Styal. These and others vehemently repudiated the idea that politics had nothing to do with religion. *Philip Carpenter* wrote: "Persons are beginning to see that Christianity is a practical religion." He preached on the Corn Laws and drew up a petition against them.

The Free Traders worried the Government with deputations and interviews. *J. B. Smith* and *R. H. Greg* were frequent members of these deputations. On one occasion it is recorded that the deputation of stony-hearted manufacturers broke into tears, so deeply was the cause felt.

In Parliament, the Free Traders kept up a steady attack, in which the Unitarian M.P.s, *Dr. John Bowring*, *Mark Philips*, and *J. Strutt*, were particularly prominent. *R. H. Greg* sat for Manchester for a time in order to further the cause. All the Unitarian M.P.s supported Free Trade.

Political feeling ran very high, yet the supporters of the Corn Laws do not seem to have put up much of a fight.

They formed a rival association. They convicted Cobden of having made one set of promises to one set of people and a different set of promises to another set of people; they collected the choicer specimens of language used by the more unrestrained repealers, but seem to have felt rather like men defending an interest than men moved by a new vision.

When the Free Traders held meetings, their chief trouble seems to have arisen from the physical force wing of the Chartists. The bulk of the Chartists were in favour of repeal, though there were some who argued that the Charter ought to come first. The fact was, that the Chartists were in an awkward position, for, when challenged, the majority had to admit that they were against the Corn Laws. The Free Traders accused the dissentient Chartists of being in the pay of the landlords, and they replied that, if the manufacturers were for Free Trade, they must have some sinister aims, one being to reduce wages. Sometimes they contented themselves with moving amendments that the Charter should come first. On other occasions they tried to obtain control of the meeting. There was a meeting in Manchester which must have been without a parallel. It was conducted to the end with two Chairmen. The appointed Chairman was the Mayor, but the Chartists got to the building first and appointed a Chairman of their own. Each put the amendment to the vote, one Chairman declared it carried and the other Chairman declared it lost. In the end the original motion was carried.

The agitation achieved its end with astonishing rapidity. The leaders of the landowners had sufficient wisdom and common sense to recognize that they could only keep their commanding position by surrendering some of their privileges. Perhaps they realized that, whatever may be the merits or demerits of tariffs in time of subsidies and trusts, at that time they were really an expression of class interest. Professor C. R. Fay has described their defeat as "the nemesis of the Enclosure Acts." No yeomanry and no peasantry were left to defend agricultural interests.

The Irish famine helped the repealers. It has been estimated that half a million persons died, and that half a

million persons emigrated to England carrying fever, dysentery, and small-pox with them.

But the conversion of Sir Robert Peel must be regarded as the chief cause of the rapid success. His conversion illustrates that power to recognize when resistance to change must be dropped which has so often saved England from civil war. It may be compared with Wellington's acquiescence in Catholic Emancipation, and the decision to extend the franchise in 1867, and with Bonar Law's acceptance of Home Rule.

Only in recent years has the wisdom of the Corn Law repeal been seriously questioned. In the generation succeeding the repeal, the Free Traders could claim that most of their prophecies had been fulfilled. There is little doubt that the Free Trade system was one cause of that rapid industrial expansion which went on for the greater part of the century. The standard of living measured in real wages continued to rise till the end of the century.

And this rise in the standard of living of the town worker was not secured at the expense of the agricultural worker. The years from 1853 to 1875 (assisted as they were by good seasons) have been described as the golden age of the English farmer.

It was only when enormous areas in America and Canada were brought under wheat cultivation that agricultural prosperity in England began to be threatened. Between 1860 and 1880 the production of wheat in the United States of America was trebled.

In one respect the prophecies of Free Traders were falsified. They had believed that other countries would follow suit. There they were mistaken. For the moment, therefore, here also the ideas and ideals of the reformers are under a cloud.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT AND THE TRADE UNIONS

From its earliest days the Co-operative movement attracted Unitarians as a way of encouraging self-help and independence. Robert Owen's theories had many admirers and some disciples at *Northgate End, Halifax*. At Liverpool, Owen's scheme for establishing industrial communities was supported

by *Mrs. William Rathbone, the Rev. John Yates*, and *James Cropper*.

Robert Owen has recorded that he had friendly discussions at Manchester Academy, and meetings there were continued "until they attracted the attention of the Principal, Dr. Baines [*sic*, a mistake for Barnes], who became afraid that I should convert his assistants from his orthodoxy; and our meetings were required to be less frequent in the College. They were, however, continued elsewhere."

On the other hand, an instance of early tolerance being extended to wide differences in social theories was supplied at the end of the eighteenth century in the treatment of *the Rev. James Pilkington* at *Derby*. *Pilkington* went far beyond the demands of the Radical reformers and published a pamphlet on the "Doctrine of Equality." This gave such great offence that he resigned. But it was resolved "that persecution or punishment for speculative opinions would be inconsistent with the principles of the friends of truth and free inquiry, and therefore that the objections urged do not appear sufficient for an acquiescence in *Mr. Pilkington's* resignation."

Though a few of the Owenite Co-operative Societies survived, the modern movement has descended from the Rochdale pioneers of 1844, who succeeded better because they were based on equity rather than on equality. Many of the founders belonged to *Clover Street*, which was known as the Co-op. Chapel. *Clover Street Chapel* belonged to the Methodist Unitarian Movement.

When George Jacob Holyoake was denied a hearing, he was given one in a Unitarian schoolroom.

In many parts of the country Unitarian ministers helped to found Co-operative Societies and to guide them through their troubles. At *Hinckley the Rev. William Mitchell*, at *Lancaster the Rev. Henry Solly*, and at *Dewsbury the Rev. William Blazeby*. At Liverpool *the Rev. John Wilson* was President of the Society, and *the Rev. S. A. Steinthal* an active supporter. At *Lye the Rev. Isaac Wrigley* helped to restore a mismanaged Society to prosperity. *Robert Elliott* worked for the movement in Durham.

J. C. Farn was an early editor of "The Co-operative News" and "sacrificed leisure, family life and health for the cause." *J. C. Farn* was the grandfather of the writer of this book.

Edward Owen Greening was one of the founders of the National Co-operative Conference, whose foundation meeting was attended by *the Rev. J. Page Hopps* and *Professor W. S. Jevons*. He pioneered the Productive Federation, Co-operative Festivals, the International Co-operative Alliance, and he was the first Co-operative candidate for Parliament. *Hodgson Pratt* founded the Guild of Co-operators. *Janet Chase*, with two college friends, helped to found the Women's Co-operative Guild. In modern times *the Rev. G. S. Woods, M.P.*, devoted immense time and energy to the same cause.

Henry Briggs, a Yorkshire colliery owner, was one of the first employers to turn his property into a co-operative company. *Edward Owen Greening* was one of the founders of the Labour Association for Promoting Co-operative Production based on the co-partnership of the workers, in support of which *F. Maddison, M.P.*, wrote "Workmen as Producers and Consumers" (1901).

On the other hand, early Unitarians as a rule failed to do justice to the Trade Union Movement. They failed to realize either the necessity of it or the contribution it was later to make to English life.

There were a few exceptions. As early as 1747 *the Rev. Dr. Robert Robinson*, of *Dob Lane Chapel*, was suspected of helping to draw up the standing orders of the first of the Lancashire Weavers' combinations. "In 1769, *T. B. Bailey*, the Manchester Justice, was strongly advocating the formation of Friendly Societies," and "the boundary between Friendly Society and Trade Union was extremely narrow" (A. P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann). *John Fielden*, though an employer, encouraged them.

This attitude, however, was exceptional. In 1833, *T. Eyre Lee* conducted a prosecution against five members of a Trade Union charged with preventing a carpenter from following his usual occupation. *J. A. Nicholls* lectured to working men on the folly of strikes, but, when he died, they did honour to his memory. The early numbers of "The Manchester

Guardian" and the diaries of men like *Robert Aspland* represented the usual Unitarian attitude.

By many, Trade Unions were regarded as ruthless tyrannies or futile conspiracies to defeat the laws of nature. Strikes were regarded not merely as "unnatural conflicts," in the words of *the Rev. William Gaskell*, but as inevitably hopeless.

This failure to understand the situation was aggravated by the fact that the Trade Unions in early days were often led by violent men, and occasionally resulted in outrages. In 1831, *Thomas Ashton* of Hyde had dismissed a man for joining the Combination, as it was called, and his son was shot dead. In the sixties the Sheffield outrages took place, and *the Rev. Brooke Herford* lectured on trade outrages.

The failure to understand the point of view of the ordinary worker might have led to disastrous consequences, had it been maintained. Fortunately, in the course of the century, the attitude of both sides came to be modified. The rising standard of living, the spread of education, the influence of Methodism influenced the Trade Unions on one hand, and on the other, the new understanding of the need of collective action moderated the old attitude to such a degree that Liberals became the champions of Trade Union rights. As early as the middle of the century *the Rev. H. W. Crosskey* took a prominent part in the Derby Ribbon Weavers' strike, and one of *George Dawson's* early public efforts was in connection with the shop assistants' attempt to get shops closed at eleven o'clock on Saturday night. *Rev. Henry Williamson* founded the Dundee Mill and Factory Operatives' Union.

Even so, though many active trade unionists have been Unitarians, few of the outstanding national leaders have been Unitarians. *The Right Honourable T. Burt*, one of the first two Labour Members of Parliament, was an exception. An examination of the denominational affiliations of Labour Members of Parliament made by a German sociologist has made it evident that they mostly come from orthodox nonconformity.

THE CHANGING OUTLOOK

The discussion of the implications of Benthamism in the early part of this chapter will have made it clear how inadequate is the label "individualist" when applied to the best reformers of the first part of the century. But it is true that the general tendency of public opinion was against the intervention of the State in social affairs except in special cases. By the middle of the century, the inadequacy of this view was being proved by its effects. Most English people of the middle class regarded industry as being under no moral law, but governed by certain laws of economics, assumed to be laws of nature and unchangeable. A few people, like the Christian Socialists, insisted that the operations of trade and industry were as much under a moral law as any other human action, but these men were one or two generations in advance of their time.

A series of great writers first gave expression to the profound dissatisfaction with existing conditions and the assumptions which lay behind them. Thomas Carlyle opened the attack with "Past and Present" in 1848, but Carlyle's outlook was more akin to that of the modern dictators with their reliance on brute force and machine-guns than an anticipation of the coming change in outlook. Walter Bagehot criticized Carlyle at the time, and Augustine Birrell has pointed out that Carlyle did nothing to help such movements as were making life better in his own time. *Charles Dickens*, who was more representative of the ordinary man in the street, published "Hard Times" in 1854. In 1862 John Ruskin followed with "Unto This Last." The contemporary "Saturday Review" described the articles as "eruptions of windy hysterics and utter imbecility." W. M. Thackeray, the editor of the magazine in which they were appearing, though he was a friend of Ruskin, wrote to him that he must ask him to bring them to a close. A second series of articles which another friend of his, J. A. Froude, had accepted for publication had also to be stopped. But twenty-five years later (1885) many of the foremost men of the day, including such distinguished economists as Walker, Bastable, Foxwell, Ashley, and MacCunn, chose to honour

Ruskin by the presentation to him of an Address in which are these significant passages: "Those of us who have made a special study of economic and social questions desire to convey to you their deep sense of the value of your work in these subjects, pre-eminently in the enforcement of the doctrines—that Political Economy can furnish sound laws of national life and work only when it respects the dignity and moral destiny of man: that the wise use of wealth, in developing a complete human life, is of incomparably greater moment both to men and nations than its production and accumulation, and can alone give these any vital significance." Carlyle had sneered at the "dismal science" of political economy, and *Dickens* had pictured the dismal conditions on which the dismal science threw no ray of hope, but Ruskin was the first to attempt a detailed criticism of current theories. And this he did with a logical skill at least equal to that of his opponents, and with an insight into the higher things of life far surpassing theirs. The economists did not know their own science, he said, as he examined their use of the terms "value" and "wealth" and exposed the carelessness of definition and the absurdities to which their false abstractions led. In this process Ruskin himself made some mistakes, above all when he denied that by exchange the sum total of wealth was increased, and that it was legitimate to demand interest for the loan of capital. But most of his criticism was as just and necessary as it was ably made. In particular, the fallacy of the utility of unlimited saving and of the theory that "demand for commodities is not a demand for labour," which he exposed so effectively, are gradually disappearing even from text-books. It is not surprising that for more than a generation "Unto This Last" stood on the shelves of working men, where little books on Karl Marx now stand.

These men were prophets of the changing outlook, as were also the poets of the romantic reaction and the theologians of the Tractarian Movement, in their own way. But so much remained to do, to clean up the ruins of the old order that a generation elapsed before this changing outlook had to meet the new problems. For the most part, those who lived

in the second half of the century were conscious rather of the immense improvement in the conditions of life than of the new problems. Economically, the time was one of increasing expansion and prosperity. This period lasted roughly from 1856 to 1886, and real wages did not begin to decline till the beginning of the twentieth century. To-day, when men look at the rows of monotonous streets of houses without gardens in Lancashire towns, they are struck by their ugliness and monotony. But the people who lived in them were very proud of them: they were aware of the fact (for it was a fact) that, with all their imperfections, they were immensely superior to anything the working men and women had lived in in recorded history. Industrial workers, for the most part, were satisfied to build up their trade unions and their co-operative societies. And with this change in the character of the trade unions came a change in men's attitude to them, and laws were passed which allowed them free play.

The criticism of the prevailing philosophy voiced by the prophets was soon repeated in more technical terms by the economists themselves.

John Stuart Mill, in his "Principles of Political Economy" (1848), while accepting *Ricardo*, helped the transition from the old political economy to the new, by making a fundamental distinction between the laws governing the production of wealth and the laws governing the distribution of wealth. The laws governing the production of wealth were based on natural laws, but the distribution of wealth was determined more by particular social arrangements.

Walter Bagehot brought to the study of economics practical experience as a banker and imaginative powers of a high order. He based his work on the actual facts of existing society, which was in process of change. The result was a number of striking books covering a wide range, of which the most noteworthy were "The English Constitution," "Physics and Politics," and "Lombard Street." The first two were translated into German, French, and Italian. He was editor of "The Economist" from 1866 to 1877. He

came from a Unitarian home, and was educated at University College, London. His first literary efforts were published in "*The Inquirer*," where his original outlook found expression in a way which rather shocked the readers of that paper. He was in Paris at the time of the *coup d'état*, which he defended on the grounds that "stupidity is the esssential condition of human freedom and the French are a great deal too clever to be free."

Later in the century *William Stanley Jevons*, Professor at Owens College, Manchester, carried further the criticism of *Ricardo* and extended it to Mill. In his book, "The State in Relation to Labour" (1882), he gave another blow to the idea that the laws of nature made State interference with economic problems futile. His main works were on statistics and logic.

Modern social surveys originated with another Liverpool Unitarian, *Charles Booth*. His statistical examination of the nature of poverty in "A Survey of Life and Labour in London" (1889–1897) was not only a model work of its kind but led to the production of many similar investigations into actual conditions.

Charles Booth helped to inspire Mrs. Sidney Webb (Beatrice Potter), who with her husband, Sidney Webb, has produced a series of monumental works on the History of Local Government, Trade Unionism, Co-operation, and Poor Law Policy, which are not only learned pieces of historical research but have helped to form the minds of a generation. Mrs. Sidney Webb was descended from the *Richard Potter* whose work is described in the chapter on "Local Government," and she has given a moving account of the intellectual and religious atmosphere of her home and her own spiritual longings in her autobiography, "My Apprenticeship."

The *Rev. B. Kirkman Gray* wrote two profoundly illuminating books, "A History of English Philanthropy from the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the Taking of the First Census" (1905), and "Philanthropy and the State or Social Politics" (1908). He made clear the distinction between distress due to personal causes, which could be relieved by

individual help, and the distress due to larger social causes which could not be met in this way.

The Reb. Philip Henry Wicksteed won distinction as a student of Dante and Thomas Aquinas, but failed to obtain adequate recognition in his lifetime for his contributions to political economy. His very originality and the breadth of his learning stood in his way. He influenced many generations of students of all kinds as a University Extension lecturer and as Dunkin Lecturer in Sociology to theological students at *Manchester College, Oxford.* This Dunkin Lectureship was probably the first of its kind to be founded in a theological college. *Wicksteed's* biographer, *Professor C. H. Herford*, revealed how fascinating even the life of a student could be made, when the student had the breadth and depth of interest of a man like *Philip Wicksteed* and the interpreter was a student of equal calibre.

The Rev. J. Lionel Tayler was another Unitarian minister of highly original mind whose work perhaps obtained more recognition after his death than during his lifetime. Lionel Tayler practised as a doctor and was also a minister of religion and a sociologist, and the interaction of these threefold activities produced unusual results.

If these men had received University appointments, their influence would have been much greater, for their work would have been carried on by the students whom they would have stimulated.

Professor George Unwin died before he had completed his work on economic history, but he accomplished enough to leave behind him an enduring monument.

The change in social outlook, begun by the prophets and the economists, made itself felt among members of both the older political parties and contributed in the end to the creation of a third party. In the seventies social reform was unconnected with the divisions between the older political parties. *Joseph Chamberlain*, as a Radical, had been responsible for Bills dealing with merchant shipping and municipal electric lighting. He had great visions of measures of social change, and his interest in social legislation did not com-

pletely cease when he became a Liberal-Unionist. Later, when he became a Protectionist, the issue divided Unitarians. Unitarians in Birmingham and the Midlands tended to follow Chamberlain, and the Unitarians in Manchester and Liverpool tended to remain Free Traders.

A precursor to the new Labour Party appeared in 1884, when the Fabian Society was formed. The Fabian Society consisted of middle-class Socialists who by their policy and methods exercised a profound influence on English social thought. The Fabian Society has been described as the child of *Jeremy Bentham* and John Stuart Mill. The Webbs, to whom so much of its success was due, have been described as the Benthams of Socialism. That nineteenth-century English Socialism did not adopt Marxism and the theory of the class war was largely due to this society, and that in turn was largely the result of the influence on George Bernard Shaw of *Philip Henry Wicksteed's* work at the critical time when the Fabian Essays were being produced. As early as 1895 *Wicksteed* contributed an article on "The Advent of the People" to a volume with the title of "The New Party."

The first Trades Union Congress met in 1868, the year of the second Reform Act, under which workmen in the boroughs received votes. At the general election of 1874 the first two Labour Members of Parliament were returned. One of them was *Thomas Burt* (later *the Right Honourable Thomas Burt, P.C., M.P.*), who lived to be Father of the House of Commons. At the Trades Union Congress of 1886, of which *Fred Maddison* (later M.P.) was President, the proposal to form an Electoral Labour Committee was approved. This was followed in 1900 by the formation of a Labour Representation Committee, and in 1906 the Labour members returned under its auspices took the name of the Labour Party.

With public opinion changing so rapidly, the Churches could hardly remain immune from the stirrings of the new spirit. The disillusionment which followed the failure of the Chartist movement in 1848 had given opportunity to those who were conscious of the wretchedness of existing social conditions, but wished to cure them by more peaceful means.

Charles Kingsley, J. M. Ludlow, and F. D. Maurice started a Christian Socialist movement. F. D. Maurice was the son of the Unitarian minister *Michael Maurice*, who had helped *Joseph Priestley* to pack his books after the Birmingham Riots, and the influence of his upbringing can be traced even after his change in theology. But, as the fears roused by the Chartist movement died away, the Christian Socialists lost whatever power might have been theirs.

A fresh start was made thirty and forty years later. In 1879 Stewart Headlam founded the Guild of St. Matthew, and in 1889 the Christian Social Union was established.

Many Methodist lay preachers devoted their energies to the work of the Labour Party, and the Methodist Church might be regarded as an early training ground in democracy for the Labour movement. But it was not until the twentieth century that the Churches as such became conscious of their responsibilities for the social order. Social Service Unions were then formed in all the Nonconformist Churches. The Wesleyan Methodist one was formed in 1905.

In 1906 *The National Conference Union for Social Service* was formed. Later this title was changed to *Union for Social Service of Members of Unitarian, Free Christian, and Kindred Churches*. The first President was *Philip H. Wicksteed*. He was succeeded by *the Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, J. F. L. Brunner, M.P.*, and *the Rev. H. Enfield Dowson*. Among its early Vice-Presidents were *Sir W. Phipson Beale, Bt., K.C., M.P., H. G. Chancellor, M.P., R. D. Holt, M.P.* (later *Sir R. D. Holt, Bt.*), *(Sir) C. Sydney Jones* (later M.P.), *J. C. Wedgwood, M.P., Sir W. B. Bowring, Bt., H. P. Greg, Professor F. E. Weiss*, and *W. Byng Kenrick. Catherine Gittins* and *B. Kirkman Gray* were its first secretaries, followed by (later *the Rev.*) *A. H. Biggs* and (later *the Rev.*) *R. P. Farley, the Rev. J. S. Burgess*, and *the Rev. H. H. Johnson. Richard Robinson* was its first Treasurer, followed by *Charles Weiss* and *the Rev. F. H. Jones*.

The Union for Social Service was largely instrumental in activities which led to the formation in 1910 of the Inter-denominational Conference of Social Service Unions, which in turn led to the remarkable Congress at Birmingham held

in 1924, known as "Copec" from some of the initials of its full title, Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship. At this Conference the hopes of those working for a better social order under the Christian impulse reached their peak point.

CHAPTER 5

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LOCAL GOVERNMENT — THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT OF 1835—UNITARIANS IN MANCHESTER—BIRMINGHAM—LIVERPOOL—AND OTHER TOWNS

IMMEDIATELY after the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, Unitarians were chosen as mayors of the most important towns of England. Not till then were Unitarians able to take their full share in the Local Government of their country—in spite of the fact that they had always had a special interest in Local Government and a pride in their towns, of which they have frequently been the historians.

The explanation is twofold. Few towns where the Unitarians were strong had Corporations or Municipal institutions till the Municipal Corporations Act was passed, and in other towns with Corporations the Test and Corporation Acts of the seventeenth century made it almost impossible for Protestant Dissenters to become members of Corporations. These Acts had been modified in 1718 as a reward for the loyalty of the Dissenters during the Jacobite Rising of 1715. The Act for Quietening Corporations provided that, if a member of the Corporation who had not fulfilled the requirements of the Test and Corporation Acts had remained a member for a year without action being taken against him under the Act, proceedings were barred. Since members of Corporations usually held office for life, this gave the Protestant Dissenters a chance to obtain a share of the government of the communities in which they lived. The *Octagon Chapel* at Norwich still contains the supports on which the insignia of the mayor were placed during the service. The Mayor's aisle is still shown at *Bridgwater*. At *Bridport* there is a pew for the Corporation. *Lewin's Mead, Bristol*, was known as the Mayor's Nest. At *Portsmouth the*

Rev. Russell Scott, grandfather of the editor of "The Manchester Guardian," *C. P. Scott*, was a member of the Corporation.

The Sacramental Test was removed in 1828 after a hard struggle in the House of Lords, which succeeded in imposing an affirmation "on the true faith of the Christian" only abolished thirty years later, in 1858. The 1828 Act removed the legal difficulties in the way of Nonconformists, and Unitarians became members of Corporations, but so long as vacancies in Corporations were filled by co-option the Act did not help them.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In the eighteenth century, 186 of the 237 towns claiming to be boroughs had self-elected Corporations, that is, vacancies in the governing body were filled by the remaining members; and some of the largest centres of population in the country—towns like Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield, Bolton, Rochdale, Bury, and Blackburn—were not corporate towns at all, but were governed under the relics of a mediaeval system. Manchester, for instance, was governed by a Boroughreeve and by a Court Leet, appointed by the Lord of the Manor and by a Parish Vestry. In Birmingham, on the other hand, the theoretical power of Lord of the Manor had been in practice lost through disuse, and the two chief officers were the High Bailiff and the Low Bailiff. The Parishes remained with their Parish Vestries as units of Local Government. Vestries were either open Vestries or select Vestries. The open Vestries exercised their powers through meetings of all parishioners; the select ones through committees. But the powers of both were limited, and inside the towns, the Parishes were rather hindrances than helps to Local Government.

Before the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, Unitarians were able to take some small part in the Local Government of their towns by acting as Commissioners. The appointment of special bodies of Commissioners to undertake certain functions was the first feeble attempt to meet the needs of large centres of population. Liverpool, which had

a Corporation, and Manchester, which had not, were the first two towns to get local Acts of Parliament passed appointing Commissioners. Commissioners were given powers to pave and light the streets and to "watch" them so as to prevent violence and robbery, but they were not at first given powers to clean the streets or to improve the health of the community. Health conditions only began to be tackled after the cholera outbreaks of 1831 and 1832, followed by those of 1848 and 1854.

The method of appointing the Commissioners varied from period to period with successive Acts of Parliament. In some cases, especially during the period 1760–1820, the first members of the Commission were named in the particular Act of Parliament appointing them, and then they were allowed to co-opt their successors. In other cases, especially during the period from 1797 to 1828, membership of the Commissions consisted of certain classes of the community, for instance, the biggest ratepayers. In a few cases, especially during the period 1820 to 1835, the members of the Commissions were elected. Manchester had experience of all three types.

The old legal restrictions on membership of Corporations did not apply to these newly created bodies, and so the appointment of these Commissions opened the way to Unitarians to serve in Local Government. Particularly in big centres of population without Corporations, like Manchester and Birmingham, they obtained enlarged opportunities of service, and it was there that they had their greatest successes.

The value of these Commissions depended on their powers and on their personnel. If they were given powers to levy rates for the work they had to do, and if the men appointed were keen, they managed to achieve good results within the limited field in which they functioned.

But the system was really an impossible one, and conditions in the towns continued to grow worse. Yet, it was not until the Reform Act of 1832 that the agitation for the reform of the Corporations became urgent. In fact, a Bill introduced in 1833 to incorporate Birmingham, Manchester,

Sheffield, and several other towns, was withdrawn because the people in these towns did not seem much interested. Even Manchester at this period asked for nothing more than to have the right to appoint its own magistrates as Leeds did. Up till then only the County Magistrates were able to act in Manchester, and they were few in number and not always on the spot. The inadequacy of this arrangement was seen when riots broke out, and so it happened that the Tories were the first to ask for the reform of Local Government, because they had been frightened by the failure of the local magistrates to deal with the growing discontent. The riots in connection with the agitation for the Reform Bill stimulated their fears. About the same time, the leaders of the new industries began to demand reform in the government of the towns, for they were mostly Nonconformists in religion and Whigs or Radicals in politics, and often excluded in both capacities. And the whole idea of self-elected close Corporations was contrary to the rising spirit of Radicalism.

The Government appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry in 1833, and this reported in March 1835. In April the Government introduced a Bill, which was passed in September, and in December 1835 the first elections were held for the new Town Councils. In spite of many imperfections and limitations, the Act was productive of untold good and was followed "by an unparalleled extension of local activities." The Act was regarded by Lord Melbourne as a triumph for the Dissenters, and it certainly gave opportunity to a large body of men with energy and a sense of civic responsibility who up to this time had been for the most part excluded from using these qualities in public service. Unitarians in particular benefited from it. At once Unitarians were elected heads of many of the great towns. Of the Mayors elected under the new Act the first Mayor of Manchester, the third Mayor of Liverpool, the first five Mayors of Leicester, the first two Mayors of Bolton, the first Mayor of Derby, the second Mayor of Leeds, and the third Mayor of Birmingham were Unitarians.

THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT (1835)

The Municipal Corporations Act gave a uniform constitution to a hundred and seventy-eight existing municipal Corporations and placed their government in the hands of Councillors elected by certain ratepayers and of Aldermen chosen by the Councillors.

There were, however, serious limitations to the Act, both in its constitution and in the powers of the new bodies—mostly the result of amendments made in the House of Lords.

Many big towns were not included in the Act, but only those towns which, for some reason or other, were regarded as being Boroughs already. Provision was made for the extension of the Act to certain other places, but it was not until 1838 that Manchester and Birmingham obtained their Charters of Incorporation, and then only after struggles to which reference will be made later. The other unregulated Boroughs were forgotten till 1875, and were not included till the Municipal Corporations Act of 1882 was passed.

The House of Lords had inserted a provision that a quarter of the Council should hold office for life. As a compromise, it was agreed that one-third of the Council should consist of Aldermen elected by the Councillors, and holding office for six years.

A more serious defect was the fact that the Commissioners already appointed for special purposes were left in power, and this crippled Local Government for many years. The promoters of the Municipal Corporations Bill intended the new Councils to take over all the powers and property of the various bodies established under Local Acts. But partly because of haste in legislation, partly in order to reduce opposition, especially in the Lords, these clauses were merely permissive. The Commissioners were permitted but not compelled to surrender their powers to the new Councils. The Act did, however, undermine the position of the Commissioners, and between 1848 and 1854 the Board of Health put pressure on them to accelerate the process. Gradually the Borough Council took over the powers of the main bodies. But in 1879 in fourteen municipal boroughs,

the sanitary arrangements were controlled by an authority independent of the Town Council. As late as 1884, nearly fifty years after the Act, there were still forty-four districts under Improvement Commissioners, and even in 1893 thirty-three remained, but these were merged in 1894 in the Urban District Councils. The Manors were left out of the Act of 1835, with the result that commons, wastes, and woodlands were rapidly appropriated by individual proprietors.

A more lasting defect of the Corporations Act was, that the areas laid down in it were not the right ones for their purpose. The most serious defect of all was the limitation of the powers of the new municipalities. In Germany, before the Great War, a municipality had power to do anything which it was not definitely forbidden to do. In England it came to be that a municipality could only act when powers were conferred upon it. This was to weight the scales heavily against all the forces which cared for health and beauty.

Exactly how this limitation of the powers of the municipalities arose is a matter on which high authorities differ. The limitation was not imposed deliberately. Before 1835 Corporations were free to do anything an individual could lawfully do. They had power to administer justice, to hold markets, to suppress nuisances, to look after police and lighting, and also to use their funds for feasting, jobbery, and political corruption. The Municipal Corporations Act did not take away these powers, except the power to use Corporation property for their own purposes. The doctrine that certain things were *ultra vires* was a later development, and did not emerge till 1843, when it was devised to limit the powers of the new Joint Stock Railway Companies. Meanwhile separate Local Government bodies had been created with specifically limited powers for separate purposes such as poor law, highways, public health, and education. Towards the end of the century the powers of these separate bodies were transferred to one local authority, but the new authorities were given only the limited powers of the separate bodies they had superseded.

MANCHESTER

Manchester and Birmingham were two of the towns in which Unitarians found their greatest opportunity. Both of them were predominantly Puritan during the Civil Wars. Both grew rapidly in the Industrial Revolution and their growth was perhaps assisted by the fact that neither of them was subject to the restrictions which operated in corporate towns. The historian of Manchester was proud of the fact that to Manchester belonged "the honour of striking in 1642 the first blow for the liberties of England: and the honour, too, of possessing the first Free Library, that of Humphrey Chetham, founded in 1656." In Manchester, too, was erected the first statue of Oliver Cromwell, presented to the city by the wife of *Alderman Abel Heywood*. In spite of this tradition, however, a strong Church and Tory party existed in both towns, and the rivalries between the Church and Dissenters did much to make Local Government ineffective.

This rivalry of Church and Dissenters was one reason why Manchester did not become a Corporation in 1763. It was then proposed that of the new magistrates, one-third were to be High Churchmen, one-third Moderate or Low Churchmen, and one-third Protestant Dissenters, but the High Churchmen were afraid that the Moderate or Low Churchmen might unite with the Protestant Dissenters and so opposed the Bill with success. For years after they celebrated their triumph by holding a procession and a dinner.

At the time of the French Revolution, the Tory spirit in Manchester showed itself in the attempt to destroy *Cross Street Chapel* and the new Unitarian Chapel in *Mosley Street*.

Manchester at this time was governed by Parish Vestries and by the Court Leet of the Manor of Manchester. That is, as Cobden put it, Manchester was governed from Rolleston Hall in Staffordshire, the residence of the Mosleys, the Lords of the Manor. The Mosleys had been in the early days members of *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester*, and were among the pioneers of the textile industry in Lancashire. Their connection with the Dissenters came to an end early.

The head of the officers appointed by the Court Leet was the Boroughreeve, and with him were two constables and

over one hundred officials, mostly honorary. These constables were not Justices of the Peace, of whom there were only a few in those days. One of the weaknesses of the system was that the local officials had to depend on county magistrates, who often were hard to reach. The Court could levy a rate out of which paid officers could be remunerated. The Radicals used the Vestry Meetings to protest against this unrepresentative system.

The first steps towards a more satisfactory form of government were taken in 1765 and 1792 when Acts of Parliament were obtained enabling Police Commissioners to be appointed with power to appoint paid watchmen to light the streets and levy a police rate; but little else was done till the nineteenth century. The Commissioners of 1765 were nominated in the Act. The Commissioners of 1792 were elected by a class—the class of large ratepayers—and included churchwardens as *ex-officio* Street Commissioners. The Police Commissioners from 1795 to 1828 consisted of all ratepayers who were assessed on a £30 rental and who chose to act. From 1828 to 1842 these were replaced by a body of Commissioners elected on a high property franchise.

Among these Commissioners, and later among the members of the Town Council, were a large number of members of *Cross Street Chapel*—many of them the same men as took the lead in the industrial and commercial development of Manchester and whose names will be found again in the chapter on the Educational Contribution.

Distinguished visitors coming to Manchester stayed with Unitarians and were taken to *Cross Street Chapel* on Sunday. The Hungarian patriot Kossuth stayed with *Alexander Henry*, Lord Shaftesbury with *William Fairbairn*, and the Duke of Newcastle with *Sir John Potter*.

As Commissioners, Unitarians brought to their task a high standard of honesty, rare at that time and none too frequent since. They were men of great ability and were ready to give up an immense amount of time and energy to the work they undertook. Not only was their work voluntary, but it included much that is now naturally done by paid officials.

The names that Sidney and Beatrice Webb in their great

history of Local Government have singled out for mention as leaders of progress are nearly all names of Unitarians. Facts of this kind show the falsity of the assumption that all the great manufacturers and merchants of this period allowed the abstract theory of *laissez-faire* to blind them to the concrete needs of the situation.

Streets were first taken charge of with the object, however, not of improving health and sanitary conditions, but of making better roads for carriages and pedestrians. The Westminster Paving Acts of 1762–1766 started a new era. In Manchester side-walks were paved with flags. But the Commissioners had no power to compel householders to pay for paving the street, and, when they tried to obtain this power in 1808, the opposition compelled them to abandon the project. It is difficult for people in the twentieth century to appreciate the fact that a man who was in favour of having the streets paved was regarded at the beginning of the nineteenth century as an extreme Radical.

The Commissioners accomplished much, but they would have done much more if they had been allowed. The great majority, if not of the people, certainly of the ratepayers, preferred incompetence and inefficiency and corruption if they thought they might share the profits of that corruption and their own inefficiency was not exposed.

In 1807 the Commissioners brought forward proposals to buy out the Mosley family as Lords of the Manor for £90,000 and to make many other necessary reforms. But these reforms would have involved the levy of a fourpenny rate, and a storm of indignation compelled them to be dropped.

The Commissioners were also defeated in their proposals to municipalize the water supply. In spite of the fact that these proposals had the support of the Town's Meeting, Parliament gave the right of supplying water to a private company, and this company was not bought out till 1847. The Commissioners spent £1,760 in opposing this Act, and the Quarter Sessions disallowed the payment, though it was recognized that in this matter they were carrying out the wishes of the inhabitants. The Commissioners themselves had to pay the sum disallowed, which in all amounted to

£2,500. Students of American local government know how much of the corruption which has been rampant there in certain towns was due to private ownership, called "franchises," of the right to supply at a profit the basic needs of the community.

The Commissioners were more successful with the proposal to municipalize the manufacture of gas. They began to make gas in 1807 for their own use, and in 1817 they obtained the ratepayers' consent to lighting the central streets of the town with gas. They set up gasworks without obtaining any Act of Parliament for the purpose. The gasworks were a great success, and they extended the works out of revenue, spending £30,000 in seven years. The success of the gas-works was largely due to *G. W. Wood* and *Thomas Potter*, and later to Thomas Wroe, the manager.

In 1823 a private enterprise company applied to Parliament to enable it to compete with the Commissioners in providing gas. The Commissioners drew up a memorial in which they pointed out the inconvenience of having two sets of authorities taking up the streets for gas mains, and that the profit made by them was not applied to private advantage. The Commissioners prepared a Bill of their own, and they were able to carry this, partly because the promoters of the private company had been found guilty of fraud.

A Bill was promoted by the Commissioners to substitute a body of elected Commissioners for a general meeting, and to give them the power to fix the price of gas. The property qualification needed to become a Commissioner or an elector of the Commissioners was put at £25. The Radicals demanded that the qualification should be lowered and the price of gas fixed. In the end a compromise was agreed to, lowering the qualification for electors to £16 and raising it for candidates to £28, but leaving the Commissioners to fix the price of gas. There is no doubt that under the existing ideas of the time this produced a better body of Commissioners than the proposals of the Radicals would have done.

For many years an unholy alliance was made between the Radical shopkeepers and the small property owners. In 1834

the Radical minority proposed that the gasworks should be sold. Sidney and Beatrice Webb have written as if all Nonconformists were on the reactionary side of this unholy alliance, but this was not true of the Unitarians.

When the reformers were beaten on every division, they began to rally their friends, and their opponents did the same. As a consequence, in 1826, more than a thousand new Commissioners took the oath of office, and six hundred attended at one meeting. It was no uncommon thing for eight hundred Commissioners to attend, and the meetings of the Commissioners became nearly as rowdy as those of the meetings of the Open Vestry.

"From 1831 to 1835 an open Vestry Meeting was held in Manchester . . . nearly every quarter, at which such popular leaders as *John Edward Taylor*, the brothers *Thomas* and *Richard Potter*, would make a strenuous fight to elect their own Church Warden, to nominate their own surveyors of the highway, to cut down the salary of the deputy constable; . . . and in 1833 to resist the imposition of any Church rates whatever" (S. and B. Webb). Tories described the Parish Vestry as consisting of the lowest scum of Manchester. And "The Manchester Guardian" of 1832 (at that time a Whig, not a Radical, paper) spoke of the reckless violence and the unabashed impudence of those who attended it.

The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 did not automatically make Manchester and Birmingham Corporations. In both cases there was a struggle lasting several years before a Charter was finally obtained. The movement for the incorporation of Manchester was headed by Richard Cobden and the brothers *John* and *Thomas Potter*. A Charter was granted in 1838, but legal objections were raised to the exercise of powers under it. The administration of the city threatened to be brought to a standstill, but a number of prominent citizens, including *J. E. Taylor*, *A. Henry*, and *S. D. Darbishire* lent money to tide over the situation. The Judges decided in favour of the Charter in 1839, but it was not until 1842 that the Charter was confirmed by an Act of Parliament, and it was not until June 24, 1843, that the Council entered

fully upon the enjoyment of the privileges granted by the Charter, an Act passed in that year having transferred to the Council certain powers still vested in the Commissioners.

The new Council proceeded to make Manchester for a time a "foremost example" of good municipal government.

Manchester was already famous for its doctors, and above all for *Dr. Thomas Percival*, and in 1835 a Manchester Medical Society was founded.

The first Statistical Society had been founded in 1833 by the same group of men, and the information it collected proved an added incentive to reform. The Society reported that of 37,000 workers' dwellings in Manchester, 10,000 were unsuitable, and that 18,000 people lived in cellars.

When a Sanitary Association was formed in Manchester, *J. A. Nicholls*, one of its most active members, gave a ghastly description of the slums of the city, and, indeed, it is only within the present century that the problem has begun to be tackled on a large scale.

In 1846 the Town Council bought from Sir Oswald Mosley for the enormous sum of £200,000 the Manor and all the rights and incidents; and the Lord's Court was quietly allowed to lapse.

The way in which Unitarians strove to extend to others the cultural amenities they valued for themselves is told in the next chapter.

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham, like Manchester, was not a corporate town, though its population had risen from about 1,200 in 1689 to 24,000 in 1740, and to 150,000 in 1835. There had been a petition for a Charter in 1716, after the riots in connection with the Jacobite rising. The famous Birmingham character, the bookseller Hutton, was against having a Corporation even as late as 1795. "A town without a Charter is a town without a shackle."

Birmingham, like Manchester, had been Puritan in sympathy in the Civil War. Because of its Puritan sympathies, and because it was open to receive the ejected ministers who were forbidden by the Five Mile Act to come within

five miles of a corporate town, Birmingham became a place of refuge and a centre of Nonconformity. Not being a corporate town, it was also free from many of the outmoded restrictions often in force in those towns. Birmingham had no special economic or industrial advantages, and its industrial development was due to the character of its inhabitants. Among these, Quakers and Unitarians were perhaps the most outstanding, though orthodox Dissenters (Independents) were also strong. The Quakers of this period were rather quietist in tendency. Not until the time of Joseph Sturge, whose statue stands at Five Ways, did Quakers take an active part in social questions, though some served as Commissioners. Birmingham, again like Manchester, though it had been Puritan in the Civil War, contained not merely active Dissenters but also a very strong Tory and Church party, and hostility to the Dissenters plays a considerable part in Birmingham history.

Though Birmingham resembled Manchester in not being a corporate town, it differed in that the control of the Lord of the Manor had been reduced to a form, though compensation had to be paid when the office was abolished. Birmingham was governed by the Justices of the Peace, by a Court Leet, and by a Parish Vestry. The chief officers of the town were chosen annually at the Court Leet, presided over by the Lord Steward.

By long tradition, in fact, the important office was that of Low Bailiff, and the Court Leet really registered his decisions. There was a High Bailiff, who was a Churchman, but his office was ornamental. The Low Bailiff and the members of the Court Leet were mostly Dissenters, and in the latter part of the eighteenth century the office of Steward and Low Bailiff was held by Unitarians, mostly by members of the *Old Meeting Congregation*. *Thomas Lee* was a Steward of the Manor for many years. He published a pamphlet in 1789 entitled "The Duty of the Respective Officers appointed by the Court Leet in the Manor of Birmingham."

In the list of members of the Court Leet for 1779 there are twenty names. Of these the following were members of the *Old Meeting*: *Thomas Lee*, Steward of the Manor, *Joseph*

Wilkinson, *John Ryland*, *Timothy Smith*, *Michael Lakin*, *William Ryland*, and *Samuel Ryland*. These names will be found recurring again and again in the history of Birmingham.

This arrangement, which gave Dissenters the control of the Court Leet, was naturally distasteful both to the Lord of the Manor and to members of the excluded party. In 1722 they had contested the legality of the procedure in vain, but in 1792, as a result of the Birmingham Riots of 1791, they made another attempt to secure the election of Church and Tory officers. The Steward tried to charge the jury. "The opposite party, headed by *Mr. John Taylor* of Moseley Hall, an eminent member of the Unitarian body, and a chief sufferer by the late Riots, contested the legality of their proceedings. Their case was conducted by *Mr. Thomas Lee*, Solicitor, and the son of a former Steward of the Manor." The right of the Low Bailiff rather than the jury to summon the Leet was established.

Commissioners were first appointed in 1769, to improve the street lighting. At that time the population was over 30,000, but a canvass showed only 237 for the proposed Act to extend the lighting and 1,236 against it. The local historian, William Hutton, has explained with a disarming naivety that he opposed the proposed Act for selfish reasons, because he occupied two houses which would have had to come down if the improvements had been carried out. In 1772 he supported the proposals, but again for selfish reasons, as he himself explained. In 1773 he himself was appointed one of the Commissioners of the Lamp and Street Act, and he found that the same motives as had animated him were active among the Commissioners. "Some wished to retain their own nuisances; others to protect those of their friends." Other sets of Commissioners were appointed as time went on, but all suffered from inadequate powers and had very little money at their disposal. "Of police there were none."

Unitarians were well represented on these various Commissions, especially by the families of the *Russells* and the *Rylands*. *Timothy Smith* was one of the most active Commissioners. He was Secretary to the Committee for the water

works in 1808, and, when he died in 1834, the funeral procession met at the Town Hall. The riots of 1791 did some harm for a time to the position held by Unitarians in Local Government, but by the early years of the nineteenth century they seem to have recovered from that blow.

In Birmingham, as elsewhere at this period, there were often fierce struggles in the Parish Vestries. In the struggles of the thirties the orthodox Dissenters and Quakers were more prominent than Unitarians, for they were opposed to the Church of England on principle in a way the Unitarians were not. The reasons for this will be made clear in a later chapter on the Creation of the Unitarian Tradition. The antagonism came to a head in 1831, and again in the struggles over the incorporation of the city.

In 1831 an attempt to levy the Church rate in St. Martin's Parish led to violent proceedings at the Vestry Meeting in the church. The nominees of the opposition were elected—P. H. Muntz, a Congregationalist, later the second Mayor of Birmingham and M.P., and T. Atwood, also later an M.P. One of the *Russells* was elected a sidesman.

At one of these meetings the Rector was violently assaulted, and at a public meeting, held to express disgust, the principal resolutions were moved by *the Rev. John Corrie* and the Low Bailiff, *Thomas Lee*. Few people realize how recent a gain of civilization were the comparative quiet and decency of the last part of the nineteenth century.

The struggle over the incorporation of the town was fiercer even than in Manchester. While the Bill was going through Parliament a meeting was held to protest against the changes being made in it by the House of Lords. The resolution of protest was moved by *Thomas Tyndall*, the Low Bailiff, and other resolutions were proposed and seconded by *William Beale*, William Wills, and *W. Phipson*. The agitation for the Charter was led by P. H. Muntz, M.P., but it was supported by the High Bailiff, who was a Churchman. The Conservatives as a whole were against the Charter and some Whigs were lukewarm. A public meeting to demand a Charter was presided over by the Low Bailiff, *T. Bolton*, and was addressed by William Wills. The names

of the supporters at this and other meetings include *Ryde*, *Martineau*, *Osler*, *Beale*, and *the Rev. S. Bache*.

A Charter was granted, and the first Council was elected on December 26, 1838. The first Councillors elected were all Liberals, chiefly of the Radical section, and were mostly Nonconformists, though there were several members of the Church of England, two Roman Catholics, and one Jew. Councillors had to take an oath or make a declaration not to do anything to weaken the Protestant Church as by law established. Two Quakers, Joseph Sturge and Charles Sturge, declined to take this oath, but Joseph Sturge was elected an Alderman.

The first Aldermen elected included *Thomas Bolton*, *Samuel Beale*, and *J. T. Lawrence*. *W. Phipson* and *William Beale* were defeated in the election of Aldermen.

The first Mayor was the High Bailiff, William Schofield, a Churchman who had supported incorporation. The second Mayor was P. H. Muntz, the Congregationalist who had led the agitation, and the third was *Samuel Beale*.

In the list of Justices of the Peace proposed in 1839 appeared the names of *John Towers Lawrence*, who was already on the Commission of the Peace for the county, *Samuel Beale*, *Thomas Bolton*, *W. Phipson*, and *Henry Smith*.

In Birmingham, as in Manchester, a fierce struggle took place even after the Charter was obtained. In fact, party spirit at Birmingham was stronger than at Manchester. At Manchester the Conservatives refused to recognize the Charter as valid and boycotted the election. At Birmingham they stood for election but were all defeated. This defeat, combined with the Chartist Riots of 1839, roused them to desperation, and they made a fierce effort to annul the Charter. The grounds for disputing the Charter were defects in its drafting and certain legal technicalities, but there was also a question of the different powers conferred by a statutory and a common law Charter. As at Manchester, the overseers refused to levy the rates, and members of the Council had to guarantee loans from the bank. The legality of the decisions of Quarter Sessions were called in question. The Recorder, *M. D. Hill*, in his charge to the Grand Jury

in 1839, held that, though the Corporation could not contribute to the cost of keeping their prisoners in the County Gaol, they could commit their prisoners to the County Gaol, where, of course, they would have to be fed at the expense of the county.

"The (Whig) government might have done in 1839 what the Conservative administration did in 1842, namely, introduced a Bill to confirm the Charters granted by the Crown." (J. T. Bunce: "History of the Corporation of Birmingham"). Instead, partly because it was afraid of the Dissenters, it passed an Act taking the control of the police out of the hands of the Corporation. In 1840 a Charter Committee was appointed, of which *Alderman Beale* was one of the members. The hostility between the two parties was so intense that members of the rival parties refused to meet in public or in private. The Quarter Sessions had to be suspended when the Government stopped its advances. The Tories had no representation on the Council, but they had the Board of Street Commissioners and the Board of Guardians nearly to themselves, and the County Justices ignored the Overseers' List presented by the Borough Overseers.

The Government introduced two new measures to settle the difficulties in Manchester, Birmingham, and Bolton. They proposed to give the Town Councils powers equal to those exercised by the Street Commissioners. Through the action of the House of Lords, however, the powers they proposed to confer upon the Town Council were, as a matter of fact, conferred upon the Street Commissioners. "And thus the much needed improvement of the town was delayed for another ten years, for nothing practically was done in this direction until the complete absorption of local governing powers by the Town Council in the Improvement Act of 1851." After the next general election, the Tory Government in 1842 under Sir Robert Peel restored control of the police to the Corporation and introduced a Bill confirming the Charter.

A further struggle took place before the powers exercised by the various bodies of Commissioners were transferred to

the Council. But in 1851, through the influence of *Henry Smith*, a Bill was passed putting an end to the existing chaos by consolidating the governing bodies of the town. By this time a change in sentiment had taken place. At first the Commissioners had been hostile to the Council, upon which few of them sat; but in course of time the leading Commissioners themselves had become members of the Town Council.

Whether as a result of these conflicts or not, Birmingham was slow in taking the place it has since occupied as one of the most progressive of municipalities. The grant of self-government was followed for a time by "a lengthened and active period of administrative vigour—the construction of public works conducive to the health, the comfort and the dignity of the administration." There followed on this, however, a period in which "public interests became enfeebled, personal rivalries and petty jealousies asserted sway, and many of the ablest and most influential citizens shrank from taking their just share in local government." The Birmingham Town Council became a "perfunctory disrespected clique of bumbledom," arranging its proceedings in a public-house with the sole object of keeping down the rates. Conditions of life were foul. The water supply was in the hands of a company and ran only three days a week. Half the inhabitants obtained their water from wells tainted with sewage. Old slums were left to grow more ruinous and new slums were being created.

This was the situation about the time that *Joseph Chamberlain* took up municipal work and opened a new era not only in Birmingham but in the country as a whole. "He was the first statesman of commanding power to put the whole question of town civilization in its proper place in politics. His career as a reformer in Birmingham is a landmark in English history" (J. L. Hammond).

Joseph Chamberlain came of a Unitarian family connected with the *Little Carter Lane* and *Islington* Churches in London. The family had settled in London in 1730, and carried on business as cordwainers in the same premises for one hundred and thirty years. His mother, *Caroline Harben*, was descended

from an ejected minister, a friend of Richard Baxter, and this ejected minister was descended from one of the martyrs under Queen Mary. "I trace a descent of which I am as proud as any baron." The family of *Harben* were members of *Westgate Chapel, Lewes*, during the eighteenth century. *Chamberlain's* father was a very ardent Unitarian, and when he was introduced to anyone he used to say: "Yes, sir, *Joseph Chamberlain*, and a Unitarian." For many years *Joseph Chamberlain* himself taught in the Sunday School of the *Church of the Messiah, Birmingham*. He was Vice-President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and a subscriber till 1894. Later in life he seems to have lost something of his religious faith. "An Honest Biography," written during his lifetime by A. Mackintosh, put the matter in this way: "As to his religious belief Mr. Chamberlain has been reticent for many years. He is still a Unitarian in his religious convictions and is still a member of the *Church of the Messiah*, although not regular now in his attendance at the services." On the other hand, Professor H. E. Egerton says *Chamberlain* "seems always to have remained faithful to the creed of his fathers."

Chamberlain entered the Council in 1869, and was Mayor from 1873 to 1876, when he resigned to devote himself to political work, though remaining an Alderman. He was forty-three years old at the time and had made a fortune in the development of the screw industry. He was "the greatest executive citizen of the nineteenth century." Later he was to win a national reputation, but he always regarded the work he did in Birmingham as the most important of his life. He gave Birmingham cheap gas, pure water, and healthy houses, but he did more than improve Birmingham in these ways. He made it for a time the best-governed city in England. He gave it a new spirit and a new imagination, and not it alone, for the example and stimulus he provided extended far beyond Birmingham.

He only accomplished his work after a series of great struggles. He won these partly by his character and partly by his methods. He put at the disposal of the community that energy and enterprise and ability which had made him a

fortune in private business. And the fact that he had made a fortune in private business gave him the confidence of many who could not share his dreams.

He applied his gifts to the organization of public opinion. His first problem was to get a majority determined on reform. This he secured by applying to local purposes the political organization he had created for national purposes. This organization was the famous political machine called the caucus. The method has its dangers and has been subject to much criticism. A too rigid division into political parties may deprive Local Government of the services of many excellent men. And the organization of the caucus may easily lead to corruption and stagnation, unless at its centre are men very conscious of their responsibilities and very open-minded, and the caucus does not encourage the predominance of this type of man.

The argument for these methods was that only in this way could the apathy of the mass of the voters be overcome—by putting before them the principles which should, and in fact often do, lie at the root of political divisions, and that only by organization could the mass be turned from a mob into a responsible body. At Birmingham under *Chamberlain's* leadership the method worked well.

Chamberlain was Mayor in 1873, and was re-elected in each of the three succeeding years, and in each of these he had a great fight. J. L. Garvin has described them in his Biography in a chapter entitled "The Great Citizen in Action."

He began with gas. Under the leadership of another Unitarian years earlier, Manchester had begun with gas. He began with gas partly for practical reasons, because there he hoped to find the money necessary to make the town healthy without such an increase of rates as would have created insuperable opposition. He started from two propositions. (1) "All monopolies which are sustained in any way by the State ought to be in the hands of the representatives of the people, by whom they should be administered, and to whom their profits should go." (2) "He was inclined to increase the duties and responsibilities of the local authority,

and would do everything in his power to constitute these local authorities real local parliaments supreme in their special jurisdiction" (J. L. Garvin).

All this is commonplace now in most big towns. It was not commonplace then. He prepared the ground by negotiations with the two companies and arranged terms with them. He persuaded the Council to support him by fifty-two votes to two, but the approval of a Ratepayers' Meeting was needed to confirm the decision. " 'Would *you* give that for it?' cried a pointed antagonist. The retort won the day: 'I will repeat the offer I made to the Town Council . . . that if they will take this bargain and farm it out to me, I will pay them £20,000 a year for it, and at the end of fourteen years (he was only thirty-seven) I shall have a snug little fortune of £150,000 or £200,000.' "

At the end of his first year of office he was re-elected. He then tackled the water supply. There he had a struggle. The Water Company refused to be bought out except at excessive cost, and an Act of Parliament had to be obtained. *Chamberlain* appeared as chief witness for the Corporation. The Bill was passed, and *Chamberlain* was able to carry out his policy of refusing to make a profit on the water supply. "All profit should go in reduction of the price of water." At the end of his second year of office he was again re-elected. His next task was harder—to destroy the slums in the centre of Birmingham. His proposals roused more opposition. They were more of a novelty, and the financial side of them was not so calculable. He was helped by the Artisans' Dwelling Act just passed by Disraeli's Government and which he had helped to amend. At the Local Government Board Inquiry "he was his own counsel." What really carried his proposals was his prestige and the confidence he had inspired. Corporation Street, Birmingham, now stands where slums had once stood. In six years the average death-rate was reduced by half. *Chamberlain* had insisted that a seventy-five years' lease for the new property was long enough, and in twenty years, when these leases fall in, Birmingham will be one of the richest municipalities in the country.

Chamberlain had many helpers. Many of them were Unitarians like himself. Over twenty Mayors of Birmingham have been Unitarians, including *S.* and *C. G. Beale*, and *W.* and *W. B. Kenrick*.

Birmingham was fortunate at this time in the services of three distinguished ministers, the Congregationalist, Dr. Dale, and the Unitarians, *Dr. H. W. Crosskey* and *George Dawson*.

R. A. Armstrong, in his Life of *Henry William Crosskey*, has said: "The position of a Unitarian minister in a great English city is in some respects unique. Ecclesiastically and socially his is apt to be somewhat a lonely figure. Usually a man of considerable culture, he finds himself in some degree bereft by his position of the fellowship to which his culture gives him claim. Religiously, his whole habit of mind, while holding its own theologically, is to seek points of sympathetic contact with the religious of every sort, from the most orthodox to those whose heterodoxy far outstrips his own. . . . Yet he finds himself an outcast from religious fellowship, and neither Catholic, nor Anglican, nor Evangelical will hold with him any communication of the spirit. Cut off thus from the comradeship of those who hold religion the foremost element of life, he turns to the intellectual life around him. He has shared the intellectual movement of his time. The great names of the century in the world of thought are his household words. The great books of the age are on his shelves and have penetrated his thinking. There is in all the realms of literature and science no teacher whose name he dreads, for he worships the Spirit of truth, and can have no fear of the outcome of honest thinking."

George Dawson was the prophet of the movement. Originally a Baptist, he had become a Unitarian in theology. He sat loosely to all theological connections, and it was only after his death that his Church became officially identified with the Unitarian organization. Many Unitarians from the older Churches went to hear him.

The tradition thus created has been carried on to this day. Birmingham was the first great city to adopt the principle of town planning. "Municipal town planning in

Birmingham owes its inception to the energy and enthusiasm of *Mr. J. S. Nettlefold*" (The Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P.).

One explanation of this survival of a good tradition is worth attention. In the course of the nineteenth century business men ceased to live near their businesses, and in many large towns they moved a considerable distance away to live in more country-like surroundings. In Birmingham the pleasant suburb of Edgbaston provided these country-like surroundings and yet was quite close to the centre of the town. So the connection was not broken, as it was, for instance, at Manchester, where business men went further away from the town.

LIVERPOOL

Unitarians were strong in Liverpool. They were among the leaders of its commercial development and of its cultural strivings, and they were respected also for their personal character. But they were excluded from the Corporation between the middle of the eighteenth century and 1833. In 1806 Liverpool so far forgot its party feeling in its respect for its distinguished citizen *William Roscoe* that it returned him to Parliament. But since one of his first acts was to vote for the abolition of the slave trade out of which Liverpool made great profits, he lost his seat at the next election.

Liverpool was an old corporate city and vacancies on the Corporation were filled by the surviving members, that is, the Corporation was self-elected and this made it difficult for new groups to obtain entrance. Liverpool had, indeed, been Puritan in the Civil War, and Whig in the early eighteenth century, but it was Whig and Anglican, not, as was more common, Whig and Dissenting. Then it became Tory and Anglican, for it was superseding Bristol as the centre of the slave trade and the Whigs, particularly those who were Unitarian and Quaker, were against the slave trade. So the most progressive and also the most prosperous of the town merchants were excluded from a share in the government of the town.

Unitarians were able to do good work on the Vestry, for the Vestry was a Select Vestry and as such more efficient than the turbulent Open Vestry of Manchester. For a time its work was largely inspired by *Dr. Currie*, and while this was so Liverpool had earned "the reputation of being the model Urban Parish." But a legal defect was found in its powers, and after 1819 the overseers were able to override the Vestry. Forty-five years later, the Medical Officer of Health for Liverpool suggested that a memorial should be erected to *Dr. Currie* "who with the physicians of the Fever Hospital, in the year 1802, pointed out preventive measures which if they had been adopted would have prevented Liverpool being now the least healthy city in Great Britain."

The Corporation, though self-elected, was not a scandalous one. It had large funds at its disposal, but it used this wealth more for public purposes than for its own gratification or for political bribery. In certain directions it had shown considerable enterprise while it was still under Whig control. As early as 1748 it got an Act for lighting, cleaning, and washing the streets which was the first of such Acts. In 1767 public walks and gardens were laid out.

The Whigs complained that the port dues were fixed higher than need be, that the city revenues were spent in the interests of the Church, for the Corporation paid for the building of churches and their upkeep, that they subscribed to King's College, London, founded for the Church of England, but not to University College, which was the first of the new colleges and unsectarian.

But here, as in all other growing towns, both the prevailing ideas and the machinery of government were quite inadequate to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing population. The population of Liverpool, which was 18,000 in 1750, was 20,000 thirty years later and nearly a quarter of a million by 1833. Even according to the prevailing low standards, Liverpool was remarkable for the filth in its streets, and 20,000 people lived in cellars. A scandal in 1827, when £20,000 was spent in bribery by candidates for the office of Mayor, discredited the old system, and Liverpool responded to the wave of reform enthusiasm which was spreading over

the whole country. For a moment in 1831 *William Rathbone* was the hero of the mob, though two years later, when he opposed its corruption, he was the object of its fury. Two years later still, in 1835, there was another revulsion of feeling, and he was presented with a piece of plate.

In 1833 two Whigs were again chosen as bailiffs, the first members of the Whig Party who had been chosen to these offices for many years. One was William Wallace Currie, the son of *Dr. Currie*. In 1834 and 1835 James Aspinall was Mayor. In 1836 the first election took place under the Municipal Corporations Act and an almost entirely Whig Corporation was returned. The third Mayor of Liverpool under the new Act was a Unitarian, *William Rathbone*. In 1840 *Thomas Bolton* was Mayor. For a short time a period of great activity set in.

The progressive dominance of the city was not continued. *William Rathbone* was defeated, though he returned to the Council later. He was Chairman of the Committee which carried the scheme for providing Liverpool with water from Rivington, and hostility to this scheme led to his defeat.

In the late eighteenth century, the situation had been complicated by the slavery question; in the nineteenth it was complicated by the growth of strong sectarian feeling. Liverpool, being a port with a large Irish traffic, had received a large number of Irish immigrants who were Catholics, and anti-Catholic feeling overrode other issues. Unitarians of course refused to pander to this sectarianism.

Later in the century a number of Unitarians received the honour of Mayor. In 1880 Liverpool became a city, and in 1893 *Richard Durning Holt* became the first Lord Mayor. In 1894 *W. B. Bowring*, then Lord Mayor, presented an address of welcome to the Duke and Duchess of York.

Even though Unitarians were only a small minority in the Council, their influence continued to make itself felt outside. Their contribution to education and to cultural amenities will be described in the next chapter.

As elsewhere, health services were the object of their special interest. As early as 1803 *William Roscoe* had projected the

institution of the Liverpool Botanic Garden, which was laid out under his direction. Princes Park, Liverpool, was presented by *R. V. Yates* and Bowring Park was opened in 1906. A statue of *William Rathbone* was unveiled in Sefton Park in 1877.

In recent times, social conditions on the Merseyside have been the subject of a survey of the type of which a Liverpool Unitarian, *Charles Booth*, was the originator. Behind all these activities lay the inspiration of a series of great ministers of religion, who continued to inspire their members with a sense of social service as part of religion, and some of whom on occasion left the pulpit for the platform when some urgent need called them. Of these, *R. A. Armstrong* was the most remarkable for his combination of deep religious feeling with public activities.

OTHER TOWNS

Leeds had also a self-appointed Corporation, Church in religion and Tory in politics. In the middle of the eighteenth century Leeds had no system of public lighting, and robberies and acts of violence were common. In 1832 there were over seven hundred deaths from cholera in six months. The Corporation did not try to obtain needed new powers for itself, but took the lead in promoting local Acts of Parliament by which special bodies of Commissioners were appointed to look after the streets and the water supply. Members of the Corporation were appointed on these bodies but the Commissioners were predominantly Dissenters, and Dissenters, who were usually Whigs in the eighteenth century, and often Radicals in the early nineteenth century, included many of the wealthy commercial families of the town. In Leeds, the orthodox Dissenters were very strong, as the history of the agitation about the Education Acts showed, but among the Commissioners were a number of Unitarians like *the Rev. William Wood*, *Josiah Oates*, and *Samuel Fenton*.

On the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act a number of Unitarians were elected as aldermen, councillors, ward assessors, and magistrates. The third Mayor of Leeds

under the new system was *T. W. Tottie*. Later *Hamer Stansfeld* (1843), *Darnton Lupton* (1844), *John Darnton Luccock* (1845–1864), *Francis Carbutt* (1847), *James Kitson* (1860–1861), *Sir E. H. Carbutt* (1877), *Sir Edwin Gaunt* (1885–1886), *Sir John Ward* (1888–1892), *Sir J. Kitson, Bt., M.P.* (1896–1897), *A. C. Briggs* (1903), *Charles Lupton* (1915), and *Hugh Lupton* (1926). Outside the Council these men left their mark in other ways. The ministries of *the Rev. W. Wood, F.L.S., the Rev. Charles Wicksteed,* and *the Rev. Charles Hargrove* were particularly notable.

Before Sheffield received its Charter in 1843, *T. A. Ward* was a Town Trustee and could have been Sheffield's first Member of Parliament. *Thomas Jessop* was on the Board of Police Commissioners and a member of the first Sheffield Town Council but did not become Mayor till 1863. Twelve members of *Upper Chapel*, Sheffield, have held the office of Mayor or Lord Mayor of Sheffield, including *W. E. Laycock* in 1865, *Michael Hunter* in 1881, and *Sir A. J. Hobson* in 1911.

Leicester before the Municipal Corporations Act won the reputation of being one of the most corrupt boroughs in the country. During this period no Unitarian was Mayor. The reform of its civic life was largely inspired by members of *Great Meeting*, Leicester, and the first five Mayors were members of that congregation. *Thomas Paget* was Mayor for the first two periods; later *John Biggs, M.P.*, and *William Biggs* were each Mayor three times. *J. R. Frears*, a member of the *Narborough Road Free Christian Church*, was Mayor in 1913.

In the eighteenth century the congregation at *Lewin's Mead, Bristol*, consisted of so many leading citizens that with one exception its members included the whole aldermanic bench. Of the feoffees of the Unitarian Alms Houses in Stokes Croft in 1785, eight had been Mayors and three Sheriffs. For some reason this close connection of Lewin's Mead with the Municipal Government seems to have come to an end.

The influence of Unitarians in the reform of the city was still considerable, but it was exercised through individual personalities like *Dr. Estlin* and *the Rev. Dr. Carpenter* and *Mary*

Carpenter and families like the *Worsleys* rather than through men holding official positions.

A similar situation seems to have existed at Norwich. The first and the second Mayors of Bolton, Lancashire, were Unitarians, *C. J. Darbishire* and *R. Heywood*, followed later by *John* and *Richard Harwood*, *John Heywood*, and *J. Percy Taylor*. The first and second Mayors of Hyde were *Thomas Ashton* and *Edward Hibbert*. *Sir Jerom Murch*, who combined both Huguenot and ejected ancestry, was Mayor of Bath seven times. He wrote "A History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England."

Sir William Lawrence was Lord Mayor of London, 1863, and his brother, *Sir James Clark Lawrence*, in 1868.

CHAPTER 6

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION — WOMEN'S EDUCATION — SECONDARY EDUCATION—ELEMENTARY EDUCATION—THE STATE AND EDUCATION—ADULT EDUCATION—CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

EDUCATION might be described as a passion with Unitarians. They believed in education as such, and not as a form of sectarian propaganda. They have contributed to all those movements of the last two hundred years which have improved education in quantity and quality. The theological prejudices against Unitarians have made themselves felt more in the sphere of education than anywhere else. The fact that Unitarians were for long a barely tolerated minority has made it impossible for them to influence large masses with their educational ideals, so their work has been mainly pioneer work, especially in University education, in adult education, in women's education, and in unsectarian education. Here again the Unitarians were carrying on the tradition of their Puritan ancestors.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The circumstances under which Protestant Dissenters were excluded from the only two English Universities will be described in a later chapter on "The Unitarian Tradition." Religious tests made it impossible for Unitarians to take their degrees at Oxford or Cambridge. Walter Bagehot was one of those who went to University College, London, because Oxford and Cambridge were closed to him.

A Bill introduced by *G. W. Wood, M.P.*, to enable Dissenters to enter the national Universities was rejected by the House of Lords in 1834. In 1850, *James Heywood, M.P.*, moved for a Royal Commission on the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1854, he had the satisfaction of moving the clause by which religious tests were abolished

for Bachelors' Degrees, except in Divinity. Even in 1864 *Russell Scott* met with difficulties before he found a College willing to take his son, *C. P. Scott*, later famous as the editor of "The Manchester Guardian." The tests imposed at the taking of the M.A. degree were abolished in 1871. Not till 1919 were the tests abolished in the case of Divinity degrees.

About the end of the eighteenth century, a number of Fellows of Colleges at Cambridge became Unitarians and had to give up their Fellowships. One of these, *Dr. John Jebb*, whose work for political reform has already been described, had made an attempt to introduce needed reforms at Cambridge.

The result of this exclusion was the creation of Dissenting Academies after the great Ejection of 1662, some of which have remained to this day. *Manchester College, Oxford*, is a successor of the Academy of Richard Frankland at Rathmell. Nonconformist Academies were attended by members of the Church of England as well as by Nonconformists, and did not confine themselves to theological subjects. Many of them had a particular interest in the teaching of science. Competent students are of opinion that these academies gave the best education to be had in the England of that time. There was a close connection between Dissenters and the Scottish Universities, especially Glasgow, during the period called the Age of Moderatism. Many of the ministers educated at these Academies kept schools, and the education provided at them was often superior to that provided by the old grammar schools. Their influence went deep in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. One old student on entering the House of Commons said he found more members who had been at *Dr. Lant Carpenter's* school than had been at Rugby.

In the nineteenth century Unitarians were active in founding and administering the modern universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham. Dr. McLachlan has described this aspect of the Unitarian contribution in "The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England."

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Somerville College, Oxford, was named after *Mary Somerville*, one of the first two women to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society; she received the honour in her own life-time of having her bust placed in the large hall of the Royal Society. Barbara Leigh Smith, daughter of *William Smith, M.P.*, was one of the chief founders of Girton College, Cambridge. The wife of *C. P. Scott* was one of the first students at the College at Hitchin, half-way between London and Cambridge, which preceded Girton College. The founder of Bedford College was *Mrs. Elizabeth Jesser Reid*, daughter of *William Sturch*. She was supported by numerous Unitarians of whom *William Shaen* deserves special mention. He was also first solicitor to the Girls' Public Day Schools Company and active in promoting women's medical education, and the opening to women of degrees at London University. The first girl to attend Bedford College with a scholarship from school was *Henrietta Busk*, whose Life has been written by Ruth Young under the title of "The Life of an Educational Worker." *Anna Leigh Browne* was largely instrumental in founding the Hall of Residence for Women, College Hall, now a part of the University of London. Penelope Lawrence and her sisters, the three daughters of *Philip Henry Lawrence* founded and managed the Roedean School, Brighton. They were descended from Philip Henry—an ejected minister.

The work of nursing had always been regarded as women's work, but nursing was not a profession till *Florence Nightingale* made it one by insisting on nurses being trained and having professional standards. In making nursing a profession she did a good work not only for the nurses but even more for the patients. She was able to effect this tremendous change by the prestige she had won from her work in the Crimean War and by her own high sense of purpose and organizing genius. In her work in providing Poor Law Institutions with trained nurses she was helped by *William Rathbone*. There seems to have been a conspiracy of silence to conceal the religious views of *Florence Nightingale*. Her parents were Unitarians. Her own views were given in

"Suggestions for Thought to Searchers after Religious Truth." A fragment of this was made available for the first time to the general public in Ray Strachey's "The Cause" in 1928. "The book was written by *Miss Nightingale* in 1852, when she was thirty-two years old, and it was revised and finally put together in 1859, after her return from the Crimea. In that year she had it privately printed, but on the advice of J. S. Mill, Jowett, and other friends it was not published." Writers on the subject have often been misled by failure to realize that the Unitarians of the older tradition did not feel the same hostility to the Church of England as orthodox Dissenters often did.

While he was President of the Local Government Board, *Sir James Stansfeld, M.P.*, made a precedent for the admission of women to Civil Service positions when in 1874 he appointed Mrs. Nassau Senior as Inspector of Poor Law Institutions. But not until political equality had been won were the barriers in the Civil Service removed.

Unitarians were the first to open the profession of ministry of religion to women. Quakers had, of course, always recognized the spiritual equality of men and women, but they had no professional ministers. *Manchester College, Oxford*, admitted two American women ministers as Occasional Students in 1892 and *Eveline Harrington* from *Meadville Theological College*, America, as a Special Student in 1899. In 1898 *Gertrud von Petzold* received an Exhibition from the College to enable her to take her degree before entering on the theological course which she took from 1901 to 1904. In 1904 she became the first woman minister in England. Before this *Mrs. Ormiston Chant* had won fame as an undenominational woman preacher. In *Manchester College, Oxford*, a Memorial Tablet has been placed to *Frances Power Cobbe*. "Writer on Philosophy and Religion—a Pioneer in Social Reform." Her hymns early found a place in Unitarian Hymn Books.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

In the eighteenth century what is now called secondary education was given mostly in grammar schools and up to

1779 Dissenters were not allowed to teach in these schools. They were, however, allowed to keep private schools. In 1714, indeed, the Schism Act was passed which would have deprived Protestant Dissenting ministers of this privilege, but owing to the death of Queen Anne the Act was not brought into operation and under George I in 1719 it was repealed. The schools kept by Protestant Dissenting ministers rendered valuable services, not merely to Nonconformity, but also to English education. Many Protestant Dissenting ministers kept private schools. These were usually boarding schools, sometimes large boarding schools. At *Banbury*, for instance, the very extensive premises which were used for this purpose can still be seen.

Some of the text-books prepared by these teachers for their private schools were widely used in other boarding schools. "The Speaker," by William Enfield (the ancestor of a distinguished Unitarian family of Town Clerks at Nottingham), composed in 1724, went through many editions.

At the other end of the century "Lessons for Children," by *Mrs. Barbauld*, may be said to have inaugurated a new era in children's books. During the nineteenth century, translations of her "Hymns in Prose for Children" were published in five languages. *Mrs. Barbauld* was the daughter of *the Rev. Dr. Aikin*, Classical Tutor at the Dissenting Academy at Warrington. She was well known in her own time as a writer both of poetry and of prose. One of her poems, "Life, we've been long together," was a favourite of Wordsworth's. She married *the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld*, a student of the Warrington Academy and the son of an Anglican clergyman. They conducted a boarding school at Palgrave near Diss in Norfolk, at which "excellent work was done." Many of her pupils later won distinction.

A school whose fame spread over all Europe and which gave rise to other experiments was kept by *T. W. Hill*, the father of *M. D. Hill, M.P.*, along with his sons early in the nineteenth century. The school was carried on by the family till 1877. *M. D. Hill* published a description of it in "Public Education" in 1822, of which a second edition was issued five years later. *Hill's* book was translated into several

foreign languages and foreign visitors were taken to see the school. *Southwood Smith* was interested in it and *Jeremy Bentham* was enthusiastic for it. The school was in many ways at least a hundred years before its time. There is no doubt that this school influenced Dr. Arnold of Rugby. The school was self-governing and self-educating and no corporal punishment was administered. There was a code of rules of a hundred pages with a Court of Justice to apply them. Manual and mental work were combined.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

In the eighteenth century, elementary education was mainly provided by endowed schools (charity schools) and by dame schools. Some of these endowed schools had survived from the Middle Ages, but many more were endowed after the middle of the seventeenth century. The earliest of these schools were due to an ejected minister, T. Googe, who founded a society which was perhaps the earliest Society in Europe set up to spread elementary education. The work that he began there may have been one of the influences which led in 1698 to the foundation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the S.P.C.K. The Society at once took up the work of educating poor children, but its object was not so much educational as what was called moral and religious. In practice this meant "the education of poor children in the knowledge and practice of the Christian Religion as professed and taught in the Church of England" (Professor J. W. Adamson: "A Short History of Education"). "The educational ideal of the century at its best was the training of the poor to poverty, an honest, upright, grateful, industrious poverty" (C. Birchenough: "History of Elementary Education in England and Wales"). The education given by these schools was limited in quantity and defective in quality. But there were not more than two thousand of these schools and no fresh ones were being founded. Their main value was that they were a beginning.

At first Dissenters had subscribed largely to these schools, but it was soon found in practice "by sufficient experience, that the children were brought up, in too many of these

schools, in principles of disaffection to the present government, in bigoted zeal for the word Church, and with a violent enmity and malicious spirit of persecution against all whom they were taught to call Presbyterians, though from many of their hands they received their bread and clothing" (H. S. Skeats and C. S. Miall: "History of the Free Churches of England"). Protestant Dissenters then began to provide Charity Schools of their own. Many of these have survived to this day and some are still attached to those Unitarian congregations which have a Protestant Dissenting ancestry.

Sunday Schools

The next attempt to spread education took the form of the establishment of Sunday Schools. Their connection with the Charity Schools is indicated by the fact that at first they were called Sunday Charity Schools. There had been a few instances of such schools in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England and in America, and of course the religious catechizing of children has a long history.

The idea of establishing Sunday Schools seems to have occurred to several people independently about the middle of the eighteenth century, and consequently there are many rival claimants for the honour.

This fact is well brought out in an inscription on a statue transferred to the garden of *Essex Church* Manse in 1887 in connection with the centenary of Robert Raikes, who did much to spread Sunday Schools, but was not their originator: "Erected to commemorate the Christian efforts of the members of various Churches from the time of Cardinal Borromeo, 1580, to that of *Theophilus Lindsey* and Robert Raikes, 1780. In gratitude to God for His blessing on Sunday School labours during the past century, and in fervent hope that the time will soon come when the differences of opinion will no longer separate the disciples of Christ in works of usefulness. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.'" On the sides of the pedestal were placed the names of various originators of Sunday Schools, together with the name of their religious

group, Roman Catholic, Nonconformist, Anglican, Methodist, or Unitarian. *Principal J. H. Weatherall* (at one time minister of *Essex Church*) has recorded that he occasionally interpreted the meaning of the statue to passers by. One of them made this comment: "I thought all the Christians hated each other. The Unitarians must be real sports."

A Sunday School was kept in 1756 at Hanwood near Shrewsbury by Mary Hughes, who later became a Unitarian. Before he became a Unitarian, Theophilus Lindsey, while still Vicar of Catterick, carried on a purely religious Sunday School in the Vicarage in 1764 or 1765, and this has often been regarded as the first Sunday School. His example was followed by *Catherine Cappe*. Hannah Bell "gathered children in the Parish Church at High Wycombe . . . and taught them the Bible. She organized this school with rules and called it a Sabbath School. This work, begun in 1769, constituted the first organized English Sunday School" (P. Monroe: "A Cyclopaedia of Education," V., p. 435: citing J. Cole: "Memoir of Miss Hannah Bell"). In 1780 the Congregationalists had a Sunday School at Brentford. The teacher was paid a shilling a Sunday.

There were two kinds of early Sunday Schools, one giving purely religious instruction as at the present day and the other kind which found it necessary to add the teaching of reading in order that children might be able to read the Bible. The Sunday Schools of *Theophilus Lindsey*, *Catherine Cappe*, and Hannah Bell were of the first kind. It was the second kind of Sunday School which John Richard Green described as the beginning of popular education in England. Robert Raikes did much to extend this second kind of Sunday School movement. He and the Rev. Thomas Stock opened a school in Gloucester in 1780. He was the owner of a newspaper, "The Gloucester Journal," and this enabled him to give publicity to the new idea. In 1785, with William Fox, he organized a Society for promoting Sunday Schools throughout the British Isles. Reading only was to be taught. Neither writing nor arithmetic was to be taught on Sundays.

The movement spread so rapidly that by 1800 there were 7,000 such schools attended by 800,000 children. Local joint

committees of Churchmen and Protestant Dissenters were formed, but later they each had their own schools.

To instruction in reading was added instruction in writing and arithmetic. There was in certain places considerable opposition to this change. To learn to read was necessary to read the Bible and the Catechism. To learn to write and to reckon might put wrong ideas into the heads of children and make them dissatisfied with their station in life. In 1814 the Methodist Conference decided to prohibit the teaching of writing in its Sunday Schools. Sometimes this instruction in writing and arithmetic was given on a week-night. The schools were no longer confined to children, but began to provide education for adults, for instance in Manchester. To this day Sunday Schools in the North are often attended by middle-aged and old men and women as well as by young people.

Unitarian Sunday Schools

Unitarians were among the first to establish Sunday Schools giving instruction also in reading, writing, and arithmetic. *The Rev. W. T. Bushrod* has given some instances in his pamphlet "The Sunday School and its Story." Several historians of Unitarian congregations have devoted many pages to the history of the schools attached to them, as at *Kidderminster* and *Gee Cross* (Hyde).

The following instances of early Unitarian Sunday Schools are arranged geographically. In the north-east of England, *William Turner* was one of the first to establish a Sunday School. In the north of England, Sunday Schools were formed at *Hyde* in Cheshire soon after 1780, at *Stand* in Lancashire in 1783, and at *Hale* in Cheshire in 1788. At *Hale* the Sunday School met in a day school built in 1740, but a new school was built in 1821. At *Bolton* the Wesleyans were first, but in 1789 *John Holland* opened one and a building was erected for it in 1796. The Sunday School at *Halifax* dates from 1799. At *Dukinfield* there were schools as early as 1700, if not before, which stood till about 1751. A Sunday School was started in 1800 in place of the morning service and buildings were erected in 1810, 1820 and 1839. At that

time there was no school nearer than at *Newchurch in Rossendale* and one was started in 1809. At *Manchester* "when Sunday Schools were first established they were not specially attached to particular places of worship, but were managed by a Committee of gentlemen who divided the town into districts and placed a sub-committee over each." *Dr. Barnes*, the minister at *Cross Street*, was joined as visitor by the Rector of St. Ann's. On account of this, separate schools were not started at an early date in Manchester.

In the midlands, the first Sunday School seems to have been founded at *Coseley* in Staffordshire in 1781. At *Warwick* the father of *E. Wilkins Field* opened one which roused local antagonism. At *Birmingham* in 1784 all the Churches combined as at Manchester, but theological difficulties arose immediately and the Dissenters started their own. The *New Meeting* Sunday School was opened in 1777 and *Priestley* preached the first sermon on behalf of the Sunday School in 1789. A separate building was erected for it in 1810. At *Derby* also in 1784 it was suggested that Churchmen and Dissenters should combine, but in the end the Dissenters had to go on with their own schools. The Sunday School at *Stourbridge* dates from 1793. A school was opened in the late eighteenth century at *Lye* in Worcestershire, in a region then almost completely destitute of all the amenities of civilization. The little room still exists as part of the Unitarian School there. At *Chesterfield* in Derbyshire a Sunday School was opened in 1813 and buildings were erected in 1831.

The movement spread more slowly in the west and east. *Lant Carpenter* started schools at *Exeter* in 1812 and later at *Lewin's Mead, Bristol*, in 1817. At Bristol they were regarded with a certain coolness at first, because Bristol possessed endowed day schools dating from 1722 which gave an English education of a superior kind. These schools were supported by subscriptions and endowments. The *Stokes Croft School* had been founded as early as 1722 and a Girls' Charity School was added in 1827. But this feeling of coolness seems soon to have disappeared, for in 1825 £700 was raised for building a new school, which was opened in 1826. An

infants' school was instituted in 1826 and an intermediate school in 1829, and to these were attached a dispensary, a library, and a museum.

Lant Carpenter was the first of a family whose members have given great distinction to the Unitarian movement. Two of the most famous of his descendants were *Dr. W. B. Carpenter*, a President of the British Association, and *the Rev. Joseph Estlin Carpenter*, Principal of *Manchester College, Oxford.*

At *Ipswich* a Sunday School was opened in 1806. "This Sunday School was the training ground of many whose sons and grandsons hold honoured places in the town to-day, and it had much to do later with the establishment of the working men's college, its teachers transferring their services to that institution." The opening part of this sentence might be said of many other Sunday Schools also. At Norwich there was no Sunday School till 1822.

These schools were often the precursors of day schools. This was so at *Hyde, Dukinfield, Dob Lane—Bristol, Monton, Chowbent, Hope Street, Liverpool*, and *Chorley*. An account of day schools will be given later.

As a rule these schools were open to all denominations. At *Stand* the Sunday School was crowded out and moved to the workhouse, but later, in 1808, another school was started in connection with the Chapel.

At *Chesterfield* the education was religious only. At *Exeter* religious instruction for every denomination was given on Sunday and instruction in arithmetic was given in the week as a reward for those who attended on Sunday. Religion and reading, writing, and arithmetic, were taught at *Hyde* and *Newchurch* and *Manchester*. The Sunday Schools at *Manchester* in 1834 were open for secular instruction for five and a half hours on Sunday and two evenings in the week. The ages of scholars were from five to twenty-five. At *Bolton* there was a sewing-school for girls in 1810.

Some curious and interesting details are related in connection with different schools. At *Hale* thirty-four children received a penny each as a bribe or compensation for not going to the local Wakes or fair, which was usually a scene

of rather inebriated excitement. At *Lye*, up to 1850, new bonnets were given to the girls every year.

At first the teachers were often paid for their services. At *Stand* they were at first paid by *Mr. Nathaniel Philips*, one of the Philips family whose work has been mentioned in previous chapters. There was a paid superintendent as late as 1880. At *Hyde* the Sunday School was conducted at first by Church members, then by a paid schoolmaster, and then by Church members again. The teachers were paid at *Hale* and at *Chesterfield*. In American Sunday Schools to-day the superintendent is often a salaried officer.

But in some Sunday Schools from the beginning teachers were not paid. At *Birmingham* the teaching was voluntary, and a Teachers' Sunday School was founded 1796. A Brotherly Society was formed in 1798, from which the teachers derived certain benefits which later proved a doubtful blessing. It was out of this brotherly society that the first Mechanics' Institute arose in Birmingham.

The factory reformer and factory owner, *John Fielden, M.P.*, taught in the Sunday School at *Todmorden*. At *Stand* members of the *Philips* family undertook the actual work of teaching. At *Norwich, Ellen Martineau* reported about 1822 or 1823, "The undertaking originated with two of my sisters, two of my brothers, and *Mr. Dowson*, but other workers were at once found. The chief difficulty lay with the elderly deacons, who greatly objected; and for long the children were taught in the pews." *R. H. Mottram* in his "Portrait of an Unknown Victorian" has borne witness to the influence of *John Withers Dowson* on his grandfather. The objections of the elderly deacons no doubt explain why there was such delay in starting a Sunday School at *Norwich*. The tradition of teaching in the Sunday School has survived to this day. In his own time *Joseph Chamberlain* for many years taught in the Sunday School.

Other activities grew up round the schools. Savings banks and libraries were attached to many of them and dramatic performances were given. A big congregation like *Bristol* had a whole series of different kinds of schools and institutions attached to it, even including a dispensary.

But perhaps the influence of these Sunday Schools with their manifold activities was greatest in some of the little isolated villages and hamlets of the time. The record has survived in places like *Hyde*, Cheshire, at *Park Lane*, near Wigan, and as an old tradition at *Lye*, Worcestershire. Inperfect as these schools were there is plenty of evidence of the value of their work.

Night Schools for Children

The provision of these Sunday Schools led also to the provision of night schools. Perhaps the first of these was that founded at *Hale* in 1794. An incident in the life of *Lant Carpenter* showed how desperate the need was and how eager the response. At *Kidderminster*, while he was only eleven years old, he helped with the teaching of Sunday School scholars and this gave him the idea of teaching boys at work. These boys began work at five o'clock in the morning, so the boy *Lant Carpenter* had classes for them at four o'clock in the morning. *John Pounds*, the Portsmouth cobbler, gave the inspiration for the foundation of Ragged Schools.

Factory Schools

Another attempt to meet the needs of the time was the provision of night schools and factory schools. The Government made an attempt to compel all employers to provide such schools. An Act was passed, as the result of a campaign conducted by the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, against the evils of child labour. The leading members of the Society were Unitarians. This was the first compulsory Education Act. It was entitled The Health and Morals of Apprentices Act, 1802. It provided that every apprentice was to receive instruction in writing and arithmetic during the hours of work, and on Sunday in the principles of the Christian Religion. It applied only to apprentices and not to "free labour" children. Petitions were presented against it by cotton and woollen spinners. In practice this Act, like so many of this period, was inoperative. It was based too much on the assumption that the existing relationship between the employer and the children

he employed was similar to that of the older apprenticeship.

A few like those provided by *Thomas Ashton* and *John Fielden* were praised by contemporaries and reached a fair standard considering the circumstances in which they were held. In the school provided at *Todmorden* by *John Fielden*, the Unitarian Minister and his wife were to teach in the factory school. Later one of their duties was to inspect the school.

Day Schools

All these experiments were valuable rather as revealing the growing sense of need for action than for the way in which they fulfilled that need. The attempt to educate children who were working long hours in factories was bound to fail. If children were to be educated, the education had to be given in day schools. The numbers and circumstances of the Unitarians did not allow them to do much in providing day schools on a large scale. In some cases their Sunday Schools developed into day schools and some of them still survive, though they have now been handed over to the Local Education Authorities.

The characteristic of the day schools provided by Unitarians was that they were undenominational, that is, they were provided not for Unitarians only. They were either completely unsectarian or for all kinds of Protestant Dissenters. The oldest really undenominational school in the country was founded at Nottingham in connection with the *High Pavement Chapel* in 1788.

The most striking fact about the provision of schools for children of wage earners was, on the one hand, its inadequacy in quality and quantity and, on the other hand, the efforts made to overcome this inadequacy so far as it refers to quantity. The provision of sufficient day schools on a big scale was an enormous undertaking. At first the effort to provide such day schools out of private resources was made both by the Church of England and by the orthodox Nonconformists, supported by Unitarians.

A step toward this end was taken when a clergyman,

the Rev. Andrew Bell, and a Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, developed systems for using children as monitors to teach other children. Bell introduced his method into England in 1798 and Lancaster opened a school in 1801. The system was greatly admired by most educational reformers. "*The Monthly Repository*" of 1807 described the system with approval, and in fact it was, as "*The Monthly Repository*" said, a great improvement on existing systems. It used the incentive of reward rather than punishment. *Robert Aspland* attended a demonstration by Joseph Lancaster in 1809, and reported enthusiastically: "His system is a blessing to the country and will prove such, it is to be hoped, to the world. . . . He can find something in every youth's affections on which to lay hold." To-day the mechanical nature of the system appals educationalists, but in those days the fact that it was mechanical was regarded as one of its virtues. The use of half-taught children to teach others produced an education as cheap as it was nasty, but the cheapness of the system encouraged those who wished to extend education further.

Two Societies were founded to spread these new and economical methods of education. "The Royal Lancasterian Association" was founded in 1808 and 1810, and changed its name in 1814 to the "British and Foreign School Society." In 1811 Churchmen followed suit and established "the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church." These two Societies practically controlled elementary education in England for the next two generations. The names still survive, for up and down the country the words British School and National School can still be seen cut into the walls of old school buildings. The National Society, as its full title made clear, existed to make "good members of the Church of England." The British Schools were professedly undenominational, being founded "to give no countenance to the peculiar doctrines of any sect, that it may include the aid of any persons professing to be Christians." "Such a broad and liberal system naturally attracted the support and attention of Unitarians, who gave both their money and their labour towards the establish-

ment of the institution which adopted it, and were among the number of its earliest benefactors." At Exeter, *Lant Carpenter* was one of those who worked hard to overcome the hostility. At Bristol, also, this system was adopted. At *Cross Street, Manchester*, the trustees suspended their own school and paid the fees of the children to the Lancasterian School. At *Chester*, the British schools were "a monument to the educational zeal of" *the Rev. John Montgomery*. But this happy state of things did not long continue.

THE STATE AND EDUCATION

Even with the help of the British and National Societies, the problem of providing a system of universal education could not be solved by voluntary effort. Brougham's figures of 1820 show that 3,500 parishes had unendowed schools, that is an old lady with a primer, and 3,000 had nothing at all. A report of 1845 showed that half the children supposed to have learnt to read the Bible had really memorized it instead, and that only one child out of fifty-three claimed to be able to do the rule of three.

It was becoming clear that the children of England could not be educated on a voluntary basis. A system of universal education is costly and lies beyond the means either of private philanthropy or of payments by the parents of the children. Some form of government assistance was essential, either through the rates or by direct grants. Universal education could only be provided if the cost were borne by the State. But if the State bore the cost, it would control the policy. If it controlled the policy, the party which at any particular time controlled the State would be greatly tempted to use its control, not for educational but for party or propaganda purposes which would be fatal to education. The temptation was hardly likely to be overcome unless there was against it a wise and determined public opinion. Such a public opinion did not exist in the early part of the nineteenth century. At this time, even geography was regarded as a dangerous subject and schoolmasters were not allowed to hang up maps.

At that time State assistance to education meant also

State assistance to dogmatic teaching. The National Society frankly stood for this. Anglicans claimed that, since they were the National Church, they should control the national system of education. On the other side, most Nonconformists were opposed to this claim and demanded what they called simple Bible teaching, which they naively believed to be unsectarian.

This controversy delayed for many years the provision of an adequate educational system. "Parish rates and local responsibility would mean Church Control, and all the advocates of a national system, as well as all Nonconformists, rejected that. State control and State maintenance implied a secular system and all creeds rejected that." The time was coming when many Unitarians were to favour the secular system, modified to allow the various religious groups the use of school buildings out of school hours.

Unitarians were and still are divided in their attitude to State aid for denominationally controlled schools. On this matter *Richard Price*, *William Shepherd*, *W. J. Fox*, *Charles Beard*, were opposed to *Joseph Priestley*, *Robert Aspland*, and *James Martineau*.

Some were still opposed to State interference at all in education. In 1843 the students at *Manchester College*, debated the question, "Is education a proper subject of State interference?" and decided in the negative. Others would have preferred voluntary to State education, but thought it so important that all children should receive some instruction that they were prepared to support any system. A favourite "sentiment," or "slogan" as it would be described nowadays, was this: "Popular education, if possible, apart from episcopal ascendancy on the one side, and a low and narrow sectarianism on the other, but still education for every child and every adult within the limits of the Queen's Dominions."

Martineau demanded compulsory education in 1845 and thought that the theory of individual independence had been carried to a vicious extreme, and that the authority of the State must be extended over a wider range than the severity of economic doctrine had been willing to allow,

concerning itself again with the houses, the hours, the education, and the amusement of the people. He was not, however, in favour of free education. In 1857 he argued that help from the rates and taxes should only be given in the last resort. His argument that schools for the poor should be made less honourable than other schools, like poor-houses, lest parental responsibility be weakened, shocks us to-day.

In Liverpool, in 1835, *William Rathbone* secured the adoption of the Irish National system, under which Catholic and Protestants were educated in the same school but with separate religious instruction. *Rathbone* and his wife made these Hibernian Schools models of their kind, but in 1841 a No Popery crusade was started and "the Bible was carried on a pole at the head of Tory processions," with the effect that thirteen Tories out of sixteen were returned to the Corporation. The scheme was abandoned and the Town Council even refused to receive *Rathbone's* portrait.

Most Unitarians would have preferred simple Biblical teaching at this time. But here, too, was a dilemma. If the Bible is taught without note or explanation, much of it will necessarily be unintelligible and misleading. If the Bible is taught with notes and explanations, these explanations are naturally coloured by the views of the teacher. Theoretically the British and Foreign School Society favoured this latter principle and won Unitarian support, but, as time went on, the pretence that the education given by this Society was unsectarian was exposed. In the struggles, which lasted throughout the nineteenth century, these different points of view appear again and again.

The first attempts to create a national system of education came to nothing. In 1807 the Whig leader Whitbread introduced a Bill providing that the poor children of every parish should receive elementary instruction for two years between the ages of seven and fourteen. The schools were to be controlled by the Parish Vestry but were not to be maintained out of parish rates, and the curriculum was not to include religious dogma. The Bill was opposed by the Church and by a later President of the Royal Society, on

the grounds that such universal secular instruction would lead the labourer "to despise his lot, read bad books and imbibe bad doctrine." From this fate the House of Lords saved the nation for a time and the Bill was dropped.

The question came to a head in 1820 when Mr. (later Lord) Brougham introduced his Education Bill for the better education of the poor. Under this Bill schools could be built with the consent of the Quarter Sessions: the cost of building was to fall on the manufacturers and the cost of maintenance on the local rates. School fees were to be charged. Schoolmasters were to be Churchmen, appointed by the Parish Vestry. The local clergymen had the right to veto any appointment and to decide the curriculum. Children of Dissenters might absent themselves from instruction in the Catechism and be taken to their own Churches and Chapels, but Church children were to attend school and those whose parents did not object were to be taught the Church Catechism.

The Bill was not altogether popular with Churchmen, for there were still many who believed, as *Robert Aspland* had found in 1812, that "the undiscriminating distribution of the Bible had a tendency to lesson the reverence due to the sacred volume." For other reasons the Bill aroused a storm of protest among Protestant Dissenters generally.

Unitarians were divided. On the one side there was *William Shepherd*, who had been converted by his friend Brougham before the introduction of the Bill. It was through *Shepherd's* influence that the proposal to impose the sacramental test on schoolmasters was dropped. *Shepherd* thought Dissenters ought to sacrifice their objections to Church-controlled education in the interests of education generally.

On the other side were men like *Aspland* who thought the price was too high, and that the Bill might give complete clerical control over the education of the majority of poor children in the country. This was to hand over education to a party, at a time when party feeling was even stronger than it is to-day.

So far as *Aspland's* objections were based on these grounds they were sound. When membership of a particular religious

or political body is made a qualification for an office, all experience shows that more attention will be paid to the sectarian or party spirit than to educational qualifications. Even the most desired extension of instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic should not be purchased at the cost of a fettered mind.

Unfortunately, less excellent reasons were added. Those opposed to the Bill opposed it not merely because it was sectarian but because they still hoped that a voluntary system would be adequate. And, to defend their position, they drew pictures of the wonderful efficiency and success of the voluntary system which bore little relation to the facts, not only at this time but even a generation later.

In 1832 the Reform Act was passed and in 1833 the first Government grant to education was made. Twenty thousand pounds was divided between the British and National Societies for the building of schools.

The Chartist movement of 1838 showed those who were frightened by the unsettling social effects of education that they had more to fear from the lack of it. Pikes were being made in the districts where there was no education, and this showed that no-education was also not without its dangers. The Manchester Statistical Society and other Societies elsewhere collected information which showed how imperfect the existing system was. Both Liberal and Conservative Governments found it necessary to introduce legislation to provide better education, even though in both parties some members were opposed to it.

In 1839 the Liberal Government set up a Committee of the Privy Council to supervise education, and a beginning was made by the appointment of two Inspectors. But further proposals for a non-sectarian training college with model schools was so strongly opposed both by the Church of England and by the Methodists that they were dropped.

In 1843 a Conservative Government introduced a measure of limited compulsory education for children employed in factories. To overcome the resistance of the Church of England, the Church was given control over the scheme

with a conscience clause for Dissenters, but this measure was defeated in turn by the opposition of the Dissenters. Petitions against this Bill poured in from Unitarian congregations. *J. R. Beard* was in favour of the Factory Education Bill of 1843, but most Unitarians were against it, including *W. J. Fox, James Martineau*, and *Charles Wicksteed.*

Martineau at this time would apparently have preferred a simply secular system of instruction. But he saw that neither Roman Catholics, Anglicans, nor Calvinists would accept such a system. *Martineau* disliked the orthodoxy of the other Nonconformist bodies more than the orthodoxy of the Anglicans, and so he preferred a system which would increase the influence of the Church, since the Church was under the wholesome control of the State. Later in life he became more friendly to religious education and led the defence of the 1870 Act against the criticism of *Crosskey.*

Most Unitarians were still in favour of scriptural education. At Bolton, for instance, a public meeting was held in favour of popular and scriptural education at which the speakers included *P. Ainsworth, M.P., J. Bowring, M.P.*, and *the Rev. F. Baker.* A Committee was formed to procure subscriptions for the British School Society.

On the other hand at Bristol a Committee formed to promote unsectarian education excluded both Unitarians and Roman Catholics. *The Rev. George Armstrong* took the matter up and obtained from Lord Brougham a confirmation of his statement that such action went against the original intention of the Society. *The Rev. George Armstrong* had been a clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Ireland and had been converted to Unitarianism. He was the ancestor of many distinguished men, of whom the two best known are *the Rev. R. A. Armstrong*, whose work at Nottingham and Liverpool has been described in the chapter on Local Government, and *Mr. G. G. Armstrong*, a President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

Sectarian feeling at this time was becoming more intense. The gulf between Unitarians and other Dissenters became wider as Unitarians continued to develop their theological

views. At this time orthodox Dissenters were trying to dispossess Unitarians of their old Chapels.

Attempts were made to expel Unitarians from the Bible Society and these attempts provoked protests at Rochdale and at Bristol. At Bristol the protest of *the Rev. George Armstrong* was received with hisses.

The pretence that the teaching in the British schools was undenominational was being dropped. At the chief establishment of the British Society for training masters and mistresses in Borough Road, London, orthodox denominational teaching was introduced, and one of their reports publicly avowed their non-co-operation with Unitarians on the grounds of "important differences of religious sentiment." About this time also (1848), *Dr. H. W. Crosskey* was engaged in conflict with the Congregationalist Board of Education, whose sectarian tendencies were disguised by the label "undenominational."

"*The Inquirer*" of this period devoted many columns to the education question and not merely to the sectarian or religious issues which were involved. The texts of Bills were printed and debates in Parliament reported.

In spite of these conflicts, the quality of the teaching was being improved, though slowly. In 1844 a Factory Act was passed under which children of eight years and upwards attended half-time at school, three full days a week or three hours a day for six days. In this way the first effective step was taken towards universal education, but in this way also was established the half-time system which remained such a terrible blot on English education down to the twentieth century.

The monitorial system was by this time seen to be a failure, and in 1846 the pupil-teacher system was adopted from Holland. Increased grants were made to denominational schools, but to obtain these grants the schools had to fulfil certain conditions of efficiency. One party among the Dissenters opposed the proposal because they were against State aid, and the National Society objected because this was the beginning of secular control of education. *James Martineau* pointed out that the scheme practically excluded

all Unitarians and all Catholic schools. *The Rev. J. J. Tayler* headed a deputation to the Government and the Liverpool congregations petitioned the House of Lords for the admission of Roman Catholics to participation in the grant.

In 1850 *the Rev. W. J. Fox, M.P.*, introduced a Bill into the House of Commons under which an inquiry was to be held in every parish into the educational facilities provided. Where these were deficient, a Committee was to be appointed with power to levy rates. Education was to be free and time was to be provided for religious education. Unitarians supported this Bill, but the opposition was able to defeat it.

In 1861 payment by results was introduced under the new code. The system was defended by the argument that, where the teaching was not efficient, it was at least cheap, and where it was not cheap it was because it was efficient. Actually under this system the level of the worst schools was raised somewhat but at the cost of a general lowering of intelligence and interest all over the country.

The year 1867 was another turning-point. In that year the franchise had received its greatest extension by the Reform Act of 1867, passed by "both parties walking in their sleep" (Professor Graham Wallas). For the Conservatives, after they had thrown out Gladstone's Reform Bill, introduced household suffrage. Both parties then agreed that "we must educate our masters."

The sentiment in favour of secular education was increasing in strength, for sectarian difficulties would be removed if only secular subjects were taught in the schools, and religious education were left entirely to voluntary effort. By this time three different attitudes had now crystallized. One extreme party held that the ratepayers and taxpayers of a particular denomination had the right not only to insist on their children receiving a denominational education in a State-supported school but to staff those schools by members of that denomination. The other extreme was, that education should be entirely secular. The middle position was, that compulsory education should be secular, but that religious education or denominational education—the two terms were usually regarded as identical—should be

given in the schools to those children whose parents wanted their children to receive it, on condition that attendance at this teaching should not be compulsory and that no teacher should be compelled to give this teaching. This was the position generally favoured by Unitarians.

The cause was taken up by *Joseph Chamberlain*, and his first appearance in politics was on behalf of the cause of universal unsectarian compulsory education on the lines of the middle way just mentioned. The Birmingham Educational Society was founded in 1867 and the National Educational League in 1869. *Chamberlain* took hold of this League and made it for a time almost as active as the Anti-Corn-Law and Anti-Slavery Leagues had been. Later, this organization was turned into a party machine because he realized that theological politics must give way to social politics.

In this campaign *Dr. Henry William Crosskey*, minister of the *Church of the Messiah, Birmingham*, of which *Chamberlain* was a member, was heart and soul with *Chamberlain*. Before this in Glasgow *Dr. Crosskey* had worked with his friend Professor Nichol along these lines in connection with the Glasgow Public Schools Association. He had been a witness before the Royal Commission on Scottish Education. When he arrived in Birmingham in 1869, the National Education League was at the zenith of its power. *Crosskey* became a member of its executive.

On the Bill of 1870 the Unitarians exercised a certain influence. *Crosskey* attended almost every debate, and with Dr. Dale drew up many of the amendments. When Forster's Education Bill was going through Parliament in 1870, *Mrs. Rathbone*, then eighty-one years old, sent her son *William* a memoranda on the Hibernian system, under which Catholics and Protestants had obtained most of what they wanted. Forster found these memoranda "the most useful hints that he had received." *J. Lupton* was another fellow worker with Forster. The solution adopted by the Cowper-Temple clause was to some degree on the lines laid down, except that denominational control over the schools as a whole was increased by the Act.

The Birmingham School Board in 1872 refused to accept the *Church of the Messiah* schoolrooms as day schools, on account of the unsectarian conditions attached to them. Later, however, the School Board succeeded in getting unsectarian religious education established.

George Dawson and *Joseph Chamberlain* were members of the first Birmingham School Board, and in 1873 *Joseph Chamberlain* was Chairman and *Jesse Collings, M.P.*, was a member. They were elected by large majorities and proceeded to carry out their policy. The education provided by the Board was entirely secular, but every religious body was allowed to give religious instruction to the children of those parents who wanted it. In 1876 *Dr. Crosskey* joined the Board and remained a member for sixteen years till 1892. He was Chairman of the School Buildings Committee from 1876 to 1880, and of the School Management Committee from 1881 to 1892.

In 1879 the Board accepted a compromise under which the head teacher read passages of the Bible without a note or comment, a compromise to which *Dr. Crosskey* was strongly opposed. *Crosskey* was a witness before the Royal Commission on elementary education in 1887.

While *Crosskey* was on the School Board, regular lessons in morals were placed on the time-table. Cardinal Manning and others examined *Crosskey* on the possibility of teaching morality without religion. *Crosskey*, himself a Fellow of the Geological Society, was also responsible for introducing elementary science instruction, insisting that such instruction must be experimental, and a system of travelling apparatus was devised to make this possible. *Crosskey* obtained the abolition of the system of automatic increases in salary according to age and substituted one of increase according to merit. He held that "a bad teacher was dear at any price." He also attempted to prevent overpressure on the children.

Dr. R. W. Dale added a chapter to the life of *Crosskey* by *R. A. Armstrong* on the subject of his educational activities. These included the teaching of morals and of science in the schools, technical education, the raising of the level of the

teaching profession by making increases of salary according to merit instead of age, and the better training of teachers. He was one of the founders of the Day Training College for Teachers in connection with Mason College. He brought forward proposals for a Midland University which later was realized through the activities especially of men like *Chamberlain* and *Beale*.

ADULT EDUCATION

At the turn of the eighteenth century, adults who had not received an elementary education often attended Sunday Schools and received instruction there not only in religion but in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The first adult school in the modern sense of the term was opened in 1798 at Nottingham, and the next at Bristol in 1814. With the exception of the one at Nottingham, these early adult schools did not survive, and the movement had a second beginning in 1855 when a Friend, Joseph Sturge, who had visited the adult school at Nottingham, opened one at Birmingham. The movement has always had a close connection with the Society of Friends.

In its wider sense, adult education outside colleges started with the Mechanics' Institutes. Unitarians have always had a special interest in this kind of education. The first of these Mechanics' Institutes was founded in 1789 at Birmingham in connection with *Priestley's* church, and was known as the Sunday Society. Lectures on Mechanics and Science were given to working men, science being a subject, as will be made clear in the last chapter, in which Unitarians have always had a special interest. In 1796 the title was changed to "the *Birmingham Brotherly Society*." Connected with this was the Birmingham Artisans' Library.

This school was visited by Dr. Birkbeck, a Professor at Anderson College, Glasgow, who in 1823 founded the London Mechanics' Institution. And so the old movement was linked on to the new. In the same year, 1823, the movement also took hold in the provinces. The Liverpool Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library was founded in 1823, and was followed in 1824 by the Mechanics' Institute in Manchester.

The first suggestion for the Mechanics' Institute in Manchester was contained in one of the essays read before the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society by *the Rev. Dr. T. Barnes*. "Its building was the first erected in England with accommodation for the various departments of its scientific work." Among the eleven citizens who subscribed the £6,600 for the erection of the building were the Unitarians *Benjamin Heywood* and the engineer (*Sir*) *William Fairbairn*. The latter was honorary secretary, and *J. A. Nicholls* lectured there. This Institution had a long and distinguished history, and after a period of decline it was succeeded by the Manchester School of Technology (later College), to which *J. H. Reynolds* rendered great service.

The movement spread rapidly from 1824 and by 1850 there were 610 such institutions, but the total number of members was only about 100,000.

Unitarians supported the movement in many ways, by active service as lecturers, as well as by financial help. Portraits of some of them still hang in the buildings of the Institutions which have succeeded them. The names may be mentioned of *E. Clephan* at Leicester, *A. Clarke* at Newport, *E. Higginson* at Derby, *W. J. Odgers* at Plymouth, *Stansfeld* at Halifax, *J. A. Turner* at Manchester, *Charles Wicksteed* at Leeds, *I. Worsley* at Bristol, *Ryland* at Birmingham, and of *F. Swanwick*. Of *F. Swanwick* his biography records: "He used his influence to get the best lecturers. . . . His house was the home of the lecturers . . . He was in the habit of inviting his neighbours to meet such men as *Emerson*, *George Dawson*, and *Dr. W. B. Carpenter*."

The provision of Libraries had always been one of the movement's functions. There was a Book Society at *Dudley*. *Frederick Swanwick* kept up an excellent village library at Whittington and at *Chesterfield* an operatives' library was maintained mainly by his help. He was one of the principal promoters of Chesterfield Free Library.

In their own way, in their own time, these Mechanics' Institutes did quite a useful piece of work, and they prepared the way for other institutions more efficient, like the Manchester School of Technology. The Birmingham Midland

Institute, which was established in 1853, may be regarded as the successor of the Mechanics' Institute.

But a decline soon set in. Working men did not join the institutes in large numbers. As early as 1844 they had disappeared altogether from the Birmingham Institute. The elementary instruction they had received at school was too poor to enable them to get much good out of the lectures, and there was a widening gulf between the ideas of the more intelligent working men and the middle-class members of the committees which ran the institutions. Attempts were made to resuscitate them here and there, but without any lasting success. At Tyldesley, Lancashire, the Institute had seven members who were branded as Owenites and infidels. To show that this was a false accusation, they asked *the Rev. Dr. Harrison* of *Chowbent* to become a member and a teacher in the Institute, and the membership rose to ninety for a time. *Dr. Beard* argued against the exclusion of politics and religion from them.

The Mechanics' Institute Library at Derby had become middle-class by 1850. *Dr. H. W. Crosskey* tried to get in working men, and, when he found it impossible, he started a Working Men's Institute. The Working Men's Club and Institute Union was founded by a Unitarian minister, *Henry Solly*, who became its first Secretary. He had learned to sympathize with the objection of the working man to the atmosphere of the Mechanics' Institutes, and he sought by these clubs to combine educational activities with good fellowship. Nowadays perhaps the social activities loom larger than the educational, but some effort is made to keep these before the members.

The Workers' Educational Association was founded in 1903, and has always had a large number of Unitarian ministers and laymen among its supporters, both as tutors and as secretaries.

The work of the Co-operative Holidays Association and the Holiday Fellowship, both founded by a Congregationalist minister, T. Arthur Leonard, to promote the best use of leisure in holidays, from the beginning received the enthusiastic support of many Unitarians. *Emily H. Smith*, sister of

the Rev. A. Leslie Smith, composed the song "Our week is over, to the town," which is often sung on Friday nights before each party breaks up. And she was one of a small committee which was responsible for the whole collection of songs and tunes. This song-book was probably the beginning of community singing in modern England.

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Education does not or should not stop with the school. And adult education was a special care of Unitarians. In many of the growing towns there was a little group of active-minded and public-spirited men who did much for the cultural life of the town. They were mostly the men whose work in local government has been described, and who obtained the opportunity for this kind of service by the part they played in the development of industry. One of the earliest ways of stimulating and widening intellectual interest was the creation of literary and philosophical societies. *Dr. H. McLachlan* has given details of these in his volume on the Unitarian Contribution to Thought and Learning. Several of these societies have published volumes of transactions extending over many years, which reveal the extraordinarily high quality of the work they did in those days when scientific and other knowledge was less specialized.

The Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society was perhaps the first and most distinguished of these. It was followed by others at Newcastle, Leeds, Hull, and Leicester, in all which Unitarians were active. The one at Newcastle obtained considerable distinction.

The Birmingham Book Club was the oldest literary society in the town. Its members were mostly Protestant Dissenters and then Unitarians, and included such well-known Birmingham names as *Pemberton*, *Ryland*, *Phipson*, and later *Mathews* and *Beale*. "In fact though not in name," it was "a political association for men of liberal thought." The members of the Club were reading Thomas Paine while his effigy was being carried through the town to be burnt. At a later date the works of Cobbett and of *Bentham* were extensively circulated.

The Birmingham Old Library was founded by the same group of people in 1779. During its first two years the Library had its home at the house of *John Lee*, who was Treasurer for many years. The Library only became important after *Priestley* arrived in Birmingham and took it in hand. *Priestley* wrote various advertisements for it and drew up a code of rules based on his experience of the library at Leeds, and these were found so adequate that they did not need to be changed for a hundred years. Early in the nineteenth century there were 20,000 volumes in it. In 1789 a dispute took place about the admission of books on controversial divinity, in the course of which *Priestley* wrote a pamphlet in favour of the admission of such books. As a result of this dispute, a division took place and Birmingham New Library was founded in 1794 and carried on till 1860.

The Birmingham Society of Arts was established in 1821, the Botanical and Horticultural Society in 1829, a Law Library in 1831, and an Educational Statistical Society in 1838. Among the founders were many Unitarians, *T. E. Lee*, *Archibald Kenrick*, *S. Ryland*, *Timothy Smith*, *Arthur Ryland*, and *J. Tyndall*.

Birmingham Unitarians were among the most active supporters of the movement to adopt the Library Acts—*the Rev. G. Dawson*, *W. Mathews*, *A. Ryland*, *M. D. Hill*, and *the Rev. S. Bache*. *The Rev. G. Dawson* gave the address at the opening of the Reference Library in 1866. The Chairman of the Free Libraries Committee, *Jesse Collings*, presented a number of memorials in favour of the Sunday opening of Libraries, and in 1872 the Reference Library and the Art Gallery were opened.

The Art Gallery and the Museum have been enriched by gifts from *J. H. Nettlefold*, *J. Chamberlain*, and members of the families of *Kenrick* and *Beale*, and the public picture fund was founded by *Clarkson Osler*. In more recent times the Municipal School of Art was indebted to its Chairman, John Henry Chamberlain, and *Edwin Smith*, and to *Miss Ryland*, who contributed £10,000. *Miss Ryland* also gave to Birmingham several of its parks.

From the middle of the eighteenth century a number of institutions were founded in Manchester in rapid succession.

The first cultural activity was the establishment of subscription concerts in 1744, thus foreshadowing one of Manchester's future claims to greatness. The Royal Infirmary was founded in 1752, a Theatre in 1753, a Subscription Library in 1765, a Circulating Library in 1771, a new Subscription Library in 1800, the Portico in 1803, whose library now has over 40,000 volumes, and the Athenaeum in 1835. Manchester Athenaeum was regarded as a valuable means of "uniting the means of improvement with social enjoyment" and was followed by the establishment of the Whittington Club in London and the *Roscoe* Club in Liverpool. The Museums Act was passed in 1850 and Salford and Manchester were quick to take advantage of it. A Royal Museum and Library was established in Peel Park. Next year, steps were taken to establish a Free Public Library in Manchester. The Act allowed a half-penny rate to be levied for the upkeep of the library, but not for the purchase of books. A Free Library was opened in 1852, the building and stock of books being purchased from a public subscription raised by *Sir John Potter, M.P.* In 1857 an Art Exhibition was held largely through the exertions and generosity of Unitarians like *(Sir) Thomas Fairbairn, J. A. Turner, Thomas Ashton*, and *Edmund Potter*.

Manchester University Library "had its origin in a selection of twelve hundred volumes presented in 1851 by *James Heywood* to Owens College."

Manchester and Liverpool men were largely responsible for the foundation of the Academy at Warrington in 1757. A successor was founded in Manchester in 1786, serving the dual purpose of a college for laymen and a training college for Radical Protestant Dissenting (Unitarian) ministers. Later *Manchester College* moved to London and is now at Oxford. It is one of the two colleges at which most Unitarian ministers receive their theological education.

Later in the century Owens College, now Manchester

University, owed much to *Samuel Alcock*, who was one of the Executors of the Will of John Owens, and to *Thomas Ashton*, who was almost a second founder.

The Society for the Promotion of Natural History was founded in 1821, the Botanic Gardens were opened in 1827, and the Zoological Gardens in 1838.

Unitarians made generous gifts to provide Manchester with public parks in 1844. To *Mark Philips* was given the honour of naming Queen's Park, and Philips Park in Bradford Road was named after him. Manchester owes Whitworth Park to *R. D. Darbishire*.

Liverpool had the distinction of founding in 1758 what was perhaps the first public circulating library not only in England but in Europe. *The Rev. Nicholas Clayton* was one of the first Presidents whose names have come down, and *William Roscoe* was President in 1789.

This was followed in 1798 by the establishment of the Athenaeum. The Academy of Arts was founded in 1798 and held Exhibitions in 1806 and 1811. Unitarians were active in all these institutions.

The Liverpool Royal Institution was established at a meeting in 1814, with *B. A. Heywood* in the chair, and was opened in 1817, when *William Roscoe* gave the address.

The Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library was founded in 1824, and the Female Apprentices' Library was added under the direction of Mrs. Thomas Fletcher and *Miss Roscoe*. Liverpool adopted the Public Libraries Act as soon as it passed. *The Rev. Charles Beard* might be described as the real founder of Liverpool University.

Professor R. Muir, in "A History of Liverpool," singled out for mention men like *William Rathbone* and *Dr. Currie*, and *William Roscoe*. He devoted three pages to *William Roscoe*. "*Roscoe* and his group redeemed to some extent the sordidness of Liverpool at the opening of the nineteenth century. . . . The glory of Liverpool in this period was to be found in a group of friends who were not content to cultivate their own minds, but strove to diffuse throughout the money-grabbing community in which they found themselves, something of their own delight in the civilizing power of

letters and the arts. . . . These men were Whigs, holding unpopular politics, and very dubiously regarded by their fellow citizens. . . . They were the enemies of the slave trade, and the strenuous advocates of political and social reforms which few of them lived to see realized."

CHAPTER 7

THE CREATION OF THE UNITARIAN TRADITION

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNITARIAN TRADITION—THE EARLY HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM ON THE CONTINENT—THE UNITARIAN MOVEMENT INSIDE THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—THE PURITAN ANCESTRY OF ENGLISH UNITARIANISM—UNITARIANISM AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY — DISABILITIES SUFFERED BY UNITARIANS

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNITARIAN TRADITION

Unitarianism took its rise in the sixteenth century as an attempt to restore Christianity to its lost purity. "The Restoration" or "The Restitution of Christianity," was the title of a book written by the most famous of early Unitarians, *Michael Servetus*. At most periods of their history Unitarians would have preferred to be called just "Christians" without any other label. During the greater part of their history they have aimed at making the basis of Christian fellowship as broad as possible, because to them Christianity has always been a way of life rather than a creed.

Most reform movements in the Christian Church set out with the idea of restoring Christianity to something more like early Christianity, or rather, to what men imagined early Christianity to have been. Sixteenth-century Protestantism began as such a movement, and it was at the time of the Protestant Revolution that Unitarians first appeared.

The special characteristic of the Unitarian attempt to restore Christianity was, that they regarded Christianity primarily as a way of life rather than as a system of doctrine. That conception of Christianity was even more strange and rare in those times than it is to-day, and their views made them intensely unpopular among all other groups of those who professed themselves Christians. John Calvin caused *Servetus* to be put to death in 1553, and all except three copies of his book were destroyed. In England and in Scot-

land the last men to suffer the death penalty for heresy were martyred for a form of Unitarianism. To be a Unitarian was, in law though not in fact, a criminal offence in England till 1813.

Since they believed that Christianity was first and foremost a way of life, Unitarians attached less importance to agreement about the letter of doctrine and more to the spirit which lay behind, and so they were tolerant. They held that only those conditions of membership of a Church should be insisted on which were fundamental and essential. They longed for a wider Christian fellowship based on the essentials of a common Christianity and a common experience, rather than the interpretations of that experience expressed in terms of a particular century. They held that only those doctrines should be accepted which were in the New Testament, and that of these only such as are intelligible to human reason should be regarded as matters of faith. By giving up the use of metaphysical terms and agreeing on the words of Scripture, they hoped to get away from endless theological squabbles and to unite all those who professed and called themselves Christians. And they hoped, too, that the less attention was concentrated on abstract points of theology the more attention might be paid to the moral life. "To be a Christian," said *Michael Servetus*, "is to be like Christ." "By their fruits ye shall know them." "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father." These have always been favourite texts of Unitarians.

Unitarians were tolerant because they also believed that men ought to seek truth above everything else, and that truth cannot be found without freedom to search for it.

Behind these beliefs lay a profound faith in God and man. They believed in God so completely that they were not afraid that anything that man could discover about the ways in which God worked out His purposes could shake their faith. They believed in man so completely that they were not afraid that, if he were free to seek truth, he would misuse his freedom.

This faith was rooted in the Christian recognition of men as children of God. And so Unitarians believed in man and the infinite possibilities of human nature. Their passion for truth, their trust in reason, their belief in freedom, their faith in man, developed during the centuries and explain why the Unitarian contribution to social progress is to be found in their devotion to civil and religious liberty, their passion for education, and their sense of responsibility.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM ON THE CONTINENT

This search for truth resulted in an abnormally rapid theological development, in the course of which many different forms of Unitarianism with many different names appeared.

There were numerous cases of sporadic Unitarianism in most parts of Western Europe in the sixteenth century. There was an early movement in Italy which might have had important developments had not persecution destroyed it.

Unitarian Churches existed in Hungary and Poland. The first part of Europe to tolerate different forms of Christianity was Transylvania, in 1568, then under the rule of the only Unitarian king in history, *John Sigismund*, King of Hungary, and Prince of Transylvania. After his death the Church suffered severe persecution both from Catholics and from Protestants but with intervals of a certain amount of toleration, and the Unitarian Church there still survives. The Transylvanian movement was known in England in the seventeenth century, but after that seems to have been forgotten till it was rediscovered early in the nineteenth century.

For a time the Church in Poland flourished exceedingly. There was at that time a connection of Poland with Italy, and, when persecution made life in Italy unsafe for heretics, *Faustus Socinus* went to Poland and became the unofficial leader of the Church there. Faustus was the nephew of *Lelius Socinus*, perhaps a more profound but not so forceful a personality. The word Socinian was applied for over two centuries to Unitarians, though they themselves did not use that name. When their great theological collection was

published by exiles in Holland after 1665, they were described as the Library of the Polish Brethren, who are called Unitarians.

The new city of Racow became the centre of the Polish Unitarians. A great University was established to which Catholics as well as Protestants sent their children. Printing presses published over five hundred works. The chief of these works was called the Racovian Catechism, after the name of the town Racow. Socinus was engaged on this at the time of his death, and it was published a year later, in 1605. This book appeared in Latin, German, Dutch, and English, and did more than any other book except the New Testament to spread anti-Trinitarian ideas.

But the Jesuits had been brought into the country, and when the Jesuit king, Sigismund Vasa, came to the throne an era of ruthless and cruel persecution set in. In thirty years the movement was completely wiped out. By 1660 all who did not give up their views had been killed or exiled.

From Poland they went to some of the German states whose rulers were more tolerant, but chiefly to Holland, at that time the most tolerant country in Europe. The early Unitarians issued in Poland the Racovian Catechism, which laid down the principle in words which "it is impossible to read without a feeling of the deepest emotion" (Professor A. Harnack).

"It is not without just cause that many pious and learned men complain at present also, that the Confessions and Catechisms which are now put forth, and published by different Christian Churches, are hardly anything else than apples of Eris, trumpets of discord, ensigns of immortal enmities and factions among men. The reason of this is, that those Confessions and Catechisms are proposed in such a manner that the conscience is bound by them, that a yoke is imposed upon Christians to swear to the words and opinions of men; and that they are established as a Rule of Faith, from which every one who deviates in the least is immediately assailed by the thunderbolt of an anathema, is treated as a heretic, as a most vile and mischievous

person, is excluded from heaven, consigned to hell, and doomed to be tormented with infernal fires.

"Far be from us this disposition, or rather this madness. Whilst we compose a Catechism, we prescribe nothing to any man; whilst we declare our own opinions, we oppress no one. Let every person enjoy the freedom of his own judgment in religion; only let it be permitted to us also to exhibit our view of divine things, without injuring and calumniating others. For this is the golden Liberty of Prophesying which the sacred books of the New Testament so earnestly recommend to us, and wherein we are instructed by the example of the primitive apostolic Church. 'Quench not the spirit,' says the apostle. . . . 'Despise not prophesying; prove all things, hold fast that which is good.'

"How deaf is the Christian world, split as it is into so many sects, become at this day to that most sacred admonition of the apostle!" (The Racovian Catechism.) "To Socinianism alone belongs the glory of having, as early as the sixteenth century, made toleration a fundamental principle of ecclesiastical discipline, and of having determined, more or less immediately, all the subsequent revolutions in favour of religious liberty" (Professor A. Ruffini). So completely were Socinians identified with toleration that the term Socinian was often used of anyone who believed in liberty of conscience. This fact, though complimentary to the Socinians, has often misled historians.

Because they believed profoundly in the moral worth of man and in the infinite possibilities of human nature, they rejected also the doctrines of original sin, human depravity, and absolute predestination, which seemed to them both degrading to God and weakening to man's moral striving. Above all, they rejected the prevailing doctrines of the atonement then current, which seemed to them both excessively legalistic in form and non-moral in character. Their views of the atonement even more than differences of Christology separated them from most other Christians.

At times during the Middle Ages a more spiritual view of the atonement had appeared, as for instance in Abelard. It was under the influence of the Italian *Francesco Ochino*

(also suspected of heresy on the question of the Trinity) that *Socinus* reached the conclusion that Christ had come not to move God but to move man. And *Ochino* in turn had been influenced by the late mediaeval philosopher, Duns Scotus, whose criticisms had done much to weaken the earlier forms of scholasticism and to prepare the way intellectually for the Protestant Revolution.

The word Unitarian covered a great variety of opinions. This variety of opinions was due to the fact that like all Protestants they accepted the authority of the Scripture but unlike most other Protestants they went to Scripture to find out what was in it, and they did not find there confirmation of the statements in the Creeds of the Church. What they found varied from generation to generation and from person to person according to the prevailing thinking of the age or the imagination of the individual. For there is no uniform, worked out theology in the New Testament but only the materials for one, the product of early Church experience and reflection on it.

Early Unitarians no more than their opponents had a really historic view of the Creeds and showed little historic sense in many of the positions that they took up. What was of value in their conclusions was not any particular detail but the fact that they were using their minds to discover what was in Scripture. This led them on to discover the real nature and value of the Bible.

Unitarians are known by a great variety of names. As late as 1619, in a Papal Bull which ran till 1770, they were called Trinitarians. *Michael Servetus* in 1553 was the first to use the word Trinitarian in its modern sense, and this was one of the charges against him in the sentence of death: "that he calls those who believe in the Trinity Trinitarians."

The great variety of names by which they are known in history is partly due to this variety of opinion, partly due to the habit in those days of labelling opponents with the name of some early Christian heresy, even though the fundamental situation was different, partly owing to historic circumstances and partly owing to the personalities of different leaders.

The word Unitarian first appeared in the Transylvanian Church in the year 1600, and was officially adopted by the Church in 1638. The name Unitarian in England first appeared in England in 1672, in a pamphlet by *Henry Hedworth*. But during the eighteenth century Unitarians were usually called "Arians," though they themselves declared that their doctrine was the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity. Later in the eighteenth century and right on to the nineteenth century the word "Socinian" was commonly used, especially by their opponents, but many of their older Churches were called "Presbyterian," and that is the name most often given to them at the end of the eighteenth century. And, to complicate still further an already complicated matter, some of their chief leaders of the period were converts from the Independents and the Baptists.

In their attitude to civil government and war, the views of these early Unitarians resembled those of early Christians and Quakers, but in this respect they have not been followed by later Unitarians. Many early Unitarians were found among the Anabaptists, or Spiritual Reformers, as Professor Rufus Jones has more accurately termed them. Many of the Polish Socinians held that Christians ought not to bear the office of magistrate at all, but others, including *Faustus Socinus*, thought it lawful for Christians to be magistrates. "Mankind could not exist without society, nor society be maintained without a magistrate and governor: and indeed the church of Christ itself supports civil government, since it could not assemble except where civil government existed."

In the opinion of *Alexander Gordon*, this pacifist attitude was one of the causes which made it so easy for Ivan Casimir I completely to exterminate the movement in Poland. "The leaders of the Polish Church generally maintained the unlawfulness, in any circumstances, of civil office for a Christian man. The operation of this restriction would necessarily deprive the Church of the services of many who wished to maintain an organic hold upon the national life, and would increase the appearance of its alien character." The fact that many of the distinguished leaders of the

movement were refugees from other countries, and not of Polish birth or ancestry, also made its suppression easier.

THE UNITARIAN MOVEMENT INSIDE THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

In England there were isolated cases of various forms of Unitarianism in the sixteenth century, but the movement became important only in the seventeenth century with the spread of Socinianism. The study of the Bible was the main source of the heresy, but Socinian publications and Socinian exiles accelerated the spread of it. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries these views were widespread, especially in the Church of England. In the seventeenth century the prevailing form was the so-called "Socinian"; in the eighteenth the so-called "Arian." The main source of these views was the study of the New Testament, but they were spread also by reading Socinian books and by contact with Socinian exiles. *John Bidle* (or *Biddle*), who was the most outstanding non-Trinitarian of this period, reached his conclusions by reading the Bible, before he read *Socinus*.

How strong the Socinian movement in England was, may be guessed at from the horror it excited among Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Independents alike.

In 1640 the Church of England enacted a Canon to put an end to the "damnable heresy." In 1648, while the Presbyterians were in power, an Act was passed imposing the death penalty on holders of the heresy. And yet the majority of the oldest Unitarian Churches have a Presbyterian or Independent ancestry. This is one of the problems of Unitarian history, to be discussed later. The Independents were as a rule nearly as intolerant. In 1650 the Independents of the Rump Parliament passed "An Act against several atheistical, blasphemous, and execrable opinions derogatory to the honour of God and destructive to human society." Any person convicted of publishing any of the aforesaid opinions was to be banished for a second offence and, if the banished person returned, he was to be put to death. "The humble Petition and Advice" gave a limited toleration to such as those who professed "faith in God the Father, and

in Jesus Christ His eternal Son, the true God, and in the Holy Spirit, God co-equal with the Father and the Son, One God blessed for ever, and do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the revealed will and the Word of God," but from this toleration Catholics and Episcopalians were excluded. In spite of this, there was, under Cromwell, a remarkable degree of religious toleration, for the Board of Triers appointed Presbyterians, Independents, and Anglicans to the charge of parishes, though the use of the Book of Common Prayer was prohibited. Cromwell saved *John Bidle* from being put to death.

Not all men were as brave as *John Bidle*. Many of the Oxford Latitudinarians, especially Falkland and Chillingworth at the beginning of the century and the Cambridge Platonists at the end, were suspected of heresy on the subject. The suspicion has since been raised to certainty, though probably it would be truer to say that their outlook and method led inevitably to Anti-Trinitarianism on this subject rather than that they themselves were conscious of these heresies. But in some cases the further step was taken. At this period Unitarian views in some form were held by many distinguished men, such as *John Milton*, *John Locke*, and *Sir Isaac Newton*, though the full extent of their heresy was not made known till after their death. Newton's "Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture" was not published till 1754, and then incompletely. One of the saddest results of persecution was its effect on great minds lacking the supreme courage. *John Locke* published his "First Letter on Toleration" under a pseudonym. But, though *Locke* did not care for the full extent of his heresy to be known, his published works, especially his "Reasonableness of Christianity," exercised a powerful influence on the mind of his own and a subsequent generation. *Locke* would have reduced all the essentials from Christianity to one, the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. *Locke's* anti-Trinitarian views were suspected in his lifetime. One of the anti-Trinitarian Tracts was attributed to him. That he held these views was confirmed by the publication of his Common-Place Book in 1829. *Locke's* lack of courage was reflected in

his work on the Gospel. *Locke* had anticipated the nineteenth-century discovery that there was a secret of the Messiahship. But his explanation of it was characterized by the crudity which marked so much of the work of the early rationalists and has provided much amusement for the present-day reader. *Locke* attributed to Jesus the same lack of courage as he himself showed.

The philosophy of *Locke* was one of the dominant influences on the social and political thought of Protestant Dissenters and others in the eighteenth century.

The Quaker, William Penn, published his "Sandy Foundation Shaken" in 1668, and this showed Anti-Trinitarian tendencies, but a year later Penn published an "Apology" in which he retracted his views to some degree.

The word Unitarian was not yet used, perhaps not yet even known in England. Its first use was in 1672 in a pamphlet by *Henry Hedworth*, but the existence of this pamphlet was not discovered till late in the nineteenth century. *Hedworth* was a disciple of *Bidle*. It was another disciple of *Bidle* who first gave currency to the term in England, *Thomas Firmin*. *Firmin* visited *Bidle* in prison, and afterwards obtained a pension for him from Cromwell.

In 1687 James II published his "Declaration of the Liberty of Conscience," and *Firmin* seized the moment to finance the publication of a series of Unitarian Tracts. One of them was entitled "A Brief History of Unitarians, called also Socinians," written by *Stephen Nye*—a clergyman of Independent and Presbyterian ancestry.

Firmin also remained inside the Church of England. In one way the Church of England was more tolerant than many Dissenting congregations—assent to the Articles was only demanded of clergymen not of laymen. The Prayer Book *Firmin* was able quite sincerely to interpret in a Unitarian or Sabellian fashion, using the arguments to be found in a tract of *Nye's* on "The Agreement of Unitarians with the Catholic Church."

Under William and Mary a number of men whose point of view was that of the rationalists of their age were appointed bishops in the Church. Archbishop Secker had been

educated at a Dissenting Academy. Archbishop Tillotson had been a Nonconformist, and his conformity was perhaps due to *Firmin*. Tillotson entrusted *Firmin* with the choice of special preachers.

The situation was a curious one. The most outstanding Unitarian of his age was a close friend of the Archbishop and of many clergymen, at the very time when an Act was being passed making the holding of anti-Trinitarian views a penal offence. Towards the end of his life *Firmin* began to have qualms about the practical effect of conformity on the part of Unitarians and he was planning to form fraternities of Unitarians within the Church when he died.

Soon after the close of the seventeenth century the movement in this form came to an end. But a century later the old Unitarian Tracts helped to convert *Theophilus Lindsey* to Unitarianism. The term "Socinian" was then revived and applied to Unitarians of the period, whose views, though advanced, were not really Socinian.

Firmin's breadth of sympathy would have been remarkable in any age. He collected and distributed funds to help both exiled Polish anti-Trinitarians and also their enemies the Polish Calvinists. He assisted Huguenot refugees from France, non-jurors in England, and Protestants in Ireland.

Firmin won fame for the quality and extent of his philanthropy. It was from *Bidle* that he "learned to distrust mere almsgiving, and to attack the causes of social distress by economic effort." He tried several schemes for helping people in distress by providing employment for them, first of all in 1665 after the Great Plague. Then, in 1686, he built what was called a workhouse for their employment in linen manufacture, and employed 1,700 people. He paid them the current rate of wages but found this too low and supplemented it in various ways. Later he tried to establish a woollen factory with the same object. Neither of these schemes paid its way, and *Firmin* not only collected funds from his friends but made large contributions himself, putting down his carriage rather than drop some of his spinners. He built a store for corn and coal, and retailed them to poor people in hard times at cost price. He took an active interest in Christ's

Hospital, of which he was a Governor, and was largely responsible for rebuilding it. He was one of the earliest prison reformers.

In the early eighteenth century another movement set in with a less radical theology which its opponents labelled "Arian" but its supporters preferred to call "The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity." This was the title of a book by *Samuel Clarke*, which for long had at least as much influence in the Church of England as among Dissenters.

The weakness of the movement in the Church of England was, that it was difficult for clergymen holding this position to reconcile it with their subscription to the Articles of the Church of England. But they managed to persuade themselves that they were justified in retaining their livings. They adopted the view put forward quite early that the Articles were not Articles of faith but what they called Articles of peace. Bramhall, Archbishop of Armagh, Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, and Bull, Bishop of St. David's, in the seventeenth century had argued that the Church of England did not look upon the Thirty-Nine Articles as essentials of saving faith but "as pious opinions fitted for the preservation of unity; neither do we oblige any man to believe them, but only not to contradict them."

They often gave themselves a free hand in modifying the words of the Prayer Book, and in the peculiar situation of the Church at that time no action was taken against them. It is interesting to note that at the close of the eighteenth century so stalwart a Unitarian as *Priestley* advised *Lindsey* to do this, though later he recognized that his advice was mistaken.

Even so, they had qualms of conscience which they attempted to quiet by declining preferment involving a repetition of subscription. *Clarke* himself gave up his living and accepted in 1718 the position of Master of Wyggeston Hospital, Leicester, where subscription was not necessary.

A movement for modification of the terms of subscription was stimulated by Archdeacon Blackburne's "Confessional" in 1766. *Theophilus Lindsey* organized a petition to the House of Commons and in 1772 listened to the debate in company with *Richard Price* and *Joseph Priestley*. The petition was

rejected by 217 to 71 votes, and that was the end of the "Arian" movement in the Church of England. Most of the clergy who had signed the petition remained in the Church, but the movement died out without exerting a lasting influence. However much one may sympathize with these men in their desire to reconcile their subscription to the Articles with their theology, their position was really an impossible one. A few men of distinction, like *Theophilus Lindsey* himself and *John Jebb*, left the Church and became avowed Unitarians. Most of these did not continue their ministry. *John Jebb*, for instance, became a doctor. This small group produced some of the leaders of the Radical Reform movement.

In 1774 *Theophilus Lindsey* opened a Unitarian Church in Essex Street, London, the first church built in England for the purposes of Unitarian worship. Earlier Unitarians had held views which made the worship of Christ possible in their sense, but to *Lindsey* this was not possible. The year 1774, therefore, marked the beginning of the modern Unitarian movement. The Independent, Job Orton, though he did not share *Lindsey's* theological views, declared that, were he publishing an account of the ejected ministers, he would add *Lindsey* to the list, "if I brought him in by head and shoulders."

THE PURITAN ANCESTRY OF ENGLISH UNITARIANISM

The Origin of the Oldest Unitarian Congregations—The Names of these Congregations—The Course of Events in the Seventeenth Century—"The Open Trust"—Early Eighteenth Century Developments

The Origin of the Oldest Unitarian Congregations

If clergymen holding Unitarian views remained in the Church of England, their influence was nullified by the incompatibility of these views with their subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. If they left the Church of England, their congregations did not follow them. That is why Unitarian

congregations do not trace their ancestry to the movement inside the Church of England. The oldest Unitarian Churches sprang from the Puritanism of the early and middle seventeenth century, though Unitarian views did not develop in them till about the middle of the eighteenth century.

The very oldest were Episcopal chapels built in remote places at a time when the Puritans were still within the Church of England. These often retained the name chapel. The *Ancient Chapel of Toxteth*, Liverpool, was such a chapel. Dissenting places of worship were not often called chapels until the rise of Methodism. Before that time Protestant Dissenters applied the term only to those buildings which had once been Chapels of Ease. The next oldest Unitarian congregations began for the most part as General Baptist.

The great majority of the oldest Unitarian congregations, however, came into being as a result of the Great Ejection in 1662, when over 1,500 clergymen gave up their positions in the Church of England. In most places where these clergymen were ejected, some members of their congregation formed Dissenting congregations. Some of these congregations were called Presbyterian, but they had no Presbyterian organization and no connection with the Scottish Presbyterians. Some were Independent or Congregationalist, and some were Baptist. In the course of the eighteenth century, for various reasons, very many of these congregations died out. Most of those which survived were Congrgationalist, but about one hundred and sixty of them became Unitarian. That is, more than half of existing English Unitarian Churches are descended from seventeenth-century Puritans. In the course of the nineteenth century, others were added which were Unitarian from the start. Some of the greatest Unitarian ministers, like *Priestley* and *Belsham*, came to Unitarianism out of Independent Churches, and others, like *Aspland*, out of Baptist Churches.

The Names of these Congregations

Neither the ejected ministers of 1662 nor those of their congregations who went out with them were Unitarians

in theology at that time, nor would they have had any sympathy with Unitarians. They did not become Unitarian as a rule till after the middle of the eighteenth century. And these congregations were not given the name Unitarian as a rule, even after they had become Unitarian in theology. Many of these places of worship were called Meeting Houses, but a Meeting House, it should be explained, was not thought of as a place where men met each other but as a place where men met God. The names *Old Meeting*, Birmingham, and *New Meeting*, Birmingham, and *Great Meeting*, Leicester, are survivals of this practice. Many of their names are geographical in origin, like the *Gravel Pit, Hackney*, and *Lewin's Mead, Bristol.*

Many congregations were called Presbyterian, and it was common to give the name Presbyterian to the Radical Dissenters who became Unitarian in the latter part of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth century. The Trust Deeds of these Churches do not, as a rule, prescribe the nature of the doctrine to be preached in them. They are what is called "Open Trusts." Nineteenth-century Unitarians thought that their Puritan ancestors had deliberately left these Trusts open, in order to allow for future theological developments, and that this openness of mind was a characteristic of English Presbyterians. This was a complete mistake, as will shortly be explained.

The Course of Events in the Seventeenth Century

A complete answer to the question how Unitarian Churches developed from the Churches founded by the ejected would involve an exposition of all the currents of religious thought and feeling of the time. Briefly, the explanation is that the period was one of unusually rapid change. Once men had broken away from the Catholic Church, they were faced with a whole mass of problems the solutions to which are nowadays taken for granted. These problems were not only theological but included subjects like changes in the forms of worship, and methods of organization and finance. But it was long before men became quite clear about all the issues involved. There was a period of great confusion. Term

changed their meaning rapidly, and men's views developed rapidly in this time of crisis.

The trouble which came to a head in the seventeenth century really went back to the earliest days of Protestantism, when the State took over the control of the Church and tried to impose a settlement dictated by State policy rather than by religious conviction. The Church settlement imposed by Queen Elizabeth resulted in a Church with a semi-Catholic form of worship, a moderate Calvinistic theology, and a government which was wholly Erastian. Naturally, such a settlement was bound to provoke trouble among all those who were not content to worship and to believe as the State dictated. Under Elizabeth there was a continued succession of Puritan ministers ejected from their livings because on certain points they were unable to accept certain practices, which they regarded as too Catholic and unscriptural. At this time, however, the prevailing theology in the Church was more Calvinistic than the Articles.

The movement seemed to die down for a time but took on a fresh lease of life under James I, when William Laud, later Archbishop of Canterbury, and the High Anglicans became powerful. Then it was that the Puritan movement became associated with the opposition of Calvinist to non-Calvinist. The Puritans themselves had no thought of leaving the Church of England, but another party was growing up of Independents and Baptists who held a quite different theory of the nature of the Church.

Civil grievances coincided with ecclesiastical grievances and a civil war broke out in which Puritans and Parliamentarians were opposed to Royalists and Anglicans. Under the stress of war rapid development took place. The moderate reformers were swept on one side, and each party came to the top in turn. Episcopacy was abolished and the extreme left-wing Presbyterians, with the aid of the Scottish army, tried to impose a system of rigid divine-right Presbyterianism on England. But this system never took root in the minds and hearts of Englishmen. It was adopted for a moment mainly because, the old system having been destroyed, something had to be put in its place, and the extreme left-

wing Presbyterians were the only people with a scheme, and the scheme was of a kind which pleased the Scottish army. This extreme left wing consisted of men who justified Milton's famous dictum that new Presbyter was but old Priest writ large. They were the men who declared: "We do detest toleration." They passed the Act of 1648, which punished Socinianism with the death penalty. Yet so complicated and so rapid were the changes that were going on, that the word Presbyterian later came to be identified with Unitarian, and in the nineteenth century a Presbyterian Association was founded among Unitarians who disliked dogmatic distinctions!

When the army under Cromwell came into power, a very wide degree of toleration was given to the numerous sects who abounded in it.

The Independents had then their moment. Their standpoint was stated in "The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order," a statement of belief which occupied no fewer than thirty-five large pages. But, though they demanded a more rigid orthodoxy among their own members, they did not try to impose this creed on non-members, since they believed that the true Church was not the parish church to which everyone came, but a gathered Church of the Saints. Their position was that the Kingdom of Heaven "was not to be begotten by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, were they never so few." But even these views were not consistently systematized at this time, and under the Commonwealth Independents held parish livings and received tithes, even though sometimes they had their own little "Gathered Church" running side by side with the assembly of the parish church.

This resulted in a curious topsy-turvy of opinions. Since the Independents believed in the "Gathered" Church of the Saints, they were not anxious to use force to compel sinners to come in, but on those who were in they felt they could make the most extreme demands.

Under Cromwell a new system was instituted. Clergymen of different parties were appointed as parish ministers after approval by a Board of Triers. In this way livings were

given to Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, and also to Moderate Episcopalians, if they were not suspected of disloyalty to the existing political settlement. The public use of the Book of Common Prayer was forbidden for political reasons, though probably in some cases it was used. With this exception there was a wider degree of toleration than existed in most parts of Europe for another hundred and fifty years. And the system must have been acceptable to or at least bearable by a very large number of clergymen who would have preferred the Anglican system, because the great majority of them retained their livings at the Restoration.

During the Commonwealth, under the influence of deeper religious ideas and of Richard Baxter, a movement had set in for closer co-operation between the different groups. Men had learnt something from the experiences through which they had passed. The sense of religious and moral need was beginning to moderate sectarian passion. In 1653 a movement was started by which Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, and Moderate Episcopalian ministers in different parishes began to meet together and to work together. This was called the Voluntary Association movement. The movement was begun independently in different counties, but one of the dominating influences on it was that of Richard Baxter, a great moral and spiritual force of the period. He is often called a Presbyterian; the term Moderate Episcopalian would describe him better, but many Moderate Presbyterians shared his views. When he obtained a licence after the ejection he described himself simply as Nonconformist.

Richard Baxter's influence was felt both by Presbyterians and Independents, though in different degrees. At Kidderminster, where he officiated, a Protestant Dissenting congregation was formed which in the course of the eighteenth century split into two, one Congregationalist and the other Unitarian. Unitarians retained the old place of worship and at a later date Baxter's old pulpit was bought and placed in the vestry, where it still is. On the other hand the new Congregationalist Church is called the Baxter Memorial Church. The original portrait of Baxter is in

possession of the Dr. Williams's Library, and a copy is at *Manchester College, Oxford*. The chapel of the Congregationalist Mansfield College, Oxford, contains a statue of Richard Baxter.

To understand the spirit of Richard Baxter is to understand those elements in the Puritanism of the time which helped to explain later developments. Richard Baxter was the greatest of the ejected. Baxter believed profoundly that to influence a man you must have him inside not outside your movement. He wanted to include in the Church all those who professed and called themselves Christians. But, if everybody was to be brought in, obviously it could not be by insistence on confessions of faith thousands of words long, but only by agreement on what were the essentials of the Christian faith. This led to the movement called Movement for Reduction of Essentials or the Reduction of Fundamentals. Baxter would have included as many as possible. And to do this, he was willing to make the maximum agreement on what was fundamental and essential. This was not because Baxter was unable to perceive the importance of theological differences. On the contrary he was one of the most ardent controversialists of his day. The wits spoke of "Richard" versus "Baxter." But because his intellectual apprehension was accompanied by a sense of spiritual realities, he did not, as many controversialists do, allow terms to blind him to the realities of experience. He said he was neither Arminian nor Calvinist, because he found both in life.

Baxter declared "his personal love for a section of his contemporaries who, as he said, 'addicted themselves to no sect or party at all, though the vulgar called them by the name of Presbyterians.' 'I am loth,' he added, 'to call them a party, because they were for catholicism against parties.' "

" 'I now see more good, and more evil, in all men than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, but have more imperfections. . . . And I find that few are so bad as (the) . . . censorious . . . do imagine . . .' And again: 'That is the best doctrine . . . which maketh men better. . . .' "

Baxter went so far as to state that the only essential articles of belief necessary for Church membership were the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue. And, when it was pointed out to him that this would admit the Socinians and the Catholics, he replied so much the better. This saying of his was often misunderstood, because, though Baxter was willing to reduce fundamentals as far as possible, in order to bring everybody in, he regarded the Socinians and the Catholics as outside the pale, or in his words, as intolerable. What he would have done with them is not clear. He was not, indeed, yet ready to trust entirely to the workings of the Spirit and to include everyone of those who felt a common bond. Though Baxter excluded Socinians, this movement is parallel with the attitude of the Socinians as shown by the extracts from the Racovian Catechism already quoted. This desire to make the basis as broad as possible and to include as many people as possible, is the quality in the ejected which led to the later Unitarian idea of a Church free from dogma.

Cromwell died in 1658, and the Restoration of Charles II took place in 1660. The Presbyterians had helped to bring Charles back, and Charles had issued the declaration of Breda promising relief to tender consciences. Baxter and others were offered bishoprics and deaneries. For a moment it looked as if the Church of England would become the Church of the great majority of the nation. But party passion, religious and political, ran too high. The memory of the sufferings of the returned exiles was too strong. The victorious party, smarting under the losses of their estates and made bitter by their sufferings in exile, determined to get the Presbyterians out and keep them out, a position which may be intelligible but is not exactly Christian. They succeeded in making comprehension impossible. "Had we known that so many would have remained in," said Archbishop Sheldon, the builder of the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, "we would have made the terms worse." They succeeded. The Act of Uniformity was passed, and over fifteen hundred of the keenest Parish clergymen gave up their livings because they could not conscientiously

assent and consent to everything in the Book of Common Prayer.

The points at issue were not those of doctrine. This must be quite clearly understood. There was only one Unitarian among the ejected, though the oldest Churches now Unitarian were founded as a result of the ejection. Only one of the ejected ministers developed heresy on the subject of the Trinity. *William Manning* was an early instance of Socinianism among the Nonconformists, and influenced *Emlyn* to some extent.

The ejected did not leave the Church in a narrow spirit of sectarianism or spiritual snobbery. For the most part the Presbyterians believed in a national Church. They went out reluctantly. They hoped that the Church would be wise enough or Christian enough to enable them to return. So far were the ejected from preferring the welfare of a sect to that of the national Church that, when they held their own services, they did not hold them at the same time as those at the parish church. At Kidderminster they continued to attend the parish church as late as 1782. They took Communion with the Church of England. For a generation they refused to ordain new ministers of their own and only began to do so when it was quite clear that their hopes of comprehension would not be gratified.

This tradition has prevailed to this day. The children of a well-known Unitarian minister were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, so that, if reunion were ever possible, the question of baptism would not arise. There is little doubt that this absence of strongly defined denominational feeling was one reason why so many of the Churches did not survive. And this strain in Unitarianism, admirable though it is, has militated against its success as a denomination.

Those Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Moderate Episcopalians who had held Parish livings had been learning to work together. But this movement for comprehension was now stopped. This is the real tragedy of the Restoration settlement—not that one side or the other had not done things of which it might well be ashamed as

unchristian, but that, just when very many of them were learning to find another way, that way was closed. In the words of Calamy: "He that should undertake to justify what either the Parliamentarians did against the Episcopalians . . . or the Episcopal men did against the Dissenters . . . would . . . have an hard task of it, and come off but poorly."

The vital issue was the condition that ministers should subscribe to all and everything in the Prayer Book. The ejected thought that certain forms and words in the Prayer Book were at the best non-spiritual and at the worst superstitious. The Bishops said: "These are small things; why cannot you fall in with them?" With equal logic the ejected replied: "If these are small things, why do you insist on them and make them essential?" To them these little things were symbols of vital issues, the control of the spiritual by the civil power and of a man's absolute faithfulness to his conscience; and they added, "To load our public forms with the private fancies upon which we differ is a most sovereign way to perpetuate schism to the world's end." They said that no power, and especially not the State, could impose conditions which God had not imposed, and to them the Will of God was revealed in Scripture. Or in their own words: "We ought to obey God rather than men." "O Sir, many a man nowadays makes a great gash in his conscience, cannot you make a little nick in yours?" Nathaniel Heywood was asked. The answer was no.

To recognize this is not to pretend that all wisdom was on their side. As a matter of fact, the position taken up by Richard Hooker on the nature of the Church would have allowed the Church to develop its life in accordance with the needs of each age, far more than the belief that Scripture had laid down an exact model of what the Church should be for all time. This rigid scripturalism is seen in the Presbyterians' "Exceptions to the Book of Common Prayer," where they demanded "That the preface prefixed by God Himself to the Commandments may be restored."

Another issue was the question of re-ordination. Some of the ministers had never received Episcopal ordination, but had been ordained only according to Presbyterian

forms. (This did not apply to Baxter and those others who had been Episcopally ordained.) Clergymen holding livings who had only been ordained according to the Presbyterian form had to receive Episcopal ordination if they wished to keep them. For the most part they were prepared to accept this, but some bishops insisted that they should at the same time make a declaration in this form: "I renounce my pretended letters of ordination." Other bishops devised a form to meet their scruples.

A period of bitter persecution set in, lasting in its extreme form for a generation, and in a modified form for two centuries. A series of Acts was passed, usually called the Clarendon Code after Lord Clarendon, the leading Minister of Charles II, and the author of the famous "History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England," from the profits of printing which the Clarendon Building in Oxford was erected, and from which in its turn the Clarendon Press of Oxford took its name. The disabilities imposed by these Acts lasted through the eighteenth century and were not entirely removed till the middle of the nineteenth century. Details of those which affected the social contribution of Unitarians will be given later in this chapter.

It was the heroism with which the ejected bore that persecution that taught the nation its lesson. Two instances may suffice. Judge Jeffreys would have liked Richard Baxter to be flogged at the cart's tail. But this was too much even for those days. The newer school of historians may whitewash Judge Jeffreys and explain that he loved music, but even the blindest men of the seventeenth century had no doubt about the relative spiritual worth of Judge Jeffreys and Richard Baxter.

This period might be described as the first heroic period of English Unitarian history and it was then that so much of value in the Unitarian tradition was created. (The second heroic period was the time of the wars with France.) Persecution either drives men wild or teaches men something. Suffering and persecution, if they do not completely exterminate, have at least this one good result, that those who survive in spite of persecution value that highly for

which they have endured. In the long run the gain from the ejection was probably greater than the loss, distressing though many of its consequences were. It crippled the Church of England for a century and a half, and it impoverished the life of the Dissenters in many ways, but it may be doubted whether men and women would really have learned the lesson of toleration unless the lesson had been driven home in this way. The ejected had also this lesson to learn and the time of persecution helped them to learn it. Even as late as 1689 the Presbyterians were more anxious for comprehension within the Church than they were to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. And in 1697 a deputation waited upon William III and requested him to forbid the printing of Socinian books. Through them England learnt a lesson which has become part of the tissue of its thought, a respect for men's consciences which is the only lasting basis of toleration and freedom. And, having thus learned toleration, Englishmen learnt that in such an atmosphere wide differences of opinion do not imply a disunited nation, but rather a nation with a richer and more harmonious life. Queen Elizabeth had believed what the twentieth century dictators of the world still believe, that national unity is brought about by uniformity. Such a forced uniformity ends in slavery or in deep-seated bitterness which sooner or later poisons the national system. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries England learned the lesson that real unity can be secured without uniformity, and that such a unity is deeper and stronger because organic and living, and not mechanical and external. To learn this lesson was worth a high price.

In March 1672 Charles II issued a Declaration of Indulgence which suspended the persecuting Acts. Licences were issued permitting Nonconformist worship.

It was with this Declaration that Nonconformity began to prepare for its future. It was in 1672 rather than in 1662 that the Presbyterians made up their minds that they would have to remain outside the Church for a time at least. The Independents, not having the same view of the Church, had made up their minds earlier, and Frankland's first

students at Rathmell Academy included Independents. A number of Meeting Houses were built—in Lancashire seventeen. With the exception of the chapels already mentioned, the oldest Unitarian churches date from this period. Some of the actual buildings survive.

The Declaration of Indulgence was of doubtful legality, and, when Parliament met in 1673, the Indulgence was cancelled. A new period of persecution set in, relieved at times by administrative action. Under James II the situation was repeated.

The period of active persecution came to an end when James II fled from England and William and Mary came to the throne. Once again, as in 1662, the Presbyterians hoped that they would be comprehended within the Church, and once again passion proved too high. A Comprehension Bill was introduced, and it has been estimated that, if this Bill had been passed into law, all the Presbyterians would have returned to the Church, and perhaps even two-thirds of the Independents. But the Church and the Tories were strong enough to prevent the comprehension of the Protestant Dissenters in the English Church, and the Bill was defeated. The Test and Corporation Acts remained in force, and the Lords rejected the King's attempt to abolish the Sacramental Test, though later they tried to make more tolerant the Occasional Conformity Act.

On the other hand, the King and the Whigs were strong enough to reward the services of the Dissenters, and in 1689 an Act was passed "Exempting their Majesty's Protestant Subjects Dissenting from the Church of England from the Penalties of certain Laws." This Act is usually known as the Toleration Act, though that is not its official name nor did it show much toleration. Catholics and Unitarians were excluded altogether, and further legislation was passed against both these classes of Nonconformists. Quakers, however, received more favourable treatment. Toleration was given to orthodox Protestant Dissenters on certain conditions. Ministers (but not laymen) had to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, excepting those relating to rites and ceremonies and Church govern-

ment. Places of worship had to be certified. The certificates are sometimes wrongly called licences—wrongly because the Justices were bound to issue them when requested. But at intervals during the eighteenth century steps had sometimes to be taken to force reluctant Justices to realize that they had no option but to issue the certificates, when the terms of the Act had been complied with.

But, though the toleration granted was limited, the Act did give Protestant Dissenters the legal right to exist. As the famous lawyer Blackstone put it: Nonconformity ceased to be a crime in the case of those Protestant Dissenters who complied with the conditions of the Act. Under it Dissenters began to take steps to continue the supply of their ministers by ordaining new ones. Up to this time Presbyterians had refused to ordain new ministers, but, unless they were willing to die out, this step had now to be taken. The first Ordination Service among Protestant Dissenters took place in 1694. These Ordination Services continued to the end of the eighteenth century and were revived in the nineteenth.

Dissenters had to learn to support a ministry without endowments and without tithes. In those days, as in these, the existence of the smaller congregations was only made possible by assistance from the larger ones.

Few people realize that when the old organization of the Church was broken up, a completely new one of some kind had to be created. There were no precedents for this in historic times. The creation of the self-governing Church was one of the achievements of Protestantism and one of the far-reaching ways in which Protestantism helped men to develop their sense of responsibility and democracy.

Dissenters began to build places of worship. A few had been built before, but most of the twelve hundred buildings used for worship were private houses. Sometimes one or two men gave the money for a new building. Sometimes one or two men built a place of worship of which they remained owners, but which they allowed the Dissenters to use. Sometimes a joint-stock company was formed, and the pews were held as private property by the shareholders. In other places members of the congregation subscribed the

funds for the new building. Sometimes, where they could not afford this, the yeomen combined, one giving the land, one the material, others doing the carting and the labouring. At *Hyde* a church was built in this way at the cost of £43.

These facts have been seized upon as indicating the religious commercialism of the Protestant Dissenters. They were in fact rather a way of meeting an urgent new problem. The method had the advantage that, if a particular congregation wished to develop, there was no superior ecclesiastical authority to forbid change.

The "Open Trust"

When these buildings did not remain in private hands, they were placed in the hands of trustees. In such cases the trusts for the most part did not lay down any doctrinal conditions, but simply stated that the churches existed for the worship of Almighty God; sometimes the words were added, "for the use of Protestant Dissenters," and sometimes the further words were added, "of the Presbyterian or Independent persuasion." These trusts have often been called Open Trusts. Actually they were made subject to the doctrinal conditions laid down in the so-called Toleration Act. They were left "open" partly because the founders were not sure of the future. They were not sure whether toleration might be extended to that comprehension they had longed for or whether persecution might break out again. Sometimes the founders provided for the possibility that the Church might cease to exist for either of these reasons.

After the middle of the eighteenth century, the fact that these trusts were open in this sense had important consequences. When the theological views of a congregation became Unitarian, there was no legal obstacle to the change in the trust deed, and, since each congregation was absolutely independent in its government, no superior ecclesiastical authority could be invoked to prevent this development.

In the early nineteenth century Unitarians were nearly deprived of all their older churches on the ground that Unitarianism was illegal at the time the churches were built. The Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844 was passed

to save them. One of the arguments used to persuade Parliament to pass this Act was, that the men who would have been deprived of their churches by the strict letter of the law were men whose fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers were buried in the graveyards which often surrounded the old chapels. The Unitarians of this period believed that their ancestors were all Presbyterians, and that the seventeenth-century Presbyterians were sufficiently open-minded to leave their trusts open to allow future developments of theology. They believed that the ejected had learnt from their ejection the danger of enforcing subscription to dogmas. And they believed also that this open-mindedness was a characteristic of Presbyterians as opposed to Congregationalists. These beliefs were mistaken, and *Principal Alexander Gordon* described the theory as the Open Trust Myth.

In fact, the various uses of the word "Presbyterian" form one of the most complicated of the minor problems of English ecclesiastical history.

Actually, the whole Presbyterian system had broken down a generation before any of these congregations were founded. The only relic of it remained in the ordination of the ministers of these Churches by their fellow ministers in certain parts of England, especially in Lancashire and Cheshire, where Presbyterianism had been strongest. The Provincial Assemblies founded in Lancashire and Devon still survive in a modified form.

The English Presbyterians who came to power at the time of the Civil War told the whole world that they detested toleration, and showed it by their actions.

Moreover, the trust Deeds of Congregational Churches founded during this period are also Open Trusts. *Walter Lloyd* has reckoned that 273 Congregationalist and 122 Baptist Churches now existing and dating from this period were once governed by trusts which specified no doctrine. In the words of *Alexander Gordon*, "This is the precarious ground on which Unitarians claim an English Presbyterian ancestry, though at least half of the old Presbyterian chapels (those of the period 1690–1710) are now in the hands of Congre-

gationals, and many of the older Unitarian chapels were erected by Congregationals."

There was somewhat more truth in the myth than *Alexander Gordon*, with all his great learning, was quite ready to allow. There were good reasons why the name Presbyterian should come to be associated with that group of Protestant Dissenters which became Unitarian in the eighteenth century. There were fundamental differences of outlook between the Presbyterian and Independent theories of the nature of the Church. And these were associated also with theological differences, though these theological differences developed later. The two different theories of the Church had existed from the beginning. The Independents believed that the Church should be the Church of the elect, in Scripture language, of the saints. While, therefore, they were less anxious to force people to come into their Church, they exacted more from those who did come in. Unfortunately, what they exacted was not merely a high standard of moral discipline but an extremely minute agreement in theological belief. On the other hand, the Presbyterians of the Baxterian persuasion hoped for a widely inclusive Church, and this hope led them to try to find as wide a basis as possible for Church membership. This was called reduction of fundamentals or reduction of essentials, and this led in time to the refusal to impose dogmatic tests at all, that is, to the principle of non-subscription. An intermediate stage of development was the refusal to impose any tests except those based on Scripture.

During the Commonwealth, it has just been explained, the less extreme Presbyterians and Congregationalists had been coming together in the Voluntary Associations. The persecution which followed the ejection had assisted this development. As early as 1670, the Academy founded by the Presbyterian Frankland at Rathmell had received students for the Congregationalist ministry as well as Anglican laymen. This College was the ancestor of *Manchester College, Oxford.* A Common Fund for Presbyterians and Congregationalists was started in 1690, through which the wealthy London congregations helped to support the

poorer provincial ones. In some places Presbyterians and Congregationalists combined to build churches for their joint use. Several of these are now Unitarian. In 1691 the two bodies made what was described as "A Happy Union," celebrated by the sermon called "Two Sticks Made One." The terms were very similar to those of Baxter's Worcestershire Agreement of 1653. Each of the two bodies surrendered something of its distinctive characteristics. The words "Presbyterian" and "Independent" or "Congregational" began to lose their original meaning, and were becoming obsolete through the use of the comprehensive phrase "The Protestant Dissenting Interest."

Unfortunately, this Happy Union between the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists did not prove very happy, and did not long remain a Union—in London at least. The Congregationalists tended to ultra-Calvinism and the Baxterian Presbyterians to a more moderate form of Calvinism, and the divergence between the two parties was too great. The first split took place in London as a result of the Crisp Controversy of 1692. The London Congregationalists founded their own Fund in 1695. After this, the older Common Fund was probably called the Presbyterian Fund, though this title was not officially used before 1771. And the older Fund did not confine its grants to Churches calling themselves Presbyterian. "Many grants to Congregationals (even when receiving from the other Fund) are entered in its Minutes." "Churches were labelled according to the character of the Funds out of which they were helped" (*A. Gordon*).

After the publication of *Samuel Clarke's* "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity" in 1712, the orthodox had to fear the growth of heresy on this subject also. The minister at Exeter, James Peirce, was accused of a form of Unitarian heresy and a conference of London ministers and laymen was summoned to give advice on the case. This conference was known as the Salters' Hall "Synod" of 1719. Peirce had been influenced by Baxter. The issues were very complicated and have often been misunderstood. In the end, the majority refused to demand a test that every minister should be asked to

make a confession of his faith by subscribing to certain statements. Independents and Presbyterians were both divided on the question. But on the whole Presbyterians tended to be against subscription and Independents to be in favour of subscription.

When the London Congregational Board was founded in 1728, it was laid down that a Congregational minister was one who manifested his agreement to the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, which was the thirty-five page confession of faith drawn up in 1658. In the eighteenth century, when Congregationalists split off from the general body of Protestant Dissenters owing to theological differences, they attached doctrinal conditions to their new places of worship. As early as 1715, for instance, when the Calvinists in Gloucester split off from their fellow Dissenters, they based the trust of their new Church on the Westminster Confession. After the middle of the eighteenth century the word "Independent" signified a certain adherence to the doctrinal standards of the Westminster Assembly, and "Presbyterian" became synonymous with liberty of opinion and even with laxity of doctrine. And in the early nineteenth century, when this liberty went so far as to result in the adoption of Unitarianism, it must be stated with sadness that Congregationalists were active in trying to deprive Unitarians of the use of their old churches. May these unhappy memories of the past serve as warnings for the future!

Actually, the General Baptists seem to have been the first religious group deliberately to adopt the Open Trust. The first instance of such a trust made in the recognition of possible future changes occurred in a bequest to the General Baptist Congregation at *Great Yarmouth* in 1722. (This, however, was an Endowment Trust, not a Church Trust.) Early in the eighteenth century also the General Baptists decided to take no action against a minister who had adopted Unitarian views.

Early Eighteenth-Century Developments

During the eighteenth century further developments took place simultaneously along several lines. Some Dissenting

ministers passed beyond the desire for comprehension and a reduction of essentials, and demanded the abolition of subscription to creeds.

An intermediate stage was a refusal to subscribe to any articles of faith which were not expressed in the words of Scripture—"human articles," as they were called. As early as 1711, *Samuel Bourn* had refused to subscribe to the Westminster Assembly's Confession, and many ministers refused therefore to concur in his ordination. Many ministers ceased to fulfil the legal obligation of subscription to the majority of the Thirty-nine Articles. The issue sank into the background for a time, but the wider question of subscription to articles of faith was restarted by Samuel Chandler, a Dissenting minister, in 1748. "If I must subscribe to human, unchristian articles, I will subscribe the articles of the Council of Trent, by which I may stand fair for a cardinal's hat, or the articles and canons of the Church of England, by which I may obtain five hundred a year, or a bishopric, rather than the articles of a pedantic layman for only fifty pounds a year" (J. H. Colligan: "Eighteenth-Century Nonconformity").

This freedom resulted in a series of theological changes. Some of the descendants of the ejected displayed the same courage in seeking new truth as their ancestors had done in bearing witness to what they held to be the truth already revealed to them. Modern Unitarianism was only reached by slow stages. A more open-minded study of Scripture led from Trinitarianism to so-called "Arianism" or Scriptural Unitarianism in its narrower sense, then to Humanitarian Unitarianism. In the nineteenth century Unitarians won freedom from the external authority of Scripture with the discovery that the only authority in religion is the inner authority of experience, of the soul, conscience, and mind of man.

The first stage of the movement was one which its opponents labelled "Arian." Those who held the views thus labelled preferred to call it, more correctly, the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity. "Arian" was, in fact, an incorrect description, but it was the habit in those days to

try to label any heresy in terms of some early Christian heresy, and completely to ignore the fact that the outlook of everybody in the eighteenth century was worlds apart from that of the fourth century, when the Arian controversy took place.

The eighteenth-century "Arian" movement in England "never became a grand debate upon the exact sense of certain words. . . . It was rather an endeavour to find out how far a rational interpretation of Scripture could be allowed; and to what degree the Protestant principle of private judgment could be safely developed" (J. H. Colligan: "The Arian Movement in England").

The movement appeared first in the Church of England, as has been stated, with the publication of *S. Clarke's* "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity" in 1712. This movement of thought, however, left no permanent effect on the Church of England, because their views were incompatible with the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion which all clergymen had subscribed. Only later did the movement affect Dissenters, but then it went deeper, because those who believed in it were willing to make sacrifices for it, and because there was no subscription to any creeds to hold them back. Among Protestant Dissenters the views of the ministers spread to their congregations as well, and so were given continuity of life. The old Unitarian Tracts were neglected or forgotten by this time. In 1710 J. Peirce, in the first edition of his "Vindication of the Dissenters," stated that there were no Socinians among them, but in the second edition of 1717 he omitted this statement. More important even than *Clarke's* book were two works by the Protestant Dissenter, *Dr. John Taylor*, "Original Sin," published in 1740, and "The Atonement," in 1751. These helped to destroy the idea both of the depravity of man as a result of the Fall and of his miraculous salvation, and so through the atonement paved the way for the next advance, which was to the humanitarian form of Unitarianism. *Taylor* was a tutor at Warrington Academy from 1757 to 1761, but was not very happy there.

P. Doddridge (1702–1751), who exerted the deepest

religious influence at this period, went further to a form of Sabellianism. Doddridge was not a Unitarian, but his students greatly influenced Lancashire Unitarianism. Between 1730 and 1750 few pastorates were untouched by "Arianism." English "Arianism" culminated about the middle of the eighteenth century, though the last English Unitarian minister to hold "Arian" views (*J. C. Means*) lived till 1879.

The change to Unitarianism proper may be dated from the middle of the eighteenth century. The term "Socinian" was often applied to it, but it was unlike seventeenth-century Socinianism in its view of Christ, and the seventeenth-century view was not quite that of Socinus himself.

The three great Unitarians of this period were *John Taylor*, *Nathaniel Lardner*, and *Joseph Priestley*. *John Taylor* was "Arian." *Lardner* was "Socinian," and his letter on the Logos, published anonymously in 1730, caused *Priestley* to advance another step on his way to a more developed Unitarianism. The characteristics of this school have been taken off in the remark that the orthodox Dissenters worshipped God for twenty minutes and dictated to man for sixty, while the Liberal Dissenters dictated to God for twenty minutes and worshipped man for sixty. This school stressed the full humanity of Jesus, while still accepting the authority of Scripture interpreted by reason and the testimony of miracles and prophecy to his unique position. The first and for a long time the only rejection of miracles by a Unitarian minister was by *T. Martin*, who died in 1814, and by a layman, *W. Sturch*, who died in 1838. As late as 1823, *the Rev. Charles Wellbeloved*, the Principal of *Manchester College*, then at York, made this declaration: "I adopt the common language of Unitarians when I say, Convince us that any tenet is authorized by the Bible, from that moment we receive it. Prove any doctrine to be a doctrine of Christ, emanating from that wisdom which was from above, and we take it for our own, and no power on earth shall wrest it from us."

If the Bible had been one Book, this might have been fatal to further progress, but higher criticism had begun,

and in time it came to be realized that the Bible does not contain one uniform theology but is rather the expression of centuries of developing religious experience.

The rapidity of these changes was due above all to the Academies where Protestant Dissenters and others were trained. Reference has been made to them in the chapter on Education. The first Academies had been founded soon after the ejection and developed in the eighteenth century owing to the theological subscription imposed on students at Oxford and Cambridge.

Many of the Academies cultivated methods of teaching which did much to stimulate independent thinking. At some Academies there were tutors of different schools of thought. They stated both sides of the case without bringing any pressure to bear on the students to reach one particular conclusion. There is an illuminating story of a tutor who presented the arguments for and against Socinianism, and as the years went on found himself forced to withdraw the arguments against, one by one, till none were left. At Hackney another tutor gave the comments of Trinitarian, Arian, Socinian, and Unitarian writers. J. Jennings, at Kibworth, encouraged the greatest freedom of inquiry, as did *John Taylor* at Warrington. Lancashire became Arian because of the influence of the Academies at Daventry and Warrington. The result of teaching theology without a bias was, in fact, to send out ardent Unitarians. Consequently the Independents who did not like these changes began to demand subscription to certain doctrines from their students.

In any case, colleges and academies are always open to the current philosophical and scientific influences of the time. In the early part of the eighteenth century the philosophy of *John Locke* was dominant. His book on "The Reasonableness of Christianity" showed the influence of Richard Baxter. But *Locke* went beyond Baxter in reducing fundamentals. *Locke* would have been satisfied to make the acknowledgment of Jesus as Messiah the basis of Church membership. Later *Locke* was superseded by Hutcheson, and then by Hartley, but he remained a weighty influence for several generations.

The Academies displayed a considerable interest in natural science. Many scientific discoveries were made at the Academies or by their students. There are indications from the beginning that Puritanism, as a child of the seventeenth century, had a special interest in science. This interest was not in any way confined to laymen. Many of the ministers had a great interest in natural science. A considerable number of Dissenting ministers were elected Fellows of the Royal Society in the eighteenth century. Some of them were also Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries, and some of these Fellows of the Royal Society were also poets.

Another influence was that of the Scottish Universities, which at this time were in close connection with English Dissenters. To this day Dr. Williams's Undergraduate Scholarships are held at the University of Glasgow. Many of the leading Protestant Dissenters were educated at Scottish Universities, and Unitarians often received honorary degrees from them. At this time, in Scotland as in England, there was a break in the intense narrowness which characterized both seventeenth-century and nineteenth-century orthodox thinking. This freer movement went by the name of Moderatism. Francis Hutcheson, Professor at Glasgow, was its most distinguished representative. Hutcheson's influence generally went to make Arians and to weaken orthodoxy.

In Scotland, *Taylor's* book influenced *Robert Burns*, whose poetry in turn spread the ideas among those who would never have read *Taylor* for themselves.

A connection with the Dutch Universities tended in the same direction. Utrecht and Leyden, like Glasgow and Edinburgh, received students excluded from the English Universities. *Nathaniel Lardner* studied in Holland. Peirce was influenced by Dutch scholars as well as by *Clarke*.

UNITARIANISM AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The decisive advance took place at the end of the eighteenth century, and is associated with the name of *Joseph Priestley*.

Priestley was first a Calvinist, then an Arminian, then an Arian, and became a materialist "necessarian" of the Hartley school. Then he questioned the pre-existence of Christ. He then adopted Hartley's views that spirit cannot exist apart from matter, and that, therefore, there was neither pre-existence nor post-existence. But this natural law was qualified by miracle. By miracle Christ's body was made immaterial, and those who believed on him also became immortal. In 1786 he criticized the virgin birth, and in doing so questioned the verbal inspiration of Scripture. Christ was not infallible, as his belief in demons showed, nor impeccable. He declared the worship of Christ to be idolatrous. *Priestley* kept his belief in prophecy and the millennium to the end, and occupied his later years in applying the prophecies of the Book of Daniel to Napoleon. In 1794 he wrote to *Belsham* about the second coming: "You may probably live to see it; I shall not. It cannot, I think, be more than twenty years."

The consequence of these changes in theology was a complete break inside Protestant Dissent as a whole, and often inside separate congregations. This was not altogether to be lamented. The old Protestant Dissent had deepened the religious life of England and maintained it through the eighteenth century, but its work was done and decay had set in. Very many of the old Dissenting congregations had died out. In London it was reported that their Meeting-houses were almost deserted by the old families which had supported them. They were shut up, or had fallen partly or altogether into the hands of the Calvinists. One cause of the decline was the absence of the sense of the Church as a community as distinct from a mere collection of isolated individuals. Among those who remained a division took place which though painful at the time worked for good in the end.

Some congregations passed on to Unitarianism without a break; others were divided. Sometimes the minority were Unitarian, and they went out and built a new church; sometimes the minority were orthodox and left the old building to the Unitarians. At a few places, like *Cross Street, Manchester*, there were two secessions.

Orthodox Churches received a new lease of life through the influence of Methodism and the Evangelical movement. Unfortunately this was accompanied by an increasing intolerance. In 1739 the Mother Society of Methodism was started. The Dissenting Deputies split up, and in 1826 the Unitarians formed a Committee of their own with a "right" of separate approach to the throne.

The grandfather of John and Charles Wesley was an ejected minister, but their father was hostile to Dissenters. So was Charles Wesley, but not John. When they found it difficult to get the use of buildings for their preaching, Unitarians lent them theirs. John Wesley preached in the *First Presbyterian Church, Belfast* (already unorthodox and now Unitarian). He described it as "the most completest place of worship I have ever seen." (1789). But so much damage was done by his opponents that the trustees would not let it a second time.

The stream coming from the Church of England now met the stream coming from Protestant Dissent, and the two flowed together in one channel, though they did not for a time perfectly mingle. A new organization was created, but many Unitarians were reluctant to support it. They thought that the time was coming when all Christians would become Unitarians, and so they did not wish to form a sect. *Lindsey* "had no wish to amalgamate with existing dissent," but hoped rather to see a new movement arising through a large secession from the Church of England. *Priestley* was also at first against the formation of a Unitarian sect, as he had been against *Lindsey's* coming out of the Church of England. (Yet both *Price* and *Priestley* regarded Anglican worship as idolatrous!) *Belsham* hoped that Protestant Dissenters would adopt Unitarian theological views and that Unitarians would remain part of the movement. "It was now possible and proper," thought *Belsham*, "for Unitarians to take their places, simply as an influential ingredient, in the larger whole of Protestant Dissent." All would have preferred to take their place just as Christians, not as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, or Unitarians. That is why the Church in *Essex Street* founded

by *Lindsey* in 1774 and labelled "Unitarian," was relabelled "Essex Street Chapel" in February 1814 (after the passing of the Act legalizing Unitarianism), "to the righteous indignation of a correspondent of the '*Monthly Repository*'" (*A. Gordon*).

Unitarians were soon to discover how little ground they had for the hope of a Church made wide enough to include all those who professed and called themselves Christians. Under the influence of the Evangelical movement the hostility felt towards them was actually increasing. Other Protestant Dissenters proceeded to open an attack and to try to deprive the Unitarians of their chapels. Unitarians were soon forced to take common action.

At first the theological differences existing between the different kinds of Unitarians just described stood in the way.

Some Unitarians were of the so-called "Arian" type, others "Socinian," and others more advanced Unitarian. A certain struggle took place, but with comparatively little bitterness on the whole, considering how bitterly theological differences were regarded in those days. Benson and Lardner shared the pastorate of Poor Jewry Lane Church, though their christologies were opposed. Also both parties continued to share the Dudley Double Lecture as late as the nineteenth century. On the other hand, *Mosley Street Church* was built in opposition to *Cross Street, Manchester*. At *Strangeways Unitarian Church, Salford*, members were required to sign a declaration: "I believe that the one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is exclusively the proper object of religious worship and that the Scriptures are the standard of religious doctrines." But this soon fell into disuse.

The last "Arian" survived till 1879, but long before that time the Unitarian movement had passed on into another stage.

THE UNITARIAN ORGANIZATION

In 1783 a Society for Promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures was formed. This was partly Unitarian and partly Orthodox. In 1791 the Unitarian Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was formed. The list of

subscribers contained the names of ministers and congregations and representatives of the old Dissenting interest. "*Belsham* drew up the preamble, meant to exclude Arians and to stigmatize the worship of Christ as idolatrous." *Belsham* read *Priestley*, and came to the conclusion that it was possible for a Socinian to be a good man, and this opinion was confirmed by his reading of *Lindsey*. *Price* and *Priestley* both were members of the Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

The Southern Unitarian Society was founded in 1801 "for the Promotion of Religious Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue in Unitarian Principles through the Distribution of Books." *William Smith, M.P.*, was one of its patrons, and the Rev. Thomas Dalton, the Vicar of Carisbrooke, was one of the original members. This included the more advanced Unitarians. The Western Unitarian Society at first tried to exclude Arians, but not for long.

A period of missionary activity set in, and this was also a period of street preachers and of doctrinal and dogmatic Unitarianism. Two of the chief missionaries were *Richard Wright* and *George Harris*. Some people feared unlearned ministers, but *Lindsey*, curiously enough, was in favour of Unitarian street preachers. The Unitarian Fund Society was founded in 1806, with *Robert Aspland* as Secretary. Its object was to send missionaries round the country.

A Christian Unitarian Tract Society was founded in 1810, after the model of the Religious Tract Society, and it printed 52,000 tracts. In 1813 the existence of Unitarianism was made legal by the repeal of the Act of 1698. A Fellowship Fund was founded in 1817 on the suggestion of *Dr. J. Thomson*. Local funds were raised at Birmingham and Bristol. In 1819 the Unitarian Association for the Protection of the Civil Rights of Unitarians was founded. In 1825 the Unitarian Association was amalgamated with the Unitarian Society and the Unitarian Fund, to form the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, whose object was to spread the principles of Unitarian Christianity. In 1828 seventy-nine congregations were subscribing to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

The active spirits among them believed that it would not be long before the whole country became Unitarian. This belief arose from the obscurantist attitude prevailing in non-Unitarian Churches. At this time *Lant Carpenter* was studying the Trinitarian controversy at Glasgow University. As a matter of fact, very few Unitarian congregations founded at this period seem to have survived. Such as did were chiefly those that came over in a body from the Methodists or the Baptists or the General Baptists. There were Methodist Unitarians at *Padiham*, *Newchurch*, *Todmorden*, *Rochdale*, and also at *Oldham*. In 1841 the Barkerites came over from the Methodist New Connexion, at *Mossley*, *Mottram*, and *Pudsey*. *Rawtenstall* changed from Baptist to Unitarian in 1804 without a split.

One result of this conversion of old congregations was the existence in one town of two Unitarian congregations with quite different ancestries or of the union of two congregations of different character into one. The Unitarian Baptists at *Chichester*, having no minister, met with the Presbyterians. *Portsmouth* had two Unitarian Churches—one Baptist in origin. At *Moretonhampstead* and at *Taunton* there were two Unitarian congregations, one Presbyterian, one Baptist in origin.

In Sussex and the surrounding district in particular there were a number of General Baptist congregations which became Unitarian—at *Northiam*, *Battle*, *Crawley*, *Ditchling*, *Rolvenden*, *Cuckfield*, and *Brighton*. The Church at *Lewes* combined four different elements.

This new activity was not without its dangers, within and without. Within, there was a real danger of making the acceptance of a particular theological doctrine the basis of Church life. From this danger the movement was saved, partly by the resistance of those who had been moulded in the old tradition, partly by a new peril. Though Unitarianism had become legal in 1813, the lawyers ruled that no place of worship built while Unitarianism was illegal could remain in the hands of Unitarians. Their activity had provoked an attempt to take away from them the old chapels in which Unitarianism had developed, on the ground that Unitarian

views were prohibited by law at the times these buildings were erected. After a long series of legal proceedings, the Dissenters' Chapels Act was passed in 1844, which removed this obstacle. The Dissenters' Chapels Act, which applied "equally to all Nonconformists, amended the Trinity Act (of 1813) by making it retrospective. It did not, as the Unitarians asked, give them the property of the chapels they occupied, nor did it sanction any changes in Church government; but it confirmed existing occupiers in their occupancy, if the trust deed had no precise doctrinal stipulations which excluded them, and if they could show the undisputed usage of twenty-five years in favour of the opinions they held and taught" (*A. Gordon*). These proceedings helped Unitarians to realize the dangers of doctrinal trusts, and Unitarians came to recognize Open Trusts as an essential condition of their being. The lawyer, *E. Wilkins Field*, friend of *Robert Hibbert*, founder of the *Hibbert Trust*, was the active leader of the movement to obtain the Dissenters' Chapels Act.

DISABILITIES SUFFERED BY UNITARIANS

During all this period Unitarians were not full citizens; they were merely tolerated and not treated as equals. Unitarians sometimes protested against "toleration." This is the explanation of that fact—they were protesting against being merely tolerated instead of sharing full citizenship. They shared all the disabilities of Protestant Dissenters, and were liable to some additional ones applying only to Unitarians.

In 1661 the Corporation Act was passed. No one was to be elected Mayor or Town Clerk or Member of a Council, or to hold any office of Magistracy or place of trust relating to the government of cities, unless he had taken the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper of the Church of England. This was left unchanged by the Toleration Act, and was not repealed till 1828.

In 1673 the Test Act was passed. Its actual title was "An Act for preventing dangers which may happen from Popish recusants," but it applied also to Protestant Dissenters.

Every person who held any civil or military office and who resided within thirty miles of London had to receive the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England within three months after appointment and produce a certificate of having done so. This remained law till 1828, with slight changes. At one time the verger of St. Paul's used to call upon those who were receiving the Sacrament for this purpose to step forward. The Government at one time imposed a Stamp Tax on these certificates of having received the Sacrament to qualify for office, and raised a revenue in this way. The working of these two Acts is often confused. Under the Corporation Act, no one was eligible to hold office who had not taken the Sacrament *before* election. Under the Test Act, the Sacrament was taken *after* appointment.

The Five Mile Act of 1665 and the Conventicle Act of 1670 were not repealed by the Toleration Act, but the provisions were abrogated as far as Protestant Dissenters were concerned, if they fulfilled the conditions of the so-called Toleration Act. These Acts were not repealed till 1828.

The educational disabilities, imposed by the Act of Uniformity of 1662, mentioned already, remained in force till after the middle of the nineteenth century.

Though not full citizens, Protestant Dissenters were devoted to the 1689 Settlement, and, in spite of these serious disabilities, they were devotedly loyal to the Constitution. These disabilities seemed slight compared with what religious minorities were suffering in other countries and what they themselves had suffered between 1662 and 1689. The Royal Arms of William III hung in *Friargate Chapel, Derby*, on the front wall of the chapel "out of gratitude."

The experiences of the Dissenters in the reaction at the time of Queen Anne no doubt intensified this feeling and helped to make them more thankful for what they had got. In 1709 Dr. Sacheverell preached his famous sermon and was impeached before the House of Lords. In the riots which followed, a number of Protestant Dissenting churches were destroyed by the mobs, as happened again in 1715, and even in some cases in 1745. The church at *Walsall* was

destroyed in 1710 and restored in 1715. It was damaged in 1743 during Wesley's first visit, and in 1751 it was partly pulled down by a mob. It is not surprising, perhaps, that at *Walsall* there was a door behind the pulpit to the roof for escape in case of need. The churches at *Dudley*, *Whitchurch*, and *Leek* were also sufferers. At *Newcastle-under-Lyme* the riot was engineered by the Mayor on a signal from the bell of the parish church. The Mayor, the Rector, and two Justices of the Peace, helped to foment the riot and drink was distributed among the mob.

The Occasional Conformity Act

More dangerous than occasional rioting was the exclusion of Dissenters from membership of Corporations by the Occasional Conformity Act of 1711, and still more dangerous was the attempt to shut down their academies and schools by the Schism Act of 1714.

Many Protestant Dissenters of this period received the Sacrament in their parish churches and so were eligible for office. A number of the Lord Mayors of London were Protestant Dissenters and took Communion. In 1697 Sir Humphrey Edwin, and in 1701 Sir Thomas Abney, took the Mayor's regalia to their church at Pinners' Hall. The practice of occasional conformity was greatly disliked by exclusive schools on both sides. The High Church party naturally found it obnoxious. Some Dissenters who had forgotten the Baxter tradition also disliked it. A rigid Protestant Dissenter like Defoe called it "Playing Bo-peep with Almighty God," and published a pamphlet with that title.

Some modern historians, who do not seem to know that the roots of the practice lie in the attitude of the ejected already described, have assumed that Protestant Dissenters took Communion solely in order to qualify for office. No doubt some did, but to those who were steeped in the Baxter tradition it was natural. As late as 1884, *the Rev. Dr. Vance Smith*, a Unitarian member of the Commission for the revision of the New Testament, received the Sacrament with his orthodox colleagues.

Under Queen Anne an attempt was made to put an end to the practice of occasional conformity. In many boroughs the Members of Parliament were returned by the Corporations. If Dissenters could be excluded from the Corporations, therefore, there would be fewer Whig Members of Parliament. And so a political motive was added to ecclesiastical bigotry. The Occasional Conformity Act was passed in 1711. This Act imposed penalties on those who held civil or military office or were members of Corporations and who during their term of office were present at a religious service not conducted according to the practices of the Church of England. On this occasion the House of Lords, which was still mainly a creation of William III, rejected the Bills twice. No doubt the reason for its opposition to the Act was that its political consequences would tell against it, for it had rejected the Comprehension Bill.

A more dangerous attempt to crush Protestant Dissenters was made by the Schism Act of 1714. Under this Act no one was to keep any school or act as schoolmaster unless he had been licensed by the Bishop and obtained a certificate that he had received the Sacrament according to the Church of England. If such a licensed person taught any catechism other than that set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, the licence was void. This did not apply to tutors employed by noblemen. (Clauses exempting peers from their operation were contained in many of these Acts.) The Act did not apply to teachers of reading, writing, arithmetic, and such mathematical teaching as was used in navigation.

The accession of the House of Hanover and the Rebellion of 1715 brought some mitigation to Protestant Dissenters. The Schism Act had been passed just before the death of the Queen, and the rejoicing at the accession of George I is intelligible. At Congleton there were lively scenes. On the accession of George I, to the disgust of the mob the Dissenters rang the church bells and a riot took place

The Protestant Dissenters had a certain privilege of direct access to the throne. A body representing the Ministers of Three Denominations had been formed in 1702, on the accession of Queen Anne. It consisted of four Presbyterians,

three Congregationalists, and three Baptists. In 1836, when the rift between Unitarians and other Protestant Dissenters had grown wide, the Unitarian privilege of separate access to the throne was recognized.

The Three Denominations presented an Address on the occasion of the accession of George I. "Nearly one hundred ministers, all clad in their black Genevan cloaks, were present." "What have we here?" asked a nobleman, "a funeral?" On which Bradbury replied, "No, my lord, a resurrection."

During the Jacobite rising of 1715, Protestant Dissenters, of course, supported the Hanoverians to a man, with the result that in a number of places their churches suffered at the hands of the mobs. Government grants were made to rebuild the destroyed and damaged churches. The tradition still survives in some churches, now Unitarian, of the part played in 1715. The Rev. James Wood of *Chowbent* and the Rev. John Walker of Horwich led their congregations to take part in the struggle. They received pensions of £100. Some Dissenters had taken up arms and accepted commissions. Under the Test Act this was illegal, and an Act of Indemnity had to be passed to indemnify those who had thus helped to support the dynasty. The Royal Arms still hang in the church at *Shrewsbury* as a memento of these years. The loyalty of Dissenters was slightly acknowledged by the passing of two Acts which did something to improve their position. The Schism Act and worst parts of the Occasional Conformity Act were repealed. An Act was passed for Quieting and Establishing Corporations, which provided that anyone appointed a member of a Corporation who had not taken the Sacrament in the previous year should remain a member if no prosecution took place within six months. Since Dissenters were only likely to be elected members of Corporations in towns strongly sympathetic to them, there was not much likelihood of anyone taking action against them. And since at that time members of Corporations usually held office for life, the Act made it possible for Dissenters to control some of the leading commercial centres of Britain.

In 1723 a Royal Grant of the Regium Donum was given to Dissenters for the widows of Dissenting ministers.

Every year, from 1728 to 1867, a series of Acts was passed annually called the Indemnity Acts. The effect of these has been misunderstood. Most writers have followed Hallam in his assumption that these Acts indemnified Protestant Dissenters who had not taken the Sacrament from breaches of the Act. That is a mistake. These Indemnity Acts gave relief only to those who had taken the Sacrament, but who had taken it after election, instead of before election. The Act which made it possible for Dissenters to be members of Corporations was the earlier Act for Quieting Corporations.

In 1745 there was a second Jacobite rising, and the story of 1715 was repeated but on a smaller scale. In Manchester subscriptions were collected to raise troops. One hundred and seven persons contributed, and of these forty were connected with *Cross Street, Manchester*, and they subscribed two-fifths of the total amount contributed. There was a plot to capture the minister, the Rev. Joseph Mottershead, who was warned, however, and escaped, but the insurgents took James Bailey, who had to pay a ransom of £2,500. In 1746 The Rev. John Brecell published a sermon entitled "Liberty and Loyalty, or a Defence and Explication of Subjection to the present Government upon the Principles of the Revolution."

On the death of George II in 1760 the accounts of *Lewin's Mead, Bristol*, show a payment of £3 for mourning for the pulpit.

In view of the proved loyalty of Dissenters during two rebellions, it was strange that nothing more was done to relieve them of their disabilities. Nothing, perhaps, showed more clearly how powerful the prevailing intolerance was than the slightness of the recognition of their services. And it seems all the stranger when it is remembered that Protestant Dissenters were devoted to the Whig party which was in power. Dissenters accepted the political philosophy of *John Locke*, and *John Locke* had been influenced by Richard Hooker. And Hooker had based government on the consent of the governed, and so became a pioneer of democracy.

A partial explanation seems to be that, though the political importance of Dissenters was still considerable, it was diminishing because Protestant Dissent was declining. Between 1688 and 1710, Dissenters took out licences for 2,418 places of worship. Many of these were private houses, and probably half of them had disappeared by 1715. It has been estimated that in 1701 Dissenters were a quarter of the population and had the trade of the country in their hands. But, according to a series of statistics prepared in 1717, the number of adult Dissenters would be two hundred thousand out of a population of six million adults and children. Only thirteen years later, in 1730, Gough published "An Inquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest," to which Philip Doddridge published a reply.

The intensity of the intolerance and the need for protection were shown by the petty persecution to which Dissenters were always liable. An instance may be given from the history of the Friends (Quakers). The Friends conscientiously refused to pay tithes, and consequently their property was sold. A special procedure, however, was legalized by which clergy could collect tithes from Friends by methods less vexatious than the usual course of selling them up. But many clergy continued to have the Friends sold up till the option to do so was taken from them.

For long, Protestants tamely accepted the situation—an attitude which roused *Priestley's* disgust. But in 1732 Protestant Dissenters living near London formed a Committee to protect their interests, and in 1736 it was decided to make an annual choice of Deputies to take care of the civil affairs of the Dissenters. The first meeting took place in 1737. They were able to compel reluctant Justices of the Peace to carry out the law, and the knowledge that cases of individual persecution might result in legal proceedings put a stop to much malicious persecution.

The Deputies fought a case which showed up the mean intolerance of the Corporation and Sheriffs of London. The Corporation of London had hit upon the ingenious idea of electing Protestant Dissenters to the office of Sheriff, knowing that under the Corporation Act they were not eligible for

the office. The Corporation then proceeded to fine these Dissenters for refusing to fulfil their civic obligations. The Deputies took up a case in 1742 and the city lost it, but only on a technical point. "The city, being at length convinced that the existing bye-laws could not reach the Dissenters, in the year 1748 made a new law, with a view, as they alleged, of procuring fit and able persons to serve the Office of Sheriff; and thereby imposed a fine of £400 plus 20 marks upon each person, who, being nominated by the Lord Mayor, should decline standing the election at the Common-hall; and £600 upon everyone who, being elected by the Common-hall, should refuse to serve the office" ("A Sketch of the History and Proceedings of the Deputies"). The Courts upheld this extraordinary procedure till 1767, and £15,000 raised by these fines helped to build the Mansion House, London. A case started in 1754 against three Dissenters was not decided till 1767, by which time only one of them was left alive and he was dying. Six judges out of seven decided against the Corporation of the City of London. Lord Mansfield, famous for other decisions extending the liberty of the subject (though he did not come well out of the Wilkes affair), made a speech as a peer from his place in the House of Lords in which the iniquity of the whole proceeding was clearly exposed.

Even as late as 1815 a Stamp Duty of five shillings was placed on certificates issued to persons who received the Holy Sacrament in order to qualify for office and the Sacramental Test was thus made a source of revenue.

Attempts to obtain relief from these disabilities took two forms. Relief was sought from the Sacramental Test imposed by the Test and Corporation Acts and relief was sought from the subscription to the Articles imposed by the Toleration Act. In 1736 and 1739 attempts to obtain relief were defeated. Then there was a pause for a whole generation. Towards the end of the century, a more determined effort was made.

"The defence of the public interest of Dissenters was at this time undertaken, for the most part by the Unitarians" (H. S. Skeats and C. S. Miall: "Free Churches"). "You have hitherto," said *Priestley*, with his usual fearless emphasis,

"preferred your prayer as Christians; stand forth now in the character of men, and ask at once for the repeal of all the penal laws which respect matters of opinion." The historian of Nonconformity, H. S. Skeats, has given this testimony. "In relation to the civil liberties of Dissenters, such men as *Priestley* and *Price* were far in advance of their ancestors. It is remarkable that the class of which these eminent men were the principal representatives, instead of suffering in numbers because of their conspicuous advocacy of their liberties, were at this time rapidly increasing. Amongst the Congregationalists the only man who apparently took a very active interest in public questions was Caleb Fleming, and his doctrinal sympathies were with the Unitarians. The Baptists were somewhat better represented, but that body, as a whole, was not in a prosperous condition, and was largely occupied with the discussion of distinctive Baptist and Calvanistic doctrines."

In one way, the time was extremely unfavourable, for the Whigs, who, always more favourable to religious freedom, had been displaced by the Tories. All the tenacious prejudices of the King's mind, later to become deranged, were exploited against Catholics and Socinians. In 1772 the King wrote to Lord North: "And I am very sorry to say, the present Presbyterians seem so much more resembling Socinians than Christians, that I think the Test was never so necessary as at present for obliging them to prove themselves Christians."

There were three points of view about modification of terms of subscription. The moderates wanted revision, the strongly orthodox wanted no change, and the strongly heterodox wanted no subscription at all. In some places the Methodists and even some Independents were against an application to Parliament to revise the Tests.

The failure in 1771 of the attempt to obtain relaxation by the clergy of the Church of England from subscription to the Articles has been mentioned. But many, who were opposed to relieving the clergy from subscription, were yet ready to admit that those who had left the Church should not be called upon to subscribe.

In 1772 a Bill for the relief of Dissenters passed the House of Commons but was rejected by the House of Lords. *Lindsey* accused the Government of having allowed it to pass the House of Commons, knowing that it would be rejected in the House of Lords. The Government did not wish to defeat it in the House of Commons because "an approaching election rendered it necessary to conciliate the goodwill of the Dissenters." The *Duke of Grafton*, later a member of *Lindsey's* Church, was at that time against it.

Next year, in 1773, another attempt was made. Edmund Burke was for it. "They claimed Liberty, they enjoyed it by connivance. What, Sir, is Liberty by connivance but a temporary relaxation of Slavery? Is this the sort of Liberty calculated for the meridian of England?" The 1774 Debate was listened to by *Lindsey*, *Price*, and *Priestley*.

After seven years' struggle, an Act was passed in 1779 for the relief of Protestant Dissenting Ministers and schoolmasters. A modified declaration was substituted for one approving most of the Thirty-nine Articles. "For giving ease to such scrupulous persons in the exercise of religion, the following declaration (was) substituted for the Articles: 'I, A. B., do solemnly declare in the presence of Almighty God that I am a Christian and a Protestant, and as such that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as commonly received among Protestant Churches do contain the revealed Will of God: and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice.' "

Price and *Lindsey* were against any test imposed by the civil government. The Duke of Richmond supported the relaxation of subscription. *Dr. A. Kippis, F.R.S., F.S.A.*, dedicated his "Biographia Britannica" to the Duke of Richmond for the Relief Bills of 1772 and 1773. But "*The Monthly Repository*" did not allow his services to condone the scandal of his private life, a scandal which did not prevent his being buried in *Chichester* Cathedral in the odour of sanctity.

By an Act of July 29, 1812, "every person officiating in a certified Meeting-house was bound to make and subscribe the declaration of the 1779 Act, but only when specially

and individually called upon to make it, by a justice of the peace, in writing. The penalty for refusing was a fine 'not exceeding ten pounds nor less than ten shillings' leviable 'every time he shall so teach or preach.' "

There were some who did not welcome this modification of the terms of subscription, partly because, in practice, the old Act had become a dead letter and partly because it was better to have a subscription so out of date that no one took it seriously than one which might become a heavy burden, as the modified subscription would have done had it actually been enforced in the nineteenth century.

In any case the Test and Corporation Acts remained and a more determined effort was made to repeal them. Some of the orthodox Dissenters did not wish even these Acts to be repealed, because they were afraid that Dissent would be broken up or that this relief would help heretics.

In 1786 the Dissenting Deputies decided that the time was ripe for another attempt to repeal the Acts. The year after, Henry Beaufoy brought before the House of Commons a motion for relief. Fox supported and Pitt opposed the motion, which was lost by 178 votes to 100.

The Deputies repeated the attempt in 1789 and 1790, but the Bill was defeated even more heavily in 1790 than on the earlier occasions. In 1791 a standing Committee of Delegates was formed from all parts of the kingdom, but by this time the reaction was beginning and the Committee was dissolved in 1794. The hysterical passions roused by the French Revolution and the wars with France postponed any reform for nearly forty years. Indeed, in 1811, Lord Sidmouth's Government attempted though unsuccessfully to limit the relief already given by the so-called Toleration Act. This attempt was mainly directed against Methodist lay preachers and was supported by the plea that ignorant people became ministers in order to be exempted from holding parish offices and from serving in the Militia. Sidmouth attempted to make it more difficult to get licences.

In 1812, however, the Five Mile Act and the Conventicle Act were repealed, though certificates were still required if the congregation numbered over twenty. At last, in 1828,

the Sacramental Test was abolished, and it was no longer necessary to take "the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites and usage of the Church of England as a qualification for office." But every person elected to a Town Council had still to make a declaration: "Upon the true faith of a Christian, never to exercise any power, authority or influence to injure or weaken the Protestant Church as it is by Law Established in England." At last, in 1863, the Test Act was entirely repealed by the Statute Revision Act of that year.

The repeal of the Test Acts was largely due to Lord John Russell. Fifty years later, in 1878, a deputation from the Deputies of the Three Denominations, together with two Unitarians, *H. New* and *R. B. Aspland*, "went down to Richmond to present Earl Russell with an Address congratulating him on his conspicuous share in carrying that great measure and on his life-long advocacy of religious freedom."

In 1791 an attempt had been made to repeal the Act under which the holding of Unitarian views was a penal offence. Though the penalties were no longer imposed, the Act had important legal consequences; 1791, however, was the year of the Birmingham Riots and the attempt failed. "There could be no harm," Fox had averred, "in removing from the Statute Book that which we are afraid, or ashamed, to enforce." Burke, in reply, admitted it was "no longer a theological question, but a question of legislative prudence." He argued that it was imprudent to accept the motion, because "Unitarians were associated for the express purpose of proselytism," aiming "to collect a multitude sufficient by force and violence to overturn the Church," and this "concurrent with a design to subvert the State." In a fine strain of mock-heroics, he implored the House not to wait "till the conspirators, met to commemorate the 14th July, shall seize on the Tower of London and the magazines it contains, murder the governor and the Mayor of London, seize upon the King's person, drive out the House of Lords, occupy your gallery and thence as from an high tribunal, dictate to you."

It was not until 1813 that an Act was passed "to relieve persons who impugn the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from certain penalties." "The Act of 1698 was only repealed so far as it related to the denial of the Holy Trinity. Consequently it still remains a crime for anyone having at any time made profession of the Christian religion to deny the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of Divine authority."

When legal and illegal persecution came to an end, there was still an immense amount of prejudice to be overcome. Instances of petty intolerance were frequent, and, from the time when Unitarians diverged from the rest of Protestant Dissenters, were manifested by Orthodox Dissenters as well as by Churchmen. At Birmingham the rector would not allow an inscription to be placed on the grave of *the Rev. T. Broadhurst*. Through slackness on the part of the legal authorities *Essex Chapel* was not licensed until ten years after it had been opened and the Rev. Dr. Horsley tried to make trouble about this.

In 1817 *John Wright* was prosecuted under the Common Law at Liverpool for giving Unitarian Lectures, but Lord Holland caused the prosecution to be dropped. A Unitarian tailor was not allowed to have an apprentice. After *Priestley* had become an Arian, no parents in his Suffolk village would send their children to his school, but at Nantwich he fared better. There were extraordinary variations in the treatment meted out to Unitarians; so much depended on the local clergy and on the bishop. In some towns Unitarians could not conduct a school, but in others they were respected and honoured.

CHAPTER 8

THE STRUCTURE OF UNITARIANISM AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHANGES

DIFFERENT TYPES OF UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONS—CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR MEMBERS AND MINISTERS—CHURCH GOVERNMENT—NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPREAD OF UNITARIANISM—THEOLOGICAL CHANGES—RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHURCHES—CONCLUSION

In previous chapters, attention has been concentrated on outstanding figures, but the contribution of these men and women has been only a part of the whole. In many villages and small towns Unitarian congregations were centres of whatever culture and enlightenment existed there. And many men and women unknown to fame were leaders of local movements. Unitarians were able to exercise considerable local influence, even at the time when the unpopularity of their religious views made it difficult for them to take their proper part in national affairs. They were known, respected, and trusted in their own localities.

The oldest Unitarian congregations all descended from some form or other of early Puritanism—Presbyterian, Independent, or General Baptist. In 1717 Dr. John Evans, a colleague of Dr. Daniel Williams, the founder of Dr. Williams's library, prepared an analysis of the class structure of these congregations in 1717, for the purpose of bringing about the repeal of the Schism Act by showing the Government that the Dissenters had great influence in elections. The number, rank, and occupations, and sometimes the wealth of each congregation, together with the number of voters were all stated. The kind of information given may be illustrated by the entries about Banbury and Bristol. The Dissenting congregation at Banbury is described as having six hundred hearers of whom seventy were County voters, thirty-five gentlemen, and the rest tradesmen and farmers. The first Dissenting congregation at Bristol was estimated to be "worth near £400,000." Several of the second congregation

were described as "rich, and a considerable number substantial." The report went on: "There is also in Bristol a large body of Quakers who are generally well affected to the present government, and large traders and very rich. Their number may be supposed about 2,000 and upwards, and their wealth not less than £500,000. The strength of all the Dissenters in Bristol may justly be reckoned much more than that of all the Low Church party there."

Visible evidence long remained of the prosperity of the members of these congregations. At places like *Cockey Moor* (Ainsworth), near Bolton, Lancashire, and at *Hale*, Cheshire, stabling had to be provided because so many people came to service either upon horseback or by carriage. At *Gorton Old Chapel* there is still in place an old stone horse-block, at which riders could mount and dismount. Descriptions have survived of the long line of carriages gathered on Sundays outside such churches as *Upper Chapel, Sheffield*, and *Cross Street Chapel, Manchester*. If the congregations of this period did not consist exclusively of wealthy middle-class families and their retainers, these families certainly dominated the congregations, and there was a quite clear class distinction. At *Halifax* the rich had large pews and the poor sat below, and this distinction was only abolished towards the end of the nineteenth century. A bequest was made to *Bank Street Chapel, Bolton*, for seats for poor people.

By the end of the eighteenth century many of these congregations had disappeared or become smaller. The issues on which the ejection had taken place no longer seemed alive or did not seem sufficiently alive to make the younger generation think it worth while to pay the price of isolation. Methodism made inroads among orthodox Dissenters, and when congregations became Unitarian this often resulted in the secession either of the orthodox or of the Unitarian. Churches declined or disappeared with the extinction or removal of the old families on whom they had depended, and this removal was often due to the transference of industrial and commercial activities to other places. The result of all these factors was a great decline in the strength of the old Protestant Dissenting congregations. *Dr. Lant Carpenter* found *Lewin's Mead, Bristol*, "in a very critical state" and the attendance "extremely thin . . . though all the seats were subscribed for." But in 1843 *the Rev. George Armstrong* found *Lewin's Mead* still "a large and wealthy society."

In those congregations which survived, many members could trace back the membership of their families for several generations, some to the period of the ejection itself. This was one of the arguments brought forward in favour of the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844, which was passed to prevent Unitarians from being deprived of these old chapels as a result of theological changes. Petitioners pointed out that, though their own theology had changed, their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers lay buried in the burial grounds attached to the chapel. These congregations were still mainly composed of members of the middle class engaged in commerce and industry, and their retainers, together with a sprinkling of county families and occasionally a member of the aristocracy.

These Unitarians were linked together with each other by a series of personal relationships which often began in the academies where laymen and future ministers were educated together. The academies and schools, then as now, provided a strong link which was made all the stronger by the sense of exclusion. Many of the sons of ministers became famous merchants and did not forget the rock out of which they were hewn. *Mark Philips, M.P.*, and *Edward Strutt, M.P.*, were at college together at *Manchester College, York. Philip Carpenter* was friendly with *Arthur Lupton* and *George Buckton* of Leeds at York. *Sir James Stansfeld* was at school with *Thomas Ashton* and *William Rathbone*. In 1807 *John Kenrick, James Yates, John Wood, Benjamin Heywood, Henry Turner*, and *Henry Crompton*, were fellow students at Glasgow University.

These links were cemented by intermarriage. The *Gaskells*, the *Butterworths*, and the *Bayleys* at *Cross Street, Manchester*, were related by intermarriage.

A marked characteristic of Unitarians was an intense regard for respectability, and conventionality in manners. The contrast between the radicalness of their thinking and

the conventionality of their outward bearing has often provoked amused comment. "A radical theology was curiously wont to be the conservative handmaiden of ancient custom in externals," wrote the historian of the *Chester* congregation. Again and again the adjective respectable is applied as a term of highest commendation. It was a body of respectable gentlemen who founded *Manchester College*. "A small but highly respectable body," is the description given to many congregations. This respectability was due to that dislike of fanaticism (known as "enthusiasm") which characterized the reaction of the age of reason against the age of religious wars. Or this may have been also a way of meeting the profound snobbery which the landed gentry and the clergy displayed towards the rising class of manufacturers. Even the not unfriendly Sydney Smith could say to a lady in Bristol: "Well, you Unitarians are certainly a most intelligent and most worthy set of people, only you are frightfully *ungenteel*." Certainly this formalism was not due to any spirit of asceticism. At *Gateacre*, near Liverpool, the congregational Christmas dinner was held at the Bear Hotel till late in the nineteenth century, when a tea-meeting was substituted.

But this reserve helped to produce coldness, which even in those days observers attributed to Unitarians. "Unitarians do not slop over," as one of them has put it. *Brooke Herford*, trying to build up a working-class congregation at *Salford* in 1864, wrote "that he had no sympathy with personal or family isolation, nor with that reserve and cold gentility which is said to (*and does*) characterize many of our school of theological thought. He had much in common with the better side of Wesleyanism. . . . He was not a North Pole Christian." This reserve in personal bearing makes a curious contrast to the many hymns glowing with light and warmth, written by Unitarians.

The merchants and manufacturers who built up these congregations had a tradition of culture and education. Many of them were educated at the academies and their descendants endowed colleges, art galleries, and libraries. In their enthusiasm for culture, they may be compared to

the merchant princes of Italy, the life of one of whom, Lorenzo de Medici, was written by *William Roscoe*.

Unitarian ministers were usually well educated, though a new type of minister came in with the popular movement at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The character of the Dissenting ministry changed after 1715 and again after 1750. The position of a Dissenting minister after 1750 was not a profitable one, except in the big towns like Liverpool and Bristol, Norwich, Newcastle, and Birmingham. In other places salaries were small though the cost of living was also low. Ministers supplemented their incomes by other work, like teaching and doctoring. Fortunately, in those days there were many opportunities for such work, and since there were few or no institutions attached to the churches, ministers had more leisure for such occupations than they would have to-day. *Joseph Priestley's* salary at Needham was £30 a year and his board cost him £20 a year. Even later, a man of the distinction of *Dr. J. R. Beard* only received a salary varying from £120 to £250, and most of his income was derived from his school.

The control of the affairs of the congregation was as a rule in the hands of the trustees. The less wealthy members of the congregation were not expected to contribute financially to its support, and in some cases were rather the recipients of charitable gifts. This system of Church government had its strength and its weaknesses. On the one hand it allowed rapid change. If the views of a minister developed theologically or otherwise, there was no higher ecclesiastical or State authority to hinder this development. So long as a minister retained the affection and respect of the members of his congregation, he was free. For the same reason it was also a weakness. If a congregation was dominated by a few families and the minister happened to disagree with those, his position became impossible. The financial dependence of a minister of religion upon the people to whom he has to give moral and spiritual advice is always somewhat irksome and is one of the crosses the Free Church minister is called upon to bear.

On the whole, however, the system worked better than

might have been expected. It is true to say—and it is one of those paradoxes which have deep significance—that these ministers, though financially dependent on the congregations, often proved themselves more independent than ministers who possessed a parson's freehold. But to work the system required a very high sense of responsibility both in minister and in congregation, together with mutual respect and a deeply rooted tradition of the freedom of the pulpit.

There was friction at times between the minister and his congregation. A bitter description of his experiences was given by the anonymous author of "The Autobiography of a Dissenting Minister"—a book which was hailed with great delight by the orthodox and went through four editions. The author was W. P. Scargill, who had been minister of *Bury St. Edmunds*. A writer in "The Christian Reformer" asserted that Scargill, during his ministry there, secretly wrote bitter articles in the Tory Press against his own political connection and only resigned his ministry when this was discovered. *The Rev. W. J. Fox, M.P.*, was forced to resign his ministry at South Place, Finsbury, but that was rather due to his domestic troubles. W. P. Scargill quoted the letter of *W. J. Fox* which appeared in "The Morning Chronicle" of September 6, 1834, as corroboration of what he had been telling "of the impertinent interference of dissenting congregations with their ministers." *Philip Carpenter* found difficulties at *Stand*, near Manchester and at *Warrington*. But this is not surprising, perhaps in view of his own statements. "I take care not to let my people sleep with their eyes open. I often preach sermons which give offence, which does them good, and makes them think. I am a great advocate for stirring people up, and making them uncomfortable. It's the first step to improvement." These small congregations were often more difficult to satisfy than the larger ones, because their life was less vigorous. At *Highgate*, London, in 1845, *the Rev. George Kenrick* complained bitterly of his treatment by the office bearers, and published the correspondence that had passed between them. The elder *William Hazlitt* "was driven from one discordant Unitarian church

to another, always down, until he finally repined in *Wem* in Shropshire," but his son suggested that part of the explanation might be that his father's sermons were not equal to his father's literary work.

These older congregations were found chiefly in the towns and the industrial districts of the North and Midlands. Very many High Sheriffs of Lancashire have been Unitarians. Lancashire had been the great stronghold of Presbyterianism in the seventeenth century, when Bolton was described as the Geneva of Lancashire. The Lancashire of those days was remote from central government, and parishes were large and therefore less well-controlled both by ecclesiastical and civil authorities. It was in this part of the country that those places of worship were to be found which were called Chapels because they were once Episcopal Chapels. In a few cases even, the minister was not ejected, though he did not conform. A considerable number of foreign Protestant refugees also found a refuge in this part of the world, and Northerners like to think that there is an independence of character and mind in the North peculiarly in harmony with Unitarianism.

London Unitarians might at this period almost be described as a class by themselves. They formed a little circle of friends and acquaintances whose cultural and intellectual contribution was immense, and they were often in close contact with others like-minded but who did not formally identify themselves with Unitarianism. The breakfasts of *Samuel Rogers* "at St. James's Place were as famous as his biting tongue and his ugly features were notorious." The literary connections of *Henry Crabb Robinson* have been made famous by his diaries in thirty-seven volumes, "a priceless chronicle." In recent years several books have been published making use of these diaries.

To these older congregations a number of new ones were added which were definitely Unitarian from the outset. Some of these were very similar in structure to the older ones—especially those founded at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but a change took place as a result of the missionary enthusiasm of the new Unitarian move-

ment, and most of these newer congregations were more popular in character.

In the early years of the nineteenth century a number of Methodist congregations came over as a body to Unitarianism, and about the middle of the nineteenth century the followers of *Joseph Barker* came over from the Methodist New Connexion. There were also some individual converts from Methodism. *Philip Carpenter* liked them immensely, though some Unitarians did not. He admired their enthusiasm, and wished there were more like them. At *Bolton* there was a split in the Methodist New Connexion Church and most of the members eventually joined *Bank Street, Bolton.*

At the same time many of the older congregations were saved from extinction by industrial developments in their neighbourhood, and in these the new mill-owner and his work-people worshipped side by side.

The religious and social cultural contribution of Unitarians in large towns has been recognized. In those days there were fewer institutions attached to Churches than there are to-day, and no specific societies existed among Unitarians for social service. Nor was this often a direct subject of preaching. But the faith that was nourished in these congregations by ministers like *R. A. Armstrong, Lant Carpenter, H. W. Crosskey, James Drummond, Charles Hargrove, John Page Hopps, John Hamilton Thom,* and *Charles Wicksteed,* found expression in the activities already described.

The contribution made in small towns and hamlets was perhaps hardly less. *Park Lane,* near Wigan, for instance, is one of the older foundations which might have died out, as many congregations in remote and isolated places did, but that coal began to be worked in its neighbourhood. *Park Lane* did a great work in trying to bring civilization to the miners of that district. *Lye,* near Stourbridge, was a new foundation of 1790, in a wide and desolate region on the edge of the black country, where the chief occupation was chain-making. In the latter half of the nineteenth century *the Rev. Isaac Wrigley* was active in working for better housing, better sanitary arrangements, and better lighting in

the district. Above all by his personal influence he trained up local councillors and teachers in the spirit of good citizenship. For many years he himself was a member of the Worcestershire County Council and of most other local bodies. He reorganized the local Co-operative Society after it had collapsed through the dishonesty of one of its officials. At *Todmorden* in Yorkshire, the home of *John Fielden, Lindsey Taplin* was minister from 1856 to 1880, and for many years after the memory of his personality survived. *H. Enfield Dowson* at *Gee Cross, Hyde,* was active in all the progressive and philanthropic movements of the neighbourhood.

The foundation of Domestic Missions by Unitarians was of importance not only as indicating the emergence of a new spirit and for the value of the work they did, but as bringing Unitarians into closer contact with the actual conditions under which people were living.

The idea came from *Dr. J. Tuckerman* of Boston (U.S.A.). In 1830 a Resolution was passed at a meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in Manchester in favour of establishing Domestic Missions. The first missionary was appointed in 1831 in London, and the first building was opened in 1832, also in London. The first Domestic Mission Society was founded in Manchester in 1833. *Dr. Tuckerman* visited England later in the same year. The London Domestic Mission Society followed in 1835 and the Liverpool Society in 1836. The histories of these three Societies have been written by *the Rev. H. E. Perry, the Rev. V. D. Davis,* and *Anne Holt. John Johns* began his ministry in Liverpool in 1837, and the first Liverpool Domestic Mission Building was opened in 1838.

The original idea had been not to erect buildings as Mission Stations or even to hold religious services. The minister was to preach the Gospel to the poor in their homes as a friend, and through personal affection and influence awaken the spirit of religion. Hence the title of Domestic Mission. Both in America and in England this had soon to be modified. Those in whom the desire to attend religious services had been aroused wished to have the missionary as their minister.

In time a host of other activities, educational and philanthropic, grew up round the religious services and Sunday Schools—evening classes, libraries, savings banks and loan societies, window gardens, and allotments.

The movement attracted the support of a number of noble characters, both laymen and ministers. Among laymen should be mentioned, *J. A. Turner, M.P., James Heywood, R. D. Darbishire, W. Rathbone, Sir John Bowring, M.P., Thomas Chatfeild-Clarke*, and others of that family: among ministers, *the Revs. W. J. Fox, J. R. Beard, William Gaskell, J. H. Thom, S. A. Steinthal*, and the successive Principals of *Manchester College, J. J. Tayler, James Martineau, James Drummond*, and *J. E. Carpenter*.

Among the missionaries was *the Rev. John Johns*, who died from typhus contracted in "attending the body of a victim which, with the exception of a Catholic priest, no other person would touch." *Thomas Lloyd Jones* was missionary during the years 1882 to 1917, when the change was made from the old to new conditions.

A new missionary movement began in the middle of the nineteenth century which was an attempt of Unitarians to spread their faith among working people. *The Unitarian Home Missionary Board* was founded in 1854, to train Unitarian Home Missionaries capable of a popular appeal. Later this developed into *the Unitarian Home Missionary College*, now *the Unitarian College, Manchester*. From the middle of the nineteenth century rarely a year passed in which a Unitarian church was not erected.

These congregations were more popular in their membership, and this change in the type of membership and the changing ideas of the time resulted in a certain amount of friction about the control of the affairs of the congregation. The enthusiastic converts who came over from the Baptists and the Methodists brought with them not only a new zeal but also a new sense of democracy. They resented the government of the Church by a few trustees. As early as 1820 the church at *Strangeways* (Salford) explained the failure of "Presbyterian" churches to attract anyone but "respectable" people by the literary quality of the sermons

preached, their undoctrinal tenor, and the high rent of pews and seats.

In the course of the nineteenth century there was often heated controversy before the custom was given up of financing churches by pew rents and high subscriptions instead of by collections from all the members. Gradually during the course of the century the actual government of the affairs of the Church was handed over to a committee of members, though, here and there, trustees continued to exercise considerable influence. The Chapel Committees were appointed at *Paradise Street, Liverpool*, in 1812, *Dukinfield*, in 1840, and at *Dob Lane* in 1847. *Brooke Herford* left *Upper Chapel, Sheffield*, in 1864, to go to the much smaller church at *Strangeways* to carry out this reform. In 1880 the subscription of *Little Portland Street, London*, was reduced to bring it within the reach of all.

Another difference between the newer congregations and the older ones, was that the newer ones were more definitely sectarian in their outlook. The more wealthy and better educated Unitarians were often unwilling to support efforts to spread Unitarian thought. The older Unitarians prided themselves on being unsectarian and having no creed. The opening number of their weekly periodical "*The Inquirer*" stated this point of view quite clearly in 1842. This tendency grew stronger during the century. Unitarians began to go to the big public schools, and in 1854 the universities were opened to them. *James Heywood, M.P.*, was the leader of the movement which removed the theological tests from the universities. F. D. Maurice when at Cambridge took a First Class in Civil Law and qualified for two scholarships, but received no degree and no money, because at that time he was a Unitarian. *T. B. Potter, M.P.*, went to school at Rugby, but after that proceeded to University College, London, rather than to Oxford or Cambridge. When the theological tests were removed Unitarians began to go to these two universities and the ties which had been made in the past at the old academies were now no longer formed.

The long-drawn-out attempt of the Orthodox Dissenters to deprive the Unitarians of their Chapels, which only ended

with the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844, strengthened this section. They came to regard the principle of the Open Trust as a characteristic of English Presbyterianism, and under the influence of this idea a Presbyterian Association was founded in 1835 and an English Presbyterian Union in 1843. The name Presbyterian in these two societies did not imply any form of Presbyterian government. Historically the idea that the Open Trust was characteristic of seventeenth-century Presbyterianism has been shown to be a myth, but in the nineteenth century Unitarian congregations did deliberately and consciously adopt this principle.

At first the newer converts to Unitarianism did not share this outlook. They did not shrink from regarding themselves as members of a denomination with a gospel to spread, and some of them were even prepared to adopt a creed. *George Armstrong*, who had held the living at Abbey Church, Bangor, Ireland, before he became a Unitarian minister, had no patience with what he described as "that sickly Liberalism the worst of all isms." "I am sure . . . I do not know what '*The Inquirer*' would be at. The *simplest* creed, if stated in words, affrights him. Yet *some* positive creed he seems to consider (justly I think) indispensable to a Church and of course to Church loyalty; which is much the position of my friend *Gordon* of Edinburgh, yet whose point of difference with *Mr. J. J. Tayler* I cannot very clearly make out." Some of the Trust Deeds of the congregations founded by the new Unitarians before 1855 were doctrinal in character. But they too received a fright from the proceedings which led to the Dissenters' Chapels Act.

The conflict of rival loyalties may be seen in the history of the *Hibbert Trust*, which has done so much to keep high the level of scholarship among Unitarians by sending students to study at the leading German, French, and American universities. *The Hibbert Trust* was first called by its founder the Anti-Trinitarian Fund, and during the first twenty years of the Trust its scholars were compelled to sign a declaration of disbelief "in the doctrine of the Trinity commonly called Orthodox." It was the brilliant Unitarian lawyer, *Edwin Wilkins Field*, who had been the mainspring of the agitation

which secured the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Act in 1844, who induced *Robert Hibbert* to modify his original plan in favour of what has become practically an endowment for research.

For long the two streams of Unitarianism ran side by side. Many shared the position of *James Martineau*, who was a Unitarian in theology but refused to label any Church Unitarian, because he regarded Unitarian as a purely theological term. "*The Inquirer*" represented the older Christian unsectarianism, "The Unitarian Herald" (1861) and "The Christian Life" (1876), represented the more definitely sectarian point of view. A third section grew up of those who found the significance of the term Unitarian not in particular doctrines but in the spirit which lay behind them. The divisions between these sections were never absolute, and in 1928 the "*British and Foreign Unitarian Association*" united with the "*National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other non-subscribing or Kindred Congregations*" to form the "*General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.*" The main objects of this Assembly were described as the promotion of pure religion and the worship of God in spirit and in truth, and of co-operation among those who reject for themselves and others the imposition of creeds or articles of theological belief as a condition of association in religious fellowship.

These changes were prepared for by developments within Unitarian thought itself—developments connected above all with the name of *James Martineau*, but which were the logical development of the gradual unfolding described in the previous chapter.

Up to the time of *James Martineau*, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Unitarians, in theory at least, accepted the infallible authority of Scripture, as did all Protestants. But they went to Scripture with more open minds, and so they anticipated many discoveries about the Bible, now accepted by all scholars who use critical methods. This faith in reason was in itself an expression of a deeper faith in man, and it was this faith in God and man and not merely their views of Scripture that compelled Unitarians to reject

the prevailing views, as expressed in the doctrines of original sin, vicarious atonement, and everlasting punishment.

This further advance was first made in America, where there were fewer legal restrictions to hinder development, and where all the oldest Churches, founded by the Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritans, had become Unitarian. *William Ellery Channing*, *Theodore Parker*, and *Ralph Waldo Emerson* were the outstanding prophets of this deeper insight, and their works had great influence in England.

Lant Carpenter has recorded that in 1821, when he first got hold of *Channing's* works, he could not eat his breakfast for absorption in them. In 1842 there were nearly 3,000 subscribers to a cheap edition of *Channing's* works, and in 1869 21,000 copies of another edition were sold in twelve months. *Channing*, indeed, still accepted the presuppositions of the older Unitarians, and that is why in the twentieth century *L. P. Jacks* found that *Channing* could not help him in his difficulties. But at the time *Channing* exerted a powerful influence on men's minds and souls and this still continues.

Theodore Parker went deeper, and his works made such a break with the older outlook that for a time he had to face considerable opposition both in America and in England.

Martineau was influenced by both *Channing* and *Parker*. "When I was young, *Channing* worked upon me . . .; more recently, *Parker*." With *Martineau* the dominance of the philosophy of *John Locke* on English Unitarians came to an end. *John James Tayler*, Principal of *Manchester College*, had heralded the change in 1851 with his pamphlet entitled "Religion, its Roots in Human Nature and its Manifestation in Scripture." *Martineau* shifted the "Seat of Authority in Religion" from the external to the inner authority. He led Unitarians to see that the logic of their principles and their spiritual insight demanded that they should give up the scripturalism of their ancestors and find the seat of authority and religion, in human experience of the divine, in the conscience, soul, and mind of man. This is not indeed infallible any more than Church or Bible, but there is no other.

Even among Unitarians this change did not take place

without a struggle and a certain amount of bitterness. *Robert Aspland* noted in 1841 that "some little alienation" existed between him and the young Unitarians who had started a new periodical in Lancashire a few years before. *George Armstrong* retained his reverence for *Locke* and confessed "to a hatred of the instinctive, transcendental and what-not German school of moral and metaphysical philosophy—the spawn of Kant's misunderstood speculations—the dreams of the half-crazed Coleridge, and the inane fancy of the Hares, Sterlings, Whewells, in loud and varied succession since." In 1842 it looked as though *John James Tayler* might have to leave the body. In 1857 there was a heresy hunt against *James Martineau* and an organized attempt to prevent his appointment to the staff of *Manchester College*. *Henry William Crosskey* was one of the pioneers of the new view, and for a time the British and Foreign Unitarian Association refused to sell a pamphlet he had written on the subject. But never did so profound a revolution in theological thought take place with so little bitterness. These controversies were reflected at great length in the pages of the Unitarian periodical, "*The Inquirer*." This paper was not under the control of any ecclesiastical body, and was open fairly to both sides.

Martineau lived to be a prophet not without honour in his own country and outside it. He was the recipient of honours and distinctions from many parts of the world and received the degree of D.C.L. from the University of Oxford, which was not so broad-minded then as it is now. His influence on Unitarianism has been an abiding one. His political views often proved distressing to some of his warmest admirers and were hard to reconcile with his sense of the value of human personality. But his sense of the value of society, which found expression in his ideas of the Church, was reflected in his sensitiveness to many of the evils in the social life of the time to which more stalwart Radicals were often blind.

These developments were helped by the scientific and historical discoveries of the time, which were making it more difficult to maintain the old framework in which accepted beliefs were set. The formulation of the theory of evolution

in particular was fraught with consequences which even now are hardly fully realized, for it broke down the rigid barriers that centuries of intellectualism had erected between life in its different forms. In 1852 Herbert Spencer published "Social Statics," and in 1858 papers by Alfred Russel Wallace and Charles Darwin were simultaneously communicated to the Linnaean Society. In 1859 Charles Darwin published "The Origin of Species." As a child Darwin had attended the Unitarian Chapel at *Shrewsbury*, but as he grew older he tended to become more and more agnostic. Unitarians, with their traditional interest in science, were among the few religious people who welcomed the discovery of evolution, though they attributed a different significance to it.

The Unitarian attitude contrasted so strongly with that of all other religious bodies of the time that twentieth-century students find instances of this contrast either incredible or amusing. At this time in England, as elsewhere, Christianity was supposed to be bound up with beliefs about eternal punishment, vicarious atonement, and the infallibility of Scripture which are now almost universally repudiated by thinking people in every Protestant Church, and these beliefs were maintained with bitter intolerance. F. D. Maurice, the son of *the Rev. Michael Maurice*, was expelled from his Chair at King's College, London, for views now taught in most Protestant theological Colleges. Sir John Seeley's interpretation of the life of Jesus in "Ecce Homo" profoundly stirred the imagination of men like *C. P. Scott* by its human touches, but Lord Shaftesbury described it as "the most pestilential book ever vomited out of the jaws of hell." The Dean of the Court of Arches in 1875 declared in his official capacity that "the avowed and persistent denial of the existence and personality of the devil, did, according to the law of the Church . . . constitute the promoter 'an evil liver' . . . in such sense as to warrant the defendant in refusing to administer the Holy Communion to him . . . and that the same consideration applies to the absolute denial by the promoter of the doctrine of eternity of punishment."

The very fact, of course, that the general outlook of Orthodox Christians of this time was so narrow gave Unitarians a great opportunity. The hearers of *Martineau* at *Little Portland Street*, between 1859 and 1873, included W. E. Gladstone, George Eliot, the American Ambassador, Lord John Russell ("among the most regular"), Sir Lewis Morris, *Sir Charles Lyell* (a regular member), Charles Darwin (a frequent visitor), *James Heywood, F.R.S., Edward Enfield, William Shaen, Miss Anna Swanwick, Henry Crabb Robinson*, Mr. Justice Wills, *Professor W. B. Carpenter, F.R.S.*, and *Frances Power Cobbe*, a devoted friend and disciple of *Martineau*. Many others came once or twice, but, as *Frances Power Cobbe* has recorded, "they went away sorrowful, for they had great (pre-) possessions." *Charles Dickens* attended the services of *the Rev. E. Tagart*, and the recent publication of his life of Jesus shows how much he shared the views of contemporary Unitarians. Samuel Smiles was a frequent hearer of *Stopford Brooke* at St. James's Chapel, before *Stopford Brooke* left the Church of England—though it is hard to imagine any point of contact between the author of "The Lives of the Engineers" and "Self-Help," and the poet *Stopford Brooke*.

The first effect of these developments was to widen the gulf between Unitarians and other Christians. Unitarians were regarded as outside the pale by other Nonconformists and by High Churchmen and by Low Churchmen alike. Only by some members of the Broad Church were Unitarians treated with common courtesy. *The Rev. George Armstrong* has recorded how his nephew, a clergyman, passed him by on the other side when they met, and, when *Mrs. Armstrong* invited a relative to stay at her house, he replied in these terms: "Most glad indeed should I have been to accept your kind invitation had circumstances been different from what they are. It has been a source of much trial and pain to me in coming to Bristol to feel that you were in a position as the wife of one who, standing *prominently forward as a teacher* of that doctrine which so dishonours the Lord Jesus who bought me with his own precious blood, that in faithfulness to him and to his word I am called, by the express testimony of Scripture, *not to receive him nor*

to bid him God-speed." *George Armstrong* felt this exclusion deeply, and this bigotry and prejudice "would often gall and irritate his expansive heart," and caused him to use bitter words "when he denounced the errors in opinion which led to such disastrous action." Unitarian candidates for Parliament were advised by timid supporters to conceal their religious views. They did not accept this advice. *S. Beale, M.P.* for Derby, in the midst of his election campaign in 1857 attended a Unitarian service, though he was told that he would lose the election if he did.

Fortunately there were exceptions at this time as in the eighteenth century. Parliament passed the Dissenters' Chapels Act in 1844. In 1847 the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, appointed Dr. Hampden, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, to the see of Hereford. A protest against his Confirmation by the Archbishop was signed by thirteen bishops and the question came before the judges of the Queen's Bench. One of Dr. Hampden's offences was that he had called Unitarians Christians. He explained this in a letter to Lord John Russell, "If, on any occasion, I have ventured to call Unitarians Christians, surely this must be understood in the wide charitable sense of the term—not in that strict sense in which it belongs to a believer in the divinity and the blessed atonement of our Lord, but in a sense not unlike that in which it is used in our Liturgy, when we pray for 'all who profess and call themselves Christians,' that they 'may be led into the way of truth,' etc. What I may have said, then, in charity of the persons or of the modes of reasoning of misbelievers, cannot in any fairness be understood as indulgence to their tenets." Dr. Stanley, the Bishop of Norwich, had given "his name as a subscriber to the sermons of his venerable, inoffensive, uncontroversial and simply Christian friend," *the Rev. William Turner*, of Newcastle, and this action called down upon him all the rude bigotry of the age. The Bishop said: "I certainly ought to have been more cautious. But what a life of wretchedness to be for ever watching over and repressing the spontaneous acts of kindness which opportunities call forth!" *George Armstrong* commented, "What a volume in these words!"

Yet during the century the standards of education and tolerance among the clergy were improving. Even as early as 1839 *Lant Carpenter* noted a great improvement in the Anglican clergy since he was a boy.

The Presbyterian ministers of Scotland were better educated than any others at this period, but in Scotland the bigotry was far worse than in England. The police could not guarantee Unitarian evangelists protection against mobs. *John Page Hopps*, then in Glasgow, wrote a "Life of Jesus for Young Disciples" which resulted in a lawsuit, in which the liberty of the press in Scotland was vindicated. One of the finest farmers of his time was *George Hope* of Fenton Barns, near Edinburgh, but his lease was not renewed by his landlord in 1872, because of his political and religious views.

George Hope was "one of the remarkable men of the new rural middle class that had now made its way into power in Scotland and was moulding its destinies. . . . In spite of the distress of his mother and the horror of his family and friends he joined the Unitarians. This was a formidable step in those days when orthodoxy in religion held its sway over the nation." (E. Haldane: "The Scotland of our Fathers").

In spite of many unpleasant incidents of the type just recorded, most Unitarians were well disposed to the Church of England. They were opposed to abuses like the levying of Church rates, which *Samuel Courtauld* fought at Braintree in lawsuits that lasted from 1837 to 1855. They demanded the right to marry and bury their own members. But only a few Unitarians followed *Priestley* in actively demanding the separation of Church and State. Their agelong dream was of a Church open to all those who professed and called themselves Christians. Some Unitarians like *Joshua Fielden* were convinced that "the connection between the Church and the State" tended "to foster religious toleration by preserving to the State or Parliament the control of the Church." All disputes had to be referred "not to a council of priests, always bigoted and tyrannical, but to the ordinary law courts . . . this has made the Church of England and Ireland the most tolerant Church that has ever existed . . . but separate

the Church from the State and all this freedom vanishes." *Fielden* preferred, therefore, that Parliament should make the Church of England in reality the Church of the English people, and not that it should sink to the level of a sect.

The nineteenth century almost to its close was a century of hope, and those who lived in it found it easy to believe in progress. They knew what immense changes for the better had been made in it. They could point not only to physical improvements in health and housing and the comforts of life, but to better education, a higher degree of freedom, and a sense of responsibility spread among millions who in previous centuries had no share at all in the shaping of their own lives. They could rejoice in an increasing humanitarianism in all aspects of life, and they hoped for still better things to come. They even dreamed of a world in which the satisfaction of men's common needs by trade would lead to co-operation and not antagonism, and make an end of war. If this sense of achievement led to a certain complacency and smugness and blindness to deep-seated evils, the achievement was still a real one, and there were prophets to rebuke the complacency and to warn men that all was not well.

These hopes crashed after 1919. Men and women in the twentieth century will try to solve their problems in their own way, but, if they abandon those ideals of truth, liberty, humanity, and democracy which animated the best minds of the nineteenth century, the time may come when the historians of the future will look back with longing on that century as in some ways a little oasis in the history of man. And, as later generations painfully take up again the work of striving to create a society in which the head is held high and the mind is free, they will wonder why those who came before them lost their nerve, and threw away the gains of centuries.

INDEX OF PLACES

INDEX OF PERSONS

(*The names of Unitarians are in italics*)

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