

Thomas Lambe, William Allen and Richard Baxter : an additional note

In his valuable paper differentiating between Thomas Lambe the soapboiler and Thomas Lambe the merchant (*Baptist Quarterly*, Jan. 1977, pp. 4-13), Professor Murray Tolmie limits himself to a single quotation from the 'fuller collection of manuscript letters from the Lambes and Allen in the Baxter correspondence preserved at Dr. Williams's Library' which, he says, 'provides a few additional details'. He also tells us nothing about Lambe the merchant or Allen after 1660, when Allen published his *Retraction of Separation*.

It may be useful to point out what a considerable amount of material is contained in the collection at Dr. Williams's. If the correspondence is reconstructed, it appears that the fifteen letters printed by Sylvester in Appendices to *Reliquiae Baxterianae* represent less than half of it. Seventeen letters remain in manuscript. Three letters, the existence of which may be deduced from answers to them or on other grounds, appear not to be extant. One letter from Allen to Baxter was printed by Baxter in his piece *More Proofs of Infant Baptism* (1675).

The earlier part of the correspondence, about the separation from John Goodwin's church by Lambe and Allen, which Professor Tolmie relates, benefits from being seen against Goodwin's own account of it in his *Triumviri* (1658), preface, section 4, and against the controversy occasioned by the schism, which prevented him, Goodwin laments, from composing and publishing *Triumviri* earlier. Goodwin's *Philadelphia or XL. Queries* (1653), pleading for tolerance over Baptism, received an *Answer* (1653) from Allen; and Goodwin's *Water-dipping No Firm Footing for Church Communion* (1653) was answered by Allen's *Some Baptismal Abuses* (1653) and by Lambe's *Truth Prevailing* (1655). Lambe was answered by a member of the church, John Price, a signatory like Lambe of *An Apologeticall Account* (1647), in *The Anabaptists Meribah* (1656, pp. 86; not in Wing, Whitley or Starr; copy in Forbes Library, now in Toronto). Goodwin replied to Allen in *Cata-Baptism* (1655), in the epistle in which he refers to Baxter as one 'whose memorial throughout all Ages may well be *Malleus Anabaptismi*, the Maul of Anabaptism' and as 'a man as like as any man I know, to make a crooked generation straight, if it be possible'.

As if to add to the confusion which Professor Tolmie skilfully unravels, Goodwin was at the same time engaged in controversy with Thomas Lambe the soapboiler. In his 'substantial book', *Absolute*

Freedom from Sin (1656) this Thomas Lambe animadverted on Goodwin's *Redemption Redeemed* (1651); and Goodwin replied with a 'brief touch' in section 48 of the preface to *Triumviri*, naming Lambe, which he refrains from doing when writing of Lambe the merchant.

In 1665 Baxter wrote of Lambe and Allen that they 'are now more zealous than other Men against Independency and Separation, by how much the more they smarted by it'; and in a later passage that they 'in Sense of their old Errour, run now into the other Extreme, especially Mr. Lamb, and Wrote against our gathering Assemblies, and Preaching when we are Silenced' (*R.B.*, ii.45 and iii.ii.11). In these later years two works by Lambe appeared, without his name: *A Stop to the Course of Separation* (1672) and *A Fresh Suit against Independency* (1677). Baxter replied to both in *The Nonconformists Plea for Peace* (1679). Between 1671 and 1676 Baxter also reopened correspondence with Allen, and again more letters remain in manuscript than were printed by Sylvester.

William Allen eventually became Vicar of Bridgwater, Somerset. His funeral *Sermon* (1686) by Richard Kidder, who after ejection at the Restoration had conformed and later became Bishop of Bath and Wells, includes a bibliography.

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