

# Transactions

of the

## Baptist Historical Society.

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### Salisbury and Tiverton about 1630.

Salisbury Municipal Records communicated by Mr. Arthur Tucker of Stockbridge; Tiverton churchwardens' accounts printed by the Rev. H. B. Case; State Paper Calendars.

**B**APTIST Churches were known to exist at London, Lincoln, Coventry, Salisbury, and Tiverton by 1626, but the names of members there were sadly lacking till local antiquarians this century began to explore their archives. Two sets of returns are now available, and we begin with the city of Salisbury.

1630. July 12. At the monthly meeting of this city Francis Clarke presented. forfeited xii<sup>s</sup> to the poore, for evry Sunday xii<sup>d</sup> which is ordered to be levied.

1630. Dec 13. St Thomas. They presented . . . for the lycke offense and the wyffe of Richard Sloo.

1631. Dec 5. The Churchwardens and Overseers of St Thomas do present Francis Clarke & his wyffe to be Popish Recusants which have not been at their p[ar]ish Church but hath absented themselves for the space of three months last past.

Also they do present Jone Slowe wyffe of Richard

Slowe, Abraham Cade & his wyffe and James Oakeford to be Anabaptists, recusants and that they have byn absent from the p[ar]ish Church is one month last past.

1632 Isaac Sloe an Anabaptist recusant for the lyke Abraham Cade and his wyfe the lyke.

1632 July 2, Sep 3, Oct. 8, Nov 12. 1633 Jan 4 Feb 4 [Same entries as for Dec 5, with the addition of Elizabeth Champion as popish recusant.].

1634 Jan 5. Richard Granger for being absent from the Church on a Sabbath day xijd.

1649 Will Rose, [blank] Taylyor & Isaac Williams was presented on Oathe for absenting themselves from Parish church the last Lord's day being 13th Jany. 1649.

1655 Laurance Tippitt one of ye overseers of Martin's p[ar]ishe.

In one parish alone we find three Anabaptist families, not to be driven to church by steady fining. St. Edmund's has not yielded any results as yet. As to St. Martin's, the fact that Tippitt was in power there may possibly account for no presentment being discovered; for an extract from the Porton Baptist Church book, referred to in our first issue, links him with this movement:—

1656. Lawrence Tippitt of Sarum who was a member with us when we stood related to the Church at North Bradley—who for refusing to sit down with us, and for maintaining of destructive principles—viz That it is sin for Christians to make it their practice to go so far to their Church Meetings as we do—and others of like nature—was exhorted to his duty, but he, refusing to hear the Church, both by the consent of the Church at North Bradley and ourselves met at Stoverd as a Church of Christ upon the 19th day of the 8th month, was withdrawn from as a disorderly member, and by the appointment of the Church, Brother Thomas Long

and Bro John Andrews were sent to declare it to him.

These Salisbury records deserve comparison with similar entries by the churchwardens at Tiverton, published in 1907 by the Rev. H. B. Case, from whose book they are reproduced:

An accompte of moneys levied on the Anabaptists for their absence from Church in the year 1628.

Imprimis at Easter Sessions, the 26th of April.

Charity Berry 4s.

Of Israel Cockram 4s., of John Tucker the same tyme 4s., of John Tucker, the 8th of June, 4s.

Of Israel Cockram and Charity Berry the xxxth of September, 8s.

Of Richard Berry, the xxist of January, for himself and his wife 8s.

Of John Tucker the same daye for himself and his wife 8s.

Of Israel Tappe, for husbände, the same day 4s.

Of James Tappe, the xivth of March, for himself and wife 8s.

Of Richard Berry, the same time, for himself and his wife 8s.

Of John Skibbon, the same tyme 2s.

The sum total of the Anabaptists is £3. 10s.

Paid out for charges at three several times about the Anabaptists, and for fetching the process for Mr. Webber 4s. 4d.

Paid Abraham Boobier for serving of Mr. Webber, of Cove, with process to appear before the Bishop 3d.

Paid John Gollings and John Stooke by Mr. Maior's orders for taking notice of the Anabaptists' absence from Church.

These entries correspond with the signatures to the letter to Amsterdam about 1631, misread by Professor Müller as "James Joppe, and Isabel, his Wife," but

evidently James Toppe and Israel his wife. Mr. Case wished he knew more about John Fort, of Tiverton, Devon, Clothier, who appeared before the High Commission in 1640. The State Papers are even more illuminating than he hoped.

The Toppe family was of some importance in the West Country. John Toppe of Stockton, on the Wylye some ten miles above Salisbury, was High Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1631. A report in May to the Privy Council complained that he was oppressing the clergy. It is evident that there were strained relations at the cathedral city, for the Recorder there, acting on a resolution of the vestry that a certain stained glass window was idolatrous, went and broke it with his staff. Such news would show that the country gentry were against the growing ritualism of Laud and his party, but would not suggest actual separation.

On 7 August, 1639, a petition was presented to Laud by our Anabaptist friend, James Toppe of Tiverton. He had long been a prisoner in Newgate, London, and had often petitioned for release; he now offered bail. The petition was referred to see whether the state of the case at Tiverton would admit of bail, and whether Toppe was willing to take the oath—a matter peculiarly agitated among Anabaptists, as is shown by the correspondence of Salisbury and Tiverton with Amsterdam.

Meanwhile another case occupied the High Commission. On 17 October, 1639, John Fort of Tiverton, clothier, was fined £500 for anabaptism. Such a sum would suggest an extremely wealthy man, for the whole town was only assessed at £130 for ship-money in 1635. But the High Commission was in the habit of naming large sums, and then really settling for much less. So on 6 February, 1640, his counsel was allowed to put in a defence and move on next "mitigation day" for some reduction; and on 22 February it was decided to return the fine. The incident closed rather

ambiguously on 20 July with a certificate of the fine after respite. The interest of the case lies in the curious fact that there was some uncertainty in the name of the defendant. Though it was thrice given as Fort, it is once queried as Topp by the modern editor. This query is quite independent of our knowledge about James Toppe of Tiverton, and suggests some connection of the two men.

James seems to have been released on bail as a result of the report ordered 7 August, 1639, for on 30 January, 1640, it was resolved to attach him if he did not appear before the High Commission by the last day of term—about the end of March. Nothing more is recorded of either case, and the High Commission was abolished soon after the Long Parliament met in November.

Whereas Dr. Evans of Scarborough fifty years ago first tapped the Amsterdam records, and showed us churches at Salisbury and Tiverton, we now have local records from these two places with the names of several "Anabaptists" about 1630. And we have one family which appears to link the two places, and was important enough to attract the attention of the Privy Council and the High Commission.

From this period we can look a generation earlier and a generation later. There was an English colony in Amsterdam before 1600, and in 1881 a monograph was presented to the Royal Academy of Science there, by J. G. de Hoop Scheffer, concerning these "Brownists." Fortunately he appended a list of 118 marriage entries relating to these people, between 1598 and 1617, extracted from the city records. Mr. Crippen of the Congregational Historical Society has been good enough to labour on this list and try to identify many of the places, publishing the results in September, 1905. The entries relating to the West begin on 22 April, 1600, with the marriages of John and William Huntley,

of Bradford, whose mother was still in England, and whose father was named Thomas. There are entries relating to Devon, Somerset, Gloucester, Wilts, and Hants; Wilts. and Somerset being most strongly represented. When we plot down the towns on a map, we are struck with the group—Bradford (four times), Hilperton (twice), Westbury, Warminster, Frome, Selwood, Beckington. This little area, twelve miles by four, was evidently the centre of gravity; and here we have the focus of that West-country church which so long remained nebulous, twenty miles up river from Salisbury, past John Toppe's home.

But this is the district Thomas Collier afterwards made his headquarters, settling at North Bradley and Trowbridge. Though in 1600 the district was only Separatist, it was strongly Baptist when we get clear light on it in Commonwealth times. The advance was probably due to John Smyth's book, taking up the position that Infant Baptism, signing the cross on the forehead of a child, was the Mark of the Beast foretold in the Revelation: that book is known to have circulated widely in the west. Salisbury is on the highroad from Southampton to this group of towns, and Salisbury by 1620 was the home of a Baptist church corresponding with Amsterdam. It was what is afterwards called General Baptist.

All this Wilts and Somerset area was worked over, as the article on the Porton church in our first issue showed; and the Confession of 1656 signed by Collier indicates that there had been a trend towards Calvinism. On the other hand, Wrington appears thrice in the Amsterdam marriage list, and the General Baptist Assembly records show John Amery upholding Baptist principles there two generations later.

There is also one unexpected touch. The Salisbury list of 1631 reports James Oakeford as an Anabaptist. Twenty years later, Daniel Cawdry mentioned Ock-

ford as a Sabbatarian Baptist author. Do the Oakefords and Tippetts of to-day, who not long ago had representatives in our ministry, preserve any evidence or traditions about their ancestors?

The Amsterdam registers show the following emigrants from Salisbury: Charles Thicels marrying on 5 November, 1611, Jane Charter on 14 April, 1612, Edward Amlin the same month, Anna Sanders (widow of Simon Willes) on 31 August, 1613, Charles Shirkley (widower of Merial Huttend) on 14 January 1617; while Ralph Amlin or Hamelyn of Fordingbridge, who married Anna Lyle 29 November 1609, seems to belong to the same group. Yet neither in these nor in any others is any point of contact with the 1631 group to be discerned. There is now, however, plenty of material inviting further enquiry, and pointing out the parishes where the registers may repay search.

**The Quarrell Family** did good work for Wales in the seventeenth century, being closely allied with the evangelization directed by Vavasor Powell. Paul lived at Presteigne in Radnor, and his widow married Powell, dying before 1658. By December of that year Powell had married again, and in making his will left a bequest to Timothy Quarrell. James worked near Salop, and in 1653 joined in repelling slanders on Powell by a book called *Examen et Purgamen Vavasoris*. Palmer thought that he founded the Congregational Church at Shrewsbury in the Commonwealth period; the verifiable fact is that in 1672 he obtained a licence to preach there at the King's Head, but three years earlier he had been at Bolas Magna. Calamy had heard of him at Oswestry, though knowing he was not ejected thence. And the researches of Dr. Shaw do not reveal him as holding any benefice at all, though he may well have been one of the itinerant ministers. A fourth member of the family was Thomas Quarrell, who worked in the Monmouth district. In 1669 he was living at Whitchurch, probably the village close to Llandaff, but possibly one in Monmouth. Thence he and John Powell evangelized a wide circuit, Llanedern, Eglwysilan, Marshfield, Bedwas and Bedwelty being all named. A letter to them and Walter Prosser written by Vavasor Powell in 1670 has been published in facsimile by the Rev. David Davies.