
A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

Monmouth, Kiffin and the Gosfrights

MR. A. L. MORTON[1] has recently drawn attention to the significance of the Anglo-Dutch family of Gosfright in the tangled and tragic story of James, Duke of Monmouth, son of Charles II. Monmouth's mother, Lucy Walter or Walters, had an aunt Margaret (Protheroe) who married Peter Gosfright. Lucy's mother was living with Peter and Margaret in 1654, when they named their daughter Kiffeana.[2] Monmouth's biographers seem to have missed the significance of this; the obvious explanation is that the Gosfrights were members of William Kiffin's church, the premier Particular Baptist society in London, and paid their pastor this somewhat embarrassing compliment. Perhaps they also had some family or business connection with Kiffin, who was a prosperous City merchant.

Peter's brother George Gosfright also had close connections with Monmouth and his mother; he was the Duke's paymaster on an expedition to the Low Countries, and was one of the witnesses on whom the Exclusionists relied to prove that Charles had married Lucy. Monmouth may indeed have been born in his house in Rotterdam in 1649. Mr. Morton claims that George has not previously been identified with the Baptists, but he was indexed as a Baptist by Dr. W. T. Whitley,[3] who gives references to the State Papers[4] as well as to the broadsheet[5] of 28th February, 1660, in which his name is associated with those of William Kiffin and Benjamin Hewling, Kiffin's son-in-law. L. F. Brown[6] had previously drawn attention to his reinstatement in 1659 along with Kiffin and other Baptist officers of the London trained-bands.

Although Mr. Morton's discovery is thus not quite new, it is undoubtedly the case that the general historians of the period have ignored Monmouth's Baptist relations, while denominational historians have overlooked the political significance of the Gosfrights and their circle. The connection may help to confirm the depth and sincerity of Monmouth's radical and democratic beliefs; it does something to rehabilitate the reputation of Lucy Walter, which James II was at pains to tarnish, and it may also explain why Charles II did what he could to mitigate the persecution of the Baptists, among whom were friends and relations of his favourite son. The Twelve Confessors of Aylesbury, sentenced to death for nonconformity in 1663, owed their lives to Kiffin's ready access to

the King.[7] Charles could not secure the repeal of the Act of 1593 under which they had been convicted, but he ensured that future proceedings were taken under Clarendon's milder Conventicle Act.

Finally, the connection between the Duke and Kiffin's circle may explain why Kiffin's grandsons Benjamin and William Hewling went into exile with Monmouth. They fought with him at Sedgemoor, were captured and executed. Although the rank and file of the rebels were treated with merciless severity, James II was ready to pardon some of the leaders who were *prima facie* far more dangerous than the Hewlings: yet Kiffin found that he could not buy a reprieve. James had such reason to fear his nephew Monmouth that he would not show mercy to those whose link with the Duke was personal as well as political.

The last word has not been said on this strange family connection between the Court of the Restoration and the Baptists of the City, and Mr. Morton has done us a service in throwing fresh light on it.

NOTES

[1] *The Amateur Historian* (1962), vol. 5, pp. 142-44.
[2] Elizabeth D'Oyley, *James Duke of Monmouth*, p. 18.
[3] *Baptist Bibliography* (1916), vol. 1, p. 218.
[4] State Papers (Domestic), xxxii. 140; xxxiii. 20.
[5] *A Letter sent to the Lord Mayor of London by Lieut. Col. Kiffen, Capt. Gosfright, Capt. Hewling*, etc. (1660).
[6] L. F. Brown, *Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men* (1912), p. 185.
[7] A. H. J. Baines, *The Signatories of the Orthodox Confession of* 1679 (1960), p. 8.

ARNOLD H. J. BAINES

John E. T. Hough: *Servants of the Word.* 24 pp. 1s. Baptist Union.

Mr. Hough has once more put all Baptists, and lay preachers in particular, in his debt by producing this short history of the Baptist Lay Preachers' Federation in connection with the Federation's Jubilee, 1903-63. The story is well-told and the production is good. It is also cheap enough for many ministers to give a copy to each of their lay preachers. It could certainly widen the vision of those whose conception of the office and of the Federation is restricted.