

**TOWNHEAD, THE HISTORY OF THE  
BAPTIST CHURCH, ASSEMBLING IN  
TOWNHEAD STREET, SHEFFIELD,  
FROM ITS COMMERCEMENT TO THE  
CLOSE OF ITS THIRD PASTORATE**

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Townhead, the History of the Baptist Church, Assembling in Townhead Street, Sheffield, from Its Commencement to the Close of Its Third Pastorate by Charles Larom

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**CHARLES LAROM**

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# TOWNHEAD.

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## The History of the Baptist Church,

ASSEMBLING IN

TOWNHEAD STREET, SHEFFIELD,

FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT TO THE CLOSE OF ITS THIRD  
PASTORATE.

By CHARLES LAROM.

"Consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following."  
48 Psal., 13 verse.

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1870.



## TOWNHEAD.

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THE verse from which we have placed a few words upon our title page, seems to intimate that church history may, perhaps should, be written ; since that, though not the only method, is the best by which it can be told to the coming generation. It intimates again that in each generation there will be lovers of the Saviour, who will eagerly enquire about His past affairs in this world ; that on every successive mighty wave of human population, the Vessel of the Church will be seen, like the ship upon the sea of Galilee, with Christ in it, and faithful ones about Him, trusting Him, calling upon Him in peril, adoring Him for deliverance, saying with astonishment, " What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him ? " knowing Him to be the Lord ; who will take deep interest in learning how the vessel sped before the great Captain of Salvation took *them* on board from sinking in the deep, what rocks were seen a-head, what storms beat on the vessel, and how those storms gave way for sunny skies and easy sail-

ing on the bosom of the quiet sea, and what peaceful high communion there was then on board? The verse suggests, moreover, that replies to such enquiries should not be partial or one-sided, but accurate and full. Hence the writer of Church history is to acquaint himself thoroughly with his theme. He is to "walk about Zion," to "go round about her," to "tell the towers thereof," to "mark well her bulwarks," to "consider her palaces." Had Milner and Mosheim, and other great writers of Church history, more fully complied with these directions, their volumes, though now much valued by the Christian Church, had been worthy a far higher appreciation. We profess no such ability as those writers possessed, nor do we attempt their task. We consider one only of Zion's communities. The individual Churches of Christ may be called The Palaces of the Christian Zion. "God is known in these palaces for a refuge." Each Church is a living temple—a "spiritual house," and is declared to be "for an habitation of God through the Spirit." We adventure a narrative of one of these.

We write this history in compliance with the request of friends. We purpose to do so with the endeavour to avoid dryness and prolixity, and with the hope that the record may be profitable, and not otherwise than pleasing to those who take a due interest in the affairs of God's kingdom in the world.



Had the design been to write of the Baptist *denomination* in Sheffield, then this history must have been enlarged to take in accounts of the two other Baptist Churches in the town—that one assembling in Portmahon, and that in Cemetery road—for both which Churches we cherish sincere Christian regard. The narrative must also have begun earlier, for we find from documents handed us by a friend, that a few pious individuals were formed into a Baptist Church in the year 1786, and met together for divine worship in a hired room in Milk street. During their continuance as a Church about fifty persons were baptized by ministers who were invited for that purpose. These were the Revds. Hopper, from Nottingham; Taylor, from Birmingham; Ashforth, from Gildersome; and Hindle, from Halifax. But the effort failed of success, and the account of it concludes thus:—"The Baptist Church being composed of poor people only, and but few in all, and labouring under many and great difficulties, and not being able to carry on divine worship creditably, gave up public preaching in September, 1793, having struggled with troubles more than seven years, and never having a pastor ordained over it." These poor people may be thought to have been imprudent in entering upon, to them, so expensive an effort; yet we would not otherwise than admire their zeal in thus endeavouring practically to sustain their views of Church constitution, and the ordinances of

the Saviour, wishing only they had had grace and energy enough to carry out their purpose to its completion.

The Particular Baptist Church of Jesus Christ, assembling in Townhead chapel, was formed in the year one thousand eight hundred and four, at a period therefore when persecution for conscience sake in this country was dying out, and when the great religious movements for the advancement of Christianity in the world, that have distinguished the present century, were starting into being—movements that have been of immense service to the kingdom of God, and in which, as its history will show, this Church has, with more or less of continued zeal, co-operated.

Twelve persons, of whom two only were women, gave themselves to each other in solemn covenant and Christian fellowship, to wait regularly upon God in public worship, to aid in the extension of His kingdom among men, and to live in obedience to the ordinances and laws of Christ. Their names were: Isaac Senior, William Downs, John Bright, William Bright, James Crawshaw, Samuel Lawrence, Sarah Newton, William Heald, Frances Heald, Joseph Drabble, Edward Periggo, Thomas Taylor. With a view to this arrangement, these persons had been dismissed from a small Baptist Church at Masborough, a village six miles distant, of which Church they had been members, going thither once a month to com-

munne at the Lord's table, and at other times worshipping with Churches in their own town of other denominations, all whose consistent members they loved for Christ's sake. But now, without animosity to any, they were concerned to have in Sheffield a Christian Church, formed fully, in their view, on the plan and principles of the gospel, and so they constituted themselves into such a community with much prayer and meekness, and in the fear of God. Their doctrinal views, expressed in their Church book, in which they inserted their names, being those of moderate Calvinism; and the positive institutions of Christ being, in their view, chiefly two—baptism and the Lord's supper: the former capable of being administered by immersion only; and neither of them to be given to any but those who make a credible profession of faith in the divine Saviour. They found among themselves a pastor in the person of William Downs, who was adapted to their then present circumstances, and who was unanimously chosen to the pastoral office. Mr. Downs was ordained in 1805. Shortly after this, Isaac Senior, John Bright, Willtam Bright and Richard Atkinson were constituted deacons. This was a small beginning that some might be disposed to despise, yet in number the little Church was equal to the company which first celebrated, and that under His own immediate presidency, the sacred memorial service of the Redeemer's death. These people hoped by their Chris-