John Taylor (1831-1901) and the Records of Northants Nonconformity

JOHN TAYLOR was born in Gold Street, Northampton, on April 13, 1831. His father John, and his uncle Thomas, operated a wide-ranging business from a shop in Gold Street, and sold their wares, everything from books to patent medicines, throughout the county and in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire as well.

John Taylor was educated at Northampton Grammar School, at a private school run by a Mr. Emery, in College Street, Northampton, and for two years at the Castle Hill School operated by the Rev. William Jarrom, for two years the General Baptist minister in the town. When Mr. Jarrom left for work in China, John was sent to James Linnett's school at Towcester.

After apprenticeships in the printing trade in Northampton and London, he joined the family business in Northampton, adding printing and the old book trade to an already flourishing concern. John's father retired in 1862, and when his father died in 1864 John took sole charge of the firm.

John had a passion for old books and an insatiable desire for anything which related to Northamptonshire history. His dominant concern was to produce a complete Northamptonshire Bibliography. In the course of his extensive investigations he came across many unknown items of Northamptonshire history which he eventually published, a few weeks before his death, entitled *Antiquarian Memoranda.* In 1884 he had commenced his extremely successful *Northamptonshire Notes and Queries* which over twelve years formed six unique volumes. His *Bibliotheca* of which only six copies were printed, is a collation of 30,000 titles of Northamptonshire.

Among a multiplicity of printed materials, John Taylor published much that was specifically concerned with Baptist life and work in Northamptonshire. One of the most interesting was a projected volume on Confessions of Faith. The basis of this was *The Faith and Practise of Thirty Baptized Congregations* in the East Midlands, a printed copy of which can be found in the Northampton Public Library. The full work, which was to include biographies of all the signatories, was never completed.

When the General Baptist cause in Northampton ceased to function, John Taylor joined the College Street Baptist Church, and it was he who was largely responsible for raising the funds which put up the present chapel in College Street. In 1884 Taylor moved his business to premises at 9 College Street, and bought a private house in York Road, Northampton, where he lived until his death on August 25th, 1901. Though twice married, there were no children of either marriage.

In the 1860s it was John Taylor, along with one or two other leading citizens who originated the Northampton Free Library. The local collection in the present Public Library, Abington Street, houses the vast Taylor Collection, as well as a considerable number of other Baptist publications and manuscripts relating to Northamptonshire Baptists, and particularly the Baptist Missionary Society.

Recently the Northamptonshire Baptist Association placed all its records in the Northamptonshire Record Office, Delapre Park, Northampton, on permanent loan. A large number of the county churches have also been encouraged to place their records on loan with the Office, so that they will be available to all researchers and maintained in good condition. The study of Northamptonshire Baptists will in future begin with John Taylor's collection in the Northampton Public Library, the Association and Church records in the Record Office, and then the records in the local churches.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION RECORDS

NBA manuscript history 1835-1851.

NBA Minute Books. Five volumes 1875-1944.

NBA Account Books. 1835-1883 J. C. Gotch, treasurer. Ledger of numerous Assn. funds 1915-1921. Cash books, audited statements, 1928-1948. Olney Fund Book, 1776-1833 recording various gifts from churches for the Abolition of slavery.

NBA Reports. Loose and bound copies most years 1767-1941.

NBA Letters. Letters *from* Assn. to churches 1765-1865 (3 volumes.) Letters *from* churches to Assn. (4 volumes.).

1. From Beds., Bucks., Cambs., Derby. and Herts. (1775-1814).
2. From Leics. and Lincs. (1775-1814).
3. From Leics. and Lincs. (1775-1814).
4. From College Lane, Northampton, Notts., Rutland and Staffs. (1775-1814).

Various other letters in files, including one from Wm. Carey, for Moulton, 1788.

NBA Magazines, etc.

Northants Nonconformist Magazine (1889-1938, 1941) 5 volumes.
Northamptonshire Baptist, May 1947-December 1966.
Northants Call, issued by NBA Evangelism Committee, Jan. 1963-Oct. 1969.
The People of God, Faith and Practice for Baptists To-day, R. Hayden, 1967.
The NBA, A Short History, 1764-1964, T. S. H. Elwyn.
The Bethany Homestead, Brief History, 1961.

NBA Societies and Funds.

Thomas Trinder Fund, founded by will Jan. 2, 1795, for poor Baptist ministers.
Parker Gray Fund, founded 1940, to give loan assistance to small churches.
Timson Trust, copy of deed, 1953.
NBA Homes Mission Society, Minute Books and Reports, 1840-1874.
NBA Provident Society, 1858-1928, Reports and Correspondence.
Northants Baptist Union, 1893-1905. Reports.
Northampton Baptist Board, 1913-1934. Reports.
Northants Baptist Ministers Fraternal, Minutes, 1942-54.

Records of Individual Churches.

Blisworth, Church Books and Papers 1825-1960.
Guilborough, Church Books and Papers. 1779-1911.

Northampton, Adnitt Road, Papers relating to founding and opening, pamphlet history of Church, 1899-1949.
Northampton, St. Michael, Church Books 1884-1934 (closed), and a number of sermons and articles relating to Rev. Henry Bradford.
Ravensthorpe, Chapel Birth Register, 1800-1833, Church Records, 1819-1918.
Towcester, Church Books, 1784-1905.

Printed Histories and Pamphlets of Churches.

Burton Latimer, Bicentenary Celebration, 1744-1944.
Desborough, *History,* 1848-1948.
Loughton (Bucks.) History and Centenary Services, 1931.
Ringstead, *Musings on History of Ringstead Baptist Church,* C. Mayes, 1936. (Poems).
Rushden, *Romance of a Northants Baptist Church,* (1900).
Thrapston and its Baptist Church. 1937.
Towcester Baptists, E. A. Payne, 1936.
Walgrave Baptist Church, E. C. Lusty, 1950.
Baptist Churches at Weston by Weedon, Woodend, Moreton, Pinkney, Sulgrave, Helmdon and Lulworth, W. C. Anderson, 1930.
The Elder Brother, Recollections of James Mursell, Arthur Mursell, 1875.
Fuller Church, Davis F. Gotch, 1922.
Sermon by Rev. J. Keen Hall, 1829.
Kettering and District Baptist News, 1964-1971.
Records of an Old Association, 250th Anniversary of Midland and West Midland Baptist Association, 1905.
A Call to Prayers, Rev. J. K. Thomason, Harpole, 1963.

Files regarding deeds, trustees and legal matters.

Files of correspondence on these matters are held for the following churches: Aldwinckle; Earls Barton; Blisworth; Bozeat; New Bradwell (Bucks.); Brafield; Braybrooke; Broughton; Long Buckby; Bugbrooke; Bulwick Lodges; Burton Latimer; Bythorn (Hunts.); Cogenhoe; Cosgrove; Cranford; Culworth; Deanshanger; Denton; Desborough; Duncote; Eastcote; Ecton; Farthingstone; Finedon; Gayton; Geddington; Gretton; Grimscote; Hackleton; West Haddon; Hannington; Hanslope (Bucks.); Harpole; Helmdon; Heyford; Hollowell; Kettering; Kislingbury; Lavendon (Bucks.); Litchborough; Middleton Cheney; Milton; Moreton Pinkney; Moulton; Northampton; Abbey Road; Aduitt Road; College Street; Grafton Square; Kingsthorpe; Princes Street; St. Michaels Road; Olney (Bucks.); Pattishall; Pitsford; Raunds; Ravensthorpe; Ravenslow (Bucks.); Ringstead; Roade; Rothersthorpe; Rushden; Spratton; Stanwick; Stony Stratford; Sulgrave; Thrapston; Towcester; Twywell; Walgrave; Weston-by-Weedon; Weston Group; Wollaston; Woodend; Woodford-by-Thrapston.

ROGER HAYDEN.

MS Contributions to the *Baptist Quarterly*

Pressure on space in the *Quarterly* has eased in recent months and we can again invite contributions. New contributors are asked to write for a copy of the Editor's advice sheet which deals with matters of format and presentation. So far as subject matter is concerned, priority is given to discussion on Baptist History and Doctrine and issues of contemporary importance. However, any serious contribution to Christian thought and history will be considered.