

Joseph Kinghorn and His Friends.

OF the interesting series of marble tablets that line the walls of St. Mary's, Norwich, four bear the name of Theobald, commemorating a family very closely connected with the church during the pastorate of Joseph Kinghorn.

John Theobald had been associated with the General Baptist Church at Great Yarmouth. He settled in Norwich and became a member of St. Mary's in 1782. Only a month after joining the Church he was nominated as a "proper candidate" for the office of deacon, but he was not elected, the successful candidate being Thomas Hawkins, who held office till his death fifty-nine years later. John Theobald died in 1799, but at least three of his five children, Ann, Sarah and Thomas, had a connection with the church, extending beyond Kinghorn's long ministry. Ann and Sarah were baptised by Kinghorn in 1794 and both remained in membership until they died respectively sixty-eight and sixty-one years after.

Ann became the wife of Jeremiah Colman, one of the founders of the firm of J. & J. Colman. For many years they lived at Stoke Mills, about five miles from Norwich, driving up to St. Mary's with a horse and gig which they stabled at the nearby "Woolpack Inn." Jeremiah Colman was a deacon of St. Mary's for nineteen years. In 1845 he was Sheriff and, in the following year, Mayor of Norwich, when he caused some stir by refusing to nominate an Anglican Chaplain, stating bluntly, "The Reverend William Brock is my Chaplain."

Thomas Theobald was a textile manufacturer and in the course of his business visited Germany many times, sailing to Antwerp, where he used to buy a carriage in which he travelled to Leipsic to buy and take orders at the Fair. On the completion of his tour he sold the carriage and sailed home. Printed below are three interesting letters written by Kinghorn to Thomas Theobald when he was in Germany in 1797.

These letters are in the possession of Mr. Basil Cozens Hardy, a great-grandson of their recipient, and are printed by his permission. It is interesting to note that while the name of Theobald has practically disappeared in Norwich, very many prominent citizens trace their descent from the marriage of John Theobald's daughters and granddaughters. During the present century his descendants have supplied to Norwich a Mayor and Mayoress, a Lord Mayor, two Lady Mayoresses, and two Sheriffs, and to Norfolk two High Sheriffs and a Lord Lieutenant, while the first Lord Cozens Hardy was his great-grand-

son. Several of his descendants are still active members of the Churches at St. Mary's and Princes Street.

The letters mention several interesting characters. William Hawkins, son of the deacon Thomas Hawkins, afterwards graduated at Edinburgh and entered the Baptist ministry. He held a pastorate at Derby, where he used to take students for a preliminary course of study before they entered Stepney College. One of these was William Brock, who became Kinghorn's successor. Brock spent six months at Derby and always acknowledged a debt of gratitude for the help and guidance he received from Rev. William Hawkins.

Dr. Enfield was minister of the Unitarian Church at the Octagon—always an intellectual centre. He founded a select debating club—the “Speculative Society”—of which Kinghorn was a member, as was William Taylor, the celebrated man of letters, who is mentioned here as giving Kinghorn lessons in German. He later taught this language to George Borrow, who devoted a chapter of *Lavengro* to describing a conversation with him.

Winterbotham was pastor of the Baptist Church now meeting in George Street in Plymouth, and had suffered four years' imprisonment for using seditious language in two “political” sermons preached there.

We are accustomed to think of Joseph Kinghorn as an austere and solitary man; a scholar wedded to his books; a champion of Calvinist conservatism; a saint aloof from the world. It is very pleasant to meet him in such a human vein—pleading the cause of English beauty, up to any mischief Sally set him upon, and highly diverted at a young member of his congregation losing 6d. at cards.

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Joseph Kinghorn at Norwich to Thomas Theobald at Leipsic, 5th October, 1797 :

“I am glad and thankful to a kind Providence that you have arrived safe in Germany. I did not expect your passage would have been so rough—your reflections when on the Turbulent deep were very proper and I hope accompanied with additional ones of resignation and hope in the father of Mercies, had it been his will that you should have terminated your life at that time.

“I observed your remarks on foreigners and their customs. You act thoroughly on the maxim that every man is to be accounted a rogue until he be approved honest. I fear this is too necessary abroad, alas, we too often find imposters at home, tho' I have, I own, a higher idea of English honour in trade, than of that of some other nations.

"I was highly diverted at your playing at Cards and losing sixpence—not that I like cards—I hate them. They are a dead stop on rationality, pleasantry and everything else that is important. But your situation is unavoidable and I imagine must be tolerated as an evil that cannot be cured. But at home in England I hope I shall never see you the companion of the card table.

"You have been visiting a great Mercht. House—Does wealth in Germany operate more in happiness than here in England?

"I have little news for you—your father and mother are at Yarmouth, your brother and sisters all desire their love to you and impressed it on me in a manner you will feel tho' I cannot describe. Sally and Nancy have been here. They have seen part of the above. You would have been interested indeed had you seen us reading it. Nancy had come first at the table and I was sitting at the side with a vol. of Pooles Synopsis before me seeing what was said and considering what I should say (Wedy. Night Remarks), and Nancy at my elbow turning over the leaves of a vol. of Neals histy. of the Puritans, the conversation naturally turned on you after I had finished and it was remarked that tho' you might generally know all our motions and probably then thought we were making preparations for going to Meet^s. (half past 6 o'clock) yet you would scarcely think of looking for us 3 where we were then. Old Mrs. Barnard desired her kind love to you by the first letter that was written. I imagine Norwich news is all of importance to you. Mr. Goodrum is better—Mr. S. Wilkin very ill—going to Bath to-morrow—I think his time on earth very short. I have for the present taken another pupil, Wm. Hawkins."

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Joseph Kinghorn at Norwich to Thomas Theobald at Hamburg, November 20th, 1797 :

"As to the state of things here I can say little. Trade I know not, you will hear that from other quarters, but I doubt there is but little. As to other things, your family are all well—This is a Capital matter for your comfort. Death has been making many inroads among us. Old Mr. Cubit is gone. Mr. W. Durant who is a relation somehow to your family is also departed. Mr. Cubit the Woolcomber in St. Mary's is dead; Mrs. Colby a relation of Mr. Harper; Mr. Spilman of Yarmouth is no more; and Dr. Enfield after the short illness of 8 days was called away, aged 56: all these nearly together. The last I knew the best and I esteemed him and lament him.

"Bro. Wm. goes to Lon^d. this week. And there is some-

thing said about you of a dubious nature—a lady wrote to your sister Sally last week and sent her love to you by the first letter! So take care lest the foreign fair take too much possession of your heart—pray leave a little corner for a fair friend here at home—who asks nothing and therefore is the more deserving—who does not stipulate for love in return but merely sends hers to you. I am in this case a disinterested pleader for pining beauty, for I know not who she is. And the more earnest for our countrywoman because foreign manners are more apt to steal away the heart by admitting actual contact—kissing is always infectious work tho' it be only hands.

"I am learning German. Made some little enquiry about the nature of the language from Mr. W. Taylor of Livery Street, who ans^d. all my questions, encouraged my design and was so kind as to offer to instruct me twice a week; this is to me a great thing.

"Yesterday I pleaded the cause of the Parsons in an annual Sermon for the Bapts. fund—'The Scripture saith thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' 1 Tim. 5: 18. and we had a capital collection.

"Respects from our dinner table—Mrs. D. and Mr. Y."

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Joseph Kinghorn to Thomas Theobald, January 6th, 1798.

"I am sorry that what I said in my last which originated in a fact and was not a mere joke upon you, seems to have excited a curiosity—a surprise—perhaps an anxiety beyond what was intended or wished. You will easily see I refer to my petition in behalf of English beauty. Your sister Sarah bid me tell you of it without mentioning names—I promised to do any piece of Mischief she set me upon, and thought no more of it—it struck me it would do very well to dress a little, and so I put it in the form you see. Ann came down about the time, I read it to her—she laughed, the letter was sent and no more was thought of it. But when yours came it surprised me and rather vexed me that I had for so foolish a thing excited any anxiety in your mind. 'Tis true as you suppose I wrote it in a giggle—you laughed when you wrote about it—yet I am sure by your manner it operated in your mind more than I wished. I believe Ann will explain the whole on the other side.

"Probably you know Mr. Winterbotham is now in Norwich. You will naturally ask what kind of man he is—I know not how to give you an idea of him—he is a fat MAN with a little wife whom he married since his liberation. He has preached for me and preaches again on Lord's day, much to general satisfaction."

C. B. JEWSON.