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Notes and News

Baptists visiting the National Portrait Gallery in London may be interested to find a number of eminent members of the denomination portrayed there. Among the faces of the famous there are also some who had temporary or debatable links with the Baptists. Thomas Sadler's portrait of John Bunyan, the only fully authenticated oil painting of Bunyan, is well known from numerous reproductions. The notorious informer Titus Oates, who belonged to a Baptist church for a while, is represented in a line engraving by Robert White. Eighteenth-century Baptists noted in the Gallery include Joseph Collet, merchant and administrator in Sumatra and Madras, who is represented in a coloured plaster statuette of 1716 by Amoy Chinqua, and John Ward (1679-1758), antiquary and Fellow of the Royal Society, in an oil by an unknown artist. William Whiston (1667-1752), who has been described, not unfairly, as a "sublime crank" and who was baptized late in life, appears in a copy in oils of a portrait after Mrs. Sarah Hoadly. Portraits of nineteenth-century Baptists are more numerous. C. H. Spurgeon is shown in a three-quarter length oil by Alexander Melville and also in two pen and ink drawings by Harry Furniss; General Sir Henry Havelock, in a plaster cast of a bust by G. G. Adams, and Sir Robert Lush (1807-71), the judge, in a water-colour by Sir Leslie Ward drawn for *Vanity Fair*. William Brodie Gurney (1777-1855) appears in his capacity of official reporter to Parliament in the large painting by Sir George Hayter of the trial of Queen Caroline in the House of Lords in 1820. An even larger canvas by B. R. Haydon depicts the Anti-Slavery Society Convention of 1840 in which a number of Baptists may be identified with the aid of the key; for example, William Brock, Francis Augustus Cox, John Howard Hinton and William Knibb. The statesman, Ernest Brown, is the subject of a working drawing by David Low and Dr. John Clifford is represented by the replica of a quarter length portrait by John Collier, presented to the Gallery by the Baptist Union. It should, perhaps, be remarked that several of the works mentioned are not on permanent display.

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Dr. Ernest Payne writes:

The Baptist church at Keysoe Brook End in Bedfordshire was one of the oldest of which we have record. The date 1652 is well authenticated, for although the earliest Church Book is no longer extant, there is a summary of the history in the second book and there are extracts in the Rix MSS, now in the possession of the Dr. Williams's Library.

Some of the first leaders of the church suffered imprisonment in the County Gaol at Bedford with John Bunyan. The church practised "mixed communion" and this was confirmed in 1765; in 1874 it was agreed that "the church shall be composed of baptized believers only."

In 1959 Mr. H. G. Tibbutt, FRHistS, prepared a valuable illustrated booklet, *Keysoe Brook End and Keysoe Row Baptist Churches* as the eighth of his studies of Bedfordshire Nonconformity.

Unfortunately, the Keysoe Brook End church has now ceased to exist and the property has been sold. Attached to the meeting-house built in 1741 was a large burial-ground. The Bedfordshire Family History Society has carefully surveyed this and has made a record of the position of 204 graves and all the decipherable inscriptions on the stones. Copies of this record are also held by the Baptist Union Corporation and by the Angus Library of Regent's Park College. Would that other churches would find a way of securing an equally complete and accurate survey of their burial-grounds before it becomes impossible.

The oldest grave at Keysoe Brook End is that of John Crow, who died in 1742. No fewer than eight Baptist ministers were interred in the meeting-house yard. Their names may be of value to those tracing denominational or family history: Samuel Cole (pastor 1725-46), William Dickins (1766-98), William Brown (1803-18, trained at Sutcliff's Academy at Olney), Thomas Gate (1838-54), Frederick Perkins (1869-78, who died in 1892), George Barnes (1901-16), H. G. Stembridge (1917-28, who died in 1945, trained at Regent's Park), Arthur Henry Dowler (1944-49, died 1954). The families represented by ten or more graves are: Barnett, Freeman, Gillett, Hartop, Ruff, Stanton and Stapleton.

There is still a small Baptist church at Keysoe Row. A place of worship was opened there for occasional services in 1808. In 1812 a church was formed and was led until his death in 1825 by the owner of the property, Joel Miles. The Baptist Union Handbook is in error in giving the date of formation as 1908.

* * *

Dr. Brian Bowers draws attention to an important issue of Baptist History and Heritage:

"The Role of Laymen in Baptist History" is the theme of the January 1978 issue of the quarterly journal *Baptist History and Heritage* (published by the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Historical Society). Six main articles are introduced by a "Guest Editorial" in which Glendon McCullough discusses the Baptist idea of the priesthood of all believers. He says that renewed emphasis has been given to this belief in recent years, expressed in practical terms by increased lay involvement in church affairs. The first two articles are about the work of laymen

as denominational leaders and as workers in Home Mission. Both have biographical sketches of several American Baptists. The third article, on laymen as leaders in the local Church, traces its theme back to the seventeenth century with quotations from the Broadmead records and Elias Keach's church manual of 1697. Two articles deal with the Baptist Laymen's Movement and Baptist laymen in politics, the latter having four biographies ranging from the eighteenth century to the present day. The final article is on Baptist businessmen and Baptist attitudes to business in a social system that permitted men such as Rockefeller to be rich while others were so poor. An "Epilogue" by Owen Cooper (the only author specifically described as a layman) concludes that although the Church needs the leadership and guidance of its pastors and teachers it can only accomplish its mission if lay people rise to the challenge. The issue is limited to American Baptists, which may diminish its interest for British readers. However, it is well written and provokes the question whether British Baptist laymen have the same story to tell as their brothers across the Atlantic. A more important limitation is that the articles deal with only two secular roles for laymen—politics and business. Are there no Baptist scientists, schoolteachers or bus drivers worthy of inclusion?

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