

UNITARIANISM IN  
HERTFORDSHIRE

---

ALAN R. RUSTON

---

**UNITARIANISM IN HERTFORDSHIRE**

by  
ALAN R. RUSTON

---

A. R. Ruston, Oxhey, Watford, Hertfordshire, 1979  
(Copyright)



[www.unitarian.org.uk/docs](http://www.unitarian.org.uk/docs)

## PREFACE

The idea for this work arose out of my efforts to trace my wife's Hertfordshire family tree. She is closely related to the Hinkins family who were connected with the town of Royston for many years (see Chapter 2). They have been Unitarian in religious affiliation at least since 1832, and maybe even before that, and some of the branches remain so today although no longer living in Royston. Unitarianism in Hertfordshire is not a subject that has been researched before and although aspects of the history of the chapel at St. Albans were recorded by William Urwick in the 19th century, the story of the Royston chapel is virtually unknown. The detail has been put together from various source material held at the Hertfordshire Record Office, the Guildhall Library, London, St. Albans Local History Library and Manchester College, Oxford. But in the main the research has been carried out at Dr. Williams's Library in London which has such a wealth of material on the history of Nonconformity. I would like to thank the Librarians and the staff of each of these institutions for their help and interest. Special individual thanks must go to Mr. John Lewis, Mr. Christopher Stell and Miss Margery Hinkins for the material that they have provided, together with their helpful advice.

It cannot be said that Unitarianism has thrived in Hertfordshire. However, except for the period 1895-1925, there have been organised groups meeting together to witness to the liberal traditions of this particular branch of Nonconformity from the 1770's to the present day. Admittedly a plant of small growth it has stubbornly resisted and kept itself alive in what has often been very arid ground. Unitarianism has really only been found in certain places, mainly the towns. Unitarian thinking has existed in many diverse churches and chapels in the County during and before this period. But that thinking and affirmation often quickly disappeared and represented only a passing influence. It is the chapels and groups which avowed themselves to be Unitarian and stuck to this belief that are recorded in this history.

The historians of Nonconformity in St. Albans in particular have been evangelical in their theology and understandably have not dwelt on the story of Unitarianism where it has had to concern them. This history hopefully supplies some of the deficiency without going to the other extreme. It is apparent that some of the people I describe in the following pages did not always live up to the best of their faith, and the words of Skeats and Miall in their history of the Free Churches (1891) are apposite:—

## CONTENTS

- Chapter 1 St. Albans
- Chapter 2 Royston
- Chapter 3 Unitarianism elsewhere in the County
- Appendix: Ministers at St. Albans and Royston.

### Alan R. Ruston

B.Sc.(Econ.), holds the Diploma in Religious Studies of the University of London. A member of the Council of the Unitarian Historical Society, his previous publications include 'A History of Unitarian Lay Preaching' (1973), 'What is Unitarianism?' (Lindsey Press, 1973), and various works published by the Unitarian Social Responsibility Department, together with numerous articles in Unitarian and other journals.

“Where active, able, earnest men are at work, churches succeed among the Unitarians as well as among other denominations; where men simply repeat the phraseology of a bygone age, and take no interest in the life and thought of their town or village, Unitarian churches decline and decay just as other churches do.”

However, I do see this as a story well worth the telling and demonstrating above all, an aspect of the continuity of English religious life that has not relied, except in the case of St. Albans, on the ownership by a congregation of land and buildings.

I have been encouraged in writing this short history by several members of the Hinkins family and it is most appropriate that this work should be dedicated to them and their forebears.

November, 1978.

ALAN RUSTON,  
Oxhey, Hertfordshire.

## Chapter 1 St. Albans

The story of the growth of Unitarianism in St. Albans is centred round the Old Meeting House in Lower Dagnall Street. Built in 1697 for a group of Presbyterians who had been meeting in the town for nearly thirty years, often in a clandestine manner due to persecution, its early theological outlook was distinctly Trinitarian in emphasis. Jonathan Grew (1626-1711)\* had been appointed as their minister in about 1675 and was from all accounts strictly orthodox. He remained in office right up until his death in 1711 when his position and standing in the City was acknowledged by being buried inside the nearby Cathedral.<sup>1</sup>

The Meeting House they built in Dagnall Lane, as it was then known, was in the oldest part of the town near the Cathedral and its lands. What, if anything, was on the site before the Meeting House was built is not known but Dagnall Lane itself was an old thoroughfare. There is a deed of 1482 mentioning the grant of land in Dagnall Lane adjoining the garden of the monastery.<sup>2</sup>

The main building today, ignoring the floors and internal structure, remains essentially as it was built. The interior (30 feet by 40 feet) was described in the 19th century in the following terms: “It is a square substantial building of red brick, unpretentious but massive, the thick walls on either side each with six windows, three above and three below, the front with three windows and two wide entrance doors. Within, a deep gallery runs along three sides, and the pulpit with communion pew below occupies the fourth, commanding a clear view of every seat below and above. The massive roof of solid oak beams, ceilinged off, is supported by two strong, tall, tree-like, pillars of timber.

In fact the building stands just as it was when first erected, embodying the faith of its founders in the permanence of the principles which as Nonconformists they maintained.”<sup>3</sup> We do not know how much the building cost or who erected it, but it was not put up with economy as the first priority. The congregation was substantial as in 1715 the number of hearers is given as 400, of whom 48 were county voters, and 99 borough voters, which clearly demonstrates the wealthy nature of the congregation at that time.<sup>4</sup>

The congregation soon called another minister, Samuel Clarke\* (1685-1750), who came from a distinguished line of Nonconformist ministers. He was ordained pastor of the Chapel on

17th September, 1712, by some of the leading Presbyterians of his day, and an account of the event was printed (a copy is at Dr. Williams' Library, London). In 1714 he was given a doctorate of Glasgow University. His ministry was an important one and "it was an honour to the taste and judgement of those who then constituted the church of Dagnal Street, that they unanimously made choice of him as their pastor." At a time of theological dispute it seems he was able to pick his way through the pitfalls and disputes with great ease, and amuse and entertain as well. It was at this time in the early 18th century that Unitarian, or perhaps more correctly Arian, thought began to emerge in Presbyterian churches but Clarke seemed to be able to keep all his theological balls in the air although some did charge him with unorthodox views.

Samuel Clarke's ministry was a success but by the end of 1749 he was becoming increasingly infirm and it was necessary to find him an assistant. He wanted someone local and one whom he had been able to influence. His choice fell on Jabez Hiron (1728-1812) who had been born in the town and was just twenty-one when appointed. Hiron, after education at Kibworth, spent a short period with Dodderidge training for the ministry at Northampton, before taking up his duties at St. Albans early in 1750. But Clarke died in December, 1750, after conducting communion in the Chapel the previous Sunday.

This was really the end of an era although it did not appear so at the time. Presbyterianism was changing considerably and being influenced by Arianism and a form of unitarianism. Hiron, so young and under the influence of Clarke who specialised in not rocking the boat, appeared as if he would carry on this tradition. But in a tremendously long ministry of sixty-two years he and his congregation gradually and imperceptibly became unitarian in sympathy. This is shown in the list of preachers of the annual sermon at the chapel in aid of the Charity School. William Urwick lists them all from 1739 to 1836<sup>3</sup> page 206. The occasional Arian appears up to 1780, but after 1780 they are mainly the names of known Unitarians, and after 1798 almost totally of that persuasion. Such a story is quite common in the history of Presbyterian meeting houses of the period. In the main it came about on the arrival of an assertive minister, or the hiving off of a section of the congregation that did not agree with the rest. This latter event did finally come about at St. Albans, but before this the alteration in religious belief came slowly over the years, the minister and congregation mutually influencing each other along the path towards a radical change in religious opinion.

Jabez Hiron, being a young man and interested in young people, became very involved with the Charity School founded by his predecessor about 1715. This was the first such school connected with the Dissenters to be formed and continued successfully in England.<sup>5</sup> But he was not the stature of his father-in-law. His obituary notice concluded, "He was a man of more than ordinary intellect and literary ability, but of a retiring nature; this may account for the fact that little is known of his career at Dagnall Lane."<sup>6</sup> He considered moving in 1770 to Dudley, Worcestershire, but then thought better of it, and continued his ministry until his death in 1812. Thus we have the almost unique circumstance of a congregation being under the care of only two ministers for exactly a century, from 1712-1812.

It would be easy to conclude that such a long ministry must have been a sleepy one. But after about 1780, when he had become distinctly Arian in sympathy and the majority of his congregation were of a like mind, arguments with the minority were constant. There is evidence that members of the chapel who disagreed with his teaching withdrew and worshipped at the Baptist congregation in the same street. No record of those who seceded exists, but an entry in the Baptist church book states: "7th September 1794. Some Independents in our congregation left us and opened a place for public worship under the ministry of Mr. Morton."<sup>7</sup>

These Independents were probably those who had split off from Presbyterianism because of the changing theology. This group met first in a factory, then in a barn in Long Butt, Sweet Briar Lane, which they fitted up for their own purposes with a Sunday school. This was opened in May, 1795, and the congregation grew so that they built themselves a chapel in Spicer Street in 1811, which continues to this day. William Urwick, the main historian of Nonconformity in Hertfordshire was minister of the Spicer Street congregation in the late 19th century. Being evangelical in sympathy and outlook, he had no time for Unitarianism and believed that his congregation had taken over the torch of Christianity from the early Presbyterians. He concludes: "The orthodox Dissenters (in Dagnall Lane) united into a distinct community, and formed a church in the Congregational way—the church to which it is now our honour and privilege to belong; so that we may fairly claim to be the successors and representatives of those Protestant Dissenters (believers in the Trinity) who banded together in Christian work and worship under Grew, Clarke and Hiron."<sup>8</sup> Reverend F. A. J. Harding,

who has written of the congregation in recent times, was also minister of the now Evangelical Free Church in Spicer Street, sees the matter in similar terms. Neither researched or analysed the Unitarian phase of the Dagnall Lane chapel, a deficiency which it is to be hoped this short history redresses.

Dr. Nathaniel Cotton\* (1705-1788) brought the poet William Cowper into the Presbyterian community at Dagnall Lane. Cotton arrived in St. Albans in 1740 and remained until his death and was probably Arian in sympathy. He built a large house close to the chapel which he made into a form of private lunatic asylum, and Cotton combined the unlikely activities of asylum keeper and poet. Soon after his arrival he allied himself with Dr. Clarke and became a friend of the famous Phillip Dodderidge.

Cowper was a melancholic and had already tried to commit suicide twice before entering the asylum in 1763. During the next couple of years Cotton apparently effected a temporary cure. So much so that Harding adduces evidence that Cowper attended the Presbyterian chapel, and was chosen by the minority group to be a candidate for the diaconate. "But the Presbyterians carried their Arian candidate and soon afterwards Cowper left the town."<sup>7</sup> Certainly Cowper was not an Arian or Unitarian, and throughout the rest of his life he was reluctant to refer to his stay in St. Albans.

The baptismal register now at the Public Record Office gives some idea of the Congregation and its individual members. Commencing on 1st December, 1757, the last entry is in 1836, and is a record of some 500 baptisms. There are names which constantly recur—Deacon (of Bricket Wood), Nutt, Enver, Wells, Hawkins, Pembroke, Humphreys, Kentish, Saunders, Dear, Rose, Hall, Wells, Iprgrave, Jones, Ewer, Wise, Russell, Hill, Reay, Godman, Buzzard, George, Addington, Hair, Compere, Easy, Chapman and Lewin. The names of Deacon, Thrale, Kentish and Pembroke can be found throughout most of the period. Some notable entries include:—

Rebekah, daughter of George and Adria Pembroke, baptised 25 September 1753.

John\*, son of John and Hannah Kentish, baptised 1 July 1768.<sup>9</sup>

Hester, daughter of John and Hester Thrale (Sandridge), baptised 14 January 1777.

It would be possible to re-construct the 18th century congregation from the names appearing in the register. In conjunction with contemporary sources, a picture of the part played by members of the leading Nonconformist group in the town could be created which would be a valuable contribution to the 18th century social history of St. Albans.

At Hiron's death on 21st December, 1812, the sentiment of the congregation was firmly Unitarian, and they looked around the ministers of that denomination for a replacement. They settled on William Marshall (1776-1849) who already had served Unitarian churches in the north for thirteen years at Failsforth, Belper and Rochdale. He was a quiet, reflective man, although obviously different from Hiron. Trained at Manchester College, under Dr. Barnes, his obituary, after years of retirement in London amongst his family, his books and his music, presents a picture of calmness which we might envy today. "Mr. Marshall's life presents little of incident; his character was retiring and contemplative, and his end was peaceful."<sup>10</sup> He must have been a pleasant man, as William Urwick, not favourably disposed to Unitarians, states that he was "a very benevolent and useful man, highly esteemed."<sup>11</sup>

Not that it would appear that the Nonconformists were very successful at this time. A guide book of the period states:—

"The whole body of Dissenters are inferior in numbers to those who favour the established religion in St. Albans and any sect by itself is very unconsiderable. Formerly there was a very numerous congregation that used to assemble at the Baptist Meeting House; and also the Presbyterian congregation was once very large; the respectable families which heretofore frequented them are partly extinct, and others have adopted different tenets."<sup>12</sup>

But the new young minister was making some changes. Before 1815 he had established a Sunday School, and in 1819 an organ had been put in, paid for by Marshall himself.<sup>13</sup> What music they had before that date is unknown but probably a bass-viol or even a tiny stringed orchestra judging from what was to be found in other similar Meeting Houses of the time. No copies of sermons preached at this time have come down to us, although from his own character it is unlikely Marshall preached an assertive Unitarianism.

It was in the early 1820's that Peter Finch Martineau (1755-1847) came to live in Romeland in St. Albans. Coming from an old Unitarian family connected with the Octagon Chapel at Norwich, he soon became active in the congregation and one of its leading members. Formerly a sugar refiner at Whitechapel in London, he set up business as a banker in St. Albans in the firm of Martineau and Story. Both his sons, John Scott Martineau (1779-1845) and Peter (1786-1869), became trustees of the Chapel although each lived in what is now North London. Catherine and Sarah, daughters of Peter the younger, were baptised at the Chapel in 1822 and 1828 respectively.

This branch of the Martineau family was connected with the famous brother and sister, James\* (1805-1900) and Harriett\* (1802-1876) Martineau. F. A. J. Harding, despite repeated efforts, attempted to find a connection between Peter Martineau and James but to no avail. In 1972 C. Anthony Crofton produced a pedigree of the Martineaus of amazing complexity; it showed that the two branches were quite closely related.<sup>14</sup> James, the Unitarian minister and one of the most famous philosophers of his day, was supposed to have preached at the Chapel when staying with his relative but there is no evidence for this.<sup>15</sup> Harriett, the writer on political economy and the Poor Law, has a firmer connection with the Chapel. William Urwick writes:—

“It is worthy of record that George Slade, when a boy at Clarkes' Charity School, acted as amenuensis for the eminent Harriett Martineau. Miss Martineau was wont to visit her relations in St. Albans and lived here with her uncle, Peter Martineau, for three years (presumably about 1828-1831). During this time, when writing her ‘Illustrations of Political Economy’ (published 1832), she employed George Slade to copy the work in full. In token of her interest in the boy, she gave him upon her leaving, two mahogany bookcases which in later life he presented to the St. Albans Free Library.”

Without doubt she attended the chapel, although in later years she abandoned Unitarianism. Peter Martineau withdrew from the banking firm in 1829 and removed to Brixton Hill, London, about 1835.

William Marshall retired from the Ministry in 1835, and for a few months John Goodland, the Master of the Charity School since 1829 and a trustee of the chapel, officiated as the minister. He had come from Jamaica, where he had been employed as an overseer by the Martineau family, and they brought him to the

town with them. George Slade, already mentioned, paid a tribute to the two men:—

“Mr. Marshall's leaving was a source of lamentation to the poor and needy of St. Albans, and many a silent prayer at that time (1835) was wafted to Heaven for a blessing to rest upon his benevolent labours. He was sorely tried and persecuted for his conscientious beliefs, by those who should have aided and assisted him in his good works. Never during the sixty-two years I have resided at St. Albans have I known two more true Christians, both in precept and practice, than Rev. William Marshall and Mr. John Goodland.”<sup>16</sup>

Late in 1835 Rev. John Mitchelson came as minister after Unitarian ministries at Poole and Diss. He stayed barely two years before going as minister at Warminster in Wiltshire. Mitchelson was immediately replaced in 1837 by Philip Vincent Coleman (1792-1868), who came from the small Unitarian cause at Battle. A sermon of his preached at the Chapel in July, 1837, survives and is a defence of the Nonconformist cause in education against that of the Church of England. Apart from this it is an assertive defence of the Bible-based Unitarianism of the day, and was undoubtedly a distinct departure from the low-key approach of his predecessors. He was attempting to be a new broom and lamented the smallness of his congregation:—

“I fear that this congregation has separated and dissolved in great measure by forgetting this sentiment (oneness of Dissent) and the great advantage designed for us by its founders—by those who first gave this place, I mean even the plot of ground, as a place for the amicable meeting of such pilgrims, in circumstances so much sought for by multitudes of Dissenters, whose only want is, a place of meeting, which they cannot afford to build or purchase.”<sup>17</sup>

After this sermon we know very little of the minister and congregation. Educated at Dublin and Paris, P. V. Coleman lived in St. Peters Street, voted in the election of 1847, and died in the City. The Hertfordshire Advertiser (9th May, 1896) informs us he was a familiar figure in the town in his day, being a Poor Law Guardian and much interested in public affairs. But of the dwindling congregation virtually nothing is known. It dissolved in 1861, and the Chapel ceased to be used for Unitarian worship.

The law at that time did not permit the use of a religiously designated building for anything but its original purpose. Thus the Unitarian trustees had to look around for other denominations who might use (and possibly pay rent for) a large meeting house. For the next thirty years there followed a whole succession of groups who occupied the building—Methodists, teetotal evangelicals, and for a short time the newly-formed Presbyterian Church of England. None of them shared or sympathised with Unitarianism, and amazingly the trustees allowed the name of the building to be altered to “Trinity Chapel.”

When a group of Primitive Methodists stopped using the building in 1887, the future seemed very uncertain. All the trustees appointed in 1833 were dead, bar one. Rev. William Urwick, Minister of the Spicer Street Chapel, wanted a Sunday School building for his chapel and decided that the nearby Meeting House would suit. He arranged for the departing Primitive Methodists to “transfer” the building. It was “offered” on payment of £10 for fixtures (probably put in by the Methodists) and the deacons of Spicer Street agreed to take over the building and spent about £10 on repairs. To fulfil trust requirements, Urwick held short afternoon services in the Meeting House for a few weeks in 1887 to prove usage, although as F. A. J. Harding states, his own congregation were not very keen on the whole procedure.

All should have gone well as the only remaining trustee, Henry Fordham (1802-1894), lived at Royston and was very elderly. He appears later in this history. An assertive Unitarian, he on hearing of Urwick’s activities appointed twelve trustees, all Unitarians, and resigned himself. They announced their decision to re-open the Meeting House for Unitarian worship. Urwick was furious and recounts his version of the story in the Spicer Street Chapel Annual Meeting records:—

“It was hoped that provision for the needed increase of School Accommodation might be obtained by a small outlay upon an old building so interesting in the annals of Nonconformity, and on August 8th, 1887, our Church commissioned the Committee to seek from the surviving trustee the transfer of the premises by a new Deed to trustees chosen from our congregation. The reply was that the transfer had already been made to new trustees, all of them Unitarians. This proceeding is (in my judgment) unjust and illegal.”<sup>18</sup>

It was not illegal and hardly unjust. It seems that the Spicer Street Congregation were not very upset over the developments as the whole procedure was at Urwick’s prompting and they built their own Sunday School building at the side of their Chapel within a few years.

So now Unitarianism was to return to the Meeting House after a gap of nearly thirty years. We have a very accurate record of the proceedings of this time as the Minute Book of the Trustees and related correspondence is in existence (Dr. Williams’s Library).<sup>19</sup>

The trustees, having no money, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association provided a grant and a supply of ministers and lay preachers from London was arranged. A subscription list was opened, £130 was spent on repairs, and a chapel keeper appointed. All was ready at the end of 1890 and advertisements appeared in the Unitarian and local Hertfordshire press announcing the commencement of lectures and services.<sup>20</sup> The name of every preacher is known and the number of attenders at each service. During 1892 the average attendance at the weekly service was over twenty. One of the main activities set up was a Boys’ Reading Room, plus a Sunday School and a Band of Hope. The main figure in the congregation was W. H. Roughsedge who was a local vet and stood at the local School Board election in 1892. He maintained an unofficial superintendence of the chapel.

By modern standards this would have been considered a fair start but in the 1890’s it was not thought much good at all. By 1892 Roughsedge is writing to David Martineau (1827-1911), the managing trustee:—

“The cause here is going on pretty much as usual but I am *still* of the opinion that with a good settled pastor we could form a permanent and settled congregation (17th August, 1892).”

But in 1893, with no settled minister in sight and the numbers remaining roughly the same, it was decided to terminate the cause. Rev. T. W. Freckleton writing to David Martineau after conducting a service:—

“I am very sorry that the work has to stop there (St. Albans)



but I see no alternative at present. There might be some hope if two or three families were to settle in that very pleasant district. I am sure that we must not waste a shilling in anything that is a failure, while the East End of London with a million people is comparatively neglected." (4th February, 1893.)

The trustees now made application to the Charity Commissioners to sell the building, and a potential purchaser was found in Mr. Joshua Pearce of George Street, St. Albans, who owned an adjacent property which blocked out light from the chapel. After a lot of argument a price of £200 was agreed, and application to sell was made. The last service to be held in the chapel took place on the last Sunday in March, 1894. The notice to sell appeared in the *Inquirer* for the issue of 30th March, 1895, and other relevant local newspapers. The order concluding "the charity known as the Protestant Dissenting Meeting House, Dagnall Lane," was made by the Charity Commissioners on 23rd July, 1895, the proceeds of the sale going to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.<sup>21</sup>

So ends the religious life of the building.<sup>22</sup> But argument was not at an end. The *Bristol Times and Mirror* in July, 1895, protested that the proceeds should go to a sectarian institution, whilst the chapel deed itself did not mention Unitarianism, a typical argument in the pattern of religious controversy of the time. The *Bristol Times* demanded a reply from the Unitarians, and this appeared in the *Inquirer* on 10th August, 1895. Explaining the recent history of the cause, it pointed out that far more than £140 left at the closure had been spent by them, and the Charity Commission agreed that for this and historic reasons the balance should go to Unitarian funds.

## REFERENCES

Note: All names marked \* indicate an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography.

- <sup>1</sup> For a longer treatment of the history of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, St. Albans, including its non-Unitarian phases, see my history of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, St. Albans, published in association with Boston Trust and Savings Ltd., 1979.
- <sup>2</sup> Archive material held at St. Albans local history library.
- <sup>3</sup> William Urwick, *Nonconformity in Hertfordshire*, 1884, page 190.
- <sup>4</sup> *Dissenting Congregations in England and Wales*, compiled between 1715 and 1719 by John Evans (original manuscript at Dr. Williams's Library).
- <sup>5</sup> For an account of the history of the school see William Urwick "Lectures upon Day School Education in St. Albans" (1888), Chapter 2.
- <sup>6</sup> *Monthly Repository*, 1813, page 52.
- <sup>7</sup> Rev. F. A. J. Harding, *Independency in St. Albans* (1962), pages 72/83. This excellent work by a former minister of Spicer Street Chapel, St. Albans, only exists in typewritten form but there is a bound copy in St. Albans local history library.
- <sup>8</sup> Urwick, *Nonconformity*, op cit, page 205.
- <sup>9</sup> Rev. John Kentish (1768-1853) was a distinguished Unitarian, and the minister at New Meeting, Birmingham, for fifty years. The family were connected with the Dagnall Lane Chapel from the 1680's onwards. John Kentish was greatly influenced by Jabez Hiron and throughout his long life retained his connection with the town, paying £40 to the minister of chapel right up until his death (Urwick, *Day School Education*, etc.).
- <sup>10</sup> *The Christian Reformer*, 1850, page 124.
- <sup>11</sup> William Urwick, *Nonconformity in Hertfordshire*, op cit, page 206.
- <sup>12</sup> *History of Verulamium and St. Albans*, no author, 1815, pages 192/4.
- <sup>13</sup> *History of Verulamium and St. Albans*, F. L. Williams, 1822, page 126.
- <sup>14</sup> *Pedigrees of the Martineau Family*, by C. Anthony Crofton, 1972, based on the earlier work by David Martineau, 1907. David Martineau (1827-1911) was one of the last trustees of the chapel and their secretary. He thus kept up a family connection of over sixty years.
- <sup>15</sup> *Victoria History of Hertfordshire*, Volume 2, page 472. An article on the Chapel in the *Hertfordshire Advertiser* for 9th May, 1896, adduces the Unitarianism of the time to the arrival of the Martineau family which is clearly wrong.
- <sup>16</sup> William Urwick, *Lectures on Day School Education*, op cit, pages 225/6.

## Chapter 2 Royston

- <sup>17</sup> "Faith," the end and consequence, etc., a sermon by P. V. Coleman, delivered at the Presbyterian Old Meeting House, St. Albans, 9th July, 1837, published by J. Mardon, 1837, pages 10/11 (Dr. Williams's Library).
- <sup>18</sup> Report of the Congregational Church Meeting in Spicer Street Chapel, St. Albans, for year ending 29th September, 1887, pages 6/7.
- <sup>19</sup> Minute Book of the Trustees of the Old Meeting House in Dagnall Lane, St. Albans, 1887-1895, black quarto notebook. Further documentary material is held by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.
- <sup>20</sup> Inquirer, 6th December, 1890; Christian Life, 13th December, 1890; Hertfordshire Standard, 4th October, 1890; Hertfordshire Advertiser, 1st November, 1890.
- <sup>21</sup> Charity Commission Scheme, 1696/95.
- <sup>22</sup> The building has had various uses since 1895. It was used as a seed warehouse and Samuel Ryder of golf's Ryder Cup fame started his seed business there. Owned by the Pearce family, it had multi-occupancy by various trades for many years according to local Directories. It was re-developed in the 1970's and in 1978 was taken over as the U.K. Headquarters of Boston Trust and Savings Ltd. The structure has been beautifully restored, and the outside appearance of the meeting house retained. A plaque has been placed over the door stating the origin of the building.

Essentially the history of Unitarianism in Royston is the story of the Fordham family. The Fordhams, whose "hereditary worth descends to us from bygone hoary age," have been connected with the neighbourhood of Royston for upwards of five hundred years. Representatives of the family still live in the area to this day. There was in his time, says Chauncey in his History of Hertfordshire (1700), a brass plate inserted over the chimney-piece in the old farm house at Kelshall, which was the original patrimony of the Fordhams, bearing an inscription, which refers to the first John Fordham, at the head of the Fordham pedigree (1526), and his two wives, and had probably been taken from Kelshall Church.<sup>1</sup> Between 1540 and 1724 there were 73 members of the Fordham family baptised in Kelshall Church.

The first settlement of the Fordhams in Royston was about the middle of the 17th century, but the most notable member of the family to settle in the town was Edward King Fordham, son of Edward Fordham of Therfield. Born in 1750, he evidently came to Royston very young and established the family fortunes in the town. Starting as a woolstapler, he founded the Royston Bank in 1808 with his brother, John, and his brother-in-law, Richard Flower. The banking firm of Fordham, Flower and Co. was a very successful one and really established the family fortunes in the 19th century.

It was in the late 18th century that the Fordhams came to be associated with Nonconformity, and Unitarianism in particular. Edward King Fordham was a member of the Independent Chapel in the town in about 1780 and he was following the example of his parents.<sup>2</sup> But as his obituary in 1848 states, "His religious sentiments gradually underwent a change and for more than fifty years since they were Unitarian. Latterly the avowal of his conviction was more distinct and open than formerly." This came about due to several causes, but one of the most notable was the influence of William Nash (1745-1830), a solicitor. He, it can be said, brought the Unitarian influence to the town, being a supporter and admirer of Rev. Robert Robinson\* of Cambridge (1735-1790). Not himself a Unitarian, Robinson seemed to create adherents to their doctrines in those people that he attracted to himself.<sup>3</sup> Henry Crabb Robinson\* (1775-1867), the diarist and a Unitarian, was connected with the Fordhams and Nashs by marriage, and is one of the major sources of information on the

two families. His diary entry on William Nash for Christmas Day, 1811, states: "In religious opinions he became a Unitarian, and Robert Robinson was the object of his admiration." Meeting in the Royston Book Club in the late 18th century the Fordhams and the Nashs embraced the Unitarian doctrines then current with some fervour. The other influence was the Flower family who were connected to the Fordhams by marriage. The most notable, and at the time infamous, member of that family was Benjamin Flower\* (1755-1829) who was considered a dangerous revolutionary and was to boot an assertive Unitarian. As the editor of the 'Cambridge Intelligencer' he opposed Pitt's measures in 1799 and was imprisoned for libel. On his way to prison he passed through Royston where a very large gathering of his relations and friends met him opposite E. K. Fordham's house. Kingston reports a letter from Flower to E. K. Fordham, the contents of which show that the Fordhams supported Flower's cause. Revolutionary Unitarianism appealed to the family as J. G. Fordham, in 1791, offered his house to Rev. Joseph Priestley when he had to fly from the violence of the Birmingham mob.<sup>1</sup>

It was John George Fordham (1780-1875) who owned and opened the Unitarian Chapel in Back Street, Royston. The registration with the Archdeacon of Huntingdon reads:—

"Royston. Building in Back Street, certified for Protestants, September 3rd 1833 by John George Fordham."

The building is still there today and is at the rear of 47 Upper King Street. The walls are timber framed, partly weather-boarded, otherwise rendered on laths, and it has a tiled roof. It probably dates from the late 18th century. The interior is 14 feet wide by 47 feet long. Today it is used as a storehouse.<sup>4</sup> It would appear that the Fordhams lived at No. 47 and provided these old work premises as a chapel at the rear. The chapel never went outside the ownership of the Fordhams and it could be said to be the Unitarian version of the proprietary chapel.

The chapel was opened on 23rd September, 1832, when two discourses were delivered by Rev. William Clack of Soham. On the following Sunday at the close of the service the Lord's Supper was administered, when ten united in partaking of it. "Thus the wish of several friends of Unitarianism in Royston and its vicinity for a chapel in which they might assemble for the worship of the Father, and to attend upon services congenial to their views and feelings, has been accomplished. They were cheered by the

congregations exceeding their expectation, and the pleasing prospect of their efforts to establish a Christian Unitarian Church proving successful."<sup>5</sup>

With wealthy owners and good support it was natural that the congregation should look around for a minister to expand the cause. Their choice fell on Archibald Forbes Macdonald, M.A. (1808-1886). A graduate of Aberdeen, he took charge of the Universalist Society, Greenock, in 1829, as a Trinitarian. The "Christian Pioneer" of the period, edited by Rev. George Harris at Glasgow, has a lot about Macdonald. "In the course of his reading, however, he soon discovered that the doctrine of the Trinity, with its long catalogue of subsidiary errors, had as little foundation in scripture as that of eternal reprobation; and with that boldness and manliness of character which ever accompany the asserter of truth, Mr. Macdonald lost no time in communicating his views to his little flock; and the consequence was, his retirement from that connexion. Mr. Macdonald having thus embraced Unitarianism, the avowed Unitarians of Greenock rallied round him, and in conjunction with those Universalists who had also rejected Trinitarianism, a society was formed."<sup>6</sup> He could do no wrong in the eyes of the assertive Unitarians of the day. A combative personality, he somehow heard of the chapel at Royston as in August, 1833, we read in the Pioneer that he was to become pastor there on 1st November, 1833. His last service at Greenock was on 22nd September, 1833, and he left "amidst much clamour, obloquy and opposition from the orthodox." Following a rousing visit to Aberdeen it appears he was going to continue at Royston as he left off at Greenock. Rev. Charles Moase of Bassingbourn preached in Royston in October, 1832, against Unitarianism on the opening of the chapel. Macdonald on his arrival quickly wrote and published a 23 page refutation.<sup>7</sup> Charles Moase replied at even greater length in 1834.<sup>8</sup> Not to be outdone Macdonald replied again in the same year in 92 pages.<sup>9</sup> But it seems Moase had the last word in 1835 when he replied with a pamphlet of 180 pages.<sup>10</sup> It was the proverbial storm in a teacup that early 19th century Nonconformists loved to engage in.

Records of what happened at the chapel are from now on scanty. No minute books are known to exist, and Royston, following these early storms, hardly is mentioned in the Unitarian press. After addressing the Eastern Unitarian Society at Bury St. Edmunds in 1835, nothing more is heard of Macdonald until the funeral of E. K. Fordham in 1847, besides "Two Discourses," 1840.<sup>11</sup> Delivered in the chapel in July, 1840, and printed the same year, they are rather mournful and morally earnest and there is no mention of Unitarianism.

E. K. Fordham's obituary tells us that when the chapel opened in 1832 "he immediately became a contributor and sometimes was present at the services there conducted. At length, his attendance thereat became regular; with the ministration of his respected friend the pastor he was well pleased and by his company, reading and conversation oftentimes was he cheered at home. Unquestionably the frequent visits and kind attention of his friend tended much to brighten his latter days."<sup>12</sup> Macdonald delivered the funeral discourse. It is almost certain that Macdonald's income mainly derived from E. K. Fordham, as within a few months he moved away to the ministry of Chowbent Chapel, Lancashire. It is probable that there was expectation from the will that did not materialise, as Crabb Robinson notes in his diary for 4th February, 1848: "Many of those who are seemingly neglected had much in their life times."<sup>13</sup>

Besides some early 20th century references, it is mainly from obituaries that we piece together the history of the chapel. There was no settled pastor until 1852 when Joseph C. Meeke became minister. A delightful description of this very experienced minister and the congregation at this time appears in the *Christian Life* for 13th June, 1903, by Rev. William Blazeby who had preached his first sermon at the chapel. "There was a fairish congregation. The chapel was a neat rural structure, with an aisle running up the interior direct to the pulpit." He tells that Meeke was an uncommonly tall man, and Blazeby was short, so in order to see over the top he stood on the pulpit Bible, "Let it, however, be said, in some expiation, that he first did most carefully cover over the sacred volume with his clerical white pocket-handkerchief."

He then describes the Fordhams. "The Fordham family were then the chief and almost the only financial supporters of the chapel. They occupied a charming residence, where the young preacher was most kindly welcomed. But be it said, the gracious host, Mr. Fordham, a tall fine old gentleman, of the older Unitarian type, did not at all hesitate in an after-dinner stroll, to express pretty freely to his companion his opinion of the pulpit performance. Happily, no question was asked as to what became of the pulpit Bible during the sermon. Well, the deliverer of the same was very soon told that it was far too short—the production, in fact, being only a fifteen-minute college specimen: and as to what we used to call the 'long prayer'—happily for childhood's weary ears, now long discarded—Mr. F. advised that college-supply to double or treble the length of what had been so

sparsely offered under such an appellation. No wonder the humiliated listener compunctiously felt that he had not properly earned his fee."

The old gentleman was probably John George, who was chairman both of the Board of Guardians and the Petty Session as well as being Deputy Lieutenant for Cambridgeshire. His obituary in the *Royston Crow* describes him of the Channing school of liberal religious thought.<sup>14</sup> He is of further interest to us as being the employer with his wife, as a governess, of Mary Carpenter\* (1807-1877), the juvenile penal reformer, during the period 1828/29. They kept contact with this daughter of the Unitarian manse for many years and were responsible for taking her for the first time in her life, to the theatre and the Royal Academy.<sup>15</sup>

Meeke's ministry was only a short one as he left in 1854. He was followed the next year by Richard Shaen, M.A. (1817-1894), who had held previous ministries at Lancaster, Edinburgh and Dudley.<sup>16</sup> His ministry continued for nearly 40 years, and he outlasted all the active Unitarian Fordhams, except Henry (1803-1894), who died on the day Shaen was buried. Born a gentleman, and with private means, he was by many accounts a quiet friendly man, and of few words. "He took a keen interest in every movement in the town of an educational or social character; on the Committee of Management of the British Schools, the Royston Institute Committee, the Coffee Tavern Co."<sup>17</sup> Active in the wider movement, he wrote several books on Unitarianism. "There were few more regular attendants than he at the Council Meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and he was one of their home correspondents." But above all his enthusiasm was for teetotalism, of which he was Royston's chief protagonist and for which he was best known in the town. "In that work his consistency and perseverance never once flagged. When the temperance reform movement was not as popular as it is today he never failed to stand in the front rank and remained there till the end."<sup>18</sup>

He kept assiduously to his ministry for forty years but of the detailed events of the life of the chapel we know little. During the last few years of his ministry in the 1880's and 1890's services at the chapel were taken once a month, first by Professor C. P. Upton of Manchester College, Oxford, and then by Rev. F. H. Jones who was Librarian of Dr. Williams's Library, London. On these monthly changes Shaen frequently went from home and preached elsewhere, sometimes as far away as Chelmsford.

He died on 24th January, 1894, after a few days' illness, "having taken the Sunday service as usual at the Unitarian Chapel on Sunday week, and was about the town on several occasions during the week. On the Friday he went out again and called at the Rookery (Mr. Henry Fordham) and upon others in the town . . . he died on the following Wednesday."<sup>18</sup>

Henry Fordham died a few days later on the day of Shaen's funeral. He had become the main figure of the congregation, its secretary and chief financial support. He was an assertive Unitarian, as is evidenced by his activities at an advanced age at St. Albans. The death of these two figures so close together called for an editorial in the *Christian Life* and a lament. "Mr. Fordham was a well-known name in our denomination; a well-known banker, and a director of the Hitchin and Cambridge Railway. It is only a few weeks ago that we had a contribution from him in our columns. The deaths of Shaen and Fordham suggest many thoughts; and the first is, the seriousness of this double loss in a small church like that which we have at Royston. The second is, the merits of the fidelity which nerves a small band of men to stand out bravely for an unpopular faith in small towns and villages, and to willingly and unflinchingly bear the burden of the support of a Church like ours, and to suffer ungrudgingly the penalties attached to an unpopular profession . . . It is an honourable record to belong to a church of 25 people, and much more so when there are only five."<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps we should not make too much of the sense of persecution in this case, as the Rural Dean of Royston attended the funerals of both men. Henry Fordham's funeral was a massive affair, reported at great length in the local papers and during which all business in the town stopped. Both men added something continental to this quiet English town. Shaen had studied at the University of Bonn in Germany and Henry Fordham in France, at Rouen and Marseilles. They had been great friends and the tiny cause was shattered. Now in the hands of Fordhams who were not strictly Unitarian and dwindling in numbers, the congregation held their last service the following year on 15th September, 1895. That congregation consisted almost entirely of four families—the Fordhams, the Beales, the Grundys and the Hinkins—some descendants of the last family remaining Unitarian to this day. William Hinkins (1815-1878) was the main builder and plumber of the town and was attached to the Chapel with his wife from its earliest years.<sup>19</sup> His two sons, William Howard Hinkins (1845-1924), Francis Robert Hinkins (1852-1934) and daughter, Clara Hinkins (1850-1919), were all supporters of the Chapel until it closed.<sup>20</sup> W. H. Hinkins had a large family and his eldest daughter, Mary, played the organ from the age of

thirteen in 1890. On the closure of the cause the organ went into the care of the Hinkins family who looked after it until the 1930's when it passed into the hands of a South London organ-maker.

So ended the chapel at Royston, but its legacy continues. If the Fordhams are no longer attached to the Unitarian movement, the Hinkins are, and at the Unitarian General Assembly in 1978 several direct descendants of William Hinkins were present. Since 1895 no public Unitarian cause has existed in the town of Royston, although meetings of the Bedfordshire Unitarian Fellowship have taken place there from time to time.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> A History of Royston, by Alfred Kingston (1906), pages 225/229.
- <sup>2</sup> Christian Reformer, 1848, pages 254/6 (Obituary of E. K. Fordham).
- <sup>3</sup> Entry in Dictionary of National Biography.
- <sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Mr. C. F. Stell for these details on the building, which is today in a poor condition.
- <sup>5</sup> Christian Reformer, 1832, page 475.
- <sup>6</sup> Christian Pioneer, 1833, page 538.
- <sup>7</sup> "Argument against declamation . . . being a refutation of the sermon of C. Moase," by A. Macdonald, Royston, 1833 (Dr. Williams's Library).
- <sup>8</sup> "Facts and arguments, occasion by 'Argument against declamation, etc.," by Charles Moase, Royston Press, 1834.
- <sup>9</sup> "An Examination, etc.," by A. Maconald, Royston Press, 1834.
- <sup>10</sup> "Remarks on Rev. A. Macdonald's defence of Socinianism," by Charles Moase, Royston Press, 1835.
- <sup>11</sup> Two Discourses, Archibald Maconald, Royston Press, 1840. Dr. Williams's Library has two other printed sermons by Macdonald, dated 1865 and 1873.
- <sup>12</sup> Christian Reformer, 1848, pages 254/6.
- <sup>13</sup> Macdonald held several subsequent short ministries, concluding at Lewes in Sussex in 1882. His obituary in the Inquirer, 1886, page 649, is quite laudatory, mentioning that he was an "advanced Liberal." But the piece that appears in the Christian Life, 1886, page 476, by Robert Spears, is very tart. "He was a man of some learning and considerable platform ability . . . had he kept theologically to the lines of Unitarian teaching, set him in the example of Rev. George Harris, we venture to think his ministry would have proved among our churches vastly more profitable and successful than it has been."
- <sup>14</sup> Royston Crow, May 1875, pages 936/7. I am grateful to Mr. John Lewis of Royston for all the assistance that he has given me with local newspapers.
- <sup>15</sup> Mary Carpenter and the Children of the Streets, Jo Manton, London 1976, pages 35/6; Life of Mary Carpenter, by J. E. Carpenter, London 1881, page 14.
- <sup>16</sup> For background details on Shaen see Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, 1978, pages 164/5, by Rev. Andrew Hill, and obituaries in the Royston Crow.
- <sup>17</sup> The Christian Life, 3rd February, 1894.
- <sup>18</sup> The Royston Crow, 26th January, 1894.
- <sup>19</sup> I have in my possession a copy of Turner's "Lives of Eminent Unitarians" inscribed "For William and Maria Hinkins, December 10th, 1843."
- <sup>20</sup> The obituary of W. H. Hinkins in the Royston Crow in March, 1924, states that "From boyhood he attended the old Unitarian Chapel until it closed." For biographical details I am indebted to several members of the Hinkins family.

## Chapter 3 Unitarianism elsewhere in the County

In 1819 Rev. George Harris published a most contentious sermon he had preached at Liverpool entitled "Unitarianism, the Only Religion that can become Universal." Like so many similar sermons of the time the issues today appear miniscule and irrelevant. The importance of the booklet lies in its appendix which consists of a list of all the Unitarian Chapels and Congregations in the country, arranged in counties. Such a comprehensive record is unique and therein lies its value and interest. The entry for Hertfordshire reads:—

St. Albans	Minister Rev. W. Marshall
Ashwell or Royston	
Sandon	E. Fordham

There is no trace of a chapel at Ashwell or Royston prior to 1832, and it can only be assumed that services of some kind were held in private houses. The case of Sandon just down the road from Royston is much more intriguing. A chapel was registered for Protestants with the Archdeacon of Huntingdon on 23rd October, 1823, at "premises called Gannock at Sandon," by Elias Fordham. Elias (1762-1838), brother of Edward K. Fordham, had apparently been preaching for some time at Sandon, as the house of Joseph Gilbey at Sandon had been registered for worship by George and William Fordham early in 1793. He had been trained for the Christian ministry as a young man, attending the academy at Homerton, and had charge of a congregation at Stowmarket about the year 1788. He was induced to resign this charge, partly because of his change of view from Trinitarianism to Unitarianism and also because he feared the exertions might weaken him.<sup>1</sup> Much influenced by Robert Robinson, he wrote some early Unitarian articles in the Monthly Repository. He loved to preach "for the works' sake," and combined the activity with farming. On 9th September, just two Sundays before his death, he had officiated at Back Street Chapel, Royston, on "the duty of improvement, a favourite subject of his." We know very little of the chapel at Gannock, Sandon, except that Elias owned the property which mainly consisted of cottages. Local Court records, etc., have many references to him, and to all the usual activities of a local gentleman farmer of the time. It seems likely that he preached in Gilbey's house from an early date, opened his own chapel in 1823 which closed a few years later.<sup>2</sup> Crabb Robinson did not like Elias, and describes him in his diary for 7th November, 1822: "Elias Fordham came also unexpectedly—neither his conversation nor his manners pleased me—he chews

tobacco and squirts every instant and he talks an American slang." Such a graphic description leads us on to want to know more about the Sandon congregation and its minister but few other details are available.<sup>3</sup>

After the closure of the chapels at St. Albans and Royston in 1895 there does not appear to have been any Unitarian activity in the County until after the First World War. Attention was directed rather to the establishment of causes in cities and the larger towns than in small towns and the countryside. But in 1925 the London Unitarians decided to make an effort at Letchworth, and brought in some of their best preachers and speakers for public meetings held at the Howard Hall. The Inquirer for 12th December, 1925, says: "In continuance of the services and lectures which have started here with encouraging results, Rev. Dr. Drummond will open a conference tomorrow afternoon at the Cloisters on the 'Spiritual Factor in International Peace'."

The building known as "The Cloisters" was a most unusual piece of architecture. Built by Miss Annie Jane Lawrence (1863-1953) to encourage the open-air life amongst other things, the Unitarians regularly met there at her invitation. She came from a long line of Unitarians in London and remained attached to that cause all her life.<sup>4</sup>

Regular services had been started at Howard Hall on 15th November, 1925. "Although no widespread interest has been evoked, and the band of enthusiasts is small, it was decided to start religious services . . . Until the new Unitarian hymnal is ready a small collection made by Rev. W. J. Jupp will be used."<sup>5</sup> Sunday morning services only were held and it would appear that the average attendance was about 25.

The group continued to meet at the Howard Hall at 11 a.m. for most of the 1920's and 1930's, but about the time of the Second World War they met at the Vasanta Hall. They did not attempt to build their own church and never called a minister. In the 1950's they met at the home of their secretary, Miss J. E. Lindsay, but in 1959 the group was transferred to Welwyn Garden City under the leadership of Mr. F. Daley. This Unitarian cause finally disappeared in the early 1960's.<sup>6</sup> Although designated "a church," it was really what the Unitarians call a "fellowship" which is a group that meets regularly in a building or house which it does not own.

The first of these "Fellowships" was set up in Hertfordshire at Watford, mainly due to the prompting of Rev. Magnus Ratter,

the then London District Minister, in 1947. Gathering at the Friends' Meeting House it still meets today in the same premises as well as in the homes of members. It has owed its continued existence to the loyalty and perseverance over a period of thirty years to several people but in particular to the late John Monk, the late Alice Scase, and to John and Muriel Cornford. Attendance and support for the group in 1978 is greater than it has been for some years; it has never had a regular minister.

In May, 1971, the Herts. Advertiser ran an article entitled "Unitarians plan city comeback," which announced that a series of house services were to be held in St. Albans as an offshoot of work already being done elsewhere. It also outlined the history of the old chapel in Lower Dagnall Street. If in the earlier chapter on St. Albans there is evidence of opposition to Unitarianism in the 19th century, it is clear it has not disappeared in the late 20th century. A letter appeared in the same paper on 21st May, 1971, page 49, informing the readership that Unitarians are not "Protestants" and inviting them to nail their colours to the mast. The letter was not signed. The chairman of the Unitarian Group replied the following week and there the correspondence ended.

The series of house services, originally held at the home of Roger and Joy Mason in Clarence Road, was successful, and the group continues to meet in the homes of various members in St. Albans today, once or twice a month, under the leadership of their minister, Rev. Tom Dalton. Part of a larger group known as the Enfield and Barnet Fellowship, there was a celebration in St. Albans to commemorate their tenth anniversary in July, 1973. A tree was planted to mark the event and there were fifty members and friends present.<sup>7</sup>

Thus in the 1970's there is more Unitarian activity in the County than since the 1890's. Not possessing any buildings, the modern religious structure relies on a gathered family affirming the liberal religious tradition of Unitarianism. The movement has not been a strong one in Hertfordshire but over nearly 200 years it has had lively and important people connected with it as it is hoped that this short history has shown. Its life and continuance has relied on people willing to persevere and insist that their organised presence and witness will continue. The cause has disappeared on more than one occasion but has been re-introduced later at a more opportune time. There is every reason to believe that this pattern will continue into the future.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> The Christian Reformer, 1838, pages 800/1 (obituary).
- <sup>2</sup> Whether or not he continued to preach in Joseph Gilbey's house is uncertain as in 1802 Elias Fordham prosecuted a Joseph Gilbey for breaking out of the stocks (Hertfordshire Sessions Books).
- <sup>3</sup> The Fordhams were active, however, in other parts of Sandon. "The same minister serves the chapel at Red Hill, a hamlet in the extreme south-west of the parish. The first chapel was built here in 1720 and in 1805 a new building was erected on ground given by Mr. Fordham." (Victoria History of Hertfordshire, Volume 3, page 270.)
- <sup>4</sup> For a full history of the building which passed into the hands of a Masonic group in 1948 see "The Cloisters, Letchworth, 1907-1967," by V. W. Miles (Lawrence Cloisters Trust), 1967. Miss Lawrence's funeral service was conducted by Rev. F. Hankinson, not Atkinson as stated by Mr. Miles.
- <sup>5</sup> Inquirer, 7th November, 1925. The main promoter of the cause was Rev. J. Arthur Pearson, the Unitarian London District Minister.
- <sup>6</sup> Essex Hall Year Book, various years.
- <sup>7</sup> Herts. Advertiser, 20th July, 1973, page 20, including photograph.

### Ministers at St. Albans and Royston

#### St. Albans

Name	Period of Ministry	Born/Died
Edmund Staunton, D.D.	1662-1671	1600-1671
William Jenkyn, M.A.	1664-1672	1630-1685
Isaac Loeffs, M.A.	Before 1669-1673	died 1689
Jonathan Grew, D.D.	circa 1675-1711	1626-1711
Samuel Clarke, D.D.	1712-1750	1685-1750
Jabez Hiron	1750-1812	1728-1812
William Marshall	1813-1835	1776-1849
John Mitchelson	1835-1837	died 1840/42
Philip Vincent Coleman	1837-1861	1792-1868

**Note:** John Goodland officiated as minister for a period during 1835.

#### Royston

Archibald Forbes Macdonald, M.A.	1833-1848	1808-1886
Joseph Charles Meeke	1852-1854	1789-1865
Richard Shaen, M.A.	1855-1894	1817-1894



