

THE REVD THOMAS LOVEDER
DISSENTING MINISTER OF HAVANT

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Very little is known about Thomas Loveder's association with Havant. In the outline history of Havant United Reformed Church written by Tony Gardiner and Jack Barrett in 1994 a Mr Loveder is listed as minister following J. Bouchier who was instituted in 1715, but beyond noting that Mr Loveder is reputed to have had 200 hearers, no further details are given.

Charles Surman's *Index of Congregational Ministers* in Dr Williams's Library is a little more informative, giving the starting date of Mr Loveder's ministry at Havant as 1719. This suggests that he was the first minister to be appointed to the new chapel in The Pallant, believed to have been opened in the previous year. Unfortunately Surman's sources are not given (at least, in the online version of his *Index*), although it is known that Surman worked exclusively from published material and did not use documentary sources.

Mr Loveder was certainly at Havant in 1720 when he witnessed Thomas Millard's will (HRO Ref. No. 1721P42). Thomas Millard, whose wife Mary was described in St Faith's burial register in 1728 as an 'anabaptist', had applied for a licence to use his house as a Dissenters' meeting-house. The term 'anabaptist' was often used by the Anglican clergy in a derogatory sense to describe Dissenters in general, but in this instance its more precise meaning was clearly intended. In reply to the bishop of Winchester's Visitation of 1725 Ralph Baddeley, rector of St Faith's, noted that there is 'One meeting-house belonging to Prisyterian [sic] dissenters, consisting of about 120 persons that live in the parish.' Adding 'Anabaptists 20, but no meeting-house.' (W R Ward (ed), *Parson and Parish in Eighteenth-*

Century Hampshire: replies to bishops' visitations, Hampshire County Council, Winchester, 1995). This short statement confirms that by 1725 the Dissenters possessed their own purpose-built chapel in Havant while the Anabaptists continued to meet in a private house. It is also of interest that Mr Loveder was on sufficiently friendly terms with one of the leading Anabaptist families in the town to witness Thomas Millard's will.

Although Mr Loveder remained at Havant for a good part of his working life it has to be repeated that little is known about his ministry here. Only one additional piece of information has so far come to light, in a letter to *The Monthly Repository* (June 1823) stating that 'Mr Loveder of Havant' preached a funeral service for Mr Robert Bagster a Presbyterian pastor at Chichester who died 'about the year 1730'. The letter, recording some facts about the history of Dissent in Chichester, also informs us that John Bouchier (Mr Loveder's precursor at Havant) preached at Chichester alternately with Mr Bagster for some years — 'at one time they held Arundel, at another Midhurst, but the longest time Havant with Chichester; and preached alternately at these places.' Clearly, before Havant had its own chapel it was served by a visiting minister.

Mr Loveder moved from Havant to Newington Green, but his ministry there was very short. According to information received from Alan Ruston, the local Unitarian historian, and Andrew Pakula, the present minister at Newington Green Unitarian Church — the successor to the Dissenting Chapel — Loveder stayed there from 1736 until 1738, a few years after which, in 1741, he 'conformed' to the Church of England. While at Newington Green, Loveder served as librarian to Dr Williams's Library, then in Red Cross Street, Cripplegate (James Brown, *Sketches of the History and Antiquities of the Parish of Stoke Newington, in the County of Middlesex*, 1783). The story of Mr Loveder's conforming is told in a remarkable letter (Appendix 1) that survives among the ordination papers

of the diocese of Winchester (HRO Ref. No. 21M65/E1/4/240). It is a letter dated 12th September 1741 from Richard Bingham rector of St Faith's, Havant to the bishop of Winchester, Benjamin Hoadly, supporting Thomas Loveder's request for ordination into the Church of England. According to the letter, written some five years after Loveder had left Havant, relations between him and Bingham were said to be 'friendly' and we learn that Loveder 'had the usual Advantages as such as are designed for Teachers in the Dissenting Way, having bin first bred in a Grammar School & afterwards spent four years under the Discipline of one of their private Academies.'

Thomas Loveder evidently made a favourable impression upon the bishop as he was duly ordained and inducted to the rectory of Little Stambridge in Essex. Whether by coincidence or design, the Reverend Thomas Loveder became rector in the very parish which, a century earlier, had been in the hands of the Bouchier family when Sir John Bouchier signed the death warrant of King Charles I and supported the Cromwellian religious settlement; being appointed a 'trier and ejector' of the Anglican clergy in 1654. It will be remembered that a John Bouchier was Loveder's predecessor at Havant, though further research is needed to establish a family connection.

No more is known about Thomas Loveder's ministry at Little Stambridge than is known about his pastorate at Havant and Newington Green except that while at Little Stambridge he published a selection of his sermons. The review that appeared in *The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* (Vol. xviii, 1751, p. 470) was critical, not so much of the sermons themselves, but the author's stated reasons for publishing them. The possible implication being that the reviewer did not consider the sermons worth publishing.

Thomas Loveder made his will on Thursday, 5th October 1758 (TNA Ref. PROB 11/884). It is an interesting document that throws a flood of light on an otherwise obscure figure. The will may be left largely to speak for itself and the text is reproduced in Appendix 2, but there are a few points that call for comment and explanation.

The parish registers of Catherington, Blendworth and Warblington in Hampshire and Westbourne in Sussex contain numerous entries to members of local Loveder families and without the evidence of the will it would be reasonable to assume that Thomas Loveder was a local man. However, all the references to his relatives in the will are to Somerset people, in particular to those living in the parishes of Goathurst and North Petherton near Bridgwater. Reference to the church registers of these parishes reveals numerous instances of the family name. A distribution map of the Loveder surname based on the 1881 census shows the greatest concentration in Somerset followed by a slightly lesser concentration in south-east Hampshire and West Sussex, with a slight scattering in Northamptonshire. It is an unusual surname and it is likely that all those bearing it were ultimately related. The origins of the family and its dispersal await further enquiry.

Thomas Loveder's publication of some of his sermons has been referred to, but in a brief clause in his will he instructs his executors: 'All my Sermon notes whether written in Quarto or Octavo I will and require shall be burnt to Ashes as soon as possible after my decease'. One wonders why he was so keen for them to be destroyed, and therefore not published, and why he had not destroyed them himself.

My final comment on the will concerns one of the witnesses: Adam Calamy of Cateaton Street. Any student of Dissent will prick up his ears at the mention of that name and Thomas Loveder's choice of this witness begs many interesting questions. Adam Calamy was an attorney at law and

as such would be a proper person to prepare and witness a will, but he was also a regular contributor to *The Gentleman's Magazine* of essays on polemical theology and republican politics under the pseudonym of 'A Consistent Protestant'. Adam was the son of a Presbyterian minister and the grandson of Edmund Calamy also a Presbyterian minister, but famous for his three volume work on the biographies of the 2,000 or so ministers ejected from the Church in 1662 following the restoration of King Charles II. One of the ejected clergy whose career was summarized by Edmund Calamy was John Harrison who founded the first Dissenting congregation in Havant. Thomas Loveder was surely aware of this history and I like to think that he appreciated the significance of his own part in it.

Appendix 1

May it please your Lordship

The Gentleman who waits upon you with this Letter, is one that has bin personally known to me for many years, havin bin the Teacher of a Dissenting Congregation in my Parish ever since I have bin in it, and with whom I have held a friendly Correspondence. His name is Loveder.

He has now a desire of conforming to ye Church of England as by Law established, and of being admitted into ye Ministry, I believe, upon no other Motive but that of Conviction of the Reasonableness of Conformity to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church. Therefore at his Request, I thought my self bound in Justice to testifie to your Lordship what I know as to his Moral Character, which is, that he has always conducted himself by the Rules of Sobriety & Peaceableness, & has led an orderly, unblameable & exemplary Life, & tho he has bin so unhappy, thro the Prejudice of Education, as to dissent from the established Church, yet has he ever preserved the Xtian *Επιεικεια**, and not brought a railing Accusation.

* Reasonableness

As to Learning, Mr Loveder has had the usual Advantages of such as are designed for Teachers in the Dissenting Way, having bin first bred in a Grammar School & afterwards spent four years under the Discipline of one of their private Academies.

If yr Lordship shall please to accept of this Gentleman as a Candidate for Holy Orders, I am verily persuaded he will make an useful Teacher in the Church of England.

I have before observed to yr Lordship, that Mr Loveder's Motive of Conforming was Conviction, for having divested himself of Prejudice, and put himself into a State of Indifferency, he began to re-examine the Controversy between the Church of England and the Dissenters, and upon an impartial Enquiry found that the Terms of Communion were not so difficult as had bin represented, and to satisfie himself throughly he has in a summary way drawn up his Reasons for conforming.

This I thought my self bound in Justice to signifie to your Lordship, at Mr Loveder's Request; & I dare venture to promise my self that your Lordship will not take amiss the Trouble that this Gentleman & I shall give you in this Affair, having before experimented your Lordship's Condescension & Easiness of Access, And therefore I take the Liberty of subscribing my self, with the greatest Deference.

My Lord, Your Lordship's most dutiful & obedient humble Servant
Havant Sep. 12. 1741 Ri. Bingham

Hampshire Record Office Ref. 21M65/E1/4/240Appendix 2

Will of Thomas Loveder 1758

In the Name of God Amen I Thomas Loveder Clerk and Rector of the parish of Little Stambridge in the County of Essex being of sound Senses and Memory revoking all other Wills do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following. Imprimis I resign my Soul to God who gave it trusting to the Merits of our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of my Sins and an inheritance among all them who are Sanctified And as to my Body I appoint it to be decently and at a moderate Expence interred in the Burial Ground of the parish where I may happen to dye. Item as to my Worldly Goods I constitute and appoint my Cousin Thomas Mills Sugar-Broker of Clements Lane Lombard Street London and Mr. James Harmar Goldsmith in Ship Yard near Temple Bar London my Executors in Trust to dispose of them as hereinafterwards is expressed that is to say After my Legal Debts (if any such shall appear) and funeral Expences are discharged I will and require the aforesaid Tho' Mills and James Harmar to pay or cause to be paid to Richard Loveder Taylor the Son of Richard Loveder late of North-Petherton in the County of Somerset the sum of Ten Pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain and as to a Bond of Twenty Pounds due to me from my Brother in Law Henry Dum[m]jett and now in the Custody of Mr. Willm. Blake of Taunton in the County of Somerset and is at present so Mislaidd that it cannot be found my Will is that if ever it is found it be forthwith Cancelled. Item I give and Bequeath to the Poor of the parish of Little Stambridge in the County of Essex the sum of Fifteen Pounds to be distributed by Mr. John Spurgion and Mr. Robert Lee of Little Stambridge provided nevertheless that Josiah Draper, inhabitant of Great Stambridge but Parishioner of Little Stambridge have for his part Five Pounds of the aforesaid sum if he survives me, if not, then I desire that the money be given to his Wife if

living and if dead to be divided equally among their Children and to my friend Talbot Smith Doctor of Physic in Wellbeck Street London I give [smudged] and bequeath the sum of Ten Pounds. All my Sermon notes whether written in Quarto or Octavo I will and require shall be burnt to Ashes as soon as possible after my decease Item I give and bequeath to the aforesaid Mr. Tho Mills one of my Executors in Trust the sum of One hundred pounds together with all my Study of Books and Book cases and to my friend Mr. Harmer my other Executor the sum of Twenty pounds and to Robert and Sarah Batchelor of Taunton in the County of Somerset the sum of Twenty pounds All the rest of my Estate real or personal I give and bequeath to my Coz. Philip Batchelor the Son of the aforesaid Robert and Sarah Batchelor and his Heirs for ever and I desire my Executors in Trust for the aforesaid Philip Batchelor to take care that he be kept at School till he can write a good Hand and understands Arithmetic and then to put him an Apprentice to such a Trade or Business as they shall judge him fit for But if the aforesaid Phil. Batchelor shall dye before he comes to the year of Twenty then my Will is that all my Estate shall be divided into an Equal proportion between his Parents Robert and Sarah Batchelor who shall be intituled to one third Part of it and to Robert Loveder of Go[a]thurst in Somersetshire Farmer and Richard Loveder Taylor who shall share between them the other two Parts. And forasmuch as I have charged my Executors with the payment of certain Legacies and with the care of my Kinsman's Schooling etc I have left the sum of One thousand pounds to carry them thro' this I undertaking that is to say, Five hundred and fifty Pounds in the three [smudged] per cent Annuities Consolidated and Four hundred and fifty Pounds in the three and half per cent Annuities reduced and if God spares my Life a few Years longer I may possibly add to the aforesaid Sum. I desire my Legatees may have their Money paid them within six months after my decease and also that they be paid in a due Proportion to the rise or fall of the aforesaid Annuities that is to say If [f...] above par, more, if under par less, will be their due and finally if any

dispute shall happen among my Relations as touching this my Will and Testament it shall be submitted to the Judgment of my aforesaid Executors in Trust and determined by them without having recourse to Law about it. Written with my own hand this fifth day of October in the year of our Lord 1758 and in the thirty second year of the Reign of his Majesty King George the Second whom may God long preserve. Thomas Loveder Signed sealed delivered published and declared by the said Thomas Loveder the Testator as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of Adam Calamy, Cateaton street. Cha: Punter his Clerk.

Proved: London, 25th February 1763, PCC. TNA Catalogue Reference: PROB 11/884

