

# INTRODUCTION.

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The "NONCONFORMIST REGISTER," more frequently styled the "NORTHOWRAM REGISTER," being now in the hands of the Subscribers, the Editor has confidence in reprinting his description of it:—

"No idea can be conveyed by such words as REGISTER or OBITUARY of the multitudinous and multifarious Entries in this valuable MS. of 300 pages, which is often referred to by such writers as the Rev. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A.

"The words 'PURITAN' and 'NORTHOWRAM' equally fail to describe its character and scope. It is a supplement to many of the West Riding Registers, particularly those of Halifax and Bradford, and exceeds in details of incidents anything I have seen. Popes, Kings, Princes, Peers, Judges, Justices, Parsons, Peasants, Doctors, Lawyers, Schoolmasters, Soldiers, Conformist and Nonconformist Ministers, Quakers and Centenarians find equal admission to these pages.

"Some hundreds of sudden deaths are recorded, and, which is very exceptional, the ages of deceased persons are generally given. The whole is spiced with remarks on character or possessions, notices of runaway weddings, and incidents 'too numerous to mention.'"

I am sorry that so long time has elapsed since the publication of the Register was announced. The delay has occurred in connection with the printer's arrangements. The Indexes have cost an incredible amount of labour, but having done the work alone, (probably 35,000 references,) I believe there will be found but few errors. There is a tendency in indexing to put the number of the page one too little, as 78 for 79.

As only a limited Subscription List can be expected for such books, economy has been a great feature in the get-up, but the accuracy has not suffered. It is an individual effort, backed by no public Society, at a third the cost of Society prices, and done by an Amateur *pro bono publico*.

The MS. has had a remarkable career for 240 years. It would seem to have been the property of Coley Chapel six years before Mr. Heywood became Curate there, and at the Ejection in

1662, he took the book with him. It was almost a blank book in 1650 when he became Custodian, and, as the names would be annually sent to the Registrar at Halifax Parish Church, there was little in it which would be thought of any interest. Mr. Heywood also kept a private Register in his VELLUM BOOK WITH ONE CLASP. On page 109, I have stated that these Vellum-Book records have been copied into the Northowram Register in a slightly more modern hand. There is little doubt that the copyist was Mr. Dickenson, not Mr. Heywood as I thought at first. The perusal of some of Mr. Dickenson's MSS., at Mr. Swaine's, near Guildford, confirms this, and I am surprised how I should have mistaken Mr. Heywood's familiar handwriting. Just as the printer was drawing to a close, this identical "Vellum Book with One Clasp" came into my hands, along with several other volumes of Mr. Heywood's MSS. (Diaries, &c.), and I find that the additions to Mr. Heywood's portion of the Northowram Register will make about sixty pages. These, with his Diaries and Note Books, referring to his wonderful journeys and numerous acquaintances, will form a companion volume to the "Register" now in the Reader's hands, and will be issued speedily.

Mr. Dickenson (and this is very remarkable) continued the work his worthy predecessor had begun, for nearly another half century. Members of the Dickenson family seem to have made occasional entries afterwards. According to Mr. Slate, the "Register" became the property of the late Rev. Dr. Ryland. The late Joshua Wilson, Esq., of Tunbridge Wells, became the owner, rumour says, (though I cannot see any reason for it,) in return for a subscription to Northowram Chapel. He lent it to several gentlemen at Halifax, who made copious notes from it, and I had the promise of it, but as Mrs. Wilson could not find it again, I wrote (in my anxiety for its safety) to the Rev. Professor Newth, Librarian *pro tem.* for the Congregational Memorial Hall Library, to which Mr. Wilson had offered a large contribution of books. Prof. Newth found the MS., and for further favours I gladly return thanks to the Rev. Dr. Wilson and Mr. Knox Wilson.

The MS. is a small 4to, now inlaid in a firmly bound large 4to, bearing, on a fly leaf, the inscription:—"This Register having come into the possession of the late Joshua Wilson, Esq., of Tunbridge Wells, is presented by Mrs. Wilson to the Congregational Library Memorial Hall. The MS. being in a delapidated state and the leaves too closely written to admit of

“binding, the whole has been inlaid in the present volume by my daughter, under my direction.—SAMUEL NEWTH, November, “1877.”

On the first fly leaf of the original Register are the following names (query—their purport) :

Jan. 10. 1660	Samuel Spencer	Mary Burkhead
James Tetlaw	Abraham Brigge	Sarah Burkhead
Mary Tetlaw	Judith Brigge	Anne Rushworth
Mary Roides	Susanna Brigge	Sarah Rushworth
Susanna Earnshaw	Mary Smith	Susanna Rushworth
Sarah Bland	Richard Murgatroyd	John Aked
John Kershaw	Abraham Nickol	Nathaniel Aked
John Wilson	Isaac Nickol	Joshua Bartle
Mary Kershaw	John Nickol	John Askwith
Sarah Pollard	Abigail Nickol	Mary Aked
John Mitchell	Nehemiah Burkhead	Hanna Aked
Will. Mitchell	Grace Burkhead	Sarah Thomas.

Some of Mr. Heywood's entries of funerals are erroneously numbered, it will be seen ; and it may be useful to state that the abbreviation *minr.* indicates minister, not minor.

Coley is one of the twelve ancient chapelries of Halifax Parish. It has no township, but the district comprises part of Hipperholme, Northowram, and Shelf, the Church being erected in the first-named township, on a bleak hill, hence its *cold* and *wintry* name. From boyhood, Mr Oliver Heywood has been more than human to me. I do not wonder that Mr Dickenson left a blank leaf in the Register, and yet no record of Mr Heywood's death, for, years before I saw the Northowram Register, in a series of articles on Coley Church, I acted similarly, merely giving his name and a promise of future notice. Good Dr. Fawcett had only two of his MS. volumes, and even those two he could not read as he confesses, and as will be seen on comparing the volume of Mr. Heywood's Diaries, now in the press, with the Doctor's *Life of Heywood*. Mr Slate copies these blunders, yet reveals more of the inner life of the venerable Puritan. Mr. Hunter, as an accomplished antiquary, is thoroughly accurate. Yet all three fail to some extent ; the old man tells his own tale best. And tell it he shall, for by a singular and unexpected concurrence of events many of the original MS. volumes have been handed to me, and I have found that I could talk to and travel with my old friend, and find the half had not been

told me. One hundred and eighty years have fled since his remains were deposited in the south chapel at Halifax Church, and nearly forty since Mr. Hunter's *Life* appeared, and I for one shall not be satisfied till every line of his MS. be printed, a worthy and useful memorial of one of Nature's noblemen.

I have compared most of Mr. Heywood's references to Bradford, Calverley and Bingley people, and many Halifax people, with the entries in the parish registers of those places, and am highly gratified, almost astonished, at his accuracy.

My Notes to the Register, alphabetically arranged according to Families, would without an effort take as many pages as the Register itself. An idea of this may be formed by consulting one article, that on the Rooks family, in the *Bradford Antiquary*. Similar articles can be compiled on scores of families mentioned in this Register. Indeed, I have come to the conclusion that this Register will have to be a local book of reference.

*Calamy's Lives of the Ejected* will be well known to most readers. Autobiographies of Capt. Hodgson, Joseph Lister, Thomas Wright, are only a little less known. Halley's *Lancashire*, Mr. Abram's *Blackburn*, and numerous other Lancashire publications may be consulted with advantage. *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, particularly Mr. Scale's Notes in the Appendix, *The Manchester Socinian Controversy*, Whitaker's *Funeral Sermons*, and other similar books occur to the mind as rendering help in many cases. Indeed, of writing notes to this Register there is no end.

I rejoice greatly that there is a growing desire to publish Parish Registers. Those affording special help to this book are : *Bradford Parish Register* from 1596, in the *Bradford Antiquary* ; *Halifax Parish Register* from 1538, a noble undertaking, and *Calverley Parish Register* from 1574, edited by my friend Mr. S. Margerison.

The publication of these Registers, and especially of the Diaries and other MSS. of Mr. Heywood render it advisable to postpone the notes to a future local work.

I gladly acknowledge my obligations to the Rev. B. Dale, M.A., of Halifax, for valuable hints ; the Rev. C. B. Norcliffe, M.A., of York, for several notes from his vast collection ; to Mr. W. J. Vint, for the loan of two plates ; to Mr. W. Scruton, for artistic work on Northowram Chapel ; to the Rev. W. H. Wawn, for the sketch of Coley Church ; to Mr. A. B. Sewell, for permission

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to compare Heywood's Register with the Bradford Parish Register.

In common with all the members of the Yorkshire Archæological Association I have to deplore the sad loss by death of Fairless Barber, Esq., F.S.A. To him I was indebted for pointing out the treasures hid away in the Sessions' Rolls at Wakefield, and for preparing the way for their consultation. The fifty pages added to Heywood's Register is but a tithe of this subject. He commenced to publish notes on other topics in the *Yorkshire Archæological Journal*. Numerous favours, days of congenial intercourse, added to his special interest in the Life of the Rev. Oliver Heywood, and his desire to see the Heywood MSS. placed in a permanent form, render it obligatory that I should pay this slight tribute to the memory of a generous Christian friend.

I have some original notes respecting Mr. Dickenson and Northowram Chapel, culled from papers during a visit to Brabœuf Manor, Guildford.

Mr. Jonathan Priestley, of Winteredge, (Mr. Oliver Heywood's executor,) surrendered Northowram Meeting-house to Nathaniel Priestley, of Ovenden, on the 15th of August, 1710. On the 21st of June, 1711, the Meeting House was enlarged. The Subscribers were:—Jos. Wright £6, Nath. Lea, £2, Jere. Clay £2, Jere. Baxter £1, Joseph Wilkinson £2, John Priestley £2, Jno. Simpson £1, and Edwd. Hanson £1.

Mr. Swaine has also a manuscript of 44 pages, on Job 1. 21, "A Funeral Sermon preached at Northourum, March ye 4th, occasion'd by the Death of three Daughters of John Priestley of Westercroft, viz., Judith, who died Jan. ye 21st, in the 15th year of her age; Mary, who died Feb. ye 4th, in the 10th year of her age, and Hannah, who died Feb. ye 22d, in the 18th year of her age, A.D. 1710." The author, I presume, was Mr. Dickenson.

Another MS. of 61 pages is entitled "Exemption from Condemnation, Or the Privilege and Happiness of all True Believers in and by Christ Jesus, considered and improved in A Funeral Sermon on Rom. 8. 1, preached in Northourum, November 17, occasioned by the death of Mrs. Mary Priestley, widow, who departed this life November the 5th, 1734, aged 65, by Thomas Dickenson."

In 1717 Mr. Dickenson preached at the opening of a preaching room at Ossett. He had been one of Mr. Frankland's students.

On the 22nd January, 1722, Mr. Jonathan Priestley, of Winteredge, yeoman, made his will. He directed his body to be buried "in Mr. Heywood's grave, next to my dear wife's grave."

Winteredge he bequeathed to his nephew Jonathan Priestley, then living with him; Dodge Holme in Ovenden, which he purchased of *Timothy Heywood*, deceased, late of Sheffield, apothecary [son of John and grandson of Oliver], he gave to his nephew Nathaniel, son of his brother John Priestley, of Westercroft, deceased; his lands in Shelf, purchased of Mr. Wm. Walker, of Crow Nest, he left to his nephew Jonathan, &c.

In 1734 John Speight sold the double stall or pew in the middle row of seats, "late my father-in-law's, Abraham Milner," for 5s. to Thomas Dickenson, John Clay and Nathaniel Priestley, three fees.

Mr Nathaniel Priestley, in 1749, gave ground and stones for a minister's house at Northourum. The original receipt, dated 1750, giving the amount of cost at £189 14s. 8d. is preserved at Guildford. For repairs to the chapel house at Northowram, Nov. 15, 1767, the following subscriptions were paid: Nathaniel Priestley and John Priestley, ten guineas each; Benj. Dickenson, John Ramsden and James Pollard, five guineas.

The name of the Rev. Thomas Drake, D.D., of Lambeth Palace, in 1786, appears as a Trustee for Northowram School. About the same time the following persons were proposed Trustees for the Chapel: Mr. John Priestley, Mr. Benj. Dickenson, Mr. Wm. Dickenson, Mr. James Pearson, Mr. Wm. Prescott, Mr. Benj. Irvin, Mr. David Asquith, Rev. Mr. S. Walker, Mr. Tho. Clark, Mr. W. Mitchell, and Mr. Richard Fawcett.

"Whereas Mr. Jonathan Priestley the elder, of Winteredge, did by his last will bequeath an annuity to the minister at Northowram, and Mr Jonathan Priestley his representative proposes to pay £20 in lieu, we acknowledge the receipt of the said sum: Samuel Walker, minister, Nathaniel Priestley, Timothy Bentley, Jos. Wilkinson, Jno. Ramsden, Benj. Dickenson, John Priestley."

The Rev. Robert Hesketh was minister of Woodkirk, or Topcliffe, in 1736, Eastwood in 1739, and Northowram in the spring of 1744. He was educated at Glasgow, and was also minister at Bolton-le-Moors some time. At Northowram he records that he received 10s. 6d. for a funeral sermon for Mrs. Wilkinson, and £8 from London during the first quarter. "Since May 30, 1744, (he writes,) the day when my family fixed at Northowram, received in presents—Joshua Robertshaw, 5s., Mrs. Priestley, chinay, 7s. 6d., Mrs. Ingham, two chinay