

Two Hardcastles, Presbyterian and Baptist.

THOMAS HARDCASTLE of Barwick in Elmet, Yorkshire, is a man concerning whom much incorrect information is in print. A study of him and a few relations from contemporary documents will dispel one or two illusions, fostered first by Edward Terrill of Bristol, and more lately by two editors, one of whom thus seeks to repair his error.

There seems at present no need to question Calamy's statement that he was born at Barwick and trained there by the minister [Christopher] Jackson, who was ejected first thence and then from Crosby in Westmorland. The Hardcastles certainly belonged to that parish, six miles from Leeds on the road to Tadcaster and York. Calamy says that he was made vicar of Bramham, some six miles to the north-east; this is borne out by a subsequent conviction under the Five-Mile Act, which applied only to ejected ministers who refused certain oaths.

At Shadwell, three miles from Barwick, there was a Chapel of Ease, which apparently had no regular service. In such cases ejected ministers often used the chapels at the desire of the residents, and Hardcastle took this opportunity. The law on this point was not clear till 1699, but a temporary conventicle act of 1664 made it illegal to meet anywhere in numbers above four. So he was thrown into prison,

and Oliver Heywood took his place at the Chapel on 13 August 1665, noting the fact in his diary. When released he occupied the Chapel again, was imprisoned again, and Heywood replaced him again on 8 January 1665-6; he obtained a copy of the warrant which showed that 24 hearers also were to be arrested. Heywood noted again that he was taken in Leeds on Tuesday 21 January 1667-8, and visited him in Wakefield jail on 6 February. Hardcastle was staunch, and the result was that Heywood found him in prison at Leeds on 28 May 1668 for holding another conventicle.

With the rising of parliament, the act expired, but the bishops were alarmed at the instant revival of conventicles, and the incumbents were called upon for detailed information. Hardcastle was reported twice to the Archbishop, first in these terms:—"Barwick in Ellmet; Att the house of Sr. Thomas Gascoyne Barr^t. Romanists, nigh 20 families of the towne besides strangers. Anoth^r Conventicle at the house of Hardcastle; head and teacher, one Hardcastle, Broth^r to him, in whose house the Assembly is." The editor has confounded the two conventicles, and has classified the Hardcastles as Romanists, overlooking the bearing of another report:—"Thorner. Att the Chappell of Shadwell; M^r Hardcastle, M^r Nesse."

Up to this point, all the associations of Hardcastle were Presbyterian. But he now began to meet Baptists, and there is a mass of correspondence at Broadmead that enables us to trace his career minutely. The value of this is beyond dispute, but the narrative of Edward Terrill, printed in the same volume by Dr. Underhill in larger type as if it were the more important, needs to be scrutinized with considerable scepticism on all points connected with baptism, as Mr. Burrage has recently shown. According to Hay-

croft, Terrill began writing that narrative in 1672, and his handwriting ceases in 1678, the year of Hardcastle's death. For local events of that period, he is good evidence, but not for events at a distance, or of a previous period; he first appeared in the church life 1654, but whatever contemporary notes he made were worked up for this period in 1676, as appears presently, and the narrative reflects his ideas at that date. Equally must the notes of Underhill and Haycroft be scrutinized with care. The actual letters of Hardcastle are the chief source, and the narrative is only secondary even after 1672.

Terrill's obituary notice states that Hardcastle suffered about eight months' imprisonment in York Castle, then was taken to Chester Castle and kept there fifteen months, then was released by the king's order, when he came to London. But Hardcastle was there by June 1670 as appears by Vavasor Powell's letter of that date, and that he was in prison, evidently under the new Conventicle Act. There is indeed just room between 28 May 1668 and 6 June 1670 for these two periods in jail, but it is difficult to see under what law he was incarcerated, and why the king should order his release just as he was assenting to the new Conventicle Act on 11 April 1670. Perhaps Terrill was astray, at least as to dates.

Powell had been asked by Terrill whether Hardcastle would suit for Broadmead; the reply was that he was a member of the Swan Alley church, on trial to be their pastor, but was then in prison, as also was Powell himself; he added that they were brothers-in-law. From the narrative relating to 1678 we find that the wife's family lived near Chester, which bears out Terrill to some extent. Two letters to Hardcastle brought a reply dated 24 August 1670, in which he added that he was a minister as well as member, and that the London church objected to his heeding the

Bristol overtures. This was confirmed by a letter from Powell and another from the church itself in October. A second letter followed from Hardcastle after his release from six months in jail. This must have been under the permanent Conventicle Act of 1670, which came into force 10 May, as Terrill noted.

A letter of 10 March 1670-1 refers to "that late passage of infant baptism" implying that Hardcastle wished to promote union among "saints as saints, though of different persuasions," and urging Terrill to show love to those that were for infant baptism rather than try to impose his persuasion. This is the first time that Hardcastle touches the subject, and it is not easy to decide from this letter alone what his preference was. The church of which he was now a member, had been pedobaptist, but under Jessey had stood for "saints, as saints." At this very time an obscure country preacher called Bunyan had taken up the cudgels in the same cause, as against Kiffin, being very glad to quote the precedent of Jessey; and evidently it is to this brush that the letter refers. Terrill declares in the obituary notice that Hardcastle was baptized in London just before his imprisonment; and this statement was accepted by the present writer in *Transactions*, I., 31 and 39; now it seems incredible in face of what is yet to come.

As regards the pastorate, Swan Alley declined absolutely to part with Hardcastle, yet conceded a month's visit. He went first in January 1670-1 to visit some Swan Alley members in Derby, being back in London by 18 April. May was spent at Bristol, and on the 29th, a written call was given him to be pastor, signed by ninety-eight members. The London church was acquainted, and returned a dignified refusal, replying to six arguments. The first is important, and ambiguous:—"If the major part of you

had taken up the sacred ordinance of baptism, only so as that they cause to fear, if a man be set over them that is not baptized, that they shall be guilty of a partial, if not a total backsliding:—we beseech you to consider, Received you the truth upon man's testimony, or upon Gods?" This appears to show that Hardcastle was not baptized. On 15 June he wrote to Bristol suggesting that they communicate again with seven ministers they had already consulted; a week later he wrote that he would come whatever the London church decided, though his wife was not in condition to travel. Apparently she was expecting her firstborn, a fact of interest later on. On 26 June he wrote that the London church had just chosen him pastor, and that he intended to refuse publicly next Tuesday; he had been advising with Dr. Owen, Mr. [John?] Collins and Mr. [John] Loder—apparently all pedobaptists. On the Tuesday he wrote that he had refused, and that Kiffin and Harrison [two Baptists] had on the whole upheld him. On 11 July he wrote again that Collins and Owen approved his going to Bristol without a London dismissal; a week later the London church expostulated with Bristol, and two days afterwards, Hardcastle wrote that he had been staying with the Fleetwoods and discussing the situation with Dr. Owen, deciding to cut the knot and start for Bristol within a fortnight, which he confirmed by another letter on 28 July. This involved abandoning a visit to Yorkshire, and travelling leisurely because of Mrs. Hardcastle's condition. A second call was given on 8 August, and he was commended "upon Tryall for ye office of a Pastor." In this correspondence there is not a word to bear out the statement that at this time he was baptized in London.

Terrill's narrative of these events was written "near Five years" later, a welcome note of time;

but it gives far less detail. Under the date 3 September 1666 we find also the note that Nonconformist meetings in London have remained public "Ever since in London, about these 10 years." Therefore the whole of this narrative was penned in 1676. It asserts with ample detail that on 6 March 1666 William Thomas of Llantrissant was sent for to baptize ten men and four women in the river, as Mr. Ewins the pastor suffered from sciatica and could not stand in the water so long. Also that on 5 April Ewins moved that [Thomas] Jennings, a minister [ejected from Brimsfield] should be the regular administrator of baptism; that in July 1667 four were baptized by Thomas; that in February 1667-8 and March 1668 two more were baptised. The next mention of baptism is when Thomas Child was baptized 8 September 1671, five more on 13 October, one on 5 January, three on 23 February, two on 12 April 1672, another on 26 April. A long note is given as to the baptism of husband, wife, and servant on 10 May. The facts here need not be doubted, but the note shows the feelings of Terrill in 1676. Many other baptisms are recorded; on 4 July 1673 it is noted that Jennings was the administrator, as usual. But his wife, a church member of long standing, was not baptized till 22 May 1674. In October another persecution arose, and Terrill writing two years later had occasion to mention the Six Separate Churches that wished to keep up public worship: he defined them as "Three Baptized Congregations, Two Independent Congregations, and One Presbyterian Congregation: viz., Mr. Hardcastle's, being our meeting, most parte Baptized" etc. Here we see his great desire in 1676 to magnify the Baptist character of this congregation, and yet his honesty in acknowledging the actual state of affairs.

All this information is given by Terrill. But we turn to absolutely contemporary documents to fill out

the sketch. Underhill refers to 35 MS. lectures by Hardcastle, preserved in Bristol College, given to the young from October 1671 to October 1672; they are on the Presbyterian Shorter Catechism. This was never used by Baptists; not till 1677 was a Baptist revision of the companion Confession executed; the standard Baptist confession was that of 1646, reprinted several times. The Shorter Catechism was however compiled by the Presbyterians for the very purpose of lectures to the young.

Again, those lectures show that between 12 May and 21 July 1672 he took a journey to "some considerable distance." Now on 15 March a Declaration of Indulgence had been issued, offering licences to preachers, and for places of worship. Application had to be made, the case was considered, the licences were registered if granted, and a receipt was taken for them. Applications made later than July seem to be mislaid, but on 5 September two pairs of licences were issued, and the original record in the Privy Council book runs:—"The house of Simon Tovy of St. James pish in Bristoll Pr. Licence to Tho: Hardcastle of Bittin in Glocestersh. to be a Pr. Teacher Sept 5th The house of ... Smith of Woollan in Gloccestersh. Pr. Licence to Tho: Jennings of Woollon in Glocstersh. to be a Pr. Teacher Sept: 5th." All four licences are plainly entered as Presbyterian; but this must be examined carefully.

Scores of licences were granted that day, for instance, "James Nobbs of Harton in Glocestersh to be a Anabapt Teacher . . . Sam: Webb to be a Bapts Teacher att Chipping Sudbury . . . James Nobbs of Westpor in Wiltsh to be a Baptist Teacher . . . The house of John Ceager in the City of Bristoll. Pr. . . . Licence to Andrew Jifford of ye City of Bristoll Pr: Teacher . . . The house of ye Widdow Collier of Witinx in Oxfordsh Baptist." Now the licence of

Andrew Gifford may yet be seen at Bristol; it is made out as stated. But Gifford himself corrected it to Baptist, and there is no doubt that he was a Baptist, and that either the applicant or the clerk made a mistake. Jennings had been a Presbyterian, and as Terrill tells us under date 4 March 1672-3, habitually preached at Wolland. Simon Tovy does not seem to have been a member at Broadmead, but by an entry of 22 June 1682 is shown to be the owner of the "four great roomes made into one Square Roome," where ye Hereticks called Quakers had formerly used to meet, at ye lower end of Broadmead, which the church "took ye 12th day of ye 6 Month" 1671. And John Ceager probably owned the building used by Gifford's congregation. Query, did Hardcastle put in the six applications? if so, he is responsible for calling himself and the others "Presbyterian."

Now Dr. Underhill professes to copy the transcripts made by Mr. Isaac James of these licences to Hardcastle and Tovy, and he makes them read, "of the persuasion commonly called Baptized." When these third-hand copies are compared with the printed licences, such differences appear, that they cannot be trusted; the printed words are altered and transposed; therefore we cannot be sure whether the crucial words were inserted at Whitehall, or by the holders as in the case of Gifford, or by some irresponsible person like Terrill or James. The official register says that Hardcastle, Jennings and Gifford were licensed on the same day, as Presbyterians; but as the licences further allowed them to teach in any licensed place, irrespective of denomination, the congregations and the teachers were protected.

On 3 November 1672 Hardcastle began a series of discourses on Colossians, nine of which are preserved; they break off abruptly. This may be connected with the fact that on 7 March 1672-3, with

much heart burning, Charles II. cancelled the Declaration of Indulgence. Yet the situation was not quite clear, and persecution did not revive at once. Indeed on 29 March 1674 the church wrote to Swan Alley asking for a transfer of Hardcastle, which was refused on 12 April; therefore the Broadmead church on 19 May dispensed with it, and elected him pastor, promising to try yet once more for a letter. So quiet was it still, that Terrill was sent to open work at Shirehampton on 8 June 1673, and with Jennings to aid the Horton church at Nympsfield about July 1673; Jennings also to a church at Gloucester about July 1674, with a view to extension in Framilode and Whitminster. Moreover Hardcastle wrote a preface to Powell's Concordance, published in 1673, and next year published a book of his own, being the substance of some Bristol sermons, besides editing sermons by Garbut.

In October 1674 the king for the first time called the bishops and no others, to advise on religion. The immediate result was the renewal of persecution in Bristol; but four congregations at once pleaded their licences, employed counsel in the city, and appointed a joint committee to fight the question. The new bishop went up to London about the matter; and the committee sent an agent to put their case; the result was that on 3 February 1674-5, an Order in Council issued, declaring the Licences to have been "long since recalled"; and a week later a declaration came out to enforce the Order and suppress all conventicles. Sheldon followed this up by ordering every incumbent to report on his parish and say how many conformists there were, how many nonconformists, how many papists. The returns for his province were summarised in a volume now in the Salt Library at Stafford, and show an estimate of 51 at Chipping Sudbury, 16 at Horton, 11 at Bitton, 600 at Bristol. Meantime the

mayor of Bristol lost no time, but on 14 February arrested Hardcastle in the act of preaching, and committed him for refusing to take the oaths under the Five-Mile Act. A habeas corpus was promptly sued out, and he was taken to London, where it was adjudged that the committal was regular, and he was brought back to Bristol jail on 5 June. Meantime some negotiations between the congregations resulted in an agreement to drop the question of baptism; but the Presbyterians declined to join, apparently because Gifford had not been "ordained by presbyters," though no reason was formally assigned. Hardcastle was released on 2 August 1675, was convicted for preaching on 8 and 15 August without taking the oaths, and was sent to jail for another six months. When a more favourable mayor was elected, the sheriffs let him go to his own house, though still in custody, and he preached on 3 October. On 14 November a warrant was out for "Jennings, who was to speak," and as he was not there, prosecutions were taken under the Conventicle Act, and five were sent to prison till the Quarter Sessions. They were then released, as counsel proved they had a right to be. This ended that bout of persecution, and Hardcastle was released after six lunar months; when he instantly resumed public preaching on 30 January 1675-6, no further action was taken. It was in the lull that followed, that Terrill digested his notes into a continuous narrative, more or less correct.

Observance of the Lord's Supper and of Baptism was also resumed, and by 9 May Hardcastle was away on a visit to Yorkshire. In October 1676 five London Baptist ministers visiting Trowbridge were asked to come and ordain Hardcastle, but they would not. Terrill gave the reason "because of great personall concernes at home," but he added this as an afterthought, and probably the real reason was that

Hardcastle was not baptized. On 12 November his wife Anne was admitted on a letter from Dr. Vincent's Presbyterian church, and she was baptized on 25 May 1677. On 3 August, Gifford was ordained by Dike and Cox; but nothing is said as to any application on behalf of Hardcastle.

In April 1678 a deputation came from the Swan Alley church to support a letter of March 31 demanding Hardcastle as "Member, and chosen an Elder" there, and denying that he was member or Minister regularly called at Bristol. Terrill made a long memorandum, admitting that he was not yet ordained, and not venturing to claim that any Baptists approved the action taken. That summer Hardcastle went to London, then a letter from his wife's brother took him to Chester, whence he returned on 27 September, rather ill, and died two days later. On 6 November 1678 his wife bore a son; the church raised £150 to pay funeral expenses and help the widow and children.

On 28 February 1678-9, three persons were baptized in the river Froome by our brother Jennings "who did, all ye time of our late pastor Br. Hardcastle, Administer that Ordinance." Under date 24 October 1679 Terrill made a long entry as to Jennings explaining how he was preacher and baptizer, yet not pastor, so not qualified to administer the Lord's Supper. In connection with the first time Fownes did this, on 9 November 1679, Terrill drew up a full list of members, showing 42 men of whom a Ruling Elder and four others were not baptized, 108 women of whom 22 were not baptized, besides ten non-resident and six under dealing, of whom four were not baptized. This is the end of his narrative, except for one note of a burial in December.

The death of Hardcastle was noted by Oliver Heywood on 1 October 1678. This token of his con-

tinued interest supports the general impression left by the documents, that Hardcastle lived and died a Presbyterian, and was never baptized. The new secretary did not mention baptism till 14 January 1680-1 when he records that three people "were baptized by Br. Th. Jennings, Mr. Fownes ye pastor being not well." In his view, baptism ought to be administered by a baptized pastor; and on 12 July 1681 he recorded that Fownes did baptize.

From Thomas Hardcastle turn to his family. He married Anne near Chester, and was brother-in-law to Powell; Powell's second wife, married before 1658, was Katherine, daughter of Colonel Gerard, then governor of Chester Castle. It would seem that Hardcastle met the Gerards when he was imprisoned at Chester about 1669. He had one child after July 1671, and another in 1678; the widow had left before Terrill's list of members in 1679. She had been Presbyterian, but was now baptized.

Oliver Heywood has a note in his diary on 12 December 1680 as to Mr. Hardcastle's troubles. This is apparently the brother reported in 1669 as housing a conventicle; and another diary note of 24.6.81 identifies him as Robert Hardcastle of Barwick. Heywood sent him a copy of his Lamentations on 3 February 1682-3. These notes imply that Robert remained Presbyterian.

But in 1707 we find a second Thomas, who is always understood to be son of the Bristol Thomas, and would therefore be between 36 and 29 years old. He sold a plot of ground at Gildersome for a Chapel or Meeting-house to be erected. A year or two later, David Crosley came hither and apparently got most of the local Baptists to side with him, so that he seems to have secured the use of the chapel. Hardcastle however preferred to join the new church constituted at Rawden in 1715, and five years later signed

for that church the minutes of Association which agreed to supply Gildersome now Crosley had gone. When the covenant was renewed on 3 April 1724, he signed as an Elder. His last appearance in the Rawden minutes is on 27 October 1744, when he was discharged from the office of an Elder at his own request, as he was now living at Great Woodhouse. It is rather strange that after all the work of Mitchell and Moore, no permanent Baptist cause had arisen in Leeds; yet it was not till 1760 that any people were baptized there, and they joined Bradford rather than Rawden.

The whole study seems to show that Baptist principles were adopted not by Thomas senior, but by his wife Anne, and that their son Thomas was the only one of the family to tread deeply in the mother's footsteps.

Theophilus Delafield in 1688.

Translation by Richard Walford, M.A., J.P., of Gosforth, formerly of Haddenham; communicated by G. Loosley of Berkhamsted.

"Bond given by Robert Howe of St. Martins-le-Grand, London, tallow-chandler, to John Bishop of Ford, in the parish of Donnington otherwise Dinton, in the County of Bucks, farmer, for the repayment of £20; dated November 27, 1688, 4 James II. Conditioned that if the said Robert Howe, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, shall well and truly observe, perform, fulfil and keep the covenants, grants, articles and agreements which on his or their parts are to be observed &c, as contained in an Indenture bearing date even with these presents between the said Robert Howe of the one part and the above named John Bishop of the other part, according to the purport, tenor and effect of the said indenture, then this obligation to be void; or else it is to stand in full force. Sealed and delivered in the presence of Edward Hitchcocke and Theo: Delafield senr. (Signed) ROBERT HOWE."