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Persecution at Lynn, 1698.

THE Conventicle Acts of Charles and Elizabeth were not repealed at the accession of William and Mary, but if dissenters chose to take certain oaths, they were exempt from the penalties therein specified. Mr. James Marham of Lynn took up the work begun there by Thomas Grantham, but apparently neglected some technical formality. He was fined at Quarter Sessions and involved in a network of litigation that entangled him from 1691 till 1698, when the Lincolnshire Association of General Baptists, to which he belonged, took up the case. A further request was made to their General Assembly at Whitesuntide, and a printed statement of the facts was drawn up. It was a custom in the Established Church to send out "briefs" for deserving objects, generally with some state backing, when collections were taken up in the parish churches. A similar system had been adopted by many Baptist churches, and there are many notices in church books as to weak points in the system, or as to liberal contributions made. The printed case of James Marham was endorsed with a personal letter from reputable men, and was widely circulated. Benjamin Keach and Richard Adams had both been General Baptist ministers, and though they had become Calvinists, they recognized that this was a case which involved all. It is, however, to be regretted that the contributions were meagre, so that in 1707 it was necessary to inaugurate another general collection to supply Marham's necessities.

The letter is interesting as showing an early use of the title Reverend.

To Mr Rich Kent in Winchester Hampshir

Reverend Bro:

This case here presented to you is such that ye like hath not been heard of since King William came to the Crown. Our Beloved Bro: Marham [now of Boston] being undon in ye defense of our liberty as by Law establish^{et}, had he not defended his cause wee

know not where it might have ended. He is a worthy Baptist Minister, & [sic] because an Anabaptist meeting they prosecuted him, resolving there should be no such people allowed to keep up a meeting in that town [of Lynn]. Wee are all greatly concerned for his deplorable case, he having liv'd well in the world, & a man of good parts, & of a very publick spirit. Pray stir up ye people to act bountifully towards him, & return what money you collect to Mr Benj Dennis, Direct your letter to him to be left at Mrs Jones^s coffee-hous in ffinch lane near the Royal Exchange.

Thus with our unfeigned love to your self, Wee rest your brethren in the sacred bonds of ye gospell.

Benj: Keach.

Rich^d: Adams.