

Bourn was chosen in conjunction with Mr. Pickard, who had been minister in the Digbeth meeting since 1715.

Of this Samuel Bourn, who was one of three generations of preachers, . . . John Angel James writes rather disparagingly, regarding the record of him which has been handed down as evidencing a serious laxity of conscientiousness in dealing with such matters as were then tending to division in the Presbyterians, that is to say Arian from Trinitarian. It was probably in great measure due to this laxity of doctrine that troubles came between ministers and congregations. It is, however, certain that controversy arose at this period about the person of Christ. What think ye of Christ? Whose Son was He? Amongst those affected or infected with Arian views were the ministers of the "Old Meeting" and the "New Meeting." The minority of the congregations holding these Arian views as obnoxious withdrew and in 1747 built the first meeting-house on the site in Carr's Lane, where they are recorded as describing themselves as a true Calvinistic Church.

Independent Nonconformity in Birmingham, 1747 to 1802.

The first meeting-house in Carr's Lane was a humble place. It cost only £700. It was in a narrow lane hidden from observation by a row of humble tenements; access to the meeting-house being obtained through a gateway so narrow that Hutton says, "The residence of Divine light is totally eclipsed by about forty families of paupers which amply furnish the congregation with noise, smoke, dirt and dispute. If the place itself is the road to heaven, a stranger would imagine that the entrance thereto led to somewhat worse."

The first minister in Carr's Lane meeting-house was Rev. Jervis Wild, who came from the old Castlegate meeting-house, Nottingham, in 1749, of whom Hutton records that the sermon he heard him preach in Carr's Lane he heard preached in Nottingham five months before. This Mr. Wild must have been a man of rare virtue, for he sold his private estate to pay the debts of his father, and lived a frugal life on £35 a year drawn from a dissenting pulpit (Hutton's Recollections).

Wild died in 1766 and was interred in Carr's Lane meeting-house.

William Hutton, the well-known historian of Birmingham, was a member of the Society at Carr's Lane and an original trustee of Scott's Trust. His wife, daughter Catherine, and one son, were also members. Catherine later on was attracted by Dr. Priestley, who had become the minister of "New Meeting," and in stating this to a friend she writes that she was sick of Calvinistic monotony and nonsense (1780). Here, however, is an opinion more to her credit which she quotes and endorses—"If a Calvinist so holds his opinions as to lead a holy life, and an Arminian so holds his as to preserve a humble spirit, I believe the principles of neither will exclude him from the kingdom of heaven." Though Catherine returned to the Arian fold, her father, William Hutton, remained at Carr's Lane until his death, which took place during the ministry of John Angel James.

Though doctrinal differences between these two sections were perpetuated, the state of actual quarrel seems to have passed away, for in 1750 when a minister was to be ordained to the ministry in Carr's Lane, owing to the smallness of the latter chapel, the ordination services were held in the "New Meeting" adjoining, and it is said that the Rev. Samuel Bourn, of whom previous mention has been made, was so moved by the Evangelical sentiments set forth in the confession of faith that he was with difficulty restrained by his friends from controversy.

In the year 1745 Wesley visited Birmingham and preached to a small society of dissenters who met for worship in the house occupied by a Mr.