

First Publishers of Truth in Staffordshire

A FRESH MS. SOURCE

Among a small collection of MSS. given to the Library by Mabel Holdsworth which belonged to her father, Charles J. Holdsworth, is a seventeenth century paper¹ which adds materially to the Staffordshire section in *First Publishers of Truth*, 1907, pp. 229-30. Its title and opening paragraphs correspond closely with the MS. there printed. The third paragraph, about Humphrey Woolrich and those who were convinced at Eccleshall, Chebsey and Shalford, adds that "He had meetings at Richard Woolrich's house in Chebsey afores'd, who received him into his house at his first comeing which [was] about the year 1653." The following passages are not in the MS. previously used :

IN a short time after the s^d Humphrey Woolrich went to the house of Thomas Hammerley in the Moorlands, who went with him to a Meeting of Babptists at Ipston at the house of one Taylor and after some discourse with some of those people the s^d Humphrey walking out of the house it was supposed the one halfe of the Meeting followed him, the Man of the house and his wife being both at that time convinced that the Light of Christ Jesus that Enlighteneth all Men & shineth in the hart is the way to the father and giveth the knowledg of his Glory and had from that time friends Meetings at their house.

One time the s^d H. Woolrich being in prison at Stafford John Alsop of Ingestrey came to the Goaler and procured my liberty and was serviseable to me and many other friends in those dayes, w^{ch} were dayes of Gladness of hart to many who had been thristing after the Lord. to whom he opened his liveing springs in the desart, and caused his river to run in dry places, to whom be praises and honour in the Midst of the church which is in God world without End. Amen.

About this time came Thomas Holme to a bowling Alley near Leek and preached truth to the people then and one of the bowlers whose name was Rob^t Mellor was so affected with his testimony that he took the s^d Thomas to his house

¹ MS. Box 10.(1). 2.

and was convinced at that time with his wife who stood faithfull in their testimony to their dyeing day.

[Francis Cumbelford] removeing thence to Bradly kept a Meeting for friends at his house in y^e times of the persecution was a valiant Man for the truth and suffered for it both by imprisonment & loss of goods was an honest man & faithfull to his testimony to his End.

In the beginning of the 10^e Month 1654 came Richard Heacock into the Moorland parts of Staffordshire with the Messuage of Truth and many were convinced in and about Leek and Uttoxeter and settled Meetings at William Davenports, Mathew Dales & Thomas Hammersleys at Basford, who were y^e first with Richard Dale that received the s^d Richard & his testimony.

Also the s^d Thomas Holme the second time was one that came into these parts and many were convinced by him, he was a good man and a true Labourer, in the work of God. the first time the s^d Richard Heacock came into the Moorlands he was Moved to goe to Leek steeple house and there standing upon a form to declare the word of truth to the people was violently thrown down backwards and his head broaken and then haled out into the graveyard and thrown over the Wall into the street.

This Richard Heacock continued in the service of truth for some years and travailed in severall parts of this Nation and Ireland—and whilst he kept his Integrity to God he was serviceable and the Lord Blest his Endeavours—but sufferring his Mind to be drawn aside went into Whimses and totally lost his former condition and became an absolute apostate, and many that were convinced by him also turned aside from the truth.