RAYMOND BROWN, Vice-President, Baptist Historical Society

BAPTISTS IN RUSSIA
The Pashkov Papers at the University of Birmingham

Neither a trip to Russia nor expertise in the Russian language is necessarily needed to research the history of the Baptist church there, for the University of Birmingham’s special collection (housed in the Heslop Room) includes the papers of Pashkov. Once a Colonel in the Russian Imperial Army, Pashkov was converted to Baptist beliefs in the 1880s and continued to support fellow Baptists in Russia: such was the fame of his faith that they were often called ‘Pashkovites’, throughout the many long years of exile in Britain.

Included within this collection, only a few items of which are in Russian, are not only Pashkov’s personal papers, letters to famous Europeans, including F. W. Baedeker of travel guide fame, and the British Evangelical Alliance, but also his defence of fellow Russian Baptists. Pashkov wrote many pleas on behalf of imprisoned believers to Tsar Alexander III and sheltered persecuted Christians, including the Stundists, on his Russian country estate. This was managed in his absence by two Englishmen, Edward and Henry Hilton, who were later forcibly expelled from Russia for their trouble. Other documents relate to Russian Baptist principles of conscience, debates between Russian orthodox priests and Baptists in 1886, and general press cuttings on Pashkov’s activities. Records of many different Baptist and Christian conferences held in Russia, South Russia and the Caucasus during the 1880s and 1890s also make up part of the collection. Correspondence with different Russian Christian groups, together with details of government and secret police action against them provides an insight into a time of Christian persecution in Imperial Russia, prior to the more famous communist regime’s anti-Christian policies which have so recently and momentously ended.

Anyone wishing to consult the Pashkov documents should write to Miss Christine Penney, Special Collections, The Heslop Room, University of Birmingham, B21 2TT. A handlist of the papers has been prepared.

D. K. Drummond, Research Fellow, University of Birmingham


4 H. G. Tibbutt, Keysoe Brook End and Keysoe Row Baptist Churches, 1959; Records of Huntingdonshire, 1969; Some early nonconformist church books, Bedfordshire HRS, vol.51; the latest information is that the Great Gransden Church Book has now been found.

5 Examples include the Stotfold, Bedfordshire, Monthly Meeting, c.1667, integrated into the Mid-Bedfordshire Monthly Meeting in 1748, and finally closed in 1798, and Bythorn, Huntingdonshire, founded in 1658, later amalgamated with Molenworth and Raunds, Northamptonshire, and discontinued in 1839. Friends Meeting House Record Book, Friends House Library.

6 P. Bell, Belief in Bedfordshire, Bedford 1986, p.52.


8 Sharnbrook Baptist Church foundation covenant.

9 Carlton Baptist first church book, p.82, Bedfordshire CRO.


11 Northamptonshire CRO MQS 292.


13 Blunham Baptist church book, transcript p.38, Bedfordshire CRO.


15 Gilbert, op.cit., p.39.

16 Kimbolton Independent Church minute book, 1692-1828, Huntingdon CRO.

17 Blunham Baptist church book transcript, p.91.


19 Southill Baptist church book transcript p.35.


22 By the late 18th century a part-time school with 200 pupils was established by the Revd William Carver of the Independent Church. In 1821 John Trigg left £2000 to establish an undenominational school for poor children, of which all the trustees were dissenters. By 1835 there were 165 pupils. VCH Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, vol.8.


25 The connection between this and other clothing trades and dissent has been commented on, e.g. Bebb, pp.25-6, Gilbert, op.cit., pp.65-6, Watts op.cit., pp.354-5.


27 Bedford Census 1851, District of St Paul’s. Volumes 2 and 3.

LILIAN M. WILDMAN BA MPhil

*** *** *** ***

CORRECTION

The editors apologize to Malcolm Bonnington, whose name inadvertently appeared as Michael, in the April issue (p.307), and also for a wrong date in the review of his Chard Baptists (1992), where the date of the move to the new building took appeared as 1742 rather than 1842. The suppliers, Forum Books, are no longer operating, but copies of the book can be obtained from Dr Malcolm Bonnington, 16 Elizabeth Way, Chard, Somerset, TA20 1BY, Tel: 0460 67123.