

Through Presbyterian Spectacles, 1691.

A REVIEW of the Pedobaptist Dissenting Interest was compiled about 1690-1692, and on its recent discovery, was entrusted by the ancient Presbyterian Board to the Rev. Alex. Gordon. He has made a most careful study of all the people and places, and has drawn up an index which is really an elaborate series of biographies for all the leaders named, several hundreds.

In his introduction to this valuable volume, "Freedom after Ejection," he says that there was a mutual antipathy between the Baptists & the Pedobaptists, a fact we have often emphasized, as at page 172 of our last volume. He calls attention however to a few allusions made to our people, which we extract and annotate. The original manuscript is reproduced by him with meticulous accuracy; here we take only the information, and make no attempt to reproduce the spelling.

In Buckinghamshire there was Richard Young. He had been reported from Edlesborough in 1669 to the bishop; in 1677 had seceded from the Chesham church and was connected with Berkhamstead; in 1679 signed the Orthodox Confession; in 1690 was reported to the Presbyterians from Wycombe.

In Essex, at Tiptree or Messing, was one Crab, a Baptist, an ignorant fellow. It is possible this was the hat-maker who in 1646 had excited the wrath of Edwards at Hertford for baptizing Samuel Fulcher the egg-man. It is far more likely to be the Thomas

Crab reported to the bishop in 1669 from Downham, or the Moses Crab at Wilbraham. Sible Hedingham was reported to the Presbyterians as much pestered with Quakers and Arminian Anabaptists.

In Gloucester there had been a Pedobaptist congregation at Tewkesbury; in 1691 there were only Anabaptists. It may be added that this church, known from 1655, in 1695 called Joseph Price to be pastor; he died 1721.

In 1672 Owen Davies had put in a number of applications for licenses to Gloucestershire Congregationalists. Among them were Henry Collett and Thomas Skey jointly for their own houses in Tewkesbury, Joshua Steed of Cleeve at his own house, Will Davison of Tewkesbury at his own house.

In Gloucestershire it was also reported in 1691 that Joshua Head, together with Collett, served Bourton on the Water, Cleeve, with other hamlets disguised as "Bigby, Cos and Pason." We know from other sources that in 1685 Edward Strode of Tewkesbury paid £50 fine on behalf of Joshua Head of Slaughter, Thomas Collett of Bourton and six other conventiclers; and that in 1698 John Venfield a minister was buried on 1 April.

In Hampshire we find that at Kingsclere some gifted men of the Anabaptists preached occasionally, but had promised to desist when a Minister was settled there. Probably this was an outpost of Whitchurch, or of Newbury.

In Hertfordshire, John Wilson was reported from Hitchin, receiving not above £10. He was really pastor 1677-1717, and his children became noted ministers. Watford and Rickmansworth were sadly recorded as having only a meeting of Antipædobaptists.

Across the borders of Hertford and Middlesex, Joseph Maisters was active. At Theobalds he co-

operated with Hamilton the Presbyterian; at Enfield with Obadiah Hughes. It is added by Mr. Gordon that when he was invited to London he kept up monthly visits to Theobalds.

From the county of Lancaster comes the interesting news that Colonel Roger Sawrey of Broughton Tower, wrote on behalf of the church at Tottlebank in Furness Fells, to say that there was no minister, though there were several legacies & some land, and the people guaranteed £20 more every year; they were calling out to the Pedobaptists for one man at least. We know that the call was unheeded, and that in 1696 David Crosley the Baptist went instead, giving the church a tinge which it has retained ever since, though it is still open-communion, as at its foundation in 1669.

From Northumberland, James Jaffray reported that Hexham was still leavened with Anabaptists. This was due to Thomas Tillam; the early documents are well known and valuable.

From Wiltshire the report came that the Martlock congregation paid eight shillings a sabbath, and that Edward Gatchell took turns there. In 1672 he had taken a licence for his house at Pitminster.

Abergavenny in Monmouthshire was reported, via Hereford, as having a great auditory, but most of them Anabaptists, and their preachers of the same persuasion, possessed of the meeting-house. This was to be expected, considering the early discussions there and the interest of the Association. To-day the centre of gravity is Llanwenarth.

Montgomery had had Henry Williams, a Baptist, pastor at Newtown; but Hugh Owen his successor was Pedobaptist. One of his Baptist members, Reynold Wilson, an itinerant, had before 1669 opened a school at Aberhafesp. There he was afterwards helped by Francis Turner, who went on to Hill Cliff.