

The Baptists of Liverpool in the 17th Century.

IT would appear that the earliest record of Baptists in Liverpool is found in the report of Bishop Hall of Chester, who in 1661 noted their meeting there as well as in Warrington and Frodsham. Consequently several prosecutions followed, and at Wigan in December, 1661, we find that Major Henry Jones and his wife Elinor, Master Nickson, John Tempest, Arthur Hutton, each with their spouses, and Thomas Christian were "presented" for being Anabaptists, or leaving their children "unchristened."

In the Lambeth Palace MSS. No. 639 we read that "Baptists met in Leverpoole over 30 years previously to 1700," and in reply to Archbishop Sheldon's enquiry in 1669 the Bishop of Chester reported "a conventicle frequently kept at the house of Mr. Jones, an old Parliament Officer. It is surmised they are about 30 or 40 in number, most of them with property, all of them Anabaptists." Several of them are stated to be mariners. The description "mariner" has now a different meaning from that of former days. In Liverpool, at all events, it then implied a merchant-shipowner or one who navigated a vessel of which he was the owner, or at least part owner.

In 1670 we find that Arthur Hutton is closely associated with Major H. Jones in Baptist leadership, and in 1673 Thomas Christian, who had married Elizabeth Nickson, obtained a licence for worship. But before 1690 the above-named worthies appear to have passed on, and families of the names of Beanes, Seacome, and Hunter now become prominent in the Baptist church.

Daniel Beanes had some time before established a successful practice as an apothecary in a house of long standing in Everton Village. It has been surmised that he was of Dutch origin, and that his surname was a corruption of "Boon." But the name Beanes appears on the Roll of Liverpool ratepayers of that date, and was known in South Lancashire at least one hundred years previously. That he had attained some reputation prior to 1690 is attested by the recurrence of his name in local assessments. Also some corroborative evidence is afforded in a statement found in a Welsh biography. It is there stated that about the year 1685 a young Oxford student named Philip James, who had

been baptised at Swansea, came as apprentice to Daniel Beanes, who after the fashion of the time had translated his name into Latin, and was known as Fabyus. The young apprentice married the daughter of Lawrence Spooner, a Baptist minister, and became for thirty years pastor of Hemel Hempsted Baptist Church.

In Stonehouse's *History of Everton* there is a reference to a sister of Daniel Fabius (as the name was generally spelt) named Mary, who was associated with him, and did much good in the neighbourhood "in spite of the persecution of Nonconformists." Her name is among the copyholders of land in Everton, and her brother's name appears on the Rental roll in 1692, and subsequent years. That the family had associations with London is evident, since they owned houses near Hoxton Church situate in Fanshaw Street between Pitfield Street and Hoxton Street.

In Hillcliffe Burial Ground are stones to the memory of Hannah Fabius, died June 7th, 1702, and Ebenezer Fabius, 1691, and doubtless these were of the family.

On the passing of the Toleration Act, Fabius obtained a certificate of enrolment which was renewed for several years. The form was as follows:—

"This is to certify to whom it may concern that the house of Daniell Fabius or Beanes Practizer in Physick situate in Everton in the county Lancaster now certified at this Court for a meeting-place for a congregation of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England for exercise of their religious worship, by this Court and Council as such pursuant to an Act of Parliament in the case made and provided.

"Given under my hand in open Court of Quarter Sessions holden at Manchester this twenty fifth day of July in the tenth year of King William's reign and in the year of our Lord 1700
(sgd) George Kenyon

Clerk of the peace of the County Palatine."

The successful "chymist" (as he styled himself) had educated one of his sons for the medical profession and he also obtained a local practice of some reputation. In the Diary of a well-known Roman Catholic Squire, Nicholas Blundell, published in the Crosby Records, it appears that he was accustomed to consult this Baptist pioneer, and on occasion sent him a present of twenty-two adders!

At the time of his death in 1705 his family consisted of two sons, Alexander and Daniel, and two married daughters, Dorothy and Elizabeth. Only a few months prior to his passing he had executed his Will "under hand and seal," as required when dealing with freehold and copyhold properties. After more than 220 years the original Will, engrossed on both sides of an

excellent wove sheet of blue paper, remains in as perfect condition as when proved in the Chester Ecclesiastical Registry on the 25th October, 1705, and the black ink is not faded in the least. The Will reads, "In the name of God Amen this 22nd day of July 1705 I Daniel Fabyus als Beanes of Everton in the county of Lancaster Chymist do make and order this my last Will and Testament." After directions as to burial and payment of debts he directed sale of his household goods and chattels (the goods in his best chamber in his dwelling-house excepted), the payment of sums to his daughters Dorothy and Elizabeth "being the remainder and in full of their marriage portions."

His two tenements, the one in Walton-super-montem in the said County, and the other in Everton aforesaid, called Hangfield, he devised to his son Alexander, charged with above payments if his personal estate should "fall short."

Then follows the devise which is of special interest to Baptists. "As to my messuages and tenement lands and closes of ground whereof and wherein I have a customary inheritance situate lying and being in Everton aforesaid I will that my dear and loving wife Hannah shall hold the same during the term of her natural life pursuant to a surrender by me heretofore thereof to that purpose now done And after the decease of my said wife I will that my son Daniel have hold and enjoy the premises with the appurtenances to him his heirs and assigns for ever And as for and concerning that my message and tenement with the appurtenances situate lying and being in West Derby in the said County called Sandham (?) my Will is and I do hereby give devise and bequeath the said last mentioned message and tenement and all my interest therein . . . to my son Daniel Fabyus als Beanes subject to the yearly payment of five pounds to my said wife during her natural life And as to for and concerning the message tenements with the appurtenances whereof and wherein I have a title or interest in part thereof situate & lying at or near Fanshaw Street or elsewhere in or near the city of London or suburbs thereof I will give devise and bequeath the same to my said sons and daughters Daniel Alexander Dorothy & Elizabeth their heirs and assigns for ever."

After a provision in the event of the daughters dying without issue capable of inheriting and clauses as to the construction of the Will, the testator nominated his "Loving brother-in-law Isaac Gooden and his loving friends Thomas Strange & Ralph Seacome Executors."

Above the seal is written "Daniel Fabyus als Beanes," and beside it in curious handwriting "Daniel Fabius." The Will is

attested by Benjamin Millington, John Livesley, and another, a most artistic signature, which may be "H. Wolstenholme."

Thomas Strange and the other Baptist stalwart Ralph Seacome, proved the Will, which paved the way for the immediate gift of the plot at Everton by Mrs. Hannah Fabius and her son Daniel the doctor for a burial ground, on which Fabius Chapel now stands.

O. KNOTT.

(To be continued.)