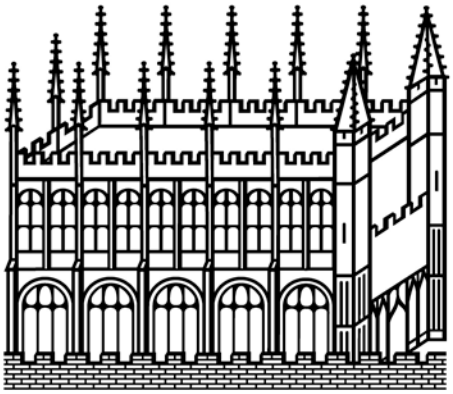

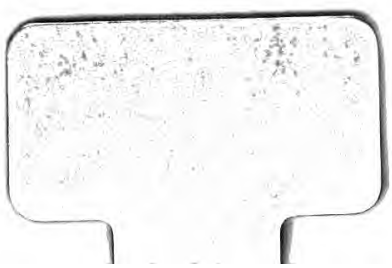

The Story of Salters' Hall.

Address

BY

PRINCIPAL GORDON, M.A.,

Of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester,

AT THE

Opening Meeting of the High Pavement Historical Society, Nottingham,

ON THE 31ST OCTOBER, 1902.

PRINTED FOR THE HIGH PAVEMENT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Nottingham:
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The Members of the High Pavement Historical Society desire to record their obligation to Principal Gordon alike for the Address delivered to them and for his permission to publish it in its present form.

The Story of Salters' Hall.

I HAVE to take you back to-night to the year 1719, four years after the first of the rebellions which were intended to put the Stuarts in the place of the Hanoverians upon the throne of this country. In the year 1719 two things happened which have had results. The one which I will mention first, was the publication of "Robinson Crusoe," by Daniel Defoe. I imagine that none of you have read "Robinson Crusoe." Well, if you have read "Robinson Crusoe," you will perhaps remember that the book contains one of the most remarkable endeavours to present Christianity to the heathen, with a full perception of the difficulties which Christianity would offer to the heathen and untaught mind; and, also, that it contains—wonderful to say, in that age, and from such a writer as Defoe, himself a strong Calvinist in his religious views—one of the most sympathetic presentations of the possibility of a *modus vivendi* in matters of religion between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. It is presented in the person of a Roman Catholic clergyman of the Order of St. Benedict, who explains his own views as regards the relation of his own Church and the Protestant Church, to the conversion of the heathen. Observe that Defoe's writings were always didactic; he did not write "Robinson Crusoe" as a mere story of adventure; he meant it to point a moral, to have an ethical value, and intended it also to have a religious meaning.

Now while Defoe was thus preaching the value of Christianity in itself, whatever its special form, in contradistinction to a wild, untrained, untaught, savage state of mind outside the Christian pale; at this very time Dissenters, alike in London and in the West of England, were accentuating their differences, bringing these to the front rather than their points of agreement, and leading the way to a rift in their body. So far they had been included together in the body of Protestant Dissenters. That was their

legal name, and that was their common standing. At Salters' Hall they came to a split. I have got to tell you the story of that split, and to estimate, if possible, its causes—its consequences I leave to speak for themselves. It is a somewhat complicated story, and I must ask your attention and your forbearance, if I go over some points which may lead, perhaps, to tedium in narration.

To begin with, I want to set clearly before your minds, and before your imaginations, if possible, three prominent figures. There is James Peirce, there is Thomas Bradbury, and there is John Shute, afterwards John Barrington Shute, and finally Viscount Barrington. All these three had belonged to the same section of the Protestant Dissenting body; they were all Independents in the first instance. James Peirce and Thomas Bradbury were both of them members, in London, of Stepney Meeting. I have seen the entries of their admissions. James Peirce was a ward of Matthew Mead, the Minister of Stepney Meeting; Bradbury was admitted somewhat later. Peirce was a Londoner, and Bradbury was a Yorkshireman.

James Peirce was, at that time, perhaps the most learned of the Dissenters, in many respects. He had gained for himself the position of being the champion of the Nonconformist cause against Conformity, by his "Vindication of the Dissenters" in reply to William Nicholls, the champion of the Anglican position. He had been minister at Cambridge, then at Newbury, and was now minister at Exeter.

Thomas Bradbury came to London from the North, and had filled some positions there; but in the North he had never met that recognition which he considered, and rightly considered, to be due to his remarkable talents. He was not a man of learning; he was, however, a man of humour, and of great popular ability. It had been his ambition to become the minister of the old Dissenting congregation in Newcastle-on-Tyne. He had been proposed as minister of the old congregation at Cross Street, Manchester. But it was not until he came to London that he really found a sphere

which was consonant with his own very just estimate of his striking abilities.

John Shute, of Hertfordshire birth, came of a family which had connections with Exeter, and represented the political side of "the Dissenting interest." He was, of course, a Whig politician; and I am not sure that he was quite free from some of the peculiarities which attached to the Whig politician, both in his century, and in the century through part of which we all have passed. But he was looked upon as the leading Parliamentary representative of Dissent; and, in such part as he took in the Salters' Hall matter, you must observe that he was actuated by political considerations. He desired to keep Dissenters at one, as a political force, as a force on behalf of the Hanoverian régime.

Now, in Peirce's "Vindication of the Dissenters" there is a chapter—I refer to the original edition, published in 1710—in which he vindicates the absolute orthodoxy of Protestant Dissenters; and says that, whereas in the Established Church it was well known that there were Socinians, in the Protestant Dissenting body there were none. He pledges himself to the fact; and I believe that he is right, unless we except possibly some obscure Independent and some few Baptist Congregations. Certainly some of the latter could not even at that date, 1710, be regarded as strictly Trinitarian in their orthodoxy, as we shall see later on. The second edition of his "Vindication"—the original was in Latin—was published in English in 1717; and in the second edition he omitted this chapter. Why did he do so? What had happened in the meantime?

A very important development had taken place in the meantime. In the year 1712 Dr. Samuel Clarke, who was the rector of St. James's, Piccadilly, otherwise St. James's, Westminster, published a work to which he gave the title, 'The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity.' Many of those who read it said, 'Well, it may be Scripture, or it may not; it certainly is not the doctrine of the Trinity.' That book exercised an extremely important influence. It created in the Church of England

what we might call a school of theologians, who were known as 'Clarkeans.' They did not admit that they were unorthodox. Clarke himself was sometimes described as a semi-Arian; but at any rate he endeavoured, on Scripture ground and in Scripture terms, so to state the doctrine of the Trinity that, though it might not agree with the ancient creeds, it should nevertheless be seen to agree with the Word of God. His work while, as I say, it created an Anglican school, which lasted on until quite the end of the eighteenth century, was even more operative, I think, amongst Dissenters. It was eagerly read by them. It was read by the young men in the Dissenting Academies, who were going to form the ministry of the future. It made them pause and think. It turned their attention away from the old scholastic definitions of the Trinity, to the Biblical data on which the doctrine of the Trinity was founded. And so it was that, in the intervening period between the publication of this book in 1712, and the publication of Pierce's second edition in 1717, it had become no longer possible for him to say that there were, among the Protestant Dissenters, no symptoms of unorthodoxy.

He might perhaps have repeated *literatim* what he had actually said; because the tendency was not to Socinianism at all. It was not to what we call, using the term in its most modern acceptation, Unitarianism. It was rather towards that to which your Chairman has referred under the denomination of Arianism. That tendency had exhibited itself in 1717 in London, and it had exhibited itself in Exeter. It had exhibited itself at Exeter in an Academy there; and I grieve to say (as there is a Baptist Minister present) that the students found that, while they were not allowed to talk their heresies in the Academy, they were welcomed at the house of the Baptist Minister in Exeter, and they might talk there as much heresy as they pleased. I am sorry that this was so, for the Baptist Minister's sake; but at the same time I am glad that there was a safety valve for these young spirits.

Things were in Exeter becoming uneasy. There was one of

the students—Hubert Stogdon by name—who, as early as 1716 was let into the ministry on easier terms than had hitherto been possible. He was not so much questioned about the Shorter Catechism—then an invariable standard of Protestant Dissenting orthodoxy—as about the Bible itself; and he managed, by confining himself to Scripture terms, to satisfy his licensers, and so got his license. By the year 1718 things had come almost to a crisis in Exeter. The Judge of Assize, whose name was Sir Robert Price, in charging the Jury, had referred to the spread of crime in the city. He had said that there was also a spirit of Arianism, and he thought there was some connection between the two. Moreover, in Peirce's own pulpit a neighbouring divine, who thought the Atonement was in danger, had created impressions unfavorable to the orthodoxy of Peirce himself.

Before I go any further, I must try to lay before your minds the condition of things as regards Church government amongst Dissenters in Exeter. The situation was very peculiar, and very complicated. The first Dissenting congregation in Exeter was a French Huguenot Church, and one cannot help thinking that some French manners and customs had influenced the special state of affairs which prevailed in Exeter at that date. You are aware, I daresay, that, in France, Presbyterianism is so organised that, in any given city, however many congregations there may be, there is but one Church Session (as we should call it). That is to say, each congregation has not its own separate and independent eldership, but there is a joint eldership for the whole city. You know, of course, from recent discussions between persons of different views of theology in Paris, how this arrangement gave absolute power over every congregation to the general majority.

Well now, in Exeter there were three meeting-houses, called Presbyterian—I lay stress upon the word "called." Two of these had congregations duly organised, with two pastors apiece. In each of these two meeting-houses the two pastors preached alternately; one in the morning, the other in the evening. The four took in

rotation the preaching in the third meeting-house, which had no pastors of its own. Then there was a self-elected body of thirteen. They are always called 'the Thirteen,' though in the lists of them I have never seen more than twelve names. The Thirteen acted very much as a finance committee. They had control of the financial administration; they collected stipends from all three meeting-houses, and apportioned them amongst the four ministers. They assumed, too, some of the powers which ordinarily belonged to the Eldership or Church Session. Then there were three smaller bodies, known as Proprietors, who owned the buildings; four Proprietors for each, I think. I do not know whether they were merely trustees; they are always spoken of as Proprietors; and I dare say it may be true that the buildings were, as used not infrequently to be the case in the older history of Dissent, proprietary chapels, not put in trust at all (partly for fear of the insecurity of toleration) but belonging to certain persons who might devote them to such purposes as they pleased.

Further, the four ministers were members of what was known as the Exeter Assembly. It was in point of fact a Devon and Cornwall Assembly, but the Cornish element at this time was no more than a minimum. This Assembly was not a Presbyterian body, it was a council of ministers which contained Presbyterians and Independents; the only section of the Three Denominations which was absolutely non-represented, and practically excluded, was the Baptist section. Baptist principles were not in high favour in that part of the world at that time; indeed, they were not in high favour in Dissenting circles generally at that time. This clerical body had no jurisdiction; but this it could do. If any member were displeasing to the majority of the members, on any matter, it could say, 'You had better not come here any more.' It certainly did administer certain funds; but at that date this was a very minor matter. There were larger funds then administered by the Thirteen, than were administered by the Assembly.

Now in 1718, early in the year, a deputation of the Thirteen

called upon Peirce and his colleagues, and asked them to preach on the Eternity of the Son of God. They did so; and the result was satisfactory. Later on in the same year, though Peirce's preaching was satisfactory at the time to his own people, the Assembly of Ministers wanted—I do not know whether it was satisfaction from Peirce—but at any rate they did want a more general satisfaction on this subject of the Trinity. Therefore, in the Assembly, in the month of September, it was proposed by one of the Exeter ministers, the youngest of them, John Lavington by name, who was supposed to be the most orthodox of the four, that each member of this Assembly should then and there make a declaration in regard to his views respecting the Trinity. They all did this except three: and Peirce was not one of the three, nor was any other Exeter minister. All the declarations but one—that of John Parr—were accepted; and then Lavington moved that it be recorded, as "the general sense" of the Assembly, "that there is but one living and true God, and that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are the one God." This was accepted, as "the general sense" of the Assembly.

The fact that the matter had been canvassed in the Assembly, and that the declarations had very considerably varied,—Parr had merely quoted a Scripture text without comment—re-excited the suspicion of the Thirteen. Lavington, they knew, was all right; so they did not go to him. But they went to the other three ministers, and said, 'We are not satisfied with a 'general sense,' we want to know what *your* sense is.' Not getting what they wanted, the Thirteen wrote up to London, addressing themselves to five ministers, including the four lecturers at Salters' Hall. To be a lecturer in London was, among Dissenters, something like being an Archdeacon, or a Dean, or it might almost be a Bishop, in the Anglican communion. There were two of these lectureships. The Merchants' Lecture had been started as far back as 1672, and there was a split from it at Salters' Hall. The feeling was that the general tone of the Merchants' Lecture was in favour of Independency, whereas the general tone of the Salters' Hall lecture was in favour of the

Presbyterian form of government. So the Thirteen sent to the Salters' Hall lecturers, among whom was Calamy, who had visited Exeter, and was probably then the most distinguished Nonconformist in London. These five London ministers, thus appealed to, put their heads together and decided not to touch the Exeter bother. They said, 'You had better apply to ministers in your own neighbourhood, who know your own particular circumstances better than we can be expected to do.' The Thirteen took the advice. They picked out seven West of England divines, and sent to ask them what was the proper thing to do in the situation which I have described. They got an answer from these seven divines on the 4th of March, and the answer deserves to be remembered. It was to the effect that denial of the "true and proper divinity" of Christ is a disqualifying error, and therefore warrants congregations in withdrawing from their ministers. That was their position; they did not go further.

This was on the 4th of March. On the next day the Thirteen, armed with this opinion, approached the four ministers. Lavington satisfied them at once. John Withers, the senior minister, after some hesitation, said he would subscribe the Nicene Creed. John Hallett, the next in seniority, declined to give an answer. Peirce parried the question. The matter of the elements and conditions of Dissenting orthodoxy, he told them, was now under consideration in London; and therefore he did not wish to give any answer in this individual case until it was known what the general body, meeting at Salters' Hall, had to say about the matter at large. The Thirteen were not satisfied. 'Salters' Hall!' said they, 'why, we understand that into that conference Baptists are admitted. We are not going to listen to the advice or decision of any body of ministers including Baptists.' Peirce by this time had got his back up, and he said he would not subscribe or make answer to anything that was not in Scripture. "If you ask me whether three and two make five," said he, "I will give you no answer, because it is not in the Bible,"—a rather foolish utterance, but that was the ground on which he took his stand. Next day the four Proprietors of James's

Meeting stepped in and shut him out of his pulpit, and Hallett with him. They were allowed on the following Sunday to preach at the third, the Little Meeting, by the Proprietors thereof; but on the 10th of March the three groups of Proprietors had a meeting together, and, "without consulting the people," refused to allow either of the recalcitrant divines to preach again in any of the three meeting-houses. Accordingly on the 15th of March they started a new meeting-house of their own; and that was the Exeter split.

Meanwhile many things had been going on in London, as Peirce was very well aware. The real man who, as early as January, had appealed to a general conference in London, was undoubtedly Peirce himself. He was in close relations with Barrington Shute. Peirce had been in the habit of going up to London periodically for literary purposes. Barrington Shute and he were friends, and worked together both in politics and religion; though, in religion, Shute ultimately went a good deal further than Peirce ever did. As regards Peirce, I should say that he was one of those men who are orthodox to a fault, so determined to be punctiliously exact that, in point of fact, they satisfy nobody. He was well able to draw extremely fine distinctions; but in his own mind I should say that unquestionably he was from first to last a man who kept tight and firm to the rigid limits of nicely formulated and precisely definite doctrine. He was not an emotional man; although they say that, in his prayers, he exhibited a fervour which rarely came out in his preaching.

Shute was a member of Bradbury's congregation. Now you know that the big man and the minister do not always get on as they should do. Hence it turned out that, in the Salters' Hall dispute, Bradbury was the visible head of one side, and Barrington Shute the invisible head of the other. Shute was anxious to secure the repeal of the Schism Act, passed under Queen Anne, and designed to produce the collapse of Dissent by shutting up all the Dissenting Schools and Academies. It had been intended, I presume, to follow it by an Act which should also shut their meeting-houses; and in some places the prospective legislation was actively

anticipated. In Ireland, particularly, persons full of faith and—no, not the other qualification—had gone about nailing up Dissenting meeting-houses.

Shute was anxious about the repeal of this unworthy Act. He wanted its unconditional repeal, like the good Independent that he then was; whereas there was a party among the Presbyterian members of the House of Commons, against repealing it without a test in regard to the Trinity. Shute defeated their amendment, and in order to facilitate the repeal, he was extremely anxious that there should be no appearance of any rift, doctrinal or otherwise, among the forces of Dissent. He therefore called together a body of laymen, who were in the habit of meeting as a committee to protect the civil rights of Dissenters. He put the matter before them. It was essential, in his view, that ministers whose opinions would carry weight, should be got to issue a joint manifesto, calculated to compose the Exeter difference.

The draft of such a manifesto, under the name of Advices for Peace, was drawn up by him, and passed by the select committee of laymen. These laymen were in fact the cream of the Dissenting magnates in London, including several members of Parliament. The Advices, if we strip them of their setting—the opening, exhortations, and so forth—really consisted in the statement of two points of principle. The first Advice was this: 'There are doctrinal errors which warrant congregations in withdrawing from their ministers.' Of course, you know what that meant. It meant stopping the supplies; and therefore, the ministers must go. But the position ot the minister was saved, by putting it the other way and allowing the congregation to go. The second Advice was this: 'The people are to determine what these errors are.' These were the two points of principle.

How would it have been if these two principles had been adopted and applied at Exeter? The people there had no opportunity of expressing their voice in the matter, in any constitutional way. It was the Thirteen first, and the Proprietors next,

who had acted on their own responsibility. The congregations, as such, had never been consulted. I am not prepared to say that the main result would have been entirely different. But it is certain that Hallett and Peirce carried away with them, from the three meeting-houses, enough people to fill a fourth. Had therefore the Advices been tendered in time to be put into action at Exeter, it is quite possible that there might have been a different issue. The people when called upon, might have said: 'No, we are not prepared to withdraw either from Hallett or from Peirce.'

The next step in Shute's programme was to get the Advices accepted by the most representative and influential body of ministers that could be got together. For this purpose the Baptists were convened to Salters' Hall, as well as the Presbyterians, so-called, and the Independents; both those in London and those in the neighbourhood of London, were convened; and I think we may fairly say that the total number of those who attended was one hundred and ten.

I have said "Presbyterians so-called"—and why? As soon as the Toleration Act was passed, when the year 1689 was young, there was raised in London a common Fund for Protestant Dissenters, always excluding Baptists. Protestant Dissenters, with the exception of Baptists, and of course Quakers, at that time formed a common body. Their ministers called themselves United Brethren. They formally agreed to drop the dividing names, Presbyterian and Congregational, and, if they called themselves anything, simply to call themselves United Brethren. But this was a ministerial compact, and nothing more; and ministerial compacts are not always carried out or backed up by congregations. This Union in London was followed elsewhere. In London it soon came to a rupture; elsewhere it was taken up when London dropped it, and it managed to endure for a very long period. In London it came to a rupture owing to the suspicions of the section formerly known as Presbyterians, in regard to Independent doctrine. The Independents were more free in doctrinal matters than the Presbyterians, or, to put it in another way, they went to further extremes. You could

find at that time, among the Independents, men whose orthodoxy was questioned. You could find also men whose Calvinistic orthodoxy was so high that it was spoken of as Antinomian. It was this last manifestation which had excited the suspicions of those who had formerly been counted as Presbyterians. They were very anxious to sharpen their controversial swords against the rise of what they deemed to be Antinomianism. Daniel Williams was put out of his lectureship by the Merchants because he had attacked Independents, on the ground of their alleged leaning to Antinomianism. Richard Baxter was living at the time when the fray began, and he had been eager to do the same thing; but John Howe kept him from publishing. Williams was a younger man, and a Welshman at that; and Williams was not to be kept down. The end was that Williams was put out of the lectureship. The common Fund ceased to be the common Fund. The Congregationalists raised a separate Fund of their own; and from that time the old Fund, originally a Fund simply for Protestant Dissent, came to be called the Presbyterian Fund. This rupture in London exhibited itself mainly in ecclesiastical matters. When it was a question of pleading before Kings, in the general interests of Dissent, the two sections came together. I daresay that was why the Baptists were at length brought in, to go with—shall we say their betters?—on deputations to the throne. For sometimes, when you quarrel with an old friend, you find it eases your feelings to have a third party in, at the subsequent meeting; so it happened, at any rate, that the Baptists found themselves in what was to them the unusual position of being recognised as part and parcel of London Protestant Dissent. The Dissenters would even take their addresses to their sovereign with a Baptist at their head, perhaps as a compromise. 'Better have a Baptist than a Presbyterian,' some might say. 'Anything is better than an Independent,' some might rejoin.

The inclusion of the Baptists in the Salters' Hall conference was important. In the year 1700, an event occurred which is very often forgotten. It is sometimes forgotten by Baptists, as well as by

those who are not Baptists. The General Baptist Assembly passed, in that year, the very first formal resolution of tolerance for heterodox opinions on the subject of the Trinity, that was ever passed by any Nonconformist union of congregations, in other words, by any co-operating religious body in this country. That was in the case of Matthew Caffyn. The General Baptist Assembly did not endorse Caffyn's views, but they tolerated them. They tolerated the man, opinions and all (and some of his opinions were queer enough) because he was a good, sound Christian man, who was doing good, sound Christian work. Consequently, there was among the Baptists a habit of tolerance, of some standing, which would incline them to go for conciliation, looking, perhaps, rather more at character and conduct, than at peculiarities of opinion, when giving advice as to what congregations had better do when ministers were suspected of heresy.

This threefold body came together, then, at Salters' Hall, and first met the very day following that on which the royal assent had ratified the repeal of the Schism Act. It was thus repealed on the 18th February, 1719, and they met on the 19th. Bradbury was at once to the front. He knew about the Advices, and he did not quite like the look of them. He therefore proposed that, instead of sending any Advices to Exeter, the ministers should pause, and fast, and pray, and then go to Exeter by deputation, and try to settle matters on the spot. This proposition was not well received. Whether the suggestion of fasting was not satisfactory, I do not know; whether it was thought the selecting of a deputation would be an invidious procedure, I cannot say. At any rate Bradbury was defeated, and the Advices were discussed. Though, as I have said, there were but two fundamental propositions embodied in these Advices, there was of course a good deal of introductory matter, tending to smooth their way, and the document was discussed clause by clause.

Bradbury saw clearly that the Advices were going to be carried. Consequently at the next meeting, which was on the 24th February, he proposed that to them should be prefixed a preamble. This pre-

amble was to set forth the doctrine of the Trinity, and Bradbury drew up a formulary with this view. Now it is rather singular that, when Bradbury was ordained, he made his confession, which was strongly Calvinistic, and strongly Trinitarian, in words of Scripture only. The confession is in print, and is a very remarkable effort. He managed—and for the most part legitimately, I think, from his point of view—by the aid of Scripture terms alone, to construct a very strongly Trinitarian and very strongly Calvinistic confession of faith. But in drafting the preamble he departed from this former usage of his; the defining terms were taken from the Shorter Catechism; and why? Clearly, I think, because now the question was how best to satisfy outsiders; and outsiders would say, 'Oh! Bible, yes; but everybody takes the Bible in his own sense. We want something which is pat and plain, the language of which is indisputable.'

On the production of this preamble came the first, and in point of fact the most memorable division; the division which has been described, and indeed satirised, by Sir Joseph Jekyll, who was present as a spectator on the occasion, when he said, "The Bible has it by four." Those who were against the preamble were asked to go up into the gallery, while the others remained on the floor of the house—the old way of making a division. Fifty-seven went up into the gallery to divide against Thomas Bradbury. Fifty-three remained on the floor with him. Consequently his preamble was lost by four votes. A good many stories are told about the amenities of the occasion. When some of the (let us hope, younger) divines, as they went up to the gallery, hissed Thomas Bradbury while he sat in his seat, he replied, "The seed of the serpent!" Very apt at retort was Tom Bradbury. When the Dissenting clergy went to their German King in their black cloaks, "Pray, gentlemen," sneered a courtier, "is this a funeral?" "Ay, my lord," replied brave Tom, "'tis the funeral of the Schism Act, and soon you will see the resurrection of liberty." However on this occasion, in regard to the preamble, he was beaten; and then they adjourned.

In the meantime both parties sent out whips. These do not seem to have had much effect; for the numbers were pretty much the same in the next division as in the first, though both sides tried to increase their strength. Nothing would induce Calamy to attend the conference. Watts also stayed away, and so did some other men of mark. On Bradbury's side, four Presbyterian divines whipped up their men in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, which was thought to be at stake; and others whipped up their men on behalf of the liberty of private expression. Both parties took the line of saving the Dissenting interest from division. The underlying interest, with the leaders, was politics on one side and orthodoxy, or presumed orthodoxy, on the other. When they met again, Bradbury proposed that the preamble be put once more; the Moderator ruled this out of order. Then he proposed that they should do as the Exeter ministers had done—call upon each minister present to make his own declaration. The Moderator, Joshua Oldfield, ruled this out of order also. Then Bradbury said he would call upon all those who were of his mind to follow him up into the gallery, and then and there subscribe the Anglican article in reference to the Trinity, and two answers of the Shorter Catechism. Sixty are said to have gone up with him, while fifty remained below. Among the sixty, there were no General Baptists, but of the Particular Baptists more favoured Bradbury than went against him.

While Bradbury, you observe, thus got a majority to subscribe the recognised formularies, this majority, you also observe, was quite out of order. Going up into the gallery was, in the circumstances, much the same as going out of the house. The Moderator had ruled that no business could be taken except what we may call the committee stage of the Advices, which were now under discussion. And out of the house, when the subscription was accomplished, Bradbury went with his sixty; who betook themselves to another hall, elected a Presbyterian as their moderator, continued their meetings, and passed the Advices, just as the others passed them; taking care, however, to prefix to them Bradbury's preamble.

out of the twelve Presbyterian trustees of Dr. Williams' foundations who voted at Salters' Hall, were subscribers with Bradbury. The younger Presbyterians, no doubt, did make up the majorities against Bradbury; though even here there were exceptions. Daniel Wilcox, Bradbury's henchman at the conference, was a Presbyterian.

What became of the younger non-subscribing Presbyterians? A considerable number of them did not remain in the Dissenting interest at all, but shortly afterwards conformed. One sees instances of the same proclivity, or something like it, at the present day. A man may say in effect: 'I am not going to pledge myself to this opinion or that—but I will sign the Anglican articles; because that does not pledge anybody to anything, beyond keeping the peace of the Church.' That seems to have been something like the position which some of these younger Presbyterian divines took. They were pressed into conformity by Hoadly, the great Whig Bishop, who let men in on easy terms of examination, satisfied with their momentary use of the goose-quill.

Again, it is clear that the split was by no means a decisive rupture between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism. Both parties stoutly and staunchly affirmed that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they held as clearly as they could the doctrine of the Trinity. What then was it on which the division really turned? It was, if I mistake not, a conflict precipitating a cleavage between the spirit of uniformity, and the spirit of liberty. I think we may fairly claim that the Salters' Hall rift worked out—I do not say, altogether well—but worked out so as to sever two tendencies, and let each do its best in making English history. Pass a few decades, reach the middle of the eighteenth century, and from that point, no doubt, those who were for doctrinal uniformity got the name of Independents, and those who were not for uniformity, but for tolerance and liberty, got the name of Presbyterians. If you ask me why this distinctive nomenclature, I am afraid I must answer that in this, as in sundry other cases, there was a close connection between ecclesiasticism and finance. The old Fund, the Fund in-

stituted for Dissenters in common, had come, we have seen, to be called the Presbyterian Fund. Thus the Presbyterian name attached itself to that position which, in theory at any rate, was of broader scope.

Yet the important thing to remember is that, whatever distinguishing name they then bore or afterwards acquired, both parties registered themselves at Salters' Hall as Independents, pure and simple. The Advices, to which all agreed, constitute a charter of Independency in its most unrestricted form. Of doctrinal truth and error, the people are to be judges. Each congregation is to say whether in their judgment the doctrine preached from the pulpit is, or is not, right and good. This judgment is to be subject to no exterior jurisdiction whatever. There is to be no constitutional appeal to any deliberative body outside. Each congregation is to be responsible to itself, under its Divine Head, for its own orthodoxy, or non-orthodoxy, as other men may choose to deem it.

For the moment, as it proved, these Advices made strongly for the Trinitarian cause. Congregations in the West of England followed the example of the Thirteen at Exeter, stranding all ministers whose orthodoxy was questioned. This was the effect at first; but of course when the time came for Unitarian notions, be they true or be they false, to gain ground in congregations, these congregations were authorised to take precisely the same action that had been taken by Trinitarians before them. They found their warrant in the Salters' Hall Advices, and made appeal to them as the charter of their liberties. So that, in a very real sense, the Salters' Hall rift issued in what proved to be an all-round charter of the liberties of congregations, whether Unitarian or Trinitarian.

It must, in estimating the full result of the break at Salters' Hall, be added that the general prosperity of Dissent from that time began very considerably to decline. Its unanimity was lost. People became suspicious of each other. In individual congregations a critical spirit was engendered. In the clerical unions—the only pledged tokens of the corporate unity of Dissent—the old bonds of

common association were relaxed. Old men looked anxiously at the future, as did Calamy. Young men, unless they had the enthusiasm of a Doddridge, began by writing tracts lamenting the decay of Dissent, and ended by slipping into the Establishment. We know what caused the revival of Dissent; but that is neither here nor there. We must remember that every gain in this world involves a loss, and in the order of Providence gain is compensation for loss.

Barrington Shute saw clearly that, as a political force, Dissent was no longer what it had been. The Viscount Barrington, of 1720, soon slackened in his hopes of the political future of the Dissenting interest; and in religion left Bradbury for Hunt, and Hunt for parish Church; still, as 'Papinian,' corresponding with Lardner on the latest developments of theological criticism. Many others saw that, as a religious force, Dissent was no longer what it once was, and what it had been hoped it might continue to be, in increasing measure—a spiritual power, battling with united strength against the common enemies of all morals and all religion. This, its true mission, was for a time impeded; this, its best work, was for a time delayed. But not for nought. The retarding check was the condition of the assimilation of a permanent boon. The rift at Salters' Hall will be for ever memorable; for then and there the future of the liberties of English Dissent was at high cost secured.

It may be as well to state that the Address here printed is simply the revised edition of a spoken utterance.