

‘Let Calvinists adore eternal love’

A Supplement to The Formation of Haggate Baptist Chapel

Rex Watson 2010



Introduction

In publishing ‘The Formation of Haggate Baptist Chapel’(hereafter ‘FHBC’) in 2007, some information came in at a late stage, and I incorporated this by means of an Addendum. I did suggest that the whole study should only be seen as an interim one, as

further information might well come to light. In the writing of the booklet I was able to use some extracts, provided by a correspondent, from the ‘Stutterd Papers’ (see reference [54] in the booklet). More recently I have been able to examine much of this archive at first hand, and it is intended here to present some further information from this relevant to Haggate. It was noted in the above reference that the Papers were in two parts, however these are now reunited, the whole archive being in the possession of the Huntington Library in California. This is now catalogued, and hopefully may be readily available for study in the future.

My references in the booklet run from [1] to [65]. Here I will use these, and continue the sequence with new references. The documents, letters from John STUTTARD (hereafter ‘JS’) to his brother Thomas, are identified by date, running from 1779 to 1793. I have presented matters according to some rather arbitrary headings, rather than in a simple chronological run. Extracts from the letters are in italics.

Preachers and Preaching at Haggate

The principal preachers were of course William SMITH and Ambrose WALTON (until his death in 1783). Despite Haggate’s (later?) reputation of isolationism, there were visiting preachers, this being very common amongst the churches of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Association, though Haggate did not join. (Whilst the Association held annual meetings from 1787 (the first at Colne) with a circular letter and keynote speakers (as we would term it nowadays), it did have a somewhat less formal or less organized existence for quite some years before then ; the Papers make reference to its affairs from time to time.)

William SMITH William is seen by Leaver [3] and Shutt [4] as the only elder in these early years, but as seen in FHBC Ambrose WALTON had a prominent role also, if maybe somewhat intermittent, to 1783, when he died. William remains a somewhat shadowy figure perhaps, but a little more can be said.

14 November 1783. *Lord's Day before last William SMITH preached a funeral for Ambrose WALTON.* This was not the burial service, Ambrose being buried at Wheatley ; we might call it a commemorative service. JS notes with some disapproval that *he gave no notice Sabbath day before, your mother was not there, nor any of A.W's children, save one.* (John and Thomas' mother Margaret remained a member at Haggate until her death.)

6 July 1787. *William SMITH, Hill, enquires What is the difference between miracles and providence?* JS does not offer a reply in his letter ! This is the only example of a query of this nature from William, but he may have deferred to John in theological matters : John was certainly well read and highly regarded in the Association.

10 Oct 1787. *Yesterday four persons were baptised by William SMITH in the water on the back of the barn at Pighole, namely John RUSHTON, Marsden Chapel, John RAWSON, Lee, John LATHOM, Coal Sike, --- MITCHELL, servant at Hill.*

19 Jan 1788. *John TATTERSALL, alias old Kibbler, interred at Haggate. Went to hear sermon, W SMITH preached well from Psalm 68-20 'Unto God the Lord belong the Issues from Death'.* The Haggate burial register gives John's age as 66, the burial date 11 Jan. Perhaps William would have been pleased with the praise from JS !

Although the letters contain much information about visiting preachers at Colne, these do not include William SMITH. (Yet Haggate members are occasionally noted as attending service at Colne.) However as noted below, John STUTTARD did officiate at least at burials at Haggate.

Ambrose WALTON There is nothing further to speak of to report on Ambrose, other than in connection with his funeral sermon for John BURROWS in 1780 [66]. After the comment by JS that this was ‘barren’, there is the further note *was shut up, he says*. Quite what this means is unclear, but it does sound as if there was pressure from some party to speak in a certain way, or maybe to leave some things unsaid.

John STUTTARD As noted above, John did from time to time conduct burial services at Haggate, though he did not it seems preach at ordinary Sunday services, say on exchange. A number of these burials were of John’s own children (Colne did not have its own burial yard until its new chapel opened in 1788.) He had in fact many children, nearly all died in infancy, or were stillborn. In Jan 1784 there is the sad note that a dead child had been delivered, and *I know not how to go to Haggate* (from Southfield, in very snowy conditions) *about the coffin and interment*.

In October 1786 John tells us that he was baptised 19 years previously, and again on 13 Sept 1793 he says *26 years this day since I baptised*. This would of course have been at Haggate, in 1767, and five months after the chapel there was licensed. He had in 1749 been baptised at Colne St Bartholomew : for a convert to the Baptist cause, this would not count, adult baptism was necessary.

Abraham NOWELL Abraham NOWELL is generally accepted as having been co-pastor with William SMITH from 1790, and continued pastor until his death in 1828. JS

has some information about his early days. In April 1786 he simply notes that Abraham, of Holt Hill, is in poor health, and needs crutches. In November 1788 Abraham apparently wrote to John regarding a mathematical problem involving oxen and acres ! There are though two references to Abraham's early efforts at speaking, as follows.

21 Oct 1788. *I hear Abraham NOWELL Holt Hill is a lively speaker in the Haggate Tuesday night Religious Conversation Meetings.* This early reference to meetings other than Sunday services suggests that Haggate was perhaps quite thriving.

21 Nov 1789. *Last Sabbath Abraham NOWELL made his first essay as a public preacher at Haggate and I hear he was well approved.*

Henry TAYLOR In October 1779 and July the next year, Ambrose WALTON is noted as exchanging with Henry TAYLOR of Crawshaw booth in Rossendale.

19 October 1779. *Preaches what is commonly called Calvinism.....is very zealous and popular.....They have lately opened a new chapel. Are Baptists but have not a connection with their brethren of that persuasion owing to their irregularity in forming a church, and building so near Mr NUTTALL of Goodshaw.*

Newbigging's 'History of the Forest of Rossendale' [67] has considerable detail on the Baptists in that area. There is no information however about Henry TAYLOR, nor can his church be identified. John NUTTALL was minister at Goodshaw for many years.

The note about 'Calvinism' above is a little unexpected perhaps, given that both Haggate and Colne were undoubtedly Calvinistic in outlook (see the piece next for 1785).

George WALKDEN One might expect that preachers at Haggate would be Baptist, generally, and if not that they be adherents of non-Baptist groups with otherwise somewhat similar ideologies, for instance Sandemanian or Inghamite. However George WALKDEN, from Blackburn, was a Methodist ! [68].

27 June 1785. About Christmas 1784 GeoWALKDEN from Blackburn preaching at Haggate was very bitter against the Doctrines of Grace. Some weeks after the following lines were put into his hand at Burnley – composed by Thomas TATTERSALL of Hill, Briercliffe...

This poetry is reproduced here in facsimile, and the lines can speak for themselves. The Doctrines of Grace were otherwise known as the Five Points of Calvinism [69]

Let Calvinists adore eternal Love
Let Halleburys reach the Courts above
With ardent zeal your Doctrine still pursue
Faint not in Heart - although in Numbers few
Yell the Arminians with amplified voice
The Scriptures' fell of an eternal Choice
And prove thereby that your Salvation's Plan
Was firm decreed before the world began
Ere the ~~Arminians~~ ^{beginning} ~~of the world~~ ^{of time} began
If not of Works, but otherwise - of Grace
Surprising Grace, made known to none, but those
Ere Time began the Almighty Father chose
Declare that from the Stem of Jesse came
A pious Calvinist of noble Name
Elect and precious the chief corner Stone
Which his own chosen build their Hopes upon
Clear as the Day, you evidently find
The promises to the Elect confined
From back to back the bright Records of Heaven
So there, and only unto these are given
Moreover whom he did predestinate

But let the Holy Scriptures witness the
your yours

Deposited the Truth so implicitly so was
then you should not be a Deceiver

In his work 'Foundations', Percy Stock, although presumably very well grounded in Particular Baptist history and characteristics, and writing in the 1930s, admits in his Chapter 'Calvinism' that he has given up 'any attempt to understand the old Calvinistic outlook' [70]. For most today too it may be difficult to give favour to the notion of 'Particular Redemption'. Perhaps in Baptist circles the Strict Baptists and Free Grace Baptists come nearest to holding the old Calvinistic views (see [71]). However this writer is at best a local historian, and would not really presume to pronounce on such matters !

Contributions for Colne's new Chapel

Colne opened its new 'Meeting House' on 1 July 1788. They were left with a substantial debt of the order of two to three hundred pounds, not finally paid off till 1792. John STUTTARD spent much time 'begging' (this was the term commonly used) to reduce this. In late April of 1788 he spent a day and a half in Briercliffe and Marsden Height, accompanied each day by a Haggate member, namely James HOYLE on Tuesday 22nd (*from 10 in the morning to nine at night*), and John GIBSON on Thursday 24th (*we had done at noon...we had a very wet journey*). He says *this is my first attempt of this kind* : there was in fact to be much more, often in unfamiliar territory. JS details amounts contributed, as follows. Most of these can be identified as Haggate trustees, or having some connection to the chapel. (See FHBC, particularly the Appendix of names ; the first names suggested here are not certain)

*William SMITH 5/- R(obert) RAMSDEN 2/6 J(ames) HOYLE 2/6 John HEAP 2/-
T(homas) TATTERSALL 2/6 E WILKINSON 2/6 J(ohn) SMITH 2/6 J BARKER 2/-*

*J(ohn) GIBSON 1/3 J RUSHTON 3/6 J(oseph) THORNTON 2/- J MITCHELL 2/-
S(tephen) SMITH 2/-*

In fact, totals for the two days are given respectively as £2-16-7(+halfpenny !) and 20/11, so there were presumably many other contributors, often no doubt of small amounts. Many of the named individuals above are known to have been of relatively substantial means, for example the SMITH brothers, with their farming and textile interests, likewise James HOYLE. It was only the previous year that Haggate's own chapel had had major work [72], so the generosity here is to be admired. Perhaps it was a shrewd move on John's part to be accompanied each day by a Haggate member, on Haggate's patch !

Early Scotch Baptist links

No definite contact with Scotch Baptists in the 18th century has previously been established. However in 1789 there is some information, in the following.

21 Nov 1789. Several tracts written by M'LAEN (McLEAN) of Edinburgh have been brought into this neighbourhood from the Fyled (Fylde !) country by John FOULDS. ... It appears to me that in doctrine and practice they (the Baptists in Scotland) are pretty near what we conceive to be the Sandemanian plan. I believe Mr M'LAEN wrote a letter to the church at Haggate about 20 years since.

In fact the letter goes on to explain that John FOULDS had recently been *put away from the (Inghamite) church at Wheatley for avowing his belief in adult baptism*. It is

suggested that McLEAN's piece had influenced him. JS also notes that there are *expectations of his face being set hitherwards* (that is, to Colne's church).

Some tension between Haggate and Colne

Whilst the two churches would have been some way apart in their beliefs and probably forms of service, we have seen that there were some interconnections, for example the occasional attendance at Colne of Haggate members (though maybe not the opposite), John STUTTARD officiating at Haggate burials, use of both for registering of births (see FHBC for the SMITHs [73]), and not least the contributions made by Haggate people to Colne's chapel fund, described above.

Generally, change of church membership was a formal matter, as often still today. Thomas STUTTARD received his 'dismissal' from Haggate, to Salendine Nook near Huddersfield in 1781 [74], and according to the Stock fragment [54] John received his from Haggate to the newly formed Colne in 1769. It was noted earlier that their mother Margaret did remain a member at Haggate until she died. She had however made moves near the end of her life to transfer to Colne, but as it seems refused permission, as the following indicates. (The change may have been under negotiation when she died.)

25 Sept 1790. ...*She had spoken to Haggate people for a dismissal, and was informed a few days before her death that they had some hesitations – wished to talk with me – had disapproved of something N SMITH delivered in a lecture at Trawden and believed that he and I were intimate.*

Nathan SMITH (not thought to be any relation to the Briercliffe family or to Richard earlier at Wainsgate) became pastor at Barnoldswick in 1790, coming from Cowling Hill [75]. He is quite often mentioned in the letters ; the churches at both these places were in the Lancashire and Yorkshire Association. Clearly the sentiments in his talk at Trawden were not so palatable to the Haggate faithful.

How much more we might have known

10 Oct 1782. *The account for Barnoldswick, Bowland, Cowling Hill and Haggate went in 8 weeks since.*

A Mr. ROBINSON, of Chesterton near Cambridge, was gathering information on the history of Baptist churches up and down the land : JS had been asked for information on Colne. (Robert) ROBINSON, Baptist minister (and farmer !) was a fairly prolific writer. However, a year later we read (14 Nov) that *Mr RIPPON says Mr ROBINSON's History of the Baptists may not appear.* (See FHBC for RIPPON [76].) And indeed there seem to be no church histories amongst his published works.

There is in fact a letter from RIPPON to JS, 27 Oct 1798, asking *Is this church Calvinistic? Where is the place of worship situated ?* (No Googlemaps !) *Are William SMITH and Abraham NOWELL yet ministers or pastors of it ?*

In conclusion

These letters give us a few further insights into how the church was, and passing glimpses of the lives of some of the members, around the time of say its third decade. Incidentally, they give a lot of new information about Colne and other Association churches, and also much miscellaneous information about Colne and the surrounding area generally. It is my hope to write about the Colne church next, particularly its building venture.

References (in order in this Supplement ; [66] on are new)

- [54] Salendine Nook, Stutterd Papers, no.14 ; however see later part of first paragraph in Introduction here
- [3] Abraham Leaver, Historical Fragments of Haggate Baptist Church, 1934
- [4] W. Shutt, Bi-Centenary Celebrations (of The Baptist Chapel Haggate), 1960
- [66] FHBC, p19
- [67] Thomas Newbigging, History of the Forest of Rossendale, Chapter IV, 1868
- [68] W.A. Abram, A History of Blackburn, p367, 1877
- [69] See for example www.grace.org.uk
- [70] See [1], p215
- [71] See for example www.strictbaptisthistory.org.uk : this has a link to [69] also
- [72] FHBC, p19
- [73] FHBC, p15
- [74] See [1], p163
- [54] As above
- [75] Rev. E. Winnard, History of the Baptist Church Barnoldswick, p63, 1916
- [76] FHBC, p7