

Aldam Manuscripts

In 1922, the exors. of Susanna A. Pease¹, of Bristol, presented the Reference Library at Devonshire House with a collection of manuscripts, which now form part of Portfolio 36. The manuscripts centre round the name of Thomas Aldam as, *e.g.*, Thomas Aldam to his fellow-prisoners in York Castle, with an account of a dream he had ; Thomas Aldam to Oliver Cromwell, April, 1654 ; Thomas Aldam's account of his visit to Warnsworth steeplehouse with George Fox in 1652 (consult *Camb. Jnl.* i. 34) ; letters to Friends from Thomas Aldam and James Nayler ; document respecting John Killam's guardianship of Thomas Aldam, Jun. ; and others.

We print the following from this valuable collection of manuscripts :

Priest Bowles and William Dewsbury

“ There is one Will^m Deusberye a cheife man of y^e sorte called Quaker who goes to & fro in y^e countrey dispersing scandalous opinions tending to the dishonor of god and to the prejudice of the public peace, and if one that hath the charge of a private congregation is lyable to be questioned by those in authoritye (as indeed he is) then I conceave [it] is he that shall disperse such opinions.

“ And therefore it is desyred that order may be given to apprehend the sayd Deusberye and that he may be questioned for dispersing his opinions to the dishonor of god as a disturber of y^e publique peace.

“ EDWARD BOWLES.”

“ I desire this Information may be presented by the Grand iurye to y^e Judge of Assize.

“ GEORGE TAYLER.”

“ These are to certifiye whom it may concerne that this information in this paper is the substance and as near as I can remember the words of an information that George Tayler our foreman of the Grand Jurye did deliver to mee

¹ We regret, that in the reference to this gift in vol. xix. p. 48, the name of Mrs. Thomas Pease was incorrectly given.

and the rest of the Grand-iurye saying that it was an information of Edward Bowles of Yorke Minister soe called delivered to him by his own hand to be signed and presented by us to the Judge: But upon Examination there being no Evidence of any perticular offence wee did all refuse to signe it but y^e foreman onely.

“ JOHN STORR

“ The 16 of May 1654.”

This episode concerning William Dewsbury (1621-1688) finds a place in chapter v of *The Life of William Dewsbury*, in the Barclay Series, 1836. Bowles was one of the four ministers of York during the Commonwealth. He has been described as having “a clear head and a warm heart.”

His request was presented by the foreman of the Grand Jury to Hugh Wyndham, the Judge, and Dewsbury was committed to York Castle till cleared by proclamation and set at liberty on the 24th of July.

John Storr was probably the Friend of that name whose home was at Hilston.

Richard Farnsworth, Adjudicator

Martine in Lincolnshire the 20th of the 9th m^o, 1656
Memoranda.

1^{ly} There come a Certeaine Company of friends; To Lay some causes, before the Truth in mee, which was heard and Determined; one was a slander cast upon John Hudson of Glentworth; who was slandered for Robbinge of A peare Tree; but he that slandered or as it was Reported y^e were the Raiser thereof, being A Keeper of a Parke, he being asked of it; as y^e Evidence certified, did deny it, & said he would not for much (not here named) cast such a Thing upon y^e mon; viz: y^e obous^d John Hudson; and expressed as y^e evidence certified that he was sorry that it should be reported as if he should cast any such thinge upon y^e mon; soe the said John Hudson stands cleare from beinge proved guilty of ony such Action as appeared at the Triale upon examination & as aforesaid.

2^{ly} And There was A Cause that was brought to the hearing; of one John Jessitk of Ingham in Lincolnshire that he should sell A sack of Barley for tenn shillings; and when it came to be livered would not take under 11^s; which was found to the controrie upon examination on the day abovesaid.

3^{ly} And there was some controversie betweene the abovesaid John Jessitk & one John Wright A blacksmith livinge at y^e said Ingham ; And they was both found in fault and owned condemnation upon whatever they had (since they were convinced till that time) Acted & spoke contrary to the Light ; And the controvisie now heard & determined y^e day abovesaid.

4^{ly} And the uife of John Jessitk confesed that shee had beene forward & uttered words hastily controry to y^e Light ; & therefore she owned condemnation upon whatever shee had uttered & done agst the Light.

5^{ly} And John Wright of Ingham haveing A Daughter living with one Thomas Craven being his hiered servant, There beinge some wanderinge beggars, goeing abroad contrarie to the law of England It was ordered by the said Thomas Craven to send his servant with them to the constable for y^e Answering of the Law, to make them a passe & Relive them from Constable to Constable ; yett the Constable beinge absent, they Lett them passe & goe without sending them as aforesaid and att the next Towne it appears that the beggars went & cast themselves upon the Constable & were sent by a passe from Constable to Constable ; And y^e Law allowing 2^d: To them that doth discover & have y^e wandering beggars to the first constable as I understand. The said John Wright went with his daughter or in her behalf to y^e Constable to demand 2^d for her: Though shee were servant to the said Thomas Craven & went with them to the Constable by her masters appointment ; & y^e Constable not being at home They was lett goe without a passe till They came at the next Towne. Yett nevertheles : Contrary to y^e minde & without the consent of Thomas Craven, the said John Wright gott 2^d: of y^e Constable for his daughter: And That thinge was brought to y^e hearing before mee, & The said John Wright was convicted of an errour in That Thinge & Confessed that he had done wronge & owned condemnation thereupon : for he confessed the acte to be unjust ; & he councelled unto it ; Therefore he being Convicted Confessed that his Councell to that unjust thinge was unjust. Soe it was ordered that by the Light which lett him see the unjustnesse both of his Councell to it ; & the Action it selfe, he should goe & give Councell to y^e undoeing of it ; & Lett the money be restored againe ;

which he then agreed unto at Martine the day examination ; & as aforesaid in witness whereof I here sett to my hand the day I from first above written : being the 20th day of y^e ninth month commonly called November : in y^e yeare accompted 1656.

RICHARD FFARNWORTH.

The Letter and Life of Scripture

I do declare in Trinitie Colledge in Cambridge, that we in this place called Universitie were onelie keepers of the letter of the Scriptures and might be void of the spirit, that the scripture bore witness of the great mysterie, Christ in us the Hope of Glorie, and that now Christ was born in those people called Quakers, whereupon I cut my name out of the Butteries, which signifies a leaving of the Colledge, and after a day it came into my Mind to put it in again and to give in this following paper :

“ To them of Trinity Colledge in Cambridge.

“ My cutting my name out of the Butteries proves but a sign of which this is the signification, that I deny to receive the profits of this place as formerlie, namely for this end, to bring up Youth to be Ministers of the Gospell. I deny these places to be the wellheads of the Divinitie and do declare that the true Ministers of the Gospell are gone forth but not out of this place, and that they are already born and not of the Letter by the operation of Man's brain but of the Spirit without the Letter & yet according to it. I deny therefore that any is made a Minister or Divine in this place as it is such. The Ministers of the Eternall Truth are gone forth which point to the true Teacher which opens the whole scripture & they were not begotten in this place, I deny therefore this place as it is such. I demand the profits of this place as having no Inheritance in the Earth, I take the profits as my inheritance, which if more than necessary food and raim^t I dispose of it to the Poor of that place whence it comes, in Yorkshire, here or elsewhere. And for my Necessaries I will not be idle, but as I have already declared in the Town, be ready to help any Poor Man

that wants Necessaries with my strength, & with my knowledge in the Toungues or otherwise further the propagation of the everlasting Gospell revealed in the Quakers unto the whole world.

“ JAMES JOLLIE.”

I do professe myselfe to continue in the said Colledge as a keeper of the Letter of the Scripture that it may not be corrupted or missensed, that so it may bear witness to the life of the Scripture wheresoever it is raised : as also to preserve any knowledge or Authors which may be serviceable in the like manner. Till such time as the Light and Life shall so shine that there shal be no need of an outward witness till every Man's Conscience shall bear witness to the Truth, through the Letter of the Scripture & the bookes of the wise men in all Ages, of all nations were nowhere extant. I am likewise ready to own any other Art or Science which is professed there that is not curious but necessary, for the common Good, and takes not up that Time which is to be spent in looking after that which is Eternall. I am ready when I am vacant from such like employm^{ts} which are more necessary & more for the common Good, to yeild my strength (as I said before) to him that wants necessaries or leisure to mind better things. And because the poor of that place whence the revenues of the Colledge come are to be preferred before all other, I dispose what is above my necessary ffood & raiment, & above what is needfull for the aforesaid purposes, I dispose of it all to them. And when I performe not these things I yeild up the place to another that can do the same.

That which is set down in the former Paper was declared to Oliver Cromwell, with a Narration of my proceedings in the Colledge and [t]heir Dealings with Mee thereupon.

MIDDLETON CHENEY, CO. NORTHANTS.

Register extract :

1794, March 26. *Baptism.*

“ Lydia Williams, a widow, bred a Quaker, aged Thirty Two, as she informes me, last Christmas.”

Extracted by Herbert Southam, Woking.