

Notes.

William Mitchel and Rossendale.

Thanks to the perseverance of Principal Blomfield, we now have the text of a pamphlet which exercised a most important influence on a large community of evangelicals in the hills which unite Yorkshire and Lancashire. The clergy of that district in the seventeenth century were ready to swing with every tide; Oliver Heywood of Coley was a rare exception. Many people were of sterner stuff, and when they saw their official leaders conform to every official order, they ceased to follow. From Rossendale on the west, at the head of the Irwell, over to Guiseley and Rawden above Airedale, little groups can be traced at least from 1672. Thirteen years later, William Mitchel of Heptonstall came to the front and linked many together, probably creating new centres also. No clergyman or minister seems ever to have been concerned in the movement. Under the guidance of Mitchel, some kind of circuit organisation was worked out, the centre of gravity of the whole lying at Goodshaw Chapel in Rossendale. Here the people defiantly used the Chapel of Ease which their fathers had built for themselves; when fined and expelled, they clung to the hamlet and erected a gaunt meeting-house within a stone's throw. Mitchel left his native county and came to live hard by, as recent discoveries prove. Then arose the question of believers' baptism, and the young man who brought it to their attention, a cousin of Mitchel, David Crosley, complicated the situation by a haughty claim to superintend, based on an ordination as "minister" by a Midland Baptist church. The ferment resulted in young Crosley leaving the neighbourhood, but the new doctrine spreading. Mitchel had excellent colleagues in Rossendale, one at least senior to himself even in suffering. He therefore went east to Bradford where he ended his days. This pamphlet, Jachin and Boaz, lays down principles of faith and order that moulded the churches of the district. It deserves to be carefully studied for originality; section 16, contemplating Baptist ministers occupying parish churches and preaching to a miscellaneous assembly, is manifestly based on the Congregational confession of 1658 drawn up at the Savoy, and is ludicrously inappropriate to forty years later. But the interest of the pamphlet is deep, especially for the scores of churches based upon the labours of Mitchel.

James Jones, Particular Baptist in Southwark, 1672-1683.

Three facts have been known as to this pastor. On 30 September 1672 a licence was issued to him to be a Baptist Teacher in the Borough. On 18 January 1675 he was one of thirteen London ministers sending a joint reply to Gifford of Bristol as to baptism and the prayers of unconverted men; part of this letter was printed by Rippon, IV., 1004. An undated memorandum prefixed to the Watford church book includes the statement that the Baptists there gave their names to the Church of Christ meeting at Horsley Down of the same faith, Brother Jones being pastor, and that they stood in that connection till a breach happened in that church which broke them to pieces. To these facts, Mr. Horace Warde of Richmond now adds the news that on 9 January 34 Car. II. (i.e. 1682-3), two bills were found against him at the Dorking Quarter Sessions; one for taking part in conventicles, the other for holding them in his house. We gain the welcome information that he was a Coffee-man, and lived in the parish of Saint Olave, Southwark. After the collapse of the Popish Plot agitation, persecution of dissenters was renewed, and at these sessions, 94 others were indicted from St. Olave, St. Saviour, and St. George. We now learn the occupation and parish of James Jones, and any one interested further may explore the parish registers of St. Olave's. He does not appear at the assembly in 1689. It is not surprising that King Charles tried to put down coffee-houses, proclaiming that they were the resort of disaffected persons. Other Baptist coffee-houses are known at this time; in 1677 Edmund Chillington was reported for keeping one in Leadenhall Street, whence false news was dispersed; and there are hints in the State Papers that John Gozbold and John Clarke were doing the same. From a different source, the minutes of association alluded to in the Petty France church book, we find that the Watford Baptists heard of Jones on 6 October 1679, when his church was received into the Association due to Edward Harrison, meeting that day in Hemel Hempstead.

Enoch Woodward of (Southwold and) Norwich.

Calamy had vague entries that a Mr. Woodward was ejected from Southwold in Suffolk, and that Enoch Woodward was ejected from St. George's, Norwich. Both entries are incorrect. Mr. Browne, the Congregationalist historian of East Anglia, did something to rectify them, and added much information from the Norwich Congregational records. As to Southwold, the vicar ejected thence was Alexander Kirby, and there is no evidence that Woodward was ever there; if he were, it could only have been in some other capacity, such as a town lecturer. Enoch Woodward first comes to clear light in 1669, being one of three teachers of 300 Independents meeting at the house of John Toft in the parish of St. Clement's, Norwich. On 18 April 1672 he took the king's licence

to preach there, and his career can be traced in the local church book. If there ever was a Woodward at Southwold, it was probably Enoch. Crosby's guess that it was the Harlow Baptist is discordant with Harlow traditions, and ought to be dismissed.

William Woodward of Harlow, Essex.

This early minister is known by three contemporary documents. On 31 December 1677 he bought a piece of ground in Foster Street, and gave it to the Baptist church as a burying place. In 1689 and 1692 he attended the Assembly of Particular Baptists in London. One of his successors, the Rev. T. Finch, gathered up some traditions; that he had been chaplain in the army when that was encamped at Nazing and Parndon commons; that in the persecutions after 1664, he suffered repeatedly, details of times, places, and circumstances being current; that after 1689 he confined his work to Parndon and Harlow; that he died in 1712. It is difficult to check these traditions, though certainly he had been succeeded in 1715 by Isaac Chalkley. If he had been in the army as early as 1647, he must have lived to a very great age. Still all the local information is consistent with the documents. But he has been confounded with two other people.

William Woodward of Havering or Romford, Essex.

Dr. Longstaff has been making enquiries as to an anniversary of the Congregational church at Romford, and has found an entry that a place of worship at Havering was registered by William Woodward in the Bishop's court during 1690. Mr. Bryan Dale naturally suggested comparison with the Harlow Baptist, but on the one hand there is nothing to show that the Harlow man ever worked so far from home, and on the other there is no indication of any but Congregational principles at Havering. The identity of name, and the similarity of the names Nazing Havering, are outweighed by the other considerations.

Elder Wheaton of Swansea, 1730.

Thomas Hollis the Baptist benefactor of Harvard, wrote a letter to "Elder Wheaton of Swanzy" in Wales, from which Cathcart in his Baptist Cyclopaedia, 1881, quotes the following suggestive sentence: "God, that hath shined into our hearts by his gospil, can lead you sleeping Sabbatharians from the Sinai covenant and law of ceremonies into the light of the new covenant and the grace thereof." It would appear therefore that Seventh-day Baptists, who were known in Monmouthshire during 1669, had survived for two generations in this district. Any information about them will be welcomed by Charles H. Greene, 232, North Washington Avenue, Battle Creek, Michigan, U.S.A.