

THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP:  
THE CONNECTIONAL AND INTER-DENOMINATIONAL ASPECTS THEREOF,  
AMONG SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH BAPTISTS

THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP;  
THE CONNECTIONAL AND INTER-DENOMINATIONAL ASPECTS THEREOF,  
AMONG SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH BAPTISTS

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A Thesis  
Submitted to  
the Faculty of the  
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Theology

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by  
G. Hugh Wamble  
November, 1955  
Louisville, Kentucky

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To My Two Girls  
Beverly Fay  
and  
Susan Elizabeth

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Beth's Birthday,  
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ERRATA

Page 223 is duplicated; the two pages are numbered 223 and 223a, respectively.

Page 456 is omitted.

ABBREVIATIONS<sup>1</sup>

BAR: The Baptist Annual Register.

BQ: The Baptist Quarterly, New Series.

Cong. Trans.: Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society.

Trans.: Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society.

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1. See Bibliography, infra, p. 540, for additional information on these periodicals.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a revival of interest in the Church. The books which have been published on the subject are too numerous to name. However, it bears notice that such factors as the modern missionary movement, the Tractarian movement within the Church of England, Ultramontanism in Roman Catholicism, and the modern ecumenical movement have stimulated much conversation on the doctrine of the Church within the past century. The contemporary revival of interest in ecclesiology among Baptists, however, is largely attributable to the ecumenical movement. Though Baptists have been divided on the issue of the identification of Baptist churches with ecumenical organizations, their interest in the doctrine of the Church has been intensified.

British Baptists have taken a greater interest in the subject than Baptists from other parts of the world, for they are more closely related to the twentieth century attempt to comprehend evangelical Christendom in a World Council. They have published a number of works which set forth, or purport to set forth, the Baptist view of the Church.<sup>1</sup> None of these

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1. Typical of the English studies in ecclesiology are the following: H. Wheeler Robinson, The Life and Faith of the Baptists (revised edition; London: The Kingsgate Press, 1946); Ernest A. Payne, The Fellowship of Believers (enlarged edition; London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1952); A. Dakin, The Baptist View of the Church and Ministry (London: The Baptist Union Publication Department, 1944); and Robert C. Walton, The Gathered Community (London: Carey Press, 1946). The books of Robinson and Payne first appeared in 1927 and 1944.

books has been a thorough, historical study of Baptist ecclesiology, but they have accented the necessity for a historical study of the origin and development of Baptist ecclesiology.

A. Objective of This Thesis

The objective of this thesis is to determine the degree and character of the extra-local relations of seventeenth century English Baptists to themselves and other professing Christians outside the Baptist persuasion. This is an investigation of the inner life of Baptists. It is a study in ecclesiology, but it involves more than summary statements of the Baptist views about Church, Ministry, Baptism, Lord's Supper, Worship, and Discipline. It involves the determination of how and why Baptists defined the principles and developed the practices which they did. Christian fellowship is the motif by which the inner life of Baptists is studied, because the vital element in corporate religious life is the manner in which believers are related to each other. Both negative and positive aspects of the inter-relations of believers come within the limits of this study.

B. Definition of Terms

The title of this thesis has been carefully chosen in order to state specifically the exact area of the study. Unfortunately, however, the terms are not self-explanatory. One of them (fellowship) is loaded with accretions from the

modern ecumenical movement and contemporary conversation in ecclesiology; another (connectional) is a term of relationship which may convey various meanings to various readers. It is necessary, therefore, that the terms of the title be clearly defined lest ambiguity derive from the title itself.

1. Concept and Practice. "Concept and Practice" are considered two aspects of the same thing. It is possible clearly to delineate them, but contradistinction is desirable only for purposes of precision of definition. In contradistinction, "concept" implies the theoretical aspect, and "practice" the functional. In this study the terms are infrequently employed, but the realities which they represent are constantly implied.

Seventeenth century English Baptists had no detailed, conceptual blueprint of ecclesiology. They were ecclesiological experimentalists who were developing their church views under the influence of varied and diverse stimuli. When they consciously defined their concept, they tried to pattern their practice after their theory. In a sense, therefore, concept followed practice; in another sense, practice followed concept. There was a tendency for experimentalism to give way to conservatism. This thesis deals with the variations in the concept and practice of Christian unity and inter-dependence.

2. Christian Fellowship. "Christian Fellowship" is a form and expression of the fundamental unity and inter-dependence of

believers in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as the writer proposes to interpret seventeenth century English Baptist life by the motif of Christian fellowship, it is necessary for fellowship to be fully defined. Due to the Baptist view of the supremacy of Scriptures, the New Testament idea of fellowship is the standard by which seventeenth century fellowship is studied.

There are three New Testament terms, with cognates, which convey the idea of fellowship. They are koinonia (fellowship, communion), hen or henotes (one, unity) and soma (body).

a. Koinonia. Koinonia and its cognates provide not only the content of fellowship, but also the root of the term "communion." The root means "common," as distinguished from "individual"; it implies commonality or mutuality. The primary meaning is participating in the same thing; association is a derived and secondary meaning.<sup>3</sup>

Koinonia and its cognates are terms which were frequently used by Paul and John. The terms convey three basic ideas:<sup>4</sup>

- (1) the relation of a believer with God the Father, Son, and Spirit;
- (2) the relation of believer with believer; and
- (3)

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2. The student is indebted to his teacher and friend, Dr. T. D. Price, for this excellent and workable definition.

3. J. Y. Campbell, "Koinonia and Its Cognates in the New Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature (JBL), LI (December, 1932), 353; G. V. Jourdan, "KOINONIA in I Corinthians 10:16," JBL, LXVIII (June, 1948), 114; J. Robert Nelson, The Realm of Redemption (London: The Epworth Press, 1951), p. 53.

4. Friedrich Hauck, articles on koinonia and cognates, in Gerhard Kittel, editor, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, IV, 804, inspired this distinction, even though he did not develop the idea.

the demonstration of inter-dependence between believer and believer. The third idea is closely connected with the second, as the practical expression of inter-dependence.

(1) Relation of believer with God.<sup>5</sup> The fundamental unity of Christians derives from the fact that each believer is related to God the Father, through Christ, and in the Spirit. It was on this basis that John appealed for a fellowship of believers.<sup>6</sup> Each believer is a member of a Christocentric community, a heavenly community, over which Christ is Lord.<sup>7</sup> This community is either created by the Spirit or constitutes the sphere in which the believer participates in the Spirit.<sup>8</sup> In this community there can be no dual religious loyalty. In worship one establishes fellowship with the object of his worship. Therefore, idolatry is to be eschewed, for Christianity has nothing in common with heathenism.<sup>9</sup> By participating in the Lord's Supper, one affirms Christ's lordship over his life.<sup>10</sup>

(2) Relation of believer with believer. The relation of

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5. In modern ecclesiological conversation, it has become common to speak of the God-man relationship as "vertical" and the man-man relationship as "horizontal." See A. Raymond George, Communion with God in the New Testament (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), p. 134.

6. I John 1:3-10.

7. I Cor. 1:9.

8. II Cor. 13:13. There is considerable disagreement among New Testament scholars concerning the meaning of this passage. C. A. Anderson Scott, Christianity According to St Paul (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1927), p. 161, thinks the Spirit creates the fellowship; Campbell, op. cit., p. 379, and L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (London: dacre press, 1942), p. 71, think the Spirit facilitates participation in the community.

9. I Cor. 10:14-20; Campbell, op. cit., p. 375.

10. Thornton, op. cit., p. 324.

a believer with God requires a similar relation of believer with believer. The lack of such a relationship between believers belies one's alleged relationship with God.<sup>11</sup> Mutual care is required of believers. The maintenance of a harmonious relationship among Christians is of such prime importance that compromise with idolatry, either actual or apparent, must be rejected lest tender consciences be offended and the relationship between believers broken.<sup>12</sup> The Supper, therefore, is a social meal, as well as a personal communion with Christ.<sup>13</sup> Inasmuch as Christians have the Spirit in common,<sup>14</sup> they are to resolve their differences and cultivate love. A believer resolves these differences when he confirms his fellowship with God by holy living, which reinforces fellowship among believers.<sup>15</sup> Love controls all activity and becomes virtually synonymous with fellowship,<sup>16</sup> for love is the essential element of the common life.<sup>17</sup>

(3) Demonstration of relationship among believers. The fellowship of believers is not an abstract theory of interdependence and inter-relatedness, but a relationship which is capable of demonstration. Believers share in evangelism to

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11. I John 1:6f.

12. I Cor. 10:23ff.

13. Thornton, op. cit., pp. 327f. Scott, op. cit., p. 152, thinks that the Supper is a social meal only; he also conceives the "fellowship" as an institutional body (p. 234) and thinks that it was the first self-applied name of the Christian movement.

14. Phil. 2:1.

15. I John 1:6ff.

16. Cf. I John 1:3ff and 2:9ff.

17. Thornton, op. cit., p. 164.

the Gentiles and seal their partnership by giving the right hand of fellowship to each other.<sup>18</sup> In the fellowship of faith, slavery is ameliorated by spiritual, if not legal, equity and equality.<sup>19</sup> The social, racial, and economic barriers to fellowship are overcome by a common religion. Fellowship may take on the outward character of a "collection" or "contribution" by Gentiles for needy Christians in Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup> This collection is the Gentiles' expression of gratitude for the evangelical blessing which Jewish Christians have shared with them; it is a pledge of equality in the scattered Christian community and an instrument whereby fellowship is strengthened.<sup>21</sup> Fellowship is a common life in which all things, material and spiritual, are shared.<sup>22</sup> The common life of the Jerusalem church was not an economic communism nor a socialization of goods,<sup>23</sup> but the spontaneous solution of the economic problem which was created by the social disabilities of early Christianity.

b. Hen or henotes. The terms for "one" or "unity" refer primarily to the relationship between God and believer. This relationship is similar to that sustained between Father and

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18. Gal. 2:9.

19. Philemon 6.

20. Rom. 15:36, II Cor. 8:14, 9:13, Heb. 13:16.

21. The collection of Christians is vastly different from Jewish alms-giving which was individually and condescendingly made, designed to secure additional reward.

22. Acts 2:42ff, 4:32; cf. Campbell, loc. cit., and Thornton, op. cit., pp. 73-77.

23. W. O. Carver, The Acts of the Apostles (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1916), pp. 35, 52; Hauck, op. cit., p. 797.

Son.<sup>24</sup> The secondary meaning is the life of man in the light of God. Believers are comprehended within a unity which is preserved by divine aid; its preservation demonstrates the validity of Christian faith and becomes the basis of evangelical appeal to the world.<sup>25</sup> One co-operates with God in the preservation of this unity by assuming his responsibility, which involves three things. First, mutual care protects a person from sin and preserves the integrity and purity of the community. Secondly, if one sins, he must assume the responsibility of his own guilt. Thirdly, if one sins, those who are not guilty are to bear the sins of the offender lest they themselves succumb to pride. Mutual care means that one responsibly shares the burdens of others while assuming complete responsibility for his own.<sup>26</sup>

c. Soma. The most descriptive term of the corporate nature of the Church is "body." Two things are emphasized: the supremacy of the Head and the inter-relation of members. The Church is the Body of Christ, who is the Head.<sup>27</sup> The supremacy of the Head is of divine institution.<sup>28</sup> The Head is the source of unity and the fountain of nourishment.<sup>29</sup> The Church must submit to its Head. The body is a complex organism of inter-related members. A member cannot separate from others

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24. John 17:22.  
 25. John 17, passim.  
 26. Gal. 6:1-6.  
 27. Eph. 1:23f, 4:12ff.  
 28. Col. 1:18.  
 29. Eph. 4:16, Col. 2:19.

without repudiating its own character and crippling the body.<sup>30</sup> Each member has a specific function; the various functions, or "gifts," are complementary, not competitive. Operating together the various members achieve the objective of the Church.<sup>31</sup> If there is any exaltation, it is the most insignificant member which is exalted.<sup>32</sup> All members have one gift in common--LOVE. Without love the exercise of other gifts is meaningless and irrelevant.<sup>33</sup>

d. Relation of New Testament fellowship to seventeenth century religious life. There is no indication that New Testament writers foresaw an ecclesiastical environment in which Christendom would be divided into "a congeries of competing denominations."<sup>34</sup> New Testament Christianity was conceived as a religious unity. Nevertheless, there were threats to this unity: conflict between Jewish and Gentile elements, Christological heterodoxy, denial of the resurrection of both Christ and the body, and incipient Gnosticism.<sup>35</sup> There were tensions and conflicts among early Christians. The conditions which such factors produced are the soil out of which ecclesiastical disintegration issues. In this sense, therefore, there is a similarity between New Testament Christianity and the ecclesiastical situation of the seventeenth century.

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30. I Cor. 12:12-27.

31. Rom. 12:4-8.

32. I Cor. 12:22-24.

33. I Cor. 13:1-13.

34. R. L. Child, "Baptists and the Reunion Movement," BQ, X (1940-41), 395.

35. Acts 15, I John 2:18-29, Col. 1 and 2.

It is notable that terms which are most descriptive of Christian unity and inter-dependence were used most frequently in literature addressed to churches in which conflict was most ominous. In his letters to Corinth and Philippi, Paul made a concerted appeal to unity. The Corinthian church was troubled by social, moral, cultic, and emotional problems. Corinthians used party names to describe their factionalism, failed to understand the basic unity of the Christian ministry, associated with worldlings, sued each other in the Roman courts of law, disregarded tender consciences, abused and perverted Christian liberty, desecrated the Lord's Supper, misunderstood the organismic nature of the Church, introduced ecstatic utterance into corporate worship, and obscured love by superficial piety.<sup>36</sup> The Philippian church was composed of diverse elements. There was diversity in cultural, occupational, and religious backgrounds.<sup>37</sup> The church was troubled by exaggerated feelings of self-importance, heterogeneity of opinion, and dissension between two prominent women.<sup>38</sup> John wrote to a community whose unity and harmony was being threatened by theological heterodoxy, moral defection, and emotional antagonism.<sup>39</sup>

Paul and John sought to correct disunity by appealing to the fellowship of Christians. Fourteen of the nineteen occurrences of the term koinonia are in the Corinthian cor-

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36. I Corinthians, passim.

37. J. B. Lightfoot, St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (twelfth edition, London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1900), p. 53.

38. Phil. 1:5, 2:1ff, 3:10,15, 4:2.

39. I John 1:8ff, 2:9ff,18ff, 3:3ff,10ff, 4:2ff,7ff.

respondence, Philippians, and I John.<sup>40</sup> Paul described the corporate nature of the Church and the excellence of love in his Corinthian correspondence.<sup>41</sup> In Philippians he made a studied repetition of "all," seemingly in an effort to comprehend the diversity within the church.<sup>42</sup> He even construed the humiliation of Christ Jesus as an antidote to self-exaltation.<sup>43</sup> John emphasized the relationship between the believer and God, and defined the ethical primacy of love.<sup>44</sup> It appears that both Paul and John intentionally employed the concepts of fellowship, oneness, corporeity, and love as correctives to divisiveness.

Seventeenth century English religious life was constantly subject to disruption. There were extensive experimentation in church-order, disintegration of established ecclesiastical bodies, and the emergence of several new denominations, each of which claimed to be more "Christian" than the rest. The unity of the Church was seriously threatened.

In this process of perfecting church-order, Baptists emerged as two denominations, General and Particular Baptists. They took radical, institutional sectarianism as far as it could be carried. General Baptists pushed it further than safety would permit, it seems, for they were more suscepti-

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40. I Cor. 1:9, 10:16, 17, II Cor. 6:14, 9:13, 13:13, 8:4, Phil. 1:5, 2:1, 3:10, I John 1:3 (bis), 6, 7.

41. I Cor. 12:12-27, 13:1-13.

42. Phil. 1:2, 7, 8, 25, 2:17, 4:21.

43. Phil. 2:1-11.

44. I John 1:3-10, 2:7-17, 3:11-18, 4:7-21.

ble to internal division and separation than Particular Baptists. Quakerism took individualism further than General Baptists dared to take it, but this individualism came out of sectarianism which was germane to the General Baptist mentality. Quakers tried to establish individualism as the norm of religious life and association, but the result was a de-institutionalizing of the Church.

Baptists attempted to establish a church-order in which the fellowship of Christian believers is perpetuated. This involved the demolition of some features of existing church-orders and the restitution of certain features of New Testament polity. There were conflicting views about what should be demolished and what should be restored. Therefore, threats to the fellowship between Baptists, and also between Baptists and other professing Christians, persisted throughout the century. Because of the changing character of seventeenth century English Baptist life, it is appropriate to interpret the inner life of Baptists by the motif of Christian fellowship.

It is not the intention of the writer to determine how perfectly or imperfectly seventeenth century English Baptists restored Christian primitivism. The intention is to investigate their inner life in order to assess their concept and practice of Christian fellowship. Both positive and negative features of unity and inter-dependence come within the scope of this study.

3. Connectional. "Connectional" refers to relations outside a local church but within a denomination, the inter-relations of Baptists beyond the local church level. Local church fellowship per se does not come within the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it will be necessary at times to indicate the concept and practice of local church fellowship, for connectional fellowship was often patterned after or influenced by local fellowship. Strictly interpreted, connectional fellowship deals with the inter-relationships (1) among General Baptists and (2) among Particular Baptists, but in this thesis the relationships between General and Particular Baptists are also construed as connectional.

For clarity's sake, a distinction is made in this thesis between "connectional" and "associational." Connectional refers primarily to the informal aspect of inter-relations; associational refers primarily to the formal, institutional aspect.<sup>45</sup>

4. Inter-denominational. "Inter-denominational" refers to relations between Christians across denominational lines which separate them. The term will be infrequently used in this thesis, but the relationship which it designates will be investigated. The term is not completely satisfactory, but it can bear the meaning ascribed to it without violating

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45. It is recognized that this distinction is somewhat arbitrary, inasmuch as the British mean by "connection" or "connexion" the same thing which Americans mean by "association." Because of this degree of arbitrariness, qualifying adjectives will be used occasionally.

the term.<sup>46</sup> The inter-denominational relationships which are involved in this study are those between Baptists and other denominations, such as the Church of England, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, Quakerism, etc.

5. Seventeenth century. "Seventeenth century" means the years between A. D. 1600 and A. D. 1700, but these dates are not strictly enforced in this thesis. Seventeenth century is construed as comprehending certain phases of Baptist life which were either partially or completely contained within the chronological limits of the seventeenth century. The English Baptist movement is investigated in a topical manner from the phase of beginnings to the phase of fixation after 1689. Generally speaking, A. D. 1700 is as good a terminal date as any, but it should be emphasized that the most appropriate terminal date varies from place to place.

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46. It was the student's original intention to use the term "ecumenical," but its meaning is too elusive, as Dr. H. C. Goerner, a faculty adviser to this study, helpfully suggested. The word "ecumenical" has had such a varied history and conveys such an idealistic meaning in the mid-twentieth century, that it is inappropriate for expressing the relationship which has been described. One of the modern usages is "concerning the relationship of different Churches" (ecclesiastical institutions which are comprehensive in scope, not local churches), but the most widely understood meaning is "that quality or attitude which expresses the consciousness of and desire for Christian unity." See W. A. Visser't Hooft, "The Word 'Ecumenical'--Its History and Use," in Ruth Rouse and S. C. Neill, editors, A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), Appendix I, pp. 735-740, for a study of this term.

6. English Baptists. "English Baptists" include Baptists in England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. Whereas "British" is the most commonly used adjective to include all of these areas, "English" most aptly fits the subject of this study. The principality of Wales has been closely related to the dominion of England, so the term "English" can include the Welsh without offending anything save Welsh provincialism. Though Baptists were in Ireland and Scotland during part of the century, they were either military personnel or transplanted Englishmen. In residence they were Irishmen and Scotsmen; socially, culturally, politically, and generically, they were Englishmen, so they too may be denominated "English." In neither Scotland nor Ireland did Baptist life long persist after these Englishmen returned to their home dominion.

English Baptists were not a homogeneous group. It is necessary, therefore, to differentiate the two basic groups, Generals and Particulars. There were other distinctive types, such as Fifth Monarchists (Military) and Sabbatarian Baptists, but these comprise such a minority group that they do not require definition. Inasmuch as the terms General and Particular have reference to theological positions, the following definitions are limited to theological distinctives.

a. General Baptists. General Baptists believed in the general election of God's grace and the universal atonement

of Jesus Christ. They also affirmed free will and falling away from grace. Some denied original sin, but the denial of original sin was not a uniform characteristic of General Baptists. They were frequently called "Arminians" by their contemporaries because they affirmed most of the doctrines which Jacobus Arminius (died 1609) of Holland had defined.

b. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists believed in particular election and atonement. They affirmed original sin and final perseverance, and denied free will. They uniformly identified themselves with the Calvinistic or Reformed tradition.

### C. Political and Ecclesiastical Characteristics

The seventeenth century was one of experimentation and change in both political and ecclesiastical areas. There were four distinctive political eras, each with its peculiar ecclesiastical character or environment. The varying political and ecclesiastical factors affected Baptists, so it is desirable to characterize the century.

1. Reigns of James I and Charles I. The Stuart line succeeded the last of the Tudors in 1603. During the reigns of James I (1603-1625) and Charles I (1625 to circa 1640)<sup>47</sup>

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47. Charles I was not executed until 1649 (W. E. Lunt, History of England /Third edition, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945/, p. 556), but he ceased to be the effective monarch of the entire dominion around 1640 or 1641.

the Church of England was the Established Church. Puritanism and Separatism grew rapidly during this period, to the alarm of the Church of England. Baptists appeared as an ecclesiological development beyond Separatism, but they caused less alarm to Anglicans. All of the dissenting groups increased in size and strength, and, at the end of the period, Anglicanism was impotent and dissenting groups were ascendant.

2. Civil War-Commonwealth. The general designation of the two decades from 1640 to 1660 is the Civil War-Commonwealth period. During this period, monarchy and episcopacy were overthrown, a republican form of government was established, and sectaries multiplied rapidly and formed denominational groups. During the 1640's, there were greater religious freedom and individualism than at any other time in the century. Nevertheless, there were three attempts to establish ecclesiastical uniformity during the two decades, but none was successful in comprehending all of English religious life. This period is aptly described as one of religious individualism, ecclesiological experimentation, and ecclesiastical competition.

3. Restoration. The Stuart line was restored in 1660 when Charles II, upon the invitation of the Army and a Presbyterianizing Parliament, returned to England from Holland. The two kings of the Restoration were Charles II (1660-1685) and James II (1685-1688). The Church of England was re-es-

established in 1660, and in August, 1662, ministers who refused to conform to Anglicanism were ejected from their livings. Nonconformists suffered in their persons, property, civil franchise, and social status. The denominations which had been highly competitive between 1640 and 1660 suffered common disabilities. Even though they did not amalgamate, their denominational positions were affected by persecution and the threat of persecution. Therefore, they became less competitive toward each other and more united against Anglicanism. At various times and places during the Restoration, the State tried to enforce uniformity with the sword. Persecution varied in duration and intensity, but at times it was either legally proscribed or indulgently suspended. In the eighth and ninth decades Nonconformity became antagonistic toward the throne because of the subtle design of Charles II and the bold action of James II to restore Roman Catholicism. Nonconformists not only opposed the monarchs, but also incited Anglican opposition to the Stuarts. In 1688 the bloodless revolution brought the Restoration to an end, and William and Mary were elevated to the throne.

4. Toleration. In 1689, soon after becoming rulers of England, William and Mary promulgated the Toleration Act which granted religious freedom to trinitarian Protestants who complied with certain legal requirements concerning worship. However, the Test Act of 1673 remained in force, thereby depriving Nonconformists of many civil rights. During the Age of

Toleration Nonconformists revived their ecclesiastical institutions and became as competitive as the growing religious indifference of the age would permit.

Baptists modified their corporate life under the influence of these political changes and their consequent ecclesiastical conditions. However, these political changes were not the determinative factors on the concept and practice of fellowship. The changes in Baptist life were determined by distinctively religious and ecclesiological factors. Therefore, the political eras of the century are not adequate divisions of this study.

#### D. Outline of This Thesis

This study of the concept and practice of fellowship among seventeenth century English Baptists is divided into seven chapters, each of which deals with a certain phase or inter-relationship of Baptist life. The approach to the study is topical. Due to the necessity of relating the topics there is some repetition, but it is hoped that this repetition stops short of redundancy.

1. Beginnings. Appearing in the early part of the seventeenth century in a time of ecclesiological controversy, Baptists had to justify their right to exist. In doing this they developed certain negative and exclusivistic characteristics of fellowship. Chapter One deals with the beginning phase and seeks to explicate the relationships which Baptists sus-

tained primarily to other professing Christians and secondarily to themselves.

2. Consolidation. After Baptists emerged as distinct groups, they tended to consolidate themselves as local churches and associated churches. There was a tendency to stabilize church-order. This stabilization affected the nature and extent of fellowship. Chapter Two investigates the process of consolidation and its effect on fellowship among Baptists.

3. Expansion and Evangelism. Up until 1660, and to some degree throughout the century, Baptists were vigorous propagandists for their views. In their propaganda they attacked the larger and more traditional ecclesiastical bodies. Chapter Three deals with the process of expansion and evangelism, and with their effects on fellowship among Baptists and with other professing Christians.

4. Connectionalism. A unique phenomenon among the Free Churches of the seventeenth century was the manner in which Baptist churches related themselves to each other. Chapter Four deals with the rise of associationalism and its effect on fellowship.

5. Internal Problems. Coming out of a Separatist environment and having strongly exclusive characteristics, Baptists were susceptible to the inherent dangers of sectarianism. Whereas Baptists achieved a notable degree of unity in the process of establishing themselves, they were severely threat-

ened by a number of internal problems of an ecclesiological nature when they tried to erect their own patterns of religious life. Chapter Five deals with these problems and their effects on fellowship among Baptists.

6. Relations between General and Particular Baptists.

Whereas General and Particular Baptists were called "Baptists," "baptized party," "baptized churches," and "Anabaptists" by their contemporaries, they were in reality two denominational entities. Chapter Six deals with the extent and character of relations between these two groups.

7. Ecclesiastical Relations between Baptists and Other Religious Groups. Baptists were a minor element of the religious life of the seventeenth century. They were related both negatively and positively to other Christian groups. Chapter Seven deals with the ecclesiastical (as distinguished from personal and private) relations between Baptists and other Christians.

8. General Conclusion. The General Conclusion is a brief summary statement of the relations of Baptists to themselves and other professing Christians during the seventeenth century. Inasmuch as a conclusion appears in each chapter, it is unnecessary to give an extended conclusion.

E. Sources and Their Use

The source material for this study is both abundant and varied. Much of the literature of the seventeenth century

which deals with English Baptists has been accessible. The writings of some individuals, confessions of faith, and church records are available in published collections. Other primary sources are available in periodicals, appendixes to books, and extensive quotation in secondary sources. The chief access to primary sources, however, is through microfilm. The recently microfilmed collection of sources from Whitley's initial contribution to Baptist bibliography<sup>48</sup> has been of inestimable value. Doctors W. W. Barnes and R. A. Baker, of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, selected the items from the bibliography and Doctor L. R. Elliott, librarian of the Fleming Library of the same institution, made arrangements for the microfilming, which was done by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. This collection has provided a ready access to materials which were formerly available only to the student who did extensive research in British libraries, though some of the materials have been published. There are forty-six full reels of "Early Baptist Publications," about sixty percent of which are seventeenth century sources.

Because of the availability of such excellent primary sources, it is neither necessary nor desirable to use secondary materials extensively. However, secondary sources

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48. W. T. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, 2 vols. (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1916, 1922).

are used for two purposes. First, primary material is sometimes lacking, so secondary sources which use such material in full or in part provide the only access to primary material. Local church histories, regional histories, and brief articles on relatively obscure persons and events are the secondary sources which are used most frequently. Secondly, interpretations of secondary writers are occasionally appropriated. In some matters, this student has attempted to correct views which appear to be erroneous. In most cases, references to secondary writers appear only in footnotes, for it is unnecessary to burden the text with modern interpretations.

It will appear to the reader, especially to one who has not read extensively in unedited materials from the seventeenth century, that typographical errors in spelling are too numerous. This is to be explained by the individualism which characterized the spelling of the seventeenth century. Sometimes the same word was spelled variously in the same work, paragraph, or sentence. Individualism and inconsistency in spelling were especially characteristic of unlettered writers and pamphlet printers, but learned writers also manifested this tendency, which twentieth century grammarians and orthographists view as a weakness. In quotation or citation, whether textual, annotational, or bibliographical, the spelling of the primary source is used; otherwise,

the spelling conforms to standard dictionary usage.<sup>49</sup>

In annotation, the short form is employed if the cited source is included in the bibliography. If the source does not warrant inclusion in the bibliography, full data are given in the footnote.<sup>50</sup> Most of the seventeenth century sources appear in the microfilm collection which is listed in the bibliography, under "Primary Sources, Books and Collections," as "Baptists. England." Inasmuch as anyone who has access to the collection also has access to the cross-index volume, it is unnecessary to list each item in the bibliography.

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49. The dictionary which is used as a standard is Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Merriam-Webster) /fifth edition; Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, 1944./ This is "the largest abridgment of Webster's New International Dictionary, second edition."

50. It is regrettable that the annotation of materials from BAR, BQ, and Trans., does not carry the month of publication, even though the years covered by a volume are cited. The bound volumes of these periodicals, which were available to this student, do not carry the monthly date of publication, and the library does not possess such information.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BAPTIST BEGINNINGS

English Baptists first appeared early in the seventeenth century, but they were insignificant in size and influence until after 1640. General Baptists began about 1608 or 1609. They had a continuous existence from that time, but little is known of them from 1612 to 1640, except for a few years between 1624 and 1630. The extant data from these few years give only a fragmentary view of their life and thought, but this data concern their inner life and relations with the Waterlander Mennonites of Holland. In 1626 there were five widely scattered churches (London, Salisbury, Coventry, Lincoln, and Tiverton) with a constituency of about one hundred and fifty persons.<sup>1</sup> Between 1630 and 1640 there was complete silence about their institutional life. Particular Baptists appeared during the 1630's, and by 1638 there was a church in London which practiced believers' baptism. Its connections with Separatists were so complex,<sup>2</sup> however, that it can be called a Baptist church only in a qualified sense.

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1. B. Evans, Early English Baptists, II, 25. In 1624 approximately eighteen were excommunicated from the London church, apparently over a Christological problem. They were led by Elias Tookey.

2. W. T. Whitley, editor, "Records of the Jacob-Lathorp-Jessey Church 1616-1641," Trans., I (1908-09), 221f, n. 24.

The uncertainty of dating the Baptist movement has stimulated speculation concerning the founder of Baptists. There are some who feel that the honor should go to John Smyth,<sup>3</sup> while others are reluctant to affirm this.<sup>4</sup> It is also supposed that Baptist denominationalism dates from about 1638,<sup>5</sup> when Spilsbery's church appears to have had a separate existence. Consequently, Spilsbery is viewed as the inaugurator of the Baptist movement.

Seventeenth century Baptists traced their origin to neither Smyth nor Spilsbery. There were some opponents who charged the newly constituted church in Amsterdam with being founded on Smyth,<sup>6</sup> but the charge originated from a desire to undermine the validity of the new church. Therefore, they attacked the singular and dubious character of the restitution of believers' baptism and argued that the new church was founded on Smyth's re-baptism. Later in the century, Thomas Wall argued that Baptists had received their baptism from

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3. A. C. Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, p. 33; J. H. Shakespeare, Baptist and Congregational Pioneers, p. 125.

4. W. T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, p. 21; W. J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 53; E. A. Payne, The Fellowship of Believers, enlarged edition, pp. 17-19; R. G. Torbet, A History of the Baptists, pp. 62-69; H. W. Robinson, The Life and Faith of the Baptists, revised edition, pp. 12-14.

5. H. W. Clark, History of English Nonconformity (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1911), I, 300-305, thinks that Baptist polity is a perversion of Congregationalism.

6. I. Hetherington, A Description of the Church of Christ, 1610, pp. 15-23; John Robinson, Of Religious Communion Private, & Publique, 1614, p. 48.

Smyth and not from Christ. In reply, Hercules Collins affirmed the principle which had been uniformly held by Baptists, viz., believers' baptism is a restoration of apostolic Christianity, not a humanly devised rite.<sup>7</sup>

Baptists made notable beginnings between the years 1609 and 1640, but the beginning phase cannot be limited to these years. It was not until about 1655 that Baptist churches were established in most of England and Wales. In Northern England a strong beginning was made during the 1690's, even though there were scattered churches in a few northern counties prior to 1660.

For the purposes of this study it is desirable to conceive of beginnings in both chronological and psychological terms. Of course, chronology provides the framework, but chronology alone does not explain beginnings. The concept and practice of Christian fellowship in the beginning phase differ greatly from those of later phases, so the psychological character of beginnings must also be considered. In the beginning phase, Baptists appeared as an aggressive minority, and their relationships with themselves and others were affected by this minority status. Later Baptists had a security which came from size and stability of church-order, so they modified their theory and expression of fellowship.

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7. Hercules Collins, Believers Baptism, 1691, pp. 114f. ✓

There were two distinguishable patterns of Baptist beginnings. They were radical separation and evolution. Radical separation was the restitution of an allegedly true church. In many cases, there were several levels of restitution, but at each level there were negative attitudes toward existing institutions. Radical separation provoked bitter feelings between the old and the new, and prevented harmonious relations between them. Evolution was the gradual emergence of an allegedly true church out of an existing church without irremedial hostility. Evolution was due to the unfolding of new truths or the gaining of new insights. At each level, however, there was a fundamental tolerance of the views which had been recently repudiated. Nevertheless, after a certain level of evolution was reached, a Baptist church tended to erect strict ecclesiological barriers between it and the church from which it had emerged.

In point of time, these patterns normally follow consecutively, but they cannot be absolutely delineated chronologically. Radical separation preceded evolution by a half generation, but early in the 1640's radical separation and evolution were occurring simultaneously. Radical separation characterized General Baptists and evolution characterized Particular Baptists. Of course, these are general characterizations, but there is accuracy in them, as the following study demonstrates.

## I. RADICAL SEPARATION

The first Baptist church suddenly emerged out of Separatism. On the basis of John Smyth's progression in church-order, it may be argued that the church did not suddenly emerge. Indeed, Smyth went through a religious pilgrimage. However, radical separation more aptly describes this process than evolution. At each stage of his pilgrimage, Smyth turned his back on the past, maintaining a negative attitude toward the positions through which he had thus far come.

### A. John Smyth's Progression to the Baptist Position

As a radical separatist, John Smyth formulated four religious and ecclesiological principles which have a direct bearing on fellowship. During his progress toward Baptist views, he modified these principles in the light of his present need. The ideas are the doctrine of pollution, the concept of congregational authority, the inchurching or constitutive principle, and anti-succession.

1. The doctrine of pollution. a. Puritan stage. Smyth's doctrine of pollution began with the Puritan antipathy toward Anglican clergymen. In The Paterne of Trve Prayer, representing the Puritan stage of his pilgrimage, Smyth declared that pollution derives only from the ministry:

... if the agent, that is, the Minister or Preacher be a man out of Christ, wanting faith and

grace, being no member of Christ, nor subject of his Kingdome, he cannot possibly obey his wil, but the fountaine being vnclean, the streame flowing from the fountaine is vn-cleane also.<sup>8</sup>

This was the germ of his doctrine. It was identical with the Puritan opposition to the Anglican clergy because of the latter's faithless element. Smyth, however, developed the idea of pollution further than Puritans.

b. Separatist stage. Smyth was given a lifetime lectureship at Lincoln on August 1, 1602, but on October 13, 1602, he was deposed. The reasons which city officials gave for his deposition were his "factious disposition" and "preaching ... against divers men of good place."<sup>9</sup> It is highly conceivable that Smyth was already applying the doctrine of pollution to particular individuals and advising religious boycott of them.

Within two or three years Smyth had so fully developed the idea of pollution that he became a Separatist early in 1606. Smyth's progress, however, was not uniform. At one time after being deposed, he renounced Separatism and sought to recover Francis Johnson, his former tutor at Cambridge who

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8. The Works of John Smyth, edited by W. T. Whitley, I, 155. (Hereafter this source will be referred to as Smyth's Works.)

9. Champlin Burrage, The Early English Dissenters, I, 227, quoting municipal records.

was presently the leader of Amsterdam Separatists.<sup>10</sup> The problem of pollution continued to trouble Smyth, so he endeavored to resolve it at a conference at Coventry. The question under discussion was whether or not true churches, ministers, and worship which are corrupted, should be "withdrawn from." He believed, as he later claimed, that he had convinced the clerics with whom he conferred that corruptions should be withdrawn from; he emphatically denied that his own views had been refuted.<sup>11</sup>

The doctrine of pollution was greatly expanded by 1607 when he wrote Principles and inferences concerning The visible Church, an apology for separation from the Church of England. At this time, Smyth was in Amsterdam, defending Separatism. Pollution derives from the sinfulness of members, and separation is obligatory for the true Christian:

If a sinne be publicly knowne in a church, or if more synnes be openly known and suffred: the whole church is defiled and leavened. ... No communion can be had with, nor no joyning can be to, a church thus leavened without manifest cōsenting to synne. ... Therefore if the church will not reforme open known corruptions after due proceeding seperation must be made from it til reformation. ... Therefore seperation may be made from true churches for incorrigible corruptions, and to seperate from a defiled church that is incorrigible, is not to forsake the communion of holy things, but the pollution and prophanation of holy things.<sup>12</sup>

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10. Richard Bernard, Plaine Euidences, 1610, pp. 19f.

11. Paralleles, Censvres, Observations, in Smyth's Works, II, 534f. Underlining is for emphasis.

12. Smyth's Works, I, 261.

Smyth also applied the theory of pollution to dedicated things:

The churches treasure is silver gold or money worth, freely given by the members of the visible church for the common good. ... The churches treasure is holie. ... None of those that are without may cast their goods into the treasure lest the treasury be polluted. ... Nothing that is gotten by fraud, violence, or any wicked meanes, may be cast into the churches treasury.<sup>13</sup>

Smyth stated that one must be a member of the congregation in which he is to serve before he is elected and ordained.<sup>14</sup> He did not thoroughly discuss the reason for this, but it was apparently related to the theory of pollution. An untested officer may be the agent of pollution; the congregation cannot be assured of his character unless he has been subject to the discipline of the separated church, which seeks to preserve the purity of its membership.

c. Initial differences with Separatists. By 1608 Smyth had begun to differ with other Amsterdam Separatists on certain matters. The most notable difference was over pollution, as it relates to worship and the treasury. Henry Ainsworth reported that the first difference concerned the use of translations in the reading of the Scriptures.<sup>15</sup> To Smyth, worship was a spiritual exercise, which must be protected from corruption by unspiritual elements. Translations are human inventions, and as such are corruptible. Therefore, they are

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13. Ibid., I, 259. "Churches" is genitival, not plural.

14. Ibid., I, 267.

15. Henry Ainsworth, A Defence of the Holy Scriptures, Worship, and Ministerie, 1609, p. 1.

not to be used in worship, for they would displace the free operation of the Spirit and permit the corruption of worship.<sup>16</sup> On September 26, 1608, Thomas Helwys wrote to English friends, indicating the nature of the division within Separatism, the news of which seems already to have reached England. He implied that Smyth's congregation used translations, but stated that they were considered "muche inferiour to the originalles."<sup>17</sup> The Separatists had "taken all books from before the eye in tyme of prayer,"<sup>18</sup> Smyth merely extended the principle by rejecting Scriptural readings in worship and preaching, and the use of vernacular psalms.

The idea of the pollution of the treasury was developed still further also. The emphasis, however, was on distribution rather than on collection.<sup>19</sup> The theory of pollution was difficult to implement in practice, but Smyth nevertheless endeavored to apply it, as Helwys' letter indicated:

For the Threasury they [Separatists] suffer them that are without to Comynicate together with them, and doe not sanctefie theire Almes with prayer, wee make a seperacion of our Almes from the giftes of Strangers, whiche wee thankfully receave And wee sanctifie the whole Action by prayer, before & after, as all the ordenances of God ought to be.<sup>20</sup>

Helwys did not indicate who these "Strangers" were, nor did

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16. The Differences of the Churches of the seperation, in Smyth's Works, I, 306.

17. Burrage, op. cit., II, 167-168.

18. Smyth's Works, I, 306. This refers to the Separatist rejection of the Book of Common Prayer.

19. Ibid., I, 317-319.

20. Burrage, op. cit., II, 168.

he specify how the gifts were used. It is apparent, however, that the treasury was conceived as a highly sacramental service. The gifts of outsiders were suspected of pollution. Whereas they could be applied to common ends, they could not be used for religious purposes.

In 1608, in Paralleles, Censvres, Observations, written against Anglicans and Puritans, Smyth further developed his doctrine of pollution. Pollution became capable of falsifying that which is true. The Church of England was, for the first time, declared to be false. It is false because it is not truly constituted, and the element which renders the constitution false is a false membership. The true church is composed of saints (faithful, separated from uncleanness, and covenanted together),<sup>21</sup> but the Church of England is composed of

the damned crew so termed in the land hierarchy,  
... Church Papists, ... adulterers, Theeves, murderers, Witches, Conjurers, Vsurers, Atheists, Swaggerers, Dronkards, Blasphemers, & infinite sorts of sinners impenitent.<sup>22</sup>

The principle of pollution became of central importance to the pure or separated church:

... the most comfortable & holy truth wee hold in our walking one with another in communion of Gods ordinances ... is ... one sinne of one man publicly & obstinately stood in & not reformed by a true constituted church doth so pol-

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21. Smyth's Works, II, 386.

22. Ibid., II, 371.

lute it that none may communicate with it in the holy things of God til the partie offending be by the church put out after lawful conviction.<sup>23</sup>

Smyth was aware of the implications of his logic, but he refused to compromise his principle. He recognized that there were many thousands in the Church of England, probably of the Puritan party, who appeared to have faith. Those who possess faith, Smyth said, are in the invisible church. However, man is not omniscient; he cannot determine invisible faith. The only canon which man can adopt is visibility. Therefore, if one is not a member of a truly constituted church, Smyth asserted, he must be regarded as a non-Christian, even though he may possess invisible faith.

The Separatists generally called the Reformed churches true churches. Bernard accused Smyth and the Separatists of inconsistency in calling them true churches, yet refusing to have communion with them. In reply, Smyth differentiated two types of true churches, and applied his principle of pollution to them. First, there is the true and pure church, by which Smyth meant the separated churches, which "we may & wil joyne." Secondly, there is the true but corrupt church, apparently the Reformed church, with which there may be no communion until it is convinced of its corruptions and reforms them.<sup>24</sup> It is rather peculiar that corruptions did

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23. Ibid., II, 440.

24. Ibid., II, 525.

not falsify Reformed churches, as they did the Church of England. The explanation perhaps lies in Smyth's confidence in and appreciation of the Calvinistic tradition up to and for three to five months after the reconstitution of his congregation. At this time, there was no practical necessity for sharp distinctions between Separatists and Reformed Christians, for intercourse with them was only slight. In this answer to Bernard, therefore, Smyth was dealing, not with experience, but with theory; he declined to declare false those churches which held Calvinistic views.

Another interesting feature of Smyth's doctrine of pollution was the relevance of congregational power. Congregational authority had been mentioned previously, but in Paralleles, Censures, Observations, it became conspicuous. Any kind of church government which is not congregational is a corruption of true government.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, Smyth reasoned, the hierarchy of the Church of England is a corruption which is alone capable of falsifying the Church. It appears that Smyth regarded the Reformed Classis as congregationally representative.

Smyth had been seeking an objective norm by which pollution could be measured. In the principle of congregational government he discovered such a norm. However, it disquali-

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25. Ibid., II, 529.

fied neither the Separatists nor the Reformed churches. It seems to have been designed exclusively for the purpose of proving the Church of England false.

d. Baptist stage. The norm was soon to become absolutely and automatically objective. When Smyth became a Baptist, the exclusivism which had been emerging reached maturity; only the exclusivism of The Last Book of John Smith exceeded that of The Character of the Beast, which was written within three to five months after the reconstitution of his congregation. The constitutive principle of a church is neither ministry, worship, congregational government, nor covenant; it is believers' baptism.<sup>26</sup> If baptism is false, then the church is automatically falsified and nothing good can proceed from it. True baptism must have a true author (God), true matter (new creatures), true form (confession of repentance from sin and faith toward God), and true end (sealing unto God). Infant baptism has none of these elements, for its author is Antichrist, its subjects are carnal infants, its form is a ritual washing in the name of the Trinity, and its end is a sealing unto Antichrist.<sup>27</sup> It was no longer the pollution of a true sacrament by corrupt elements, but the subversion of the Church by a false sacrament, infant baptism. By this norm, the

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26. Ibid., II, 657.

27. Ibid., II, 653-679.

Church of England, Puritan-Reformed ecclesiology, and Separatist congregationalism were mechanically determined false.

Though The Character of the Beast was written against the three traditions named above, it was directed primarily against the Separatists. For over a year Smyth had been engaged in controversy with them, but their principles were almost identical with his. When he adopted believers' baptism, however, he could clearly distinguish himself from the Separatists. Consequently, without equivocation, he declared Separatist congregations false. It was on the basis of his objective norm that he appealed to Separatists either to proceed to Christian baptism or to return to the Church of England and thence to Roman Catholicism.<sup>28</sup>

2. Doctrine of congregational authority. a. Separatist stage. Smyth did not define a theory of congregational authority until he became a Separatist. It appears that he

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28. Ibid., II, 567: "The Separation must either goe back to England, or go forward to true baptism." Smyth's arguments were curiously used by Anglicans against Separatists, though Anglicans failed to see the validity when applied to the necessity of returning to Rome. Hetherington, op. cit., p. 91, argues that Separatists are the sayers and Smyth the doer: "And therefore you must of necessity, either loyne with them Smyth's group, or change your minds, or else hide your selues for shame." Bernard, op. cit., p. 2, charges that Separatism breeds Anabaptism, by which he means Smyth's defection. Richard Knight, History of the General or Six Principle Baptists, p. 25, records an anecdote, the authenticity of which this student has neither verified nor disproved, in which Bishop Gray of Ely tells John Robinson that Smyth's logic is so incontrovertible that the Separatists must either declare the Church of England false or else return to her.

developed this view in order to justify separation from the Church of England. The visible church is the "only religious societie that God hath ordeyned for men on earth" and communion is restricted to members of this society. The visible church is

A visible communion of Saints ... of two, three, or more Saints joynd together by covenant with God, according to the word, for their mutual edification & Gods glory.<sup>29</sup>

The visible church has three essential elements: (1) true matter, saints; (2) true form, (a) inward, consisting of the Spirit ("the soule animating the whol body"), faith (which "vniteth the mēbers of the body to the head Christ"), and love (which "vniteth the members of the body each to other"), and (b) outward, "a vowe, promise, oath, or covenant betwixt God and the Saints" ("I will be their God--they will be my people"), and between saint and saint (mutuality through the exercise of the duties of love); and (3) true properties, the characteristics of self-government.<sup>30</sup>

There is no higher power or authority than that which resides in a visible church, though comprised only of two or three. It is "of equal powre with all other visible churches ... and hath powre to reforme al abuses within itself."<sup>31</sup> However, Smyth affirmed this view, not as a basis for interrelations between Separatist churches, but as grounds for

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29. Principles and inferences ..., 1607, in ibid., I, 252.

30. Ibid., I, 253-257.

31. Ibid., I, 267.

excluding external authority, regardless of its source. Officers come from the membership of the local congregation; none may refuse the call of the church to an office. The church cannot permit her officers to be translated to other churches.<sup>32</sup>

b. Differences with Separatists. In 1608 Smyth differed with other Separatists over the number and authority of the presbytery. In 1607 he had held that the presbytery is composed of three officers (pastor, teacher, and ruling elder) and that a person may hold only one office. In 1608 he admitted that the functions are multiple and that the office is variously named (elder, overseer, teacher, governor, etc.), but he insisted that the eldership is uniform, without a gradation of officers.<sup>33</sup> He emphatically rejected the idea that church government resides in the presbytery.<sup>34</sup> This was a rebuttal to Johnson's advocacy of rule or government by church wardens,<sup>35</sup> which, it appeared to Smyth, gravely limited, if it did not abolish, congregational authority. Smyth argued that the church is superior to the

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32. Ibid., I, 260-264.

33. The Differences of the Churches of the separation, in ibid., I, 307.

34. It is conceivable that Smyth derived his view about two officers only (elder and deacon) from the Waterlanders. However, there is no indication, neither from his own writings nor those of his opponents, that the Waterlanders had yet exerted any positive influence on him. His theology was exclusively Calvinistic, and as late as 1609 he asserted that the Anabaptist (Waterlander) churches were not truly constituted (ibid., II, 350).

35. A. de Bussy, "The English Church at Amsterdam," BQ, XII (1946-49), 425.

presbytery:

The presbytery hath no powre, but what the Church hath & giveth vnto it; which the Church vppon just cause can take away: ... The Church hath some powre which the presbytery alone hath not, viz. powre of Elections & communications.<sup>36</sup>

Smyth apparently felt that a multiplicity of officers, in a graded structure of authority, would result in presbyterial control. At any rate, he affirmed that one person may function in various offices, thus denying the need for a large and potentially dominating presbytery which the congregation cannot control as easily as it can control a few persons. Of course, it should also be recognized that this view may have been influenced by Smyth's dominating personality.

c. Importance of congregational authority. By 1609 the idea of congregational authority had become extremely important to Smyth. He stated that it was

the mayne cause of our Seperation, the first foundacion & rock of truth, which is, that Christs ministerial powre is given to two or three Faithful ones...<sup>37</sup>

He greatly amplified this idea, appealing to two Biblical figures, the Bride and Body of Christ. As the Bride, the Church is placed immediately under Christ in authority, for no groom places servants in authority over his bride.<sup>38</sup> The

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36. Ibid., I, 315.

37. Paralleles, Censvres, Observations, in ibid., II, 529.

38. Ibid., II, 416. This is an interesting interpretation, for Paul emphasized subjection to Christ (Eph. 5:23-27), whereas the author of the Apocalypse emphasized purity (Rev. 19:7,8, 21:10ff).

more significant figure, however, is the Body. The Church has no power divided from the Head, and all members are subordinate to the body:

Some members of the Church have special gifts given them of God, but the powre of vsing those gifts they haue from the head Christ by meanes of the body...<sup>39</sup>

The body hath no powre divided from the head: the hands (Elders) have no powre divided from the body. ... al powre Ecclesiasticall or ministerial is derived from Christ to the Church, & then through the Church to the Elders, which is first in the Church before it comes to the Elders.<sup>40</sup>

Election to office, "the verie essence & forme of the minister," is valid only if it comes from the congregation.

d. Smyth's defection. Helwys later accused Smyth of defecting from his view of the plenary power of two or three believers.<sup>41</sup> Though Smyth denied this charge,<sup>42</sup> it is most probable that he defected and that Helwys perpetuated the view of congregational authority which was held at the time of reconstitution of the congregation.

3. The inchurching or constitutive principle. When Smyth became a Separatist in 1606, or soon thereafter, the two congregations at Gainsborough and Scrooby were organized as one church by means of a covenant:

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39. Ibid., II, 424.

40. Ibid., II, 437.

41. Thomas Helwys, An Advertisement or admonition, 1611, p. 36.

42. The Last Book of John Smith, 1611, in Smyth's Works, II, 757.

... they shooke of this yoake of antichristian bondage and as ye Lords free people, joynded them selves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walke in all his wayes, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them.<sup>43</sup>

In 1607 Smyth stated, and later reaffirmed, that the outward form of the visible church is a covenant between God and saint.<sup>44</sup> After becoming a Baptist, however, he rejected the idea that the covenant is the constitutive principle of a church; in place of the covenant, he established be-

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43. William Bradford, History of Plymouth Plantation, in Plymouth Church Records 1620-1859, p. 14. H. Wheeler Robinson ("The Works of John Smyth," Trans., V (1916-17), 2, and "John Smyth and the Freedom of Faith," BQ, IV (1928-29), 196) thinks that Smyth gave to the Pilgrim covenant its most distinctive feature, its progressive character, and that Robinson's spirit in the famous Farewell Address came from Smyth. Whereas it is irrefutable that Smyth exerted an influence on Robinson, the progressive character of the covenant antedated Smyth. Burrage, op. cit., I, 123-125, records six Separatist testimonies prior to 1592 (when Johnson joined Greenwood's group); each testimony has the refrain that the person will walk with other Separatists as long as the word, laws, ordinances, or truth and glory of God warrant it. It should also be noted that Robinson's spirit prior to 1614 was quite exclusive. It was probably moderated in the theological controversy between Calvinists and Arminian Remonstrants, in which Robinson took an active part and which demonstrated the theological unity of Calvinists. In 1620, however, his liberal spirit extended no further than Calvinism and Lutheranism, and he charged that they knew only part of God's will; apparently, the deficiency was in congregational government. See H. M. Dexter, Congregationalism, pp. 400ff.

44. Principles and inferences ..., in Smyth's Works, I, 253-257. He stated the same thing in Paralleles, Censures, Observations, in ibid., II, 386.

lievers' baptism as the inchurching principle. Smyth, it is true, still held to a covenantal idea, but the covenant was no longer an inchurching instrument. It was "the mutual contract betwixt God & the party baptized expressed visibly in confession."<sup>45</sup>

4. Anti-succession. It was not until shortly before Smyth became a Baptist that he repudiated the idea of succession. At any rate, he did not refer to it before Paralleles, Censvres, Observations. There seem to have been two formative influences, each of a negative nature, on his repudiation of succession. First, the apologists of the Church of England consistently claimed ministerial succession. Secondly, ministerial exaltation in Johnson's church was reaching serious proportions. Each of these influences threatened congregational authority; while Johnson did not overtly claim ministerial succession, he yet intimated it. Smyth stated that "our whole cause of Separation lieth in the dust & we must disclaime our Schisme which we haue made, & our heresies

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45. The Character of the Beast, in ibid., II, 671. Bur-  
rage, op. cit., I, 240, recognizes only half the truth about  
Smyth's covenant. He notes that Smyth still believed in the  
use of a covenant in the organization of a church, but he  
thereby conveys the wrong impression; he fails to recognize  
that the character of the covenant is individualistic. Whit-  
ley ("Thomas Helwys of Gray's Inn," BQ, VII (1934-35), 249)  
and H. W. Robinson (Introduction to Thomas Helwys, The Mis-  
tery of Iniquity, p. ix), therefore, are more correct in  
denying that Smyth used a covenant as a Baptist. In Smyth's  
thought, there is a covenantal character to repentance from  
sin and confession of faith.

which we hold" if apostolic succession is valid.<sup>46</sup> He rejected succession on three counts: (1) it makes the ministers lords over the church; (2) it requires return to Rome, for it is the chief foundation of Rome; and (3) it contradicts itself, for the pope does not appoint and empower his successor. He developed his anti-succession views still further in The Character of the Beast. He rejected baptismal as well as ministerial succession. Apostolic antiquity, not apostolic succession, he argued, is the standard for the church.<sup>47</sup> He discovered that apostolic baptism was believers' baptism, so he rejected infant baptism and restored primitive baptism de novo.

5. Evaluation. Smyth's concept and practice of fellowship was affected by the development of his doctrines of pollution, congregational authority, the inchurching principle, and anti-succession. Smyth progressively reached a state of complete exclusivism. At each stage of his pilgrimage, he possessed a certitude of mind which enabled him to repudiate and denounce those church-orders through which he had come. Upon accepting believers' baptism he ecstatically claimed that it was "the most vndoubted & most evident truth that ever was revealed to me." Concerning it, he had

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46. Paralleles, Censvres, Observations, in Smyth's Works, II, 349f.

47. Ibid., II, 567, 655, 664.

received "such assurance ... that you & al the earth shal never be able to wring it out of my hart & hands,"<sup>48</sup> an assurance which unfortunately wavered and dissolved within two years.

Smyth's exclusivism developed through the rejection of Anglican ministers, separation from the Church of England, separation from public sins which might pollute, and rejection of communion with Separatist churches. In 1609 he was able to support his exclusivism with his two principles of congregational authority and believers' baptism. Pollution rendered Puritans and Reformed churches unworthy of communion, and a false constitution rendered the Church of England incapable of communion.<sup>49</sup> After becoming a Baptist, Smyth affirmed that only a confession of faith, following repentance, through believers' baptism, entitles one to the full privileges of the Church. Those who do not make this confession through baptism are debarred from communion.<sup>50</sup>

There is truth as well as polemics in the accusations of his contemporaries that he unchurched every church save his own little congregation.<sup>51</sup> There is a possibility that he rejected the validity of Mennonite baptism at this time.

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48. The Character of the Beast, in ibid., II, 679.

49. Paralleles, Censvres, Observations, in ibid., II, 369-371.

50. The Character of the Beast, in ibid., II, 640.

51. Illustrative of this accusation is H/etherington, op. cit., pp. 15-24.

In the state of radical separation, Christian fellowship was untenable in theory and apparently impossible in practice; spiritual needs could not be fully met by the kind of exclusivism which characterizes radical separation. Therefore, Smyth was seeking admission into the Waterlander church within a year after the reconstitution of his congregation.

B. Relations between Baptists and Waterlander Mennonites

1. Initiation of relations by the Waterlanders. The radical separation did not long persist. It is impossible to describe with absolute clarity the process of its breakdown, but it is probable that the liberal Waterlanders initiated relations with Smyth's group.<sup>52</sup> From the time of its immigration, Smyth's congregation used the bake-house of Jan Munter, a Waterlander, for worship. Therefore, it is probable that there had been informal intercourse between the English and the Waterlanders ever since the former took up residence in Holland. Nevertheless, the two parties had no religious affiliation with each other; throughout his writings, including The Character of the Beast, Smyth denounced Anabaptism. The English immigrants had been indoctrinated to

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52. Burrage, op. cit., I, 242, feels that there had been formal intercourse with the Waterlanders before the reconstitution and that Smyth deliberately declined baptism at their hands. On the other hand, Whitley, "Thomas Helwys of Gray's Inn," BC, VII (1934-35), 250, conjectures that Smyth did not know of the existence of the Waterlanders until an opponent asked him why he had not sought baptism from them.

distrust Anabaptist tenets, and the Separatists were very scrupulous about religious communion. It is unlikely, therefore, that Smyth's congregation enjoyed anything more than informal contact on the personal level. Moreover, it is highly improbable that Smyth's group, immediately after its reconstitution, would have sought fellowship with a foreign church with which it held only one thing in common, believers' baptism.

The Waterlanders had a strict ecclesiology, but they were liberal about cultivating private or informal contacts with non-Mennonites. Some of Smyth's group became very friendly with the Waterlanders. Later correspondence between Waterlander churches revealed that there were some Waterlander members "by whom their [Smyth's group's] doings and godly walks are perfectly known." These members expressed "insisting desires" for the admission of the English.<sup>53</sup> It appears that these Waterlanders were the ones who initiated conversation with Smyth's group, and who also pressed for their admission into the Waterlander church.

2. Character of early relations. The informal intercourse must have been gratifying to both the English and the Dutch. The Helwys group, which later returned to England, also enjoyed the fellowship with the Waterlanders. Some fif-

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53. Evans, op. cit., I, 211f.

teen years later, five English churches sought union with the Waterlanders, but their two messengers stated, under interrogation, that it was doubtful that the English churches would hold communion with the English members of the Waterlander church.<sup>54</sup> It is most interesting that the English churches would seek union with a foreign church, yet deny fellowship to their compatriots who were already members of it. The only satisfactory explanation is the nature of the early relations between the various parties. The feeling between Helwys' group and the Waterlanders was cordial, but that between the two groups headed by Helwys and Smyth was extremely bitter. Both these feelings persisted for at least fifteen years; the former stimulated an attempt at the union of Baptists and Waterlanders, but the latter prevented fellowship between embittered English persons.

3. Modification of theology. The friendly intercourse with the Waterlanders antedated the breach in the Smyth-Helwys congregation. After the breach had become fixed, the relations between Helwys' group and the Waterlanders was not conducive to the cultivation of close friendship.

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54. Ibid., II, 31f. The English in question were probably Smyth's remnant which had joined with the Waterlanders in January, 1615 (ibid., I, 221f). However, the questions of Hans de Ries imply that there were two English groups; one of these had been excommunicated and then fled to Amsterdam (ibid., II, 30f). If there were indeed two English groups, the second was most probably that of Elias Tookey, which had been excommunicated early in 1624 or earlier.

The initial modification of English views occurred, not in ecclesiology, but in theology. Certain intimations in Helwys' thought early in 1610, as seen in Synopsis fidei,<sup>55</sup> are inexplicable on any other basis. Ecclesiological differences had developed before Helwys published the synopsis, for he emphatically differed from Smyth in three matters; Helwys affirmed the plenary power of the congregation, appealed to the primitive church-order, and advocated regularity of worship. However, the ecclesiological problem at this time was neither grave nor irreparable, for Helwys was conciliatory toward Waterlander theological positions. In 1611, however, Helwys retracted every distinctively Mennonite view save general election and universal atonement; he vigorously denied free will and affirmed original sin.<sup>56</sup> After the difference with Smyth became critical, it appears, Helwys refused to indulge in theological conciliation toward the Waterlanders. The ecclesiological problem of succession caused Helwys to reconsider his theological conciliation. Helwys later held the Waterlanders responsible for Smyth's defection from the doctrine of congregational authority and for his adoption of a theory of succession.<sup>57</sup> Had the eccles-

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55. Burrage, op. cit., II, 182-184. The articles which suggest conciliation deal with original sin, free will, universal atonement, and Christology.

56. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 86; Helwys, An Advertisement or admonition, 1611, pp. 91ff; Helwys, A Short and Plaine prooffe, 1611, pp. 24ff.

57. Helwys, An Advertisement or admonition, pp. 34f.

iological problem arisen first, Helwys would never have been theologically conciliatory toward the Waterlanders.

4. Division in the Smyth-Helwys congregation. The major part of the Baptist congregation, under the leadership of Smyth, applied for admission into the Waterlander church. With the aid of certain Waterlanders, they continually pressed for admission, and finally their application was investigated. Due to the opposition of affiliated Waterlander churches (and perhaps to the admonitions of Helwys' congregation also), the Amsterdam church finally refused the request of Smyth's group. There is no indication that the Smyth group ever sought reunion with the Helwys group. However, there were some individuals, the number and identity of whom are unknown, who changed their views and returned to the Helwys congregation.<sup>58</sup> The two groups became embroiled in increasing hostility which resulted in an irremedial cleavage.

#### C. Smyth's Exclusivism and Perfectionism

1. His alleged ecumenical spirit. Certain statements in Smyth's last doctrinal system (Propositions and Conclusions), in the so-called "Retractions" (The Last Book of John Smith), and in the anonymous The Life and Death of John Smith, have fostered the supposition that Smyth developed a very

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58. Evans, op. cit., I, 212f.

irenic and ecumenical spirit before his death, and this alleged spirit has been unduly adulated.<sup>59</sup> These statements, extracted from the context and interpreted apart from the general tone of the documents, may be construed in this way; however, such an interpretation misrepresents the facts. To be sure, Smyth renounced his censorious spirit and retracted a few controversial points involving very minute details. Nevertheless, he repeatedly insisted that he believed that truth had always been on his side in his controversies, and that he had erred only in the temper of his writing. It is also true that he professed a comprehensive charity, but it is attractive only when he was speaking in generalities; when he dealt in particulars, especially concerning Ainsworth and Helwys, he belied his profession of charity. Helwys had been his closest friend, but Smyth scathingly attacked him for breaking "the bonde of charitie aboue all mē that I ever read or heard."<sup>60</sup>

2. Smyth's perfectionism. Smyth maintained his extreme exclusivism to the end of his life. Only its basis changed. Whereas it had previously been founded on a perfection of church-order, it was later based on a perfection of charity.

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59. The most widely quoted tribute is that by Mandell Creighton: "None of the English Separatists had a finer mind or a more beautiful soul than John Smyth. . . . None of them founded their opinions on so large and liberal a basis." (Quoted in Underwood, op. cit., p. 45.)

60. The Last Book of John Smith, in Smyth's Works, II, 758.

As at every previous stage of his pilgrimage, he claimed a more perfect understanding. Even when he purported to renounce his critical, censorious spirit of the past, Smyth seems not to have seriously considered the possibility of error. He had a more perfect way, the perfection of charity. Therefore, outward matters of ecclesiology, over which he had controverted for several years, were now adiaphora; the essential thing was to hold all believers and penitents in Christian charity. He could love Christians whom he had not seen, but he continued to manifest antipathy toward those who had been closest to him, the Separatists in general and Helwys in particular. As far as fellowship was concerned, Smyth had a more radical exclusivism at the time of his death, for it was based on subjective perfectionism which prevented self-evaluation and self-criticism.

#### D. Thomas Helwys

1. Heir to Smyth's Baptist views. The heir to Smyth's Baptist views was Thomas Helwys. Having a legal background, Helwys was able consistently to apply the principles which the impetuous and pioneering Smyth intuitively apprehended or experientially assumed. Except for the doctrine of universal atonement and its corollary, general election, which became the pivotal doctrines in his system,<sup>61</sup> his theology

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61. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 86; Helwys, An Advertisement or admonition, 1611, pp. 91-93; Helwys, A Short and Plaine prooffe, 1611, title page, and p. 19.

remained essentially Calvinistic.<sup>62</sup>

2. Succession and ministerial ordination. The most critical problems confronting Helwys were succession and its concomitant, ministerial ordination. Of course, he also differed from the Waterlanders and Smyth on Christology, regularity of worship, and magistracy,<sup>63</sup> but his emphasis was on anti-succession.

By March 10, 1610, succession had become "the whole cause in question." It is "Antichrists cheife hold." The Waterlanders' pretended succession, Helwys argued, cannot be demonstrated to satisfaction, "neither the time, Person, nor place." He accused the Mennonites of claiming a pre-eminence,

as though ye spiritt of God were onelie in their harts, and the word of God were onely to be fetched at their mouethes, and the ordnances of God onelie to be had from their hands.<sup>64</sup>

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62. Payne, op. cit., p. 17, prefers the term "pre-Calvinism." However, Calvinism had for fifty years exerted such an influence in England that Payne's term is anachronistic. Whitley, "Thomas Helwys of Gray's Inn," BQ, VII (1934-35), 249f, has demonstrated that there had been an anti-Calvinistic movement in England, in which Robert Cooke was active. Helwys used arguments and phrases of Cooke's against particular election, but his arguments for universal atonement were original with him. Some Anglicans were questioning Calvinism as early as 1595, for in that year William Barrett of Cambridge was forced to recant certain statements dealing with certitude, perseverance, and reprobation. Others were far more successful, and by the early seventeenth century Baro and Andrewes at Cambridge and Hooker at Oxford were spokesmen for the new theology which was anti-Calvinistic; see W. H. Frere, The English Church In the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I. (1558-1625) (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1924), pp. 282-284.

63. Helwys, An Advertisement or admonition, 1611, title page.

64. Burrage, op. cit., II, 185f.

This quotation obscures the fact that the letter, as a whole, was very respectful toward the Waterlanders. Within a year, however, the situation had become more acute. Consequently, Helwys spent over one-half of An Advertisement or admonition, which he addressed to the Waterlanders, in controverting succession and its implications. Succession is based on the false view that the visible church is the kingdom of heaven, a view which Helwys acknowledged he had formerly mistakenly held. "Neither you [Waterlanders], nor any Church congregation, or people are the kingdom of heaven."<sup>65</sup> The visible congregation is only the agent of extending the kingdom. Baptismal succession does not derive from John the Baptist, for John never founded a church. Succession implies compulsion, which contradicts the liberty of the Gospel. Succession, through its companion doctrine of ministerial ordination, subverts both congregational power and the priesthood of believers. The priesthood of believers, it should be noted, is corporate, not individualistic; the liberty to offer spiritual sacrifices without ministerial mediation is a privilege which appertains only to a company of two, three, or more, gathered in the name of Christ.<sup>66</sup> Succession prevents the shedding of God's glorious light, for

... whilst some Church or congregation settled  
in the dreggs of error and ouertaken with a se-

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65. Helwys, An Advertisement or admonition, 1611, p. 24.

66. Ibid., pp. 40-50.

cure, cold frozen profession of the gospel [Church of England], and some other church or congregati<sup>o</sup> carried away with a headstrong blind zeale into manie errors [Waterlanders], will have all men come and followe Christ, or rather go out of the way, or be frozen vp with them, and while men thinke they are to give them the preferment, what hope is there of the groth of pure Religion.<sup>67</sup>

3. Congregational authority. a. Anti-succession and the universal church. For Helwys, the positive side of anti-succession was congregational authority, which he systematized in more complete fashion than Smyth ever did. The fullest expression is found in A Declaration of Faith of 1611. Helwys admitted that, in the universal sense, the church is one, consisting

off divers particuler congregacions, even so manie as there shallbee in the World, every off which congregacion, though they be but two or three, have CHRIST given unto them, with all the meanes off their salvacion.<sup>68</sup>

b. Local church. It was the local church, however, which Helwys emphasized. The last part of the article on the universal church, quoted above, declared that each congregation has plenary power in the exercise of all holy things, with or without officers. Other articles emphatically stated the doctrine of the local church. The church is constituted by baptism, and may receive members only by baptism; churches which are constituted on any other principle "are not according to CHRISTS Testament." The church

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<sup>67</sup>. Ibid., p. 54, no question mark.

<sup>68</sup>. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 89 (art. 11).

may not be of such size as to prevent the members from knowing each other, for this would make it impossible for the members to perform "all the duties off love one towards another both to soule and bodie." Discipline is corrective, not punitive; excommunication follows the rejection of the church's efforts to correct an offender. The church chooses its officers only from its membership, and they have authority only in the congregation which elects them. They cannot intervene in the affairs of another church. The confession did not specify the intention of the article about officers, but it was specifically related to ordination. The purpose of the article, it seems, was a defense, not against the intervention of officers of the Helwys congregation in the affairs of other churches, but against interference in the life of the Helwys church by officers from other churches. No church has a pre-eminence over another.<sup>69</sup>

c. Explanation of the emphasis on the local church.

In radical separation, the local church was emphasized to the virtual denial of the universal church. The objective of the confession of 1611 was to differentiate the Helwys congregation from Smyth's, as the long appended letter of seventeen pages (as contrasted with only four and one-half pages of text) adequately demonstrates.<sup>70</sup> Helwys believed

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69. Ibid., pp. 88-91 (arts. 10-13, 16, 17, 20-23).

70. Ibid., pp. 92f.

in the universal church, but he mentioned it without emphasis. Had circumstances been permissive he doubtlessly would have amplified the doctrine. Within the immediate circle of his congregation, he appears to have taught the doctrine of the universal church, for within fifteen years his descendants were giving visible evidence of the doctrine. Several churches were not only in close association with each other, apparently along formal lines, but they were seeking union with the Waterlanders.

4. Reasons for return to England. Late in 1611 the Helwys group decided to return to England in order to witness to the truth, even at the cost of life, if necessary.<sup>71</sup> Robinson charged that Helwys' heady and indiscreet actions had dispersed the congregation, forcing him to assume "an appearance of spiritual courage,"<sup>72</sup> but this does not adequately explain the return. There were two influences upon Helwys' decision to return to England. First, Puritans and Anglicans had, for several years, been criticizing flight during persecution.<sup>73</sup> While Helwys was making his decision to return, he was in correspondence with Suffolk reformists who reproved flight.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, Helwys had become convinced

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71. Thomas Helwys, The Mistry of Iniquity, 1612, p. 212.

72. Robinson, Of Religious Commvni on ..., 1614, p. 41.

73. Joseph Hall, The Third Decad, letter about 1608, "To M. Smith, and M. Rob: "; H/etherington, op. cit., p. 109.

74. Whitley, "Thomas Helwys of Gray's Inn," BQ, VII (1934-35), 250.

of the validity of his recently constituted church. The controversy with the Waterlanders over succession intensified his conviction. He was persuaded that the Church is not the Kingdom itself, but only the agent of the Kingdom. It was incumbent on the Church to witness when and where the truth was most needed. This required Helwys and his followers to return to England, where the truth was needed and where they could make a better contribution than in a foreign land.

5. The Mystery of Iniquity. Helwys' celebrated book, The Mystery of Iniquity, appeared in 1612, not long after the return of the heroic Baptists to their homeland. In this book Helwys' exclusivism appeared in clear relief. However, his exclusivism was evangelistic, where Smyth's had been isolationistic.

a. Liberty of conscience. Helwys made an extended appeal for liberty of conscience. He based his appeal on several arguments. First, the individuality of divine judgment makes it impossible for one to receive punishment for the sins of another. Therefore, one should not be compelled to accept a religion which his conscience rejects, for only he can be judged on the matter.<sup>75</sup> Secondly, the true religion is unitary. But, if a monarch has authority to enforce religion, there may be as many religions, all equally valid,

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75. Helwys, The Mystery of Iniquity, p. 46.

as there are regal views. Such a polity ties religion to political fortune.<sup>76</sup> Thirdly, civil authority usurps Christ's prerogative when it exercises spiritual power, for Christ has reserved this for Himself.<sup>77</sup> Fourthly, the mortality of the king demonstrates that his authority is merely temporal. The king violates his own nature when he tries to be God.<sup>78</sup> Helwys argued for liberty of conscience for all, including Roman Catholics, "heretickes, Turcks, Jewes,"<sup>79</sup> etc.

b. Evangelistic strategy. The real objective of the book was evangelism. To be sure, it was ecclesiological evangelism, not soteriological; but, it was evangelism nonetheless. It was premised on the sole validity of the baptized church. Helwys manifested greater earnestness and more acute perception than Smyth, in that he very discriminately attacked the three major ecclesiological traditions in England: Anglicanism, Puritanism, and Separatism. His strategy is both interesting and appropriate. He attacked each tradition at the point where he thought its chief weakness lay. He sharply delineated two alternatives, and then appealed for an immediate decision between them. The Church of England was at-

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76. Ibid., pp. 43f.

77. Ibid., p. 42.

78. Loc. cit., and especially the autographed address to James I; see Underwood, op. cit., opposite p. 48, for a facsimile.

79. Helwys, The Mystery of Iniquity, p. 69.

tacked at the point of similitude to Rome in hierarchy and worship; the alternatives were either return to Rome or procession to primitive patterns of government and worship.<sup>80</sup> Puritanism was attacked at the point of its reluctance to effect that for which it propagandized; the alternatives were either cessation from complaining about Anglican corruptions or separation from the Church of England.<sup>81</sup> Separatism was attacked at the point of infant baptism; the alternatives were either termination of schism or adoption of Christian baptism.<sup>82</sup> He also attacked the Separatists at the point of flight in persecution, but this was secondary.

The progression of Helwys' thought and evangelistic appeal is clear. The Church of England must forsake Rome; Puritanism must separate from the Church of England; Separatism must repudiate its connection with the other traditions through infant baptism. By understanding the prejudices and fears of each tradition, Helwys was able to make the alternatives radically disparate, thus slanting the decision toward his position, if any decision were made.

Though Helwys had all three traditions in mind, he dealt more fully and in a far more impassioned manner with Separatism. Over one-half of his appeal, if the lengthy pas-

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80. Ibid., pp. 11-36.

81. Ibid., pp. 86-123.

82. Ibid., pp. 123-212.

sage on liberty of conscience is excluded, was directed to Separatists. He had most in common with Separatists, but he attacked them most vigorously, for it was from their ranks only that he could hope to make converts.

E. John Murton

1. Anti-paedobaptism. John Murton, Helwys' successor, perpetuated the same evangelistic exclusivism, but he expressed it differently. Murton's dialogue initially between "Antichristian" (Prelate) and "Christian" (Baptist) in the presence of "Indifferent Man" (one who is undecided about, not indifferent toward ecclesiology), purported to deal with liberty of conscience.<sup>83</sup> However, Murton's chief interest was the propagation of Baptist views. Over one-half of the book is a dialogue between "Christian" and "Indifferent Man" dealing with the false ecclesiology of the Church of England and resulting in the conversion of "Indifferent Man." The real issue is baptism. "Christian" took a position between baptismal succession (Paedo-baptism), on the one hand, and baptismal rejection (Familism), on the other.

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83. John Murton, Objections: Answered by way of Dialogue, wherein is proved By the Law of our Land: And by his Maties many testimonies That no man ought to be persecuted for his religion, so he testifie his allegiance by the Oath, appointed by Law, [1615]. The work appeared anonymously, being signed "Anabaptists," but Murton is generally accepted as the author. It was reprinted in 1662 under the title, Persecution for Religion Judg'd and Condemn'd, and is edited by E. B. Underhill, in Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, pp. 95-180. (Hereafter Underhill's volume will be referred to as "Underhill, Tracts.")

Baptism is absolutely necessary, but its administration is tied, not to ministerial office, but to preaching discipleship.<sup>84</sup>

2. Liberty of conscience and evangelism. Murton advocated liberty of conscience for two reasons. First, it permitted freedom of propaganda. Secondly, it protected the individual's responsibility to make his own religious decision. Of the two, the latter was the primary reason. Baptists had boldly manifested that civil repression could not deter their propaganda. Some Baptists viewed persecution as proof that they were in the true church. They did not feel that they had to delay their witness until legal permission was granted. Therefore, the primary motive for appealing for liberty of conscience was not personal, in providing easier conditions for propaganda. On the other hand, Baptists could not make converts unless their hearers were persuaded that religion is a matter for which each person is individually responsible. Therefore, the burden of appeal fell, not on the right of any man to do what he pleases in religion, but on the necessity of assuming full responsibility for what he does. Men may claim no immunity through sacerdotalism or compulsory (State) religion. Once Murton established this principle, he could effectually evangelize. "Indifferent Man" first interjected a remark concerning the

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84. Underhill, Tracts, p. 164.

the reasonableness of non-compulsion in religion; he next observed that compulsion presently hindered "thousands" from assuming true religion.<sup>85</sup> For Murton, liberty of conscience was a prerequisite to effective evangelism.

3. Supremacy of the Scriptures. In 1620 Murton and other Baptists sought to establish an objective norm by which they could propagandize. They published a supplication for liberty of conscience,<sup>86</sup> in which conventional arguments for religious freedom were made. The new feature, however, was a sustained emphasis on the Scriptures.<sup>87</sup> Interpretation of the Scriptures is neither restricted to the learned nor determined by tradition. To the contrary, Scriptures interpret themselves by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit operating in an individual.

In appealing to the supremacy of the Scriptures, Murton and his friends were not making a novel suggestion, for Anglicans, Puritans, and Separatists uniformly professed the doctrine, as their confessions of faith verify. However, there was a practical necessity for an emphatic insistence on the supremacy of the Scriptures. Baptist propaganda had

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85. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

86. A Most Humble Supplication of the King's Majesty's Loyal Subjects, ready to testify all Civil Obedience, by the Oath of Allegiance, or otherwise, and that of Conscience, who are persecuted (only for differing in religion), contrary to divine and human testimonies. This, too, was reprinted in 1662; see Underhill, *Tracts*, pp. 189-231, for text.

87. Underhill, *Tracts*, pp. 197-214.

been partially ineffective because of the writings of the learned and the testimonies of tradition which had been used against them. They, therefore, either experientially or deliberately, arrived at the necessity of establishing an objective norm to which they could refer their opponents. Inasmuch as all Evangelicals held the Scriptures in high respect, Baptists emphasized the Bible as the ultimate authority in faith and order. However, they did not go to the extreme that Busher is said to have gone in 1614, in requesting that the Bible be officially established as the only legal standard for religious propaganda.<sup>88</sup>

4. Arminian theology. In 1620 Murton anonymously published A Description of What God hath Predestinated Concerning Man. It was directed against Calvinism in general, and John Robinson and the Synod of Dort in particular. It denied the supremacy of conciliar or synodical theological definitions, and advocated the testing of conciliar dogmas by the Scriptures and individual conscience.<sup>89</sup>

The book revealed that Murton had departed from some of

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88. Leonard Busher, Religions Peace: or A Plea for Liberty of Conscience. Busher is said to have printed this in 1614, but contemporary literature is singularly silent about it. In 1646 it was published by "H. B." (perhaps Henry Burton), as a rebuttal to Presbyterian anti-toleration. Internal evidence indicates a radical revision after 1640, if not the initial writing. It is edited by Underhill, Tracts, pp. 9-81; see p. 51 for Busher's alleged proposal for propaganda.

89. [John Murton], A Description of What God hath Predestinated Concerning Man, "To euery vnpartiall Reader."

the doctrinal positions which were formerly held by Helwys. Murton upheld free will,<sup>90</sup> apparently for evangelistic purposes. He denied original sin, and curiously made a distinction between man's body which came from Adam and his soul which came from God.<sup>91</sup> His chief theological interest, however, was the preservation of the doctrine of general election, the basis of evangelism. In repudiating particular election, Murton was in the tradition of Helwys, but in his views on sin and will Murton departed from Helwys. Murton seems to have altered his theology in the heat of controversy, in which theological positions were pushed to their extreme logic. However, Murton's deviation is not explicable merely on the basis of controversy. He seems intentionally to have delineated his theology from that of the Calvinists, thereby facilitating evangelism. He felt that he had a far more attractive theology than the Calvinists, and he wanted his compatriots to understand it.

5. Lay baptism. Ecclesiology was a secondary interest of A Discription of What God hath Predestinated Concerning Man. Infant baptism was repudiated. The right of lay disciples to baptize was more emphatically affirmed than in any previous Baptist work.<sup>92</sup> This emphasis was a reaction to

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90. Ibid., p. 99.

91. Ibid., p. 114.

92. Ibid., pp. 156-166.

the insistence of Murton's opponents that lay baptism implies private baptism, for which there is no Scriptural warrant.

#### F. Conclusion

The early General Baptists radically separated from other professing Christians. Fellowship which compromised their convictions they eschewed. They violently repudiated infant baptism and non-congregational government, both of which they viewed as antichristian characteristics, and either of which prevented religious communion. Smyth was an energetic polemicist, but his concept and practice of fellowship was negative. He repeatedly differed from other Christians and then separated over his differences. Progressive separation continually delimited the area in which Smyth could enjoy fellowship. After despairing of achieving satisfactory fellowship within ecclesiological bounds, he rejected all outward forms and sought fellowship in an abstract Christian charity. Unfortunately, his negative temperament inverted this noble sentiment.

Helwys was as negative toward other ecclesiological traditions as Smyth. For Helwys, however, the falsity of other churches and the exclusive validity of the baptized church were the two principles which jointly required life-denying evangelism on the part of Helwys and his friends.

In their encounter with non-Baptists, Baptists altered their views on several things and also discovered the values of certain principles which they had not fully appraised. Their evangelism did not effect a mass movement, but the results were sizable. Within fifteen years a small congregation which could not have numbered over twenty, grew to number six congregations, one of which was separated from the other five, with a total constituency of about one hundred and seventy.

## II. EVOLUTION

The simultaneous emergence of many new churches between 1640 and 1655 indicates that evolution of Baptist thought and practice was extensive. In most cases the process cannot be documented. In other cases evolution was retarded. By the mid-1650's one church might be in a stage of consolidation whereas a contiguous church might still be in a stage of evolution. Evolution was not limited to a single period. In East Anglia churches emerged in the mid-1650's after several years of gradual progress; in Northern England evolution did not become common until after 1690.

The effect of evolution on fellowship was rather uniform, even though it was neither chronologically concurrent nor uniformly rapid. No attempt is herein made to trace the histories of all churches which gradually progressed to Bap-

tist views. A representative church is the Jacob-Lathorp-Jessey church of London, out of which Particular Baptists first emerged. A more retarded evolution is evident in the Broadmead church, Bristol, but this church never arrived at the point of Baptist exclusivism. The pattern and effect of evolution can be demonstrated with data from the beginnings of these two churches.

A. The Jacob-Lathorp-Jessey Church, 1616-1641

1. Evolution from the Church of England. The first Particular Baptist church gradually evolved from a Separatist congregation in London which was organized by Henry Jacob in 1616.<sup>93</sup> Jacob slowly adopted Puritan and Separatist views. As early as 1604 Jacob, as a Puritan, objected to the Church of England's "so farr remoteness from ye Apostlicall Churches." In Holland he conversed with John Robinson about 1608 or 1609, and Robinson encouraged Jacob to establish Separatist congregations in England. Around 1610 Jacob and others concluded that Separatism "ware a very

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<sup>93</sup>. The primary sources dealing with this church are second-hand, though they are not far removed; it is believed that Jessey was the author of some of them. They are fragmentary, thus raising some questions which cannot be answered. They are in the Benjamin Stinton Repository, dated 1712; Stinton received them from Richard Adams. The Baptist Historical Society (British) recognized their inestimable value to Baptist history and published them in the initial volume (1908-09) of the Transactions. They are edited by W. T. Whitley and may be seen in Trans., I (1908-09), 203-245.

warrantable & commendable way" and as appropriate for England as for Holland. A Separatist congregation, however, was not organized until 1616, when several saints "joyned both hands each wth other Brother and stood in a Ringwise" and "Covenanted together to walk in all Gods Ways as he had revealed or should make known to them." "A Confession & Protestation" was drawn up,

therein showing wherein they consent in Doctrine wth ye Church of England, & wherein they were bound to dissent, with their evidences from ye Holy Scriptures for their dissent in about 28 perticulars.<sup>94</sup>

These particulars were typical objections which Puritans and Separatists raised against the Church of England. They concerned authority, church government, corruption of the ministry, and Roman Catholic vestiges in doctrine, worship, and discipline. Though the Jacob church objected to various Anglican doctrines and practices, it did not radically separate from the Church of England. In 1624 the Ancient Church of Amsterdam scrupled to recognize the London congregation as a true church because some of its members still attended parish worship, for which they were not disciplined.<sup>95</sup>

2. Communion with the Church of England. In 1630 the issue of infant baptism in parish churches was raised by John Came, the pastor of the Ancient Church. While in London

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94. Trans., I (1908-09), 211.

95. Ibid., p. 210, n. 6.

he endeavored to persuade the London church, then under the leadership of John Lathorp, to revise and renew its covenant so as to renounce communion with the Church of England. He seems to have made this a condition of fellowship with the London Separatists. Some, apparently led by Dupper, were eager to comply; others

were Unwilling in their Covenanting to be tyed either to protest against ye truth of them, or to affirm it of them, not knowing wt in time to come God might further manifest to them thereabout.<sup>96</sup>

Shortly thereafter the covenant was renewed without any reference to the Church of England. The covenant retained the progressive character of the original covenant in 1616. Dupper seceded, and he and others formed another church which held communion with Canne's Ancient Church but not with the Lathorp church.<sup>97</sup>

3. Growth during persecution. In April, 1632, persecution fell upon the church, and for two years threatened it. However, the church continued to assemble each Sunday for worship and the Lord's Supper. Those who were imprisoned held steadfastly to their faith and became more convinced of the verity of their cause. The church continued to grow, as is evidenced by the reception of fourteen members from among fellow prisoners.

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96. Ibid., p. 225.

97. Ibid., p. 220, n. 21.

4. Division over the validity of the Church of England. On September 12, 1633, a notable but peaceable secession occurred over the validity of the Church of England. The issue seems to have been under discussion for some time, perhaps as far back as the Dupper secession in 1630. Discussion reached such proportions that the peace of the church could be better preserved by division than by continued union. Moreover, the size of the congregation was large enough to make the church susceptible to persecution.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, when some denied the validity of parish churches and "desired dismissal that they may become an Entire Church," their request was granted. Of the nine persons dismissed, at least five had been imprisoned in April, 1632. How long they remained in prison is not known, but it is conceivable that they first repudiated the validity of the Church of England while in prison.

5. Adoption of the practice of believers' baptism. Eight others, including Sam Eaton and Richard Blunt joined the separated group at an uncertain date, "Mr. Eaton with Some others receiving a further Baptism."<sup>99</sup> In 1638 six others of the

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98. Ibid., p. 220.

99. Loc. cit. John Taylor, A Swarme of Sectaries, and Schismaticques, 1641, p. 6, says that Spilsbery baptized Eaton. The statement is in a poem, and the chronology is difficult to determine. If the statement be true, Spilsbery must have been in the church considerably before 1638. Taylor's information is very interesting, for the church records are completely silent about the administrator of Eaton's baptism.

mother church became

of ye same Judgment wth Sam. Eaton & desireing  
to depart & not to be censured our intrest in  
them was remitted wth prayer in their behalfe  
June 8th 1638.<sup>100</sup>

Being peaceably dismissed, they joined "wth Mr Spilsbury,"  
whose name appeared in the records for the first time. The  
"same Judgment" involved believers' baptism, for the indi-  
viduals had become "convinced that Baptism was not for In-  
fants, but professed Believers."<sup>101</sup>

Eaton was the outstanding propagandist for believers' baptism, even though he was not the pastor of the congregation. In 1638 he was in Newgate prison, where he held conventicles numbering up to seventy persons, with both permission and personal assistance from the prison-keeper. He is reported to have preached "that baptism was the doctrine of devils and its original an institution from the devil."<sup>102</sup> Contrary to the impression of the report, Eaton did not deny the ordinance of baptism; he only preached against infant baptism, holding that it is antichristian. He also attacked episcopal government, claiming "all bishops were heretics, blasphemers, and anti-christians."<sup>103</sup> Though he had a negative attitude toward the Church of England, he did not have

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100. Trans., I (1908-09), 221. It is elsewhere stated that there were three persons who changed positions (p. 231).

101. Ibid., p. 231.

102. State Papers (Charles I), vol. 427, no. 64.

103. Ibid.

a negative attitude toward Separatists who still retained infant baptism. He was held in esteem by Separatists as well as by Baptists. His funeral was attended by at least two hundred "Brownists and Anabaptists," who instructed the grave-keeper not to call a clergymen for the last rites.<sup>104</sup>

6. Summary of evolution to 1641. Prior to 1641 a gradual narrowing of fellowship occurred in the church. Anti-Anglican sentiment among the Separatists slowly developed before 1630. The persecution of 1632 to 1634 intensified these feelings. Whereas the church refused to denounce the Church of England in 1630, it peaceably dismissed in 1633 a group which repudiated the Church of England, some of whom assumed a "further Baptism." Doubtlessly, persecution contributed to the healthy relations between the two illegal churches. By 1638 believers' baptism was being practiced. In 1633 it was the administrator of baptism which made a further baptism necessary; in 1638 it was the subject. The feeling of Separatists and Baptists toward the Church of England progressively deteriorated, but Baptists appear to have been more antagonistic than Separatists.

#### B. Revival of Immersion

In 1640 the Jacob-Lathorp-Jessey church split into two groups, under the leadership of Praise-god Barebone and

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104. Ibid., no. 107.

Henry Jessey. Richard Blunt, who was related in 1633 to the secessionist church which included Eaton, was a member of the Jessey church in 1640. Seemingly, Blunt had not become convinced of believers' baptism until 1640. He soon moved beyond the subject of baptism, and in 1641 he raised the question about the mode, thus inaugurating a new stage in the evolution of Baptist views.

Upon deliberating the issue and having no English example to follow, the Jessey church sent the Dutch-speaking Blunt to Holland with letters of recommendation. He was cordially received by the Rhynsburg Collegiant church of which John Batten was teacher. The records do not specify what transpired in Holland, so it cannot be determined that Blunt was baptized there. The records simply state that "Those two Companies did set apart one to Baptize the rest" and

Mr Blunt Baptized Mr Blacklock yt was a Teacher amongst them, & Mr Blunt being Baptized, he & Mr Blacklock Baptized ye rest of their friends that ware so minded.<sup>105</sup>

Francis Bampfield reported in 1681 that two members of the original church told him that the administrator had bap-

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105. Trans., I (1908-09), 234. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, 1646, III, 112, calls Blunt's church "one of the first and prime Churches of Anabaptists now in these latter times," indicating that the rebaptized persons formed another congregation.

tized himself, and then he and another baptized the rest.<sup>106</sup>  
 It has been inferred that this statement referred to Blunt and Blacklock, but the description more perfectly fits the case of Smyth and Helwys which was well known. There was no contemporary charge that Blunt performed a se-baptism, and this silence is strong evidence that he did not. The arch-cataloguers of heresy, Edwards and Pagitt, would have made much of a se-baptism. The earliest known pamphlet to declare for immersion came out within a few months after the restitution of immersion. Se-baptism, probably that of Smyth's, was deliberately repudiated.<sup>107</sup>

There is some evidence to support the conjecture that Blunt was immersed in Holland, but it comes from the following generation. Edward Hutchinson reported a rumor, the source of which he did not indicate, to the effect that "the want of an Administrator ... was removed by sending certain

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106. W. T. Whitley, "The Revival of Immersion in Holland and England," *Trans.*, III (1912-13), 34, thinks this refers to Blunt and Blacklock. Burrage, *op. cit.*, I, 334, on the other hand, thinks that Blunt first baptized Blacklock, who in turn baptized Blunt; the two then baptized the rest.

107. Edvard Barber, A Small Treatise of Baptisme, or, Dipping, 1641, 30p. This may have been as late as March, 1642, due to calendar differences. It has been supposed that Blunt and Blacklock baptized the group in January, 1642 (*Trans.*, I [1908-09], 238). If this be true, Barber, a General Baptist, came out with a treatise on immersion within two months after its inauguration. It may be that the General Baptists were the first fully to realize the significance of the newly restored mode.

messengers to Holland whence they were supplied."<sup>108</sup>

C. Controversy in the Jessey Church over Believers' Baptism

1. Debate between Jessey and Knollys. The Jessey church continued to be agitated about the subject (not the mode) of baptism for several years. Hanserd Knollys, a trained clergyman who had been a dissenter for at least ten years and a member of the Jessey church for a short time, became doubtful in 1643 about having his child baptized. Several local meetings were held in various homes, "performed wth Prayer & in much Love as Christian meetings."<sup>109</sup> William Kiffin, apparently a member of Jessey's church as late as March, 1644, interjected the clutch remark in the debate which had been dominated by Jessey and Knollys. Kiffin said that it is improper to seek Old Testament grounds for New Testament ordinances; the New Testament is the sole authority for believers' baptism. The result of the debate was the immediate persuading of four persons, including Knollys' wife, against infant baptism. Within a week sixteen others came to the same conclusion, reportedly by private deliberation rather than by consultation with each other.

2. Baptist exclusivism. At an uncertain date, there was

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108. Edward Hutchinson, A Treatise concerning the Covenant and Baptism, 1676, ep. ded.

109. Trans., I (1908-09), 240.

a secession by some who were "not satisfied we were baptized as a true church ..."<sup>110</sup> By April, 1644, the Jessey church tried to pacify these Baptists, who were not the new converts from the Jessey-Knollys debates for they were yet in the church. The seceders may have been those who had already been baptized by Blunt and Blacklock and who within two years had come to deny the validity of infant baptism and who refused communion with their Separatist brethren who still practiced it. Conceivably, the seceders may have been those who followed Kiffin, who was at this time an ex-member of Jessey's church. At any rate, the Jessey church was disturbed by their attitude, but efforts to conciliate them were ineffectual. Several members of the Jessey church favored censuring the seceders, but others were inclined toward leniency. The matter was referred to an eminent group of Independent elders and brethren, including several who were members of the Westminster Assembly. They advised the church to exercise patience, for the Baptists were not obstinate; they had tender consciences which should be indulged until they could be reclaimed. The church continued to love them and count them as members, upon the advice of the Independents. The Independents also advised the church to have fellowship "so far as their [Baptists'] principles permitt them." If and when they grew "giddy & scandalous," they should be ex-

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110. Ibid., p. 244.

communicated.

3. Lay baptism. Twenty-six members of Jesse's church became convinced of believers' baptism, but they scrupled receiving it from Jesse who had not yet adopted the principle. They, therefore, delayed receiving baptism. Nine soon resolved their question of the administrator, taking the view that "Such Disciples as are gifted to teach and Evangelize may also baptize & c & were baptized."<sup>111</sup> Some of these later joined with Knollys, while others joined with Kiffin for reasons which are not evident.

4. Jesse's baptism and open communion. Jesse later became doubtful about infant baptism. He hoped to resolve his doubts by conferring with Independent leaders. However, these conferences served to stimulate Jesse's acceptance of believers' baptism. He was baptized by Knollys, and "then by degrees he [Jesse] Baptized many of ye Church, when convinced they desired it."<sup>112</sup> The church, it is generally held, continued as an open communion church, i. e., one which does not require each member to be baptized as a believer. It is interesting, therefore, that some who had seceded over the falseness of infant baptism returned "in time" to communion with Jesse's church.<sup>113</sup>

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111. Loc. cit.

112. Ibid., p. 245.

113. Loc. cit.

#### D. First London Confession

Seven Particular Baptist churches had appeared by 1644, but the full details of their evolution are not known. In the confession of 1644 they distinguished themselves from General Baptists. This confession was the first public indication that a denominational consciousness was developing among Particular Baptists. Within and related to Independent congregations, they had already begun to develop exclusivistic traits, but the public seems to have viewed them as enclaves which were closely related to Independent churches.

#### E. Baptist Exclusivism in the Mid-1640's

Very early in the Civil War period the differences between Baptists and Independents became evident to them. They were closely related, but their fellowship tended to become informal and personal. Baptists separated from Independent congregations, but most of these divisions or secessions were accomplished amicably. As early as 1643 or 1644 Baptists were denying the validity of non-baptized churches. The heated controversies which were already underway served to fix distinctions between the two traditions. Baptist exclusivism appears to have been largely responsible for the erection of barriers to fellowship between Baptists and Independents. The Jessey church, it has been noted, would have had fellowship with Baptists, but Baptist principles prevented it.

By 1646 the lines which delineated Baptists and Independents were more evident. Of course, some churches were still in the process of evolution; in these churches the distinctions between Baptists and Independents were still blurred. In 1646 John Saltmarsh, an Independent, recognized three divisions within evangelical Protestantism (Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist). Though he was aware of the distinctives of each party, he sought to effect a unity of spirit through the exercise of love. In addition to believers' baptism, Baptist distinctives included (1) the right of a lay preacher to baptize and (2) the reservation of the title "brother" for baptized believers only.<sup>114</sup> Each of these distinctives was exclusivistic. First, lay baptism facilitated the conversion of non-Baptists to Baptist ecclesiological views, for it took advantage of anti-clerical feelings. Baptists purposively differentiated themselves from others at this point. As denominationalism became more pronounced, however, the administration of baptism came under stricter control. Secondly, the reservation of the title "brother" to baptized believers implied that other professing Christians are not fully Christian. The term "brother" was revived because of the desire to restore primitive practice. Baptists continued to reserve the title to themselves.

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114. John Saltmarsh, The Smoke in the Temple, 1646, p. 14.

Quakers later ridiculed Baptists for applying the principle with legal precision. They charged that Baptists refused to call anyone "brother" until he had been baptized, even though his faith may have been satisfactorily examined a month previously.<sup>115</sup>

F. Evolution in the Broadmead Church, Bristol

Baptist views developed very slowly in the Broadmead church, Bristol. As Baptist views became more dominant, the church tended to have less fellowship with non-Baptists, even though it was an open communion church. There were two Baptist churches in Bristol before 1650, one General and one Particular. However, Baptist views did not become conspicuous in Broadmead until 1653. It was not until 1654 that Broadmead officers were baptized, receiving baptism from Henry Jessey in London.<sup>116</sup> Why they went to London is not known, but there are three possibilities. First, the Particular Baptist church in Bristol, of which Hynam was pastor, may have refused to baptize them, as the entire church did not desire believers' baptism. Secondly, the Broadmead church may not have requested baptism of Hynam's church, because of the strictness of the latter's views. Thirdly,

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115. Humphry Woolrich, A Declaration to the Baptists, 1659, p. 6.

116. The Records of a Church of Christ, meeting in Broadmead, Bristol. 1640-1687, edited by E. B. Underhill, p. 51.

the association between Jessey's church and Broadmead early in the 1640's may have prompted Broadmead to request baptism from Jessey.

Once Baptist views had emerged, Broadmead gradually adopted practices which were consistent with those of other Baptists. By 1675, during the persecution which had a unifying effect upon Nonconformists, Edward Terrill uniformly reserved the title "brother" for Baptists and Broadmead members; Presbyterians and Congregationalists, with whom regular prayer meetings were held, were called "Mr."<sup>117</sup> It might be argued that this represents only the view of Terrill, a pronounced Baptist, but the church seems to have shared his attitude toward non-Baptists. Late in the 1650's, it had been common to receive new members without believers' baptism. At no time did the church exclude those members who had been baptized only as infants, but by the 1670's it had become common to receive members by believers' baptism. Of the last forty-five members received before the membership list was prepared in November, 1679, only two were received without believers' baptism.<sup>118</sup> After this the formal connections of Broadmead became increasingly Baptist. Though Broadmead continued to accept Paedobaptists, the number declined.

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117. *Ibid.*, pp. 241, 245, 331.

118. *Ibid.*, pp. 417-418.

## CONCLUSION

Baptists tended to restrict their fellowship to themselves during the phase of beginnings. Among the early General Baptists fellowship with non-Baptists was violently rejected within a very brief period. Among the Particular Baptists it was more gradually restricted. Moreover, Particular Baptists seem never to have reached the degree of non-communication which General Baptists rather uniformly adopted.

General Baptists became very exclusivistic. Why they differed so much from Particular Baptists at this point cannot be fully explained. However, several factors contributed to the greater development of exclusivism and isolationism among General Baptists. First, General Baptists were innovators in theology as well as in ecclesiology. They were doubly separated from the Separatist tradition. Consequently, their incipient tendencies had to develop in a more limited ecclesiastical area. Secondly, they were ambiguously related to Anabaptists (Waterlander Mennonites), who were generally distrusted by the English. General Baptist views were violently attacked because of their alleged seditious character. General Baptists reacted defensively to this attack by extending their exclusivistic traits. Particular Baptists were also accused of foreign and heretical associations, but they collectively protested their innocence. Thirdly, General Baptists appeared in a hyper-critical atmosphere in which

every difference was magnified. The early Separatists were far more sectarian than Separatists of the 1630's. The early history of Amsterdam Separatism is replete with cases of internal controversies. Particular Baptists, on the other hand, arose out of an atmosphere in which criticism was reserved for the Church of England. Fourthly, the experimentation in congregational government had only recently been started when General Baptists arose, but congregational ecclesiology was essentially defined when Particular Baptists arose. In the 1630's, the Separatist tradition had fewer ecclesiological issues to settle by internal discussion than early Separatism had. Therefore, there was less likelihood of disruption over minor matters in the fourth decade than at an earlier date. Fifthly, persecution was not a cohesive factor in early Separatism. The early Separatists evaded persecution by flight. In Holland they were given freedom of propaganda; unfortunately, much of their propaganda was aimed against each other. The five General Baptist churches in England about 1625 were closely related, and one factor in their unity was persecution. They refused to force persecution upon themselves by failing to take the Oath of Allegiance,<sup>119</sup> but it is evident that persecution made unity more necessary. In the

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119. Evans, *op. cit.*, II, 24-31. The Waterlanders made a renunciation of oath-taking of any form a prerequisite to union, but the English Baptists categorically denounced the position of the Waterlanders. The Baptists held that oath-taking in England had civil connotations only.

1630's, the Particular Baptist congregation was intimately related to other separated churches because of persecution. Sixthly, being pioneers, General Baptists had radically to break with Paedobaptists over anti-paedobaptist views which suddenly developed among them. Anti-paedobaptist sentiments gradually developed in England, thus permitting Baptists gradually to separate from Paedobaptists. Seventhly, re-baptismal sentiment was rare early in the century, but it was common by 1640. During the 1630's, this sentiment proceeded, not from the invalidity of infant baptism, but from the invalidity of its administrator. It appears that many Separatists shared with Baptists the antagonism to prelatical administration. Eighthly, General Baptist theology was - rebuffed by Particular Baptists as well as by other Calvinists. Thus, General Baptists were subject to theological ostracism from Particular Baptists.

The ecclesiological crisis became grave during the Civil War period when all parties enjoyed an unprecedented degree of freedom of propaganda. They began to compete with each other, and in so doing denominational consciousness arose and ecclesiological patterns became fixed. In the process of consolidation the concept and practice of Christian fellowship was modified both intra- and inter-denominationally.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONSOLIDATION

The years from 1630 to 1645 were characterized by radical experimentation in religion. Conventicles grew rapidly, even during the Laudian persecution. In 1635 the "Commissioners for Causes Ecclesiasticall" ordered the suppression of all conventicles and granted full power to its messengers to enter any house suspected of housing a conventicle and to search for sectaries and documents with which to convict them.<sup>1</sup> Dissent reached such proportions that the Long Parliament, which convened on November 3, 1640, felt obliged to take action. However, the various opinions in Parliament crystallized into political parties; Anglicans became royalists and Puritans became republicans.

The Civil War was activated in 1642. However, in its religious aspect, it had already been going on for several months. During the first two years of the war (1642-1644), the king had the advantage, but the hold of Episcopacy was already broken. In 1643 Parliament was forced to declare itself for Presbyterianism, to the consternation of sects.<sup>2</sup>

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1. State Papers (Charles I), vol. 314, no. 34.

2. W. E. Lunt, History of England, third edition, pp. 422-430. See Henry Gee and W. J. Hardy, Documents Illustrative of English Church History, pp. 569-574, for the text of "The Solemn League and Covenant."

There was more freedom of religious expression for a few years after 1640 than at any other time during the century. Late in 1640 Archbishop Laud was arrested. With his deposition, the high-handed attacks on Puritanism, in its several forms, were brought to an end. Before 1640 the dissenting element was disorganized, having to subsist in an isolated, underground manner. When suppression was lifted, unrelated groups began to experiment with the religious views for which they had risked their persons and property.

The general outlines of congregational government had been previously determined. Most sectaries assumed a congregational form of life.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there was ample room for individuality, for the major ecclesiastical parties had not yet become consolidated. The heresiographer Edwards charged that the sects had grown rapidly since the first year of the sitting of the Long Parliament,<sup>4</sup> and noted that the most respectable Independent congregations of three years of age and with a constituency of thirty or forty, were composed of a medley of opinions.<sup>5</sup> Most of the cataloguers of sects were motivated by a desire to overthrow sectarianism,

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3. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, 1646, I, 9, says that all heretics and schismatics agree in "Independencie," by which he meant congregational government. Cf. Robert Bayly, The Dissuasive from The Errors of the Time, 1653, p. 11.

4. Edwards, op. cit., I, "Address to Parliament."

5. Ibid., II, 16.

so they uniformly manifested a hair-splitting of differences among the sectaries. The catalogues were drawn up by trained clergymen whose distrust for any kind of congregationalism is conspicuous.<sup>6</sup>

The multiplicity of sects in this period, as contrasted with the small number later in the century, testifies to the fluidity of the Civil War period. From 1641 to 1647 several lists of sects appeared, listing from a dozen to forty-seven heresies and schisms, plus hundreds of specific errors. The discontinuance of these lists is partially explained by the growing dominance of Presbyterianism. However, the principal explanation is that previously unrelated groups holding similar tenets developed into a homogeneous whole. By 1660 the lines were rather clearly fixed. There were five major parties: Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, Baptists, and Quakerism.

By the end of the century, consolidation was more rigid. However, England was becoming indifferent to religious matters which had dominated thought for at least three generations. The religious parties, in strengthening their positions at the expense of others, had dissipated their resources. A fog of irreligion settled over England, limiting visibility largely to local and formal concerns.

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6. Robert Baillie, Anabaptism, The True Fountaine..., 1647, preface.

During the seventeenth century, Baptists achieved an institutional structure which distinguished them from other denominations. Several factors contributed to institutional consolidation, but they may be generally classified under three heads: development of denominational distinctives, development of ministerial authority, and regulation of membership.

#### I. DEVELOPMENT OF DENOMINATIONAL DISTINCTIVES

Baptists were early considered the descendants of Münster. They were suspected of ecclesiastical subversion and political sedition. It became their task to establish their religious sincerity and political innocency without compromising their distinctive views. They also had to compete with other religious propaganda which was bombarding the nation. They, therefore, addressed themselves to the task of justifying their existence and extending their faith and practice. In this process they defined their distinctive tenets.

##### A. The Authority of the Scriptures

1. Confessional statements. The only authority which Baptists claimed was the Bible. Every confession of faith save one had an article on the sufficiency of the Scriptures for matters of faith and order. The exception was The True

Gospel-Faith, a General Baptist confession of 1654. This is most notable, for the confession was adopted to thwart the Quakers who primarily attacked the authority of the Scriptures. The confession was written by Thomas Lover prior to the Quaker campaign; seemingly, he took the authority of the Scriptures for granted. Lover died before the confession was adopted by the General Baptists of London.<sup>7</sup>

Baptists recognized that other Protestants claimed the Scriptures as the sole authority.<sup>8</sup> In their advocacy of the Scriptures, Baptists identified themselves as Protestants. However, Baptists developed the principle of Biblical authority more fully than others.

Baptists were not immune to the biblicism of the age, but they were less literal than Congregationalists<sup>9</sup> and such fringe groups as Fifth Monarchists and Sabbatarians. General Baptists were more literalistic than Particular Baptists. All religious parties of the century, including the Quakers, used the Scriptures as an affirmed standard, but the conclu-

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7. W. L. Lumpkin, The Local Baptist Confessions of Faith of the Civil War--Commonwealth Period, unpublished Ph. D. thesis for the University of Edinburgh, 1948, p. 154.

8. Richard Deans, A Copy of a Brief Treatise ..., 1693, p. 30: "I take it to be agreed, among the generality of Reformed Christians, that in the Holy Scriptures are contained Directions, as well concerning all essential Parts of worship, as Doctrines, necessary to be believed."

9. D. M. Himbury, "Christ's Holy Community," BQ, XV (1953-54), 11-13, indicates the difference between Particular Baptists and Congregationalists.

sions drawn therefrom were diverse.<sup>10</sup> The controversies of the century were biblicistic, resulting in the development of bitter feelings and in the perversion of the Scriptures.

Baptists early exercised a great independence of thought and defended individual interpretation under the leading of the Spirit. Throughout the century, they rejected both logic<sup>11</sup> and tradition.<sup>12</sup> They rejected the former because it subordinated religion to evident reason, and the latter because it shackled religion to the past. In either case the learned became the guardians of religion, and the preaching of "mechanick preachers," as the unlettered preachers were called, was prohibited.

Baptists were most opposed to tradition, for it was ec-

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10. Hanserd Knollys, A Moderate Answer ..., 1645, p. 10, agrees with Bastwick that the Bible is to be the source of church government, but dissents from Bastwick's conclusions.

11. Daniel Featley, The Dippers dipt ..., 1645, pp. 2f, 9, attempted to establish syllogistic reasoning, abstract philosophy, and tradition, as norms for a dispute with Kiffin and a Scotsman, which they rejected. A very complete statement about logic is contained in the preface to the General Baptist confession of 1678 (edited by A. H. J. Baines and published in BQ, XV [1953-54], 68): "Reason itself, as well as Tongues, or Humane Learning, ought to be subservient to the mind of the Holy Ghost ... For if Reason shall go before like an Usher to make way to Faith in Divine Mysteries, we should never believe ... Reasons going before Faith weaken Faith, but Reasons coming after strengthen it."

12. Thomas Grantham, The Baptist against the Papist, 1663, 61p., is concerned with this specific problem; Deane, loc. cit.; Thomas De Laune, A Plea for the Non-conformists, A New Edition Enlarged, 1779, p. xiii. It was the controversy over the authority of tradition about 1680 which led de Veil, the renowned commentator of Acts, to become a Baptist; see W. S. Samuel, "Charles-Marie de Veil," BQ, V (1930-31), 126f, 180.

clesiastically preserved. Within twenty-five years of controversy, they came to equate tradition, by whomsoever employed, with "Papism." Consequently, their later confessions emphasized the Scriptures more strongly than either Presbyterian or Congregational confessions. The first sentence of the Particular Baptist confession of 1677 emphatically stated, as the Westminster and Savoy confessions did not, that "The holy scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience."<sup>13</sup>

2. Interpretation of the Bible. a. Civil War period.

Baptists recognized that the Bible must be interpreted. However, they denied any norm of interpretation which was exterior to the Bible. The principle of interpretation stated by Kiffin in 1641 seems to have been uniformly adhered to during the Civil War period:

All Texts are to be understood literally, except they make against some other Scriptures, or except the very Coherence and Dependence of the Scripture shews it otherwise, or it makes against the Analogy of Faith.<sup>14</sup>

There is latitude in this principle, but it is Bible-centered. Even the "Analogy of Faith," which has reference to the ex-

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13. E. B. Underhill, Confessions of Faith, p. 179 and n.1. This is obviously significant, for the confession was designed to emphasize likenesses rather than differences. (Hereafter this collection of confessions will be referred to as "Underhill, Confessions.")

14. William Kiffin, A Glimpse of Sions Glory, 1641, pp. 13f. A. P. S. Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, p. 233, improperly attributes authorship to Hanserd Knollys.

perience wrought by the Spirit, is Bible-centered, for the Spirit was considered the interpretative agent of the Scriptures:

The letter of the word of God is not scripture, without the revelation of the spirit of God; the word revealed by the spirit is scripture.<sup>15</sup>

b. Abuse of individual interpretation. The initially affirmed freedom of interpretation was soon limited by the necessity of defending against excessive individualism. Opponents foresaw the logic of sectarian freedom in interpreting the Bible and predicted that it would ultimately lead to the rejection of Biblical authority.<sup>16</sup> The Seekers early despaired of establishing a Biblical ecclesiology. By 1649 the Leveller Walwyn, seeking to establish a civil state with complete social equality, was advocating that the Scriptures be interpreted only by the individual conscience. In 1646 Walwyn had enjoyed very cordial relations with Baptists. In 1649, however, Baptists charged him with atheism because of his emphasis on natural law and rejection of divine authority.<sup>17</sup>

c. Threat of Quakerism. The chief threat to Biblical authority came from the Quakers. Quakerism was particularly dangerous for its interest was religious rather than social.

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15. Featley, op. cit., p. 15, quoting Baptists.

16. Baillie, op. cit., p. 97.

17. D. M. Himbury, "The Religious Beliefs of the Levellers," BQ, XV (1953-54), 270f.

Quakers took to its logical conclusion the progressive principle which had characterized early Separatists and Baptists.

Quaker growth was not notable until about 1652, but within a few years Quakers had covered England and Wales. General Baptists were most susceptible to Quakerism because of their strong emphasis on man's innate capacities. General Baptists lost heavily to the Quakers. However, Calvinism, in both Baptist and non-Baptist forms, was not immune to Quakerism.

The most feared Quaker tenet was "crying down the scriptures, those sacred oracles of truth, as a dead letter, and crying up the lights within, as they call it."<sup>18</sup> Between 1653 and 1660 there were at least thirty debates between Baptists and Quakers;<sup>19</sup> the foremost subjects were the Scriptures and the Inner Light. The confessions of the mid-1650's uniformly contained anti-Quaker articles,<sup>20</sup> and the preface to the third edition (1652) of the London confession of 1644 denounced Quakerism.<sup>21</sup> The Fenstanton records of 1651 and

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18. Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, edited by E. B. Underhill, p. 315. This reference comes from the Hexham records, in a letter from Hexham to the Coleman Street church, London, dated March 1, 1653. (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "church Records," as appropriate.)

19. A. S. Langley, "Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations," Trans., VI (1918-19), 216-243

20. Lumpkin, op. cit., pp. 150-207.

21. Underhill, Confessions, p. 25. Heart-Bleedings for Professors Abominations, 1650, (ibid., 293-310), was appended to later editions of the confession of 1644. W. J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 199, calls it "a burning and powerful plea for biblical Christianity."

1652 listed many excommunications, the vast majority of which concerned the rejection of the Scriptures and ordinances, and the claim of a superior light.<sup>22</sup>

d. Evaluation. The individualism of Quaker interpretation was the prime factor in the de-emphasis of individualistic interpretation among Baptists. The place of the Spirit became less prominent, and greater care was exercised in certifying lay preachers. When Bunyan was questioned in 1661 about his principle of interpretation, he stated that the Bible is to be interpreted by comparing various passages; the Bible alone is its judge.<sup>23</sup> In interpreting the Scriptures Baptists sought to steer between traditionalism and individualism. They succeeded in great measure, even though their conclusions were not uniform.

3. The New Testament as a norm. The various controversies of the Civil War-Commonwealth period caused Baptists to adopt the New Testament as their ecclesiological norm. The opponents of believers' baptism, congregational religion (as contrasted with national), lay preaching, and toleration, uniformly based their arguments on the Old Testament. They asserted that the Church is the extension of national Israel. To confute their opponents Baptists appealed to the New Tes-

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22. Fenstanton Records, pp. 2ff.

23. John Bunyan, A Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan, in The Practical Works of John Bunyan, edited by J. Newton Brown (American Baptist Publication Society edition), VIII, 158.

tament for the confirmation of their views.

The religious literature of the century abounded in scriptural references, regardless of the issue under discussion. However, the Bible was most frequently used for ecclesiastical purposes rather than evangelical, for disputation rather than edification. In the mid-century, Baptists were aided by their emphasis on the Scriptures. However, religious pamphleteering alone was inadequate to produce genuine religion.

Literary controversy continued throughout the century. The populace grew weary of it, and some were perhaps offended by the misuse of the Bible. During the seventeenth century, the Bible became the rule-book for English church-order, whereas it had been used in the sixteenth century primarily as a rule-book for evangelical theology. As theological scholasticism set in during the sixteenth century, ecclesiastical scholasticism, an inflexibility of church-order, set in during the seventeenth. The Bible, variously interpreted, was used to defend each ecclesiastical institution. Within a homogeneous tradition, the Bible strengthened fellowship; inter-denominationally, the Bible became a divisive factor, for the Bible was employed to distinguish ecclesiastical systems rather than to integrate Christianity. Behind the use of the Bible for proof-text purposes were bias and prejudice, which made unanimity impossible.

### B. Theological Definition

Theology was the secondary concern in the initial phase of Baptist life, as early pamphleteering indicates. Baptists were early engaged in establishing their ecclesiology, their primary interest. However, theological definition became necessary in the process of consolidation. By the end of the century, theology was more significant than ecclesiology.

Theological definition was the response to four needs. First, Baptists had to establish their theological orthodoxy against the calumny of their opponents. Secondly, Baptists had to define a theological basis for evangelism. Thirdly, defections to fringe sects, heresies, and particularly Quakerism, had to be arrested. Fourthly, Baptists had to be stabilized and instructed in their theology in order to subsist. These needs and reactions cannot be absolutely delineated chronologically, but the order in which they are listed appears to be the most accurate arrangement.

Calvinism was the dominant theology of seventeenth century England. The anti-Calvinism which appeared early in the century had been accepted by many in high episcopal offices, the most significant of whom was Laud. Anti-Calvinism contributed to the increasing unrest of Puritans during the first four decades. Concurrent with English anti-Calvinism was the fierce theological controversy between Arminianism

and Calvinism, which was waged primarily on the Continent. However, the controversy also affected England, and the extremely high Calvinism epitomized by the Synod of Dort became comparatively normative throughout most of the century. With the advent of the Civil War, theological latitudinarianism, as represented by Laud, was stripped of effective force, and high Calvinism became ascendant through Presbyterians, Independents, and Particular Baptists.

1. Purposes of confessional theology. a. Self-defense against calumny. It is significant that Particular Baptists were the first to publish a confession of faith during the Civil War period. In 1643 Spilsbery included a confession in his treatise on believers' baptism. The confession was designed to disarm the charge of Arminianism, "those reproachfull clamours, cast upon all without exception that seem to be of my judgement about Baptisme."<sup>24</sup> In 1644 seven London churches issued a confession to demonstrate their theological orthodoxy and political innocence.<sup>25</sup> One of the stated purposes of subsequent Particular Baptist confessions was the confirmation of orthodoxy.<sup>26</sup>

b. Evangelism. The first General Baptist confession

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24. J/ohn/ S/pilsbery/, A Treatise concerning the Lawful Subject of Baptisme, 1643, p. 43. Unfortunately, the confession is incomplete, as some pages are missing.

25. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 171-174.

26. Ibid., pp. 201f, 223-227; Articles of the Christian Faith, 1704, broadsheet.

appeared in 1651. It was designed to serve, not a defensive, but an evangelistic purpose.<sup>27</sup> In this the confession manifested the heroic character of Helwys, though the form of the confession was patterned after Smyth's confession<sup>28</sup> and the theology was most akin to that of Murton in 1620. The confession of 1651 is unique because of its evangelistic character.

Subsequent General Baptist confessions were more defensive than evangelistic. The Standard Confession of 1660 had objectives similar to those of the London confession of 1644.<sup>29</sup> Of course, the Standard Confession did not deny Arminianism, but it declared "our innocent Belief and Practise." The Orthodox Creed of 1678 was conciliatory toward Calvinism because of the defective Christology which some General Baptists held. The affirmed purpose of the confession was to unite and confirm all true Protestants.<sup>30</sup>

c. Defense against Quakerism. There is a distinct relationship between the confessions of the mid-1650's and the alarming defection to Quakerism. Particular Baptist confessions which manifest this are the third edition of the London confession in 1652,<sup>31</sup> the Midlands confession of 1655,<sup>32</sup>

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27. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 95.

28. Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 136.

29. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 111.

30. Ibid., p. 124.

31. Ibid., pp. 196-198.

32. Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 159.

the Somerset confession of 1656,<sup>33</sup> and the Welsh confession of 1656.<sup>34</sup> General Baptists produced no confession during the Quaker onslaught. The confession of 1651 and the Welsh confession antedated the active propaganda of the Quakers,<sup>35</sup> and the London confession of 1654 was privately written before Quakerism arose, even though it was publicly directed against Quakerism.

Inasmuch as General Baptists suffered the greater losses to Quakers, it is difficult to explain why General Baptists produced no original confession during the Quaker campaign. However, there appear to have been two reasons. First, the theology of General Baptists was not fully worked out, being limited to Biblical language. Secondly, General Baptists were so disorganized and disrupted by Quakerism that they could not give primary attention to theology. They were more concerned with cultic than with theological matters. The theology of General Baptists which came out of this emergency

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33. Underhill, *Confessions*, p. 64.

34. \_\_\_\_\_, *An Antidote Against the Infections of the Times*, 1656, pp. 19-26; cf. Lumpkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-204.

35. This confession is entitled "Som principall pointes Held, and Maintained by the Church of Christ in wales, falsely called Anababtists." It was never published by Welsh Baptists, but the manuscript was edited by Champlin Burrage and published in *Trans.*, I (1908-09), 3-20. Burrage curiously ascribes it to Vavasor Powell because marginally it bears the name "Vavasour Powell." However, the name is written in different ink and style. Lumpkin, *op. cit.*, p. 186, on the basis of internal evidence, dates it before the Quaker campaign and denies that Powell is the author.

contained Calvinistic tendencies, even though certain Arminian views were inviolably defended.

d. Basis of unity and instruction. The confessions were used as standards for organic unity and instruction. Particular Baptists were of the Calvinistic family, so they did not need a cohesive statement initially. General Baptists, on the other hand, were in the theological minority; therefore, it became necessary for them to establish a doctrinal norm for their own stability.

The confession of 1651 was an attempt by thirty General Baptist congregations to define their faith in a form acceptable, not only to themselves, but also to all General Baptists "in England, Wales, Army, or else-where." Other churches had not, due to distance and non-acquaintance, co-operated in the drafting of the confession. Nevertheless, the thirty congregations expressed the hope that

our forwardness herein will not be any hinderance to you in the future, to manifest your concurrence with us, so far as we own the Truth; for the preserving our Union with God, and our Joy and Peace with each other.<sup>36</sup>

In this confession the inter-relatedness of local churches was strongly defined, for unity was intended.<sup>37</sup>

The Particular Baptist Midlands confession of 1655 emphatically stated that it was a standard by which churches

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36. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 96.

37. Ibid., pp. 106f (arts. 65 and 70).

could be judged as to their authenticity. Churches which adopted the confession were to be acknowledged as true churches, and inter-communion was possible.<sup>38</sup>

It is notable that the churches which signed the General Baptist confession of 1651 and the Particular Baptist confession of 1655, were from the general Midlands area. The great bulk of General Baptist strength was to the north and east of the Particular Baptist churches, but there was perhaps some connection between the two confessions. The confession of 1651 seems to have been used by General Baptists in the area as late as 1658, for in that year a Paedo-baptist minister of Leicestershire attacked the confession on the doctrine of original sin.<sup>39</sup> It seems highly probable that the example of General Baptists and the need for doctrinal differentiation called forth the confession of 1655.

The Somerset confession of 1656 was originally prepared, not for public view, but "for a trial of our unity in the faith, for our more clear fellowship one with another, from our harmony in faith and practice."<sup>40</sup>

The confession of 1677 was published to show agreement between Particular Baptists and other Calvinists. The Westminster and Savoy confessions were appropriated verbatim

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38. Lumpkin, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

39. Nathaniel Stephens, Vindiciae Fvndamenti, 1658, preface.

40. Underhill, Confessions, p. 63.

except in matters where essential differences existed. The affirmed purpose of this public plagiarism was

to convince all that we have no itch to clog religion with new words, but to readily acquiesce in that form of sound words which hath been, in consent with the holy scriptures, used by others before us.<sup>41</sup>

The confession was subscribed by upwards of one hundred congregations in 1689, not to show agreement with non-Baptists, but

for the glory of God, and the good of these congregations. ... which Confession we own, as containing the doctrine of our faith and practice; and do desire that the members of our churches respectively do furnish themselves therewith.<sup>42</sup>

It is evident, therefore, that the re-issue of the confession was intended for connectional and instructional purposes.

The growing interest in an inflexible theology for purposes of instruction required the publication of The Baptist Catechism, which was patterned after the Shorter Catechism (Westminster Assembly) and designed to explicate the confession of 1677. Specifically, it was intended "for the instruction of youth in the fundamentals of religion."<sup>43</sup> The specified objectives of the confession of Elias and Benjamin Keach of 1697 aimed at theological integrity among Particular Baptists. First, it was intended to enlighten Baptists, the

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41. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 224.

42. Ibid., p. 218.

43. Underhill, Confessions, p. 249.

generality of whom were too ignorant on doctrinal matters. Secondly, it was designed to arm Baptists against heresy.<sup>44</sup>

e. Conclusion. Confessions, representing the most conscious and comprehensive theologies, were first promulgated to confirm orthodoxy. Soon, however, they were used for stabilizing Baptists against heretical defections. Seldom were confessions used to serve evangelistic ends. By 1700 confessions and catechetical aids were designed primarily for didactic purposes. The progress is notable, demonstrating the gradual consolidation of Baptists along theological lines.

2. Modified theological positions. Baptists were divided into two theological traditions. Those who held the doctrine of universal atonement were essentially in the Arminian tradition; those who held the doctrine of particular atonement were in the Calvinistic tradition. With few exceptions the theological traditions were rigidly separated. However, there were some attempts to harmonize the two theologies.

a. London church. Early in the century, Helwys had held a Calvinistic theology which was modified only at the points of atonement and election. In 1645 a London church, whose identity is unknown, issued a pamphlet containing a moderate theology. It was charged that the attacks on Arminianism, while being partially justified, had nevertheless denied

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44. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 289f.

"the manifest Truth" of the general atonement, "the very foundation of saving faith."<sup>45</sup>

b. Thomas Collier. The most notable modification was made by Thomas Collier. His area of operations was West Anglia where General Baptists had existed before 1640. Prior to the Civil War, Smyth's book, The Character of the Beast, had been widely circulated in the area.<sup>46</sup> In 1645 Edwards charged that Collier was "a great Sectary of the West," and that he was one of the first to sow the seeds of Arminianism.<sup>47</sup> In 1647 Collier strongly spiritualized the doctrine of the Church,<sup>48</sup> in a way which was later typical of Quakerism. He perhaps had this in mind when he said in 1654 that some would accuse him of vacillation, charging that he was once against ordinances as if "there was a life above them, without them."<sup>49</sup> The Somerset confession of 1656, of which Collier was the chief signatory, had an ambiguous theology, containing both Calvinistic and Arminian elements.<sup>50</sup>

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45. \_\_\_\_\_, The Fountains of Free Grace Opened, 1645, "To the Reader." Free will is denied, and original sin and perseverance are upheld.

46. Arthur Tucker, "Salisbury and Tiverton about 1630," Trans., III (1912-13), 6.

47. Edwards, op. cit., III, 27-29. The charge of Arminianism may be explained by Edwards' failure to distinguish between Particular and General Baptists.

48. Thomas Collier, A Discovery of the New Creation, 1647, in Woodhouse, op. cit., pp. 390-396.

49. Thomas Collier, The Right Constitution and True Subjects of the Visible Church of Christ, 1654, ep. ded.

50. This was either an attempt "to unite all Baptists of the district irrespective of their Calvinism or Arminianism" (Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 175), or a Calvinistic modification of Arminianism.

Collier became neither strictly Calvinistic nor strictly Arminian, a cause of concern to the strict Calvinistic Baptists of London.<sup>51</sup> He identified himself with Particular Baptists, but he never felt completely at home among them. When the confession of 1677 was drafted, he dissented from its advanced Calvinism on seven articles, each of which dealt with a basic tenet of Calvinism.<sup>52</sup>

3. General Baptists and Christology. General Baptists slowly established a doctrinal standard. They were troubled internally with theological diversity. During the 1650's, some became concerned about defective Christology, of which Matthew Caffyn was the chief protagonist. It was the dehumanizing Christology of Melchior Hoffmann who affirmed that Jesus took His flesh from God and though He was born of Mary He received nothing from her, for He passed through her as water through a conduit. The ambiguity and Biblical

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51. The Records of a Church of Christ, meeting in Broadmead, Bristol. 1640-1687, edited by E. B. Underhill, p. 359. In 1676 Kiffin, Deane, Fitten, N. Coxe, and Moreton went to see Collier about his "unsound doctrines, or new notions." (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "Broadmead Records.")

52. Thomas Collier, A Confession of Faith, 1678, pp. 42-62. He questioned the conciliatory character of the confession, holding that it tended to Antinomianism, a "God-dishonouring, Gospel-destroying, Sin-exalting, and Soul-undoing Principle of Faith" (p. 59). It is very probable that the confession was considerably in advance of the Calvinism which was currently held by Particular Baptists, and that it contributed to the development of a more rigid Calvinism which became apparent before 1700. The confession was widely adopted by Baptists after 1689, and was interpreted by a Calvinistic catechism.

literalism of earlier General Baptist confessions were unable to prevent the spread of this heretical Christology, so General Baptists of Bucks, Herts, Bedford, and Oxford made a conciliation toward Calvinism in order to disarm Caffyn's views.<sup>53</sup>

After 1690 General Baptists found themselves in a theological dilemma. On the one hand was Caffyn's Christology and on the other were the dominance and encroachment of Particular Baptists. The General Assembly, as a whole, was more fearful of Calvinism than of defective Christology, so the Assembly, instead of adopting the confession of 1678, repeatedly subscribed the Standard Confession of 1660,<sup>54</sup> which was theologically naive and non-committal on the points in question. In 1696 the Assembly limited Christological discussion to Biblical language.<sup>55</sup>

Other General Baptists were more fearful of Caffynism than of Calvinism. They withdrew from the Assembly in 1696, and in 1697 they formed the General Association which endorsed the Orthodox Creed of 1678.<sup>56</sup> The Association became more strict about pulpit intercourse with Particular Baptists,<sup>57</sup>

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53. A. H. J. Baines, "The Preface to the Orthodox Confession of 1679," *BQ*, XV (1953-54), 62-64. "Caffynism" will be used in this thesis, as it limits the de-humanizing Christology to English Baptists.

54. Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, With Kindred Records, edited by W. T. Whitley, I, 30, 39. (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "MGA.")

55. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

56. Baines, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

57. *MGA*, I. 66.

for the Orthodox Creed made them susceptible to Calvinism. The Association also proscribed communion with churches which were affiliated with the Assembly.

4. Conclusion. Baptist theologies became rigidly fixed during the seventeenth century. Particular Baptists early adopted Calvinism. General Baptists gradually defined their theology. At the end of the century, however, they were divided into two theological groups, each of which rejected communion with the other. The General Assembly held an ambiguous theology and proscribed discussion in non-Biblical language. The General Association held a Calvinizing theology. By 1700 theology had become so paramount that agreement was a prerequisite to communion.

#### C. Believers' Baptism

1. The inchurching principle. The most conspicuous distinctive of Baptists was believers' baptism. They early made it essential to communion and this requirement continued, with few exceptions, throughout the century. Believers' baptism displaced the covenant as the inchurching or constitutive principle of the gathered church. Later in the century, the practice of covenanting was revived but the covenant was not called the inchurching principle.

a. Rejection of covenant. Believers' baptism became the inchurching principle at the beginning of the Baptist movement. Smyth and Helwys rejected the covenant, claiming that

the church is founded on believers' baptism. A few members of the Jessey church scrupled the use of the covenant,<sup>58</sup> and the rejection of covenanting soon became a characteristic of Baptists. The reason for this rejection was the close relationship between the inchurching principle and the covenant of grace which was the prime defense of infant baptism.

The development of believers' baptism as the inchurching principle was progressive. The Anglican polemic against Separatism derogated the covenant as an inchurching instrument, for Anglicans claimed that a new covenant would have to be attended by a new seal, a new baptism. An investigation of this idea caused some Separatists to renounce their infant baptism and to assume a new baptism.<sup>59</sup> However, these Baptists did not uniformly repudiate infant baptism as insufficient for communion.

b. Baptismal controversy. The baptismal controversy of the 1640's led to an emphatic denial of the covenant. In 1643 Spilsbery and Lambe, Particular and General respectively, were ambiguous about the constitutive principle. They emphasized faith but implied that there was a covenant involved in the constitution of a church.<sup>60</sup> The confession of

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58. W. T. Whitley, editor, "Rise of the Particular Baptists, 1633-1644," Trans., I (1908-09), 233.

59. Thomas Wynell, The Covenants Plea for Infants, 1642, "To the Christian Reader."

60. S/pilsbery/, op. cit., pp. 41-43; Thomas Lambe, A Confutation of Infants Baptisme, 1643, pp. 35-37.

1644 mentioned both baptism and covenant.<sup>61</sup> Independents and Presbyterians, in the heat of controversy, repudiated believers' baptism and defended covenanting.<sup>62</sup> Most Baptists immediately rejected the covenant.<sup>63</sup>

c. Open communionists. Some Baptists, however, denied that the church is constituted on believers' baptism. They favored the organization of churches by means of a covenant. As for communion, they held that faith and holiness are the only prerequisites to church-communion.<sup>64</sup> These open communionists were influenced by Paedo-baptist arguments against the necessity of baptism following belief.<sup>65</sup>

Open communionists differed from both Paedo-baptists and Baptists over the importance of baptism. Paedo-baptists consistently held the necessity of baptism before church-communion, a fact which Kiffin pointed out.<sup>66</sup> The difference be-

61. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 183.

62. See John Turner, A Heavenly Conference, 1645, pp. 30-32, for a typical argument.

63. Hanserd Knollys, A Moderate Answer . . ., 1645, pp. 19f; Thomas Colyer, Certaine Queries: . . ., 1645, pp. 10f.

64. Henry Lawrence, Of Baptisme, 1646, pp. 402f; John Tombes, An Apology or Plea . . ., 1646, pp. 65f; Edward Hutchinson, A Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism, 1676, p. 105; John Bunyan, A Confession of my Faith and a Reason for my Practice, in Complete Works (Gulliver's edition), pp. 825ff; Bunyan, Differences in Judgment about Water Baptism, No Bar to Communion, 1673, 122p.

65. John Goodwin, Water-Dipping No Firm Footing for Church-Communion, 1653, 90p., argues against the necessity of water baptism after actual faith. He was answered by both General and Particular Baptists. Within a few years, some of the open communionists were changing their views.

66. William Kiffin, A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion, 1681, 163p., esp. pp. 3, 126-138.

tween Paedo-baptists and Baptists was over what constitutes valid baptism, not whether baptism is necessary for communion. Baptists held that true baptism follows actual faith and insisted that any alleged baptism prior to belief is not baptism. Open communionists were ambiguous about baptism, for they accepted either believers' or infant baptism.

d. Quakerism. Another factor which led to the increasing emphasis on baptism was the Quaker rejection of outward baptism. Quakers argued that the only valid baptism is that of the Spirit;<sup>67</sup> if one has this baptism, external baptism is irrelevant and a concession to legalism.

Baptists had to steer between baptismal dispensability (as held by the Quakers and implied by open communionists) and baptismal legalism (as held by Paedo-baptists).<sup>68</sup> The former position would do away with baptism. Of course, open communionists would not admit that they were against ordinances, but their idea carried the germ of baptismal irrelevance. The latter position exaggerated the importance of baptism in requiring everyone to be baptized, with or without active faith.

2. Mode. a. Defense of mode. After the revival of immersion, Baptists uniformly claimed dipping as the mode.

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67. Alex Parker, A Testimony of God, 1656, p. 23; George Fox, Concerning the True Baptism and the False, 1676, 7p.

68. Thomas Grantham, Truth and Peace, 1689, p. 19.

They emphasized immersion more during the first few years after its revival than later in the century. However, this emphasis was caused, not by an abnormal appreciation of the mode, but by the calumnies of critics which required rebuttal.

Opponents of Baptists early attacked the form as well as the subject of believers' baptism. They charged that immersion was immoral (due to the alleged nakedness of the baptizand) and injurious to health.<sup>69</sup> Of course, Baptists defended themselves against these calumnies, but even then the primary emphasis was on the subject rather than on the mode. In Kiffin's defense of closed communion there are only oblique references to mode. Kiffin mentioned sprinkling, as related to infant baptism, but the emphasis was on "infant" or non-believer rather than on "sprinkling." He mentioned immersion or dipping only in a metaphorical way, in describing the symbolism of death-burial-resurrection.<sup>70</sup> Kiffin never asserted that infant baptism is invalidated because its mode is sprinkling; it is invalidated because it has a wrong subject.

b. Various methods of dipping. There seem to have been varied administrations of immersion. Baptists uniformly de-

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69. \_\_\_\_\_, The Anabaptists Catechisms, 1645, p. 1; Featley, op. cit., pp. 33-35; Baillie, op. cit., p. 90; Edwards, op. cit., I, 71, 55 (mis-numbered); Richard Baxter, More Proofs of Infants Church-Membership, 1675, preface.

70. Kiffin, A Sober Discourse ..., pp. 4, 9, 19.

scribed only the religious service connected with baptism, never bothering to describe the manner of immersion.<sup>71</sup> Their opponents, however, described the mode variously: (1) the administrator places a hand on back and head, and "dips the said person quite over head and eares;"<sup>72</sup> (2) a woodcut shows the administrator, left hand on head and right hand on back, pushing the candidate into the water;<sup>73</sup> and (3) a series of four woodcuts shows the administrator and baptizand, holding hands, arms outstretched; the baptizand falls back into the water.<sup>74</sup> Though these descriptions come from antagonists, there is no reason summarily to discard them as calumnious misrepresentations.

3. Condition of communion. During the century, closed communion increased. The open communion practice of the Commonwealth and Restoration was disappearing by the end of the century. Some open communion churches became Baptist, but most became Congregational.

The influence of controversies (concerning infant baptism, communion, and Quakerism) hardened believers' baptism into an inflexible rule for church-communion. However, in 1700 the harsh feelings which had prevailed earlier had

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71. Samuel Richardson, Some brief Considerations ..., 1645, p. 4, is a typical Baptist statement.

72. \_\_\_\_\_, The Anabaptists Catechisms, p. 11.

73. \_\_\_\_\_, Catalogue of the several Sects and Opinions ..., 1647, broadsheet.

74. \_\_\_\_\_, A Publick Dispute ..., 1654, frontispiece.

largely disappeared. Paedo-baptists had early accused the Baptists of unchristian exclusivism. Congregational denominationalism and the disfranchisement of Presbyterianism during the Restoration mitigated this criticism, except for a few years in the 1670's.

It is true that Baptists early rejected paedo-baptism with a certain degree of exclusivism. The main reason for this rejection, however, was its irregularity of order. Benjamin Coxse named this as the main reason in 1646. William Allen stated in 1653 that church-communion may follow believers' baptism only, else baptism is meaningless. Lambe argued in 1655 that faith does not grant an immediate right to full communion with the Church; full communion comes only after conformity to Christ's regulating order, believers' baptism.<sup>75</sup> Particular Baptists elaborated this principle in the controversy with open communionists, affirming that sentimentality is no basis for violating a "Gospel-Rule," and arguing that it would be a breach of good order to admit the unbaptized, i. e., those who are not baptized as believers.<sup>76</sup>

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75. Benjamin Coxse, An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, in Underhill, Confessions, p. 59; William Allen, Some Baptismal abuses Briefly Discovered, 1653, p. 104; Thomas Lambe, Truth prevailing against the fiercest Opposition ..., 1655, pp. 11-13.

76. Kiffin, A Sober Discourse ..., pp. 151-163; see a discussion of this by J. M. Ross, "The Theology of Baptism in Baptist History," BQ, XV (1953-54), 105.

4. Revival of covenanting. Whereas most Baptists initially rejected the covenant as the inchurching principle, many churches which slowly emerged from Independency adopted covenants. This practice was more prominent when the separation was amicably accomplished; it was most conspicuous among open communion churches.<sup>77</sup> Later in the century, after Baptist denominationalism was rather securely established, covenants were adopted by newly-organized churches.<sup>78</sup> Some of the older churches also adopted the practice of covenanting. Benjamin and Elias Keach, father and son, drew up a covenant for their churches, but the covenant was widely adopted by other churches. However, it was frequently modified, a fact which indicates a persistent independence of thought within the local church.<sup>79</sup> During the eighteenth century, covenanting was the rule rather than the exception. It was particularly prominent in America. However, Baptists never surrendered the principle of believers' baptism. The covenant was not the inchurching principle; it was merely the standard for discipline. The covenant contained rules for conduct and the mutual relationships of members of the church.

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77. The Church Book of the Bunyan Meeting 1650-1821, p. 2. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Bunyan Meeting Records.")

78. C. B. Jewson, "St. Mary's, Norwich," BQ, X (1940-41), 230f; W. T. Whitley, "Church Covenants," BQ, VII (1934-35), 228.

79. Whitley, "Church Covenants," op. cit., p. 230.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF MINISTERIAL AUTHORITY

Throughout the seventeenth century, Baptists affirmed the principle of congregational government. They also preserved the idea of the universal church. In both of these, Baptists manifested a difference from Independents. Independents compromised the theory of congregational authority by elevating the ministry. Of course, Baptists also elevated the ministry, but it was a gradual development among them, whereas it rapidly developed among Independents during the 1640's. Independents identified the Church almost exclusively with the particular congregation. They developed their view of the particular congregation in controversy with Presbyterians, for the doctrine of the Church was the chief difference between them. Presbyterians emphasized the universal church, so Independents had to emphasize the particular congregation in order to justify continued separation from Presbyterianism.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, Independents gave to

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80. T. G. Crippen, "Ordination, Primitive and Congregational," Cong. Trans., VII (October, 1918), 330-343. The similarity between the views of J. R. Graves, the outstanding protagonist of Old Landmarkism, and Congregationalists is striking. His youth was spent in New England during the critical period when Congregationalism was unsuccessfully fighting to preserve its preferred status. It is highly conceivable that Graves appropriated Congregational ecclesiology and transplanted it in the South where two somewhat similar groups (Baptists and Christians) were engaged in a heated controversy. Against the unionizing efforts of the Christians, Baptists strongly emphasized the local church.

the ministry a pre-eminence which is not easily harmonized with congregational government.

By the end of the century, Baptists had highly elevated the ministry. They continued to affirm the principle of congregational authority and the doctrine of the universal church. However, congregational authority was limited by an increasing ministerial authority. The doctrine of the universal church was consistently preserved as the doctrinal basis of associationalism.

#### A. Lay Preaching

1. Early sectarianism. Under the influence of lay preaching, disputations, and pamphleteering, sects grew rapidly early in the 1640's. One of the most successful propaganda agencies was lay preaching. Independency initially participated in this lay propaganda. However, it became increasingly conservative due to the large number of trained Independent ministers, participation in the official ecclesiastical deliberations of the Westminster Assembly, an early hope for an establishment favoring Independency as well as Presbyterians, and Independent attempts to curtail the growth of Baptists. Baptists had some trained ministers<sup>81</sup> which were

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81. Christopher Blackwood, Francis Cornwell, Benjamin Coxe, Henry Denne, John Gibbs, Edward Harrison, George Kendall, Hanserd Knollys, John Pendarves, Vavasor Powell, and John Tombes. Two observations are inescapable: (1) Particular Baptists had more formally trained ministers than Gen-

prominent in early Baptist theological definitions and evangelism, but Baptists were primarily dependent on lay preaching for expansion. Trained ministers did not dominate Baptists as they did Independents.

2. National Church opposition. Anglican and Presbyterian polemics against lay preaching focussed attention on the problem. The political situation favored the sects, for there was experimentation in politics as well as in religion. People were desirous for civil liberties. Their civil and religious desires became mixed. Consequently, the populace favored the sectaries' position on preaching.

Parish clergymen insisted that there are three prerequisites to preaching.<sup>82</sup> First, the preacher must have a divine vocation. The clergymen soon ceased to emphasize this idea, for the sectaries appealed pre-eminently to their calling by God. Secondly, the preacher must be personally fitted for the office. By this the clergymen meant formal theological training. In opposition to this view, sectaries argued that the most excellent formal training cannot compensate for the guidance of the Spirit. Thirdly, the preacher must be ecclesiastically authorized, or episcopally or

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eral Baptists; and (2) open communion was more prominent among Oxford graduates than among Cambridge graduates, perhaps because the Puritan witness had been less strong at Oxford.

82. John Bewick, An Antidote Against Lay-Preaching, 1642, 44p., states the typical arguments.

presbyterially ordained. Against this the sectaries developed the theory of congregational authority. It offended trained clergymen to see the spread of the sects, and some seem honestly to have thought that the sects were disruptive and corruptive to true religion.

3. Congregational control. Individualism was an early characteristic of lay preaching. Understandably, there were heterodoxy and novelty. However, Baptists consistently refused to restrict preaching to ordained ministers, for they relied on lay witnessing. General Baptists, it appears, had more lay preachers than Particular Baptists, due to the former's adoption of an extensive system of itineration.<sup>83</sup>

As Baptists increased in strength and congregations incorporated for worship, greater caution was exercised in the authorizing of preachers. Throughout the century, Baptists affirmed that any gifted disciple may preach, but the testing of gifts became more strict. Baptists refused to permit an individual to determine his own gifts, feeling that only the church can accurately determine preaching fitness.

4. Place of women. Any disciple who preached to the conversion of others was permitted to baptize. The administration was "no where tyed to a particular Church, Officer, or person extraordinarily sent."<sup>84</sup> However, this freedom

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83. Edwards, op. cit., I, 104f.

84. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 185 (Confession of 1644).

of administration was not granted to women.<sup>85</sup> They were denied the privilege of preaching, baptizing, and actively participating in government. With rare exceptions, Baptists and Congregationalists restricted the activities of women.

The early critics of the sects in the Civil War period accused the sects of permitting women to preach,<sup>86</sup> but this was a misrepresentation of fact. Some women were permitted to testify in extremely informal edificatory services, it appears, but they were not given license to preach.

Separatists first developed the theory and practice of female silence. Early in the century, Francis Johnson, because of personal problems and on the basis of Biblical literalism, demanded that women maintain strict silence in the church.<sup>87</sup> Independents and Baptists, especially Particular Baptists, adopted the custom of female silence without question.

The Broadmead church, Bristol, in 1645, then in an independent stage of evolution, permitted any brother to speak on interpretations of the Scriptures, but women could speak

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85. Hanserd Knollys, The Shining of a Flaming-fire in Zion, 1646, p. 9; Thomas Grantham, The Second Part of the Apology for the Baptized Believers, 1684, p. 33; Thomas Collier, The Right Constitution . . ., 1654, pp. 34f.

86. Baillie, op. cit., p. 31; \_\_\_\_\_, An Answer to an Impertinent Pamphlet . . ., 1641, pp. 6-8; John Bastvick, The Utter Routting . . ., 1646, pp. 528-530.

87. A. de Bussy, "The English Church at Amsterdam," BQ, XII (1946-49), 425.

only "by a brother."<sup>88</sup> When the church was calling Hardcastle in 1671, "every sister might speak to some brother to declare for her."<sup>89</sup> When Fownes was called in 1679, the brethren signed their names to the instrument of call, but the sisters could do no more than answer as their names were called from the church roll.<sup>90</sup>

A female member of Chamberlen's church refused in 1655 to attend services because she did not have liberty to speak. The church then deliberated the issue and concluded that only prophetesses may speak, but only if they wear veils.<sup>91</sup>

The custom of female silence was used as an argument against congregational singing about 1690.<sup>92</sup> Though women usually outnumbered men in churches, they had a negligible part in congregational government. The recommendation of Samuel Buttall to the office of minister in the Plymouth church by forty-two women in 1690 must be viewed as an exception. However, it is noteworthy that they recommended Buttall, not to the church, but to the brethren who called him.<sup>93</sup>

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88. Broadmead Records, p. 33.

89. Ibid., p. 134.

90. Ibid., p. 400.

91. Champlin Burrage, editor, "A True and Short Declaration . . .," Trans., II (1910-11), 145f. The office and function of "prophetess" were not defined.

92. Thomas Whinnel, A Sober Reply . . ., 1691, p. 28, cf. H. W. Robinson, "The Value of Denominational History," BQ, II (1924-25), 106.

93. John Rippon, "The History of the Baptist Church at Plymouth," BAR, III (1798-1801), 283.

The appeal for female rights which appeared toward the end of the century<sup>94</sup> certainly represented the situation among Congregationalists and Baptists. This self-criticism was intended to correct a contradiction of the principle of congregational government.

#### B. Confessional Evidence

The congregational authority of the brethren was altered as the ministry was exalted. This modification is partially traceable through confessions and polity statements. Plenary power was claimed by early Baptist congregations. This power included the right to elect and ordain, to appoint an unordained person to administer the ordinances, and to exercise discipline. Helwys fully defined this position in 1611.<sup>95</sup>

1. General Baptists prior to 1640. Five General Baptist churches declared in 1626 that an appointed layman may administer the sacraments in the absence of an ordained minister.<sup>96</sup> However, the administration was limited to those who had the consent of the church, for the sacraments belong to the church.<sup>97</sup> Under interrogation by the Waterlanders, the

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94. N. E., The Females Advocate ... Designed chiefly for the use of those of the Congregational and Antipaedobaptist Persuasions (who Professedly own, That Church-Government is wholly committed to every Particular Church of Christ) ..., n. d., 32p. A summary of its arguments may be read in Cong. Trans., VIII (August, 1920), 96-101.

95. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 89-91.

96. B. Evans, Early English Baptists, II, 25.

97. Ibid., pp. 27f.

messengers of these churches disclosed that some of the churches were without ministers and that churches which lacked ministers waited until a minister came from another church to officiate at the observance of the Lord's Supper.<sup>98</sup>

2. Civil War-Commonwealth period. The confession of 1644 asserted that each congregation possesses authority to elect and ordain, and that a preaching disciple may baptize.<sup>99</sup> The General Baptist confession of 1651 was far more concerned about the proper care and support of the ministry than about congregational authority.<sup>100</sup> It had much to say on the former, but was silent on the latter. Either congregational authority was assumed by the thirty congregations or ministerial elevation was well underway. The ministry was even more emphatically upheld in the Somerset confession of 1656<sup>101</sup> and the Standard Confession of 1660.<sup>102</sup> Neither confession claimed plenary authority for the congregation.

3. Restoration. In the confessions of 1677 and 1678 congregational authority was claimed, but the ministry was also emphasized. Particular Baptists refused to restrict preaching to the ministry, saying that "others also gifted,

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98. Ibid., p. 31.

99. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 184ff. The confession is silent on the administration of the Lord's Supper.

100. Ibid., pp. 104-108.

101. Ibid., pp. 210-212.

102. Ibid., pp. 116f.

and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved, and called by the Church, may and ought to perform it."<sup>103</sup> Concerning the ordinances, however, Particular Baptists specified that

These holy appointments are to be administered by those only, who are qualified and thereunto called according to the commission of Christ.<sup>104</sup>

General Baptists restricted the authority of the minister to the church which ordained him. In the case of messengers, authority was extended to all churches which participated in his ordination. Within the church, however, ministers and messengers were conspicuously powerful for they were the executors of discipline and government.<sup>105</sup> In contrast to this, Particular Baptists withheld the execution of discipline and government from ministers. They also declined to admit the Savoy declaration that officers of a particular church may not administer ordinances nor govern in the whole church;<sup>106</sup> the "whole church" meant all the congregations of like faith and order. The confession of 1704 stated without qualification that none may preach publicly or administer the sacraments without a lawful calling.<sup>107</sup> This confession was patterned after the Thirty-Nine Articles.

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<sup>105.</sup> Ibid., p. 267. General Baptists did not concede this freedom in the confession of 1678.

<sup>104.</sup> Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>105.</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>106.</sup> Underhill, Confessions, p. 220, n. 3.

<sup>107.</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Articles of the Christian Faith, 1704, art. 23, broadsheet.

### C. Particular Baptists

By the end of the century, the ministry was highly elevated among Particular Baptists. Ministers were the guardians of both ordinances. The elevation of the ministry can be demonstrated and explained to some degree of satisfaction.

1. Early theory. During the Civil War period, Particular Baptists stubbornly insisted on the right of lay preachers to administer the ordinances. In 1646 Benjamin Coxe stated that a preaching disciple may not only baptize, but also "guide the action of a church in the use of the supper." He may also advise and assist a new church in its settlement, and in its choice and installation of officers.<sup>108</sup> This theory is demonstrated by practice, for preachers both baptized their converts and inaugurated the celebration of the Lord's Supper without ministerial aid.<sup>109</sup>

#### 2. Broadmead church, Bristol. a. Administration of bap-

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108. Benjamin Coxe, An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, 1646, in Underhill, Confessions, p. 59. E. A. Payne, The Fellowship of Believers, p. 57, states: "The custom of a deacon or a so-called 'layman' presiding at the Lord's Table in the absence of a pastor or an ordained minister, except in rare cases of emergency, appears to have been almost unknown in Baptist churches until the middle of the nineteenth century." It will be adequately demonstrated in the text that early Baptists uniformly affirmed this principle and that "ministerialism" was a later development which had serious consequences.

109. Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720, edited by E. B. Underhill, pp. 290f. (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "church Records," as appropriate.)

tism. Ministerial elevation can be traced with ease in the records of the Broadmead church, Bristol. The difference between the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper is conspicuous. Broadmead secured a Welsh pastor to administer baptism in 1666.<sup>110</sup> In 1667 a preaching disciple, previously commissioned by another church, was appointed as the agent of baptism. Though he continued to be the administrator of baptism, Edward Terrill went into great detail in 1679 to explain that the preaching commission was adequate for the administration of baptism but not for officiation at the Lord's Supper, the administrator of which had to be a pastor.<sup>111</sup> However, the pastor was not considered indispensable for admissions and excommunications, for in the interim between pastors Broadmead received nineteen members and excluded three.<sup>112</sup>

b. Administration of the Lord's Supper. The administration of the Supper was more zealously guarded than baptism. The Broadmead pastor was in prison in 1664. By the analogy of the necessity of feeding children when the responsible adults are absent, he apparently advised the celebration of the Supper by the church in his absence.<sup>113</sup> However, his advice was not taken. After his death in 1670,

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110. Broadmead Records, p. 92.

111. Ibid., p. 415.

112. Ibid., p. 416.

113. Ibid., p. 83.

the church refused to observe the Supper until a new pastor was secured.<sup>114</sup> In 1674 a church in Gloucestershire requested the assistance of Broadmead's baptismal administrator, Thomas Jennings, in administering the Lord's Supper, and Broadmead complied.<sup>115</sup> Five years later, however, Broadmead refused to permit Jennings to administer the Lord's Supper in his home church, even though he had officiated at the celebration in other churches. Broadmead stubbornly held that only a pastor may administer the Supper.<sup>116</sup>

3. Wapping church, London. When Hercules Collins, pastor of the Wapping church, London, was in prison in 1684, the church appointed "a Preaching Bro' to Administer to us That Solemne Ordinance of ye Lds Supper." Collins immediately re-proved the church, insisting that "itt was the Privilege & duty of an Elder Onely." The church claimed that it had the authority to appoint anyone to administer the Supper, so Collins agreed to "give place to ye Chur: practice." At a business meeting later, the church affirmed that

it is lawfull for a Bror whome ye Chu shall Judge able to Oppen ye Nature of ye Ordinance; (The hee bee nott called to ye office of an Elder) To Administer the Lds Supper.<sup>117</sup>

Three observations are noteworthy. First, the congregation

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114. Ibid., p. 106.

115. Ibid., pp. 206-211.

116. Ibid., pp. 396-415.

117. E. F. Kevan, London's Oldest Baptist Church, p. 67, quoted.

was reluctant to surrender plenary authority. Secondly, ministerial authority was claimed by the minister. Thirdly, this case appears to have been an exception, for ministerial elevation was far advanced. The more usual practice was the calling in of an outside minister. Benjamin Keach of Southwark (Horsley-down), London, frequently presided at the Lord's Supper in Reading.<sup>118</sup>

4. General Assembly. The General Assembly, as a representative cross-section of Particular Baptists, declared in 1689

That an Elder of one church, may administer the the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to another of the same faith, being called so to do by the said church; tho' not as their Pastor, but as a Minister, necessity only being considered in this case.<sup>119</sup>

Seemingly, the Assembly considered it more desirable for an outside minister to administer the Supper than for an unordained man to do so. This certainly represents an exalted view of the ministry.

A comparison of the lists of representatives to the General Assembly in 1689 and 1692 confirms this tendency toward

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118. E. A. Payne, The Baptists of Berkshire, p. 58.

119. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and Ministering Brethren, of the Baptized Churches, met together in London from Sep. 3-12, 1689, from divers parts of England and Wales, Owing the Doctrine of Personal Election and Final Perseverance," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 55. (This supplement includes the General Epistle, the narrative of the proceedings, questions which were discussed, and the lists of representatives for the years 1689 and 1692. Hereafter it will be referred to as "The Narrative ...")

ministerial elevation. In 1689 the Assembly was attended by forty-two pastors, thirty-one ministers, five preachers, four messengers, and seventy undesignated men. In 1692 the representation was forty pastors, forty ministers, one messenger, three preachers, and only nine undesignated men.<sup>120</sup> The undesignated personnel were laymen; "messengers" and "preachers" were probably laymen. This means that over one-half of the representation in 1689 was made up of laymen, compared to less than one-sixth in 1692.

#### D. General Baptists

Ministerial elevation among General Baptists cannot be easily traced in non-confessional literature from the early years for the data are scarce. However, by the end of the century, ministerial elevation was extensive, as the sources confirm.

1. Fenstanton church, Huntingdonshire. a. Discipline. The comparatively full records of the Fenstanton church of Huntingdonshire, 1651-1658, reveal a growing power of the two elders, John Denne and Edmond Maile. In 1651 most excommunications were executed by the church in business session. Within two years, however, the elders were excommunicating members in their itineration through the villages where members resided. It appears that the church vested

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120. Op. cit., pp. 57-63.

this power in them.<sup>121</sup> In 1654 they excommunicated a member of the Warboys church.<sup>122</sup> The details are not clear, but it appears that the Warboys church had admonished the member before authorizing the Fenstanton elders to excommunicate him in behalf of the Warboys church. At any rate, the elders of one church were the executors of the discipline of another church.

b. Lay preaching. Contemporaneously with the increase of ministerial authority in discipline, lay preaching was being restricted. A lay preacher, it was agreed, may preach only in the local church for the edification of the members; he may not "preach publicly to the world" without the specific approval of the congregation.<sup>123</sup> This prohibition was strictly enforced.<sup>124</sup>

The increasing authority of the minister in discipline and the restriction of lay preaching were policies which developed out of the emergency created by Quakerism. Quaker sympathizers refused to come to church when summoned for discipline. The church had to fulfill the rule of Christ concerning discipline, which involves an official exclusion from the church. Consequently, ministers were empowered in their itineration to administer the church's excommunication. Quak-

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121. Fenstanton Records, pp. 2-100.

122. Ibid., p. 116.

123. Ibid., p. 98.

124. Ibid., p. 126.

ers were vigorous lay witnesses. When one felt the impulse to preach, he did so. Seemingly, the restriction of lay preaching was an attempt to prevent defection to Quakerism; church authority was an antidote to individualism.

2. Hearing preachers of other denominations. Churches prohibited their members from hearing ministers and preachers of other denominations. In 1675 the Amersham church stated in its "Artickells of Agreement" that no stranger, an outsider, may preach

with out ye consente of ye whole & A letter of recommendation from ye Church hee belongs to or good testimony hee is of Life and Conuersation and of a good report.<sup>125</sup>

This was designed to prevent the introduction of novel doctrines. Late in the century, General Baptists were very careful to protect themselves against Particular Baptist preaching. They also disciplined their members for attending services of other denominations.

3. London Dependency. At an uncertain date, but considerably before 1688, five London churches in a Dependency agreed to ordain ministers "over the whole." This agreement was necessitated by their lack of ministers. Hence, the churches agreed to confer upon ministers in ordination the authority to minister in each of the five churches as need

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<sup>125.</sup> The Church Books of Ford or Cuddington and Amersham, edited by W. T. Whitley, p. 202. (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "church Records," as appropriate.)

arose.<sup>126</sup> Ostensibly, the power to elect and ordain resided in a representative assembly of the five churches. In reality, however, the church which needed an officer and provided a candidate from its own membership, dominated his election and ordination. In 1694 the Whites Alley church proposed three men in a ritualistic manner and stated its preference for one of them. The other four churches unanimously approved the person which Whites Alley preferred.<sup>127</sup>

4. Whites Alley church, London. The minister dominated the Whites Alley church, London. After one minister, Joseph Taylor, was disciplined for sexual immorality, the church recovered some of its authority, but soon the ministry was again elevated. In 1698 Whites Alley named three men to preach, but it was emphatically stated that this was not designed to abridge the pastor's authority or right to bring in "any person that he shall think fitt."<sup>128</sup> In 1699 when the pastor was under discipline and in schism, the church requested Benjamin Morley, a venerable messenger, to come and administer the Supper; if he could not come, he was to send anyone he chose.<sup>129</sup> Later in the year, the church voted that

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126. The Church-Book of White Alley Meeting House, Book I, 25 (in manuscript). The records speak of "ye Antient agreement." (Hereafter this will be referred to as Whites Alley Records.)

127. Ibid., pp. 118f.

128. Ibid., p. 182.

129. Ibid., p. 200.

it had authority to choose "A privat Brother to Administer the Ordinances."<sup>130</sup> However, this seems to have been a moot decision, for after seven weeks Whites Alley and another church jointly set apart a person as a messenger to serve in both churches.<sup>131</sup>

5. General Assembly. The growing elevation of the ministry was reflected in the action of the General Assembly. In 1693 the Assembly declared that the administrator of the Supper must be ordained.<sup>132</sup> In 1702 it specified that messengers and elders only may administer the Supper. The Assembly approved baptism by unordained persons and judged that private baptism by a minister was lawful if he and a congregational majority approved the candidate.<sup>133</sup> Private baptism and majority approval were departures from earlier practices. Private baptism seems never to have been practiced in a local church; the only instances of baptism outside the church were baptizings by itinerant evangelists. Previously, unanimous consent was required for admission.

#### E. Attempts to Control the Ministry

The elevation of the ministry was gradual and perhaps unnoticeable to most seventeenth century Baptists. Baptists consistently affirmed the theory of congregational authority

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130. Ibid., p. 208.

131. Ibid., pp. 222ff.

132. MGA, I, 39.

133. Ibid., p. 70.

which implies that the ministry is subordinate to the church. The repeated affirmation of congregational authority was not enough to guarantee it, so churches attempted in various ways to control the ministry. Even though these measures were ineffectual in frustrating ministerial elevation, they should be investigated.

1. Delegation of authority. Churches delegated authority to their ministers in order that they might act in official capacities. General Baptists insisted that authority extended no further than the specific commission at the time of ordination. Therefore, it was necessary to ordain for other functions. When one was elevated from the office of elder to that of messenger, or from the office of deacon to that of elder, the church gave him authority to act in a new capacity.<sup>134</sup> Prior to 1689, General Baptist messengers were elected and ordained by several contiguous churches. After 1689 the General Assembly assumed an increasing authority over messengers, selecting, ordaining, commissioning, and disciplining them.<sup>135</sup>

2. Certification of preachers. Congregations claimed the exclusive right to try and approve preaching gifts, particularly gifts which would be discharged before the "world."

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134. Thomas Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles, 1674, 23p.; MGA, I, 7, 28.

135. Cf. MGA, I, 7, 31, 36, 42.

The certification of preachers was designed to prevent irresponsibility and doctrinal irregularity. After 1689 there was a relaxation of ministerial standards due to the need for preachers. However, denominationalism was strong enough insure the validity of certification. Particular Baptists deplored the fact that gifted brethren had not cultivated their gifts, and General Baptists very broadly invited those who would preach to do so.<sup>136</sup> Whereas strict certification was designed for ministerial control, it elevated the ministry by creating a deficiency of preachers.

3. Discipline of ministers. Churches disciplined and boycotted ministers for heterodoxy and immorality.<sup>137</sup> These steps were intended to preserve integrity and purity. The discipline of ministers was more common among General Baptists than among Particular Baptists. The discipline of ministers for theological deviations was perhaps due to the doctrinal ambiguity of General Baptists. Moral charges were occasionally levelled against a minister whose theology was objectionable.

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136. Amersham Records, pp. 202f, 220; Broadmead Records, pp. 242, 415, 446f, 457; Bunyan Meeting Records, p. 80; Fenstanton Records, pp. 98, 124, 146, 240f; Ford Records, pp. 10f, 34f, 36; Whites Alley Records, I, 76, 118, 148, 151, 159, 175, 183, 197, 221; MGA, I, 52, 70; \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 44f. Churches were careful about whom they heard!

137. Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles, 1674, p. 17; Bunyan Meeting Records, p. 80; Whites Alley Records, I, 196, 202; MGA, I, 74.

4. Ministerial stability. Preachers were not permitted to go elsewhere without express permission from the home church. By the end of the century, this policy was uniformly enforced. The chief reasons for ministerial stability were the primacy of home church needs and irregularity or heterodoxy in other churches. A church generally felt that it was not required to share its ministry to the neglect of its own needs. When a church could assist another church, it was expected that the benefited church would defray all expenses.<sup>138</sup>

5. Pastoral callings. Baptists informally employed a policy which forbade one church to secure the pastor of a second church without its consent. It was commonly held that one should be a member of the church before he was chosen to pastoral office in it.<sup>139</sup> A member could not join a second church without the recommendation of his home church. The home church, therefore, could honor or reject the request of a second church for a certain person's membership. This custom was more commonly observed among Particular Baptists than among General Baptists. In reality it was a Congregational policy which declined during the eighteenth century.<sup>140</sup>

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138. Broadmead Records, pp. 415, 495-499; Bunyan Meeting Records, pp. 51, 77a; Fenstanton Records, p. 102; Ford Records, pp. 9f; Whites Alley Records, I, 157, 184, 195, 197, 219; II, 19, 39.

139. Jerom Murch, A History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England, p. 70; W. T. Whitley, "Seeking a Change," Trans., II (1910-11), 161.

140. Crippen, op. cit., p. 340.

The practice declined among Baptists also as ministers became more independent of churches, but during the seventeenth century it was a measure of ministerial control.

a. Reasons for such a policy. There were three main reasons for this restriction of the ministry. First, confusion and uncertainty would result if a church did not know that its pastor was permanently located. If a pastor could leave his office at will, a church could never be sure that it had a pastor.<sup>141</sup> Secondly, frequent or habitual ministerial changes would corrupt the minister's motives, causing him to work for advancement, money, etc. Frequent changes would also stimulate ministerial competition and facilitate jealousy.<sup>142</sup> Nonconformists had found ministerial independence deplorable among Established clergymen, so they devised ministerial stability as a preventive against ministerial independence. Thirdly, a congregation would be less important than its minister if the minister can leave his office when he desires. Ministers are the servants, not the lords, of the church.<sup>143</sup>

b. Case of Thomas Hardcastle. The most notable violation of this policy was Broadmead's securing of Thomas Hard-

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141. Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles, 1674, p. 23; Broadmead Records, p. 202.

142. John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress (Hanserd Knollys Society edition), pp. 122f.

143. Vavasor Powell, Common-Prayer-Book No Divine Service, 1660, pp. 26f.

castle from the Swan Alley church, London. The two churches were in friendly relations before the episode over Hardcastle, and only a few months before the event Swan Alley graciously thanked Broadmead for certain courtesies granted to a Swan Alley member who was then in Bristol. However, the episode created an irreparable breach in their fellowship. Swan Alley refused to release Hardcastle, but he went to Broadmead over Swan Alley's protest. After he had been in Bristol for three years, trying out for the pastoral office, Broadmead decided to ordain him. Consequently, Broadmead requested Swan Alley to release Hardcastle to Broadmead's membership, for he should be a member before ordination. Swan Alley rejected this request, expressing bitter feelings over the theft of Hardcastle. In 1678 Swan Alley, after "marrying" and "burying" a pastor, as Broadmead stated, sent to Broadmead to reclaim Hardcastle, declaring that he was still a member of the London church.<sup>144</sup>

c. Ministerial independence. By the early eighteenth century, the ministry had been so elevated that pastoral changes could be made without the disruption of fellowship between churches. There is one conspicuous case in which a London minister, Richard Adams, with the aid of fellow ministers, sought a change due to unpleasantness in his church.

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<sup>144</sup>. Broadmead Records, pp. 102, 112-158, 196-203, 380-384.

He professed that he was under no compulsion to leave London as he had a good church, but he desired to "live in the country where she [wife] might enjoy the benefit of a good ayre ..."<sup>145</sup>

F. Explanation of Ministerial Elevation

The measures of congregational control over the ministry were unable to arrest ministerial elevation. Some measures of control even contributed to elevation, even though they were designed to prevent it. Several factors were responsible for this elevation. The specific significance of each cannot be abstracted in percentage terms, but the grand effect was the exaltation of the ministry.

1. Calvinistic tradition. Particular Baptists were in the mainstream Calvinistic tradition in which the ministry has a high and secure position. They were indoctrinated with the view of ministerial superiority. As Baptist churches were evolving from Separatism and Independency, Baptists emphasized congregational authority. However, when the tension of initial separation was relaxed, Baptist polity underwent some change and Baptists reverted to certain views of their earlier training. Among these was the Independent view of the exalted ministry.

2. Lack of leadership and a graded ministry. The general lack of leadership led to the inevitable recognition of

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<sup>145</sup>. Whitley, "Seeking a Change," Trans., II (1910-11), 161-165.

the most capable persons. Initially, this was characteristic of General Baptists, but as the century progressed, it became increasingly characteristic of Particular Baptists as well.

General Baptists developed the office of "messenger" which proved at first to be an agent of expansion and a cohesive force between local churches. His functions were

1. To plant Churches where there is none. 2. To set in order such Churches as want Officers to order their affairs. And 3. To assist faithful Pastours or Churches against Usurpers, and those that trouble the peace of particular Churches by false Doctrines.<sup>146</sup>

By the end of the century, however, the messenger's primary function of evangelism had been de-emphasized, and the other functions had been magnified. The messenger's authority became superior to that of the local church pastor, and the messenger's function became increasingly administrative.

Particular Baptists did not have such an office, unless Thomas Collier's superintendency of the West be so classified.<sup>147</sup> However, certain ministers, particularly Londoners, functioned as such, though lacking the official title.

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<sup>146.</sup> Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles, 1674, p. 17.

<sup>147.</sup> Collier is sometimes called a General Baptist messenger; see F. W. Butt-Thompson, "Newport, Isle of Wight," BQ, IV (1928-29), 308-310, and Hugh Martin, "Baptists and the Great Church," BQ, XIV (1951-52), 316. At least by the 1650's and most probably earlier, Collier was associated with Particular Baptists. However, he had certain things in common with General Baptists, such as the office of superintendent and a very moderate Calvinistic theology.

Multiple pastors were common in the mid-century. Though they were not uncommon at the end of the century, the unitary pastorate was becoming the rule. The reason for this development was inadequate ministerial training. Universities were closed to dissenters, and the few ministerial schools were unable to meet demands. A church was fortunate to have a pastor, who was usually elevated out of its membership. The scarcity of ministers facilitated the unitary pastorate, thereby elevating the ministry.

3. Defense against fringe sects. The crises presented by fringe sects (Fifth Monarchism, Levellerism, and Quakerism) required the establishment of effective defensive measures. The churches wisely placed enforcement in the hands of their ministers. However, the practices which were adopted in emergencies persisted after the crises had been relieved. They were merely re-channelled, with the ministers continuing to be the executors of power.

4. Pastoral role in discipline. The prominent role of the pastor in discipline (which involved admitting, admonishing, correcting, and excluding) led to an increase of his authority. The minister did not usurp this authority, for the church vested it in him. In the stage of initial separation, the congregation usually exercised discipline, and throughout the century the theory of congregational discipline was affirmed. However, several factors contributed to the surrender

of the responsibility of execution to the pastor: remote distances of membership residences, availability of the pastor (who, in many cases, was employed on a full-time basis), and perhaps lay timidity.

Almost uniformly the chief person in a church was the pastor. There are some instances of the discipline of ministers for heterodoxy and gross immorality, but they are few.<sup>148</sup> Successful discipline was due, not to congregational authority, but to external ministerial assistance.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, General Baptists, out of necessity, recovered a degree of congregational authority in discipline. As churches declined in size, ministerial maintenance declined accordingly and an increasing number of pastors was compelled to earn a livelihood in so-called secular employment. These pastors had less time to give to church affairs, so the churches recovered some of their authority, even though they did little with it.

5. Distinction between ministers and members. By delegating authority for specific functions, churches tended to differentiate officers from members. In placing restrictions on preaching, administration of the ordinances, etc., churches also declared in effect that those who perform the work are

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148. Hexham Records, pp. 294-299, 321; Warboys Records, p. 275; Whites Alley Records, pp. 196-208; C. E. Shipley, general editor, The Baptists of Yorkshire, p. 84.

different from those who are prevented from functioning. By the end of the century, it was most unusual for the Supper, and to a lesser degree baptism, to be administered by an unordained person. What had begun as authorization developed into a comparatively rigid order.

6. Large size of churches. Ministerial authority seems to have increased in direct proportion to congregational size. General Baptist churches were originally larger than Particular Baptist churches.<sup>149</sup> In the mid-century, most churches, especially those in rural areas, were composed of several congregations. Worship and edification services were held simultaneously in several places and all of the congregations met monthly for a business meeting and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The earlier views of Helwys that a church of only two or three is as truly a church as larger ones and that all members should know each other,<sup>150</sup> were

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149. W. T. Whitley, "London Churches of 1682," *BQ*, I (1922-23), 82-87. A spy of dissenting churches reported six General Baptist churches of 500 or more, with John Clayton's church having 1500 and Thomas Plant's having 1000. The largest Particular Baptist church was Edward Harrison's, having 600. Even when concession is made for distortion and the fact that these numbers represent both members and auditors, the conclusion is inescapable that General Baptist churches were larger than Particular Baptist churches, at least in London.

150. McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-91. Early Separatism also believed in small congregations. Francis Johnson, *A Christian Plea* . . ., 1617, p. 250, states that the particular church should be small in order that "each of them [members] may come together in one place." In 1658 the Fenstanton church was electing a deacon but only eight attended. The church reluctantly and disappointedly proceeded on the basis of "where two or three are gathered . . ."

seemingly considered impractical.

It was recognized, however, that large churches hinder fellowship. In 1651 the Glasshouse church, London, advised an extremely large Welsh church to divide for convenience's sake, provided each congregation could support its own minister. In 1696 the Western General Assembly at Bristol advised Welsh churches to break up into smaller churches in order better to answer "the end of communion."<sup>151</sup>

Though there were some cases of division of churches in accordance with the foregoing sentiment, there were far more cases of amalgamation and dissolution. In 1689 Benjamin Keach, in a book entitled The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated, stated that a church which cannot provide ministerial maintenance should question its constitution as a church.<sup>152</sup> In the same year the General Assembly bewailed the neglect of the ministry<sup>153</sup> and recommended that small churches, contiguously related, unite when they individually could not maintain a minister. The Assembly also requested that each church secure Keach's book for counsel.<sup>154</sup> Amalgamation partially explains why there were fewer churches

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151. Joshua Thomas, A History of the Baptist Association in Wales, in BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 7f, 12, 26.

152. A. J. Klaiber, "The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated," BQ, II (1924-25), 228.

153. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 44f.

154. Op. cit., pp. 51, 55.

in 1690 than in 1660.<sup>155</sup>

Size was not necessarily reflected in the attendance of business meetings. The neglect of the Whites Alley business meeting toward the end of the century, by officers as well as members, caused alarm.<sup>156</sup> Seemingly, the neglect of the business meeting was characteristic of the age. The necessity of large churches due to the lack of leadership and the demands of ministerial maintenance, and the growing neglect of lay responsibility resulted in an increase of ministerial authority.

7. Ministerial fraternal societies. Ministerial fraternal societies appeared before 1700 and became very prominent during the eighteenth century. This trend indicates that the ministry had developed certain exclusive interests. During the Commonwealth, Richard Baxter, a Presbyterian, proposed a type of ministerial fraternity composed of Presbyterian, Independent, and open communion Particular Baptist ministers. The differences between the various denominations, it was suggested, could be resolved in this fraternity. The attempt to implement Baxter's proposal in 1659 was unsuccessful, for agreement extended no further than generalities.<sup>157</sup> In 1691

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155. See W. T. Whitley, "Paul's Alley, Barbican, 1695-1768," Trans., IV (1914-15), 46f., for the unusual case of the union of a General Baptist church with a Particular.

156. Whites Alley Records, I, 145, 162.

157. F. T. Powicke, "Richard Baxter's Relation to the Baptists and his Proposed Terms of Communion," Trans., VI (1918-19), 193-215.

Baxter's principles were embodied in a comity agreement between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in London. In this agreement, entitled Heads of Agreement, the ministry was highly exalted.<sup>158</sup> Baptists, however, did not participate in the agreement.

Baptist ministers declined to participate in formal ministerial societies, but many supported informal societies. In London there were at least two such societies, the most prominent of which met at Jones' Coffee-House. Particular Baptist ministers met weekly at the coffee-house. They entertained inquiries on faith and order, and gave advice on certain issues. Participants included some of the most eminent London pastors, some of whom were largely responsible for the spread of congregational hymn-singing and the regular use of hands in ordination. Isaac Marlow's dislike of these two practices caused him to attack the society. He claimed that the pastors were arrogating to themselves an authority which properly belongs to each congregation.<sup>159</sup> Of course, Marlow's prejudice doubtlessly distorted the cause and effect of the society, but it is nonetheless significant that he recognized fraternal societies as a threat to congregational power.

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158. Heads of Agreement ..., 1691, in Cong. Trans., VIII (February, 1920), 38-48.

159. \_\_\_\_\_, "James Jones's Coffee-House," BQ, VI (1932-33), 324-326.

In 1727 the London ministers of the "Three Denominations" (Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist) were organized to secure civil rights.<sup>160</sup> Out of this lobbying organization there developed a social society of ministers which met monthly.

8. Veneration of older men. The age of prominent leaders solicited respect which approximated veneration. Several men lived to rather old age, exercising lengthy and conspicuous leadership. Among these were William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys, Thomas Collier, Thomas Grantham, Benjamin Morley, and Matthew Caffyn. Demonstrative of the secure position which they held is the invulnerability of Caffyn. General Baptists had great difficulty in curtailing Caffyn's influence in Christology, and then they were successful only in certain areas. The prestige which had come to the older men through many years of service was transferred to the ministry as a whole. Some of the younger ministers, such as Hercules Collins, coveted this prestige and encouraged its transferral to younger men. Veneration gave way to extensive respect of ministers.

#### G. Conclusion

The elevation of the ministry altered the expression of fellowship. The local congregation became increasingly

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160. W. T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, revised edition, p. 204.

isolated from other churches, except through formal association. In such association, however, the ministry dominated. In the eighteenth century, there were few vital and effectual ties between churches. The ministers, however, developed fraternal societies to meet their need of fellowship.<sup>161</sup>

A result, perhaps inevitable, was the diminution of evangelical vision and effort. The modern mission movement, through voluntary missionary societies and a more evangelical theology, was the first force successfully to overcome isolationism, extend vision, and rescue the laity. The decline in Christian fellowship, to which ministerial elevation had contributed, was corrected by "faith and fellowship in the Gospel."<sup>162</sup>

### III. REGULATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Baptist churches of the seventeenth century were "gathered" churches. The regulation of their members was a matter of great concern to them. Whereas measures of regulation were primarily designed to maintain the integrity and purity of a local church, these measures had both connectional and inter-denominational effects. Relations with themselves and

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<sup>161.</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 203-206.

<sup>162.</sup> This phrase was widely used in mid-seventeenth century inter-church correspondence and seemingly indicated joint participation in missionary efforts. However, its use declined. When it was used in the early eighteenth century, it echoed the past rather than described the present fact.

others were regulated. Connectionally, the effects of regulation were generally positive; inter-denominationally, they were primarily negative.

There are four areas of membership regulation which require investigation. They are moral discipline, guarded communion, inter-church recommendations, and marriage. Moral discipline preserved the purity of character. Guarded communion protected the purity of the church's fellowship. Inter-church recommendations protected the disciplined church and facilitated absentee communion in other churches. Cultic marriage prevented the corruption of home life by false religion.

#### A. Moral Discipline

1. The "gathered" church. The "gathered" church required its membership to demonstrate the Christian calling by true faith and holy living. One of the chief Nonconformist objections against the National Church was the failure of the National Church to correct moral irregularities within its membership. In contrast to the National Church, the "gathered" or "pure" church is "a company of sanctified, Baptized Believers."<sup>163</sup> Each believer was under obligation to join a particular church, thereby being not only admitted to all spiritual privileges in the church, but also coming under

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<sup>163</sup>. H[anserd] K[nollys], An Exposition of the whole Book of the Revelation, 1689, p. 61.

"the Censures and Government thereof." The believer must demonstrate his calling by his walk or conversation (holy living) as well as by profession of true faith.<sup>164</sup> It was believed that weakness in living negates one's profession of faith. Failure to correct moral problems invalidates the church's witness to the world. However, Baptists were more zealous in protecting their internal life by discipline than in demonstrating their character in public. In protecting their inner life, discipline served two purposes; it aided the sinner and kept the church from pollution.<sup>165</sup>

2. Method of discipline. Churches refused to tolerate actual or apparent moral offenses, especially those of a public nature. They dealt with offenders on the basis of the rule of Christ: private admonition, semi-private admonition, congregational admonition in the business meeting or through "the mouth of the church," and formal exclusion.

The exceptions to this rule were few. The Broadmead church summarily dealt with Mary Smith as soon as it was discovered that she was pregnant out of wedlock. The church invited non-members to leave after worship and promptly excommunicated her. However, the church maintained an interest in her, apparently in an effort to protect the reputation of

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164. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 264-268 (Confession of 1677, art. 26).

165. Bunyan, A Confession of my Faith and a Reason for my Practice, in Complete Works (Gulliver's edition), pp. 825-827.

the church. Her master confessed paternity but refused to marry her. The elders of the church pressured him into marriage and arranged for a parish clergyman to perform the ceremony which Broadmead scrupled to perform. Broadmead even paid the marriage fee, in which the clergyman was allegedly most interested.<sup>166</sup>

3. Types of moral problems. Anything which impairs character was subject to discipline. Discipline preserved the reputation of the church, maintained its purity, and reclaimed the offender. Misconduct, it was thought, harms the reputation of the church. An undisciplined offender may pollute the entire church, thereby corrupting its communion. Churches contribute to addiction to sin when they neglect moral offenders and do not require reformation.

In implementing moral discipline, churches, either consciously or unconsciously, established casuistic norms. Problems which called for discipline, according to the common rule, included drunkenness, keeping bad company, dancing, adultery, attending worldly sports on Sunday, financial irresponsibility, sexual intercourse out of wedlock, imprisonment for criminal misdemeanor, going to court to settle differences, non-assemblying for fear of persecution, slander, lying, idleness, cursing, beating a wife in public, unauthor-

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166. Broadmead Records, pp. 407-410.

ized and fraudulent soliciting of funds in the name of the church, "vain modes of apparel and fashions of the world," borrowing money with the intention of leaving the city to prevent repayment, and criticizing the church before the world. An applicant for membership was refused admission because she sold alcoholic drink.<sup>167</sup> A mother refused to permit her daughter, apparently a non-member, to go off to work, and the daughter subsequently stole wood. The church, being offended by the daughter's behavior and holding that she would not have stolen had she been gainfully employed, ordered the mother to send her to work.<sup>168</sup>

4. Decline of discipline. Both General and Particular Baptists were strict on morality. However, the minutes of Particular Baptist churches record the larger number of disciplinary cases involving morals. General Baptists were primarily concerned with cultic matters, which partially explains the smaller number of moral cases. By the end of the century, there was a notable decline of moral discipline in both traditions. Both became more concerned with cultic integrity than with ethical matters.

Churches of all denominations had a decreasing control over their members in the Age of Toleration. Members, when reprimanded or excommunicated, less frequently submitted to

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167. Ibid., p. 211.

168. Fenstanton Records, p. 210.

correction. It is an inescapable observation that the generality of the population had a more healthy respect for religious authority before than after 1700. However, the theory of a pure church was consistently affirmed by Baptists. They continued to exclude members for moral reasons, but exclusion not infrequently resulted in outright rejection of the church's authority. Whereas discipline was designed for correction rather than punishment, it tended to become punitive and its reclamatory value decreased accordingly. Churches dwindled in size, partially because of the loss of constituents due to ineffectual discipline.

#### B. Guarded Communion

1. Theory. The Lord's Supper was closely guarded. Generally, it was observed only by the local church. However, there was no rule which stated that only local church members may participate. The practice of local or guarded communion was a logical extension of the idea that one in sin may not come to the Table without injury to himself and pollution of the ordinance.

a. Early Particular Baptists. Guarded communion developed immediately with Baptist beginnings. In some respects, it was not a Baptist theory only for Separatists held a similar view early in the century. In 1642 Benjamin Coxe was attacked for advocating guarded communion. Coxe had taken the position that "to eat and drink with others at the Lords

Table is an act of greatest familiarity, and nearest communion";<sup>169</sup> therefore, sinners are not to be admitted to the Table lest they corrupt all the saints and even the Supper itself. Blake, Coxe's opponent, agreed that gross sinners may not communicate, but he argued for communion with all Christians on the grounds that Paul, in advising separation from sinful persons, meant, not "locall and corporall," but "mentall and spirituall" separation.<sup>170</sup> Blake insisted that one may participate at the Supper with "moderate" sinners without actually communicating with their sins. Coxe, on the other hand, conceived of the Supper in a corporate sense:

They that joyn together in outward receiving of this Sacrament, doe both loyn together in the profession of the same faith in Christ, and also doe professe themselves to be ... fellow members of the same mysticall body, as being all fed with the same spirituall food.<sup>171</sup>

Coxe's view of the corporiety of the Supper was widely disseminated in 1646 through the appendix to the confession.

In the appendix, Coxe argued that the early disciples were baptized as believers before they communicated:

we therefore do not admit any to the use of the supper nor communicate with any in the use of this ordinance, but disciples baptized, lest we should have fellowship with them in their doing contrary to order.<sup>172</sup>

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169. Martin Blake, The Great Question, 1645, p. 33.

170. Ibid., p. 73.

171. Ibid., epistle.

172. Benjamin Coxe, An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, 1646, in Underhill, Confessions, p. 59.

Between July, 1642, and 1646, it appears, Coxe enlarged his doctrine of pollution. In July, 1642, he held that sinners pollute the Supper; in 1646 he held that the violation of New Testament church-order pollutes communion. It should be said, however, that Coxe manifested a charitable attitude toward Paedo-baptists throughout the appendix. Therefore, he cannot be accused of bigoted exclusivism, of which John Smyth was earlier guilty.

The same emphasis on regularity of church-order was maintained elsewhere. However, Particular Baptists refused to restrict Christian love to baptized believers. In 1652 Berkshire Baptists, in a joint statement, affirmed the principle of particular church and guarded communion, but they deliberately denied that guarded communion is a restraint on Christian love.<sup>173</sup>

b. Open communionists. Open communio

nists also maintained the theory of guarded communion. The thought never occurred to them that the Table should be made available to any so-called Christian who desired to participate. Bunyan insisted:

I dare not have communion with them that profess not faith and holiness, or that are not visible saints by calling; but note by this assertion I meddle not with the elect but as he is a visible saint by calling, neither do I exclude the secret hypocrite if he be hid to me by visible saintship.<sup>174</sup>

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173. Payne, The Baptists of Berkshire, app. I, p. 148.

174. Bunyan, A Confession of my Faith and a Reason for my Practice, in Complete Works (Gulliver's edition), p. 825.

Bunyan also believed in the doctrines of pollution and the corporality of the Supper. Therefore,

no man may intrude himself upon, or thrust himself upon, or thrust himself into, a Church of Christ without the Church have first the knowledge and liking of the person to be received; if otherwise, there is a door opened for all the heretics in the world.<sup>175</sup>

He stated that a visible saint cannot be a member of an anti-christian church, by which Bunyan meant a non-congregated church. Connection with such a church must be broken before the person may be admitted to the Supper.<sup>176</sup>

c. Difference between open and closed communion. The sole difference between open and closed communion involved the prerequisites for guarded communion. Open communionists held that faith and holiness only are adequate qualifications for the Supper. Closed communionists held that obedience to the Scriptural practice of faith, holiness, and believers' baptism is necessary. Believers' baptism, or water baptism, was held by closed communionists as a prerequisite sine qua non. Kiffin stated that the ordinances are trusts, so "great care and fidelity must be used to keep them as they were delivered by him [Christ]."<sup>177</sup> The church has no right to grant latitude which God did not authorize.

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175. Ibid., p. 828.

176. Ibid., p. 839.

177. William Kiffin, A Sober Discourse ..., 1681, pp. 37, 57-59.

d. Local observance. William Mitchell stated about 1702 the theory of the local observance of the Supper more clearly than anyone before him. However, he did not make local membership an indispensable condition of communion:

... they who are ingaged in the Work of Publick Preaching, and enjoy the Publick Maintenance upon that Account are not there by obliged to Administer the Lord's Supper to any other than such as (being Saints by calling, and gathered according to the Order of the Gospel) they stand related to as Pastors or Teachers ...<sup>178</sup>

A pastor is obligated to administer it to his members, but this obligation does not extend to non-members. It is significant that Mitchell did not say that a pastor is obliged to refuse communion to non-members. Mitchell also held the doctrine of pollution,<sup>179</sup> which supports the practice of the guarded communion. Mitchell manifested a notable affinity to Presbyterians and Congregationalists in church-order in his book, and in this particular instance his view is very similar to the Congregational view of the local observance of the Lord's Supper.

2. Practice. Guarded communion and, to a lesser degree, local observance seem to have been the dominant practice of Baptists (General, Particular, and open communionist). None

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<sup>v</sup>  
178. William Mitchell, Jachin & Boaz, 1707, in Trans., III (1912-13), 168. This was written in 1702 and published posthumously in 1707 by David Crosley, who admitted altering it at only one point, free will; Crosley felt that a denial of free will would undermine evangelism.

179. Op. cit., p. 162.

was admitted who did not qualify at least as to faith and holiness and generally as to believers' baptism also. The church was responsible for guarding the Table, so an individual was not permitted privately to determine his fitness to communicate. Members who were under admonition were shut off from the Table. Non-members were not admitted until their qualifications were determined to the satisfaction of the church. Non-members could prove their fitness by holy living, or their home churches could certify them by letters of recommendation. During the mid-century, the former practice was general; by the end of the century, the use of letters was most common. Seemingly, the issuance of letters concerning members was originally designed, not to transfer membership, but to secure communion privileges in a distant church when one could not reasonably attend his own church.

3. Illustrations of guarded communion. a. Supporting evidence. Data to support the view of guarded and local communion are abundant. The open communion Broadmead church did not admit Mrs. Hardcastle, the pastor's wife, to "breaking of bread" for four or five years. When Broadmead received a letter from Thomas Vincent's church ("reputed a presbyterian" church holding open communion principles) of London in 1676, she was admitted to the Table.<sup>180</sup> Broadmead honored the rec-

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180. Broadmead Records, p. 360.

ommendation of Barbara Whitehead from Kiffin's strict communion church in London to Gifford's strict church in Bristol; she "was not willing to sit down with them [Gifford's church], but with us."<sup>181</sup>

The open communion Bedford church made co-operative arrangements with other churches which held open communion principles. Members of these churches could communicate when they attended a co-operating church of which they were not members.<sup>182</sup> However, Bedford consistently refused to send recommendations to closed communion churches, insisting that closed communion is unscriptural and disorderly.

The General Baptist church at Amersham refused in 1675 to admit anyone to the Table who was not under the laying on of hands.<sup>183</sup> Full agreement in order, as well as in faith, holiness, and believers' baptism, was necessary to communion.

Five General Baptist churches in London, which conceived of themselves as parts of one Dependency, agreed jointly to hold an annual communion service. One of the churches, Goodman's Fields, scrupled this arrangement, holding that communion properly belongs to a church, not to an assembly. The other churches granted liberty to the members of Goodman's Fields to absent themselves from the annual service.<sup>184</sup> This

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181. *Ibid.*, p. 361.

182. *Bunyan Meeting Records*, pp. 16, 21, 61.

183. *Amersham Records*, p. 202.

184. E. A. Payne, "The Glasshouse Yard Minute Book, 1682-1740," *BQ*, VII (1934-35), 322.

was an exceptional practice, and it soon died out. However, it was a guarded communion service, even though it was not local; those who participated were qualified communicants in the various churches.

Whites Alley was one of the constituent churches of the Dependency. The regular practice of Whites Alley was to admit persons from other churches only upon demonstration of a holy life or certification from another church. Recommendations were usually procured either by letter or visitation. The church frequently appointed messengers to go to other churches while they were in business session in order to secure recommendations.<sup>185</sup>

b. Exceptional cases. The exceptions to guarded and local observance are both rare and interesting. In 1652 the newly-organized Hexham church admitted a member of a London church to the Supper. During the same year, Hexham also admitted a Northumberland minister who was a member of a London church.<sup>186</sup> The Table remained guarded, however, for each person was apparently certified by Thomas Tillam, the Hexham pastor.

In 1682 the Broadmead church "brake bread, and several of the castle people [Congregationalists] with us."<sup>187</sup> This

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185. Whites Alley Records, I, 29, 58, 121, 122, 131, 134, 146, 161, 180, 199; II, 25.

186. Hexham Records, pp. 290-291.

187. Broadmead Records, pp. 458-460.

occurred thrice in as many months. However, it should be noted that this deviation occurred during the fiercest persecution of Nonconformity by Charles II. The decimated Nonconformists met together in fields or under trees, and then repaired to private homes for the Supper. It is significant that members of Gifford's strict church, who worshipped in the fields with the rest, refused to communicate at the Supper with non-Baptists.

In 1701 the Bedford church, then under a Congregational minister,

concluded yt those persons yt were members of Presbyterian Church yt was strickt in separation from the Nationall Church should be admited to occasionall communion, if known to any of us, & no exception made agt their convers:...<sup>188</sup>

Independent Paedo-baptists had communicated in the Bedford church since the 1650's, but this was the first instance of communion with Presbyterians. It is evident, however, that the Table remained guarded, for the prospective communicant had to be known and his character approved.

Ministers frequently administered the Supper or participated in communion in churches of which they were not members. In such cases, however, the reputation of the minister was adequate certification, so the Table remained guarded.

4. Membership transferrals and occasional communion. At the end of the century, it was customary for letters of rec-

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188. Bunyan Meeting Records, introduction, p. 101.

ommendation to transfer membership. The earlier practice of co-operative arrangements for members occasionally to communicate elsewhere<sup>189</sup> was replaced by membership transferrals. When a member was not transferred by letter, the fact was specifically mentioned. Old Gravel Lane, London, permitted Nathan Myles in 1694 "to sit down as a transient member he still retaining his church membership with the Church at Norwich."<sup>190</sup> In 1700 and 1701 the Northampton church admitted to "occasional communion" members from the Kettering (closed communion) and Stephenton (open communion) churches.<sup>191</sup>

In 1696 Whites Alley admitted a person to "transient communion," but his home church was not listed.<sup>192</sup> That transfer of membership generally displaced "transient communion" is seemingly indicated by the fact that Whites Alley sought in 1696 to discipline "Bro. Barnard" who had long absented himself from the church, but upon investigation "it appears to ye Church, yt he is yet a member with ye Congregation in Kent to whom he first belonged."<sup>193</sup> Evidently he

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189. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 25. These occurred before 1662.

190. C. B. Jewson, "St. Mary's, Norwich," *BQ*, X (1940-41), 234.

191. John Ryland, "History of the Baptist Churches in Northampton," *BAR*, IV (1801-02), 716, 771; cf. *Bunyan Meeting Records*, p. 16.

192. *Whites Alley Records*, I, 144.

193. *Ibid.*, p. 145. In 1689 "Sis; Morris" was "vpon Inquiry" found to be no member of the congregation (p. 38). The Particular Baptist church at Hexham was of the opinion in 1653 "that no person ought to have the censure past upon him in any church, but in that only wherein he was first a member" (*Hexham Records*, p. 330).

had been recommended for communion privileges in Whites Alley several years previously, the Kent church retaining his membership. In the interim, the custom changed and Whites Alley assumed that he was a member. When it became evident that he was yet a member in Kent, Whites Alley discontinued disciplinary proceedings.

5. Associational or denominational standards. The experimentalism involved in verifying one's fitness for the Supper gave way to objective standards. Associational unity played a leading part in the increased use of recommendations between churches of like faith and order. As associationalism increased, the knowledge of affiliated churches was more easily maintained. As a rule, churches recommended only to sister churches.

Particular Baptists specified that they owned original sin and perseverance, and denied free will. Baptists who did not hold these views were out of fellowship with Particular Baptists. In the mid-century, a few General Baptist churches restricted communion to churches which held the Six Principles of Hebrews 6:1, 2. In 1691 the General Assembly of General Baptists resolved

... yt they can & will have Communion at the Lords Table (as they have Opportunity) wth all yt own this Confession of ffaith /Standard Confession of 1660, as interpreted by Thomas Grantham/ & walk according to it.<sup>194</sup>

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194. MGA, I, 31.

These objective standards of communion between churches did not alter the theory of guarded communion. It was consistently held that holy living and right faith, as well as agreement in order, were prerequisites to communion. At least in theory, the Table remained guarded.

C. Letters of Recommendation

1. Scattered membership. In the early stages of growth, Baptist churches had a widely scattered membership. The system of itineration and the mobility of the Army contributed to this condition. As Baptists became more numerous and enclaves met together for convenience, new churches were organized. Close contact was maintained with churches which fostered the organization of these younger churches. Prior to 1650, it was not unusual for London churches (as Lambe's Coleman Street church, Knollys' Coleman Street church, or the Glasshouse church) to claim members from several counties.

2. Church rolls. Church rolls were not originally used by most Baptist churches. The Fenstanton minutes of the 1650's have few references to admissions, but many references to excommunications. The church roll suggests that each person signed a statement of faith upon admission, but it is not evident that the practice of signing extended back to the time of the organization of the church. The Broadmead minutes repeatedly mentioned admissions, but the church roll was not kept up-to-date. In 1665 Terrill was requested to

prepare a list which could be read at the breaking of bread to determine the absentees. In 1672 a letter was written to non-resident members, who were requested to inform Broadmead of their "estates" and to advise if Broadmead had ever recommended them to communion in another church. In 1679 a list was prepared, showing who were members, and when and how they joined.<sup>195</sup> The Whites Alley minutes toward the end of the century continually mentioned admissions and transferrals. It appears that the keeping of church rolls gradually developed as denominational consciousness and membership constituency increased.

3. Certification of preachers. The earliest letters of recommendation seem primarily to have concerned the certifying of preaching disciples. Grantham apparently reflected a common and proven procedure when, concerning the certification of messengers, he said that "for the greater security of the Churches, such Testimonials are expedient for all, and necessary in remote places."<sup>196</sup> In 1651 Thomas Tillam was laboring in Hexham as "a messenger of one of the seven churches in London," Knollys' Coleman Street church. In 1653 Knollys' church owned the Hexham church "in the Lord, to be a visible constituted church of God," and extended to Hexham

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195. Broadmead Records, pp. 86, 166, 416. On August 3, 1702, the Amersham church prepared a roll to be read in the communion service (Amersham Records, p. 238).

196. Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles, 1674, p. 23.

"the right hand of fellowship."<sup>197</sup> Both General and Particular Baptists certified preaching disciples, especially when the preachers were going to places where Baptist work was not established.

4. Communion letters, openly addressed. Members were later recommended to other churches for communion at the Lord's Supper, and these letters were initially openly addressed. The Hexham church in 1653 and 1654 issued recommendations for Thomas Stackhouse, Hugh Hesloppe, and Elizabeth Heslop [sic], addressed "To all Saints ..."<sup>198</sup> In 1655 Thomas Disbrowe requested the Fenstanton church to certify him to Baptists in Leith, Scotland. Fenstanton complied, but the recommendation was addressed "To all churches of Christ whom this may concern."<sup>199</sup>

There were three reasons for open addressing. First, the certification of preaching disciples necessarily required open addressing in most cases, for it was impossible for the certifying church to foresee the activities of the preacher well enough to permit specific addressing. This practice apparently inspired the use of letters for communion purposes. Secondly, the rapid and simultaneous growth of Baptists prevented full knowledge of new churches, so it was impossible to give a specific address. Thirdly, the formal lines of

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197. Hexham Records, pp. 289, 309.

198. Ibid., pp. 324, 332, 365.

199. Fenstanton Records, pp. 164-167.

connection had not yet been fully drawn. One of the causes of inter-church correspondence was the need of dependable information about churches of like faith and order. A church could not recommend its members to churches whose existence and character were unknown.

5. Communion letters, specifically addressed. Open recommendation was unsatisfactory. Both General and Particular Baptists adopted the procedure of specific addressing whenever possible. Considerably before June, 1653, Irish Baptists requested a list of Particular Baptist churches, but their request was not fulfilled. On June 1, 1653, three Irish churches petitioned several London churches again. The London churches, it appears, forwarded the Irish letter to churches throughout the country. At any rate, on July 24, 1653, they forwarded it to Wales. In their accompanying letter, the Londoners stated that a list of churches would provide knowledge of "what churches and societies we may groundedly communicate with."<sup>200</sup> Such a list worked two ways; it provided knowledge of churches to which persons were recommended, and it certified the recommending church.

By the end of the century, the custom was to issue letters only under specific addresses. It seems to have been

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200. \_\_\_\_\_, "An Account of the Baptist Churches in Ireland, with letters which passed between The Irish, English, and Welsh Churches, In 1653," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 20.

irregular openly to recommend. Specific addressing became more conspicuous when a recommendation normally effected a transfer of membership. The Whites Alley church refused to grant an open recommendation to Joseph Morris in 1697 and justified its refusal on the grounds that it could not "give a Letter of Commendation vnless we Know to whom we Commend."<sup>201</sup>

The use of specific addresses was consistent with the principle that an individual member must be under the care of a church. The church, therefore, prevented a member from deciding to whom he would go. A vital factor in church care was the determination of a member's qualifications for membership elsewhere and of the worthiness of another church to receive him.

6. Transferrals of membership. The earliest letters of recommendation of members were designed to secure communion privileges in a church of which one was not a member.<sup>202</sup> In few, if any cases were members transferred. However, non-residence became unsatisfactory. Churches found it extremely difficult to preserve a disciplined church with non-resident members. The Fenstanton church had more trouble with Quakers<sup>SM</sup> in distant villages than in Fenstanton and Caxton where the majority and where the church normally met for business.

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201. Whites Alley Records, I, 160.

202. Amersham Records, p. 231; Broadmead Records, pp. 169, 362; Bunyan Meeting Records, pp. 25, 27.

In 1672 Broadmead sent a letter to all "removed" members, exhorting them to faithfulness. The replies indicate that the non-resident members were practicing some things which would have been effectively disciplined in Bristol, but over which remote control was difficult, if not impossible.<sup>203</sup> In 1679 Broadmead had one hundred and sixty-six members, ten of whom were "removed by distance of habitation ...; and six under dealing by the church, and most of them at distance by habitation."<sup>204</sup>

7. Requesting letters. There was no uniform pattern of requesting letters. Initially, it appears, an individual requested his home church to recommend him to another church. By the end of the century, however, there were two different procedures which were commonly followed. First, the home church dispatched a recommendation via the member to the church to whom he was recommended. Secondly, the receiving church by messenger or letter requested the home church to recommend, without the mediation of the individual involved. It is difficult to ascertain which was the more common procedure, but the Amersham,<sup>205</sup> Broadmead, and Whites Alley minutes indicate that the former preceded in time and that the tendency at the end of the century was toward the latter.

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203. Broadmead Records, pp. 166-187.

204. Ibid., p. 419.

205. Cf. Amersham Records, pp. 206, 213, 216, 218.

8. Caution in granting requests. Churches granted requests for recommendations in a very discriminate manner. The Bedford church invariably required that the prospective receiving church observe open communion principles.<sup>206</sup> The Ford church withheld recommendations for three specified reasons: error in the receiving church, absenteeism of the member under consideration, and profanation of Sunday by the member.<sup>207</sup>

The Whites Alley church declined to recommend for several reasons: (1) the person left the church in a disorderly manner; (2) persons who desired recommendations were under admonition; (3) the member was needed in Whites Alley and could not be spared; (4) the requesting churches were Particular Baptist churches; (5) the requesting church called itself a "true" church but did not show the same honor to Whites Alley (this derived from the tension between the General Assembly and the General Association over Caffynism); and (6) a member had defective Christology and was not worthy of recommendation.<sup>208</sup>

9. Latitude in receiving. Churches were more inclined to relax their standards in receiving members from other churches than in transferring. The receiving church probably

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206. Bunyan Meeting Records, pp. 21, 23, 25, 45f, 49, 50, 51, 57, 58, 61, 74.

207. Ford Records, pp. 3-5, 9, 39.

208. Whites Alley Records, I, 25, 126, 134, 144; II, 31, 47.

felt that the member improved his status by transferring. When churches received negative responses to their requests for recommendation, they did not always honor them. This seems to have characterized Nonconformity as a whole, for the various denominations were inclined to proselyte from each other. In 1659 Baxter proposed that churches honor each other's discipline; unity cannot be achieved so long as persons can go from one church to another to escape discipline, pretending "a Change of Opinion to cloak their Scandals."<sup>209</sup>

In February, 1681, Broadmead requested a recommendation on Thomas Whinnell from a General Baptist church in Christchurch, Dorset. The request was refused, so Broadmead then asked Christchurch if there were any objection to Whinnell's morals, but apparently Christchurch did not answer. In March, 1682, Broadmead received Whinnell because he had initially been a member of an extinct General Baptist church in Bristol where his life had been commendatory.<sup>210</sup>

The Whites Alley church received members from the churches of Knollys and Keach.<sup>211</sup> However, Whites Alley rejected requests from Particular Baptists and sought to determine why its members would go over to them. Whites Alley normally

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209. Powicke, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

210. *Broadmead Records*, pp. 427, 452.

211. *Whites Alley Records*, I, 60, 224; II, 9, 11, 29. The use of the title "Mr." is noteworthy. There are some instances in which Particular Baptists are called "brother," but the common title for them was "Mr."

honored refusals which were based on immorality. It refused to receive a member from Keach's church until he had given satisfaction to Horsley-down.<sup>212</sup> Whites Alley received a lady without external certification because her "life and conversation" seemed "as becomes the Gospel."<sup>213</sup> Other General Baptist churches normally granted requests from Whites Alley; if requests were rejected, Whites Alley usually honored the rejections. However, it once rejected an "Equiquall Answer" on a charge of "Eivle," for the sister church did not substantiate its charge; the applicant was admitted.<sup>214</sup> The Rainham church in Essex requested to be admitted in toto but Whites Alley advised it to "sit down" as a church, due to its distance from London; for several months Whites Alley assisted in maintaining a preaching ministry in Rainham. At the same time, Whites Alley received a Rainham resident who was a member of the Rolvendon church in Kent.<sup>215</sup> The church at Maidstone in Kent was refused membership as it had no church to recommend it to Whites Alley.<sup>216</sup> This case reflected Whites Alley's suspicion of Caffyn's Christology. Seemingly, Maidstone had repudiated Caffynism and desired communion with Whites Alley because of the tense situation

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212. Ibid., II, 29.

213. Ibid., I, 19.

214. Ibid., I, 130.

215. Ibid., I, 96, 98, 99, 180, 184.

216. Ibid., I, 129.

in Kent. Whites Alley was suspicious, however, so it denied Maidstone's request on the basis of a technicality, i. e., the lack of a recommending church.

#### D. Control of Marriage

1. Sectarian position. The Nonconformists or dissenters of the seventeenth century objected to the marriage practices of the National Church. The general Puritan movement objected to the "papist" character of the Anglican ceremony, in such things as kneeling and the use of the ring. Separatism, apparently in an attempt to preserve its integrity, objected to the marriage of saints with unbelievers.<sup>217</sup> Smyth, perhaps under some Mennonite influence but also under Separatist influence, elaborated this principle,<sup>218</sup> but Helwys was completely silent on marriage.

From 1640 onward the sects preferred, and in many cases demanded, that their members marry within their faith and order, and without clerical officiation.<sup>219</sup> It is doubtful that Anabaptist influence was determinative for this sectarian policy, for the regulation of marriage was characteristic of those in the Calvinistic tradition.

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217. Johnson, op. cit., p. 320. The covenant of the Separatist church at Burwel, dated August 28, 1607, states: "that we will not Marry with the visible wicked or visible enemies of Christ & his 'church' wayes." See \_\_\_\_\_, "Congregationalism in the Fen Country," Cong. Trans., VII (May, 1916), 6.

218. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 82.

219. Edward Harris, A True Relation ..., 1641, p. 2.

2. John Milton. John Milton exerted considerable influence on the practice of cultic marriage. He held that an incurably unjust marriage, *i. e.*, one in which there is contrariety of mind, is the greatest hindrance to a Christian. He attacked canon law which is more concerned about physical fitness and degrees of consanguinity than about mental mating. If marriage be of God,

the chiefe society thereof ... [*is*] ... in the soule rather than the body, and the greatest breach thereof ... [*is*] ... unfittnesse of mind rather than defect of body.<sup>220</sup>

He concluded, therefore, that less "schandall" would result from divorce "for naturall disparity" than from continuance in "an unchristian dissention."

Within two years, and perhaps immediately, Mrs. Attaway, a prominent member of Lambe's General Baptist church in Coleman Street,<sup>221</sup> is reported to have stated that she intended to look into Milton's doctrine of divorce, as she had an "unsanctified" husband.<sup>222</sup>

3. Cultic marriage. Cultic marriage was the marriage of two Christians. All Evangelicals favored marriage within

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220. John Milton, The Doctrine & Discipline of Divorce ..., 1644, p. 28.

221. Baillie, op. cit., p. 54. Edwards, op. cit., II, 11, identifies her as one of Goodwin and Saltmarsh's saints, thus an Independent; she was a General Baptist.

222. Edwards, loc. cit. Mrs. Attaway was a woman of notorious reputation, it appears. She was accused of prophesying in church and running away from her husband and living with another man. After a few years, she happily disappeared from public notice.

the Christian community. The inclusion of the principle of cultic marriage in Baptist confessions was due to Presbyterian and Congregational examples. Except for Smyth's statement, cultic marriage was not advocated in a Baptist confession until 1677 and 1678,<sup>223</sup> when Baptists deliberately made a conciliation toward Presbyterianism and Congregationalism.

Cultic marriage was the uniform theory and practice of Baptists from their beginning. Members of the original Jacob church and of Spilsbery's church rejected the "mixt marriages" of the Church of England.<sup>224</sup> In 1645 the requirements for Baptist marriages were, by an opponent, said to be: (1) both persons must be Baptists; (2) each person must consent to the wedding; (3) the church must approve the marriage; and (4) the simple ceremony of taking each other as man and wife must be performed before the congregation.<sup>225</sup>

4. General Baptists. a. Fenstanton. General Baptists were the first to work out and enforce the polity of cultic marriage. Throughout the century, they were more concerned

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223. McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 159, 263f.

224. W. T. Whitley, editor, "Records of the Jacob-Lathorp-Jessey Church, 1616-1641," *Trans.*, I (1908-09), 211; James Stuart, Beechen Grove Baptist Church, Watford, p. 10.

225. \_\_\_\_\_, The Anabaptists Catechisme, 1645, pp. 11f. Thomas Grantham, Truth and Peace, 1689, pp. 73-90, describes the ceremony in much the same terms. However, he says, "no Man takes upon him the Office to marry any, that being the proper Act of the Parties themselves" (p. 75); unless marriage be a sacrament, as Roman Catholicism defines it, "there is no absolute Necessity to have a Priest to celebrate Marriage" (p. 83).

with it than Particular Baptists. In 1651 the Fenstanton church excommunicated a man for marrying an Anglican "infidel" contrary to the church's advice.<sup>226</sup> In 1652 the Fenstanton elders argued that a non-member (one who is not a member of a General Baptist church) is a worldling:

There is now none but the church and the world; if your husband were not of the church, he must be of the world.<sup>227</sup>

b. Associational agreement. At a general meeting at Cambridge in 1655, attended by several General Baptist elders, the question of mixed marriage was raised:

Upon this question there was very much debate; but at length it was resolved, that it is not lawful for any member of the congregation to be married unto one without the congregation. Likewise it was resolved, that all persons offending in this case shall be sharply reprov'd ... and if they refuse to hear they shall be excommunicated.<sup>228</sup>

By "congregation" was meant, not a local church, but the General Baptist community of the region.

Churches were disposed to co-operate in the enforcement of this rule.<sup>229</sup> In 1656 the Royston church reprov'd a Fenstanton member then residing in Royston. Fenstanton was advised of the action; in reply Fenstanton stated that one of Satan's devices for destroying the church "is persuading many members of the congregation to join themselves in marriage

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226. Fenstanton Records, p. 9.

227. Ibid., p. 24.

228. Ibid., p. 147, underlining mine.

229. Ibid., p. 163; Warboys Records, pp. 274, 275, 279.

with those without."<sup>230</sup>

However, General Baptists did not uniformly endorse the principle. Popular objection was one of the reasons why the eldership was so vigorous in enforcing cultic marriage. In one instance, an elder was stripped of his office for several reasons, one of which was the upholding of marriage "with one not in the fellowship of the gospel."<sup>231</sup>

c. Divorce repudiated. The discipline of mixed marriage did not involve separation from one's spouse.<sup>232</sup> There was only one case in which divorce was upheld. It involved marriage between a London Baptist and a Quaker. In 1667 the husband, a Baptist, wanted to be relieved of his wife, on the grounds that she was an "unbeliever." Though the church recognized him to be a "knave," it granted him the divorce; he soon married within the church.

d. General Assembly. The unusualness of the foregoing case is demonstrated by the reaction of London pastors. They disowned Henry Clayton, the pastor who permitted the divorce. The problem was referred to the General Assembly when it convened in 1668. After thorough deliberation, the Assembly defined the polity which prevailed for a century among General

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230. Fenstanton Records, p. 9.

231. Warboys Records, p. 274.

232. \_\_\_\_\_, "Hamlets in Surrey and Sussex," BQ, II (1924-25), 328, states that "not one case is recorded where husband was required to leave his wife." The same thing was true in other parts of the nation.

Baptists.<sup>233</sup> The Assembly's resolution stated that an unbeliever is one that "is not a member of the visible Church of Christ," i. e., a General Baptist church.

Marriage between believer and unbeliever is against God's law, the Assembly said, and sexual intercourse in such an alleged marriage is sinful. However, to prevent hard feelings and social stigma, intercourse in mixed marriages should not be called fornication. The Assembly did not know how to resolve the problem after marriage was consummated, as its proposal indicates:

their separation one from another, all circumstances considered, may not be safely required of them. Wherefore there remain only two ways, to wit, Either that we must accept of their unfeigned repentance, Or else have them in the excommunicated estate, both of which seem to be attended with great straits. Yet we propose this as the best expedient in our Judgment, knowing that it is better to incline to mercy than severity, namely: To accept of such repentance as the reality thereof may not be questioned by any circumstances attending.<sup>234</sup>

The propriety of the rule was frequently questioned but the Assembly continued to uphold its resolution. In 1689 the Assembly sought

to find out some Larger Bounds than the said Community for the Marriage of such as are of the said Community but none could be found.<sup>235</sup>

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233. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Southwark Monthly Meeting," BQ, VII (1934-35), 324.

234. MGA, I, 23f.

235. Ibid., p. 26.

The Assembly stated that a believer may not marry with "Turks Jews Infidells &c. & wth all sorts of pretended Christians."

e. Decline of cultic marriage. Repeated inquiries concerning cultic marriage to the Assembly in 1693, 1696, 1697, 1698, and 1702,<sup>236</sup> indicate that the popularity of strict marriages was declining. In 1697 it was conceded that "a Nationall Minister" may perform the wedding if he omits "the ceremonial part thereof respecting Divine Worship."<sup>237</sup> This was a notable concession to popular opinion. It seems conclusive that the practice of excluding members for mixed marriages, when they did not repent, was dying out by the end of the century. At any rate, the fully recorded minutes of the Whites Alley church from 1681 onward have no references to exclusion for mixed marriage.

f. Reasons for decline. The reasons for this decline are not fully evident. However, three factors contributed to it. First, prominent leaders disfavored the rigors of cultic marriage. Matthew Caffyn claimed in 1674 that he was responsible for the ameliorating articles of the Assembly's resolution in 1668.<sup>238</sup> Secondly, during the Age of Toleration, the tension between denominations was relaxed, especially on the informal and social levels, thus permitting

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236. Ibid., pp. 39, 42, 50, 52, 70.

237. Ibid., p. 50.

238. Matthew Caffyn, Envys Bitterness Corrected with the Rod of Shame, 1674, pp. 8f; see supra, p. 179, for the article.

greater association of members in personal affairs. Thirdly, the frequent questioning of the polity indicates that it did not have popular backing; the ministers were the chief promoters of cultic marriage. There is evidence that marriage to a General Baptist was a prerequisite to the eldership,<sup>239</sup> indicating that there was a conscious attempt to preserve the integrity of the eldership. Ministers were acutely aware of the threat of mixed marriage to General Baptist life, and they became very conservative. When one married outside the General Baptist community, he was lost either to Calvinism or Anglicanism. Calvinism dominated Nonconformity, and the civil and social assets of Anglicanism were attractive. It was easier for a General Baptist to change denominations than for one to become a General Baptist. To counter this threat, ministers tried to enforce cultic marriages, but the age was too irreligious to permit success.

5. Particular Baptists. The evidences of Particular Baptist advocacy of cultic marriage are scarce, but there are some. In 1658 the Hexham church excluded one who married an unbeliever.<sup>240</sup> The General Assembly of 1689 stated simply that it is the duty of members to marry "in the Lord."<sup>241</sup> John Bunyan, in one of his allegories, described the death-

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239. Amersham Records, pp. 214f.

240. Hexham Records, p. 297.

241. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 52.

bed admonition of Mr. Badman's wife, a religious lady. She advised her daughter of the evils of marriage with unbelievers and pleaded with her to profit by her mother's mistakes.<sup>242</sup> On the whole, Particular Baptists seem to have been more concerned about marriages with non-Christians than about marriages with members of other denominations.

6. Failure to prevent mixed marriages. The regulation of cultic marriage was unsuccessful. Regulation originated from the desire to insure purity of life, including the domestic area of life. Cultic marriage among General Baptists developed into a rule designed primarily to isolate a member from outside influences. Particular Baptists, due to their kinship with Calvinism, regulated marriage less frequently and severely than General Baptists. By the end of the century, among General Baptists cultic marriage was disfavored by the laity and stubbornly upheld by most ministers. Its purpose was conservative, but it could not maintain the integrity of General Baptist life.

#### CONCLUSION

In the process of consolidation, Baptist churches tended

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242. John Bunyan, The Sinner's Progress (American Baptist Publication Society edition), pp. 89, 166. See Fenstanton Records, pp. 172-175, for a similar case, which lacks only the death-bed. Jane Johnson was "truly sorry" for her mixed marriage and asked the church to warn "all young men and maids in the congregation!"

to limit their fellowship. Theological norms became more inflexible and inter-relations of churches tended to become restricted to formal connectionalism, in which ministers exerted increasing authority. The basis of associational relations became rather fixed according to faith and order. Though order would have permitted association between General and Particular Baptists, faith prevented it. Whereas faith would have permitted association between Particular Baptists and other Calvinists, order prevented it.

Of the two Baptist traditions, General Baptists were the more conservative and isolationistic. However, both became self-centered, being more concerned with self-preservation than with evangelism. The fellowship between ministers was inadequate for Baptist growth at the end of the century. Lacking vital inter-church fellowship, General Baptists declined, and Particular Baptists hardened into an unevangelistic tradition.

Baptists maintained the theory of the disciplined church. However, discipline became increasingly ineffectual, primarily due to the character of the times. Prior to the Toleration Act, religion was a vital concern for most people, especially the Nonconformists. After 1689 religion diminished in interest and significance. Therefore, people did not submit to discipline.

Baptists affirmed that each believer is obligated to af-

affiliate with a particular church. However, membership lists were not emphasized in the mid-century, though by 1700 they were uniformly kept. Letters of recommendations were first designed to secure for absentee members communion privileges in churches of which they were not members. Later letters effected a transfer of membership. There was greater reluctance in transferring members to other churches than in receiving them from other churches, a phenomenon which indicates the growing self-interest of the local church.

Perhaps the most unwholesome characteristic of Baptist life in the seventeenth century was the elevation of the ministry. Ministerial elevation weakened congregation government in practice, if not in theory. The minister became the guardian of the door to the church, the administrator of the seals, the interpreter of the Word, and the executor of discipline. Ministerial maintenance became absolutely necessary. When Baptists declined in strength in the eighteenth century, ministerial maintenance decreased, and a degree of congregational authority in discipline was recovered.

Religious indifference and missionary inertia resulted in Baptist regression in the eighteenth century. Whereas Baptists had been vitally alert in their witness in the mid-seventeenth century, after 1700 (and even before) they became interested in conserving their present status, but in this they were unsuccessful. James Hinton, writing in 1821, ana-

lyzed the religious declension of the eighteenth century. He attempted to exonerate Baptists from responsibility in this declension, claiming that "other orthodox churches" were entirely responsible. However, his appraisal applies to Particular Baptists also:

We have reason to believe that this declension arose from the union of a sound creed with a lukewarm heart; from the combination of an orthodox belief with a spirit of indifference to the power of vital godliness.<sup>243</sup>

Whereas the Particular Baptist decline was due to the peculiar combination of orthodoxy and irresponsibility (due to the security of election), the General Baptist decline was due to rationalism and isolationism. In both cases the compulsion of missions was lacking, and the values of such a compulsion were lost.

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<sup>243</sup>. James Hinton, An Historical Sketch of Eighteen Baptist Churches included in the Oxfordshire Association, with appropriate reflections, 1821, p. 20.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXPANSION AND EVANGELISM

Baptist expansion was inconstant during the seventeenth century. The rapid expansion of the Civil War-Commonwealth period was arrested by legal proscription during the Restoration. The Age of Toleration was not attended by notable growth, for Baptists had become concerned with internal affairs and self-conservation. Therefore, expansion and evangelism are largely limited to the years 1640 to 1660.

Several factors contributed to expansion during the Civil War-Commonwealth period. External factors were (1) popular interest in religion, (2) comparative freedom of propaganda, and (3) civil experimentalism, a type of democratic republicanism which was in harmony with ecclesiological experimentation along congregational lines. However, Baptist growth was due primarily, not to external circumstances, but to Baptist activity.

Baptists organized into two religious bodies between 1640 and 1660, General and Particular Baptists. Baptist strength in 1660 has been variously estimated, on the basis of careful source study, from two hundred and forty-six to two hundred and ninety-seven churches.<sup>1</sup> In 1660 Particular

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1. A. C. Underwood, A History of English Baptists, p. 85.

Baptists had more churches than General Baptists. As General Baptists had a propensity toward larger churches, their numerical strength may have been out of proportion to the number of their churches. General Baptists greatly outnumbered Particular Baptists in 1650, but they suffered heavy losses to Quakerism during the 1650's. If Particular Baptists were not numerically the stronger in 1660, they certainly outnumbered General Baptists before 1700.

Both General and Particular Baptists employed methods of expansion which were sectarian in character. General Baptists were more sectarian, for they differed from most of their contemporaries in both faith and order. An opponent of sects called them "compleat Anabaptists" and Particular Baptists "Semi-Anabaptists."<sup>2</sup> The General Baptist emphasis on the general atonement and man's capacity to respond to God's grace provided them with a strong evangelistic appeal. The evangelism of Particular Baptists, on the other hand, was largely limited to ecclesiology, and even in this they shared some features with Independents.

The most effective methods of Baptist expansion may be classified as itinerant preaching, public disputation, pamphleteering, and mobility of the Army.

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2. Thomas Wynnell, The Covenants Plea for Infants, 1642, p. 7. Thomas Hall, The Font Guarded, 1652, (as cited in A. S. Langley, Birmingham Baptists Past and Present, p. 23), calls Particular Baptists "single Anabaptism."

## I. ITINERANT PREACHING

### A. Sectarian Preaching

Early in the 1640's lay preaching identified Baptists with Independents and differentiated them from Anglicans and Presbyterians. From 1645 to 1648 itinerant preaching was increasingly limited to Baptists, for Independents settled into a pattern in which ordained ministers clearly dominated. Independent preaching was increasingly restricted to the local church. The Independent departure from and neglect of sectarian preaching favored the growth of Baptists.

1. Difficulty in distinguishing sects. It is difficult to distinguish sectarian preachers early in the 1640's. The opponents of lay preaching failed, in most cases, to differentiate between the sects. Lay preachers increased in numbers in the fourth decade, but they increased faster after late 1640 when Anglicanism was rapidly losing its hold as an established church. Trained clergymen, whether Anglican or Presbyterian, uniformly disapproved of preaching by unlearned men. In 1641 there appeared many calumnies against lay witnessing and these attacks continued for several years.

2. Ridicule of lay preaching. Lay preachers were made the butts of clerical ridicule. Their lives were subjected to malignant scrutiny; nothing was immune. Their secular employments were considered unworthy of preachers:

A Preachers work is not to gelde a Sowe,  
 Vnseemly 'tis a Iudge should milke a Cowe:  
 A Cobler to a Pulpit should not mount,  
 Nor can an Asse cast up a true account.<sup>3</sup>

"This new kinde of talking Trade, which many ignorant Cox-combes call Preaching" was mocked for its "disorderly preaching, pratings, and prating."<sup>4</sup>

Lay preaching was highly emotional. Henry Denne, a clergyman turned General Baptist, had "some kinde of strains in his Preaching, which affect and take the people much."<sup>5</sup> However, lay preaching was sincere, as John Bewick, unlike most clergymen, recognized:

by Preaching they meane ... An expounding of Scripture by doctrinall deducing of instructions, and conscientiall applications of them to the Hearers by way of dilating or enlargement. Or more briefly: by Preaching they mean A speaking unto men for exhortation, edification, and comfort ...<sup>6</sup>

3. Effect of clerical criticism. The vigorous polemic of clergymen against lay preaching is confirmation that lay witnessing both alarmed the clergy and won converts to sectarian views. It was charged that "everyone that hath gained

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3. John Taylor, A Svvarme of Sectaries, and Schismatiques, 1641, p. 2. The title page is quite descriptive of the ludicrous attacks on lay preaching: "Wherein is discovered the strang preaching (or prating) of such as are by their trades Coblers, Tinkers, Pedlers, Weavers, Sow-gelders, Chymney-Sweepers ... Printed luckily, and may be read unhappily, betwixt hawke and buzzard ..."

4. \_\_\_\_\_, New Preachers Nevv ..., 1641, title page.

5. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, 1646, I, 76f.

6. John Bewick, An Antidote Against Lay-Preaching, 1642, p. 4.

a little experience in the Scriptures, takes upon him the great office of a Minister, and administers the Word ..."<sup>7</sup>  
 The calumnies against laymen and the arrogant claims of the clergy perhaps assisted the spread of sectarian views. Sensitive people, particularly Calvinists, must have been abashed by the intemperate clerical criticisms. Featley went to grave excesses in calling lay preachers "Clergie of Laicks," "Russet Rabbis," and "Mechanick Enthusiasts." He accused lay preachers of turning

Stables into Temples, Stalls into Quires, Shop-boards into Communion Tables, Tubs into Pulpits, Aprongs into Linmen Ephods, and Mechanicks of the lowest ranke into Friests of the high places.<sup>8</sup>

4. Response to lay preaching. Because of their attitude of superiority, clergymen accused lay preachers of having a zeal which lacked knowledge and truth.<sup>9</sup> Clergymen were more theologically astute, and some of the interpretations of lay preachers doubtlessly amused them. However, clergymen noted responses to lay preaching which they did not receive. Lay preachers had a Biblical, not a theological, knowledge, and their passion far exceeded that of the clergy. Whereas clergymen preached at appointed hours, in appointed places, and by appointed authority, lay preachers witnessed whenever op-

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7. \_\_\_\_\_, The Anabaptists late Protestation, 1647, p. 4 (unnumbered).

8. Daniel Featley, The Dippers dipt ..., 1645, preface.

9. \_\_\_\_\_, An Answer to an Impertinent Pamphlet ..., 1641, "To the Reader."

portunity was provided. Lay preachers would interrupt clerical preaching. Private conventicles were well attended. In short, the populace responded to lay preaching. It was alleged that one-half of those on alms' lists in London were sectaries who regularly frequented conventicles. People left "their callings and trades two or three dayes a weeke" to hear the new preachers.<sup>10</sup> Clergymen insisted that religion should aid, not harm, the economy, as sectarian religion was doing through its enthusiasm.

#### B. Significance of London for Lay Preaching

The extent of lay preaching throughout the country is not ascertainable, but it is well known that London was a hub of evangelism. The landed gentry and clerical leadership effectively controlled both the civil and religious life in rural areas; in the cities, especially London, civil rights and religious freedom were advocated by the same persons, many of whom thought they were concomitants.

New churches were formed in London by religious refugees from outer counties.

Some godly and learned men of approved gifts and abilities for the Ministerie, being driven out of the Countries, where they lived by persecution of the Prelates, came to sojourn in this great city, and preached the Word of God both publikely, and from house to house, and daily in the Temples and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach

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10. \_\_\_\_\_, New Preachers Nevv ..., 1641, p. 5 (unnumbered).

Jesus Christ; and some of them have dwelt in their own hired houses, and received all that came in unto them ...<sup>11</sup>

The striking similarity between this account and that of the first few chapters of Acts is not accidental. Lay preaching, the sectaries held, is justified, for God's spirit has been poured out, as Acts 2:18 predicted.<sup>12</sup>

Religious refugees in London naturally maintained an interest in their home counties. Their enthusiasm required witnessing. Consequently, London conventicles and churches fostered itinerant witnessing. When laymen returned to their homes for visitation or residence, they went witnessing. Unfortunately, the extant accounts of lay preachers are limited to the most remarkable preachers, among whom were many converts from the clergy. Private lay witnessing exceeded public preaching and the unknown laymen were perhaps more responsible for the rise of Baptist churches than known ministers. However, it should be noted that ministers considered laymen as allies, not as competitors.

### C. General Baptist Itineration

1. Thomas Lambe. Baptist churches in London sent "several Emissaries members of their churches, to preach and

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11. Hanserd Knollys, A Moderate Answer ..., 1645, p. 19.

12. \_\_\_\_\_, An Answer to an Impertinent Pamphlet ..., 1641, p. 21; Richard Byfield, Temple-defilers defiled, 1645, p. 26. Byfield later became a Baptist and wrote in defense of believers' baptism.

spread their errours, to dip, to gather and settle Churches."<sup>13</sup> Thomas Lambe's Coleman Street (General) church was the "greatest ... and most fruitfull of all their Societies without comparison."<sup>14</sup> Lambe himself travelled extensively "up and down the Countreyes to preach their corrupt Doctrines ..."<sup>15</sup> --in Portsmouth, Kent, Essex, Suffolk, Hertford, Cambridge, etc. Late in 1641 he and Clement Wrighter went to Gloucester at the request of Walter Coles. Being unable to secure a public place for preaching, Lambe preached in a private house. As a result, "divers men and women were rebaptized in the great river of Severne in the City of Gloucester," in "an extreame cold, and frosty time."<sup>16</sup> Within a few months, Lambe, claiming to be "a messenger of Jesus Christ," was in Norwich, "erecting churches, and planting new foundations."<sup>17</sup>

2. Numerous preachers. Lambe's activities appear to have been increasingly restricted to the environs of London, due to the demands of the work there. However, his church had "many exercisers." The church selected by vote the person who was to preach.<sup>18</sup> It appears that the church took advantage of these "exercisers" as they itinerated.

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13. Edwards, op. cit., I, 65.

14. Robert Baillie, Anabaptism, The True Fountaine, 1647, p. 94.

15. Edwards, op. cit., I, 92.

16. Wynell, op. cit., "To the Christian Reader."

17. Ibid., p. 71.

18. Edwards, op. cit., I, 94.

3. Denne and Oates. Besides Lambe, the two most effective evangelists of the church were Henry Denne and Samuel Oates. Each was a converted clergyman. It was reported that they were "the chief Apostles and Evangelists of the Anabaptist Churches, who are sent out by the rest to the adjacent counties."<sup>19</sup>

Denne was a very effective evangelist. He itinerated in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, doing "much mischief." He was appointed to the parish of Eltisley, Cambridge, because of the influence of an official sequestrator of parish livings who was rapidly assuming Baptist views.<sup>20</sup> By 1644 Denne had planted the church at Warboys with five members<sup>21</sup> and organized the church at Fenstanton, about a mile from the parish church.

Denne's fervid evangelism is seen not only in his itineration, but also in his writings. He was a strong advocate of justification by faith; a profession of faith demonstrates that one has been justified.<sup>22</sup> His Grace, Mercy, and Peace<sup>23</sup>

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19. Baillie, loc. cit. Baillie does not substantiate the hint that Denne and Oates itinerated for several churches.

20. Edwards, op. cit., I, 76.

21. Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, edited by E. B. Underhill, pp. 267f. (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "church Records," as appropriate.)

22. Henry Denne, A Conference Between a sick man and a Minister, 1643, 22p.

23. Henry Denne, Grace, Mercy, and Peace, 1645, 47p. It is published in the volume containing the Fenstanton Records, pp. 373-426.

is as evangelistic as any pamphlet of the age. His usual theme was, as Edwards charged, Christ's dying for all men. He treated this doctrine under two points: "Gods Reconciliation to Men" and "Mans Reconciliation to God." Man's response is the complement to God's initiation of justification. Denne consistently placed on man the responsibility of decision.

Samuel Oates' itinerary is not as well known as Denne's. However, it appears to have centered in Essex, Surrey, and Sussex.<sup>24</sup> Most of his work was done during the fifth decade, for in the 1650's he dissented from the practice of laying on of hands and took a negligible part in General Baptist life.

#### D. Particular Baptist Itineration

1. London itinerants. The Particular Baptists of London also itinerated, but their itineration was designed, not to do mission work, but to settle and assist conventicles which invited their aid. William Kiffin was the first to baptize in Kent, baptizing several near Canterbury in 1643 or 1644.<sup>25</sup> Because of his preaching against infant baptism, Hanserd Knollys was forced to leave London. He went to Suffolk where he preached often on the subject of baptism. He was "stoned

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24. Edwards, op. cit., I, 92, 182; II, 4; \_\_\_\_\_, "An Early Recruit from the Clergy," BQ, II (1924-25), 330.

25. Luke Howard, A Looking-Glass for Baptists, 1673, p. 28.

out of the Pulpit (as he was preaching) by a rude multitude."<sup>26</sup> He then returned to London where he preached to as many as a thousand at a time.<sup>27</sup> In 1646 Knollys was invited to return to Suffolk to discuss toleration. Late in 1648 or early in 1649 certain "Ipswich men" petitioned Parliament to send Knollys and Kiffin to Suffolk;<sup>28</sup> after the visit of these two men, the Ipswichers thanked Parliament for sending them.<sup>29</sup> In 1653 Henry Jessey was sent as a messenger to visit Baptist and Independent churches in Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk. His objective, however, was not missions, but the strengthening of unity among the churches, which was being threatened by certain internal problems.<sup>30</sup>

2. Thomas Collier. In West Anglia Thomas Collier itinerated extensively. He "preached and dipped" as far east as Surrey, but his chief activity was farther west. Edwards called him

a man of great power ... and hath Emissaries under him, whom he sends abroad and commands to go into severall parts, as Syms, Row, &c, and supply his place in his absence.<sup>31</sup>

Some of Collier's letters, captured from the person of one

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26. Hanserd Knollys, Christ Exalted, 1645, title page.

27. Edwards, op. cit., I, 97f.

28. William Kiffin, Remarkable Passages in the Life of: Written by Himself, and edited by William Orme, p. lll.

29. A. J. Klaiber, The Story of Suffolk Baptists, appendix ii, pp. 204f.

30. Hexham Records, pp. 346f.

31. Edwards, op. cit., III, 29.

of the itinerant preachers, described the rapid growth of Baptists and indicated the healthy interest which widely scattered churches had in each other.<sup>32</sup> Collier's leadership, it seems, was the line of fellowship between them.

3. Results of itineration. Active itineration resulted in the establishment of numerous churches. In 1645 Featley reported that "Anabaptists" boasted of forty-seven churches;<sup>33</sup> where these churches were is not clear, but apparently he meant throughout the Kingdom. In 1647 Baillie estimated that there were seven congregations which issued the confession plus thirty-nine others, all of which he thought were in the environs of London.<sup>34</sup> Both Featley and Baillie exaggerated Baptist strength, it seems, in order to excite Parliament against the sects. Their estimates may be inaccurate, but there is no basis for rejecting the validity of their general impression that Baptists were rapidly expanding.

#### E. Missionary Offices

1. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists employed itineration not so much for evangelistic work as for setting conventicles in church-order and ordaining officers. Therefore, the applicability of the term "itineration" to their practice can be questioned. They did not devise a system of

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32. Ibid., pp. 51-54.

33. Featley, op. cit., "To Friend John Downam."

34. Baillie, op. cit., p. 49.

itineration comparable to that of General Baptists.

There are some instances of systematic itineration. John Myles sponsored an extensive Welsh movement, but it was originally promoted by a single church which had its constituents scattered in congregations over a wide area. Myles' system of itineration was designed to serve these congregations. Thomas Collier was the conspicuous itinerant in West Anglia. In 1656 he was named superintendent of the West. It is supposed that Benjamin Cox exercised a similar function in the Midlands during the 1650's, but supporting evidence is lacking.<sup>35</sup>

Particular Baptists certified preaching disciples, but certification placed the approving church under no obligation to support the preacher in pioneer work. The certification merely attested the qualifications of the disciple to preach the Gospel; it served as a credential.

2. General Baptists. a. Office of "messenger." General Baptists developed a missionary and ministerial order which they named "messenger." The initial function of the office was pioneering in evangelism. The inauguration of the office

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35. \_\_\_\_\_, "John Miles in Wales, 1649-1653," BQ, V (1930-31), 362-365; W. T. Whitley, "Benjamin Cox," Trans., VI (1918-19), 55. In an address to Cromwell on February 11, 1654, Thomas Tillam of Hexham singularly called himself a "messenger" (see E. B. Underhill, Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, p. 334), but there is no appreciable evidence for this claim, which represents Tillam's peculiar character.

is unknown. The confessions of 1651 and 1660 failed to mention the office. It was mentioned by the General Assembly in 1656, but the duties were not specified. In 1674 Thomas Grantham defended the office as if its acceptance was incomplete and its position insecure.<sup>36</sup> The confession of 1678 mentioned the office in detail.<sup>37</sup>

b. Factors in the development of the office. Three factors contributed to the development of the office. First, General Baptists had effectively used itineration before the office arose. Itineration initially issued from London, but soon the practice of itineration was adopted elsewhere. In 1653 Henry Denne spoke to the Fenstanton church on Matthew 28:19, 20, pointing out that the Lord's presence is predicated on missionary activity, in which Fenstanton had been remiss. Consequently, the church chose and ordained Denne as "a messenger to divulge the Gospel of Jesus Christ."<sup>38</sup> This was a more formal commission than earlier appointments for itinerant preaching.<sup>39</sup> However, the office of messenger was not a fixed office; at any rate, it was not the type of office advocated by Grantham at a later date. Denne visited several

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36. Thomas Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles, 1674, 23p.; see Underwood, op. cit., pp. 119-122, for a study of the General Baptist messenger.

37. W. J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. 146f.

38. Fenstanton Records, p. 72.

39. Edwards, op. cit., I, 105.

towns in Essex and Cambridge, making a number of converts. A year later he itinerated in Kent, and the Baptists of Canterbury requested him to come to Canterbury for residence. He refused to go until Fenstanton specifically instructed him to leave, apparently scrupling to assume private responsibility in church action. There is no indication that he went to Canterbury as a "messenger." In 1657 an associational meeting in Kent authorized each messenger to take a "young disciple of good report" to assist in the spread of the Gospel.<sup>40</sup> This suggests that evangelism was the primary function of the office at this date. The office, it appears, was designed to conserve the values of earlier itinerancy. In all probability the individual preaching of the Quakers led General Baptists to regulate itinerancy, thereby making it a missionary responsibility of the messenger.

Secondly, the lack of leadership necessitated the fullest possible use of capable persons. Throughout the century, General Baptists were deficient in first-rate leadership. By setting a capable person apart as a messenger, General Baptists facilitated the maximum use of his abilities. Some churches, however, were reluctant to release their pastors to the office.

Thirdly, the growing biblicism among General Baptists

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<sup>40</sup>. Fenstanton Records, pp. 101-113; Horace Warde, "Two Associational Meetings in Kent, 1657," Trans., III (1912-13), 247.

encouraged the restitution of primitive patterns. The so-called Six Principles were considered the minimum of doctrinal essentials. The biblicism which assisted the acceptance of the Six Principles also aided the restitution of the office of messenger. The messenger was conceived as the successor of the New Testament apostle. Grantham's defense of messengers was premised on their succession of the apostleship. Over one-half of his argumentation was spent in pointing out the similarities between the primitive apostle and the Baptist messenger.<sup>41</sup> Grantham had two basic arguments: (1) justification for the office must come from the New Testament, and (2) if there was such an office in the New Testament (of which Grantham had no doubt), then it must be restored in seventeenth century churches.

c. Administrative character. The office of messenger increasingly became an administrative rather than an evangelistic office. In 1656 the General Assembly declared that the "presbiterary" is composed only of "Messengers & Elders."<sup>42</sup> In the records of the Assembly the office of messenger was invariably listed before the eldership. The confession of 1678 mentioned that the messenger may preach "the word, or gospel, to the world, or unbelievers," but this was an "also"

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41. Grantham, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-14.

42. Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, With Kindred Records, edited by W. T. Whitley, p. 7. (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "MGA.")

function. The primary emphasis of the confession was on the role of the messenger in government.<sup>43</sup> By 1689 the messenger had become a governing officer over several churches. During the 1690's, the Assembly repeatedly solicited maintenance for the messengers. This repetition indicates that the office was not popularly accepted, or that ministerial maintenance was declining, or both. At any rate, the perpetuation of the office was due to ministerial promotion. The Assembly nominated and ordained men to the office; it also appointed them for specific work and disciplined them as necessary.<sup>44</sup> With the possible exception of work in Yorkshire, messengers appear to have done no pioneer work after 1689.<sup>45</sup> The commission to Yorkshire, it should be noted, was stimulated, not by a missionary impulse, but by an urgent appeal from General Baptists in the area. It appears, therefore, that the Yorkshire mission was not evangelistic.

F. Particular Baptist Itineration after 1689.

Whereas General Baptist itineration declined after 1689, Particular Baptist itineration received a stimulus from toleration. Particular Baptist itineration had been spasmodic in the mid-century, but in 1689 a method of expansion was deliberately proposed. The General Assembly of 1689 recognized

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43. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 147.

44. MGA, pp. 31, 36, 42, 51, 52, 66.

45. Ibid., pp. 33, 51.

an unhealthy condition which required correction:

The spirit of the world, we clearly discern, has got too, too much into the hearts of most christians and members of our churches, all seeking their own, and none, or very few, the things of Jesus Christ; if, therefore, in this there be no reformation, the whole interest of the blessed Lord Jesus will sink in our hands, and our churches will be left to languish ...<sup>46</sup>

An optimistic program of expansion was proposed to amend this condition. Money was to be raised immediately by free will offerings and was to be placed in a common stock fund; the fund was to be maintained by an annual offering from each church on a pro rata subscription basis. This fund was to be used for three purposes: (1) to aid churches which could not support a minister, (2) to finance preaching missions in places "where the Gospel hath, or hath not yet been preached, and to visit churches," and (3) to support ministerial education.<sup>47</sup> In one instance, the preaching mission produced permanent results. The work which Lambe, Kiffin, and Knollys had fostered in Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex in the 1640's was apparently assimilated in the two succeeding decades. Richard Tidmarsh of Oxford visited the three counties after 1689, laying the foundations for the earliest permanent churches

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46. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and Ministering Brethren, of the Baptized Churches, met together in London from Sep. 3-12, 1689, from divers parts of England and Wales, Owing the Doctrine of Personal Election and Final Perseverance," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 44.

47. Op. cit., pp. 50f.

in Suffolk.<sup>48</sup>

The principle of expansion through co-operative efforts was valid. However, religious indifference, doctrinal stiffness, and ministerial domination prevented success commensurate with the initial optimism.

#### G. Conclusion

Lay preaching and itineration played a responsible part in early Baptist growth. At the end of the century, lay witnessing was not conspicuous among Baptists, though there were some indigenous efforts. Itinerancy was initially a cohesive factor, binding churches together in the fellowship of missions. Planted churches stood in close relationship to churches which had assisted them. The development of an administrative itinerancy weakened this fellowship, for the objective was conservation, not evangelism.

## II. PUBLIC DISPUTATIONS

### A. Introduction

1. Extent of public disputations. Public disputations were frequently held during the Civil War-Commonwealth period. They were less frequently held during the Restoration, but they were not uncommon. There were one hundred and nine

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48. Klaiber, op. cit., pp. 41f.

known Baptist disputations during the seventeenth century.<sup>49</sup> Ninety-one of these can be located as to place and time. Of these ninety-one, twenty-six occurred between 1641 and 1650, fifty-three between 1651 and 1660, and twelve between 1661 and 1698. Twenty-four were held in London, and the remainder was spread over twenty-seven counties, with Kent having eight disputations, the largest number for any county save Middlesex. Baptist disputants included Tombes, Jessey, Knollys, Kiffin,<sup>1</sup> Blackwood, and Bunyan among Particular Baptists, and Lambe, Denne, Grantham, and the very capable and ever-popular debater Jeremiah Ives among General Baptists. Their opponents included clergymen, Quakers, and other Baptists.

2. Subjects. The subjects were preponderatingly ecclesiological in nature. Not more than a dozen debates concerned theology: Christology, Trinity, atonement, immortality and immateriality of the soul, original sin, and perseverance. In theological disputations, General Baptists were the chief disputants; sometimes Particular Baptists were among their opponents. The ecclesiological debates were numerous, dealing with such things as church government and discipline, lay preaching, ministerial maintenance, ordination, Sabbatarianism, membership of the church, laying on of hands, baptism, and Quakerism. The foremost subjects were baptism and Quaker tenets. Twenty-six were held on baptism; all but four of

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49. Arthur S. Langley, "Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations," Trans., VI (1918-19), 216-243.

these were held before 1654, and two of the remaining four were held in 1692 and 1698. There were thirty-two debates with Quakers. Over three-fourths fell in a four year period, 1654 to 1657. Sources indicate that there were numerous unrecorded disputes with Quakers, of a semi-public and local nature. Internal disputations among Baptists, dealing with theology and ecclesiology, occurred either before 1654 or after 1657. The inescapable conclusion is that Quakerism diverted Baptist interest from baptism, theology, and internal problems; Baptists became absorbed in defense against Quakerism.

3. General character. The disputations of Baptists before the Quaker crisis were offensive. They were aimed at securing rights for self-government and propaganda, and at laying foundations for Baptist growth. The debates with Quakers were defensive. They were aimed at upholding the supremacy of the Scriptures and the necessity of church-order, and at preventing separations from Baptist churches. The former debates were designed to make converts; the latter were intended to confirm or reclaim Baptists. The former denied traditionalism, the latter individualism. It is interesting that Quakers used certain arguments against Baptists which were similar in principle to those which Baptists had used against traditionalists. The separatist principles which Baptists initially used could not defend them against Quakers.

B. Debates between Baptists and Traditionalists

1. Debates initiated by Baptists. Baptists were aggressive in challenging traditionalists to debate. Early in the 1640's, Baptists challenged Paedo-baptists to dispute on baptism, and sometimes Baptist leaders were summoned to dispute in distant towns. Lambe was called to Essex in 1644; he and Timotheus Batt, a physician, debated with three clergymen.<sup>50</sup> Also in 1644 William Dunn of Warboys confronted Eusebius Hunt, the parish minister, and summoned Henry Denne, who debated twice with Hunt.<sup>51</sup>

In 1643 Baptists in Coventry called Benjamin Coxe from Devonshire to assist them in a debate with Richard Baxter. In 1646 Knollys was called from London to debate in Coventry with three learned clergymen.<sup>52</sup> Baxter soon recognized the futility of such disputations; he later confessed that "I purposely avoided it in publick and private" during the years 1646-1648 when Baptists were making "more stir among us than before." He could not evade disputes, however, for the converts of John Tombes came to Baxter and declared their intention to be baptized by Tombes unless Tombes was refuted in public disputation. Their professed uncertainty was a stratagem to engage Baxter, it seems, for they had already decided

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50. [John Stalham], The Summe of a Conferences . . ., 1644, 36p.

51. Warboys Records, p. 267.

52. Irene Morris, Three Hundred Years of Baptist Life in Coventry, pp. 7-9.

upon believers' baptism. A disputation was held between Baxter and Tombes at Bewdley, and the results were gratifying to Baptists. For several years thereafter, Tombes tried to engage Baxter in a literary dispute on baptism.<sup>53</sup> In 1653 Tombes' success in Abergavenny, Monmouth, necessitated a public debate. It appears that Baptists challenged Paedo-baptists, a technique which Tombes had used in Bewdley, Ross, and elsewhere in Herefordshire.<sup>54</sup> Either Tombes requested his followers to make the challenge, or he indicated his willingness to debate when his followers sought to take advantage of his learning and skill.

2. Debates initiated by doubting persons. Disputations were sometimes called by persons who were doubtful about baptism. In most of these cases, the requesting person seems to have made a decision beforehand, so the Paedo-baptist was on the defensive throughout the debate.

A London merchant called a debate between Presbyterians and Baptists (B. Coxe, Knollys, and Kiffin) late in 1645. The initial meeting failed to resolve the merchant's doubts, so other meetings were arranged.<sup>55</sup> The day before a large meeting was to be held, the mayor called it off, ostensibly

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53. Richard Baxter, More Proofs of Infants Church-membership, 1675, preface; John Tombes, Anti-paedobaptism, 1654, II, 8.

54. \_\_\_\_\_, A Publick Dispute . . ., 1654, ep. ded.

55. Coxe, Knollys, Kiffin, et al., A Declaration Concerning The Publike Dispute, 1645, p. 1.

awaiting Parliamentary approval of the debate and fearing the possible activities of an excited multitude.<sup>56</sup> Baptists immediately issued a public statement in defense of their innocence. The fear of mob violence was groundless, they said:

let any rationally man judge, whether we, who thinke it an unreasonable thing, that we should be beaten with Club-law instead of Arguments, should goe about to doe that to others, which we would not have them to doe to us.<sup>57</sup>

In spite of Baptist agitation, the mayor declined to set a date and arrange a safe place for the disputation. On May 26, 1646, an order forbade public disputations in London. Baptists used the reluctance of the mayor and the prohibition against debates to good effect. They claimed that they had routed the Paedo-baptists:

those Clergy men that have engaged themselves to debate that controversie do suspect both the truth of their cause, and their owne, inability to defend it, in that they thus cowardly keep themselves within doores, and dare not shew their faces against us in open field ...<sup>58</sup>

A gentlewoman requested a debate between Henry Denne and Gunning in 1657. The debate was held before "thousands of People" and resulted in the conversion of the lady. She was baptized in December, "even though it was unusually cold."<sup>59</sup>

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56. \_\_\_\_\_, An Answer to A scandalous Paper, 1646, p. 1.

57. Coxe, Knollys, Kiffen, et al., op. cit., p. 5.

58. \_\_\_\_\_, The Lord Mayors Fare-Vvell, 1646, p. 4.

59. /Henry Denne/, A Contention for Truth, 1658, 46p.

3. Chief arguments of traditionalists. Clergymen rarely initiated debates, but there were some cases in which they initiated disputations in order to confirm apostates from the Baptists.<sup>60</sup> Clergymen had two stock arguments: (1) "laymen" are incompetent to engage in theological disputations, and (2) conventicles are illegal and sectaries are criminals.<sup>61</sup>

C. Debates between Baptists and Quakers

1. Aggressiveness of Quakers. Quakers were as aggressive against Baptists as Baptists had been against traditionalists. Quakers interrupted Baptist meetings and accused the Baptists of being persecutors when they ejected Quakers from their meetings.<sup>62</sup> Quakers took every opportunity to engage Baptists in debate, both public and private. They challenged Baptists whenever Baptists made themselves vulnerable: excommunications of Baptists for adopting Quaker views, calumny against Quakers and their tenets, immorality, etc. The chief leaders of the Quakers were summoned to dispute publicly with Baptists. Fox participated in sixteen known disputations with Baptists in nine counties and Scotland.

2. Disputation at the Barbican, 1674. One of the most famous Baptist-Quaker disputations occurred in 1674 at the

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60. Richard Ballamie, The Leper Cleansed, 1657, 31p.

61. Featley, op. cit., pp. 1-10; Thomas Grantham, A Religious Contest, 1674, "To the Reader."

62. E. Burrough, To you that are called Anabaptists ..., [1657], 7p.

Barbican meeting-house in London. It was precipitated by an alleged distortion of Quaker views by Thomas Hicks. Quakers demanded a public hearing in which the misrepresentations could be corrected. The debate occurred about twenty years after the strong Quaker onslaught, but the extreme bitterness still existed between Quakers and Baptists, just as in former years. Penn charged that there was a conspiracy against the Quakers, for Presbyterians (Ferguson), Particular Baptists (Kiffin), and General Baptists (Ives and Plant) were arrayed against them.<sup>63</sup>

The crowd was so large and unruly that the meeting-place became unsafe. The disputation had to be cut short in order to permit repairs to doors and the cleaning up of wreckage, in preparation for Sunday services. Auditors "hooted" at Penn when he tried to explicate Quaker views. A woman hawked a book against Quakerism just outside the entrance, and this book allegedly contributed to the excitement of the crowd. A Baptist preacher, in a letter to Ives, objected to the treatment of the Quakers, and proposed that future disputations with them be held three or four miles from the city, away from the rabble.<sup>64</sup> It is most evident that the disputation served no useful purpose.

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63. W. Mead, J. Osgood, et al., A Brief Account ..., 1674, p. 14; T. Rudyard, The Anabaptists Printed Proposals, 1674, p. 11.

64. Mead, Osgood, et al., op. cit., 43p., is a report of this fiasco.

#### D. Decline of Public Disputing

The practice of public disputing declined after 1660. The laws against Nonconformity contributed to the decline during the Restoration. After 1689 a growing religious indifference made disputing ineffectual, except in areas where religious interest was still strong.

In Wales Baptists enjoyed a marked growth immediately after toleration was granted. Several debates were held between Baptists and Congregationalists, from whom Baptists were winning converts. In 1692 Congregationalists arranged a program of preaching which had some of the characteristics of a disputation. A Congregationalist preached on infant baptism the first day and a Baptist on believers' baptism on the second. So many Congregationalists were converted to Baptist views as a result that Congregationalists did not employ the method again.<sup>65</sup>

Baptists employed public debate in 1698 in an effort to settle the internal controversy over congregational singing, but the result was an extension of the practice of singing.

After 1689 the populace was indifferent to public disputations, so the practice declined and died out. When disputations failed to win converts, the various denominations ceased employing them.

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65. Joshua Thomas, A History of the Baptist Association in Wales, in BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 25.

### E. Conclusion

Public disputing was intended for evangelism. An affirmed objective was the determination of truth, but the real motive was proselytism. When Baptists engaged traditionalists, they were seeking to win converts; when Baptists were engaged by Quakers, Baptists were seeking to prevent defections to Quakerism. Baptists were very successful against traditionalists, but they failed against the Quakers. The aggressive side had the advantage. Normally both sides claimed the victory. It is very doubtful that debates strengthened Christian fellowship, except among participants on the same side. Disputations did not contribute to the cultivation of Christian love across denominational bounds nor to the development of a unity of spirit among Christians.

## III. PAMPHLETEERING

### A. Control of Printing

1. Archbishop Whitgift. The Church of England was fully aware of the power of the press in the rise of the Puritan party in the last half of the sixteenth century. In 1583 Archbishop Whitgift, in one of his first measures against Puritanism, forbade the printing of books without ecclesiastical license.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>. John Canne, A Necessity of Separation ... (Hanserd Knollys Society edition), Introduction by Charles Stovel, p. lxii.

2. Printing in Holland. Separatists had freedom of publication in Holland. Their works were widely distributed in England, as citations in the literature of the age confirm. Smuggled Bibles had aided in the overthrow of Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth century; smuggled books on congregational government, toleration, and religious reformation contributed to the disestablishment of the Church of England and the ascendancy of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists in the seventeenth.

In December, 1637, John Lilburne was arrested "for sending of factious and scandalous Bookes out of Holland into England." He protested innocence, but admitted that he had seen "great stores of bookes" while he was in Holland.<sup>67</sup>

Restrictions on English printing were relaxed early in the Civil War period, but many books were still printed in Holland. Of course, the only Englishmen to use foreign jobbers were sectaries, but they continued to use them until after 1648. Henry Lawrence's Of Baptism, which bears no publisher's identification, is said by the British Museum to have been printed in Rotterdam in 1646.<sup>68</sup>

3. Localization of printing. Except for presses in Oxford and Cambridge Universities, printing presses were to be found only in London. The restriction on presses was design-

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67. [John Lilburne], The Christian Mans' Triall, 1641, pp. 2-10.

68. [Henry] Lawrence, Of Baptism, 1646, title page.

ed to suppress unlicensed books. It was religious pamphleteering which necessitated this restriction; it was religious pamphleteering which proved the ineffectuality of the restriction.

During the sixth decade, books were sometimes printed in London for booksellers in other cities, but distribution was usually made by London publishers. The first book published in Birmingham was probably Thomas Hall's The Font Guarded, in 1652; it was printed in London.<sup>69</sup> In 1656 John Bunyan's Some Gospel-truths Opened was printed and published in London by J. Wright; his A Vindication . . ., in 1657, was printed in London for Matthias Cowley, a bookseller in Newport.<sup>70</sup>

#### B. Printers

1. Anonymous printing. During the first few years of the Civil War period, sectarian pamphlets were issued without naming the printers, because of prohibitions against unlicensed books. Several Baptists (Lambe, Spilsbery, Benjamin Coxe, Blackwood, Denne, and Collier) had books printed anonymously between 1643 and 1645.

2. Printers for trained ministers. Clergymen who be-

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69. A. S. Langley, Birmingham Baptists Past and Present, p. 23, shows the title page.

70. John Bunyan, A Vindication of the Book called, Some Gospel-Truths Opened, 1657, title page; cf. Bunyan, Some Gospel-truths Opened, 1656, title page.

came Baptists had greater success in securing licensed printers than unlettered Baptists. In 1646 Giles Calvert printed books for Tombes and Coxe. In 1646 and 1647 Iane Coe printed several books for Knollys, all "according to order."

3. Presbyterian and Independent printers. During the Civil War period, Presbyterians and, to a lesser extent, Independents could have their books printed without difficulty. John Cranford was the official ecclesiastical censor for Presbyterians; John Bachlor was the Independent licenser until about 1647. In a period when most Baptists had books printed anonymously, Presbyterians and Independents secured the services of the most respected printers in England, including Allen, Underhill, Overton, Ralph Smith, etc.

4. Use of Independent printers by Baptists. Between 1643 and 1647 Independent printers were sometimes used by Baptists. The ambiguity of early sectarianism permitted this, for in this period Baptists shared similar views with Independents on such themes as liberty of conscience, toleration, congregational government, and lay preaching. Baptists could secure licenses for books on these subjects, and some of the books, as Edwards charged against Bachlor, contained anti-paedo-baptist views.<sup>71</sup> For a short time Independents anticipated comprehension in the religious establishment of the

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71. Edwards, op. cit., I, 97.

Long Parliament, and early in the sixth decade Independency was the favored party, so the Independents became monopolistic of their printers. Baptists then had to secure their own printers.

5. Baptist printers. After 1650 Baptist books were published in volume by licensed printers. Henry Hills, who became Cromwell's official printer, became a Particular Baptist. After the Restoration he changed his religious views, apparently in order to secure a trade advantage. From about 1656 Hills had a monopoly on the printing of Bibles.<sup>72</sup> Francis Smith became a General Baptist preacher and printer. He printed some Particular Baptist materials about 1649 and 1650, and during the 1670's, but his business was dominated by General Baptists. Baptist loyalty to Hills and Smith is interestingly confirmed by The Humble Apology ..., in 1661, which was jointly prepared by General and Particular Baptists after Venner's insurrection on January 7, 1661. It bore the notation: "London, printed by Henry Hills, and are to be sold by Francis Smith."<sup>73</sup>

Henry Cripps preferred Independent literature in the mid-1650's, but he also published Particular Baptist books. Giles Calvert printed Baptist books up until about 1655 when

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72. W. T. Whitley, "Henry Hills, Official Printer," BQ, VI (1932-33), 215-217.

73. See E. B. Underhill, Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, p. 343. (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "Underhill, Tracts.")

he began to print Quaker books; after two or three years he seemingly realized that printing for Quakers was unprofitable, so he declined their trade. Livewel Chapman favored Fifth Monarchist books in the mid-1650's.

During the Restoration, pamphleteering declined due to the renewal of restrictions on printing. In 1664 Benjamin Keach, then a General Baptist, was arrested, tried, and sentenced to stand on pillory; on his head was placed a paper which was inscribed: "For writing, printing, and publishing a schismatical Book."<sup>74</sup> Restrictions on printing were relaxed for a few years in the 1670's, when Francis Smith, Thomas Fabian, Benjamin Harris, etc., resumed printing for Baptists. However, Grantham, Caffyn, and other General Baptist leaders seemingly preferred to have their printing jobbed "for the author." After 1689 Particular Baptists clearly dominated Baptist publications. In the Age of Toleration, Baptists had no trouble in securing printers.

### C. Opposition to Pamphleteering

1. Clerical opposition. Unlicensed printing and defective typography failed to deter sectarian pamphleteering. In 1643 a group of clergymen complained to Parliament about the "almost infinite issue of bastard Books" which daily appeared.

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74. "The Tryal of Mr. Benjamin Keach, at the Assizes held at Ailsbury in Buckinghamshire, October 8, and 9. 1664." 16 Car. 11, p. 1020. (This source is available to this student only on microfilm, but it comes from a sixteenth annual of the reign of Charles II.)

"The present day seemeth to procreate more bookes then Babes," they claimed, "being begotten by Eunuchs, and brought forth by the Barren."

A greater number of bookes hath been printed at London within this year and halfe past [since mid-1641], then at either of the Universities from the very Cradle, or invention of Typographicall art.<sup>75</sup>

The City of London, upon the request of civil officials and the "Commonalty of the Stationers," promulgated a law in 1643 which forbade book-selling on the streets by hawkers.<sup>76</sup>

Featley advised Parliament in 1645 that "the Presses sweat and groane under the load of their [Baptists'] blasphemies."<sup>77</sup>

Ministers in Suffolk and Essex urgently petitioned Parliament in 1646 to settle religion, because "Seducers multiply, grow daring and insolent, pernicious Books poyson many souls."

In reply Parliament re-affirmed its intention to suppress heresy, schism, and "soule-subverting books."<sup>78</sup>

2. Baptist reaction. Baptists immediately took advantage of such petitions and suppressive measures as the foregoing. Samuel Richardson charged that Presbyterians believed

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75. \_\_\_\_\_, The Clergyes Bill of Complaint, January 12, 1643, p. 1.

76. \_\_\_\_\_, An Act of Common Councell, for the prohibiting of all persons vwhatsoever, from crying or putting to sale about the streets within this City, and Liberties, any Pamphlets, Books, or Papers whatsoever, by way of Hawking, to be sold ..., 1643, broadsheet.

77. Featley, op. cit., ep. ded.

78. \_\_\_\_\_, The Humble Petition of the Ministers Of the Counties of Suffolke and Essex, May 29, 1646, and Parliament's answer, June 1, 1646, 6p.

that there was too much "light" among the sectaries, and feared the overthrow of Presbyterianism. Therefore, they order, said Richardson,

that nothing be printed unless it be licensed by them, lest their profitable traditions, with their plots and devices, be discovered.<sup>79</sup>

Edwards reported in 1646 that sectaries, by which he primarily meant Baptists,

- have put forth books against Parliament, Assembly, preached against them and their proceedings, the Directory, Ordinance against preaching of persons not ordained ...<sup>80</sup>

The strategy of Baptists was to overthrow national religion and to establish voluntary religion, so they attacked Presbyterianism in their propaganda.

#### D. Conversions due to Pamphleteering

The success of pamphleteering in winning converts is attested by the constant efforts to suppress unlicensed publications. It is, of course, impossible accurately to determine the role which pamphleteering played in the conversion of readers to Baptist views, for most cases are clothed in obscurity. Most conversions were due to several factors, one of which was pamphleteering.

There is an interesting case, however, in which pamphlet-

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79. Samuel Richardson, The Necessity of Toleration in Matters of Religion, in Underhill, Tracts, pp. 278f.

80. Edwards, op. cit., I, 59.

earing seems to have been the sole factor in conversion. Colonel John Hutchinson favored liberty of conscience and as early as 1643 he was accused of favoring Separatists.<sup>81</sup> In 1646 the Presbyterians ordered him to break up a Baptist conventicle. In the meeting-place he found some notes on baptism, apparently written by Tombes and Denne. He took the pamphlets home with him, and his wife Lucy, having some leisure during her pregnancy, read them. She began to doubt infant baptism; when John tried to resolve her doubts, he too came to question the propriety of infant baptism. Presbyterian ministers were called in, but they could not controvert the printed arguments of Tombes and Denne. After their child was born, the Hutchinsons refused to have him baptized. There is no indication that they became Baptists in anything save conviction. They neither forsook the parish assembly "nor retracted their benevolence and civilities from them." Nevertheless, the Hutchinsons were suspected of "Anabaptism" and were socially ostracized.<sup>82</sup>

#### E. Effect on Fellowship

1. John Tombes. Baptists were aware that Christian unity and fellowship were impaired by pamphleteering, but

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81. Lucy Hutchinson, Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, third edition (1810), I, 338f.

82. Ibid., II, 104.

felt it necessary to witness to the truth as they understood it. In 1654 Tombes admitted that baptism had evoked much controversial literature. Paedo-Baptists were largely responsible for the excess, he said, for they had issued numerous unnecessary and unenlightened books. Baptists like "Peace," but not at the expense of "Truth." Baptists should be given freedom to witness to their convictions. "Were men better [sic] temper'd than commonly they are," he suggested, "dissenters might ventilate things in question with less offence."<sup>83</sup> Tombes was a liberal open communionist.

2. Prejudicial opinions. Baptists generally felt that Paedo-baptists were most unreasonable in their writings against Baptists. At the same time, Baptists argued that their own writings were temperate. Edward Hutchinson, in reviewing the multitudinous pamphleteering on baptism, said in 1676 that if all the books written in "late Years" were examined, it would be easily seen that Paedo-baptists had "a proud, magisterial, scurrilous, abusive, and scornful Spirit" and that Baptists had "a more humble, gracious, meek, and charitable temper."<sup>84</sup> Thomas Grantham was more correct when he recognized that there had been "Pens of passionate

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83. John Tombes, Anti-paedobaptism, 1654, II, 2.

84. Edward Hutchinson, A Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism, 1676, appendix, p. 8 (unnumbered). This appendix is entitled "Concerning Unity."

Writers on either side."<sup>85</sup>

3. Critical character. Pamphleteering was critical and divisive. To extract scandals, lies, distortions, newly coined words, plays on words, critical expressions, impugments of motives, and bitter feelings would be an endless task.

4. Thomas Grantham. During persecution pamphleteering among Nonconformists was considered both undesirable and dangerous to the cause of dissent. Grantham complimented Henry Danvers for his yeoman service to the cause of believers' baptism, but accused him of intolerance in attacking laying on of hands. Grantham proposed a conference to settle the issue of laying on of hands, "for I never expect to see an end of this Controversy by writing Bookes one against another."<sup>86</sup>

In 1687, during the last stages of persecution, Grantham stated that it was "no convenient time for Dissenters to write one against another" on baptism. He proposed that the differences be settled by conferences, even though he doubted that Paedo-baptists would be amenable to the proposal.<sup>87</sup>

These intimations of Grantham's awareness of the harmful effect of pamphleteering are very interesting. They indicate that persecution blunted the effectiveness of pamphleteering. These remarks are unique, for Grantham possessed

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85. Thomas Grantham, A Religious Contest, 1674, ep. ded.

86. Thomas Grantham, The Fourth Principle of Christs Doctrine Vindicated, 1674, p. 35.

87. Thomas Grantham, Presumption no Proof ..., 1687, preface.

one of the most prolific and acrimonious pens of the age.

#### F. Conclusion

Pamphleteering was designed for ecclesiological proselyting. It exaggerated differences and facilitated the marking of distinctions between the participants. When engaged in internal pamphleteering, Baptists impaired their inner unity. The negative aspect of fellowship, at least along inter-denominational lines, was greatly aided by pamphleteering. In reality pamphleteering was published disputation which was intended to vindicate one's position and completely to subvert an opponent's position.

#### IV. MOBILITY OF THE ARMY

Military Baptists were a major factor in the extensive spread of Baptist views early in the 1650's. It is difficult to determine the degree of Baptist influence in the Army prior to 1648, for the term "Independent" embraced all sectaries who opposed Presbyterianism.<sup>88</sup> Whereas it is not known how strong Baptists were before 1648, it is known that there were many soldiers and officers who later appeared as Baptists.

Richard Deane, who served in the New Model Army as comp-

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88. W. T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, p. 74.

troller of ordnance, stated that whereas he knew of Baptists in the Parliamentary Army during the first Civil War, he had never heard of an "Anabaptist" in the King's Army. However, Baptists were not numerous in the Parliamentary Army. Deane stated that there were only two officers in command prior to 1648: Richard Laurence, marshall-general, and John Fiennes, who later became the only Baptist member of the Rump Parliament.<sup>89</sup> Deane apparently meant "high" command, for there seem to have been other Baptist officers. In 1644 Lt.-Col. William Packer was arrested by Maj.-Gen. Crawford for "Anabaptism." Cromwell reprimanded Crawford for discharging such a faithful officer in such an irregular manner, merely for his religious views. It also appears that Cromwell was unconvinced that Packer was a Baptist.<sup>90</sup>

The period of greatest Baptist expansion, according to Deane, was 1649 to 1659. He was persuaded that military service contributed to Baptist growth. Prior to 1649 there were "not more than twenty" Baptists in command, but they soon became prominent. Many Baptists became soldiers before 1650,

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89. Richard Deane, A Copy of a Brief Treatise, 1693, pp. 12-14. An interesting case of Royalist support is that of John Gifford, the organizer of the Bedford church. He is spoken of as "a Kentish man, a great Royalist and officer ... in ye kings army" (The Church Book of Bunyan Meeting 1650-1821, p. 1). It is certain that he was not a Baptist while serving with the king.

90. Letter of Oliver Cromwell to Maj.-Gen. Crawford, March 10, 1644. This letter is available only on microfilm. It comes from an unidentified book entitled First Civil War.

and by 1650 there were Baptists in the Navy.<sup>91</sup> The Army was dispersed throughout the three dominions and the principality, and Baptist views were dispersed as widely as the Army.

A. Support of Army against Parliament

1. Two Parliamentary mistakes. Parliamentary forces had defeated the Royalists by 1646. Parliament then proceeded on two courses of action which were fateful for Parliament and Presbyterianism. First, Parliament attempted to establish Presbyterianism to the disfranchisement of Independents, Baptists, and other sectaries who had supported Parliament against the king. These sectaries had favored Parliament because they favored religious freedom. They refused to surrender their hope, so they became outspoken antagonists of Parliament. Secondly, Parliament proposed to discharge the Army without pay and to establish a police force which would operate directly under Parliamentary supervision.<sup>92</sup>

2. United front against Parliament. Independents, Baptists, and the Army presented a solid front against Parliament. They did not have identical interests, but they had a common foe which united them. Cromwell took advantage of Independent and Baptist hostility toward Presbyterianism and secured their support of the Army. Baptists felt that they had a better chance of securing religious freedom from Crom-

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91. Deane, op. cit., p. 12.

92. Lucy Hutchinson, op. cit., II, 108.

well than from Parliament. Therefore, they supported the Army and advocated that the sword be held by Fairfax and Cromwell rather than by a bigoted, Presbyterianizing Parliament.<sup>93</sup>

3. Role of Army. The Army was active in fomenting antipathy toward Presbyterianism and Parliament, for the future of the Army was dependent on popular support from the sectaries. Richard Laurence, after a tour of military establishments and ostensibly on the basis of information which he had received in his visitation, published in January, 1647, a book entitled The Antichristian Presbyter: or, Antichrist Transformed: Assuming The Nevvshape of A Reformed Presbyter ... Printed for the Timly information of the people.<sup>94</sup> It is apparent that Laurence desired to stimulate antagonism toward Presbyterianism in order to secure sectarian support of the Army.

4. Civil War between Army and Parliament. A second Civil War broke out in 1648 between Army and Parliament. The Scottish invasion of England and the attempted alliance between Parliament and Charles I in 1648 expedited the resolution of the Army's internal problems. The invasion and attempted alliance were designed to establish Presbyterianism as the national religion and to restore Charles I to the throne. The

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93. Richardson, op. cit., p. 284.

94. Richard Laurence, The Antichristian Presbyter, 1647, title page.

Army quickly defeated the Scots and then turned its attention to Parliament. On December 6, 1648, Colonel Pride expelled all Presbyterians from Parliament. The remaining Parliament was only about one-fifth as large as the original Long Parliament and was called the Rump Parliament, or, as the prudish Lucy Hutchinson preferred to call it, the "Pocket Parliament." It was composed of Independents and controlled by the Army.

#### B. Dispersion of the Army

1. Appearance of Baptist churches. The Army was forced to frustrate insurrections and to quiet unrest, so forces were maneuvered through England and Wales in policing operations. Baptist churches arose in the wake of the Army, seemingly due to the number of Baptists in uniform.<sup>95</sup> In Ireland and Scotland, Baptist churches were almost completely composed of soldiers, but in England and Wales the churches had a predominant civilian constituency. Therefore, the newly organized churches in England and Wales were able to endure the departure of the Army, which churches in Ireland and Scotland could not.

2. Ireland. The Army went to Ireland early in 1650. By mid-summer it had overrun opposition. The Army personnel who remained for garrison purposes were rewarded in 1652 by

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95. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, p. 78.

land gifts. Some seven hundred thousand Irish residents were moved to the west, and their property was divided among seventy thousand Englishmen. The property was apportioned according to regimental occupation, so soldiers became landed citizens where they had served as occupational troops.

Baptist churches were immediately formed. By 1653 there were at least ten Baptist churches in Ireland. These churches contained Baptists who had been prominent in earlier Baptist activities. Thomas Patient, a signatory of the confession of 1644 and of the second edition in 1646, and Christopher Blackwood were active in Ireland. John Vernon and William Allen, who had formerly been active in Baptist work in West Anglia, served in places of military command.<sup>96</sup>

The most significant contribution of these Irish churches to fellowship was their proposal of correspondence between Particular Baptist churches. Their interests remained in England, so they persistently requested regular correspondence with English Baptists. This desire for correspondence derived from two sources: (1) their understanding of the corporate nature of the Church and (2) their former associations with fellow Baptists in England.

3. Scotland. A large contingent of the Army went from Ireland to Scotland in 1650 and defeated the Scots at Dunbar

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96. \_\_\_\_\_, "An Account of the Baptist Churches in Ireland, with letters which passed between The Irish, English, and Welsh Churches, In 1653," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 13-20.

soon after the invasion. Baptists claimed that they were largely responsible for the victory of a small English Army over a numerically superior Scottish force. After Cromwell became Protector, Baptists accused him of dissembling, reminding him of his frequent entertainment of Baptists in his own home and of his constant declarations in favor of congregational government while he was establishing himself. The reason for this Baptist polemic against Cromwell was his growing disinterestedness in Baptists and Independents and his open courting of the Presbyterians. Baptists complained that Cromwell had "used" them to serve his own inordinate ambition and then discarded them.<sup>97</sup>

After the victory at Dunbar the Army was garrisoned in eighteen towns.<sup>98</sup> At one time every commander was a Baptist.<sup>99</sup> However, Baptists were weaker in number, both members and churches, in Scotland than in Ireland. Baptists in Scotland maintained some correspondence with English Baptists, but it was usually personal rather than ecclesiastical. The Hexham church corresponded with several of its members who went to Scotland<sup>100</sup> but rarely with Scottish churches.

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97. [John Sturges], A short Discovery Of His Highness the Lord Protectors Intentions, 1655, p. 2.

98. George Yule, History of the Baptists in Scotland, p. 26.

99. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, p. 74.

100. Hexham Records, pp. 307f, 312f, 317f, 324, 328, 329, 333.

### C. Military Evangelism

After 1648 many Baptists became chaplains, officers, and troops. They had been active in propagandizing before entering the Army, and their sectarian disposition compelled them to continue their propaganda. The mobility of the Army provided them with additional opportunities for witnessing.

There was notable freedom of propaganda in military service between 1648 and 1653. After Cromwell began to aspire to sole rule, he tended increasingly to restrict the activities of the Army, but a degree of freedom remained. In January, 1653, Edward Hickhorngill refused a chaplaincy in Lilburne's regiment in Scotland because a chaplain had falsely told him that chaplains could not freely preach the Gospel. Within a month, however, Hickhorngill was mustered as a chaplain, and the Leith church, composed primarily of soldiers, requested him to join the church and to assist in the ministry. Within another few weeks Hickhorngill advised the Hexham church that "Col. Lilburne hath given me liberty to be with the church, whenever they shall please to call amongst them." He urgently pleaded with Hexham to send other members to Scotland, either as chaplains or soldiers, for "there are divers honest Scotch people that long to be gathered into the same gospel order with us, but they want a faithful pastor."<sup>101</sup>

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101. Ibid., pp. 308, 312f, 318.

The pioneering spirit of enthusiastic Baptists necessitated witnessing, and the witnessing produced notable results. In addition to those already named, Baptist leaders of prominence who served in the Army were Henry Denne, Samuel Oates, Robert Overton, Paul Hobson, Henry Danvers, Edmund Chillingden, etc.

#### D. Baptist Opposition to Cromwell

After 1653 Baptists became divided over Cromwell. Many violently opposed him, while others supported him. Cromwell became so distrustful of Baptists that he had a few Baptist leaders to intercede with their confederates in his behalf. He kept Baptists, both in and out of the Army, under surveillance. He tried to cashier Baptists from the Army without pay,<sup>102</sup> but experience should have taught Cromwell that such a course of action was stupid. Cromwell's assumption of the title "Lord Protector" stimulated the development of the Fifth Monarchy movement in which both Independents and Baptists participated.<sup>103</sup> They would have no ruler save Christ. Baptists in divers places reprimanded Cromwell for attempting to displace Christ's Lordship with his own.<sup>104</sup>

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102. Sturghion, op. cit., 8p.; \_\_\_\_\_, The Complaining Testimony, 1656, 4p.; see Underhill, Tracts, pp. 322-326, for the letter of Kiffin, Spilsbery, et al., to Ireland.

103. Louise F. Brown, The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men, 258p., is the best treatment of this interesting movement.

104. The assumption of the title brought forth objections from Bedford, Kent, London, Wales, Scotland, and a circular letter from Baptists in Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, etc.

When Cromwell was later contemplating elevation to the throne, Baptist and Independent opposition became more pronounced. Unrest in the Army and violent feelings of Baptists and Independents were perhaps the decisive factors in his refusal of the crown. In 1657 Baptists in Northern England, London, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk, Ireland, etc., violently protested against his regal aspirations.<sup>105</sup> In March, 1657, a Kent association resolved that it is unlawful for officers of churches "to list themselves either as private soulders or Comission Officers."<sup>106</sup> This rejection of military service was premised on the impossibility of serving both "Lord" Jesus and "Lord Protector" Cromwell. Baptists had actively supported first the Parliamentary Army against the Royalists and then the New Model Army against Parliament, so they had no scruples against military service for a godly purpose, as they viewed the former wars. However, they held that it is wrong to support one who intends to usurp the prerogatives of Christ. This Baptist agitation against Cromwell was perhaps one of the factors in the later suspicion of Charles II and Anglicans that Baptists were seditious.

#### E. Conclusion

The mobility of the Army enabled Baptists to spread rap-

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105. See typical letters in Underhill, Tracts, pp. 331-338.

106. Horace Warde, "Two Associational Meetings in Kent, 1657," Trans., III (1912-13), 247.

idly under Cromwellian protection early in the 1650's. However, their opposition to Cromwell after 1653 made them suspect and apparently impeded Baptist expansion. Baptist interests and efforts became absorbed in opposing Cromwell, not in proclaiming Baptist views.

Military Baptists fostered extra-local, intra-denominational fellowship. The initial correspondence between military Baptists and home friends was seemingly informal, but it issued into formal communication which was designed to keep churches mutually informed about each other. This information facilitated a fuller realization of Christian fellowship among Baptists in the same faith and order, even though distance separated them.

#### CONCLUSION

In evangelism and expansion, Baptists enjoyed fellowship almost solely among themselves. Whether in preaching, disputing, or pamphleteering, they majored on their differences with non-Baptists. In external controversy Baptists quoted each other on Baptist distinctives, so it early appeared to the world that Baptists were solidly united. Some discerning opponents, however, recognized that there were "compleat" and "semi" Baptists, or General and Particular Baptists.

Unfortunately, after establishing themselves, Baptists turned their weapons of ecclesiological warfare against each

other in their internal controversies. The measures which Baptists had used so effectively in propaganda to the world became disruptive of Baptist harmony and unity. This was more true of General Baptists than of Particular Baptists.

Military Baptists were perhaps the most cohesive factor during the period of rapid expansion. Coming from different places and out of scattered churches, they became a binding link between previously unrelated churches. Laymen as well as ministers served in evangelizing new areas while in the Army. The instinct and longing for Christian fellowship caused them to maintain contact with churches in which they had formerly been members. The varied backgrounds of military personnel in Baptist churches or enclaves extended genuine interest to distant and, as far as some were concerned, unknown churches. Military service provided a living opportunity for Baptists to get together outside local congregations. Because of their view of lay participation, Baptists were able to take advantage of this opportunity. Consequently, the mobility of the Army became a significant factor in Baptist connectionalism, even though it was not the determinative factor.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONNECTIONALISM

Both Baptists and Congregationalists held the theory of congregational government. There were, however, three notable differences between them: (1) the Baptist emphasis on the universal church as well as the particular, (2) the higher view of the Congregational ministry, and (3) the development of connectionalism among Baptists. Congregationalists emphasized the particular church at the expense of the universal, so they lacked a doctrinal basis for associationalism. Their exalted view of the ministry prevented congregational connectionalism, even though ministerial connectionalism developed after 1689.<sup>1</sup> In an institutional sense, associationalism did not develop among English Congregationalists until the nineteenth century, and even then many prominent ministers acknowledged the movement only with reluctance.<sup>2</sup>

John Owen, the outstanding seventeenth century English Congregationalist, recognized the weakness of congregational particularism. He proposed inter-relations among Congregational churches, but he was careful to specify that the principal care is "incumbent on the pastors" and that connection-

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1. W. T. Whitley, "Associational Life till 1815," Trans., V (1916-17), 21f.

2. John Owen, The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government (1689), abridged and edited by John Huxtable, introduction, p. 20.

alism does not abridge local authority and independence. Owen believed that inter-church relations should be restricted within "lines of communications" which do not render "the mutual performance of such duties insuperably difficult." The primary duties of the "synod" are the definition of faith and order, and the correction of difficult problems.<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that Owen's views were posthumously published after the promulgation of the Toleration Act. Owen died in 1683, but his book was not published till 1689.

Owen's views on connectionalism were seemingly inspired by three factors. First, experience had demonstrated the need of connectionalism among Congregational churches. Perhaps persecution focussed attention on the weakness of congregational exclusivism and isolation. At any rate, he defined his views within two years after the fiercest persecution commenced. Secondly, by the end of the century, Congregationalists were becoming more susceptible to Presbyterian views. During the Civil War-Commonwealth period, Independents rejected Presbyterian ecclesiology, but during the Restoration Congregationalists and Presbyterians were closely related in most areas. Owen seemingly borrowed both ideas and terminology from Presbyterians, e. g., the synod is composed of ministers. Thirdly, Baptists had demonstrated that connectionalism is possible among congregationally governed churches.

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3. Ibid., pp. 74, 119-132.

Owen was in advance of his society, for his views were not adopted in the seventeenth century by Congregationalists.

Unlike Congregationalists, Baptists successfully developed an effective system of connectionalism. Several conditions made this possible, and in some cases necessary. First, the Baptist emphasis on believers' baptism differentiated Baptists from Paedo-baptists, so they did not have to minimize the doctrine of the universal church. Secondly, the minority status of Baptists required them to receive strength, security, and fellowship from each other. Thirdly, the scattered condition of Baptists, even in the same local church, provided an experiential basis of connectionalism. Fourthly, the initial Baptist view of ministerial subordination to a local congregation prevented Baptists from waiting for the ministerial initiation of relations between churches. Fifthly, Baptists had varied theological and ecclesiological standards, so they were threatened by radical sectarianism; they had to defend themselves against such movements as Levellerism, Fifth Monarchism, and Quakerism.

All of these factors conditioned the development of Baptist connectionalism. However, connectionalism was not an effortless evolution under external conditions. It was an experimental attempt to maintain fellowship and to preserve denominational integrity. It developed into formal associationalism, but connectional relations were not initially de-

signed to serve formal purposes. In fact, the vitality of fellowship diminished in proportion to the growth of formalism.

This chapter is concerned with the rise and character of connectionalism among seventeenth century English Baptists. Associationalism was underwritten by a theory of the direct relationship between local churches and the universal church. There were several informal and experimental factors which contributed to the theory and institution of associationalism. This chapter deals specifically with the doctrinal basis, informal aspects, and formal development of connectionalism.

#### I. THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF CONNECTIONALISM

It is the Church which is involved in the doctrinal basis of connectionalism. The doctrine of the Church involves the idea of the universal church, the relation of the particular to the universal church, the theory of the disciplined church, and the concept of the "Body of Christ."

##### A. The Universal or Invisible Church

1. General Baptists. a. John Smyth. Seventeenth century English Baptists uniformly affirmed or implied the doctrine of the universal church.<sup>4</sup> From the beginning of the

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4. See E. A. Payne, The Fellowship of Believers, enlarged edition, pp. 20-37, for pertinent quotations.

Baptist movement, General Baptists affirmed the view. As a Separatist and later as a Baptist, John Smyth affirmed his belief in the universal as well as the particular church. In his Baptist thought, however, Smyth conceived of the universal and particular churches as co-extensive. He felt that all churches save his were apostate and, therefore, not true churches. His church was a restitution which contained all the visible saints of his day. Hetherington saw, what he conceived to be, the fallacy in Smyth's thought, charging that "there neuer was such a Church in the world, in one fellowship congregated and constituted by baptisme."<sup>5</sup> In 1611 Smyth's view, manifesting Mennonite influence and representing his last ecclesiological position, made little of outward matters in church-order, so it cannot be defended as a characteristically Baptist view.<sup>6</sup>

b. Thomas Helwys. Thomas Helwys was the heir to Smyth's Baptist ecclesiology. Helwys stated that the Church is one, though "it consisteth off divers particuler congregacions."<sup>7</sup> A close study of Helwys' confession reveals that he was primarily concerned with the visible, particular church.

c. Confessions. General Baptists neglected the idea of the universal church in their confessions after 1640. Except

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5. I. Hetherington, A Description of the Chvrch of Christ, 1610, p. 5.

6. W. J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. 78f.

7. Ibid., p. 89; see supra, pp. 56f.

for the confession of 1678 which, in many respects, contained a higher ecclesiology than General Baptists held, their confessions failed to specify the universal church. The confession of 1678 affirmed that there is "one holy catholic church." However, the article on the particular church was thrice as long as the article on the universal church. The article on the "Communion of Saints" dealt with "one mystical body of Christ," but its emphasis was on the earthly demonstration of fellowship through unity and peace, and liberality and charity among Christians.<sup>8</sup>

d. Thomas Grantham. General Baptists held the doctrine of the universal church even though they did not emphasize it in their confessions. Thomas Grantham, in refuting Roman Catholic and Anglican exclusivism on the doctrine, stated in 1663 that Baptists admit the doctrine of the Church "truly and universally taken."<sup>9</sup> In 1692 he claimed that the view was "joyfully and stedfastly believed" by Baptists. Grantham refused, out of Christian charity, to equate the universal church with any visible church,<sup>10</sup> and he also repudiated the claims of Roman Catholics and Anglicans to be the only mundane representatives of the universal church.

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8. Ibid., pp. 145f, 150f.

9. Thomas Grantham, The Baptist Against the Papist, 1663, p. 20.

10. S. A., A Modest Reply . . ., 1692, pp. 21-23. This may have been written by Grantham. It is bound with other pamphlets by Grantham. "S. A." may refer to "Seven Arguments" with which the work deals.

2. Particular Baptists. a. Confession of 1644. Particular Baptists were emphatic on the doctrine of the universal church. The confession of 1644 equated Christ's "spirituall Kingdome," in its visibility, with the Church, which all Christians must enter. The particular church was defined in several articles, but the isolated existence of each particular church was denied:

And although the particular Congregations be distinct and severall Bodies, everyone a compact and knit Citie in it selfe, yet are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all meanes convenient to have the counsell and help one of another in all needfull affaires of the Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their onely head.<sup>11</sup>

This article reflected the peculiar conditions related to the issuance of the confession:

We doe ... here subscribe it, some of each body in the name, and by the appointment of seven Congregations, who though wee be distinct in respect of our particular bodies, for conveniency sake, being as many as can well meete together in one place, yet are all one in Communion, holding Jesus Christ to be our head and Lord ...<sup>12</sup>

The signatories of this confession had recently been intimately associated in congregational life. It was natural, therefore, for them jointly to issue the confession. Such an article as the one cited above would hardly have been included if the confession had been issued privately by a single congregation. The article was a confessional statement of the

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11. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 186f.

12. Ibid., p. 173, from the explanatory epistle.

experience of the membership of the seven churches.

The Baptist conviction of congregational interdependence was intensified because of attacks from opponents. In 1645 Thomas Blake accused Christopher Blackwood and the confession of 1644 of inconsistency in affirming the doctrines of both the particular and universal churches.<sup>13</sup> In 1646 Thomas Bakewell found fault with seventeen of the fifty-two articles of the confession, though Featley was pressed in 1645 to find error in six.<sup>14</sup> One of Bakewell's chief objections was the theological simplicity of sectaries who could believe in both the universal and particular churches. Bakewell insisted that the universal must be differentiated from the particular, the invisible from the visible.<sup>15</sup>

Presbyterians uniformly attacked congregational government, arguing that it restricts the universal church to each local church. They seemingly attempted to force Baptists to surrender either the invisible or the visible church, and the polemic attests that they desired Baptists to deny the latter. Baptists, however, could not surrender either view without rejecting the Biblical idea or violating their own Christian experience. Consequently, their convictions were heightened

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13. Thomas Blake, Infants Baptism, 1645, p. 64. In The Storming of Antichrist, 1644, p. 6, Blackwood argued that the term "catholic" properly refers, not to an earthly ecclesiastical institution, but to the Body of Christ.

14. Daniel Featley, The Dippers dipt, 1645, pp. 220-227.

15. Thomas Bakewell, An Answer or Convitation Of Divers Errors . . . , 1646, p. 4.

and both doctrines were perpetuated among seventeenth century Particular Baptists.

b. General observations. After 1644 Particular Baptist confessions and writers commonly affirmed the doctrine of the universal church. They employed such terms as "universal," "invisible," and "Body."<sup>16</sup> "Body" figuratively described both the visible and invisible churches, but the other two terms were in contrast to "particular" and "visible." The individual writers who affirmed the view are too numerous to cite, but two observations must be registered.

First, the term "Body of Christ" was preferred by those who were not theologically trained or whose objectives had nothing to do with scholastic definition.<sup>17</sup> It would be improper to accuse them of theological naiveté; they merely preferred the Biblical expression to Calvinistic definitions. Some of these unlettered Baptists may have been incompetent to deal with Calvin's thought, but incompetence was not the main reason for the use of the term "Body." Baptists understood the Bible better than academic theology.

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16. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 210, 264f; Articles of the Christian Faith, 1740, art. 19, broadsheet.

17. Several sources illustrate this point: E. A. Payne, The Baptists of Berkshire, appendix I, pp. 147f (resolutions of Berkshire associational meeting, Oct. 8, 1652); William Kiffin, A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion, 1681, pp. 137f; C. E. Jewson, "St. Mary's, Norwich," BQ, X (1940-41), 230 ("Covenant and Articles" of the church); Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720, edited by E. B. Underhill, pp. 353f. (Hereafter this last work will be referred to as "church/ Records," as appropriate.)

Secondly, open communionists generally showed a great indebtedness to Congregationalists in emphasizing the particular church far more than the universal church.<sup>18</sup> William Mitchell affirmed that there is a "Catholic or universal Church," but he denied that it had any administrative power.<sup>19</sup> His view of the universal church was largely theoretical. Bunyan conceived of a universal church but, against closed communionists, he argued that there was no universal church on earth.<sup>20</sup> John Tombs, an earlier open communionist, refused to identify the particular with the universal, or the visible with the invisible, for the supra-mundane church is composed only of the elect.<sup>21</sup>

3. Conclusion. Baptists were able to affirm the doctrines of both the particular and universal churches because theoretically they defined the membership of these two entities identically. Baptists asserted that a visible congregation is composed of saints by calling, who have professed saving faith in Christ and are demonstrating their calling by holy living. Paedo-baptist churches, on the other hand, are composed of all citizens and their offspring (as in the

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18. T. G. Crippen, "Ordination, Primitive and Congregational," Cong. Trans., VII (October, 1918), 336-338, states that Congregationalists, in this period, categorically denied the "catholic" church, insisting on the particular only.

19. William Mitchell, Jachin & Boaz, 1707, in Trans., III (1912-13), 158.

20. John Bunyan, Peaceable Principles and True, in Complete Works (Gulliver's edition), pp. 879f.

21. John Tombs, Anti-paedobaptism, 1654, II, 229f.

case of National Churches), or of saints and their progeny (as in the case of Congregationalists). Evangelical Paedo-baptists could not claim that all of the members of their churches are in the universal church without implying that election is somehow tied to the font. They abhorred the idea of sacramental efficacy, on which Rome's claims to be the "catholic" church are partially based. Consequently, evangelical Paedo-baptists sharply differentiated the universal church from the particular. The universal church became a supra-mundane reality which is related, not to particular churches, but to election.

Baptists recognized, of course, that membership in a Baptist church does not automatically enroll one as a member of the universal church. They admitted that non-Christians had joined with them. They insisted, however, that their theory of particular church membership is valid. If only qualified persons, according to Baptist theory, enter particular churches, all of the members of particular churches are also members of the universal church.

Open communionists were ambiguous about the essential conditions of church membership. They accepted both latent and patent faith. Because of this ambiguity, they tended to differentiate the universal and particular churches, as Congregationalists did. Administratively, the particular church was emphasized; soteriologically, the universal church only has ultimate significance, they held.

B. Relation between Particular Churches and the Universal Church

1. Integral parts. Baptists held that particular churches are related to the universal church as integral parts are related to the whole.<sup>22</sup> None may be admitted into particular churches who is not first of the universal church through faith. Inasmuch as baptism is of the essence of the particular church, it is essential to the universal church.<sup>23</sup> Open communionists dissented from this view, affirming that faith only makes one a member of the universal church and that water baptism is circumstantial, not essential.

2. Thomas Grantham. Thomas Grantham, a General Baptist, declared that members of particular churches are members of the universal church, but he declined from defining the universal church as the sum total of particular churches.<sup>24</sup> Two factors influenced his refusal to make the membership of the total particular churches co-terminous with the membership of the universal. First, he held that dying children are not lost, so, therefore, they are in the universal church. Secondly, he refused bigotedly to affirm that no one may be a member of the universal church who is not first a member of a "baptized" church. He claimed that infant baptism makes Paedo-baptist churches "the unholyest (generally) of all the

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22. Richard Deane, A Copy of a Brief Treatise, 1693, sp., p. vii.

23. William Allen, Some Baptismal abuses Briefly Discovered, 1653, pp. 104f.

24. Thomas Grantham, The Querist Examined, 1679, pp. 50f.

Christian Churches in the world,"<sup>25</sup> but still he admitted that they may be Christian churches.

3. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists could not restrict the universal church to particular churches for other reasons. Their doctrine of election and their own experience with non-Baptists forbade such a limitation.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, Particular Baptists believed, as Bunyan indicated in his controversy with closed communionists,<sup>27</sup> that there is a close relation between the universal and particular churches.

4. Hypocrites. Particular Baptists more generally acknowledged the possibility of hypocrites (invisible, not visible) being members of the particular church than General Baptists. Particular Baptists held that the salvation of a person cannot be conclusively determined by outward appearance, as it is possible for the non-elect outwardly to manifest Christian characteristics. Open communionists developed the theory of invisible hypocrites further than closed communionists. Some open communionists, as Bunyan,<sup>28</sup> Mitchell, Crosley, etc., tended to individualize salvation and to mini-

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25. Ibid., p. 34.

26. William Kiffin, A Glimpse of Sions Glory, 1641, pp. 21-33; Kiffin, A Sober Discourse . . ., 1681, p. 1.

27. Bunyan, loc. cit.

28. For Bunyan's tendency to individualize salvation, see the following: A Confession of my Faith and a Reason for my Practice, in Complete Works (Gulliver's edition), pp. 838ff; Saved by Grace, in The Practical Works of John Bunyan (Am. Bapt. Pub. Soc. edition), VII, 9-85, passim; The Resurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment, Ibid., I, 346; The Saints Privileges and Profit, ibid., II, 91ff.

mize the visible institution. Their emphasis enabled them to relegate institutional membership to a position of unimportance in determining visible saintship. Orthodox faith and holy living, they held, are the only true measures of visible saintship. In practice, however, they held that membership in a gathered or congregational church is necessary.

#### C. The Disciplined Church

The theory of the disciplined church is consistent with the view that particular churches are visible manifestations of the invisible church which is composed only of saints. Discipline is designed to keep the particular church pure in membership. Though non-elect persons may get into a particular church, they are not to be forbore. The church is to admonish the member whose conduct casts suspicion on his election. If he does not hear the church and reform his life, the church excludes him as a non-Christian.

Each congregation has the power of the keys. Exclusion from the visible church confirms, not effects, non-membership in the invisible. It was uniformly held in theory that exclusion from the visible church is a consequence, not a cause, of non-membership in the invisible. The rank and file, however, did not always make this distinction. Some believed that exclusion from the invisible church is a result of ex-

clusion from the particular church,<sup>29</sup> so it was incumbent on one to maintain respectable membership in the visible church. It appears that the effectiveness of discipline was affected by the lack of making a distinction between visible and invisible exclusion.

Discipline was becoming ineffectual by 1700. The decline of discipline was accompanied, if not caused, by the ascendancy of deterministic election on the one hand and optimistic humanism on the other. Election (supralapsarian) was remote from earthly affairs; humanism weakened the force of divine laws. In either case, the visible church's power of the keys was impeded, for election made exclusion irrelevant and humanism made it unattractive.

#### D. The Body of Christ

The implications of the term "the Body of Christ" underwrote connectionalism. Both Congregationalists and Baptists held that the visible, particular church is a "mystical body." Congregationalists, however, found it difficult to harmonize infant baptism with the doctrine of the universal church, so they related the idea of the "mystical body" only to the disciplined, visible church. As related to the disciplined or visible church, the term implies the mutual care of bona fide

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29. The Records of a Church of Christ, meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-1687, edited by E. B. Underhill, p. 183. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Broadmead Records.")

members of a particular church. Infants and irresponsible children are not bona fide members, Congregationalists held, so the full privileges of church membership were withheld from them. Baptists, on the other hand, declined to distinguish between latent and patent faith, insisting that each member must have active faith. Therefore, the matter of mutual care was of primary importance to Baptists, for each member is a bona fide Christian.<sup>30</sup>

The Particular Baptists of London justified connectionalism on the basis of the term "Body" in 1644. It was the Particular Baptists of Berkshire, however, who most completely utilized the figure in connectional theory:

... in all things ... wherein particular members of one & ye same particular Church stand bound to hold communion each wth other ... there is the same relation betwixt particular Churches each towards other, as there is betwixt particular members of on Church for the Churches of Christ doe all make up but on body or Church in generall under Christ their head ... as particular members make up on particular Church under ye same head, Christ, and all the particular assemblies are but on mount Zyon ... in his body there is to be no schisme, which is then found in yt body when all the members have not the same care on over another ...<sup>31</sup>

This is an unusual case, for most Baptists did not personify the visible church in such fashion.

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30. The Somerset confession of 1656 speaks of the particular church as the "body of Christ" and explicates, in twenty-one divisions, the principle of mutual care; see McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-210.

31. Payne, *The Baptists of Berkshire*, appendix I, p. 147. "One" is usually spelled "on."

The principle of mutual care became the practical as well as the theoretical basis of connectionalism. The Stokesley church, which observed closed communion, in 1653 or 1654 reproved the open communion Hexham church for holding certain errors. Stokesley justified its action by appealing to the figure of the Body:

as distinct bodies (though but as members of one mystical body, whereof Christ is the head), we are so sensible of our duties, as being bound with the ligaments of faith and love, as that we cannot but either mourn, or rejoice, and join in any duty of love with you, our dearly beloved sister church.<sup>32</sup>

#### E. Conclusion

Baptists believed that each church which is composed of believers is related to the universal church. Inasmuch as this is true, it is both fitting and necessary for these churches to be related to each other. Churches assist each other by offering prayers in each other's behalf, by joining in common tasks, by assisting each other in visible need, by sharing the Gospel through epistolary edification or preaching, and by maintaining watchful care of each other lest one be taken in error and sin. In spite of their agreement on this doctrine of connectionalism, General and Particular Baptists were never formally associated. They differed over the foundations of a true visible church, so they could not associate.

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32. Hexham Records, pp. 253f.

## II. INFORMAL ASPECTS OF CONNECTIONALISM

The doctrines of the universal and particular churches provided the doctrinal basis of connectionalism. Informal fellowship helped to effect a system of associationalism which was consonant with the theory. Informal inter-relations preceded and, in a sense, produced formal inter-relations. The areas in which informal fellowship was the strongest were (1) scattered membership, (2) benevolence, (3) organization of new churches and ordination of officers, and (4) cooperative discipline.

### A. Scattered Membership

It was normal for a local church to have a scattered constituency and to be composed of several congregations. For convenience or protection, the membership was divided into several parts for worship. This pattern was more characteristic of "country" or "village" churches than of "city" congregations.

1. City churches. City churches were more fully integrated than country churches. London churches appear to have maintained a local solidarity from their beginnings or soon thereafter.<sup>33</sup> The Broadmead church, Bristol, met in one place

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33. E. B. Underhill, Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, pp. 359f, n. 3, thinks that the General Baptist churches of Tower Hill and Whites Alley in 1660 considered themselves as one congregation, but this is a weak conjecture based on the fact that their respective preachers exchanged preaching engagements. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Underhill, Tracts.")

until 1682 when fierce persecution forced them to meet clandestinely in four places.<sup>34</sup>

a. Explanation. There are three explanations of the more advanced integration of city churches. First, distance was not a hindrance. Secondly, Baptists were strongly concentrated in the city, especially in London, so a full-sized congregation could be easily gathered. Thirdly, leadership was more numerous in the city, thus permitting each congregation to secure a stable and local ministry.

b. Persecution. Records of city churches infrequently refer to several congregations within a church. During persecution, however, it was normal for a church to meet in several places for purposes of protection. Whenever these abnormal circumstances were relieved, the church reverted to united assembly.

c. London Dependency. During the late ninth and early tenth decades, five General Baptist churches in London were related to each other as "parts."<sup>35</sup> The component parts were Glass-house Yard (Goswell Street), Whites Alley (Moorfields), Goodmans Fields (Rupert Street), Duckhead or Dockhead (South-

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34. Broadmead Records, p. 448.

35. See E. A. Payne, "The Glasshouse Yard Minute Book, 1682-1740," BQ, VII (1934-35), 321f; Payne, The Fellowship of Believers, p. 26, states that there were seven churches, but he cites the journal article which says six. Payne states that these churches conceived of themselves as one congregation, a view which is incorrect. Because of Payne's reputation, the view has been widely accepted as accurate.

wark), and the "Parke" (Southwark). On November 5, 1691, they proposed to "sett vp" a meeting "at the golden balle end of Bowstreet by Hartstreet Covent Gardens,"<sup>36</sup> which became the sixth part on April 12, 1692. The new church received members from each of the other churches. Though Covent Gardens was the creation of the other five churches, it maintained independence of thought. On February 27, 1693, the five parts endeavored, unsuccessfully, either to persuade Covent Gardens of laying on of hands or else to reclaim their members who had helped in forming the new church.<sup>37</sup>

It is improper to think of these several congregations as one church for they did not so conceive themselves. They drew up rules for co-operative efforts in electing ministers, in settling difficult cases of discipline, and in undertaking limited mission work. However, each church maintained a separate existence. Each received members from other churches (including the other "parts"); each disciplined its own members, save in unusual cases; each maintained its own ministers, except in the case of messengers who were jointly supported; each recognized the other parts as independent, though not isolated, churches.

The Whites Alley minutes called these related congrega-

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36. The Church-Book of White Alley Meeting House, Book I, 69 (in manuscript). (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Whites Alley Records.")

37. Ibid., pp. 75, 89.

tions a "Dependancy." The component congregations were variously designated as "parts" (or "pts"), "congregations," and "churches."<sup>38</sup> The co-operative arrangement was not strong enough a few years later to prevent division over Caffynism. These churches viewed themselves, not as one church, but as a confederacy. Moreover, it is conceivable that the Dependancy was inaugurated to serve the purposes of self-conservation.

2. Country churches. The scattered church was characteristic of country Baptists. Only gradually were these churches integrated. The evidence which demonstrates the scattered condition of rural churches is too abundant to include in this thesis,<sup>39</sup> so only the evidence concerning Welsh churches and the Fenstanton church is herein produced.

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38. *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 69, 74, 75, 83, 88, 97, 118.

39. There are many other cases, e. g., (1) Porton: Arthur Tucker, "Porton Baptist Church, 1655-85," *Trans.*, I (1908-09), 56-61; (2) Dalwood: W. T. Whitley, "Loughwood and Honiton, 1650-1800," *Trans.*, IV (1914-15), 129-131; (3) Bedfordshire: The Church Book of the Bunyan Meeting 1650-1821, p. 20, and G. E. Page, "Some Baptist Churches on the Borders of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire," *BQ*, XI (1942-45), 227; (4) Kensworth: W. T. Whitley, "Edward Harrison of Petty France," *BQ*, VII (1934-35), 216-219, and James Stuart, Beeschen Grove Baptist Church, Watford, p. 7; (5) Plymouth: John Rippon, "History of the Baptist Church at Plymouth," *BAR*, III (1798-1801), 283f; (6) Ford: The Church Books of Ford or Cuddington and Amersham, edited by W. T. Whitley, pp. 1-44; and (7) Yorkshire and Lancashire: Frederick Overend, History of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Bacup, pp. 1-128, C. E. Shipley, general editor, The Baptists of Yorkshire, pp. 73-84, and David Glass, "Baptist Beginnings in the West Riding," *BQ*, III (1926-27), 178-183.

a. Wales. The scattered church was very conspicuous in Wales. The Ilston church, organized by John Myles, was composed of widely scattered congregations. In October, 1650, it was agreed that there should be a general communion service at Ilston one Sunday in three; on the other Sundays "breaking of bread" was to be observed at Llanddewi and Llanelly respectively. Whereas "spiritual welfare" inquiry services were held weekly in each place, church discipline was reserved for Ilston. In February, 1651, it was decided that converts may be baptized at Aberavon. However, admission to full membership in the church was restricted to Ilston. Two months later the Aberavon congregation was given permission to break bread locally, but it was stipulated that each member of the Aberavon congregation come to Ilston at least once a quarter and that the Aberavon congregation officially delegate at least two representatives to report each month to Ilston on the spiritual condition of each member. The churches at Abergavenny, Llanwenarth, and Llangibby had similar arrangements.<sup>40</sup>

The size and scattered state of Welsh churches led the Glass-house church, London, to advise them to divide:

Regarding the distance of your habitation, we advise, if God hath endowed you with gifts, whereby you may edify one another, and keep up the order and ministry of the church of Christ, you may

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40. Frank Lee, "The Ter-Centenary of Ilston, 1649-1949," BQ, XIII (1949-50), 149f.

divide into more particular congregations, but with mutual consent ...<sup>41</sup>

Additional churches were formed, but the scattered church prevailed in Wales. In 1690 six churches, listed as ten or eleven congregations, formed the Welsh Association. One of these churches, Abergavenny, met in three places, and its members were scattered as widely as twenty miles. In 1693 the Pembrokeshire church had one hundred and thirteen members, of whom fifty-nine were in Pembrokeshire, thirty-five in Carmarthenshire, and nineteen in Cardiganshire. Eleven of its members were in the preaching ministry.<sup>42</sup>

b. Fenstanton church. The Fenstanton church, Huntingdonshire, was composed of residents in several small villages early in the 1650's. Business meetings were normally held alternately at "Fenystanton" and Caxton, but they were occasionally held at Papworth Everard and Eltisley. Caxton and Fenstanton were about seven or eight miles apart,<sup>43</sup> so the farthest villages were considerably removed from each other.

Prior to 1651 there were only thirteen members, excluding Henry Dennis whose name appears at the top of the list without number. Twenty-six joined in 1651, eighty-six in 1652, twenty-four in 1653, eight in 1654, ten in 1655, twelve in 1656. The next recorded admissions occurred after 1689:

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41. Joshua Thomas, A History of the Baptist Association in Wales, in BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 7, quoted.

42. Ibid., pp. 22, 25.

43. Fenstanton Records, p. 1, n. 1.

one in 1690, four in 1691, and one in 1692. The great ingathering was between 1651 and 1654. However, many of those admitted in this period were soon excluded for holding Quaker views.

Prior to 1651 most of the members resided in Caxton, Fenstanton, Hemingfordgray, and Eltisley. In 1652 several other villages were represented: Boxworth, Barington, Mildrid, Papworth Everard, St. Ives, Hadnam, Yelling, Warboys, Hawson, Gamlingay, Wisbich, Chatteriss, Burne, Cone, Sandy, Sutton, etc. It appears that small enclaves which had conventicled for worship in these villages joined Fenstanton en masse. In 1652 twelve from Chatteriss and five from Sutton joined at the same time. Quakers were more disruptive in outer villages than in the central towns. Several members residing in the same village were frequently excluded at the same time for Quakerism.

In 1676 the membership was largely centered in six centers: twenty-six in Fenstanton, thirteen in Gormanchester, nine each in Hemingford Abbott and Hemingford Gray, eight in St. Ives, and four in Holliwell.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, the records are silent about the reasons for this concentration. Nevertheless, it seems safe to conjecture that Quakerism and persecution were the forces which divorced remote members from the church. Quakerism took its toll during the sixth decade,

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44. Ibid., pp. 251-256.

and persecution decimated the churches during the next two decades. In the Fenstanton church, conventicles were held in three or four of the places mentioned above. Those who could not attend one of these conventicles were lost to the church.

3. Principle of division and amalgamation. According to the theory of congregational government and the disciplined church, a local church should consist of no more members than may ordinarily convene at one time in one place. Presbyterians held that all congregations or local churches in a city compose but one church, which is governed by a single Presbytery.<sup>45</sup> Both Independents and Baptists objected to this view, holding that each local congregation has plenary power and repudiating the theory of a body of ruling elders which is superior in authority to the local church.

Hanserd Knollys, in his interpretation of the "seven churches" of the Revelation, reflected the theory and practice of Particular Baptists, especially of the city:

Although the Church in any City, at its beginning and first Planting of it, was but one Congregation, and assembled themselves together in one place ..., yet when the number of the Disciples was multiplied ... and the Multitudes ... were added ... then the Church was necessitated, for the edification of the Multitude, and great number of Members thereof, to

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45. John Bastwick, The Utter Routting, 1646, "Anti-loguie." Bastwick also stated the same view in Independency not Gods Ordinance, but he was answered by Hanserd Knollys, A Moderate Answer ..., 1645. The Utter Routting purports to be a refutation of Knollys' view of congregational government.

assemble themselves together in particular Congregations, and become distinct Companies ... and each Company or Congregation had their Elders and Deacons ...<sup>46</sup>

Knollys purported to be explicating the practice of New Testament churches, but the contemporary theory of congregational government facilitated his exposition.

The principle of division had a converse side: small and incompetent churches should unite. The General Assembly of Particular Baptists advised small, laboring churches which lacked an adequate ministry to amalgamate when distance permitted. The principle of division and amalgamation was variously applied. In London large churches divided into two or more congregations or churches. The confession of 1644 stated that the seven churches were distinct bodies "for conveniency sake, being as many as can well meete together in one place." In Wales large churches divided. William Mitchell advocated, in Northern England, the formation of one church in one place, composed of all "Saints living in one City, or Town, or within such distances as they may conveniently assemble for divine Worship."<sup>47</sup> Briefly stated, the principle of division and amalgamation was: distance permitting and ministerial needs demanding, small churches should unite; distance hindering and ministerial provisions permitting, large churches should divide.

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46. Hanserd Knollys, An Exposition of the whole Book of the Revelation, 1689, p. 9.

47. Mitchill, op. cit., p. 172.

4. Influence of provincialism. Provincialism retarded the application of the principle of particular church division. Country churches of scattered membership and congregations persisted throughout the century. By the end of the century, however, the dominant tendency in most rural areas was toward the division of large churches. Among other factors (such as lack of ministers and ministerial elevation), provincialism contributed to the delay of division of large churches in rural areas. It is evident that the areas in which division was retarded also possessed the more pronounced provincialism. Welsh churches characteristically maintained large churches. The other area in which large churches were found about 1700 was the West Riding section of Lancashire and Yorkshire, where the provincialism of the Pennines was strong.

5. Factors contributing to the division of scattered churches. Several factors contributed to the inevitable breakdown of the system of scattered churches. First, the pastoral office became unitary in number and professional in character. This limited lay preaching and led to a decrease in the number of preaching places due to the spatial limitations on a preacher's ministry. It is noteworthy that churches in both Wales and Northern England possessed a number of capable preachers who served the multiple congregations. In the rest of England, however, most churches (except large city churches) possessed only one minister. Secondly, the increase of

membership transferrals tended to localize a church within the bounds of convenient transport. Thirdly, distance was always a hindrance to effective and gratifying fellowship. It is probable that the growing religious indifference at the end of the century psychologically magnified the distances which enthusiasm had formerly telescoped. Fourthly, the use of church buildings established a center of worship, thus relieving the necessity of services of a conventicular nature. Ministerial elevation and membership transferrals have already been treated,<sup>48</sup> so it is presently necessary to treat only distance and church buildings.

6. Distance. A disciplined church was difficultly maintained when members were scattered. Neither related groups (as in villages) nor isolated, scattered individuals could be easily controlled when they were geographically separated from the main body. During the early stage of Baptist growth distance was not objectionable, due to the effect of enthusiasm. In time, however, distance became a hindrance to fellowship.

a. Civil War-Commonwealth period. There were few who objected to distance during the Civil War-Commonwealth period, but there were some. Typical of these objections are cases in Norfolk and Porton. Norfolk dissenters went to Holland during the Laudian persecution. There they formed a Separ-

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48. Supra, pp. 117-149, 162-174.

tist church and lived in close proximity to each other. Early in the 1640's, they returned to England, settling in Yarmouth, Norwich, and the countryside. They formed an Independent church in September, 1643. Less than a year later, on June 10, 1644, a group in Norwich (including persons who later formed a Baptist church), who objected to travelling twenty miles for church fellowship, organized into a separate church with the consent of the parent Yarmouth church. The fellowship of the Yarmouth church continued to be burdensome and inconvenient, for there were many remote country members for whom Yarmouth residents had to provide accommodations when they came to church services.<sup>49</sup> The Norwich church increased from nine brethren and several sisters to at least one hundred persons within a year.<sup>50</sup> The time which had formerly been spent in travel was spent in evangelism among Norwichers.

In 1656 the Porton church excluded Lawrence Tippitt for refusing "to sit down" with Porton. Tippitt attempted to justify his position by "destructive principles--viz That it is sin for Christians to make it their practice to go so far to their Church Meetings as we do ..."<sup>51</sup>

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49. C. B. Jewson, "Transport and the Churches," BQ, X (1940-41), 40.

50. C. B. Jewson, "St. Mary's, Norwich," BQ, X (1940-41), 171f.

51. Arthur Tucker, "Salisbury and Tiverton about 1630," Trans., III (1912-13), 2, quoted.

b. Persecution. During the persecution of the Restoration, large and widely scattered churches divided into small conventicles. These conventicles remained parts of the parent church, even though it might be supposed that many new churches were formed. Attendance declined during persecution, and, instances of heroism notwithstanding, churches suffered disorganization from persecution of great duration. It seems that churches failed to keep in touch with their members during persecution; at any rate, churches rarely kept written records which would endanger the membership if they should fall into unfriendly hands. Churches also suffered in their leadership, against whom the most repressive measures were directed. Because of numerical decline, disorganization, delinquency in maintaining contacts, and a deficiency of ministers, new churches could not be formed.

c. Toleration. After 1689 churches became more localized, and new churches were formed out of established ones. It is highly conceivable that conventicling during persecution was a factor in the developing view that widely scattered churches should divide. Members had been accustomed to meeting in small local groups to escape persecution, getting out of the habit of travelling great distances to regular services. Consequently, when toleration came they desired to form churches which were more convenient to their residences. Nevertheless, competent leadership was consid-

ered essential to churches, so there was an attempt to implement the advice of the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689 which called for the amalgamation of churches "that live near together, and consist of small numbers, and are not able to maintain their own ministry."<sup>52</sup> A few years later the Assembly advised the dividing of large churches when distance prevented the maintenance of integrated church life. It is apparent that distance increasingly became a disadvantage which could be overcome only by the localization of churches.

Several churches were organized between 1689 and 1715 in accordance with the last advice of the Assembly and the prevailing sentiment of the times. Part-time services and remote fellowship were not gratifying. Baptists did not appear in the West Riding until the 1690's, but within a generation the initial enthusiasm had given way to interest in local matters. Prior to 1715 Yorkshire Baptists had been supplied by the Rossendale church of Lancashire,

so far as their circumstances would allow of, or we reasonably expect, considering their distance from us--and yet it came far short of what our necessity required.<sup>53</sup>

Due to the deficiency of its church life, the Yorkshire group

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52. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and Ministering Brethren, of the Baptized Churches, met together in London from Sep. 3-12, 1689, from Divers Parts of England and Wales ...," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 51. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "The Narrative ...")

53. Glass, op. cit., p. 180, quoted.

secured a pastor in August, 1715, and became a distinct church.

d. Conclusion. Distance was not considered a major hindrance so long as the churches were aggressively evangelistic. The sense of unity and strength which came from the relation of scattered congregations in one church encouraged successful evangelism. Moreover, each small church was an enlisting agency for the church. When religious interest abated and churches became more localized, distance caused individuals whose affections were lukewarm to absent themselves and to withhold their support. It became necessary for churches to divide for "convenience." In some respects, local fellowship was improved by such divisions, but the connectional aspect of fellowship suffered. Religious concerns became local, thereby producing religious self-centeredness.

7. Church buildings. a. Civil War-Commonwealth and Restoration. During the Civil War-Commonwealth and Restoration periods, there were few stable church buildings. Of course, there were some rather large assembly places before 1660,<sup>54</sup> but they were few. After the Restoration of Charles II, private houses were the common meeting-places for Baptists. Even during the Restoration, however, there were some large meeting-places, but they were unusual. In 1667 Broadmead

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54. See W. T. Whitley, "Baptist Meetings in the City of London," Trans., V (1916-17), 74-82, for the brief histories of some of these churches.

secured the second floor of "brother Ellis'" warehouse which was made very commodious. In 1671 Broadmead obtained "the meeting-house at the lower end of Broadmead," which was formerly used by the Quakers. It was a house with "four great rooms made into one square room," measuring forty-eight by forty-five feet. When persecution hit in 1682, Broadmead was forced to meet in smaller groups, conventicling in a cave, under trees, in the fields, and in the woods. On one occasion, when authorities were closing in on the conventiclers, "The bushes were of great service." Meetings diminished in frequency during the persecution, and on March 4, 1684, Broadmead decided to hold even smaller "circular meetings" due to the danger from informers and the discomfort of extremely cold weather.<sup>55</sup>

Several London churches met in different places in 1682, perhaps in conventicular fashion. Particular Baptists seemingly divided into conventicles more readily than General Baptists. Only three General Baptist churches, each with six hundred or more members (and auditors), were reported to meet in two or more places. Most of the Particular Baptist churches, none of whom numbered over six hundred members (and auditors), met in several places.<sup>56</sup> In 1682 persecution was just

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55. Broadmead Records, pp. 95, 159, 214, 448, 452, 477, 482.

56. W. T. Whitley, "London Churches in 1682," BQ, I (1922-23), 82-87; cf. Ernest F. Kevan, London's Oldest Baptist Church, pp. 44f.

getting underway, so conventicling perhaps became more common as persecution intensified. The General Baptist propensity toward large meetings was perhaps a factor in their decline, for they could not adjust to the exigent circumstances which persecution presented.

b. Toleration. Church construction became conspicuous after the promulgation of the Toleration Act. The Wapping church, London, under the ministry of Hercules Collins, on September 29, 1687, six months after James II had become treacherously solicitous of Nonconformists, projected a remodeling program in order to have "Gallerys & a with drawinge roome." Wapping requested friends to contribute to the building fund. In February, 1689, a few months before the promulgation of the Toleration Act but after it had become apparent that the new monarchs would be tolerant, the church leased a lot of ground sixty by one hundred and twenty-nine feet for expansion purposes.<sup>57</sup>

A meeting-house was built in Birmingham immediately after the Act was issued.<sup>58</sup> Whites Alley, London, repaired its meeting-house in 1690, bought property to the west of the church building in 1691, and in 1698 built a new room.<sup>59</sup> In 1692 the Duckhead church, Southwark, built a meeting-house,

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57. Kevan, op. cit., pp. 47f.

58. A. S. Langley, Birmingham Baptists Past and Present, p. 20.

59. Whites Alley Records, I, 55, 62, 170.

and Whites Alley contributed to its fund.<sup>60</sup> During the same year meeting-houses were built by Nonconformists in Bacup, Yorkshire,<sup>61</sup> and by Baptists in Lyme, Dorset.<sup>62</sup> By 1693 a meeting-place had been built in Wantage.<sup>63</sup> By 1695 the church at Llanwenarth, Wales, had built a place of worship.<sup>64</sup> The foregoing cases illustrate the extensiveness of church construction after toleration was granted.

c. Good effects of church buildings. The construction of meeting-houses had some good effects on church life. First, members had a commodious, comfortable, and fixed place of worship. Secondly, churches sometimes aided each other in financing construction, thereby expressing their sense of mutual dependence. Thirdly, church buildings were a factor in the growing respectability of Baptists.

d. Ill effects. (1) Paralyzing indebtedness. There were certain ill effects of extensive church construction. First, churches were incapacitated by the burden of debt. They were unable to meet their other financial demands. The small, struggling church at Lyme took advantage of toleration to build a meeting-house to serve an evangelistic objective; there was in Lyme "an auditory both hopeful and encouraging."

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60. Ibid., p. 78.

61. Shipley, op. cit., p. 78.

62. F. E. Lewis, "Broadmead Records," BQ, X (1940-41), 222f.

63. Op. cit., pp. 223f.

64. Thomas, op. cit., p. 25.

However, the few members were unable to bear the expense, so in 1693 Lyme appealed to Broadmead for aid. At this time Broadmead did not have a building debt. Moreover, apparently Broadmead had generously helped other churches in procuring meeting-places, for Lyme stated that "many have found [Broadmead] redy to incourage ye work of ye Lord."<sup>65</sup>

In 1693 the Wantage church appealed for aid from Broadmead, and probably from other churches also. The house of a Wantage member had burned, and he was in need. The populace of Wantage had withheld charity from him because he was a sectary, and the church was unable to provide adequate aid, because

we have been concerned lately to buy a Meeting House and a Burying place which hath cost us three hundred pounds and upwards and things lie hard upon us, otherwise our charity had been more fully extended to him.<sup>66</sup>

In 1698 the General Association of General Baptists was forced to assume the forty pounds indebtedness of the Norwich church. Poor judgment had apparently been exercised in the procurement of a meeting-place in Norwich. In 1695 the London Dependency subscribed three and a half pounds for the support of a minister in Norwich, but the group which could not provide a minister had built a meeting-place within three years. The Association assumed the indebtedness, for the

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65. Lewis, op. cit., p. 223.

66. Loc. cit.

failure of the Norwich church to retire the debt "is likely to be very prejudicial to ye Interest of Christ there."<sup>67</sup>

(2) Limitation of vision. Monies which had been shared in evangelism and benevolence were appropriated for local purposes. The results were the limitation of vision and restriction of responsibility. The consensus of the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689 was that

those persons that will not communicate to the necessary expences of the church whereof they are members ... should be duly admonished; and if no reformation appears, the church ought to withdraw from them.<sup>68</sup>

In spite of the financial incapacity of churches, the Assembly projected a system of evangelism, visitation, education, and local church strengthening. The "necessary expences" of a church included the construction and maintenance of a meeting-house, ministerial support, "Kings Taxes & Parish Duty,"<sup>69</sup> benevolence, etc.

In 1687 Whites Alley divided its membership into quarters (North, East, South, and West), and brethren were appointed to visit each member regularly in order to facilitate the mutual care of the membership. On April 24, 1693, the visitors were charged with an additional responsibility, viz.,

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67. Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, With Kindred Records, edited by W. T. Whitley, I, 60. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "MGA.") Cf. Whites Alley Records, I, 125, for some information on the Norwich church.

68. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative ...," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 52.

69. Whites Alley Records, I, 176.

collecting subscriptions from the members.<sup>70</sup> In a period of six years, the overhead expenses of Whites Alley had increased, and it became necessary to solicit for finances. It is conceivable that the growing religious indifference was assisted by the increased solicitation of monies.

(3) Localization and division of churches. Fixed places of worship contributed to the tendency to localize churches. The ministry of a church was rotated as long as its services were held in small congregations. When the meeting-place became fixed, the ministry became stabilized also. Remote congregations which had previously been served as to preaching were then required to go to the meeting-house. They were not accustomed to travelling great distances for worship, so they desired to "sit down" as separate churches. Coventry Baptists were a part of a church which built a church-house at Arnesby in 1702. For eight years the Coventry group continued to attend services at Arnesby, but the arrangement was unsatisfactory. Because of inconvenience in travelling to Arnesby, the Coventry group constituted itself as a separate church in 1710 and built its own meeting-house.<sup>71</sup> In Yorkshire and Lancashire, the division of the widely scattered church radiating from Rossendale was accompanied by the construction of

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70. Ibid., pp. 18, 89.

71. Irene Morris, Three Hundred Years of Baptist Life in Coventry, p. 10.

several church-houses which became the centers of separate churches: Rodhill End in 1703, Cloughfold in 1705, Rawdon in 1712.<sup>72</sup>

Local fellowship and worship were certainly improved by meeting-places, but extra-local fellowship was impaired. Previously the scattered congregations had been vitally related as parts of the same church. After constituting themselves as distinct churches, their church services were localized. Their close ties with sister congregations tended to become limited to formal associationalism. Church walls became obstructions to outside fellowship.

8. Conclusion. A factor in the growing pre-occupation with local religious life was the breakdown of scattered congregations and the construction of meeting-places. Growing financial necessities focussed attention on the raising of needed monies. The burden of debt and overhead expenses paralyzed both mutual care and mission interest. The stability of religious services localized fellowship and broke the sense of unity among geographically separated Baptists. It is notable that local concernments and non-missionism accompanied each other.

#### B. Benevolence

The disciplined church characteristically relieved the

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72. Shipley, op. cit., p. 83.

necessities of its membership. The theory of mutual care required members to assist each other as need demands. This theory was extended to extra-local needs in the "household of faith." Both General and Particular Baptists held the view that sister churches should assist in the relief of each other's needs when the home church was unable to meet them. The practice of extra-local benevolence was more extensive during the 1650's than at the end of the century. The growing concern in local affairs inevitably affected extra-local benevolence.

1. Confessional statements. a. General Baptists. Confessions of faith uniformly affirmed that Christians are under obligation to relieve each other's needs. In all cases this rule applied to the local church, but in many cases it applied to inter-church relations. It was on the basis of mutual care that Helwys insisted that a church should consist of no more than may know each other; one cannot assist fellow members whom he does not know, neither can he be helped by those who do not know him.<sup>73</sup>

The fullest General Baptist confessional definition of mutual care came from the thirty Midland congregations in 1651. They held that those who "through sickness or weakness cannot labour," especially those of "the household of Faith," must be supplied "with food and rayment." If a home church

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73. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 90.

cannot relieve its needy members, it may officially request aid from sister churches. However, it was recognized that indiscriminate benevolence may cause some members to neglect their callings, thus falling "into hunger and nakedness." An idle person should be admonished and, if reformation is not forthcoming, he must be excluded "as one that hath denyed the faith."<sup>74</sup>

The Standard Confession of 1660 advocated the relief of necessities. The emphasis, however, was on "free and voluntary contribution, (and not of necessity, or by the constraint of power of the Magistrate)."<sup>75</sup> This article protested against parish benevolence which was supported by compulsory tithes. By making the local church the executor of benevolence, General Baptists cut the ground from under tithe-supported benevolence or parish charity.

The confession of 1678 advocated the relief of the needs of saints "according to our ability in freedom, liberality, and charity." A brother's needs determines the degree of benevolence. Because Baptists were accused of communalism, the confession specifically stated that "no equality, or property, be pleaded for." The reason for mutual aid was defined as follows: "if one member suffer, all are pained with it."<sup>76</sup>

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74. Ibid., pp. 105-107.

75. Ibid., pp. 117f.

76. Ibid., pp. 150f.

b. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptist confessions were less specific about benevolence than General Baptist confessions. However, mutual care was always implied and occasionally stated in Particular Baptist confessions. The confession of 1644 was silent on benevolence, but it was implied in the article on the inter-dependence of churches: churches are to "help one another in all needfull affaires of the Church, as members of one body ..."<sup>77</sup> The silence of the confession of 1644 was corrected by the revision of 1646 which specifically enjoined mutual care, "that the name of Jesus ... Christ may not be blasphemed through the necessity of any in the church." Mutual care may have been intentionally omitted in the 1644 edition because of the charge of communalism; the edition of 1646 circumvented this by expressly repudiating communalism.<sup>78</sup>

The Somerset confession of 1656 differentiated the ways in which mutual care is expressed. First, one assists mutual care by industry when he is able, for idleness violates the purpose of mutual care. Secondly, a church fulfills the demands of mutual care by relieving the needs of one who, in spite of industry, is unable to meet his needs. Extra-local benevolence is a duty incumbent on churches as well as local benevolence. It is the obligation of churches "to communicate each to other, in things spiritual, and things tempo-

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77. Ibid., pp. 186f.

78. E. B. Underhill, Confessions of Faith, p. 40.

ral," as occasion demands.<sup>79</sup>

The confession of 1677 enjoined benevolence,

especially to be exercised by them, in the relations wherein they stand, whether in families, or Churches, yet as God offereth opportunity is to be extended to all the household of faith. . . . nevertheless their communion . . . doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety, which each man hath in his goods and possessions.<sup>80</sup>

William Mitchell repeated this article<sup>81</sup> which Particular Baptists had, with little change, appropriated from the Westminster Confession. The confession of 1704 repudiated communalism and, as an after-thought, approved alms-giving according to one's ability.<sup>82</sup>

c. Observations. These confessional statements provide the basis for two interesting observations. First, Particular Baptists consistently rejected communalism, in self-defense against the charges that they permitted the same communistic excesses of the Münsterites and Familists. Secondly, General Baptists were more positive and specific in defining benevolence. Apparently this arose out of the necessity created by their differences from other Christians in both faith and order. General Baptists more rigidly regulated the lives of their members. Consequently, for purposes of conservation, it was incumbent on General Baptist churches

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79. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 209f.

80. Ibid., pp. 268f.

81. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 159.

82. \_\_\_\_\_, Articles of the Christian Faith, 1704, art. 35, broadsheet.

to exercise widespread benevolence. Particular Baptists had a stricter view of the local church, and their economic level, it appears, was higher than that of General Baptists. Moreover, Particular Baptists were more closely related to Calvinists. Therefore, theoretically Particular Baptists were more obligated and economically more able to care for their poor locally. Their closeness to Calvinists placed Particular Baptists in a better position to receive, on the local level, aid from Calvinists and other citizens. Particular Baptists were not required to define the theory of extra-local benevolence as fully as General Baptists defined it.

2. Abuse of extra-local benevolence. The practice of benevolence was initially exercised in a haphazard manner. Consequently, the purpose of benevolence was abused. By 1652 there were, according to the experience of the Fenstanton church, "many persons who have made a trade of going from place to place to seek relief."<sup>83</sup> Because of the personal request of a Londoner in September, 1652, Fenstanton drew up rules for handling cases of extra-local benevolence. The requesting party must appear before the church, or deacons, and provide conclusive information about his need and worthiness. Expenditures were prohibited, unless the church specifically approved them. Fenstanton defined three conditions which must be met before a person qualified for aid. First, all

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83. Fenstanton Records, p. 17.

lawful means of subsistence must be exhausted before one requests aid. Secondly, assistance must be secured from relatives if possible, or from the local church. Thirdly, if the local church cannot meet the need it may recommend a needy person to a sister church or churches; however, the church should officially delegate someone to present the request to the sister church, rather than permit the needy person to itinerate in his own interest.<sup>84</sup>

The General Assembly of General Baptists in London in September, 1656, attempted to police benevolence. It was recognized that "many have deceivably gone up and downe Re-quiring Contributions in their own behalfe." Local congregations were exhorted to take care that their members "do not leave their proper Callings & vndertake such dealins as far exceeds their abillity to mannage," thereby intensifying their needs. It was implied that industry and thrift are preventive measures against poverty and the need for charity. Nevertheless, it was recognized that some cases are worthy of assistance, and the following method was recommended:

... when any Member of a Congregation shall be in want Judged by them to be an object of pittty & themselves not able without some great & more than ordinary disinableing of them selves to communicate to his want that they then shall send a sufficient testimony thereof to ye next Congregation that is to say by a Messenger appointed for that purpose that is known to the next Congregation except there may be a letter genl subscribed with

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84. Loc. cit.

such hands wch may be certainly known to that congregation and so that Congregation to ye next and so to as many as that Congregation to whom ye pson in want belongs vnto shal think fitt in which time ye pson in want may follow his occasions and not bring himself in greater extremity by his going up and down neglecting his calling.<sup>85</sup>

The abuse of extra-local benevolence was more extensive among General Baptists than among Particular Baptists. Inasmuch as the latter practiced extra-local benevolence less frequently, it was less susceptible to abuse. Nevertheless, Particular Baptists were also plagued with those who took advantage of charity. The Bedford church excommunicated Richard Deane in 1671 for going "in the name of the Church, and yet wholly without their knowledge or consent to beg the charity of ye good people of St. Neets."<sup>86</sup>

3. Decline of General Baptist practice. After the early stages of expansion, there was a tendency for a local church to become less responsive to external needs. The abuse of charity stimulated this by necessitating the inauguration of a policy of effective investigation of all requests. Also, churches became concerned with local affairs, thereby being disinclined to aid extra-local Baptists.

a. Fenstanton. The Fenstanton church brought a widow with children from Royston to Fenstanton and maintained her for a short time in 1653. She became not only a financial

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85. MGA, I, 8.

86. Bunyan Meeting Records, p. 45.

burden, but also an undesirable member of the community. Fenstanton continued to assume responsibility for her welfare, but Royston and Melbourne were encouraged to share in her maintenance. In November, 1654, fire destroyed several rented houses of a Fenstanton member. The landlord demanded payment, so the church came to his aid. Fenstanton decided to request aid from General Baptist churches rather than to solicit from the local citizenry. In December a general meeting of seven churches was held at Cambridge to discuss means of aiding the Fenstanton member. Each church either pledged or was apportioned a certain amount payable within a month. The churches preferred assuming the burden among themselves above undergoing the "many inconveniences that follow the sending a great way for contributions." An elder of the Thaxfield church refused to collect the amount apportioned to his church, claiming that benevolence should extend no further than food and clothing. He protested against the disorderliness of the general meeting's subscription in the name of the churches. The Thaxfield church was reported to be selfish, for, though "all in that place are rich, ... it is their opinion that every church ought to keep their own poor."

Contrary to expectation, Fenstanton was stingy in aiding others. In December, 1655, and November, 1657, the requests of Twyford (Leicestershire) and Westby (Lincolnshire) respectively were rejected because they were "disorderly," *i. e.*, they did not conform to the agreed procedure of extra-local

requests. In April, 1658, the church at Dullingham in Cambridgeshire made a request, which some of the members of Fenstanton scrupled to honor. The request could not be ignored, however, for Dullingham had previously responded to a similar request from Fenstanton, and Dullingham propitiously reminded Fenstanton of the fact.<sup>87</sup>

b. Restriction of extra-local aid. The tendency to restrict benevolence to local members was marked. Extra-local laymen were rarely aided. It was not uncommon for ministers to receive aid from outsiders, but in most of these cases such aid should not be viewed as extra-local benevolence, but as ministerial aid. There were some instances of extra-local aid, of course, but they were few and by the end of the century they were scarce. The Amersham church relieved a Wickham member who had suffered from a fire in 1676.<sup>88</sup> In 1688 the Ford church sent aid to "Northon Shire" for an unspecified cause; the gift of one shilling<sup>89</sup> was given in a ritualistic manner and was apparently a token only.

c. Whites Alley. The Whites Alley church changed policies on extra-local aid. In August, 1687, the church agreed that people who were not of "our Congregation" should not be

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87. Fenstanton Records, pp. 82f, 86, 103-105, 108, 167f, 223.

88. The Church Books of Ford or Cuddington and Amersham, edited by W. T. Whitley, p. 204. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Church Records," as appropriate.)

89. Ford Records, p. 3.

aided until "wee are in a Better Capacity to Do it." Nevertheless, Whites Alley continued to give aid to numerous Londoners, particularly to widows and sufferers from fire, who were members of churches in the Dependency. In June, 1696, Whites Alley was the sole member of the Dependency to separate from the General Assembly over Caffynism. In October, 1696, Whites Alley agreed "that this Congregation allow no weekly pension to ye poor of any other congregation." This withdrawal of aid was apparently caused by the tense feelings which developed over the separation and was intended as a retaliatory measure. In April, 1700, Whites Alley delegated two members to attend the General Assembly which was vainly trying to heal the breach caused by the separation. Apparently Whites Alley was requested by the Assembly to aid the poor of another church, but Whites Alley stubbornly refused to aid the "Cropsegatte poore be fore they are Certyfied it is there Right see to doe."<sup>90</sup>

4. Particular Baptist practice. Extra-local benevolence was less extensive among Particular Baptists. Nevertheless, there were some cases, especially in rural areas. The Dalwood church in West Anglia requested aid for Richard Gill from a dozen churches in 1656.<sup>91</sup> The churches in this area were bound together by Collier's superintendency; in this

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<sup>90</sup>. Whites Alley Records, I, 18, 24, 26, 48, 127, 148; II, 9.

<sup>91</sup>. Whitley, "Loughwood and Honiton, 1650-1800," Trans., IV (1914-15), 133.

instance of extra-local benevolence there is similarity to General Baptist practice. The Hexham, Broadmead, and Bedford churches did not commonly register cases of extra-local aid in their minutes. However, the fact that Richard Deane fraudulently, and with some success, solicited extra-local aid, is proof that inter-church benevolence was practiced.

5. Decline of local benevolence. The decline in extra-local aid was accompanied by decline in local benevolence. In 1684 Broadmead gave only one shilling to a needy member, whereas the parish church gave her two shillings. In July, 1686, the Broadmead deacons complained that the poor members were being neglected; members "were desired" to contribute.<sup>92</sup> In this case, the equalizing effect of persecution seems to have been the cause of neglect. In June, 1693, only two months after a method of systematic solicitation was inaugurated, Whites Alley instructed the pastor "to stir up ye Congregation every fortnight to help ye poor."<sup>93</sup>

6. Conclusion. The extensive extra-local benevolence of the mid-century contributed to connectionalism, for both donor and recipient were closely related through gifts. The strongest relations through benevolence were between contiguous churches. Indiscriminate benevolence necessitated connectional agreements to prevent fraud.

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92. Broadmead Records, pp. 479, 494.

93. Whites Alley Records, I, 95.

Misfortune was so widespread during the Restoration that extra-local aid was arrested, for a church had difficulty in supplying its own needs during persecution. After 1689 churches became pre-occupied with church construction and ministerial maintenance. A result was the neglect of benevolence, both local and extra-local. Tithes and parochial dues remained in force, for they were not suspended by the Toleration Act.<sup>94</sup> Nonconformists had to contribute to parish alms, so they declined to underwrite membership needs which could be met by parochial charity.

Whereas benevolence had once been a free and vital indication of the healthy relationship between Baptist churches, the practice declined to a token status, being ritualistically perpetuated in many cases. Token benevolence was intended to demonstrate the basic kinship of Baptists. Unfortunately, this kinship was too unreal, for too few churches sacrificed in order to help sister churches.

### C. Constitution of Churches and Ordination of Officers

1. Constitution of new churches. During the mid-century, new churches were frequently organized by preaching disciples who had been invested with authority, not only to preach, but also to organize.<sup>95</sup> Churches which were formed in this man-

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94. Henry Gee and W. J. Hardy, Documents Illustrative of English Church History, p. 657.

95. Benjamin Coxe, An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, 1646, in Underhill, Confessions of Faith, p. 59.

ner maintained close relationships with the churches which fostered them.

A stricter regulation for constituting new churches soon developed. Churches became more careful in authorizing preaching disciples. The power of constituting new churches was reserved by existing churches. When a conventicle desired to become organized, it requested assistance from an existing church. By this means, churches were informally related to each other. When a minister assisted in the constituting of a new church or in the ordination of officers, he was often held in great respect and affection by the benefited church. This tie of affection became a link between the two churches. The Amersham church was re-constituted in 1675 with the aid of John Griffith of London. While Griffith was in prison, Amersham made repeated gifts to him.

2. Particular Baptist ordination. Among Particular Baptists extra-local ordination was unnecessary in the beginning phase of the movement, for the theory of congregational power made outside assistance irrelevant. There were some cases of extra-local assistance in ordination, but courtesy, not regularity, inspired such cases. As denominationalism developed and the ministry was elevated, extra-local ordination became the custom. The insistence of the ministry was perhaps the chief factor in this development of outside ordination. Ministers argued that orderliness requires that extra-local ministers recognize, approve, and ordain new ministers.

a. Bristol. The development of extra-local ordination appears in clear relief in Bristol Baptist life. Ruling elders of the Broadmead church were ordained by the Broadmead pastor and two unidentified ministers in March, 1667. In September, 1676, Broadmead requested five Londoners (Kiffin, Deane, Fitten, Nehemiah Coxe, and Moreton), who were then in Trowbridge dealing with the doctrinal irregularity of Collier, to return via Bristol and ordain Thomas Hardcastle, who had been on pastoral trial for five years.<sup>96</sup> These ministers declined to come, claiming that they had to return to London immediately. It has been supposed that these Londoners refused to ordain Hardcastle because he had not undergone believers' baptism.<sup>97</sup> It is more likely, however, that the rejection of Broadmead's request was prompted by Fitten, who was a member of the London church which accused Broadmead of stealing Hardcastle; there is little reason to think that he would be well-disposed to ordain Hardcastle. It appears that Hardcastle was never ordained by extra-local ministers. The church justified the validity of Hardcastle's local ordination on the basis that congregational election is the only essential element to ordination; formal ordination is merely circumstantial.<sup>98</sup>

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96. Broadmead Records, pp. 91, 358-360.

97. W. T. Whitley, "Two Hardcastles, Presbyterian and Baptist," Trans., IV (1914-15), 43.

98. Broadmead Records, p. 383.

In August, 1677, Andrew Gifford, pastor of the closed communion church in Bristol, was ordained by Dyke, Coxe, and several other London elders.<sup>99</sup> Gifford had served for several years without ordination, but soon thereafter he and several other elders desired and advised the Porton church to ordain three elders who had served for twenty years without extra-local ordination.<sup>100</sup>

b. London. Hercules Collins, pastor of the Wapping church of London, was much in demand as an ordainer during his long pastorate which began in 1676.<sup>101</sup> Collins, it should be recalled, had a very exalted view of the ministry, so he perhaps encouraged churches to secure ministerial assistance in ordination.

c. Toleration. In 1689 the General Assembly urged the ordination of those who are "competently qualified." Without ordination "they are rendered incapable of preaching and administering the ordinances of the Gospel so regularly."<sup>102</sup>

In 1690 or 1691 four congregations, including Southampton, requested the "London Association" to send "two or more Elders" to officiate at an ordination service for the four congregations. The London churches complied with the request, and the ordainers wrote to the churches, advising them of the

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99. Ibid., p. 369.

100. Arthur Tucker, "Porton Baptist Church, 1655-85," Trans., I (1908-09), 59; cf. W. T. Whitley, "Early Baptists in Hampshire," BQ, I (1922-23), 224.

101. Kevan, op. cit., p. 38.

102. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 44.

procedure which should be followed in qualifying the ordi-  
nands.<sup>103</sup> The four congregations seemingly requested as-  
sistance in ordination in compliance with the instruction  
of the Assembly.

In 1694 about twenty persons, who had separated from  
the Horsley-down church over congregational singing, desired  
the organization of themselves as a church and the ordination  
of their preacher. The Thames Street church declined to or-  
dain the preacher, charging that he was an unproven "novice."  
The group then secured several elders from other churches,  
who organized the malcontents into a church.<sup>104</sup> This group  
went against denominational sentiment in separating over con-  
gregational singing and in rejecting the advice of the Thames  
Street church to which it had been related for about a year  
after leaving Horsley-down. Nevertheless, it refused to con-  
stitute itself as a church without external assistance. Dur-  
ing the mid-century, such a sectarian group would have pro-  
ceeded in constitution and ordination independently of out-  
side aid. It seems, therefore, that extra-local assistance  
was the regular practice of Particular Baptists by 1700.  
During the early part of the eighteenth century, the church at  
Northampton frequently assisted in organization and ordination.<sup>105</sup>

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103. \_\_\_\_\_, "Ordination at Southampton, 1691," *Trans.*,  
II (1910-11), 65f.

104. H. W. Robinson, editor, "Discipline Book of Robert  
Steed . . .," *BQ*, I (1922-23), 119.

105. John Ryland, "History of the Baptist Churches in  
Northampton," *BAR*, IV (1801-02), 717f.

3. General Baptist ordination. a. Messenger. Among General Baptists the practice of extra-local ordination was introduced quite early. The delegated authority of the "messenger" includes the right to plant new churches where there were none and to ordain officers in those churches which participated in his ordination. In accordance with his authority, he ordained officers, sometimes with assistance from his suffragan churches.

b. Assistance from local churches. It was very common for a local church to request sister churches to assist in ordination. Warboys petitioned the general meeting at Cambridge in 1655 to send elders to ordain Warboys' officers. The meeting delegated John Denne and Edmund Mayle of Fenstanton to go to Warboys for the ordination.<sup>106</sup> In 1684 Warboys again needed ordainers, but Warboys appealed directly to Fenstanton for the assistance of the same two men.<sup>107</sup> Fenstanton exerted a wide influence in extra-local ordination.<sup>108</sup>

In 1675 an Amersham group split off from a church and summoned John Griffith to constitute the splinter group on the basis of the Six Principles. In 1678 an Amersham elder was ordained by a "Berkhamstede" elder. Except for these two cases, Amersham remained curiously aloof from other churches.<sup>109</sup>

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106. Fenstanton Records, p. 155; cf. Warboys Records, p. 272.

107. Warboys Records, p. 280.

108. Fenstanton Records, p. 195.

109. Amersham Records, pp. 202, 215; cf. introduction by W. T. Whitley, p. xiv.

In 1692 Whites Alley called the other parts of the Dependency to assist in the ordination of a deacon.<sup>110</sup> This was an unusual case which cannot be fully explained. It had been the practice to ordain elders and deacons at the same time, but it was unusual for outside assistance to be solicited when only a deacon was to be ordained. The ordination of Whites Alley's deacon by outside churches indicates both the close tie between the five churches and the growing importance of extra-local ordination.

c. General Assembly. The General Assembly took an increasing lead in the ordination of officers. The Assembly did not demand this role; rather, churches referred their needs to the Assembly which gave what assistance it could. Whereas there were some cases of associationally appointed ordinands in the mid-century, they were few. It was not until after 1689 that the Assembly exercised much authority in ordination. In 1687 the ubiquitous Thomas Grantham, exercising his office of messenger, ordained two elders at Bourne in Lincoln. In 1696 the Lincolnshire churches needed a messenger. Theoretically, they had the authority to elect and ordain someone to the office. However, they referred the matter to the Assembly which elected a person and delegated a Northampton messenger to officiate as his ordination.<sup>111</sup> Prior to

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110. Whites Alley Records, I, 83.

111. F. J. Mason, "The Old Minute Book of Bourne Baptist Church," BQ, XV (1953-54), 226f; MGA, I, 42.

this time, a messenger supervised only the work of the churches which ordained him. Messengers now came under the supervision of the Assembly and acted in its behalf. They continued to supervise churches and ordain new officers, but by leave, not of suffragan churches, but of the Assembly.

4. Conclusion. The initial informality of the organization of churches and ordinations of officers gave way to formal practices. Among Particular Baptists the causes of this development were denominational consciousness and ministerial elevation. A minister became a member of a fraternity of ministers, and he served in a denominational entity which was larger than his church. Ministers increasingly claimed the right to ordain new ministers. Thus, authority which local congregations had initially exercised was assumed by ministers.

Among General Baptists denominational solidarity, especially on the regional level, facilitated connectional ordinations. The Quaker threat also stimulated carefulness in ordinations, for the election of an untried person to ministerial office was dangerous to the entire denomination. After the relaxation of the Quaker threat, persecution disorganized General Baptists, so churches reverted to the earlier practice of inviting contiguous churches to assist in ordination, apart from connectional authority. After 1689, however, the defensive task and inherent weakness of General Baptists caused them increasingly to surrender to the General Assembly the authority over ordination.

#### D. Co-operative Discipline

During the seventeenth century, Baptist churches co-operated in the discipline of cases which could not be resolved locally. However, the extent of co-operative discipline and the ultimate authority of the association in discipline have been overemphasized.<sup>112</sup>

1. Theory. There were both theoretical statements and instances of co-operative discipline, but they were neither emphatic nor frequent. The only General Baptist confession which stated the theory of co-operative discipline was the Midlands confession of 1651:

... if any controversie should fall out, that the case cannot easily be determined by that society or church where it is first presented, that then use be made of some other society which they are in fellowship with, for assistance therein ...<sup>113</sup>

The Particular Baptist confession of 1677 endorsed a Presbyterian theory:

In cases of difficulties or differences, either of Doctrine, or Administration: wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church

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112. This student has not been able to confirm certain unqualified statements of Whitley and Payne. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, p. 131, says: "... the General Baptists had a graduated series of appeals ..., with the General Assembly able to over-rule and reverse decisions of lower courts." Payne, The Fellowship of Believers, p. 104, says: "From early days, in General Baptist churches, a member who had been disciplined for an offence had a right of appeal from the local church to the Association and from the Association to the General Assembly." These statements represent a "high church" view which early Baptists did not have. Referrals in the seventeenth century dealt almost exclusively with ecclesiastical problems, and the right of referral rested, not in an individual, but in churches and associations.

113. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 107.

in their peace, union, and edification; or any member, or members, or any church are injured, in or by any proceedings in censures not agreeable to truth, and order...<sup>114</sup>

churches in fellowship with the troubled church may give advice. However, these churches have no power of enforcement.

The foregoing statements are easily misconstrued. They should be balanced by other facts. It was uniformly held that discipline is both the privilege and obligation of the local church.<sup>115</sup> Most cases of discipline were handled by the local congregation.

2. Moral problems. Moral problems were normally disciplined in the local church. Co-operative discipline in such matters was rarely necessary. Most of the cases of co-operative discipline for moral offenses involved ministers, but ecclesiology was occasionally involved when a minister was disciplined for immorality.<sup>116</sup> If a church could not resolve a moral problem, it might secure outside help, not so much to confound the offender as to convince him of impartiality.<sup>117</sup> There were many instances in which an outside individual or

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114. Ibid., p. 268. William Mitchill, op. cit., p. 173, repeated this article with minor alterations.

115. See confessions of 1644 and 1677, in McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 186, 265f, and Thomas Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles, 1674, p. 17, for the view of the plenary power of the local congregation in matters of discipline. This was the essential principle of congregational polity.

116. Fenstanton Records, pp. 211-213; Warboys Records, pp. 274f; Whites Alley Records, I, 194-216.

117. Fenstanton Records, pp. 183, 238, 241; Warboys Records, pp. 274f.

church advised the home church of the immorality of one of its members.<sup>118</sup> Such reports were not always accepted, especially if there were differences between the two churches involved.

3. Ecclesiological problems. Co-operative discipline usually dealt with ecclesiological problems. The Particular Baptist theory specified that outside aid was indicated in matters of "doctrine" or "administration" in which the total church had something at stake or an individual's rights had been violated. Particular Baptists had a well-defined ecclesiology, so they rarely had to resort to co-operative discipline on church matters. General Baptists were constantly agitated by ecclesiological experimentation and diversity, so they often had to employ co-operative discipline because of the incapacity of local churches to resolve their problems.

4. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists were able to resolve most of their ecclesiological problems locally, but there were some cases of co-operative discipline. In 1653 the Hexham church received a complaint against its pastor, Thomas Tillam. Tillam became a controversial figure in Northumbria, and the controversy affected churches as far away as London and the West Midlands. Tillam was accused of lying and fraud, but the major issues were laying on of hands and

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118. Fenstanton Records, pp. 228-231; Whites Alley Records, I, 123, 193, 221.

confirmation of children in an Anglican manner. Both Independent (Wrexham, Cheshire, and Newcastle) and Baptist (Newcastle and Coleman Street, London) churches disapproved Tillam. The result of their complaint was a split within the Hexham church.<sup>119</sup> Tillam's peculiar disposition perhaps stimulated the joint complaint of outside churches. He was of Continental Jewish extraction and was extremely biblicistic. He was one of the first Particular Baptists to adopt the Six Principles, and he ended up as a pre-millennial Sabbatarian. His passionate spirit caused him to act both prematurely and indiscriminately, contrary to norms which had become fairly well defined, so sister churches complained against him.

In 1657 several churches in West Anglia participated in co-operative discipline which was moderated by a non-local minister. The problem under deliberation was the apostasy of Richard Ballamie to the parish church.<sup>120</sup>

In 1659 the Bedford church requested several churches with whom it had a working agreement to advise on a certain problem. John Childe had, apparently due to the encouragement of an unidentified minister, refused to hear the admonition of the Bedford church. The records are silent on the cause of discipline, but it probably involved communion.<sup>121</sup>

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119. \_\_\_\_\_, Mr. Tillam's Account Examined, 1657, 32p.; cf. Hexham Records, pp. 294-296, 318, 334, 349f, 355-357, 361-364, 367-370.

120. Richard Ballamie, The Leper Cleansed, 1657, pp. 3-15.

121. Bunyan Meeting Records, p. 22.

5. General Baptists. a. Fenstanton. The practice of co-operative discipline was widely employed by General Baptists. It was designed to establish and preserve ecclesiological uniformity. The Fenstanton church exerted an extensive influence in the disciplinary problems of sister churches. Late in 1651 the church at Norborough had trouble with its pastor who had assumed the laying on of hands. He immediately agitated for the adoption of the principle by the entire church, and the problem became critical in September, 1653. Three churches assisted Norborough in attempts to resolve the problem, but their efforts were in vain. Twice the pastor refused to submit to the discipline of his church. Finally, out of desperation, Norborough requested Fenstanton to assist in disciplining the pastor. Fenstanton was under the principle, so Norborough thought that its pastor would honor Fenstanton's instructions. In May, 1655, the general meeting at Cambridge disciplined an elder for inhospitality and two elders for adopting Quaker views. In June and August, 1655, Fenstanton elders went twice to Peterborough to resolve a theological problem involving particularism. At the latter meeting, Thomas Lambe of Bell Alley, London, was present. In 1656 Fenstanton was requested by the Wakerly congregation of the church at Thorpe in Rutland to send elders to resolve a problem over laying on of hands. The Rutland church questioned Fenstanton's qualifications to arbitrate the case, inasmuch as Fen-

stanton was the most vigorous advocate of the principle in question. Because of the objection of Rutland, Fenstanton did not intercede in the case.<sup>122</sup>

There were only three cases in which outside churches were, in any way, related to the discipline of Fenstanton's problems. Two involved cultic issues: attendance at parish worship and mixed marriage. In the former case, Fenstanton claimed plenary power to execute its own discipline. The member was reprimanded for explaining his case to the Royston church, for "they were one congregation and we another, for we do not meet together." In the latter case, Fenstanton requested Royston to be Fenstanton's voice in admonishing a lady who was guilty of mixed marriage, then living in Royston. Fenstanton deliberated the case without advice from Royston. Royston merely assisted Fenstanton in admonishing Fenstanton's non-resident member. The third case dealt with a sharp difference over money. Fenstanton "laboured much to decide the controversy, but could not." It was decided to request another congregation to judge the case. However, the person whom the church felt to be at fault refused to have her case arbitrated by outsiders, claiming that the outside church would endorse Fenstanton's judgment.<sup>123</sup> In all three of these cases, Fenstanton executed its own discipline.

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122. Fenstanton Records, pp. 66-68, 140, 141, 144, 149-154, 202-206.

123. Ibid., pp. 100, 183-186.

b. Whites Alley. The Whites Alley church both received and gave assistance in disciplinary cases. The close relationship in the Dependency facilitated co-operative discipline. After withdrawing from the General Assembly, Whites Alley broke its connection with the Dependency and became closely related to Barbican and High Hall. In 1692 a member of one of the churches of the Dependency refused to attend his church, so the five parts decided that he could not have communion in any one of the five churches until he first satisfied his own church. In 1698 Whites Alley sent representatives to resolve a difference between a pastor and member of another church. In 1699 Whites Alley and High Hall heard a case allegedly involving an improper procedure in discipline. The most conspicuous case, however, was the trial of Joseph Taylor, elder of Whites Alley, by four churches. He was accused of criticizing the church of which he was pastor, engaging in sexual immorality, and making a schism. Those who separated from Whites Alley and followed him were also disciplined.<sup>124</sup>

c. General Assembly. Prior to 1674 the General Assembly had an agreement whereby referrals were made from local congregation, to association or quarterly meeting, to Assembly. However, the power of referral was possessed, not by an individual, but by church and association. In 1674 the Assembly refused to hear a charge against Caffyn because it had not

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<sup>124</sup>. Whites Alley Records, I, 88, 170, 191, 195-197, 202-206.

gone through channels.<sup>125</sup>

In 1693 the General Assembly authorized referrals to the Assembly. The General Association on May 12, 1697, resolved

That if a member or members shall find themselves agreived they shall have liberty to apeal either to a Sister Church or Churches or a quarterly, or a General Association /or/ from ye former to ye latter, and yt ye Church complained against having timely notice shall be obliedged to apear, and that ye mater shall be determined by ye generall association.<sup>126</sup>

On the surface, it appears that this resolution authorized anyone to refer any problem to the Association. In practice, however, only ecclesiological issues were handled. The first case involved a split in the Wickham church over particular theology. Later cases dealt almost exclusively with differences over Caffynism and the friction between the Assembly and Association. In one instance, the Association decided that the Deptford church had erred in procedure, but "then agreed the Church was ye proper judge of what satisfaction to receive."<sup>127</sup> As a result of the judgment of this case, Deptford broke relations with the Association, but also maintained separation from the Assembly.

6. Conclusion. Throughout the century, joint discipline was most frequently administered in cultic and ministerial problems, as distinguished from moral problems. Except in

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125. Matthew Caffyn, Envy's Bitterness Corrected ..., 1674, pp. 4-6.

126. MGA, I, 39, 46.

127. Ibid., pp. 46f, 58f, 62, 64f.

few instances, churches felt competent to resolve local problems. These exceptions dealt, not with gross moral problems, but with intransigent differences over order between otherwise reputable members. Ecclesiological and theological problems affected all the churches. Therefore, outside churches had something at stake and were occasionally invited to participate in their resolution.

The influence which such discipline had on the development of formal associationalism cannot be accurately appraised. However, it is noteworthy that a major objective of associationalism was cultic integrity. It is conceivable, therefore, that the successful resolution of emergency matters in called meetings was a prominent factor in the rise of associationalism. After associationalism became entrenched and regular meetings were scheduled, Baptists continued to affirm the polity which called for joint discipline of emergency problems apart from associational mediation.<sup>128</sup>

### III. FORMAL ASSOCIATIONALISM

One of the most unique features of seventeenth century English religious life was the development of formal associationalism among Baptists. The Church of England had a hierarchical organization and Presbyterians had a synodical sys-

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128. Ibid., p. 71; Mitchill, loc. cit.

tem. In each of these institutions, however, the ministry dominated. There was little association between churches. Both Anglicans and Presbyterians held the theory of "one church," but by this they meant a church which is national in constituency and which receives support and protection from the State. Independents held theories of both particular church government and ministerial authority, but they were unable to develop satisfactory connectionalism.

Baptists also held the theory of congregational government. Initially they subsumed the ministry under congregational government, but by the end of the century the Baptist ministry was highly exalted. The development of associations was a modification of their view of congregational government. Originally associations arose to serve functional purposes. Prior to the mid-1650's, most connectional relationships were informal. Success in meeting exigencies inspired formal associationalism which was characterized by regularity of meeting, definition of authority, standardization of program, etc.

Regional experimentation in associational life preceded national. Prior to the rise of national assemblies, Particular Baptists had held regional meetings in Wales, West Anglia, Ireland, and Berkshire, and General Baptists had held meetings in the Midlands, Kent, and the Cambridgeshire region.

It must be strongly emphasized that these meetings were functional. Their functional character is aptly illustrated by the development in the Cambridgeshire region. A "general

meeting" was held in Cambridge in January, 1653, to resolve a difference over love feasts. In December, 1654, the general meeting was called to devise a system of joint benevo-

lence.<sup>129</sup> In February, 1655,

it was desired, that for the better attaining to, and retaining of, unity and order in the churches, that we should unite ourselves together into a strong combination, to meet often together (howsoever the elders of the respective congregations), at such times and places as should be thought most convenient.<sup>130</sup>

Success in resolving exigent problems in 1653 and 1654 was a preparatory factor in the formal association which commenced in 1655 to meet quarterly.

The matters which associations deliberated were those which immediately concerned the churches. By the end of the century, there was a tendency for the program, as well as the organization, to become formal. Prior to 1701 the Welsh Association spent its time in prayer and the deliberation of common problems. In 1701, however, it was resolved that a sermon should be preached in 1703.<sup>131</sup>

#### A. Brief Sketch of Associationalism

It is unnecessary to attempt a full history of associations during the seventeenth century. However, it is desirable briefly to sketch the development, for reference will be

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129. Fenstanton Records, pp. 37, 108f.

130. Ibid., p. 126.

131. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 28f.

made to the chronology of the development.

1. General Baptists. General Baptist churches were early related in an indefinable formal arrangement. The five churches which sought union with the Waterlanders in 1626 were seemingly organized into a union,<sup>132</sup> though the terms of this union are unknown. In 1651 thirty congregations from eight Midland counties issued a confession of faith.<sup>133</sup> Twenty-one of the congregations were located in Lincoln and Leicester. Because of its regional character, this affiliation has been designated the Midlands Association. Early in 1653 a general meeting was held in Cambridge. Prior to March, 1657, an association had been organized in Kent.<sup>134</sup>

The General Assembly met in London in 1653, attended by church representatives from six counties and London.<sup>135</sup> The Buckinghamshire Association, which usually met at Aylesbury, persisted during the Restoration, and in 1678 it was attended by at least fifty-four representatives who subscribed the Orthodox Creed.<sup>136</sup> Grantham wrote during the eighth decade as if the General Assembly was being continued. Though there are references to associational meetings throughout the era,

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132. B. Evans, The Early English Baptists, II, 26-32.

133. W. T. Whitley, "The Midland Churches of 1651," BQ, II (1924-25), 319-324.

134. Horace Warde, "Two Associational Meetings in Kent, 1657," Trans., III (1912-13), 247-250.

135. Hugh Martin, "Baptists and the Great Church," BQ, XIV (1951-52), 314.

136. Richard Knight, History of the General or Six Principle Baptists . . . , p. 119.

records are not extant.<sup>137</sup> From the mid-1680's, meetings were held regularly in Aylesbury.

After the promulgation of the Toleration Act, the General Assembly convened in 1689, 1691, 1692, 1693, 1696, 1697, 1698, 1700, etc. In 1696 several churches separated from the General Assembly over Christology, and in 1697 they formed the General Association which convened annually.<sup>138</sup>

2. Particular Baptists. The earliest experiment in formal co-operation among Particular Baptists was the issuance of the confession of 1644.<sup>139</sup> In November, 1650, a group of Welsh churches and congregations met in concert. They continued to meet at least until and probably after 1656.<sup>140</sup> Prior to 1651 there was some kind of inter-relationship in West Anglia, for in that year Collier issued "A Second General Epistle ..." This association became quite prominent, holding known meetings in 1653, 1655, 1656, and 1658.<sup>141</sup>

Within six months time, October, 1652, to March, 1653, three Berkshire meetings were held at Tetsworth and Wormsley. At the first meeting the designs of associationalism were

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137. MGA, I, 24.

138. Ibid., pp. 26-67.

139. See W. T. Whitley, "Associational Life till 1815," Trans., V (1916-17), 19-34, for a good sketch of Particular Baptist associations. Unless otherwise cited, information on Particular Baptists is taken from this article.

140. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 6-16.

141. Joseph Ivimey, History of the Baptists, IV, 257; , "May a Minister take State Pay?" Trans., I (1908-09), 65-68; Thurloe Papers, VII, 138-140.

eight articles was drawn up, but the agreement made no provision for enforcement.<sup>147</sup> In 1675 London churches called a general meeting for 1676. In 1677 a confession was issued, which was again subscribed by over one hundred churches in 1689. Several meetings were held between 1678 and 1683 in the region just north of London. Persecution arrested such meetings. In 1688 the Western Association was revived.

The new era of Particular Baptist associations began with the great meeting in London, September 3-12, 1689.<sup>148</sup> Meetings were held annually thereafter. The meetings were so large and transport was so inconvenient that the Assembly divided itself into two parts (Eastern and Western) in 1692. The Eastern assembly met in London, and within a few years the regular meeting-place of the Western assembly was Bristol. In 1700 Welsh churches formed their own association. Additional associations of a regional character were formed. The eighteenth century was a century of rigid associationalism.

#### B. Causes and Objectives of Associationalism

1. Influence of military associationalism. It is much easier to observe the development of Baptist associationalism than to explain it. It has been conjectured that the example of military associations exerted a formative influence on the

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147. Bunyan Meeting Records, pp. 21-23, 33f.

148. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 48-56.

origin of Irish associationalism, which in turn, it is said, inspired the English movement.<sup>149</sup> There are some data which may be so construed, but the full import of the data offers little substantiation for this conjecture.

a. Eastern Association. The Eastern Association became one of Cromwell's choice military organizations. Originally it was established by Parliament as a home militia against the Royalists. In December, 1643, provisions were made for the fortifying of Newport Pagnell in Buckingham. In September, 1645, Parliament promulgated an ordinance calling for the defense of Bedford, Cambridge Castle, and Lyn Regis in Norfolk. These fortifications were to be financed by local and contiguous counties. The association was given authority to raise money with the aid of civil collectors and to disburse it.<sup>150</sup>

After winning the Civil War, Parliament sought to disband the Army without pay. Cromwell then re-organized the Army as the New Model Army. Each regiment was given the right to elect two representatives. These regimental representa-

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149. W. T. Whitley, "The Plantation of Ireland and the Early Baptist Churches," *BQ*, I (1922-23), 280; Whitley, "Edward Harrison," *BQ*, VII (1934-35), 216; Whitley, "Associational Life till 1815," *Trans.*, V (1916-17), 19f; Whitley, A History of British Baptists, pp. 90f. Because of Whitley's comprehensive knowledge of Baptist antiquity, his view has been widely accepted. Though he exaggerates the importance of the military association, Whitley admits that the military pattern was not the exclusive influence.

150. An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons ... For the maintenance and pay of the Garrisons ... in the Eastern Association..., Septemb. 4. 1645, 15p.

tives, meeting in concert, advised on military policies. William Allen first rose to prominence as an elected representative to the association. He was in Ireland during the campaign. In December, 1656, he and other officers "quitt ... publique employment,"<sup>151</sup> in opposition to Cromwell.

The foregoing are the basic facts about the Eastern Association, the supposed example for Baptist associations. However, these facts offer little confirmation.

b. Negligible influence. There are several factors which suggest that the military association had negligible, or at least very little, influence on the rise of Baptist associationalism in Ireland.<sup>152</sup> First, the Irish churches were not highly organized. The celebrated letter of June 1, 1653, was signed in behalf of only three of the ten churches. Allegedly the churches were "united together," but the description of their spiritual estates indicates that the unity was not formal. Moreover, the conditions of some churches were unknown.

Secondly, the Irish Baptists did not request formal associationalism. The agreement between Irish churches called for the setting apart of the first Wednesday of each month for prayer. The reason for such concerted prayer was "a slippery and slothful condition." "Breaches" had been created in the churches by the removal of "righteous ones from us"--"the

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151. Thurloe Papers, V, 729f.

152. \_\_\_\_\_, "An Account ...," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 13-20, contains all the extant correspondence.

never-to-be-forgotten young Drapes, dear Consett, precious Pocke, useful Saffrey." In addition to the loss of these promising young men, the churches were suffering from "indifference, worldly-mindedness, and heart-hypocrisy." Religious decline was alarming to the Irish churches, as indicated by the twelve reasons for monthly prayer; it is conceivable that prayer was held simultaneously in several places.<sup>153</sup> The English transplantation had only recently been completed, but already the soldiery was becoming pre-occupied with new fortunes, thus causing a decline in the churches. The Irish believed that concerted prayer would effect the much-needed revival. The London churches recognized the problem immediately, stating that God had raised up "a quickening spirit" among the Irish "to call upon us to awake to righteousness."

The Irish had profited from

a more revived correspondence with each other by letters and loving epistles, in which practice we found great advantage, not only by weakening Satan's suggestions and jealousies, but it hath brought a closer union and knitting of heart.<sup>154</sup>

The Irish churches merely recommended their experience to the English. They requested the English churches to assist in developing mutual interest among churches by exchanging correspondence on the spiritual estate of each and by visitations between churches. Before proposing this plan to other church-

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153. Op. cit., pp. 18f.

154. Op. cit., pp. 16f.

es, the London churches "kept a day of holy fasting and prayer upon the grounds therein expressed." The Londoners added a new feature: the use of inter-church correspondence as a means of certifying those in fellowship as Particular Baptists. The diversity of English Baptist life and the need for standardizing the distinctives between General and Particular Baptists perhaps inspired the proposal of the London churches.

Thirdly, the inspiration for the inter-relation of the Irish churches probably derived from Thomas Patient. The list of Irish churches was drawn up, it appears, by the Dublin church of which Patient was the most prominent member. Patient was called by "brother Reade" to baptize converts at Carrick Fergus. The Kilkenny church probably owed its origin to Patient. At any rate, Patient was in Kilkenny in April, 1650, when he wrote a letter containing spiritual admonitions to Cromwell.<sup>155</sup> The most prominent man in Kilkenny in June, 1653, was Christopher Blackwood, but he had only recently arrived in Ireland.<sup>156</sup> There is every reason to suppose that Patient was the leader of Irish Baptists. Patient had close connections with London Baptists. Kiffin and Patient had co-signed the confession of 1644 and its 1646 edition in behalf of the same church.<sup>157</sup> The initial signatory of the London letter which accompanied the Irish letter to Wales was William

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155. Underhill, Tracts, pp. 311-313.

156. A. C. Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, p. 71.

157. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 174, 193.

Kiffin. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that the connecting link between London and Ireland was Patient, a participant in the first co-operative effort of London Baptists.

A weakness in the view that the Eastern Association inspired Irish associationalism is the fact that William Allen, the Baptist who ostensibly was most acquainted with the system of military associationalism, was not a member of either of the ten Irish churches, nor a signer of the Irish letter of June 1, 1653. Allen's brother-in-law, John Vernon, was the bearer of the letter to London, of course, but Vernon was a member of the Dublin church with Patient.

c. Conclusion. The specific influence of military associationalism on Baptist associationalism was negligible. It cannot be determined how significant the Irish example was in the rise of English associationalism, but it is abundantly clear that the Irish neither enjoyed nor proposed formal association. Their inspiration came, not from military associationalism, but from the earlier co-operative action of the seven London churches, as mediated through Patient.

The term "association" was later used to designate co-operative religious life. However, the term was not suggested in the Irish letter. The preferred terms during the 1650's, when military associationalism was well known, were "general meeting," "assembly," "meeting," etc. The term "association" did not become popular until after 1689. The growing institutional character of connectionalism was perhaps the deter-

minative factor in the adoption of this term. Of course, it is conceivable that the popular knowledge of its military application facilitated its acceptance, but this cannot be demonstrated.

2. Effective causes and objectives of associationalism.

Associational gatherings were initially emergency meetings about specific needs. These needs, to which the meetings consciously addressed themselves, may be viewed as the effective causes, as well as objectives, of associationalism.

a. Minority status. The minority status of early General Baptists required solidarity for purposes of strength and fellowship. It is known that the combined membership of the five churches in 1626 was about one hundred and fifty. Each church did not have a minister, so the ministry was rotated among the churches. They maintained an inflexible exclusivism toward the National Church.<sup>158</sup> Many of their members had probably been informally related as Separatists early in the century, and it is almost certain that members of two or three of the churches were among the Separatist and Baptist communities in Amsterdam around 1610. When they returned to England, some went to their home areas. They would not engage in fellowship

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158. The English translation of most of the correspondence which relates to the life of the English churches may be seen in Evans, op. cit., II, 21-51, passim, and Trans., IV (1914-15), 253f. The Dutch is published in Champlin Bursage, The Early English Dissenters, II, 222-257, passim, and Trans., IV (1914-15), 229-252, passim.

with persecuting Anglicans, so it was natural for them to establish a system of inter-dependence and mutual aid.

b. Defense of orthodoxy and loyalty. The popular suspicion of "Anabaptism" was responsible for the initial co-operation among Particular Baptists. The purpose of their co-operation was to defend their theological orthodoxy and political innocence. The confession of 1644 specifically stated that it was jointly issued because it was feared that otherwise the confession would be construed as the judgment of one congregation "more refined than the rest."<sup>159</sup>

c. Cultic conservation. Cultic integrity was threatened by both external forces and internal problems. The conservation of integrity was perhaps the chief reason for associationalism in both the sixth and tenth decades. In the 1650's Baptists achieved a denominational consciousness, but they were variously threatened at the same time. During the 1690's the bounds of associationalism were strictly fixed.

(1) External threats. The two chief threats from the outside were Quakerism and Fifth Monarchism. The former capitalized on religious experimentalism, the latter on antipathy to Cromwell's political ambitions.

Baptists were sorely tested by the Quaker threat. Confessions were jointly issued to confirm Baptists against the individualistic doctrines of the Quakers. Disputations were

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159. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 173.

held, mostly at the instigation of Quakers. Though General Baptists drafted no confession during the Quaker onslaught, they excluded Quakers from their churches, sometimes with external assistance. It is not known how many elders were deposed and excluded for holding Quaker views, but the number would probably be astounding. On May 3, 1655, the cases of Samuel and Ezekiel Cater, elders at Littleport, were brought before the general meeting at Cambridge. Three factors in this action bear attention. First, the elders in one church were seemingly conceived as elders in all the churches. This was a view which General Baptists had previously repudiated, so it appears that Quakerism was a factor in the elevation of the ministry. The eldership had to extend beyond a local congregation before ministers from other churches could depose and exclude an elder. Secondly, the "general meeting" was popularly, if not theoretically, equated with "the church." It should be pointed out, however, that this church was regional in scope and General Baptist in character. Thirdly, the assembly appointed two elders "in the church" to go to Littleport and admonish the offenders. If they did not hear the admonition of the assembly, they were to be excommunicated. Within ten days the offenders were excommunicated.<sup>160</sup>

From 1653 to 1658 the political ambitions of Cromwell caused many joint actions on the part of Baptists. Several

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160. Fenstanton Records, pp. 140f, 144-146.

regional groups sent protests to him. Concurrently, the Fifth Monarchy Movement reached extreme proportions. Baptists were divided on Fifth Monarchism and their attitudes toward Cromwell. Nevertheless, the opposition to Cromwell and interest in Fifth Monarchism was intense enough to require the intercession of prominent Baptist leaders in behalf of Cromwell. In 1653 Kiffin, Spilsbery, Sanson, etc., wrote to the Irish churches, in an attempt to improve "a spirit of great dissatisfaction and opposition against the present authority." It is interesting that they justified their epistolary intercession by the precedent of the Irish letter in June.<sup>161</sup> In 1658 at the Western Association in Dorsetshire, there arose "a greate contest ... aboute their joyninge with the fifth-monarchy-men." Allegedly the opposition of Kiffin was the prime factor in frustrating a decision in favor of the radicals.<sup>162</sup> After the Restoration several joint declarations of innocence were addressed to Charles II; they were designed to correct the popular suspicion of the political fidelity of Baptists.

(2) Internal threats. Internal threats received more associational attention from Baptists than external threats. External problems generally stimulated Baptist unity, but internal problems threatened it. Joint meetings dealt preponderatingly with internal concerns. Some issues were more

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161. Underhill, Tracts, pp. 322-326.

162. Thurloe Papers, VII, 139.

peculiar to one tradition than to another, but both General and Particular Baptists were concerned about such matters as the supply of multiple congregations and importunate churches, benevolence, mixed marriage, hearing non-Baptist preachers, ministerial morality and maintenance, laying on of hands, singing of psalms and vernacular hymns, heterodoxy, communion, duties of officers and members, definition of faith and order, etc. Baptists sought to resolve differences on these matters through joint deliberation and action. However, it should be emphasized that General and Particular Baptists remained separate and distinct. The only cases of joint activity dealt with efforts to defend Baptists before the world.

Throughout the century cultic integrity was aided by joint action. In the 1650's external threats were frustrated by joint action. As the precedents became more numerous and comprehensive, and the norms more fixed, associationalism became quite narrow, especially among General Baptists.

(3) Fixed limits of associational life. Both General and Particular Baptists fixed the limits within which their associationalism was possible. The General Assembly of Particular Baptists identified itself as "denying Arminianism,"<sup>163</sup> which was spelled out in terms of denying universal atonement, general election, and free will, and of upholding original

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163. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 55.

sin and final perseverance. Between the years 1689 and 1691 General Baptists variously denominated themselves by such terms as "Six Principles," "generall ffaith," "emphasizing the laying on of hands after baptism," etc.<sup>164</sup> In 1697 the General Association stated that "general" was used to distinguish the national from the regional meeting. The Association specifically denied communion to any church which was related to the General Assembly.<sup>165</sup> Apparently anti-Assembly feeling was the primary basis of the inter-relations of churches in the Association.

Experience demonstrated the impossibility of successful associationalism without basic agreement in theology and ecclesiology.<sup>166</sup> The latitude of Particular Baptists in ecclesiological minutiae permitted them to establish a broad basis for co-operative endeavors. General Baptists erred in making the bounds of agreement too narrow, thereby permitting the association to be divisive.

d. Evangelism. Baptists propagated their views through associational actions and agencies. Early associationalism

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164. MGA, I, 26, 30, 33, 35.

165. Ibid., pp. 45f.

166. This appears as a difference between seventeenth and twentieth century practice. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, Baptists in both England and America, felt that the condition sine qua non of associationalism was basic agreement in theology and ecclesiology. It is therefore curious that the Southern Baptist Convention has from its very beginning steered clear of both these issues, seeking to remain neutral. Of course, regional associations among Southern Baptists have, by deliberation and precedent, set up norms which are presently giving way to promotionalism.

was partially designed for evangelism. The propagation of Baptist views was accomplished through confessional statements, arrangements for supplying the needs of multiple congregations, subsidy of weak churches, commissioning of preachers to untouched areas, etc.

Associational propaganda and evangelism were originally more characteristic of General Baptists than of Particular Baptists. The former were aggressively sectarian, and during the 1650's they successfully used associationalism for expansion. Sporadic efforts were made by both traditions after 1689, but a close investigation of these efforts reveals that conservation, not evangelization, was their primary objective.

Associational propaganda was more common of country churches than of city churches. City churches were stronger and were, therefore, able to act more independently of each other in evangelism. The Welsh Association repeatedly appointed men to preach in various meeting-places and arranged for the maintenance of these preachers.<sup>167</sup> In 1653 the General Baptist Assembly defined one of its objectives as joint propaganda and evangelism.<sup>168</sup> General Baptists employed messengers in evangelism. In October, 1653, a plan of evange-

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167. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 6-16.

168. Martin, op. cit., p. 314; W. L. Lumpkin, The Local Baptist Confessions of Faith of the Civil War--Commonwealth Period, p. 148.

listic itineration was proposed to the Fenstanton church by Henry Denne; he was immediately commissioned to itinerate, apparently representing the large Fenstanton church only.<sup>169</sup> In 1656 churches in the counties of Leicester, Nottingham, Cambridge, and Huntingdon sent two messengers "into the west" and jointly shared the expense of this enterprise.<sup>170</sup>

e. Fellowship. Associationalism was designed to preserve Christian fellowship. Close fellowship between churches was originally maintained by informal connectionalism. When churches became more numerous, this close fellowship could not be informally perpetuated. A system was devised by Irish churches to facilitate mutual knowledge and aid among churches. Open communionists soon circulated a letter similar to the Irish letter. Shortly before October, 1653, Henry Jessey of Swan Alley, London, and an unidentified messenger of Great All-hallows visited thirty Independent and Baptist churches in Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk.<sup>171</sup> In 1655 Jessey visited at least thirteen churches in West Anglia.<sup>172</sup> There is no evidence that these visitations were prosecuted under the auspices of an associational organization. To the contrary,

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169. Fenstanton Records, pp. 71f.

170. Ibid., pp. 196f.

171. Hexham Records, pp. 346f; see supra, pp. 309-312, for the Irish plan.

172. \_\_\_\_\_, "May a Minister take State Pay?" Trans., I (1908-09), 65. Jessey was one of Cromwell's ecclesiastical "Triers" and accordingly received a salary. Apparently Jessey's practice called forth West Anglia's denunciation of State support.

they were made in the name of local churches, and their objective was the preservation of fellowship and unity through formal correspondence and visitations.

3. Classic statements. The classic statements of the purposes of formal connectionalism came, not from General Baptists, but from Particular Baptists. At Tetsworth on October 8, 1652, Berkshire Baptists proposed six purposes of connectional life. First, associationalism complies with the implications of the figure "the Body of Christ." Secondly, the chief purpose of associational life is the same as the purpose of particular church communion, namely, maintaining purity and preventing scandals. Thirdly, associationalism demonstrates Christian love "to all Saints," which local church communion cannot demonstrate. Fourthly, God's work, in which all churches are concerned, is more "easily & prosperously" accomplished by joint prayers and efforts. Fifthly, associational life serves "to quicken them [churches] when lukewarme, to helpe when in want, assist in counsell in doubtfull matters, and prevent preiudices." Sixthly, associationalism convinces the "world" that Baptist churches are authentic, bearing the mark of Christ. On March 17, 1653, the churches unanimously approved the proposed union. Their agreement read:

to acknowledge one another [as true churches of Christ], to holde a firme communion with each other in point of advice in things remaining

doubtfull to any particular Church or Churches, as alsoe in giving and receaving in case of want and poverty ..., and in consulting & consenting as need shall require.<sup>173</sup>

Seven Midland churches met at Warwick in March or May, 1655. In June they organized as an association. They drew up a confession and five purposes of connectionalism, which were ratified by all the churches in October.<sup>174</sup> The statement of purpose was:

mutually to acknowledge each other to be true churches of Christ; and that it is our duty to hold communion with each other ... and so to be helpful.<sup>175</sup>

The similarity of these two statements is obvious. Unfortunately, the agreements of most associations are not extant, but there is no reason to doubt the representative character of these statements, at least as far as Particular Baptists were concerned. It is doubtful that General Baptists deliberated the purposes of connectionalism with any degree of fulness.

4. Conclusion. Associations were designed to render mutual assistance in case of need, regardless of the specific nature of need. The initial meetings were experiments in

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173. Payne, The Baptists of Berkshire, app. I, p. 149.

174. Hinton, loc. cit.; Whitley, "Associational Life till 1815," Trans., V (1916-17), 23. Hinton and Whitley disagree on dates and neither produces the designs of connectionalism.

175. Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 161, quoted. Article 15 of the confession speaks of "district churches." Also, Lumpkin points out that Quakerism was a determinative factor in the inauguration of this association.

solving urgent problems. Both General and Particular Baptists justified co-operative action in 1689, after associationalism was fairly well established, on the basis of need. The General Baptist Assembly stated that "necessity" and mutual "Agreement." are the two elements which give being or essence to an association.<sup>176</sup>

### C. Extent of Authority

Baptists recognized that the view of congregational government necessitates neither isolation nor institutional unity. Experience taught them that inter-dependence of local churches is necessary for both the security of all churches and the achievement of common objectives. They, therefore, inaugurated associationalism with specifically limited authority.

1. Theory. a. General Baptists. The only confession of the century to elevate the association, as an institution, above local churches was the General Baptist confession of 1678. It stated that

the churches appearing there by their representatives, make but one church, and have lawful right, and suffrage in this general meeting, or assembly, to act in the name of Christ; it being of divine authority, and is the best means under heaven to preserve unity, to prevent heresy, and superintendency among, or in any congregation whatsoever within its own limits, or jurisdiction. And to such a meeting, or assembly, appeals ought to be made, in case any injustice be done, or heresy, and schism countenance, in any particular congregation of Christ, and the decisive voice in such general assemblies

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176. MGA, I, 26.

is the major part, and such general assemblies have lawful power to hear, and determine, as also to excommunicate.<sup>177</sup>

There are four reasons to doubt that this confessional statement faithfully represented either the theory or practice of General Baptists. First, also in 1678 Thomas Grantham, the spokesman of Lincolnshire, stated:

This mutual consultation of many churches shews no superiority of churches one over another, but only the brotherly interest which they have in each other, and the duty which lieth upon the churches to help one another in their difficulties.<sup>178</sup>

Secondly, the Standard Confession of 1660 was the most widely accepted General Baptist confession. When associationalism was being revived, General Baptists in 1691 ratified this confession<sup>179</sup> which has no article on the plenary power of an association. Thirdly, the initial debate of the General Assembly in 1689 was over the power of convening "Generall Conventions." It was affirmed that no church has a superiority over another church. Necessity and agreement are adequate reasons for co-operative action.<sup>180</sup> Plenary power was not claimed by the Assembly. Fourthly, the General Association, which adopted the confession of 1678, had to back down from the policy stated in the confession. The theory of associational authority was denied by one church, and the Associa-

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177. McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

178. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 120, quoted.

179. *MGA*, I, 30.

180. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

tion could not enforce its policy. In 1697 the only article which the churches in the Association agreed on was non-communication with the Assembly. Before two years were over, Deptford had refused completely to sever relations with churches affiliated with the Assembly. Associational representatives were sent to the Deptford business meeting on May 22, 1699, to rebuke Deptford for violating the agreement about non-communication. When the Association convened on June 6, 1699, Deptford advised:

we are willing to continue members of that Assembly Association, provided it be agreed by them that they only Meet to confer & advise for the promotion of the Gospell and ye good of the whole, but not to make Laws obliging particular Churches thereby ..., which we think is divesting such Churches of the power given them by Christ, and renders them vn-caple to manage their own affairs ...<sup>181</sup>

The Association unanimously re-affirmed its agreement on non-communication with the Assembly. Nevertheless, the Association seemingly recognized the dubious character of its enforcement powers, for it requested Deptford

to sit downe & act with vs and if any thing should arise yt they could not agree with it time enough then to withdraw But notwithstanding this they withdrew themselves from our association vnless we would alter that Article.<sup>182</sup>

The Association was impotent to enforce its decisions; attempted enforcement effected separation, not reclamation.

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181. Ibid., p. 62.

182. Ibid., p. 63.

b. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists emphatically renounced associational authority over local churches.

The confession of 1677 stated:

these messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any Church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any Churches, or persons: or to impose their determination on the Churches, or Officers.<sup>183</sup>

The first rule of the General Assembly in 1689 declared:

we disclaim all manner of superiority and superintendency over the churches, and that we have no authority or power to prescribe or impose any thing upon the faith or practice of any of the churches of Christ. Our whole intendment is to be helpers together of one another, by way of counsel and advice.<sup>184</sup>

2. Essential agreement. Both General and Particular Baptists held that essential agreement among constituent churches is an absolute prerequisite to effective unity and joint action. Two cannot walk together, they said, unless they be agreed. This in itself was a healthy view. The problem arose in the determination of what is essential.

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183. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 268. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 173, repeats the article, though he also uses expressions of the Savoy Declaration. He denied institutional and scheduled meetings, holding that synods should be held only for emergency purposes: "... there are not instituted by Christ any stated Synods, in a fixed Combination of Churches, or their Officers in lesser or greater Assemblies, nor are there any Synods appointed by Christ in way of Subordination to one another." In this article Mitchell shows the influence of Congregationalism, whose aversion to associational life has already been noted.

184. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative ...," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 48.

Particular Baptists had a rather fixed theological norm, so they had little difficulty on theology. They refused to insist on agreement in every ecclesiological matter, holding that diverse opinions on circumstantial features should be tolerated. Thus, there was latitude in the definition of essential agreement among Particular Baptists.

General Baptists characteristically differed on essentials. They were continually susceptible to disruption over ecclesiological minutiae. An inability to handle differences of opinion within a local church was a basic weakness of General Baptists. The same weakness was transferred to associational meetings. General Baptists endeavored, by the weight of joint action, to define in ever-increasing detail the essentials of their faith and order. Normally, they defined their faith and order, not by sane deliberation, but by emergency consultation. Tension prevailed at the outset of these meetings, so it was natural for differences to arise.

When local churches were unable to resolve differences, they summoned outside churches to assist them. The local church felt that uniformity had to be established, so it would attempt to enforce the decisions of co-operating churches, but without success. The practice of attempted enforcement was transferred to formal associationalism, but also without success. The frequent result was further to weaken General Baptist life.

Full data are not available, but there is adequate basis for supposing that more General Baptist churches were harmed than helped by the attempts of associations to impose strict requirements on fellowship. The rebuff of associational authority intensified associational claims. It is very significant that General Baptist associations were becoming more zealous of their authority as the denomination was declining in strength. Associational authority was an unsuccessful attempt to conserve present gains, and the pretension of authority must be viewed as a weakness.<sup>185</sup>

Some General Baptist churches could not happily affiliate with an association because of the claim of associational authority. Deptford separated from the General Assembly because the Assembly imposed Christological ambiguity and forbade discussion in other than Biblical terms. Deptford later separated from the General Association because the Association imposed non-communication with churches in the Assembly. Deptford thereafter remained isolated from associations.<sup>186</sup>

3. Preservation of local church rights. a. Particular Baptists. The problem which inevitably arose among Baptists was the preservation of the rights of the local church while

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185. It was a weakness which came from the conviction that ecclesiology and theology are important. In fact, they were so important that disagreement on minor points prevented fellowship. Initially, General Baptists were concerned about ecclesiology, but theology later became important. In either case, however, an ability to agree on essentials was evident.

186. MGA, I, 62, n. 6.

engaging in associational life at the same time. Particular Baptists protected the rights of the local church by insisting that each church declare its position on each issue under consideration. Berkshire churches in 1652-1653 and Midland churches in 1655 proposed terms of inter-dependence. However, these terms were not imposed on the churches; the terms were not binding until they had been ratified. In the case of the Berkshire churches, the organization of the association followed the ratification of the terms by each church. In the case of the Midland churches, the organization came at the second meeting, during which the confession of faith and objectives of union were drawn up as tokens of unity; however, the churches had already approved the proposal for organizing themselves as an association.

When the Particular Baptists met in the great meeting in 1689, the first constructive action of the Assembly was the definition of procedural rules and foundational principles. The first rule disclaimed associational authority over the local church. The succeeding rules indicated how the first rule was to be implemented:

2. That in those things wherein one church differs from another church in their principles or practices, in point of communion, that we cannot, shall not impose upon any particular church therein, but leave every church to their own liberty to walk together as they have received from the Lord.

3. That if any particular offence doth arise betwixt one church and another, or betwixt one particular person and another, no offence shall be admitted to

be debated among us, till the rule Christ hath given, in this matter, be first answered, and the consent of both parties had, or sufficiently endeavoured.

4. That whatever is determined by us in any case, shall not be binding on any one church, till the consent of that church be first had, and they conclude the same among themselves.

5. That all things we offer by way of counsel and advice, be proved out of the Word of God, and the Scriptures annexed.

6. That the breviates of this meeting be transcribed, and sent to every particular church with a letter.

7. That the Messengers that come to this meeting, be recommended by a letter from the church (to which they belong), and that none be permitted to speak in this assembly, unless by general consent.<sup>187</sup>

The excellency of these rules and principles did not prevent Particular Baptists from losing their vitality. The extensive project of ministerial aid, education, and itineration undertaken by the Assembly in 1689 manifested vitality and optimism, but the project was not completed. Ministerial elevation, strict Calvinism, and general religious indifference were factors working against the realization of the Assembly's objective.

b. General Baptists. General Baptists were unsuccessful in preserving the rights of the local church. They could not resolve the problem on a theoretical basis. There is no indication that General Baptists ever drew up procedural rules.

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<sup>187</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 48f.

In their early experimentation in joint action, General Baptists were unified against external factors. They opposed the National Church, defined their evangelical faith, undertook missionary enterprises, and defended themselves against Quakerism without serious differences. These matters required no rules of procedure, for there was no difference of opinion. When General Baptists turned their attention to internal matters, however, they suffered because they had no procedural rules and principles by which they could resolve differences which arose. They proceeded on the principle of local church discipline without adapting it to inter-church relationships.

It was unanimously held that the local church is superior to any member, including the minister. Some persons went so far as to claim for the association a plenary authority over constituent churches. Theoretically, only the confession of 1678 affirmed this; practically, General Baptists often proceeded on the premise. A local church could, in most cases, execute and enforce its decisions because of its elected officials and the popular appreciation of discipline, but associations lacked such a power of enforcement. The associations had no executive officials, and the theory of congregational authority contradicted the attempted enforcement of associational decisions. Moreover, most of the principals in associational meetings were ministers who were accustomed to being on the giving, not the receiving end, of enforcement.

Within a regional association it was possible for a strong-willed messenger, such as Grantham, to enforce a fair degree of uniformity. Suffragan churches invested such authority in the messenger, but there were limits to his effectiveness. The General Assembly stated in 1689 that the essence of associationalism is necessity and agreement, and the Assembly held that it had no power to compel uniformity. However, General Baptist sectarianism fostered attempts to enforce "advice," "agreement," and "counsel." These attempts were often interpreted as abridgments of local authority and separation was frequently the result.

4. System of referrals. Baptists devised a system of referring problems and inquiries to associations. Associations were not initially designed as courts of final arbitration, and among Particular Baptists they did not become such courts. Among General Baptists, however, due to the growing weakness of local churches and regional associations, the Assembly exercised increasing authority in the deliberation of referred cases.

a. General Baptists. An evidence of weakness among General Baptists, in both local churches and regional associations, was the practice of referring cases to larger bodies. In the 1670's the Assembly had an agreement which required that referrals come through orderly channels. In 1674 the Assembly refused to hear a case because it had not been or-

derly referred. The case involved a difference between Matthew Caffyn and Richard Haines. The problem arose over Haines' new method of cleaning seed, but it soon degenerated to the personal level. Haines was excommunicated from the Horsham church. Due to his dissatisfaction, the church referred the case to a quarterly meeting of regional churches. Haines bypassed the quarterly session and went directly to the London Assembly. Caffyn allegedly moved that the Assembly hear the case, but the unanimous decision of the Assembly was to stand by its former agreement which required referral from the local church to the quarterly meeting, and from the quarterly meeting to the Assembly. The Assembly promised that

if ... they [quarterly meeting], by reason of the difficulty of the case, or difference thereabouts, could not decide the matter; that then they would readily hear it.<sup>188</sup>

Caffyn agreed for the Assembly to appoint six men to participate in the quarterly meeting, but the Assembly "obstinately refused" to permit such action. Haines asserted that he would not go to the quarterly meeting, for he could not expect justice. It was then proposed that the Assembly appoint persons privately to adjudicate the case,

to which was replied by some of the meeting, that the matter concerned the Congregation, and they were not present ... what may be done by mutual consent, is another case. ... nor may he think that Churches are obliged to follow the notions of excommunicated persons whither they please.<sup>189</sup>

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188. Caffyn, op. cit., p. 5.

189. Ibid., p. 6.

The Assembly could reach no agreement about judging in a case in which congregational consent and associational referral were lacking.

It is significant that the exaggerated claims of associational authority in the confession of 1678 derived from a desire to disarm Caffyn's influence in Christology.<sup>190</sup> The channels of referral had to be circumvented before Caffyn could be disciplined, for Caffyn, at that time, was invulnerable in his home region. The General Baptists of Bucks, Hertford, Bedford, and Oxford could not hope to curtail Caffyn's influence so long as he was protected by the quarterly meeting and its power of referral.

During the 1690's General Baptist referrals became conspicuous. The effect of referrals was to strip the regional meetings of effective power, for they became referral agencies. Prior to 1693 the only referrals to the Assembly came from local churches, such as Stone House and Shrewsbury; in reality the referrals were simple inquiries. In 1693 the Assembly authorized the Western Association to meet at Taunton in Somersetshire. In the event that the association did not convene, Messenger Amory was instructed "to Bring any Greivance or disorder in their Churches" to the Assembly. This

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190. A. H. J. Baines, "The Preface to the Orthodox Confession of 1679," *BQ*, XV (1953-54), 62-74, has pointed out that the text of the confession has an evident polemic against Rome, but that the chief attack was aimed at Caffyn, as the preface confirms.

was the first instance in which the Assembly arrogated authority to itself. Also in 1693, the Northern Association, composed of churches in Bucks and Middlesex, introduced a question in Christology. In 1696 the Assembly named the time for the meeting of the Northern Association. In 1697 the Northern Association briefly entertained two issues (the performance of weddings by Anglican clergymen and the defection of the General Association) which were referred to the Assembly without recommendation. Also in 1697 the Assembly received inquiries from Colchester, Lincoln, Chichester, and the Western Association. In 1698 the Western Association again brought up the question of cultic marriage, and Northamptonshire churches re-introduced the Christological question. In 1700 the Assembly sent letters to Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire churches, and in 1701 the General Association sent letters to the same churches. Apparently the Assembly and Association were competing for the support of these churches, which affiliated with the Association in 1703. In 1702 the Northern Association considered five items requiring deliberation and decision, but referred each to the Assembly, apparently without recommendation. In the same year, the Assembly "ordered" that "an Association shall of course proceed the Assembly."<sup>191</sup>

Among General Baptists, the early practice was for a local church to solicit aid when needed. This practice

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191. MGA, I, 30, 37, 39, 42, 49, 50, 52, 69, 71f, 80.

gave way to the procedure of referrals to or inquiries of associations. By the end of the century, the General Assembly had apparently made a ritual out of quarterly meeting or regional referrals, but the Assembly still insisted on orderly referrals. The interesting thing, however, is that the Northern Association, which was comprised of prominent churches which apparently took the lead in the Assembly, consistently declined to decide issues, preferring to refer the issues without recommendations to the Assembly.

General Baptists neither worked out in theory nor developed in practice a system which protected the authority of the local church. The rights of regional associations were also violated. The system of referrals was designed to be a connecting link between church, quarterly meeting, and Assembly, but it was a weak link. The chief value of the system is that it sought to prevent competition and disharmony between the local church and the Assembly, but unfortunately the system achieved little success.

b. Particular Baptists. Among Particular Baptists there was not the tendency to elevate the Assembly. The Assembly defined its authority before tension arose. The Assembly of 1689 disclaimed any desire to arbitrate difficult cases. The Assembly endorsed the procedure which churches employed in local matters: differences are handled by private consultation or church conference, and appeal for outside assistance is made only in irremedial circumstances.

Instead of surrendering authority to a large and powerful Assembly, Particular Baptists divided their Assembly into two meetings in 1692. Each meeting sent representatives to the other. In 1700 the Welsh Association separated from the Western Assembly. In each case the division was amicable. Ostensibly the divisions were accomplished for purposes of efficiency and convenience. A natural result was the de-emphasis of the Assembly's authority.

#### D. Associational Program

Descriptions of associational meetings are rare. However, there is an abundance of minutes which record the topics discussed and agreements reached, and there are some descriptions of meetings. There is enough evidence to permit satisfactory reconstruction of the program of associational meetings, especially of Particular Baptists.

1. Western Association, 1658. The fullest description of an associational meeting was written, not by a Baptist participant, but by a spy. John Cooke was instructed to investigate the Western Association in 1658 to determine if political sedition were intended.<sup>192</sup> Cooke made a full report of the meeting. The "Annabaptists" arrived on Monday. On Tuesday morning the meeting, composed of about three hundred persons, gave attention to "receiveinge and readinge certaine

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<sup>192</sup>. See Thurloe Papers, VII, 138-140, for Cooke's report.

letters," presented by appointed messengers from the various churches. These letters were inscribed: "An epistle of the church of Church /sic/ in \_\_\_\_\_ to the messengers of the several churches of Christ."

The subject matter of most of them (besides salutation) was to inquire the estate of the other churches, and to give an accounte of there owne; the motive of both beinge the consideration of the season, which they assert to be a time of apostasy and persecution.<sup>193</sup>

Collier was the "regulator of this affaire," recording the epistles as they were presented. The afternoon session was given to prayer and preaching, perhaps extempore, by eight men.

On Wednesday morning, additional epistles were read, and afterwards certain issues were discussed throughout the day: alms-seeking, mixed marriage, preaching circumstantials as fundamental faith, anointing with oil, and laying on of hands. John Vernon and William Allen arrived Wednesday afternoon. That evening in closed session the group took up the matter of Fifth Monarchism. On Thursday morning "all the grandees, with the pastors and teachers only" debated on unknown issues until two o'clock. Concurrently, a public meeting was held, in which "prayinge and preachinge" dominated. A closed meeting was held Thursday evening, and on Friday morning a prayer meeting was held. At the conclusion of the meeting, all of the messengers met

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193. Ibid., p. 138.

to receive an accounte of the result of the generall meetings, to communicate to the severall churches from whom they came and to receive information of the day and place for the next generall meetings.<sup>194</sup>

This description provides the basis for two interesting observations. First, participation in the meeting was not restricted to churches and persons who were located within the regional limits of the Western Association. Several Londoners (Deane, Kiffin, Warren, and Harrison) and ex-Army officers (Vernon and Allen) attended, and apparently exercised considerable influence. It is conceivable that Vernon and Allen were considered members of the Dalwood church in the region, but they had been in Ireland until quite recently. The Londoners, of course, were outside the area of the Western Association. Secondly, there is no indication that the Londoners were delegated to attend the Western Association. It appears that they attended because of their interest in the Fifth Monarchy problem. They were cordially received because of their eminence among Baptists, and their views were respectfully heard.

2. General Assembly, 1689. The General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689 spent its first day in prayer, the second in formulating procedural rules, and the third in deliberations about establishing a common fund. The other six or seven days were spent in debating certain questions.

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194. Ibid., p. 139.

Unfortunately, the deliberations on the questions were not fully recorded, the record simply stating the resolution of each question in terms of "yes" or "no." Most of the questions dealt with cultic problems.<sup>195</sup> In conclusion, a "General Epistle" to all churches was issued over thirty-two signatures, exhorting the churches to fidelity and advising them of the Assembly's resolutions.<sup>196</sup>

3. General Baptists. The evidence concerning the proceedings of General Baptist meetings is very scarce, but they deliberated issues which were similar to those discussed by Particular Baptists. There is no evidence to suggest that their meetings differed basically from those of Particular Baptists, except in the degree of order.

4. Conclusion. Throughout the seventeenth century, the program was given to prayer, exhortation, and deliberation on common problems. These elements persisted throughout the eighteenth century, but the spontaneity which characterized early associational meetings gave way to formal programs. The Welsh Association appointed, two years in advance, a person to preach the associational sermon in 1703.<sup>197</sup> In 1702 the General Association of General Baptists named someone to preach, pray, and supplicate at the meeting in 1703.<sup>198</sup> The

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195. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 48-56.

196. Op.cit., pp. 43-47.

197. Thomas, op. cit., p. 29.

198. MGA, I, 77.

preaching of former meetings was spontaneous, possessing the character of testifying or exhorting. During the eighteenth century, preachers were charged to preach at associational meetings and given at least a year to prepare.

In the seventeenth century, the letters which issued from joint meetings bore several signatures. Three persons signed the Circular Letter of the Western Association in 1656. The general epistle of the Particular Baptist Assembly in 1689 was signed by thirty-two persons. Apparently multiple signatures were considered necessary for the proper certification of the authenticity of the record. During the period, it should be noted, it was common for local church minutes, such as those of the Whites Alley church, to be signed by each brother who attended. During the eighteenth century, the associational letter was usually drawn up by one party and issued over the signature of the moderator, usually the host pastor.<sup>199</sup> In the eighteenth century, associationalism was formal enough for only one delegated person to authenticate documents.

#### CONCLUSION

Informal connectionalism, which was designed to meet specific needs, developed into organized associational life.

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<sup>199</sup>. Whitley, "Associational Life till 1815," Trans., V (1916-17), 24-27.

Initially, inter-relations were between churches which were closely connected by ties of geography or sentiment, and within a common faith and order. Faith and order became more important as formal associationalism developed. It was unanimously held that basic agreement is an indispensable condition of satisfactory inter-relations.

- Particular Baptists learned to tolerate differences in ecclesiological minutiae, but in theology they achieved notable unanimity. It was this unanimity which held them together during a period of stagnation. General Baptists were characterized by theological diversity and individuality from the mid-century onward. As the century progressed, General Baptists attempted to stabilize their theology, but they never worked out a satisfactory statement. By the end of the century, the chief issue, which resulted in an unfortunate split, was Christological. General Baptist diversity in ecclesiology led them to seek a New Testament minimum. Upon discovering Hebrews 6:1, 2, they sought to impose laying on of hands as a sixth essential of the primitive church.

The theory of connectionalism was founded on the doctrine of the universal or invisible church. The principle of mutual care was extended to inter-church relations, as the earliest deliberate statements of associational purpose so happily illustrate.

In the seventeenth century, churches (especially in the

country) were composed of several congregations and scattered membership. This pattern was, in reality, neither local nor associational, but theoretically it was local or congregational. When conditions permitted, two or more distinct churches were formed out of a scattered church. The previous intimate relationship within the scattered church stimulated inter-church relations as soon as the division took place. However, as churches aged, their inter-relations became formal. The practice of extra-local benevolence and extra-local assistance in the constitution of churches and ordination of officers also contributed to the rise of formal associationalism. It is tragic that distance and the construction of meeting-houses localized the churches and made them self-centered.

Baptists did not develop a system of associationalism which operates automatically. At the end of the century when associationalism was formally strong, the Baptist witness lacked strength and virility. Nevertheless, Baptist associationalism was more satisfactory than the local autonomy of Congregationalists, or the ministerial supremacy of Anglicans and Presbyterians. Baptists erred in becoming conservative and in employing their energy unduly in resolving circumstantial and local problems of inner life. These problems required consideration, of course, but self-centeredness did not solve them; in fact, it created missionary inertia.

Formal associationalism lost much of the vitality which characterized early experiments in connectionalism. General Baptists were radical, aggressive sectaries around 1650, but at the end of the century they were a regressive minority seeking to maintain cultic integrity by isolationism and narrowness. Particular Baptists were initially very vigorous propagandists for Baptist views, but the certitude of theological orthodoxy prevented them from realizing the benefits of co-operative endeavor, which their theory of associationalism proposed. Baptists attempted, sometimes by joint action, to maintain true faith and order. However, formal associationalism which concerned itself almost exclusively with inner life and thought was enervating. The formalism of associational life was one factor in the rapid multiplication of mission societies after 1792, for associations were too conservative to meet the demands of enlarged vision and effort.

A contrast between General and Particular Baptist practices of associationalism is profitable. General Baptists employed connectionalism as early as Particular Baptists, but they failed to define a workable theory. In the initial joint actions against external threats, this was no disadvantage, for General Baptists had a basic unity against these forces. However, when they addressed themselves to the resolution of internal problems, the lack of an adequate theory which protects local churches became a detriment. Radical sectarianism

was successful in the encounter with external forces, but General Baptists failed to adapt sectarianism to the demands of denominational harmony and unity.

Particular Baptists proceeded more cautiously in effecting formal associations. They defined their principles clearly enough to permit unity and broad enough to frustrate disagreement over minutiae. They realized that there must be both theological and ecclesiological grounds for effective unity, so they refused to compromise either. However, they refused to make the grounds of agreement so narrow or ambiguous that they would be divisive or meaningless. Their theory aptly preserved the rights of the local church and embraced the values of inter-dependence. It is unfortunate, therefore, that they whose theory was so good, did not continue to operate by it and to profit from it.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### INTERNAL PROBLEMS

The unity which Baptists achieved against external threats was undermined by internal problems. Both Particular and General Baptists had begun to crystallize as denominations by 1650, and denominationalism became more entrenched in the following years. However, denominational unity was threatened by problems of an ecclesiological nature. They arose out of the biblicism of the age. As Baptists increased in size and importance, it became necessary for them to achieve a workable unanimity on essentials, but the ambiguity of New Testament practice fostered differences of opinion over certain features of organized religious life. The problems which most agitated Baptists were the laying on of hands, church-communion, singing, oath-taking, love feasts and foot-washing, and Sabbatarianism.

#### I. LAYING ON OF HANDS

Laying on of hands was performed in two ways. First, hands were laid on all believers after baptism. Secondly, hands were laid on officers in ordination. In both practices General Baptists predominated. Particular Baptists were reluctant to adopt the practices, but by the end of the century both were being widely accepted. The laying on of hands upon

baptized believers troubled General Baptists from the mid-century onward. The imposition of hands in ordination caused some concern among Particular Baptists during the last quarter of the century.

A. Imposition of Hands upon Baptized Believers

1. Origin of practice. In 1674 Henry Danvers reported that Francis Cornwell inaugurated the practice of laying hands on believers in 1646 in a sermon preached at the Spittle in Bishops-gate-street, London. In reply to Danvers, Benjamin Keach reported, on the basis of information received from an "eminent" brother who had "full knowledge" of the affair, that those who separated over the principle joined with London and Kentish churches which were already under the practice. He also stated that the practice was instituted "about the time water Baptism or dipping Believers" was introduced.<sup>1</sup> Edwards reported a ceremony in which Edward Barber performed laying on of hands prior to February 15, 1646. Edwards allegedly received his information from an eye-witness, but his account is ambiguous; hands may have been laid on the "five new Members lately Dipped" or on all members, about eighty in all.<sup>2</sup>

2. Extension of practice. The principle was not widely accepted until after 1651. It spread rapidly among General Baptists and was endorsed in their confessions. The confes-

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1. Benjamin Keach, Darkness Vanquished, 1675, pp. 101-103.

2. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, 1646, I, 104.

sion of 1651 related the use of hands to ordination only,<sup>3</sup> but the confession of 1654 advocated the imposition of hands on each baptized believer.<sup>4</sup> In the confessions of 1660 and 1678 it was defended as a means for receiving the Holy Spirit,<sup>5</sup> the purpose for which Barber had employed the rite in 1645 or 1646.<sup>6</sup> Due to the representative character of these two confessions the practice was widely, though not uniformly, adopted by General Baptists.

a. Biblicism. It has been conjectured that the acceptance of the rite derived from "a desire to emphasise and secure the gift of the Spirit,"<sup>7</sup> but this supposition is only partially correct. The most satisfactory explanation of the phenomenal spread of the principle within three to five years is the extreme biblicism of General Baptists. They were experimentalists who sought to restore primitive church-order. The rite was first introduced during the heated controversy about church-order in the 1640's. During the 1650's, diversity within and the encroachment of Quakerism from without necessitated an intensive investigation of the New Testament pattern. Laying on of hands was soon discovered to be the

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3. W. J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 108.

4. W. L. Lumpkin, The Local Baptist Confessions of Faith of the Civil War--Commonwealth Period, p. 155. Lumpkin also points out that this was the first confession to specify this.

5. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 116, 148.

6. Edwards, loc. cit.

7. E. A. Payne, "Baptists and the Laying on of Hands," BQ, XV (1953-54), 214.

practice of the New Testament churches. An alleged basis for the practice was found in Hebrews 6:1, 2. The six statements of this passage became known as the "Six Principles," of which laying on of hands was called the "Fourth Principle." This Biblical statement of essential doctrines facilitated the acceptance of the rite. However, the result was the adding of another "essential" which was ecclesiastical in character. As early as 1655 it was being claimed that "Antichrist" had failed in "dis-ordinancing" the Church (Quakers), so he altered his strategy and continued in his attempts to deceive the Church by adding ordinances.<sup>8</sup> Thomas Grantham argued in 1674 that the doctrine of laying on of hands should be protected, while "many are seeking for those things that might make for Peace."<sup>9</sup> By the 1670's, it appears, the Six Principles were considered by some General Baptists as the epitome of doctrinal fundamentals. It was felt that doctrinal ecumenicity was comprehended in these principles, but the list was too incomplete for such a Bible-minded age.

b. Arguments in support of biblicism. There are three factors which support the view that the laying on of hands derived from a desire to restore primitivism, as literally determined. First, those who vigorously propagandized for the principle also advocated such practices as the observ-

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8. Thomas Morris, A Messenger Sent, 1655, "To the Reader."

9. Thomas Grantham, The Fourth Principle of Christs Doctrine Vindicated, 1674, ep. ded.

ance of a love feast, singing of psalms, foot-washing, etc., all on the basis of New Testament practice. Secondly, Baptist Sabbatarians (Dr. Peter Chamberlen, Thomas Tillam, and John James), who were extreme biblicists, adopted the principle very early. Thirdly, the use of hands after baptism and at ordination was extensively practiced by the biblicistic General Baptists; Particular Baptists were reluctant to admit the practices, though some adopted them.<sup>10</sup>

#### B. Effect on Fellowship

The controversy over the practice of laying on of hands upon believers impaired Baptist life. General Baptists suffered most, but Particular Baptists were also affected.

1. Particular Baptists. a. Wales. Among Particular Baptists, the principle was most widely adopted by rural, open communion, and Sabbatarian Baptists, and by converts from the General Baptists. In Wales the question about the imposition of hands arose as early as 1651. In 1654 the issue reached

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10. Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720, edited by E. B. Underhill, p. 295. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Church Records," as appropriate.) See Thomas Tillam, The Fourth Principle of the Christian Religion, 1655, ep. ded., for an apt illustration of the reasons stated in this paragraph. Tillam defended "the precious ordinances of Christ, as Baptisme, Church fellowship, Love-feasts, washing of feet, breaking of bread, singing of Psalmes, Imposition of hands, Church officers, Sabbath, Lords day, Anointing with oil, Holy kisse, Christian salutes, Censures and such like."

serious proportions, and a general meeting convened three weeks early because of it and other internal problems. The subject concerning laying on of hands was proposed by the Carmarthen church. The Association named five men to treat it according to the Scriptures at the next meeting, and charged Carmarthen "by admonition, &c. to prevent the broaching among them of any thing concerning it, until that meeting be past."<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the records of the next meeting are lost, but it is known that the problem was not resolved. In 1675 Keach dedicated Darkness Vanquished to the Baptist churches in South Wales; in 1698 he re-issued the book under the title, Laying on of Hands upon Baptized Believers, but he retained the dedication. In the postscript Keach professed his belief that the principle is "of the same nature of Baptism." This was an exaggeration, it seems, for he objected to separation over the principle, though he thought separation over baptism is justifiable.<sup>12</sup>

b. Thomas Tillam. One of the earliest advocates of laying on of hands among Particular Baptists was Thomas Tillam. It is not known when he first became interested in the principle, but he became more convinced of its validity while visiting in Chamberlen's church, London, in 1653 before the

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11. Joshua Thomas, A History of the Baptist Association in Wales, in BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 11.

12. Benjamin Keach, Laying on of Hands upon Baptized Believers, 1698, p. 111.

church became Sabbatarian. The Hexham church, under Tillam's leadership, adopted the principle, but soon Tillam was under attack from Hobson and Gower of Newcastle. The Coleman Street church, London, which had approved Tillam as a preaching disciple, was encouraged by Newcastle in 1655 to deny fellowship to Hexham members who favored laying on of hands. The open communion Swan Alley church, London, of which Henry Jessey was pastor, approved the principle and recognized Hexham as "a church of Christ, with which he hath communion; and therefore we are willing to enjoy communion with you." Open communionist tolerance was applied to the issue of laying on of hands, for Jessey's church refused to exclude from the Table those who do not accept the principle, "merely for weakness' sake."<sup>13</sup> This latter statement was perhaps intended as a reproof of Tillam who, it appears, had unchurched several members who had rejected the practice.

c. Other cases. There were not many cases of Particular Baptist agitation over the principle, but in some areas it was an issue of brief moment. In Bedfordshire the practice had become enough of an issue by 1656 to merit specific mention in Gifford's celebrated letter on the basis of church-communion.<sup>14</sup> In 1653 the Somerset assembly agreed that hands should be applied in ordination; laying on of hands upon be-

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13. Hexham Records, pp. 295, 323, 347f.

14. The Church Book of Bunyan Meeting 1650-1821, pp. 2-4. (Hereafter this will be referred to as Bunyan Meeting Records.)

lievers may not be made a condition of communion and anyone who preaches it as an essential is to be boycotted by the Western Association.<sup>15</sup>

In 1674 and 1675 Henry Danvers repudiated the principle. Benjamin Keach reported that Danvers' arguments were so inconclusive that about thirty Londoners came under the practice on one day after the publication of Danvers' book. Keach also claimed that "many godly persons" (Presbyterians and Congregationalists) had assumed the practice, though they could not accept the principle of baptism. It is noteworthy that Keach had been a Particular Baptist not longer than three years; he probably assumed the principle while yet a General Baptist. It was Keach who sponsored the practice among Particular Baptists at the end of the century. He and his son, Elias, included an article on the imposition of hands upon believers in the confession which they drew up for their churches. This article was appropriated by the Philadelphia Association and added to the revised confession of 1677 (the Philadelphia Confession) as the thirty-first article.<sup>16</sup>

The General Assembly in 1689 was silent on the laying on of hands. The latitude in their procedural rules prevented deliberation on issues on which there were honest differences of opinion. This tolerance favored the spread of the practice,

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15. Joseph Ivimey, History of the Baptists, IV, 257.

16. Keach, Darkness Vanguished, 1675, ep. ded., p. 8; McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 297f.

for it prevented discipline of those who adopted the practice and permitted its extension without bitter feelings.

d. Caution. When laying on of hands was practiced by Particular Baptists, it was administered so as not to offend those who did not approve it. The Wapping church, London, first discussed the matter about 1703 or 1704. When a new pastor, Edward Elliott, came, the church appointed another person privately to lay hands on initiates who requested it, for Elliott refused to perform the rite.<sup>17</sup> Elliott honored individual preference and the church honored Elliott's scruples. For the most part, Particular Baptist leadership denied that imposition of hands upon believers is a fundamental principle. Among those who denied the principle were Collier, Hobson, Kiffin, Knollys, Tombes, etc. However, they handled those who requested the rite in such a way as both to gratify the desires of individuals and to prevent offense to those who rejected the practice.

2. General Baptists. General Baptists adopted the practice in great numbers as soon as they reckoned it to be one of the six fundamentals of the New Testament church. There were some who denied the principle, so there was an intense controversy over the issue for a few years, from which General Baptists suffered heavily in both fellowship and membership.

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17. E. F. Kevan, London's Oldest Baptist Church, pp. 50f.

a. Norborough and Samuel Oates. Late in 1651 or early in 1652, pastor Wright of the Norborough church came under the practice. He immediately denied that he was the pastor of those who rejected it. Samuel Oates, a member of Lambe's Bell Alley church, London, was then in the area, so he was summoned to confute Wright. Apparently Oates was successful in the debate, for Wright's exclusivism was moderated, with pastor and church granting each other liberty in the matter. However, within a year the situation became so critical that outside assistance was ineffectual in resolving the differences.<sup>18</sup> Oates was so violently opposed to the principle of laying on of hands, arguing that it is similar to Anglican confirmation, that he soon ceased to evangelize for General Baptists.<sup>19</sup> The practice was progressing too rapidly for Oates' position to be honored, so he withdrew his support.

b. Fenstanton. The Fenstanton church played a considerable part in the spread of the practice. It was practiced by Fenstanton in November, 1652, but it was not included among the ordinances--praying, preaching, baptism, and breaking of bread. As late as December, 1653, it was not considered one of the distinguishing marks of General Baptists.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, it was already the uniform practice, for in August, 1653, Fenstanton was charged with making it a condition of

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18. Fenstanton Records, pp. 63-68.

19. \_\_\_\_\_, "An Early Recruit from the Clergy," BQ, II (1924-25), 331.

20. Fenstanton Records, pp. 8, 31, 84.

communion. In 1656 candidates for office in the Fenstanton church had to accept the principle, with conviction, before election to office.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1653 and 1656 Fenstanton participated in the spread of the practice, as disputant, arbitrator, and administrator. The Norborough church asked Fenstanton to assist in disciplining Wright, who had refused to honor Norborough's admonition because it was not under the principle. The Westby church requested Fenstanton to provide scriptural grounds for the practice. Fenstanton immediately complied, stating that believers who were not under the principle were admitted to communion, for they were faithful, though ignorant; their deficiency, Fenstanton said, could be corrected by instruction.

In 1654 Fenstanton elders laid hands on members of the Warboys church. In February, 1655, some members of the Wisbeach church requested Fenstanton to send administrators, and in April two elders instituted the practice at Wisbeach, even though "mightily opposed" by one brother. Within a month a few members of the Wisbeach church, apparently under the influence of Lincolnshire elders, were holding the view that those under the practice should separate from those not under it, for the latter lack qualifications for communion. The Peterborough church, about the same time, requested Fenstanton to supply an administrator.

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21. Ibid., pp. 61, 188f.

Prior to July, 1656, the parts of the scattered church of Thorpe in Rutland agreed, in a spirit of toleration, to forbear various views on the principle. On July 4, 1656, however, the main part at Rutland "did establish a decree to have no communion with those that were under laying on of hands." Members at Thorpe itinerated from village to village, house to house, in an effort to secure the renunciation of the principle. When the Wakerly part asked Fenstanton to intercede, the Thorpe part categorically refused to permit Fenstanton to arbitrate the matter, for Fenstanton's position prejudiced impartiality. Moreover, Thorpe declared that unity was impossible unless Wakerly disowned the principle.<sup>22</sup>

Fenstanton achieved unanimity on the principle and assisted its spread. However, at least four churches split over the practice, and Fenstanton was variously involved in each case. Unfortunately, the divisions were not amicable. Fellowship was disrupted because of the sectarian vigor with which the rite was instituted.

c. Intolerance in the 1650's. General Baptists could not agree to tolerate differences about laying on of hands. In 1655 Benjamin Morley proposed that hands be laid only on those who request the rite. His latitude was immediately attacked, not by a protagonist for the rite, but by an opponent, who argued that the decision should not be left up to

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22. Ibid., pp. 61, 63f, 129, 140, 142f, 202-206; Warboys Records, p. 271.

the baptized believer if the principle is fundamental.<sup>23</sup> Such sentiment, held by both proponents and antagonists, made toleration impossible. General Baptists had to resolve the matter one way or another, so the General Assembly agreed, in September, 1656, "that mixt Communion in breaking of bread wth psons denying laying on of hands is not lawful."<sup>24</sup> The Kent association in 1657 also limited communion to those under the principle.<sup>25</sup> How prominent Fenstanton was in these agreements is unknown, but it is noteworthy that the Assembly's action followed the Thorpe affair by two months and that Henry Denne was, or had been, active in Canterbury, Kent.

d. Amersham. The Amersham congregation, on August 15, 1675, split from a church which rejected laying on of hands. The church may have been a Particular Baptist church, but it seems more likely that it was a General Baptist church. The alleged reason for separation was Amersham's belief that laying on of hands is a duty incumbent on all believers. John Griffith of London was called to institute the rite. The first "Artickell of Agreement" established Hebrews 6:1, 2 as the basis of communion at the Supper.<sup>26</sup>

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23. Morris, op. cit., Part II, pp. 1-18. The second part was written by Robert Everards who held that imposition of hands should be employed only in ordination.

24. Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, With Kindred Records, edited by W. T. Whitley, I, 6. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "MGA.")

25. Horace Warde, "Two Associational Meetings in Kent, 1657," Trans., III (1912-13), 250.

26. The Church Books of Ford or Cuddington and Amersham,

e. Age of Toleration. The problem continued to agitate General Baptists after toleration came. In 1688 several members of Whites Alley, London, rejected laying on of hands and joined with Turner's Hall church. Whites Alley refused in January, 1688, to recommend "Sister Alin" as she had disorderly left the church, apparently over the principle. In May and June the church considered deposing Allen from the ministry for rejecting the principle.<sup>27</sup>

In 1692 the new church in Covent Gardens, recently sponsored by the Six Principle Dependency, "sat down" with some who were not under the principle. The five churches sought either to convince Covent Gardens of its error and irregularity, or else to reclaim their members from Covent Gardens.

Whites Alley received members from several General Baptist churches in 1687, 1694, 1695, and 1696. If the persons had not already come under the principle, hands were laid on them upon admission into Whites Alley. In one instance, a church refused to recommend a lady to Whites Alley, but Whites Alley proceeded to admit her, charging the other church with prejudice over the issue of laying on of hands.<sup>28</sup>

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edited by W. T. Whitley, pp. 202f. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Church Records," as appropriate.) Whitley (Introduction, p. xiii) unqualifiedly affirms that Amersham was initially related to a Particular Baptist church.

27. The Church-Book of White Alley Meeting House, I, 25-30. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Whites Alley Records.") Cf. Richard Knight, History of the General or Six Principle Baptists, p. 45; \_\_\_\_\_, "Paul's Alley Barbican, 1695-1768," Trans., IV (1914-15), 49.

28. Whites Alley Records, I, 22, 120, 129f, 144.

In 1702 the General Assembly agreed that

A Member of the Church of Christ built upon the foundation mentioned 6 Hebr: 1: 2: May not Joyn in Matters relating to the Worship of God with a Church that is not built upon that foundation.<sup>29</sup>

The Assembly carried the principle of non-communion further than it had previously been carried. This prohibition concerned "worship" whereas former agreements concerned "breaking of bread." The rule applied to relations with General Baptists, for there were other rules which prohibited worship and communion with Particular Baptists and non-Baptists.

f. Conclusion. Among General Baptists, laying on of hands became a disruptive factor. The "dis-ordinancing" tenets of Quakerism forced General Baptists to investigate anew their conformity to New Testament practices, and they quickly appropriated the statement in Hebrews 6:1, 2, as containing the essentials of the New Testament church. The period of vigorous propaganda for the principle followed the majority of defections to Quakerism in the Fenstanton church only by a few months. The principle spread rapidly, but it frequently encountered opposition, and the friction which developed was unhealthy. Assembly and associational actions sought to coerce acceptance of the principle which propaganda could not establish. There is no basis whatsoever on which to suppose that joint statements represented the unanimous opinion and practice of General Baptists. The recurrent actions of joint

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29. MGA, I, 71.

meetings were in reality reactions to opposition to the principle from General Baptists. Some churches dissented from the rite, and an indeterminate number refused to affiliate with those who held the principle.

### C. Imposition of Hands in Ordination

1. General Baptists. The practice of laying on of hands in ordination increased during the century. It became a ritual in the official recognition of all officers. The practice seems to have been uniformly accepted by General Baptists. They believed that it conformed to New Testament practice. The confession of 1651 advocated the use of hands in ordination, and Thomas Grantham argued that authority can be delegated to officers only through ordination with laying on of hands.

2. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists were divided over the use of hands in ordination. In denying the practice, some were influenced by Independents. When the Norwich Independent church divided from the Yarmouth church for convenience in 1647, Yarmouth advised that laying on of hands is not permissible if it connotes a conferral of gifts; if it is merely demonstrative of the setting apart for office, it is lawful. Within a few years, some of the Norwich leaders became Baptists.<sup>30</sup> The position which the Yarmouth church defined was characteristic of Particular Baptists at the time.

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30. C. B. Jewson, "St. Mary's, Norwich," BQ, X (1940-41), 172.

In 1656 Parsons of Hatch, Somerset, objected to the use of hands in ordination.<sup>31</sup> In 1662 Broadmead, Bristol, set apart a pastor, elder, deacon, and deaconess. The church intended to use hands in their ordination, but one of the participating ministers scrupled the practice. In 1680 it was the Broadmead pastor who scrupled the rite.<sup>32</sup> The Porton church was advised by Bristol ministers in 1679 to have hands laid on three elders who had been functioning for twenty years or more.<sup>33</sup>

During the 1690's, the rite gained ground. Isaac Marlow attacked both the practice and those who advocated it. He argued that the practice came from Anglicanism through General Baptists, and that it was being adapted for the ordination of officers. Ostensibly, his chief fear was that the practice would encourage the superstition that ministerial grace is transferred through succession.<sup>34</sup> Marlow's was a losing cause, however, for laying on of hands became the usual procedure at eighteenth century ordinations.<sup>35</sup>

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31. W. Fisher, "The Baptists of Hatch Beauchamp," BQ, XII (1946-49), 34.

32. The Records of a Church of Christ, meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-1687, edited by E. B. Underhill, pp. 72f, 427. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Broadmead Records.")

33. W. T. Whitley, "Early Baptists in Hampshire," BQ, I (1922-23), 224.

34. \_\_\_\_\_, "James Jones's Coffee-House," BQ, VI (1932-35), 325.

35. Payne, op. cit., p. 206. Payne states that the practice went into disrepute during the nineteenth century, probably as "the result of a wave of anti-clericalism" inspired by the "High Church" Oxford Movement in Anglicanism.

Whereas there was disagreement on the imposition of hands in ordination, it was not disruptive of Particular Baptist fellowship, except in a few instances. It was a matter in which the ministry was primarily concerned, so churches normally honored ministerial preferences or scruples. Though Marlow's fears had some basis, his attack against Keach toward the end of the century was partially inspired by jealousy. Though Particular Baptist fellowship was able to absorb the direct influence of the controversy, it was impaired by the indirect influence; the practice of laying on of hands upon ordinands contributed to ministerial elevation.

## II. CHURCH-COMMUNION

Closed or strict communion was the practice of restricting fellowship at the Lord's Supper to persons who were baptized as believers. As developed in controversy, the theory specifically excluded persons who had been baptized as infants but not as believers. Open communion was the practice of extending fellowship at the Table to persons who had been baptized either as infants or believers, and whose active faith and holiness of life qualified them for communion. Mixed communion was the practice of extending communion at the Supper to persons whose fitness to partake had not been confirmed by adequate discipline. At times "mixed" or "mixt" was used interchangeably with "open." However, for the purposes of

this thesis, the two ideas must be differentiated. In this thesis, "mixed" will be used to convey the idea of communion with profane or undisciplined persons; in quotation "mixed" may mean "open," but the meaning will not be ambiguous.

A. Guarded Communion

1. Uniform practice. Baptists uniformly rejected mixed communion. They insisted that the church must guard the Supper against desecration. This required the exercise of stringent mutual care within the church. When a person failed to meet the requirements of sound faith and holy living, the church excluded him from the Supper. The Supper was ordinarily celebrated by the local congregation only, for the Supper could not be guarded if the determination of fitness to participate were left up to each individual. To be sure, introspection was encouraged, but Baptists were not so individualistic as ultimately to leave communion up to the individual.

2. Local observance. Whereas the Supper was normally celebrated by the local church only, participants were not irrevocably limited to local church members. Ministers officiated in churches of which they were not members. There were a few cases in which personal reputation secured communion privileges. The practice of recommendations was initially designed by a home church to secure communion privileges for its non-resident member in a sister church; the home church retained the membership of the absentee member. Such

a system both insured the Supper's purity and integrity, and expedited admittance to the Table. Within a generation letters of recommendation were employed to effect transferral of membership; this practice made local church communion more common, but "transient" communion persisted. At no time in the century did Baptists define a theory of exclusively local communion. On the whole, they appear to have been less strict about local communion than Congregationalists.<sup>36</sup>

3. Opposition to mixed communion. The theory of the disciplined church, which includes the idea of the guarded Table, led Baptists to reject communion in the National Church. Separatists also rejected communion with the National Church because of the latter's corrupt worship and profane communicants.<sup>37</sup> By 1639 nine churches had emerged out of Puritanism,

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36. Both Baptists and Congregationalists held that one must be a member of a visible church, but among Congregationalists the privileges of membership were more narrowly restricted to the local church; see John Owen, The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government, abridged and edited by John Huxtable, pp. 30-36. Edwards, op. cit., II, 151f, reports a "local church" case which occurred on April 6, 1646. An Essex friend of Sympson, pastor of an Independent congregation in London, visited the church and received bread, seemingly with Sympson's permission, "... which when he had received, there were some of the Church-members began to take notice he was none of their Church, and there was a great stirre and muttering about it, and they told him they admitted none but of their Church-way; whereupon this religious man [perhaps a Presbyterian] was not permitted to partake of the cup, but was glad to withdraw." He was "a godly man, and a visible Saint," but "not one of their members."

37. John Canne, A Necessity of Separation from the Church of England (Hanserd Knollys Society edition), pp. 230f.

assuming Separatist and Baptist positions; six of these refused to acknowledge the Church of England as a true church, and repudiated communion with Anglicans.<sup>38</sup> The same exclusivism toward the communion of the Church of England prevailed throughout the century. When and where Presbyterianism was established, communion with Presbyterians was also denied. During the Restoration, of course, a few open communionists took communion in Presbyterian churches, but Presbyterianism then possessed the status of a sect. Generally, open communionists were found only in Congregational and Particular Baptist churches.

#### B. Nature of the Communion Controversy

1. Real issue. The primary issue in the communion controversy was whether believers' baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to communion. Both open and closed communionists repudiated mixed communion and insisted on right faith and holy living. Closed communionists held believers' baptism as essential. Their chief argument was that good order demands adherence to New Testament practice. Ambiguity on baptism would result in disrespect to the ordinance.<sup>39</sup> Open communionists held that divers opinions on circumstantials (in-

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38. W. T. Whitley, editor, "Records of the Jacob-Lathorp-Jessey Church, 1616-1641," Trans., I (1908-09), 221f, n. 24.

39. William Kiffin, A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion, 1681, pp. 54-59, argues that "Antichrist" subverts Christianity by degrees. It is dangerous, therefore, to lower requirements which God has established and to which the New Testament church conformed.

cluding baptism) should be tolerated in a church, there being no objection to faith and "conversation." The controversy, therefore, dealt not with open communion, but with ambiguous baptism in a gathered church.

2. Rigidity of open communionist principle. Open communionists applied the principle of open communion so rigidly that, for all practical purposes, it was closed communion. Open communion was never conceived as a blanket invitation to all who call themselves Christian to come to the Table. John Tombes initially declared for "a profession of repentance and faith in Christ," but he denied

that it is necessary there should be a further probation by trying mens spirits, so as to satisfie the particular congregation or Church-officers; that a person be admitted to Church-membership; and the Lords Supper. I confesse such triall is requisite in admitting into speciall function, or intimate society; but not to communion in worship.<sup>40</sup>

Repentance and faith qualify one for baptism, Tombes argued, so they should also qualify one for the Supper. Tombes was inconsistent in affirming this, for in the same book he declared that a minister's "judgement of charity" is an inadequate basis for baptism; "certaine knowledge of true sanctification by extra-ordinary revelation, or ... the parties profession of faith by other meanes" is prerequisite to baptism.<sup>41</sup> Tombes affirmed that care must be taken in qualifying one for

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40. John Tombes, An Apology or Flea For the Two Treatises, 1646, p. 94.

41. Ibid., p. 101.

baptism; probation must be thorough.

The baptismal controversy forced Tombes to become more emphatic on believers' baptism. In 1659 he stated his preference that baptism precede the Supper. He still admitted the possibility of latent faith, but he said that infant baptism premised on it is not according to "the instituters commanded use" of baptism. Tombes declared:

I must confess as much as I am against separation I never intend to have communion with Master Blakes congregation, if they profess not saving repentance and faith. And if he exact not such a profession, I say still he makes foul work in the church.<sup>42</sup>

Tombes' objection to Blake's Presbyterian church was that a church has difficulty qualifying communicants for the Supper if it does not qualify them for the font.

Within three months Tombes issued a catechism on baptism. He used sixteen pages in defining believers' baptism. He also advised "baptized Christians ... to associate together in Church Communion" and to separate if there is "evil ... in Faith, Worship, or Discipline."<sup>43</sup> Tombes wrote this against Presbyterians, in deference to whom he had introduced the idea of open communion in the 1640's. In 1659 Tombes' logic and experience were leading him toward sectarian exclusivism and closed communion, but his disposition and the Restoration prevented him from arriving at these positions.

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42. John Tombes, Felo de Se, 1659, p. 24.

43. John Tombes, A Short Catechism About Baptism, 1659, 17p. (unnumbered).

Open communionists of the Bedfordshire region placed a stronger emphasis on holiness of life than Tombes, who had emphasized repentance and faith. The Bedfordshire emphasis permitted an easier maintenance of the disciplined church. The principle upon which the Bedford church was constituted was "Faith in Christ & Holiness of Life" without respect to externals.<sup>44</sup> John Gifford wrote a lengthy letter to the church just prior to his death, part of which reads:

Union with Christ is the Foundation of all Saints Communion and not any Ordinance of Christ or any Judgment about Externals. ... tho there should happen any Difference about other Things Concerning Separation from ye Church, about Baptism, Laying on of Hands, anointing with Oil, Psalms or any externals, I charge you every one of you respectively as he shall give an Account of it to our Lord Jesus Christ ... that none of you be found guilty of this Evil which while some have committed & that thru' a Zeal for God yet not according to knowledge they have erred from ye Law of the Love of Christ & have made a rent from ye Church which is but one.<sup>45</sup>

It bears repetition that this principle applied only to the local, gathered church.

The adoption of this principle was a condition of admission into the Bedford church and to its communion. Bedford uniformly refused to recommend members to churches which did not practice open communion. As a result of the controversy early in the 1670's, intense feelings sometimes accompanied these refusals.<sup>46</sup> In 1674 the Swan Alley church, London, of

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44. Bunyan Meeting Records, p. 2.

45. Ibid., pp. 2f.

46. Ibid., pp. 21, 25, 57f, 61, 74.

which Jessey had formerly been pastor, requested Bedford to recommend a lady, but Bedford delayed recommendation until the London church first advised if it still maintained as a "Church principle," "that good and godlie principle" of communion "with saints as saints."<sup>47</sup> Bedford refused to recommend to a church which made believers' baptism a condition of communion.

Another staunch open communionist in the same region was John Gibbs of Newport Pagnell. The Trust Deed of his church specified that "no one can preach, pray, or perform any religious worship or service in the assemblies, or on the premises, unless they agree with John Gibbs."<sup>48</sup> Gibbs held that believers' baptism is true baptism, but denied that it is a prerequisite to church-communion; so, none could preach in his church who did not believe accordingly. The stipulation of the deed eliminated Congregationalists who denied the former, and closed communionists who upheld the latter.

The foregoing adequately demonstrates that specific bounds were placed on open communion. Open communionists were just as rigid in applying their principle as closed communionists were in applying their's, in that the former made open communion fundamental to church-communion.

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47. *Ibid.*, pp. 57f.

48. M. F. Hewett, "John Gibbs, 1627-1699," *BC*, III (1926-27), 321.

C. Brief Sketch of the Controversy

The Baptist insistence on believers' baptism early in the 1640's effected a separation between Baptists and Independents. In the case of Particular Baptists, this separation was often amicably achieved. Nevertheless, Baptist propaganda led many non-Baptists to accuse Baptists of bigotry and exclusivism.<sup>49</sup>

1. Civil War-Commonwealth period. a. Early statements.

Baptists initially advocated the absolute importance of believers' baptism. They believed so strongly in the principle that they separated from congregationally-governed Paedo-baptists. The confession of 1644 insisted on believers' baptism only.<sup>50</sup> The confession was silent on the Lord's Supper, but Coxe's appendix to the 1646 edition stated that

we ... do not admit any to the use of the supper, nor communicate with any in the use of this ordinance, but disciples baptized, lest we should have fellowship with them in their doing contrary to order.<sup>51</sup>

Coxe's view, published in November, was apparently a rebuttal to Tombes' advocacy of open communion in August. There is reason, therefore, for supposing that the clarification of the Baptist position concerning the relation of baptism to communion was prompted by Tombes' ambiguity.

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49. Martin Blake, The Great Question, 1645, pp. 33, 73; Robert Bailly, The Dissuasive From the Errors of the Time, 1655, pp. 80f.

50. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 185.

51. Benjamin Coxe, An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, 1646, in E. B. Underhill, Confessions of Faith, p. 59.

Tombes had arrived at believers' baptism in an academic manner. He was an individualist for whom church-order was secondary. Except for a dispute with a Bristol Baptist whom he could not refute, all of Tombes' conversation on the subject of baptism was held with Independents and Presbyterians, out of deference to whom he agreed not to make an issue of believers' baptism. He initially intended to publish his defense of believers' baptism in Latin, for he felt that the matter was something which only scholars could decide. He later decided that God intended a wider reading than scholastic circles could provide, so he published it in English. In 1646 Tombes was attacking the confession of 1644 for putting baptism "into the definition of the Church,"<sup>52</sup> but within five months Robert Baillie, a Presbyterian, was accusing Tombes of inconsistency in his new "hetch-potch" view of baptism and open communion. Baillie also called Tombes an Erastian.<sup>53</sup> Baillie's attack was primarily designed to reclaim Tombes from his "error" about believers' baptism, but it also pointed out the error of open communion.

b. Henry Jessey. Henry Jessey supposedly adopted the principle of open communion as soon as he became a Baptist. He, too, claimed Independents as his closest friends. In

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52. Tombes, An Apology or Plea For the Two Treatises, 1646, pp. 8-12, 15, 65f.

53. Robert Baillie, Anabaptism, The True Fountaine ..., 1647, pp. 91f. Baillie thought that open communion would weaken each ecclesiastical tradition.

1644, before he became convinced about believers' baptism, Independents advised him not to excommunicate those who had separated over baptism; they had separated over zeal and their lives were free from scandal, so they should be tolerated.<sup>54</sup> Jessey continually maintained his close relation with Independent ministers. He conspicuously absented himself from Baptist propaganda in the 1640's, neither engaging in disputations with non-Baptists nor signing confessions of faith. However, there is no evidence that he actively propagated for open communion until the 1650's.

c. Controversy about 1653. There was little discussion on communion until after 1650 when Independency was ascendant. Cromwell desired to establish Independency on a basis broad enough to embrace both Independents and Baptists. During the latter half of 1653 the communion controversy flared up, while Independents were seeking Baptist support for an establishment of "free churches." Independents initiated the controversy, with John Goodwin being in the vanguard. Goodwin declared that "Church-communion" should not be based on "Water-Dipping." He exhorted Baptists "to continue Communion with those Churches, or imbedied Societies of Saints, of which they were members before the said Dipping."<sup>55</sup> In May, 1653, Allen answered Goodwin and predicted that Independency would, within

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54. W. T. Whitley, editor, "Debate on Infant Baptism, 1643," Trans., I (1908-09), 244.

55. John Goodwin, Water-Dipping No Firm Footing for Church-Communion, 1653, 90p.; see full title page.

a generation, become "as carnall as the Parochiall and Nationall" churches. On the basis of orderliness, he argued for strict adherence to believers' baptism.<sup>56</sup> In September, 1653, Tombes was attacked by a Presbyterian for his ambiguous view,<sup>57</sup> perhaps in an attempt to divorce the learned scholar from Independency.

Concurrently with the literary advocacy of open communion, the practice was spreading. Tombes and Jessey were the most zealous protagonists for it. In September, 1653, Jessey visited thirty churches in the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, which were

sound in the faith, and holy in life, though differing from some about the subject and manner of the ordinance of baptism. ... yet we desire that in all churches all truths be managed in the wisdom of the Spirit, and in all love.<sup>58</sup>

Also in September, 1653, Tombes held a disputation with parish clergymen in Abergavenny, Monmouth.<sup>59</sup> Prior to this time, Abergavenny had been related to Welsh churches and had apparently observed closed communion. Tombes perhaps introduced open communion in Abergavenny. At any rate, in March, 1654, the Welsh Association admonished Abergavenny "to take heed of mixed communion with unbaptized persons, or any

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56. William Allen, Some Baptismal abuses Briefly Discovered, 1653, 119p.

57. Baily, loc. cit.

58. Hexham Records, p. 347.

59. John Tombes, A Plea for Anti-Paedobaptists, 1654, 44p.; \_\_\_\_\_, A Publick Dispute, 1654, 111p.

others walking disorderly."<sup>60</sup> Thomas Proud was suspended from membership in the Ilston church for fourteen weeks because he favored open communion.<sup>61</sup> A modern study of religion in Wales has produced overwhelming confirmation that most Welsh Baptists of the period practiced closed communion. Open communionists were centered in the south, being led by Christopher Price who derived his views from Tombes.<sup>62</sup>

The exact date of the organization of the Bedford church is not known, but it appears to have been during the period of the communion controversy. Direct contact with Jessey or Tombes cannot be demarcated,<sup>63</sup> but Bunyan later appealed to the practice of these two men. It seems probable, therefore, that Bedford was indirectly influenced by Tombes and Jessey, even if personal contact were lacking.

During the Civil War-Commonwealth period, open communionism issued from Tombes and Jessey, both of whom were closely related to Independents. Both were willing to be included in established Independency. Both were rewarded by being named to "The Commission of Triers," a commission inaugurated March 20, 1654, to fill clerical vacancies.<sup>64</sup> In addition to

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60. Thomas, op. cit., p. 11.

61. Frank Lee, "The Ter-Centenary of Ilston, 1649-1949," BQ, XIII (1949-50), 150.

62. Book Review of Thomas Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, 1654-1662, in BQ, II (1924-25), 43-46.

63. W. T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, pp. 136f.

64. Henry Gee and W. J. Hardy, Documents Illustrative of English Church History, pp. 577-582.

these two semi-Baptists, Independents also pressed for the practice of open communion; in fact, they inspired the movement. Vavasor Powell did not become a Baptist until 1658, but he propagated in Wales for open communion, gathering about twenty churches in Montgomeryshire and environs, all but one of which became distinctively Independent at a later date.<sup>65</sup> In 1653 open communion was advocated by Independents for two reasons: conservation of their members and political expediency. They hoped to neutralize the effect of believers' baptism, thus taking the edge off Baptist propaganda; they needed Baptist support for the establishment of Independency, but they could not gain such support so long as Baptists made believers' baptism a condition of communion.

Baptist opposition to open communion was not a sustained effort, for the problem seems to have been handled on the local and regional levels. The Welsh Association in 1654, the Western Association in 1656, the General Baptist Kent Association in 1657, and the West Midlands Association in 1658 rejected the practice.<sup>66</sup>

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65. E. K. Jones, "Welsh Baptist Polity," *BQ*, XII (1946-49), 199.

66. Thomas, *loc. cit.*; E. A. Payne, *The Baptists of Berkshire*, p. 27; Warde, *op. cit.*, p. 248; A. J. Klaiber, "Baptists at Bewdley, 1649-1949," *BQ*, XIII (1949-50), 118. The latter case is significant for Bewdley was the home of Tombes. In 1658 the churches at Bewdley and Gloucester were proposed to the West Midlands Association, but the Association asked them to study the confession, which repudiated open communion, before they were admitted.

There is no evidence to support the conjecture that Kiffin's Devonshire Square church, London, which was formed in 1653, was the first to refuse admission to Paedo-baptists.<sup>67</sup> Kiffin was a closed communionist, but there is no indication that he took an active part in the controversy at this time. To the contrary, there are indications that he was well-disposed toward Independents. On July 7, 1653, as Independents were making their drive for establishment, Kiffin and five other men were licensed to preach anywhere; they were given "free use of any pulpits" which were not in use by regular ministers.<sup>68</sup> Kiffin also maintained a healthy relationship with Cromwell's government while some Baptists were denouncing it. It is improbable, therefore, that Kiffin spearheaded the campaign for closed communion.

The extensive practice of closed communion among Baptists prior to 1653, concern over Quakerism and internal matters which called for the appraisal of New Testament practice, and growing antipathy toward Cromwell frustrated the spread of open communion after 1655. When Tombes revived the issue in 1658 and 1659, he declined to extend open communion principles far enough to embrace Presbyterians. It appears, therefore, that open communion had lost some of its appeal to Tombes.

The Independent advocacy of open communion in 1653 was

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67. Canne, op. cit., Introduction by Charles Stovel, p. xix.

68. State Papers (Domestic), XXXVIII, 12f.

an expedient measure. In the 1640's, while seeking inclusion in the religious establishment of Presbyterians, some Independents had advocated the exclusion of all who deny infant baptism.<sup>69</sup> After Parliament favored Presbyterianism, Independency turned on the Presbyterians, but Independents were still not tolerant toward Baptist views. In November, 1649, the Yarmouth church was disturbed about the lawfulness of granting communion privileges to Baptists.<sup>70</sup> The rapid growth of Baptists from 1650 to 1653 made them a factor to be contended with, so Independents sought for a few months to comprehend Baptists. Within a few years Independents lost their opportunity for establishment, so they ceased to propagandize for open communion. During the 1660's the practice of open communion was revived because of persecution, but it did not become a controversial issue until after 1670.

2. Eighth decade. The communion controversy was renewed by John Bunyan early in the 1670's. Bunyan published A Confession of my Faith and a Reason for my Practice. He was immediately answered by Thomas Paul (whose book was introduced by a letter from Kiffin) and John Denne of Fenstanton.<sup>71</sup> In 1673 Bunyan published Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion as an answer to Paul and Kiffin,

69. John Turner, A Heavenly Conference ..., 1645, p. 42.

70. \_\_\_\_\_, "The History of the Congregational Church at Yarmouth, Norfolk," BAR, IV (1801-02), 637.

71. T/homas/ P/aul/, Some Serious Reflections, 1673, 63p. (incomplete); John Denne, Truth outweighing Error, 1673.

it being unnecessary to answer Denne. In his letter to the "Courteous Reader," Bunyan claimed that "the Brethren of the Baptized-way ... have sought [for sixteen years] to break us in pieces, meerly because we are not in their way all baptized first." He argued that Baptists disturb the Church under the pretense of water, making believers' baptism "the Wall, Bar, Bolt, and Door" of the Church.

In 1674 Henry Danvers published A Treatise of Baptism, which was reprinted in 1675 with an "additional preface." In this treatise, Danvers utterly repudiated infant baptism, claiming that it has neither right subject nor right form. He insisted that believers' baptism is not circumstantial, for it is God's ordinance. Bunyan replied to Danvers in 1674 with Peaceable Principles and True. Bunyan acknowledged that believers' baptism is God's ordinance and denied that he had ceased to be a Baptist: "'Tis an ill bird that bewrays his own nest." However, he denounced "those factious titles of Anabaptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or the like," which come, not from Jerusalem or Antioch, but from Hell and Babylon; he preferred to be called "a Christian, a believer." He denied that he attacked the persons of "the rigid way," saying, "I only struck at their heart-breaking, church-rending principle and practices" which require non-communication with Paedo-baptists and open communionists.<sup>72</sup> Denne immediately

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72. John Bunyan, Peaceable Principles and True, in Complete Works (Gulliver's edition), pp. 877f, 886.

rebutted Bunyan in a book entitled Hypocrisie Detected. After 1674 or 1675 the controversy subsided.

In 1681 William Kiffin published A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-communion. He claimed that the controversy over communion was exclusively with some who were improperly called Baptists, for they did not insist on believers' baptism. Kiffin defined the closed communion position without attacking Bunyan personally. Bunyan had taken little part in the controversy after 1675; in fact, his view about baptism seems to have undergone some change between 1678 and 1684.<sup>73</sup> Inasmuch as the controversy was moderating, it was not necessary for Kiffin to engage in personalities, so his is one of the less embittered pamphlets of the age.

#### D. Church-communion and Christian-communion

Whereas closed communionists withheld the Supper from Paedo-baptists, they denied that this was an abridgment of Christian charity. They distinguished "Church-communion" from "Christian-communion." Church-communion, they argued, cannot be more broad than Christ's injunction and New Testament practice, and in the Bible believers' baptism always preceded participation in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. They recognized that infant baptism is not overtly repudiated in the New Testament, but they insisted that all

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73. Cf. John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress (Hanserd Knollys Society edition), pp. 58f and pp. 249f.

known cases indicate believers' baptism. If it was important in the primitive church, it is still important. To displace believers' baptism with infant baptism is to displace God's ordinance with man's devisement.

Both Paedo-baptists and open communionists sometimes accused Baptists of bigoted exclusivism. However, Baptists were reluctant to call Paedo-baptists "Antichristians," as Smyth and Helwys did early in the century. Kiffin distinguished between "Church-communion" and "Christian-communion." The former is fellowship at the Table, which is open to baptized believers only; the latter is the exercise of Christian love, which is incumbent on all Christians but which may stop short of Table communion. Kiffin admitted that the New Testament does not make this distinction, but he insisted that the distinction protects the New Testament practice while satisfying the demands of mutual love. Open communionists, he argued, invert New Testament injunctions by making the Lord's Supper more essential than baptism, for the New Testament records more commands to baptize than to sup. Kiffin declared that he was not seeking a superiority of baptism, but a parity of the ordinances.<sup>74</sup>

Thomas Grantham, who was not far removed from the Bedford

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74. Kiffin, A Sober Discourse ..., 1681, pp. 19-26. "Christian-communion" conveys the same meaning as Baxter's "Catholick Communion"; see F. T. Powicke, "Richard Baxter's Relation to the Baptists and his Proposed Terms of Communion," Trans., VI (1918-19), 205.

area, declared that Christian love is "a kind of Fellowship" which is binding on all Christians by whatsoever name known.

And tho they [non-Baptists] be never so angry with me for opposing them in their Traditions, or erring Notions otherwise, yet I must have a Brotherly tenderness towards them all for the Truths sake which dwelleth in them. But now, for ample or full Communion, I see not how that can be attained and maintained, but where there is antecedent to it, an Union both in Doctrine and Practice, in things necessary to the true Constitution and Government of the Church of Christ.<sup>75</sup>

#### E. Particular Baptist Tolerance

Particular Baptists learned to tolerate differences over communion. The appendix to the confession of 1677 recognized that there was a difference of opinion among Baptists on the subject, so the confession was deliberately silent on communion; some were unable "to hold Church-communion, with any other than Baptised-believers, and Churches constituted as such," but others had "a greater liberty."<sup>76</sup> This tolerant attitude is remarkable, for the appendix was an impassioned defense of believers' baptism.<sup>77</sup> The Assembly of 1689 established tolerance "in point of communion."<sup>78</sup> Differences over communion were subordinated to more important matters.

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75. Thomas Grantham, The Loyal Baptist, 1674, p. 15; cf. Grantham, Truth and Peace, 1689, p. 53.

76. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 287.

77. Ibid., pp. 274-289.

78. Ibid., "The Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and Ministering Brethren, of the Baptized Churches, met together in London from Sep. 3-12, 1689 . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 48f. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "The Narrative . . .")

#### F. General Baptists and Closed Communion

General Baptists uniformly observed closed communion. Open communion was repudiated by the Kent Association in 1657, and by John Denne in 1673 and 1674. Grantham did not personally engage in the controversy, but his statements consistently favored closed communion. General Baptists had a propensity to seek absolute agreement on all issues, so the fact that open communion was never breached as an internal problem after 1657 attests to the uniform practice of closed communion. The manner in which they regulated their members, in such things as marriage, hearing non-Baptist preachers, and adopting Calvinistic doctrines, effected a more closed communion among them than among Particular Baptists. There is only one exception to General Baptist uniformity on closed communion; at an uncertain date after 1689 an elder in Lincolnshire allegedly practiced open communion.<sup>79</sup>

#### G. Observations on Open Communion

1. Extent of practice. The practice of open communion among Baptists was more prominent in the country than in the city. There were some city churches, of course, which prac-

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79. Knight, op. cit., p. 47. This student has been unable to secure substantiation for this report, but it can be explained. Around 1700 the Lincolnshire churches were, for a while, affiliated with neither the General Assembly nor Association. The alleged case may have occurred at this time, for the lack of an associational agreement would produce a situation conducive to open communion.

ticed open communion, but it was more characteristic of rural areas. The chief reason for this was the homogeneous life of rural peoples. Transport was a problem; people were intimately inter-related in other than religious affairs. These factors facilitated religious society along open communion lines.

2. Relation to evolution. In radical and initial separation communion was strict early in the 1640's. Open communion did not become an issue until around 1645, but even then it was not extensive. Independents recognized the validity of closed communion, which they also practiced, but they argued that Baptists made too much of baptism. During the 1650's many new areas were evangelized by Baptists, and Baptist churches evolved out of Independent societies. It was in these churches that open communion was most common. Independents had already achieved a denominational unity, so they opposed the separation of Baptists. At the same time, they were seeking to establish themselves as the State religion, so Independents appealed to Christian unity and charity in an effort to maintain their strength.

Particular Baptist churches in the Bedford churches were organized in this period, and they uniformly held open communion views until the end of the century.<sup>80</sup> Open communion was fostered in the West Midlands, South Wales, and Montgomeryshire by Tombes and Powell, Baptist and Independent respec-

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80. G. E. Page, "Baptist Churches in the Bedford Area," BQ, XIV (1951-52), 271-279.

tively. The Hexham church in Northumberland was founded in 1652, and in 1653 it was practicing open communion, to the dismay of both Independents and Baptists in Newcastle.

Illustrative of the close relation of open communion to evolution is the case of the Broadmead church, Bristol. Some of its members were related to London Baptists in 1643 and 1644 while they were refugees in London. However, Baptist views were first raised as an issue in 1652 when Thomas Munday, perhaps the same person who signed the confession of 1644, protested against the impropriety of infant baptism. Rather than split the church, he requested permission to join Hynam's Baptist church in Bristol. Attempts were made to reconcile the difference, but Munday was intransigent in his view. Consequently, permission was given for him to join Hynam's church. In 1653 Timothy Cattle desired believers' baptism, but Broadmead established the rule that members may receive baptism provided they "keep their places in the church, and not leave their Communion." Cattle was sent to London for baptism, at the hands of Jessey, the open communionist. After the principle of open communion was adopted, Baptists became conspicuous in Broadmead: "After this, divers others of the church were baptized, according to the scripture example, in a river."<sup>81</sup> It is noteworthy that Broadmead was willing to release Munday in 1652 before the Independents

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81. Broadmead Records, pp. 41f.

made their drive to comprehend Baptists, whereas during the drive in 1653 Broadmead refused to release Baptists.

3. Persecution. Persecution created a climate which facilitated open communion. Small, local conventicles were frequently composed of Baptists and Congregationalists, and occasionally Presbyterians. In Wales many Baptists were affiliated with Congregationalists before the expiration of the First Conventicle Act in March, 1669, but after persecution was relaxed Baptists renewed their propaganda. The communion controversy broke out in 1672 or 1673 after the suspension of the Second Conventicle Act of 1670,<sup>82</sup> but it subsided in mid-1674 about eight months after the Test Act revived the Second Conventicle Act. However, the persecution which was revived in 1674 or 1675 failed to arrest the baptismal controversy among Baptists and Paedo-baptists, for it continued for another two or three years. The appendix of the confession of 1677 indicates the tolerance among Baptists on the matter of communion, and also the differences between Baptists and Paedo-baptists on baptism. Kiffin's book came out during a respite, but late in 1681 persecution was renewed. For the remainder of the ninth decade open communion was not a divisive issue among Particular Baptists. The Assembly of 1689 directed attention to other matters, so the issue declined.

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82. See Gee and Hardy, op. cit., pp. 623-632, for the text of the Act. It was not revoked until 1689, but the indulgence of March 24, 1672, suspended it for several months.

4. Temporary character. Open communion was a temporary measure, not an ecclesiological principle of permanent value. The age was too concerned about church-order to perpetuate such an ambiguous principle. Therefore, open communionist churches tended to become either Congregational or Baptist; the former tradition profited most.

A Congregationalist succeeded Bunyan as pastor of the Bedford church. For three quarters of a century, there was not a single Baptist minister elected to pastoral office in the church; it was only after the Wesleyan revival that a Baptist became pastor in 1770. Within the church there was disagreement in 1690 over a resolution which would prevent discussion on controversial issues. The church agreed to permit Chandler, Bunyan's successor, to baptize infants and agreed to grant liberty for members to be baptized as believers upon request. However, Chandler requested the Baptist members "onely to forbear discourse and debates on it [bap-tism] that may have a tendency to break the peace of ye church."<sup>83</sup> This proposition favored Paedo-baptism by making infant baptism the maximum baptism and curtailing discussion on the subject. However, his agreement for the church to appoint an administrator of believers' baptism was a concession to Baptist strength. The congregation at Gamlingay ratified the agreement with Chandler, with a notable qualification:

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83. Bunyan Meeting Records, p. 77c.

only [we] desire to have Liberty to speak or preach Believers Baptisme if ye Lord shall sett it upon ones hearts; yet with that Tenderness as being far from any such designe as to tend at least ye breaking ye peace of ye Church; and do Hearby grant our Bro: Chandler ye same Liberty to speak or preach 84 Infant Baptisme provided with ye same tendernesse.

Chandler seemingly feared to broach the issue of baptism lest it disrupt the church; Gamlingay seemingly feared to exclude it from the possibility of discussion lest it result in uncertainty about baptism and restrict God's future enlightenment on the subject.

In 1679 Broadmead was receiving most of its members, about ninety-five percent, by believers' baptism.<sup>85</sup> The church continued to practice open communion but Congregationalists became a declining minority; some who had been in the church for thirty to forty years adopted believers' baptism. In 1757 Congregationalists formed a small congregation which met elsewhere in the building simultaneously with the Baptists. They united with Baptists in calling ministers, and relations between the two groups were pleasant. It is noteworthy that the division occurred shortly after the Foster-Killingworth controversy was inaugurated and that it lasted for ninety-six years; Congregationalists persisted as a "little church," as it was called, in a predominantly Baptist church.<sup>86</sup>

Nineteen of the twenty churches founded by Powell in the

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84. Loc. cit.

85. Broadmead Records, pp. 417f.

86. F. E. Lewis, "Broadmead Records," BQ, X (1940-41), 225.

area of Montgomeryshire became Congregational. After 1663 closed communion became the distinctive Baptist practice in Wales, resulting in the loss of the Montgomery churches.<sup>87</sup> Henry Maurice, or Morris, a Congregationalist, in 1675 drew up a list of "congregated churches" in Wales.<sup>88</sup> He mentioned many Congregational churches in which there were Baptists, but they were mostly "free communion" Baptists. He made few references to "strict" Baptists, so his catalogue has created the false impression that open communion was extensive in Wales at the time. A modern study has demonstrated conclusively, however, that most Welsh Baptists practiced closed communion. Baptists who "consorted with Independents ... succumbed to the alchemy of assimilation."<sup>89</sup>

In 1689 or 1690 Richard Tidmarsh found "many scattered brethren" in Colchester. They were divided on communion and some refused to join a church which practiced strict communion. Tidmarsh "greatly convinced" them and they agreed to join "in the baptized order only."<sup>90</sup> The Northampton church was organized about 1700, and its covenant endorsed open communion. After Moore, the organizer of the church, died in 1726, Northampton joined with the Castle Hill Congregational

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87. \_\_\_\_\_, "Wales under the Penal Code, 1662-1687," *BQ*, III (1926-27), 93f.

88. See Broadmead Records, addendum B, pp. 512-518.

89. Thomas Richards, "Wales under the Indulgence, 1672-5," *BQ*, IV (1928-29), 283.

90. A. J. Klaiber, The Story of Suffolk Baptists, p. 41.

church for worship. In 1732 the Baptists desired to revive the Baptist church, and they called Charles Rodgers, a closed communionist, as pastor. Rodgers refused to permit a Congregational minister from Wellingborough to come monthly and administer the Supper to Paedo-baptists in the church. The trustees refused to surrender the property to Rodgers' closed communionist group, so Rodgers and his followers withdrew and joined with a "strict" Baptist church.<sup>91</sup>

### III. SINGING

Early Separatists and Baptists interpreted the cultus of established denominations in a negative and critical manner. They held views on worship which Anglicans and Puritans said were disruptive of worship. John Smyth and Thomas Helwys held that spiritual worship must be spontaneous and that only saints may participate in it. They rejected set prayers, written sermons, etc., because they violate the principle of spontaneity. They rejected participation in Anglican worship because the privilege of the saint was usurped by profane persons.

Early in the 1640's, sectaries (including Baptists) applied the principles of spontaneity and saintship to worship.

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<sup>91</sup>. John Ryland, "History of the Baptist Churches in Northampton," BAR, IV (1801-02), 719f; E. A. Payne, College Street Church, Northampton, 1697-1947, p. 13.

Their negative attitudes facilitated separation from Anglicanism and later from Presbyterianism. However, these negative attitudes could not produce a new cultus. It was one thing to overthrow "false" worship; it was another to establish "true" worship. As sectaries grew in strength and their churches became more numerous, it became necessary for them to establish a satisfactory and stable cultus. Whereas both Independents and Baptists held, early in the 1640's, that it is blasphemous for humans to sing Biblical and divine psalms,<sup>92</sup> Independents soon introduced the singing of psalms in their worship. The aspirations of Independents to be included in the Presbyterian establishment, the higher level of education among Independents, and the closeness of Independents to Presbyterians were factors which contributed to the introduction of psalmody among Independents. In New England, where Congregationalism was the State religion, the sectarian worship had to give way to inclusive worship. The Plymouth church, which was originally composed of radical Separatists, was agitated over the issue of psalmody because of the doubts of Samuel Hicks. The church deliberated the matter and concluded that psalms may be sung in a mixed multitude, but only "Scripture Psalmes" may be used.<sup>93</sup>

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92. Edwards, op. cit., II, 2; \_\_\_\_\_, Catalogue of the severall Sects and Opinions . . ., 1647, broadsheet.

93. Plymouth Church Records 1620-1859, edited and introduced by Arthur Lord, I, 95.

Baptists were crystallizing into two denominations by 1650. It was necessary for them to devise a system of worship which would permit spontaneity yet prevent confusion, but it was difficult for some individuals to surrender their sectarian individualism and spontaneity. Consequently, there was disagreement over worship. The first feature of worship, apart from church-communion, to agitate Baptists was singing. The singing of psalms first arose, for two reasons. First, Baptists had come either mediately or immediately out of Puritanism (Presbyterianism) in which singing of psalms had been practiced for a century, among Reformed Protestants and Scottish Presbyterians. Secondly, Baptists studied the Bible minutely in order to determine the pattern of New Testament church life, and they discovered that the New Testament churches practiced singing. The attempt to institute the singing of psalms among Baptists met with opposition, but the most serious opposition arose later in the century when the congregational singing of vernacular hymns was introduced.

#### A. Singing of Psalms

1. Rise of issue. The singing of psalms became an issue after 1650 as Baptist denominationalism was crystallizing. It concerned Particular Baptists more than General Baptists, for the former were closer to Independency and Presbyterianism in which the practice was common. In March, 1651, the Welsh general meeting agreed to propose the singing of psalms

to the churches. In August, 1654, Welsh churches were so concerned over the matter that the Association appointed three men to treat the subject scripturally at the next meeting.<sup>94</sup> In 1653 the Coleman Street church, London, cautioned Hexham against singing with the "world." There was a disagreement, though not of an irreparable nature, in East Anglia over singing.<sup>95</sup>

2. Open communionists. The practice of psalm-singing became common in churches, especially open communion churches, during the sixth decade. Late in the century, the advocates of vernacular singing appealed to the views of Jessey and Tombes in order to support the practice. John Bunyan was one of the first Baptists to write vernacular hymns, apparently for didactic purposes.

3. Confessions. It was not until the 1670's that singing was endorsed in confessional statements. The Particular Baptist confession of 1677 declared that singing is an element of worship, but the statement was not emphatic.<sup>96</sup> The General Baptists were silent about singing in their confession of 1678, even though they also sang psalms. In 1678 Thomas Grantham stated that "Singing Psalms is a duty incumbent upon Christians, a part of Publick Worship."<sup>97</sup> By singing, the

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94. Thomas, op.cit., pp. 7, 11.

95. Hexham Records, pp. 339, 347.

96. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 260.

97. MGA, I, 29, note, quoted.

confession of 1677 and Grantham meant singing of psalms only.

4. Opposition. How extensive the opposition to singing was is not ascertainable, but there was some violent opposition. In 1675 the Broadmead church approved singing, but the sister church of which Andrew Gifford was pastor was divided over the practice.<sup>98</sup> The opposition apparently came from Gifford, who had an extremely sectarian view of worship for the times. Among other things, Gifford held that a non-Christian ought not pray, for prayer is a spiritual privilege which only Christians possess. Thirteen Londoners sent him a letter in January, 1676, seeking to correct his exclusivism,<sup>99</sup> which he seemingly applied to all features of worship.

5. Persecution. Persecution curtailed singing, but the practice did not die out. In some places singing was excluded from worship, for it would attract law enforcement officers. Nevertheless, singing was continued during persecution, as the case of Broadmead illustrates. In 1671 a neighbor complained to the constabulary that Broadmead's singing was a noisy nuisance. In 1675 the church was frequently interrupted by peace officers, who were seeking to arrest the preachers. One of the stratagems which were devised to prevent detection

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98. Broadmead Records, p. 242.

99. See BAR, IV (1801-02), 1004-1007, for the text of the letter. It is noteworthy that both John Smyth and Roger Williams possessed a similar exclusiveness. In a stage of radical separation, such a degree of exclusivism was an asset, but after denominationalism had developed such exclusivism was considered expediently undesirable and essentially invalid.

of the ministry was the singing of pre-selected psalms when an informer approached.<sup>100</sup>

#### B. Singing of Vernacular Hymns

There was some opposition to psalm-singing, but it was pointed out that the practice had Biblical support. The singing of vernacular hymns, however, lacked such support, so it was bitterly contested. Opponents argued that innovators were adding to Biblical worship. They feared that the ultimate result would be the restoration of all kinds of superstitious rites from which they had so recently separated.

##### 1. Rise of vernacular singing. a. Particular Baptists.

Benjamin Keach, a Particular Baptist, allegedly was the first to introduce vernacular singing in church worship. He became a Particular Baptist about 1672 and was soon elected as the pastor of the new church at Horsley-down. In 1674 or 1675, while persecution was fierce, he led the church to sing a hymn after the Lord's Supper. There was opposition to this innovation, but Keach convincingly appealed to the first celebration of the Supper by Christ and His disciples. About six years later, during a respite from persecution, the church observed three days of thanksgiving, on which occasions Keach introduced songs of thanksgiving. There were not any other occasions of singing on days of thanksgiving, save one; on

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<sup>100</sup>. Broadmead Records, pp. 159, 226. Kevan, op. cit., p. 51, suggests that anti-singing sentiment was an expedient reaction to persecution; however, it derived from sectarian views of worship.

this occasion, however, singing was not authorized by the church and the person who introduced the song, apparently with Keach's coaching, was embarrassed over the opposition.<sup>101</sup> In November, 1678, the frustration of the Popish Plot inspired Edward Terrill to write a hymn which Broadmead sang for "edification."<sup>102</sup> On March 1, 1687, the new meeting-house of Devonshire Square was opened for worship, and the inaugural service included singing.<sup>103</sup>

b. General Baptists. Vernacular singing was not well accepted by General Baptists. Grantham approved singing after the Lord's Supper and, on the basis of the New Testament example, inferred that "we are not tyed to any form of words." Nevertheless, he repudiated both vernacular and mixed singing; only psalms may be sung and only baptized Christians may do the singing.<sup>104</sup> The General Assembly of 1689 approved the singing of psalms, but objected to singing with those who are not General Baptists. A few unidentified churches had been using a hymnal containing musical instructions in the form of "Gammut sol-fa-la-my-Re-ut &c.,"

All of which appeared so strangely foreign to the Evangellicall worship that it was not conceived anyways safe for the Churches to admit to such Carnall formalities But to rest satisfied in this till we can see something more Perfect ...<sup>105</sup>

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101. Isaac Marlow, Truth Cleared, [1691], pp. 32-34.

102. Broadmead Records, pp. 389f.

103. Joseph Ivimey, The Life of Mr. William Kiffin, p. 93.

104. MGA, loc. cit.

105. Ibid., p. 28.

2. Controversy among Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists were greatly agitated over vernacular singing for a few years following 1689. As early as 1680 Hercules Collins of the Wapping church, London, had advocated "vocal Singing" as "the publick Duty of the whole Church." However, the practice did not spread until after the indulgence of James II and more especially after the issuance of the Toleration Act. As soon as conditions permitted, several congregations sponsored lectures, at which Keach introduced hymns. In 1689 Keach proposed the question of vernacular singing to the General Assembly, which declined to permit debate on such a controversial issue.<sup>106</sup> Within two years, however, there were some thirty Baptist churches under the practice, and others were in the process of instituting it.<sup>107</sup>

a. Participants. London was the center of the controversy, and the chief disputants were Benjamin Keach and Isaac Marlow, proponent and opponent of singing, respectively. In addition to Marlow, the opponents included Edward Man, George Barrett, Robert Steed, and Richard Hallowell. Proponents comprised a far more imposing list: Hanserd Knollys, William Collins, Leonard Harrison, Richard Adams, James Jones, Hercules Collins, Thomas Whinnel, Joseph Wright, Samuel Bagwell, Joseph Stennett, and others. Keach advocated singing in a book entitled The Breach Repaired in God's Worship, and in 1691 he

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106. Marlow, op. cit., pp. 3f.

107. Thomas Whinnel, A Sober Reply ..., 1691, pp. 6f.

published the first Baptist hymnal, Spiritual Melodies. After opposition became less public and singing was more widely accepted, Keach published another collection in 1696, entitled A Feast of Fat Things. In 1700 this collection was revised and published under the title Spiritual Songs. Marlow's works against singing included A Discourse concerning Singing, An Appendix, and Truth Cleared. Robert Steed published an "Epistle" on singing, to which Whinnel replied in 1691 in A Sober Reply. Whinnel charged that Steed offered nothing new on the subject and suggested that he would not have bothered to write his epistle if he had first read the convincing writings by the advocates of singing.

b. Arguments. The real issue was worship, as the title of Keach's initiatory book suggests. Against the sectarian views of worship, as held by the opponents of singing, there was the propaganda of those who felt that God's worship must be orderly and must carry some elements of refinement. The antidote to sectarian freedom in worship, which had no constructive value, was stable worship.

The two practices under debate were congregational singing and the use of vernacular hymns. These practices normally accompanied each other. The arguments were varied, both for and against the practices, as the following indicates.<sup>108</sup>

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108. See Marlow, op. cit., passim, and Whinnel, op. cit., passim, for the development of these arguments.

The chief arguments of the opponents were the following. Profane worship is unlawful. Vernacular hymns are human inventions, whereas psalms are Biblical; therefore, psalms may be sung but vernacular songs may not. Mixed multitudes corrupt singing just as mixed communion profanes the Supper. Fixed words and metered music deprive singing of spontaneity under the Spirit. Singing is permissible after the Supper, for both supping and singing are privileges which belong exclusively to qualified communicants. Singing should deal, not with praise, but with edification. Some people do not have "tuneable Voices," so congregational singing should not be permitted lest poor voices render singing blasphemous and offensive to God. Women are enjoined to maintain silence in the church, so they may not join in congregational singing.

To these arguments the proponents of singing made many counter-arguments. Singing under the influence of the Spirit is not profane. Singing does not have the essential character of the Supper, so it is not as subject to corruption; therefore, the entire congregation may join in singing, but not in communion. If set forms are not employed, confusion would reign while each person sings his own words in his own way. Singing should not be withheld from non-communicants, for it is effectual unto quickening, just as prayer, preaching, and exhortation. If singing were primarily didactic, it would usurp the teaching and preaching ministries. Each person has a "faculty of Singing," even though uncultivated.

The dictum calling for female silence appertains only to teaching, preaching, and exercising authority over men; it does not prohibit their participation in worship.

3. Disruptive effect. Churches were divided over singing, and brethren dissolved their friendships. For two years or so the controversy was very embittered in London. Though vernacular singing soon became ascendant, the opponents of the practice continued to snipe at the advocates. After the practice became widespread enough, the advocates could and did ignore opposition, but they proceeded with enough caution to prevent public controversy.

a. Horsley-down church. One of the most serious splits over singing occurred in the Horsley-down church. On February 22, 1691, Keach proposed that the church permit those who favored singing to remain each Sunday after the sermon in order to gratify their desires. A week later the vote was taken; all but five or six persons approved Keach's proposal, but an indefinite number had stayed away from the voting because they discountenanced singing and felt that they had no hope of winning. At the time of the vote Keach allegedly refused to permit discussion on the issue, insisting that discussion was unnecessary inasmuch as the advocates were not going to impose their will on the church; they merely desired freedom to sing themselves.<sup>109</sup> About twenty-two persons withdrew and

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109. Marlow, op. cit., pp. 32-42.

sought communion with Robert Steed's church in Thames Street, until they could settle as a church. Steed's church refused to admit them on this condition, insisting that they must come "into the Church without any reserve." They agreed to come in without reservation, but within a few months they pulled out, organizing themselves as a church with the aid of a few outside elders, but contrary to Steed's advice and without his support.<sup>110</sup>

b. General Assembly. The controversy became so bitter by mid-1691 that the General Assembly was forced to consider the issue. Marlow claimed that he had been falsely accused of unchristian behavior, so he appealed "to all my Brethren in the Ministry, and other sober Christians" to appoint arbitrators to judge impartially between Keach and himself. The Assembly declined to arbitrate a debate, but instructed Marlow and Keach to hold a disputation to settle the issue. Between August 4, 1691, and November 9, 1691, several letters passed between them on the proposed disputation, which each professed to desire. Each named four men to judge the debate. However, Marlow refused to ratify one of Keach's appointees, who had attacked Marlow in print on another subject. Keach refused to agree on procedural rules for the meeting, holding that they were unnecessary. Marlow's appointees accused

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110. H. W. Robinson, editor, "The Discipline Book of Robert Steed . . .," BQ, I (1922-23), 118f.

Keach of deceit by repeatedly delaying the meeting while publicly favoring a disputation.<sup>111</sup> Soon the controversy became critical, and abusive literature issued from each side. In 1692 the General Assembly assumed a role which it had declined in 1691; it appointed seven representatives to study the controversy. They advised the destruction of the most vicious, abusive, and polemical pamphlets on the subject.<sup>112</sup> After this the controversy subsided, but the fellowship had already been disrupted.

4. Process of spread. Singing spread quickly after 1689 but at no time was it instantaneously accepted. Churches proceeded with caution in instituting the practice in order to prevent separation. Keach's church first sang at the Lord's Supper, a few years later at thanksgiving services, and in 1691 after the sermon. Caution notwithstanding, the church split.

On October 20, 1690, the Bedford church agreed on public singing but cautioned those who could not sing "with Grace in there Hearts" not to participate. Four months later, permission was granted for singing each Sunday; those who did not approve had liberty either to absent themselves or to remain silent. In 1701 singing was extended to all preaching services, either Sunday or week-day.<sup>113</sup> Though Hercules Collins

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111. Marlow, op. cit., pp. 2-20.

112. E. A. Payne, The Baptists of Berkshire, p. 61.

113. Bunyan Meeting Records, pp. 77a, 77c; Introduction by G. B. Harrison, p. 101.

advocated singing in 1680, his church did not officially permit the practice until 1704 or 1705, a few years after his death. Permission was first granted for singing on Sundays; later the church devised a method "for our Brethren & Sisters doing it at other times without offence."<sup>114</sup> This pattern was characteristic, and within a few years singing was common in Particular Baptist churches. One effect of the Wesleyan revival toward the mid-eighteenth century was the spreading of the practice among other denominations.

5. Singing and unity. For Baptists the most intimate religious relationship was participation in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Singing was introduced at the Supper, as the restitution of apostolic worship. The first hymns were written for communion purposes, emphasizing "unity," "communion," "union," etc. This hymnal emphasis on fellowship is explicable on the basis of the close relationship between singing and the Supper. It was generally held that the Supper is symbolic of the essential unity of the Body of Christ; Keach held that congregational singing is an expression of oneness, just as the Supper:

Singing together clearly shews  
thy People should one be;  
For Union's a most lovely thing,  
unite us all to Thee!  
And in thy Truth and bonds of Love,  
let us all live together

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114. Kevan, loc. cit.

In Vnity, so will we sing 115  
thy Praises, now and ever.

The poetry is weak, but the verse aptly teaches the corporate nature of worship through singing; singing is an act of fellowship.

#### IV. OATH-TAKING

Among General Baptists there was a difference over the taking of oaths. Though many Baptists, both General and Particular, refused to take the Oath of Allegiance, oath-taking was a controversial issue only among the former. The controversy derived from a biblicistic interpretation of Christ's injunction against swearing, which was interpreted as a prohibition against oath-taking of any kind.

##### A. Controversy

Oath-taking did not become a controversial issue until the latter part of the Commonwealth period. The Kent Association stated in 1657 that "it is Lawful for ye ending of strife in a soleme way to swear by the name of ye Lord."<sup>116</sup> Less than three years later, some of the most obstinate objectors to oath-taking came from Kent. The elders of the churches of Seven-oaks and Biddenden were imprisoned in Maidstone, whence

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115. Benjamin Keach, Spiritual Songs, 1700, Hymn 80, "Unity of Saints," p. 83. The underscored words appear as such in the hymnal.

116. Warde, loc. cit.

they published in 1661 a voluntary renunciation of "all foreign jurisdictions and powers whatsoever"; nevertheless, they refused to take the Oath, on the grounds that oath-taking is a religious service due only to God.<sup>117</sup> Because of the popular suspicion of Baptists and the temper of the Maidstone declaration, this view was commonly accepted as characteristic of Baptists. Within six weeks, John Tombes published a second defense of oath-taking, directed to the prisoners. He argued that the prisoners actually believed in swearing, for they had appealed to God when they pleaded their innocence.<sup>118</sup>

Henry Denne also countered the view of the Maidstone prisoners, arguing for the lawfulness, antiquity ("not above 300 years younger" than the moon!), and universality of oaths.<sup>119</sup>

Jeremiah Ives and Theophilus Brabourne also upheld oath-taking. They were answered by Henry Adis and Samuel Fisher, "Free-Willer" and Quaker, respectively. Adis distinguished between vows, asseverations, and oaths, concluding that it is appealing to heaven, earth, Jerusalem, head, etc., and the use of the word "BY" which make an unlawful oath out of a vow

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117. The Humble Petition and Representation ..., 1661, in E. B. Underhill, Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, pp. 297-308.

118. John Tombes, A Supplement to the Serious consideration of the Oath of the Kings Supremacy, 1661, pp. 5-19. Tombes' first defense of oath-taking was written in October, 1660, shortly after the Restoration, and was addressed to all "non-conformists," and especially to "Quinto-monarchians."

119. Henry Den, An Epistle Recommended to all the Prisoners ..., 1660, 8p.

or asseveration. He called Tombes and Denne "Black Coats" (clergymen) because of their oath-taking, which demonstrated that they were subservient to the State.<sup>120</sup>

#### B. Effect of Controversy

The controversy over oath-taking caused little disruption of fellowship, for circumstances prevented its spread. After the Act of Uniformity became effective on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, persecution became extensive.<sup>121</sup> Prior to this date, most of those who suffered for religious causes were General Baptists and Quakers, with the latter having a larger proportion of non-jurors; after this date, other Nonconformists also suffered. Prior to 1662, oath-taking was merely a declaration of political fidelity; in 1662 it involved the acceptance of Episcopacy and the renunciation of "free church" views. Consequently, the rejection of the Oath became more common. Some attacked the magistracy for enforcing the Act of Uniformity, and advocated separation from all civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Tombes came to the defense of the State by attacking the radicals and appealing for civil obedience.<sup>122</sup> It is noteworthy that Tombes compromised most of his "free church" ideas at a later date.

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120. Henry Adis, A Fannaticks Testimony Against Swearing, 1661, 50p.; Samuel Fisher, One Antidote more . . ., 1660, 57p.

121. See Gee and Hardy, op. cit., pp. 600-619, for the text of the Act of Uniformity.

122. John Tombes, Saints no Smiters, 1664, 118p.

### C. Continuance of Anti-Oath Sentiments

Anti-oath sentiments persisted and, in some cases, caused friction. However, opposition gradually died out after 1689 when Nonconformists began to receive civil compensations for the taking of oaths. In 1675 the Amersham church listed non-communication with oath-takers as one of its "Artickells of Agreement," but the article was later cancelled.<sup>123</sup> On July 24, 1689, the Ford church decided that it could not subscribe to the Toleration Act, but desired the exemptions which the Act offered if subscription could be evaded.<sup>124</sup> On April 24, 1690, Ford and four other churches called a special meeting at Beirton to discuss the subscription of the Act by some of the churches:

... the same have occasioned a great Difference betweene the bretheren of the said Churches or some of them the said ptyes concerned on both sides doe declare themselves to be sorry & troubled at the same & doe desire to be acting together for the future for a Healing of the same difference by Joyntly praying to Allmighty God & forgiving one another.<sup>125</sup>

Not only did General Baptists moderate their attitudes toward oath-taking, but they also honored the Government's requests for nation-wide public prayer and thanksgiving. Whites Alley observed the scheduled days of prayer in 1692, 1696, 1697, etc.<sup>126</sup>

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123. Amersham Records, p. 202.

124. Ford Records, p. 4.

125. Ibid., p. 8.

126. Whites Alley Records, I, 93, 139, 155.

D. Particular Baptists and Oath-taking

Particular Baptists were never disturbed over oath-taking. Tombes, of course, participated in the controversy, but he wrote as a defender of the State, not as an advocate of oath-taking to his Particular Baptist brethren. He nowhere indicated that Particular Baptists were bitterly divided over oaths. Some Particular Baptists refused to take the Oath of Allegiance in 1660, but they were tolerant of jurors. This tolerance prevented oath-taking from becoming an issue. In December, 1660, "the brethren only" of the two Bristol congregations met and drew up a statement in which they pledged their loyalty to the king. After Venner's insurrection, the mayor of Bristol was instructed to exact the letter of the Oath. However, he seemingly understood the nature of the scruples of Baptists, for he permitted them to swear

no further than the scripture did require us, whereupon some others, though they held an oath for the end of controversy to be lawful, yet were not then satisfied to take a promissory oath; and so in peace we bare one with another, them that did, and them that did not.<sup>127</sup>

A similar tolerance prevailed elsewhere, it seems.

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<sup>127</sup>. Broadmead Records, p. 71. Bristol was reported to be the strongest non-juror center in West Anglia. On November 24, 1660, Richard Ellsworth reported that non-juror Baptists and Quakers held meetings of 1,000 to 1,200 persons; see State Paper (Domestic), XXI, 363. The mayor was wise in recognizing that non-swearing derived, not from seditious intentions, but from religious scruples. The jails could not have held all non-jurors.

## V. LOVE FEASTS AND FOOT-WASHING

A. Love Feasts

General Baptists were troubled about the observance of a love feast before the Supper. It was a problem for a brief time only. In 1645 or 1646 Edward Barber's church, London, had a meal, "dressed for them by a Cook," after which the church observed the Supper.<sup>128</sup> The rite made little progress until about 1652, but then it was commonly accepted in some areas. In 1652 the rite caused trouble in the Cambridgeshire region, and in January, 1653, the general meeting at Cambridge decided that

we ought always to break bread after supper, and it was likewise ordered that breaking of bread shall be practised in that manner, viz. after supper, through the congregations.<sup>129</sup>

In August, 1653, Westby in Lincolnshire asked Fenstanton to send "some of the principal grounds" for the practice. In April, 1655, a few members rejected communion in the Westby church, for the majority was not persuaded that a love feast should precede the Supper. Westby sent another letter to Fenstanton, requesting "some true or supposed grounds ... from the scripture" and also inviting John Denne to come to Westby to assist in the resolution of the difference which had arisen over the practice. Before September, 1653, the

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128. Edwards, op. cit., I, 104.

129. Fenstanton Records, p. 37.

elder of the Norborough church attacked his people, partly because they did not observe the love feast. Fenstanton defended the rite on the basis of (1) Christ's practice, (2) Paul's rebuke not of the rite itself but of its abuse, and (3) the necessity of feeding the communicants who had travelled great distances to come to the Supper. In November, 1654, Thaxfield, one of the churches related to the Cambridge general meeting, refused to assist in extra-local benevolence, arguing that each church which was capable of observing a love feast was also capable of taking care of its own needy members. In September, 1656, candidates for offices in the Fenstanton church were asked if they upheld love feasts.<sup>130</sup> In 1655 the Warboys church adopted the practice, "because the ancient churches did practise it, and for the unity with other churches near to us."<sup>131</sup> Fenstanton was probably the church which made the love feast a condition of unity.

#### B. Foot-washing

Foot-washing, which was connected with the love feast,<sup>132</sup> was also adopted by some General Baptists. In 1654 Tombes reported that he knew of no contemporary practice, but he recognized that Hebrews 6:1, 2, and Christ's practice would be the chief scriptural arguments for it.<sup>133</sup> It appears that

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130. *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 66, 69f, 114, 136, 188f.

131. *Warboys Records*, p. 272.

132. *Fenstanton Records*, p. 67.

133. John Tombes, *A Plea for Anti-Paedobaptists*, 1654, p. 2.

the practice had not yet reached the West Midlands and West Anglia, but later it appeared in West Anglia. In 1682 Thomas Whinnell left the General Baptists and joined the Particular Baptist Broadmead church, Bristol; along with other things, he renounced foot-washing.<sup>134</sup>

### C. Particular Baptists and the Two Rites

The practices of the love feast and foot-washing did not trouble Particular Baptists. A few adopted the rites, but they tended toward Sabbatarianism. Thomas Tillam led the Hexham church in the observance of the love feast in September, 1652.<sup>135</sup> Doctor Chamberlen's church in London practiced both rites, and Tillam exulted over the "sweet society" which he had in Chamberlen's church.<sup>136</sup> Seemingly inspired by bibli-  
cism, Tillam attempted to introduce the "holy kiss" at Hexham.

## VI. SABBATARIANISM

### A. Early Puritans and Separatists

Early Puritans and Separatists objected to the excessive number of holy days in the Anglican calendar and also to the way in which they were celebrated. They objected to the word "Sunday," preferring "Sabbath." They transferred the customs of the Jewish Sabbath to Sunday, transforming it into a day

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134. Broadmead Records, pp. 452, 454.

135. Hexham Records, p. 290.

136. Ibid., p. 323.

of worship and rest only.<sup>137</sup> In 1617 James I was petitioned by peasants, tradesmen, and servants of Lancashire who desired recreational rights on Sunday; the petitioners accused the Puritans of being papal recusants because of their non-attendance at parish worship. In 1618 the king issued the so-called "Book of Sports" which granted sporting rights to those who first attended parish worship on Sunday; those who did not possess a confirmatory chit from the parish clergymen could not engage in Sunday sports; Puritans or Precisians were either to conform or leave the country.<sup>138</sup> Puritans immediately protested this desecration of the "Sabbath" and continued to disseminate their views. When the Sunday Observance Act was passed in 1626, it reflected Puritan sentiments.<sup>139</sup>

#### B. Reason for Limited Acceptance of Sabbatarianism

The imposition of Jewish customs upon Sunday was probably the chief reason for the comparative non-acceptance of Seventh-day views. The Puritan Sabbath became so securely established before the heyday of Sabbatarianism that Seventh-day views could make little progress. There were Sabbatarians in the Elizabethan period, but they constituted no threat to regular practice. John Trask and Theophilus Brabourne adopted Sab-

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137. W. T. Whitley, "Catholic Holy Days and Puritan Sabbaths," BQ, II (1924-25), 365f.

138. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Book of Sports," Cong. Trans., VII (April, 1918), 273-279.

139. Whitley, "Catholic Holy Days and Puritan Sabbaths," BQ, II (1924-25), 373.

batarianism before 1640.<sup>140</sup> Sabbatarianism was comprehended in the novelty of religious practice during the 1640's, so it did not become a separate tradition until the mid-1650's.

### C. Sources of Sabbatarianism

The two chief sources of Sabbatarianism were Biblical literalism and Fifth Monarchist chiliasm. Chamberlen and Tillam were radical biblicists. In Wales literalism was fostered and propagated by Richard Goodgroome, a teacher at Usk, the leader of Welsh Sabbatarianism.<sup>141</sup> Sabbatarian leadership was early related to the anti-Cromwellian Fifth Monarchy movement.<sup>142</sup> Chamberlen's church was the only Baptist church in London unanimously to endorse the Fifth Monarchy Manifesto of 1654.<sup>143</sup> Abingdon was such a center of Fifth Monarchy sentiment that the Government feared insurrection at the funeral of Pendarves in 1656. Consequently, officers were sent to Abingdon to keep the widely represented multitude under surveillance; several sectaries were either arrested or maltreated.<sup>144</sup> By 1658 Edward Stennett of Abingdon had become a

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140. See Brabourne's full defense, A Defence Of that most Ancient, and Sacred ordinance of Gods, the Sabbath Day, second edition, corrected and amended, 1632, 633p.; cf. \_\_\_\_\_, Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America, I, 40.

141. \_\_\_\_\_, "Welsh Baptists till 1652," BQ, I (1922-23), 232.

142. E. A. Payne, "More about the Sabbatarian Baptists," BQ, XIV (1951-52), 162, suggests this, without elaboration.

143. Louise F. Brown, The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men, p. 59. See J. W. Thirtle, editor, "The Fifth Monarchy Manifesto of 1654," Trans., III (1912-13), 129-153, for text and notes.

144. \_\_\_\_\_, The Complaining Testimony, 1656, 4p.

Sabbatarian and one of the most active propagandists for Seventh-day views.<sup>145</sup> John James was arrested on October 19, 1661, while holding services on Saturday. During his trial he admitted that he owned the Fifth Kingdom, but denied complicity with Venner.<sup>146</sup>

#### D. Characteristics of Sabbatarianism

The distinguishing mark of Sabbatarianism was the external act of Seventh-day worship. In reality, however, the two distinguishing characteristics were Biblical literalism and millennialism. Biblical literalism led Sabbatarians to insist that all commandments, especially the Ten Commandments and the injunctions of Christian primitivism, are still binding. Millennialism led Sabbatarians to reject worldly government. Christ was conceived as the only sovereign to whom ultimate allegiance was due. Related to this was their anticipation of Christ's intervention in the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

These two characteristics are aptly illustrated by the covenant which Francis Bampfield employed when he gathered a Seventh-day church on March 5, 1676.

We own the Lord Jesus Christ to be the One &  
Only Lord & Lawgiver to our Souls & Consciences.

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145. Payne, The Baptists of Berkshire, p. 48.

146. \_\_\_\_\_, The Narrative of the Apprehending, Commitment, Arraignment, Condemnation, And Execution of John James ..., 1662, 47p.

And we own the Holy Scriptures of Truth as ye One  
& only Rule of Faith Worship & Life, According to  
which we are to Judge of all our Cases.<sup>147</sup>

This was the entire covenant of the church.

As a rule, Sabbatarians were well-educated. They were also common-sense rationalists. They had an unusual number of medical doctors; Chamberlen and Stennett were bona fide doctors,<sup>148</sup> and Tillam masqueraded as a doctor in 1662.<sup>149</sup>

#### E. Sabbatarian Denominationalism

Sabbatarianism did not become a separate movement until after the mid-1650's. It is alleged, on Chamberlen's tombstone, that he joined "the Seventh-day Baptist fraternity" in 1651,<sup>150</sup> but the astronomical marks interspersed throughout the church records of 1652 to 1654 indicate that the church met on Sunday during these years.<sup>151</sup> Tillam was compelled to leave Hexham between June, 1655, and June, 1656.<sup>152</sup> By 1657 he had gathered a Seventh-day church at Colchester in Essex. He addressed his book on the Seventh-day to those who admit the "royal Law," or Baptists who hold Fifth Monarchist views.<sup>153</sup>

147. \_\_\_\_\_, "Bampffield's Plan for an Educated Ministry," Trans., III (1912-13), 9, quoted.

148. W. S. Samuel, "Charles-Marie de Veil," BQ, V (1930-31), 181.

149. W. T. Whitley, "Colonel Paul Hobson," BQ, IX (1938-39), 309.

150. J. W. Thirtle, "A Sabbatarian Pioneer--Dr. Peter Chamberlen," Trans., II (1910-11), 19.

151. Champlin Burrage, editor, "A True and Short Declaration . . .," Trans., II (1910-11), 129-160, passim.

152. Hexham Records, pp. 295f.

153. Thomas Tillam, The Seventh-Day Sabbath, 1657, p. 148.

It is not known when Edward Stennett espoused Seventh-day views, but he was a Sabbatarian by 1658. It appears, therefore, that the appearance of Sabbatarianism as a separate entity occurred about 1656 to 1658.

#### F. Exclusivism

Sabbatarians were radically sectarian, holding very exclusive views about Church-communion. In 1677 John Cowell justified his withdrawal from Seventh-day Baptists on their exclusivism. He adopted Sabbatarianism in 1661. In 1664 the practice of some, especially Tillam, offended him, but he continued to associate with them. In 1668 he disfavored the Sabbatarian practice of calling non-Sabbatarian Nonconformists "anti-christian." One of the things which most offended Cowell, however, was the establishment of Seventh-day views as the "boundary of Church-communion." Sabbatarians withheld the Supper not only from non-Sabbatarians, but also from Sabbatarians who had communed with non-Sabbatarians because of the inconvenience of distance, which prevented Sabbatarian communion.<sup>154</sup>

#### G. Inter-relations

Even though they were few in number and scattered in congregation, Sabbatarians maintained a close fellowship. In 1668 the Bell Lane church, London, wrote to the Seventh-day

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154. John Cowell, The Snare Broken, 1677, pp. 2, 7, 67-70.

church in Newport, Rhode Island. In December, 1690, the churches in England and Wales circulated among themselves information about the condition of each other. The church records of Llanwenarth, Mermouthshire, contain a list of meeting-places, ministers, and the spiritual estates of Sabbatarian churches in twelve counties in 1690.<sup>155</sup> It is probable that Sabbatarians copied this practice from Particular Baptists.

Sabbatarians maintained a close relationship with London Particular Baptists prior to 1689, and their ministers were included in the meetings of London elders. Bampffield was held in high regard by Baptists; he died in prison in 1683,<sup>156</sup> but his church continued to enjoy close ties with Baptists. The church was greatly concerned when it did not receive an invitation to the General Assembly in 1689. Three men, including Joseph Stennett, the son of Edward Stennett of Abingdon, were delegated to apprise Particular Baptists of the desire of the church to participate in the Assembly. On October 19, 1689, the three reported that their overtures had been ineffectual and that no Sabbatarians had been invited to the Assembly.<sup>157</sup> It is notable that one of the most polemical

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155. Payne, "More about Sabbatarian Baptists," BQ, XIV (1951-52), 162-166.

156. Thomas De Laune, A Plea for the Non-Conformists, new edition, enlarged, 1779, p. 129, speaks of the "society" with Bampffield and Ralphson, "truly pious, truly sweet, and truly amicable."

157. \_\_\_\_\_, "Bampffield's Plan for an Educated Ministry," Trans., III (1912-13), 14.

statements of the Assembly of 1689 was a repudiation of Sabbatarianism.<sup>158</sup> The close relationship between Sabbatarians and Particular Baptists declined after 1689, and several Sabbatarians, including Joseph Stennett, adopted strict Particular Baptist views.

#### CONCLUSION

The ecclesiological experimentalism of the mid-seventeenth century facilitated the rise of internal problems, most of which dealt with church-order. The attempt to restore Christian primitivism led to the "discovery" of many neglected practices; inasmuch as the Bible was the rule of order, these practices were inaugurated. In most cases, there was opposition, but they were gradually accepted.

General Baptists suffered more from internal problems than Particular Baptists. General Baptists were more biblicistic, so they were more prone to make new discoveries. They were more closely inter-related around 1650, so the new practices were easily spread. Particular Baptists, on the other hand, were protected by the stability which derived from Calvinism; their theology was fixed and their ecclesiology gave more authority to the local congregation. Therefore, problems were fewer and were also more easily handled locally.

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158. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative . . .," BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, pp. 53-55.

The two areas in which Particular Baptists were most susceptible to internal differences were communion and worship. They were closely akin to Congregationalists in everything save believers' baptism. Many Particular Baptist churches had emerged en masse out of Independency, so some, especially churches in rural and newly evangelized areas, were susceptible to the appeal of Independents to Christian charity. A result was the surrender of the fixed principle of believers' baptism for baptismal ambiguity, in order that communion between Baptists and Paedo-baptists might be preserved. The open communion principle proved to be ineffectual, however, for churches tended to become either Congregational or Baptist; in most cases the churches became Congregational. The controversy over worship derived from the conflict between sectarian and denominational views. The principles which the opponents of singing voiced at the end of the century were the same which Separatists and Baptists affirmed at the commencement of the century; they were sectarian. When Particular Baptists became an integrated denomination, these principles were harmful to fellowship, so their advocates either separated or gradually conformed to normal practice.

Particular Baptists successfully established a latitude in ecclesiology which permitted basic unity within and between churches. However, they insisted on strictly Calvinistic theology, so moderate Calvinism tended to disappear. General

Baptists, on the other hand, were aggressively sectarian in both theology and ecclesiology. As long as General Baptists were meeting external forces, this sectarianism was a benefit, for it encouraged unity; when inner life was under discussion, however, it was a curse, for it encouraged division. General Baptists strived for a denominational unity, and they achieved it on a regional basis earlier than Particular Baptists. However, this unity was undermined from within, for General Baptists were unable to resolve internal problems.

Some Particular Baptists were susceptible to new practices, but these tended toward Sabbatarianism. They were radical sectaries and biblicists, as were General Baptists. They and General Baptists took up such practices as laying on of hands, love feasts, foot-washing, the holy kiss, non-oath-taking, etc. General Baptists and Sabbatarians were very exclusive in Church-communion, rigidly regulating it by theological and ecclesiological standards. Particular Baptists, for the most part, also practiced closed communion, and after 1675 the problem of communion ceased to dis-unify Particular Baptists. Each tradition employed closed communion for defensive reasons, for it prevented assimilation by a group with which there was a great similarity.

The age was overwhelmingly concerned with Biblical ecclesiology and theology, so it was perhaps inevitable for internal problems to arise. It is a marvel that there was as

much unity at the end of the century as there was. The degree of unity which existed at the end of the century was the result, not of theological and ecclesiological indifference, but of the exercise of Christian tolerance and charity. Denominational unity and strength had moderated individualistic sectarianism, thus permitting the holding of diverse views within homogeneous limits.

## CHAPTER SIX

### RELATIONS BETWEEN GENERAL AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

General and Particular Baptists maintained independence and, in most matters, isolation from each other. This, however, has not been uniformly recognized. Thomas Crosby, the first person to attempt a Baptist history, failed in his four volume history which came out in 1738 to distinguish Baptists as to their theologies. Some contemporary interpreters also fail to distinguish them sharply,<sup>1</sup> but most modern investigators distinguish them.<sup>2</sup>

The fundamental separation between General and Particular Baptists can be variously demonstrated. The testimony of seventeenth century non-Baptists, the theological barrier between the two groups, and defection from one tradition to the other, all substantiate the view of radical separation. Geographical distribution also supports this view, though there were many instances of contiguous life. Joint participation

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1. For example, E. A. Payne, The Baptists of Berkshire, p. 15, says the separation between them was not rigid. His supporting remarks, however, are quite general, and they apply equally as well to Independency.

2. Louise F. Brown, The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men ..., p. 4, says "there was practically no communication" between them. Thomas Richards, in his multi-volume study of Welsh Non-conformity, has demonstrated that they were strictly separated. W. T. Whitley assiduously employed distinctions in his numerous and varied studies of Baptist antiquities.

in controversy, mostly literary, and encounter with external forces provide a limited basis for the conjecture that there was a unity between General and Particular Baptists which transcended their differences. Such a conjecture, however, breaks down when the data are interpreted, not by twentieth century theological and ecclesiological latitude, but by seventeenth century standards of church life. Moreover, the scarcity of joint participation in controversy is so conspicuous that it is historically unsound to premise such a broad conjecture on such tenuous evidence.

#### I. TESTIMONY OF CONTEMPORARY NON-BAPTISTS

##### A. Testimony

1. Civil War period. a. No distinction. The opponents of believers' baptism generally failed to distinguish the two traditions during the early and mid-1640's. In 1645 Daniel Featley spent about two hundred pages equating English Baptist tenets with those of Continental Anabaptism. In conclusion he admitted that the confession of 1644 disclaimed identity with Arminianism, but he undermined his professed observation of Calvinism in the confession by attacking six ecclesiological articles, three of which he described as "Anabaptistical"; he implied that the other three were also heretical.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Daniel Featley, The Dippers dipt, 1645, pp. 20-227.

By "Anabaptisticall" Featley meant Arminianizing Continental Anabaptism. Samuel Richardson immediately replied, charging Featley with misrepresenting the truth. Richardson claimed that Featley had drawn poison "out of the impure fountaines off divers Heretikes," and then had tried to drown English Baptists in the poison.<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Edwards manifested no awareness of a difference between General and Particular Baptists. He listed "Anabaptist" errors and then illustrated them with contemporary acts and teachings of English Baptists. He cited the names of many sectaries, but he failed to classify them according to theology; in some cases he failed to distinguish between Baptists and Independents.<sup>5</sup>

Both Featley and Edwards desired the suppression of sectaries and their publications were designed to secure popular opposition to them. Consequently, Featley and Edwards grouped all known or imagined errors together so as to make the sectarian picture more ominous. However, the chief reasons for the confusion in the minds of Featley and Edwards were fear and ignorance. Both feared that the excesses of Münster would inevitably develop unless "Anabaptism" were curbed. Edwards openly admitted his superficial knowledge, whence some of his distortion proceeded, saying, "I never saw Den, Hich, Clarkson,

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4. Samuel Richardson, Some brief Considerations . . . , 1645, p. 6.

5. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, three volumes, 1646.

Paul Hobson, Wb, Lamb, Marshal, with many others named in this Book."<sup>6</sup>

b. Notable distinction. Very early there were some who distinguished the two traditions. In 1642 Thomas Wynell named two groups: "compleat" and "Semi-" Anabaptists. The

compleat Anabaptist doth hold, that no child in infancy is baptizable, let his parents be never so holy, and let the administration be never so sure.<sup>7</sup>

Wynell attacked Thomas Lambe, so it seems plausible to deduce that by "compleat Anabaptist" Wynell meant General Baptist. Inasmuch as Wynell was a clergyman of Gloucestershire, he had little reason for knowing the intimate inner life of London Independents and Baptists; Particular Baptists in London were then adopting a strict view of believers' baptism.

In January, 1647, Robert Baillie published a very discriminating study of Baptists. He distinguished them from "Brownists" (Independents), whom he called the "soberest" Separatists. He divided Baptists into two groups: "Antipaedobaptism" and "Arminianism." He sharply delineated the two groups, even listing anti-Arminianism as a characteristic of "Antipaedobaptism," or Particular Baptists.<sup>8</sup> He noted that

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6. Ibid., I, 178.

7. Thomas Wynell, The Covenants Plea for Infants, 1642, p. 7.

8. Robert Baillie, Anabaptism, The True Fountaine ..., 1647, pp. 49-92. He also specifically included Tombes among the Anti-Paedo-baptists, though he felt that Tombes did not happily belong, inasmuch as Tombes looked upon baptism as an unnecessary rite.

the confession of 1644, which he approved as an orthodox confession, rejected Arminianism. Nevertheless, he claimed that most Baptists were Arminian,<sup>9</sup> and impugned the authenticity of the alleged Calvinism of the confession. First, he noted that the second edition of 1646 omitted the Scripture verses of the first edition which obviously disprove Arminianism; Baillie thought that this indicated that the authors had defected from the Calvinism of the 1644 edition. Secondly, though Spilsbery wrote against Arminianism,<sup>10</sup> he had not, to Baillie's knowledge, refused "communion, and the right hand of fellowship unto any person whome he knew to professe" Arminianism.<sup>11</sup> Baillie also desired the overthrow of the sects, but he could not ignore the differences among Baptists. Indeed, he argued that "Anabaptism" is the true fountain of heresy and schism, but he recognized that some Baptists were less guilty than others, when measured by Presbyterian standards.

2. The sixth decade. The distinction between General and Particular Baptists became more obvious during the 1650's, when the process of denominational consolidation was well underway. In 1652 Thomas Hall declined to call "single Anabap-

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9. Ibid., p. 48.

10. Baillie had in mind John Spilsberie, Gods Ordinance, The Saints Priviledge, 1646. There were two treatises, the second of which dealt with "The peculiar Interest of the Elect in Christ, and his saving Grace."

11. Baillie, op. cit., p. 94. An argument from silence!

tism," or the denial of infant baptism, heresy. He claimed, however, that the "Devil" attracts with the innocence of this view and then "draws them on to other dangerous Errors; inso-much that I never knew that Anabaptist which had but one Error."<sup>12</sup> In Hall's opinion, the rejection of infant baptism was the beginning point of all heresies. In 1653 Erbery distinguished three groups:

The baptized Churches are subdivided into three parts, one Church is for free will, a second for universal Redemption, a third count themselves more Orthodox in Doctrine, as the Church of England. Neither of these three baptized Churches doe communicate one with another.<sup>13</sup>

In 1659 Richard Baxter also recognized three groups: General Baptists, closed communion Particular Baptists, and open communion Particular Baptists.

There are extremists who, besides nullifying Infant Baptism, nullify the ministry and all extant Church-order, deny the essentials of the Faith and generally endeavour the ruin of the church. ... Then, there are those who, by the strictness with which they construe their particular difference, "make themselves incapable of being members of the same particular churches with us," and shut us out of their own Churches; ... Lastly, there are persons who, feeling bound in conscience to be rebaptized, are willing still to continue their membership with "our Churches ..."<sup>14</sup>

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12. A. S. Langley, Birmingham Baptists Past and Present, p. 23, quoted.

13. Brown, loc. cit., quoted. The significant observation is non-communication, but it is also interesting that Erbery distinguished free willers from universal redemptionists, the latter of whom may refer to some in London or West Anglia.

14. F. T. Powicke, "Richard Baxter's Relation to the Baptists and his Proposed Terms of Communion," Trans., VI (1918-19), 208f. This is Powicke's summary.

3. Restoration. During the Restoration, Baptists were distinguished according to their doctrinal positions. This was not true of the first few years after the promulgation of the Act of Uniformity, for persecution frequently blurred distinctions within Nonconformity. When the Second Conventicle Act was issued in 1670, Nonconformist conventicles were raided; the report of one raid listed "Anabaptists" without any other identification except place of meeting.<sup>15</sup> The granting of licenses in 1672 was very indiscriminate, indicating that the State took little care to differentiate Nonconformists. Baptists were variously listed as "Presbyterian," "Congregationalist," "Anabaptist," "Baptized," and "Baptist."<sup>16</sup> In his catalogue of Welsh "congregated churches," Henry Maurice distinguished between "Baptists" (most of whom were "free communionists") and "Arminian Baptists."<sup>17</sup> In 1682 a spy reported on Baptist churches in London; there were "ginsrall," "pirtikler," and "monerkey" (Fifth Monarchy) churches.<sup>18</sup> It appears that distinctions were becoming more evident.

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15. W. T. Whitley, "The Great Raid of 1670 on certain London Churches under the new Conventicle Act," BQ, IX (1938-39), 248.

16. W. T. Whitley, "The Baptist Licences of 1672," Trans., I (1908-09), 156-177; Whitley, "Two Hardcastles, Presbyterian and Baptist," Trans., IV (1914-15), 39f; Thomas Richards, "Wales under the Indulgence, 1672-5," BQ, IV (1928-29), 280-287.

17. The Records of a Church of Christ, meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-1687, edited by E. B. Underhill, Addendum B, pp. 512-518. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Broadmead Records.")

18. W. T. Whitley, "London Churches in 1682," BQ, I (1922-23), 82-87.

### B. Interpretation

The foregoing data, when compared with other information interspersed in the preceding chapters, suggest five stages of development in the non-Baptist understanding of differences among Baptists. First, early in the 1640's the two traditions were not widely distinguished; in fact, sectarianism was considered a homogeneous whole. The factors which facilitated confusion were the fluidity of sectarianism, the recent emergence of Particular Baptists, the popular fear of Continental Anabaptism, and the distortion of facts in polemical pamphleteering. Secondly, the confessional statements of 1644 and 1646 and the growing separation of Particular Baptists from Independency encouraged the recognition of differences among Baptists. Thirdly, the development of denominationalism in the 1650's permitted a wide recognition of differences among Baptists. Theological and ecclesiological variations within the same tradition were frequently noted. Fourthly, denominational distinctions between Nonconformists were blurred, and in some cases obliterated, by persecution. The State failed to distinguish between Nonconformist groups, so it could hardly be expected that variety among Baptists would be noted. Fifthly, about 1675 the distinctions between the two groups became more apparent. The controversies over baptism and communion in the mid-1670's aided in revealing differences, and the confessions of 1677 and 1678 differentiated

the two traditions. At any rate, by the 1680's the distinction between General and Particular Baptists was notable even in the midst of persecution.

## II. THE BARRIER OF THEOLOGY

Both General and Particular Baptists achieved a notable degree of theological stability, though there was greater variety among General Baptists. General Baptists were characterized by the universal or general atonement. Their opponents, including Particular Baptists, charged them with Arminianism in their affirmation of free will and denial of original sin and final perseverance. "Arminianism" was a loaded term which Calvinists used to convey ignominy.<sup>19</sup> In spite of popular antipathy toward Arminianism, General Baptists received the name "General," rather than "Arminian"; this is an emphatic testimony to the primacy of the doctrine of the universal atonement among them. Particular Baptists were Calvinists; the term "particular" was a theological term,

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19. Thomas Tillam was accused of partial Arminianism (Brown, op. cit., p. 77), perhaps because of his advocacy of certain rites which General Baptists practiced. Yet, he used such phrases as "Arminian poison" and "dregs of Arminius" with complete abandon; see Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720, edited by E. B. Underhill (hereafter referred to as "church Records," as appropriate), p. 352, and E. B. Underhill, Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, p. 332. It is conceivable that Tillam's use of such "orthodox" watchwords or counter-phrases was one factor in his ability to escape expulsion from Hexham for several months.

referring specifically to the atonement. Inasmuch as both groups received titles descriptive of their views of the atonement, it appears that the most significant distinction between them was on the doctrine of the atonement.

There were a few attempts to define a theology which contained elements of both Calvinism and Arminianism. There is little evidence that theological conciliation was designed to facilitate the union of General and Particular Baptists; these attempts derived, not from ecclesiastical strategy, but from evangelical zeal and a tendency to define theology in Biblical terms. The first attempt was made by a London congregation in 1645,<sup>20</sup> but it appears to have escaped notice for the church is unknown and the pamphlet unanswered.

The most successful mediation of theology was made by Thomas Collier in West Anglia. Collier exerted a strong influence, so there is every reason to suspect that his views were widely accepted in West Anglia, especially during the 1650's. In attacking the high Calvinism of the confession of 1677, he claimed to know "many more [churches] that do abhor it [the confession] than believe it."<sup>21</sup> Collier continually troubled Particular Baptists, but after his death his mediating theology disappeared; before his death, several West Anglians subscribed the confession of 1677.

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20. \_\_\_\_\_, The Fountaine of Free Grace Opened, 1645, 24p.  
 21. Thomas Collier, A Confession of Faith, 1678, p. 58.

Baptist theologies were clearly differentiated by the end of the century. Moreover, each system was moving beyond its earlier position; General Baptist theology was becoming more rationalistic, and Particular Baptist theology was becoming more highly Calvinistic.

### III. PARTICULAR BAPTIST DEFECTIONS TO GENERAL BAPTISTS

#### A. Strength of Particular Baptist Theology

Particular Baptist theology was more impregnable than that of General Baptists. There were some Particular Baptists who apostatized to the General Baptists, but, when compared with General Baptist losses, Particular Baptist losses were insignificant. The period of Particular Baptist susceptibility was early in the 1640's when theology was undefined. The London confession of 1644 and the revision of 1646 established a Calvinistic standard for Particular Baptists. Though this was a London confession, it circulated widely among Particular Baptists. Kentish churches affirmed that they were of the "Seven Churches," so they were theologically identified with, if not personally related to, the London churches. During the mid-1650's, Particular Baptists in other areas drew up confessions which were essentially Calvinistic. After 1677 Particular Baptists, Collier notwithstanding, became theologically homogeneous.

### B. Losses during the Civil War-Commonwealth Period

It is impossible to assess the number of Particular Baptists who became General Baptists between 1640 and 1660, for evidence is lacking. The only notable apostasy appears to have been in Kent. Kiffin ostensibly inaugurated the Baptist movement in Kent in 1643 or 1644, baptizing several who were "all of the Opinion of the particular Point, and who reckoned themselves of the Seven Churches in that Day." In the "great contest" between Baptists, some individuals changed to "general views" and were "re-baptized"; others adopted General theology but retained Particular baptism.<sup>22</sup> The specific date of these changes is unknown, but it appears to have been in the mid-1640's or soon thereafter. An apostate became the first indigenious General Baptist "Preacher" and "Dipper" in Kent. General Baptists increased rapidly, and by the mid-1650's they had more known churches than Particular Baptists.

### C. Caution in Admitting

The disciplined church protected itself by exercising caution in the admission of members. This caution was largely responsible for the prevention of apostasy. All of the Baptist churches of the seventeenth century were disciplined churches, but it appears that Particular Baptists were more successful than General Baptists in guarding the door of entry.

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22. Luke Howard, A Looking-Glass for Baptists, 1673, p. 28.

The procedure of admission into the Broadmead church remained consistent in principle throughout the century. There were variations in the application of the principle, of course, but the principle was stable. A person was usually proposed by a member, or he proposed himself; at the end of the century, personal applications were on the increase. He was then "spoken with" by the elders. In some cases he testified to the entire congregation, declared "the work of regeneration upon his soul." If the church was satisfied, the person was admitted just prior to the breaking of bread; if not, admission was delayed. A person was not immediately received in any case, for his Christian faith and life required confirmation. This confirmation was secured by observation or recommendation, or both. In 1676 and 1678 several persons were received by letters of dismissal from other churches, even though they had communed regularly in Broadmead for a "few months" or "eight or nine years." In one instance, the church declined to admit a man because the church had no knowledge of his desires until he proposed himself.

The acceptance of Calvinism appears to have been a condition of admission into Broadmead. The records are silent as far as a specific policy is concerned, but the records imply that only Calvinists were admitted. Thomas Whinnell, a member of a General Baptist church at Christchurch and formerly a member of the defunct General Baptist church in

Bristol, was proposed to Broadmead at least thrice. The date of the first proposal is unknown; on February 8, 1681, he was "again proposed," but "The church was not willing to admit him, fearing he might hold Arminian errors." On March 2, 1682, he preached to a combined assembly of two Particular Baptist churches in Bristol. On March 8, 1682, he testified about God's activity in his soul, professed the confession of 1677, and renounced General Baptist views and practices; he was immediately "received into the fellowship."<sup>23</sup>

D. Testimony of Church Minutes and Associational Records

Particular Baptist records registered few instances of trouble over defection to General Baptists, so the silence must be interpreted as indicative of the actual case. The General Assembly of 1689 was concerned with defection to the Church of England, but not to General Baptists. The Assembly consistently endorsed Calvinism by defining justification, reconciliation, adoption, atonement, and faith, perhaps as an antidote to Anglican latitudinarianism. Particular Baptists were given liberty

to hear any sober and pious men of the Independent and Presbyterian persuasions, when they have no opportunity to attend upon the preaching of the word

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23. Broadmead Records, pp. 87, 96, 164, 211, 361f, 427, 452-454. Edward Terrill, the Broadmead scribe, had an adverse opinion of General Baptist theology. He stated (p. 20) that "many thousands in England [Particular Baptists] ... do not hold communion with others, though they [General Baptists] do own and practise believers' baptism."

in their own Assembly, or have no other to preach unto them.<sup>24</sup>

Whereas Independents and Presbyterians were considered theological allies, the Church of England constituted a threat; Particular Baptists were prohibited from associating with Anglicans in worship and preaching. However, General Baptists presented no such cause of alarm to Particular Baptists, for the latter had the advantage.

#### IV. GENERAL BAPTIST DEFECTIONS TO PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

General Baptists considered Particular Baptists as a threat throughout the century. At no time were General Baptists immune to Calvinism. By 1700 General Baptist life was subject to disruption by Particularism, and many General Baptists were apostatizing to the Particular Baptists.

##### A. Civil War-Commonwealth Period

General Baptists had the advantage over Particular Baptists during the 1640's, but by 1660 General Baptists were on the defensive. The re-baptism of Kentish Particular Baptists in the mid-1640's implies that General Baptists considered their theological distinctives essential to church regularity.<sup>25</sup>

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24. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and Ministering Brethren, of the Baptized Churches, met together in London from Sep. 3-12, 1689, . . .," BAR, (1801-02), supplement, p. 51.

25. Inasmuch as some were not re-baptized, this interpretation cannot be stubbornly argued.

The Fenstanton church, one of the strongest General Baptist churches, was frequently and gravely agitated about Particular theology. In June, 1653, the church was troubled over a woman's defection from the doctrine of the general atonement. Great pains were taken to persuade her that she had professed the doctrine at the time of baptism, for otherwise Henry Denne would not have baptized her. It was charged that she held the General view "without doubting" until Richard Trevis came from London. She stubbornly refused to profess the general atonement, so the church decided that she had lacked saving faith at the time of baptism and summarily excommunicated her.

In December, 1653, Henry Denne proposed that the church draw up their differences with other traditions, in order that General Baptists might more earnestly contend for the faith. Five topics were chosen for discussion. Three were definitely theological: atonement, God's relation to the origin of sin, and perseverance; two were ecclesiological: Quakerism (validity of ordinances) and baptism. The significance of the atonement is attested by the appointment of Henry Denne to treat the subject.

In July, 1655, John Matthews, an eminent member in the church before going to Ireland where he changed his views, affirmed limited atonement, predestination and election, and the specific number of the elect, "with such a compulsive power that they cannot resist." He was admonished for his

errors; when he rejected the admonition, the church "delivered him unto Satan."

The only probable instance of friendly contact between Fenstanton and Particular Baptists was the relation of Thomas Disbrowe to the Leith church in Scotland, which was probably composed largely of Particular Baptist soldiers. When Disbrowe requested a recommendation to the church, Fenstanton issued a letter with an open address; however, Fenstanton also sent Disbrowe a letter, exhorting him to stand fast in faith and morals.<sup>26</sup>

#### B. Restoration

Persecution relieved the tension among Nonconformists, but there were some cases of General Baptist defection to Particular Baptists. The most notable convert was Benjamin Keach. A native of Bucks, Keach became the General Baptist preacher at Winslow around 1660, and in 1668 he became pastor of the original General Baptist church in Southwark, London. In 1672 he married a Particular Baptist; due to his wife's insistence and the influence of Kiffin and Knollys, he soon became a Particular Baptist.<sup>27</sup> Keach maintained a close relationship with the General Baptist church at Amersham; on September 18, 1676, Amersham explained its separation to

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26. Fenstanton Records, pp. 52-57, 83f, 151f, 164-167.  
 27. \_\_\_\_\_, "James Jones's Coffee-House," BQ, VI (1932-33), 324. This was Keach's second wife; his first wife, a General Baptist, died in 1670.

Keach, "to his satisfaction." Two years later the brother of a prominent member in the Amersham church was recommended to Keach's Particular Baptist church in London. Amersham became conservative, however, and in 1680 agreed to hear no preachers save Six Principlers.<sup>28</sup> The history of the Watford church in Hertford is not clear, but there is a possibility that it was originally a General Baptist church which adopted Particular Baptist views about 1675.<sup>29</sup> At any rate, Watford had contact with the General Baptist church in Southwark before Keach's defection; later Watford appeared as a Particular Baptist church,<sup>30</sup> due perhaps to Keach's influence.

### C. Toleration

The relationship between General and Particular Baptists became strained after 1689. Particular Baptists felt secure, but General Baptists were so insecure that they cultivated uncharitable feelings toward Particular Baptists. Under constant pressure from Particular Baptists, General Baptists became increasingly conservative. By the mid-1690's local congregations were dividing, and associations were trying to devise a defense against defection.

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28. The Church Books of Ford or Cuddington and Amersham, edited by W. T. Whitley, pp. 206, 213, 220. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "church/ Records," as appropriate.)

29. James Stuart, Beechen Grove Baptist Church, Watford, Appendix A, pp. 163f.

30. Ibid., pp. 5, 10f.

1. Ford. The Ford church, Bucks, gradually became very strict against Particularism, and finally a split occurred. In 1689 a lady desired to join the Particular Baptist church at Tring, but her request was denied; nevertheless, Ford agreed to release her to the Particular Baptist church at Hemel Hempstead.<sup>31</sup> In March, 1700, some of the Ford members were asserting Calvinistic views, causing

Much trouble In ye Congregation Yet for peace sake  
It is now Agreed yt ye sd persons shall be borne  
with provided they Neither by Preaching or Publick  
Discoursing or otherways goe Aboute to Maintaine  
or Endeavour to Propagate ye sd opinions ...<sup>32</sup>

Within a month Thomas Delafield was reproved for propagating Particular views. In March, 1701, the church resolved that none may preach contrary to the confession of 1678. By July a few members had separated and established a Particular meeting, with which Ford declared non-communication. In September Ford members were charged not to hear Particular preaching by Brother Goss. The church refused to recommend a lady to a Particular Baptist church because the latter was in error and disorder.<sup>34</sup> In June, 1702, Ford's case came before the General Association, which advised Ford to "deal with them as disorderly persons and Schismaticks" if the separatists rejected another summons to appear for discipline.<sup>34</sup> The situation

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31. Ford Records, p. 5.

32. Ibid., p. 34.

33. Ibid., pp. 34, 36f, 39.

34. Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, With Kindred Records, edited by W. T. Whitley, I, 73f. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "MGA.")

became increasingly unbearable, for the General Association expressed concern over discovering a "malignant" spirit among the Particularists, whose appeal was full of "invective and hard expressions."<sup>35</sup>

2. Whites Alley. Whereas the Whites Alley church, London, was strong enough to prevent disintegration over Particular views, it was troubled by Particularism. In October, 1696, a member objected to the preaching of Calvinism in Whites Alley; this perhaps referred, not to preaching by a Particular Baptist, but to the use of the confession of 1678. In September, 1699, two women were excluded from the Table for denying "the precious truth of Generall Redemption." In the same month, Whites Alley unanimously called a pastor, "with this proviso, yt you are of ye same Faith" about the atonement.<sup>36</sup>

3. Associational evidence. The gravity of the problem of Particularism is traceable in associational records. In 1696 the General Assembly resolved that no General Baptist elder who adopts Calvinistic views may preach in General Baptist churches.<sup>37</sup> In 1700 the General Association proposed two rules for handling the Particularist problem:

1 Agreed yt where any pson off A generall congregation shall preach vp ye pertickeler point to

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35. Ibid., pp. 78-80.

36. The Church-Book of White Alley Meeting House, Book I, 148, 193, 197.

37. MGA, I, 41f.

ye destorbing of ye peace of yt Congregation & will not forbare it is ye dvtty of yt Church to silance svch A pson & to vse all possible means to recover such psons.

2 Agreed that iff any svch pson desiars to remove his Communion vpon yt accovnt yt ye Church may grant ym Liberty see to doe but they are not obliged to commend ym to any other Church.<sup>38</sup>

The Association thought it was dangerous to harbor an aggressive Particularist; it was more strategic to dismiss a Particularist than to suffer his propaganda within a local church, for widespread defection usually resulted.

4. Individuals and churches. Several prominent men and churches went over to the Particular Baptists. Richard Adams was trained as a Particular Baptist by John Tombes at Bewdley, but in Leicestershire, where General Baptists were strong, he became a General Baptist. In 1688 he went to London as a successor to John Clayton, and in 1689 he adopted Calvinism; in 1690 he was ordained as assistant pastor to Kiffin in the Devonshire Square church.<sup>39</sup>

Mark Keys was a minister in Whites Alley in 1697. He desired communion with Keach's church, but because of a difference between him and Keach nothing came of his request.<sup>40</sup> Within a short time, however, Keys left London and went to

38. Ibid., p. 65.

39. Ibid., "Seeking a Change," Trans., II (1910-11), 161.

40. The Church-Book of White Alley Meeting House, Book I, 152f.

Reading, ostensibly for his health. The Reading church was soon troubled about his Calvinism, so he became a Particular Baptist. In 1702 he was a member of Devonshire Square, and in 1706 he became assistant pastor.<sup>41</sup>

The London Dependency of General Baptist churches organized a new church in Covent Gardens in 1691. In 1699 John Piggott split the church over Calvinism and organized the Little Wild Street Particular Baptist church.<sup>42</sup> In 1700 several Kentish churches split over Caffynism and Calvinism, and the Calvinists formed a Particular Baptist association.<sup>43</sup> Before 1707 the churches at Sutton and Arnesby in Leicestershire became Particular Baptist.<sup>44</sup>

#### D. Explanation of General Baptist Defection about 1700

1. Christological crisis. There are four explanations for the widespread defection to Particular Baptists around the turn of the century. First, General Baptists were engaged in a severe doctrinal crisis over Caffynism. Many were more afraid of Caffynism than of Calvinism, so they were most susceptible to Calvinism. It is significant that the three prominent centers of defection were Kent, London, and Leicester, in each of which there was vigorous opposition to Caffyn.

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41. \_\_\_\_\_, "Seeking a Change," Trans., II (1910-11), 162.

42. W. T. Whitley, "Little Wild Street," BQ, V (1930-31), 264-267; cf. MGA, I, 65f.

43. W. T. Whitley, "Ashford in Kent," BQ, VII (1934-35), 34f.

44. \_\_\_\_\_, "Sutton-in-the-Elms and Arnesby," Trans., I (1908-09), 183f.

2. Confession of 1678. The confession of 1678 had a direct bearing on defection to Particular Baptists. The confession was drafted as an antidote to Caffynism. In countering Caffyn, the confession defined a theology which had close affinities to Calvinism. The General Association adopted the confession because of its anti-Caffynism. In 1700 the Association heard a case which aptly illustrates the connection between the confession and defection. A Particular Baptist preached Calvinism at Wymeswold, Leicestershire, "alleging that it was supported by Thomas Monk and fifty more stars of the first magnitude."<sup>45</sup> Particular Baptist propagandists, it appears, appealed to the confession, written by Monk and signed by fifty-four "messengers, elders, and brethren," as a proof-text for Calvinism.

3. Particular Baptist pressure. Particular Baptist leaders kept pressure on General Baptists. Keach exerted a strong influence on Amersham and other churches in the Bucks area. In 1697 the General Association protested to Particular Baptists against the efforts of Keach and Richard Robbins "to make a division among ye Church [High Wycombe] and afterward a schisme from them."<sup>46</sup> Other Particular Baptists were less conspicuous, but their pressure was variously applied.

4. Loss of General Baptist pastors. The loss of pastors

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45. MGA, I, 64.

46. Ibid., pp. 46f.

to Particular Baptists weakened General Baptists. By the end of the century, the ministry was so highly elevated in both traditions that the minister was normally the strongest person in a church. When a pastor became a Particular Baptist, the members were less able to withstand Particular propaganda, and the "apostate" had a list of prospects, some of whom were well-disposed toward him.

#### E. Conclusion

Theological differences between General and Particular Baptists became strict. General Baptists soon lost the advantage which they had over Particular Baptists in the 1640's. Persecution arrested defection from one group to another, but the controversy over Caffynism from the 1670's onward made General Baptists susceptible to Particularism. In 1696 a split developed within General Baptist ranks over Christology, and anti-Caffynists took recourse to semi-Calvinistic views in order to subvert Caffynism, thereby making themselves vulnerable to Particularism. Within a few years both individuals and churches were becoming Particular Baptist in number.

#### V. JOINT ACTION

Whereas General and Particular Baptists were separated from each other by theology and, to a lesser degree, ecclesiology, there were some friendly inter-relations. Church-communion and formal associationalism were impossible, but

the two groups shared some positions in common. In most cases, inter-relations were stimulated by external forces, to which Baptists responded in concert for conservative reasons.

#### A. Pamphleteering

Baptists were basically agreed on such issues as believers' baptism, religious toleration, political loyalty, lay preaching, etc. Consequently, they attacked the same opponents and quoted each other's writings in polemical pamphleteering. Joint rebuttal and mutual appropriation of arguments and facts, however, do not necessarily imply personal fellowship. The affiliation of General and Particular Baptists in pamphleteering is to be explained on the basis of the character of polemics, in which all substantiating data are used, regardless of source. Baptists appropriated pertinent information from non-Baptists as freely as from each other,<sup>47</sup> but there was more occasion to quote from each other.

#### B. Disputation

Both General and Particular Baptists were threatened by Quakerism and Paedo-baptism. In some cases they jointly disputed with their opponents, but joint participation in public debates was an uncommon practice. However, both jointly debated

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47. This is such an inescapable observation that it does not require detailed annotation. It can be confirmed by comparing polemical literature on the same subject.

with Quakers in 1674<sup>48</sup> and Paedo-baptists in 1698.<sup>49</sup>

### C. Defense before the State

1. Joint address in 1661. The most unanimous joint action was designed to defend Baptists before the State. After the abortive insurrection of Thomas Venner on January 7, 1661, Baptists and Quakers were suspected of sedition. The Whitehall Council Board had drawn up a prohibitive statute against conventicles a few days before the insurrection, so it was immediately promulgated; "... all such persons going under the notion of anabaptists, quakers, and other sectaries" were prohibited from attending meetings.<sup>50</sup> Two weeks later, from the security of Scotland, Charles II issued a "Proclamation Against all Meetings of Quakers, Anabaptists, &c."; it empowered officers

To make exact search from time to time, in all places where any such meeting hath been, shall, or may be suspected; and to apprehend every such persons, who shall keep, or frequent these meetings.<sup>51</sup>

By mid-1661 about four hundred persons were imprisoned in Newgate, and others were imprisoned elsewhere. Shortly after the king's proclamation, a book appeared which equated English

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48. \_\_\_\_\_, A Brief Account ..., [1674], 45p.; T. Rudyard, The Anabaptists Printed Proposals, 1674, 30p.

49. See A. S. Langley, "Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations," Trans., VI (1918-19), 216-243, for data on 109 known public disputations.

50. Underhill, op. cit., p. 313.

51. PROCLAMATION Against all Meetings of Quakers, Anabaptists, &c., 1661, broadsheet.

Baptists with Münster Anabaptists.<sup>52</sup> General Baptists immediately issued defensive statements which were regional in scope, and John Sturgeson pleaded for toleration.<sup>53</sup>

General and Particular Baptists joined in issuing The Humble Apology in an effort to allay suspicions of their disloyalty. It was signed by thirty men, including prominent leaders in each tradition: Kiffin, Hills, Harrison, Blackwood, Spilsbery, Clayton, Denne, Lambe, Gosnold, Smith, etc.<sup>54</sup> It was designed to counter those who had "industriously" defamed Baptists in press, pulpit, and private conversation. Baptists disclaimed kinship with the Münsterites and involvement in Venner's insurrection:

We desire therefore that it may be considered without prejudice whether our persuasion in the matter of baptism hath any connexion with these doctrines against government, or whether these can be the probable consequences or inferences from our doctrine concerning baptism.<sup>55</sup>

2. Joint address in 1696. A similar problem arose in 1696, and it, too, was countered by a joint address. A conspiracy against the life of William the Third was frustrated, and Baptists were again suspected of sedition, but not so generally as formerly. To disarm this suspicion, fifty Lon-

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52. \_\_\_\_\_, Munster Paralleld In the Late Massacre Committed by the Fifth Monarchists: ... Being a Continuation of the Bloody History of the Phanatiques, 1661, 39p.

53. See Underhill, op. cit., pp. 297-308, 323-341, 357-360, for some of these statements.

54. Ibid., pp. 343-351.

55. Ibid., p. 346.

don Baptist ministers addressed the king, denying complicity in the conspiracy and pledging fidelity to the throne. Thirty-two of the thirty-eight known Baptist churches in London were represented. The signatories included twenty-four Particular Baptists, fourteen General Baptists, five Sabbatar-<sup>56</sup>ians, and seven whose affiliations are unknown.

3. Aid to a poor minister. Particular Baptists assisted a General Baptist preacher who was engaged in an expensive court suit in the 1690's. James Marham failed to comply with all of the technical requirements of the Toleration Act, and between 1691 and 1698 he was implicated in a legal battle which completely exhausted his resources. The Lincolnshire Association petitioned the General Baptist Assembly to relieve Marham's need; the Assembly printed a petition for aid which was forwarded to all affiliated churches. Benjamin Keach and Richard Adams, both of whom had been General Baptists, endorsed the appeal. It is unknown how widely they solicited money, but their letter to Richard Kent of Hampshire is extant. Inasmuch as Marham's defense had benefited all Baptists, they stated, he was worthy of help:

Our Beloved Bro: Marham ... being undon in ye defense of our liberty as by Law establishet, had he not defended his cause wee know not where it might have ended ... because an Anabaptist meeting they prosecuted him. ... Wee are all greatly concerned for his deplorable case. <sup>57</sup>

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56. E. G. Atkinson, "Loyal London Ministers, 1696," Trans., VI (1918-19), 183-188.

57. \_\_\_\_\_, "Persecution at Lynn, 1698," Trans., II (1910-11), 67f.

D. General and Particular Baptists within the Same Church

1. Civil War period. In the early stages of the Baptist movement there may have been some mixtures of General and Particular Baptists within the same church, but churches tended to become theologically uniform. Therefore, toward the end of the century there were few mixtures, save in isolated cases. Edwards alleged that "Blunt, Emmes, and Wrighters church, one of the first and prime Churches of Anabaptists," broke into pieces,<sup>58</sup> perhaps over theology. Blunt was the person who introduced immersion among Particular Baptists; Clement Wrighter was associated with Thomas Lambe in a baptizing in Gloucester prior to September, 1642.<sup>59</sup> It is conceivable, therefore, that Wrighter joined with Blunt, but later separated. The alleged disintegration of the church may have been due to Wrighter's sectarian disposition; he progressed, it is reported, to Independency, to Anabaptism, to Arminianism, and finally to Seekerism.<sup>60</sup> The instability of the early 1640's, however, gave way to the enforcement of doctrinal uniformity within the local church in the 1650's; therefore, there were few mixtures.

2. Toleration. There were several cases of mixed churches around the end of the century, but they are explicable. First, Particular Baptists infiltrated General Baptist churches.

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58. Edwards, op. cit., III, 112f.

59. Wynell, op. cit., "To the Christian Reader."

60. Edwards, op. cit., I, 82.

This infiltration initially involved the development of Particular views within a church. The attempt of General Baptists to tolerate both views within their churches was ineffectual in most cases, for churches either split or excluded recalcitrant members. Secondly, weakness and isolation, in rare cases, occasionally required the maintenance of both views in a church.

In May, 1695, two London churches "agreed to unite and join together, and make one intire Church." Paul's Alley was Particular and Turner's Hall was General. However, the former steadfastly declined to participate in Particular Baptist associational life, and the latter had severed formal connections with other General Baptist churches of London. Also involved was a Sabbatarian church whose minister, Joseph Stennett, preached at Paul's Alley, which had no minister. In this particular case, the churches were forced to depend on each other because of their isolation from churches of like faith and order. The arrangement was neither satisfactory nor permanent, for objections were soon made against Stennett's Calvinism, and the union was broken. Within ten years the Calvinists formed an alignment with Particular Baptists.<sup>61</sup>

Early in the eighteenth century, there were two churches in the town of Leicester. In 1706 the Particular Baptist congregation affiliated with a church in Arnesby which was par-

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<sup>61</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_, "Paul's Alley, Barbican, 1695-1768," Trans., IV (1914-15), 46-52.

tially, if not completely, composed of General Baptists. Arnesby progressed to Particularism, and in 1707 it established connections with Particular Baptists. However, as late as 1715 there were both General and Particular Baptists in the Arnesby church, a fact which John Evans, the dissenting church cataloguer, noted as exceptional.<sup>62</sup>

#### E. Personal Inter-relations

Relations between individuals of the two traditions cannot be satisfactorily assessed, but the data suggest that General Baptists were more suspicious of Particular Baptists at the end of the century than of other denominations. Because of General Baptist isolationism, friendly relations between the two groups were probably at a minimum. It is well known that Thomas Grantham and the General Baptist church in Norwich sustained a much healthier relationship with Anglicans than with Particular Baptists during the last quarter of the century. Each of the two Baptist churches in Norwich excommunicated members who associated with or defected to the other church.<sup>63</sup> It is interesting that Particular Baptists of Leicester refused to join with Leicester General Baptists, but joined the Arnesby church which was several miles distant. It appears that personal relations in Leicester were unpleasant.

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62. W. T. Whitley, "Early Leicester Baptists," BQ, I (1922-23), 74-77.

63. C. B. Jewson, "The Old General Baptist Church at Norwich," BQ, IX (1938-39), 430-432.

Friendly relations seem to have been rare. Unfortunately, personal relationships were not subject to recording, so it must be recognized that this conclusion is partially deduced from silence. The friendly relation between Benjamin Stinton and General Baptists was probably unusual. He was the son-in-law of Benjamin Keach who had an amazing ability to get along with General Baptists. Very shortly after 1700, Stinton of Horsley-down, London, enjoyed happy relations with two General Baptist churches, and a third shared a baptistery with Horsley-down.<sup>64</sup> The ambiguity of Thomas Crosby, Stinton's son-in-law, about the relationship between General and Particular Baptists may have derived from Stinton, for Crosby used the records which Stinton collected during the 1710's for his pioneer history.

#### VI. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Incomplete data on seventeenth century Baptist churches suggest that Baptists originated in a few centers whence the movement spread to other places. In the mid-seventeenth century, General and Particular Baptists infrequently occupied the same territory; only in the counties within fifty to sixty miles of London were they mixed to any notable degree. During the century, the two traditions extended themselves, resulting

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64. \_\_\_\_\_, "Benjamin Stinton and his Baptist Friends," Trans., I (1908-09), 193-196.

in the inter-penetration of each other's original areas. The extension was so comprehensive that by 1715 Particular Baptists were in all but five counties (in the Midlands and Northern England) and General Baptists in all but ten counties (in the extreme North and extreme Southwest).

Full data on Baptist churches are not available. Though neither comprehension nor certitude has been achieved, there have been attempts to compile functional, if not complete, lists of Baptist churches. There are four reasons for incomplete knowledge. First, the most comprehensive seventeenth century lists were the signatures to confessions, which did not pretend to represent all churches. Secondly, geographical identifications in some literature are incomplete, so antiquarian cartographers have had difficulty in locating churches. Thirdly, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a church is General or Particular. Fourthly, the pattern of widespread congregations within an integrated church may easily confuse the compiler. In spite of these difficulties, however, lists have been reconstructed. The two lists which are most useful for the following study deal with churches which existed prior to 1660 and in 1715.<sup>65</sup>

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65. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Baptist Interest under George I," *Trans.*, II (1910-11), 95-109, and \_\_\_\_\_, "Baptist Churches till 1660," *Trans.*, II (1910-11), 236-254. W. T. Whitley was the author of these two anonymous articles. The former list uses Evans' catalogue of 1715 as the baseline, but additional information is listed; the latter list is a reconstruction from extant data.

A. Civil War-Commonwealth Period

General and Particular Baptists were generally separated as to locales, with one tradition having an overwhelming majority. By 1660 Particular Baptists had a few more churches than General Baptists, but in numerical strength they may have been more equal. There is a possibility that General Baptists were numerically the stronger, for they had larger churches.

1. General Baptists. General Baptists were strong in three areas. In one of these they had a virtual monopoly; in the other two, they were on comparatively equal terms with Particular Baptists. General Baptists predominated in a territory roughly approximating the Midlands. The counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton, Rutland, Lincoln, Leicestershire, and Salop contained General Baptist churches only. Each of the contiguous counties of Nottingham, Derby, Stafford, and Worcester contained only one Particular Baptist church, and Warwick contained only three. This Midlands area is triangular in shape, with the southern angle in Cambridge, the northern in Lincoln, and the western in Salop. In the Southeast, General Baptists were slightly stronger than Particular Baptists; in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, the former had eighteen churches and the latter had thirteen. In the counties of Middlesex (London), Hertford, Bedford, and Buckingham, General Baptists were strong, but on the whole Particular Baptists were stronger; the exception was Bucks, which had a strong General Baptist witness.

General Baptists were very weak in other areas. In Oxfordshire there were only two churches. In the West, only one county (Gloucester) had two churches, and five (Devon, Dorset, Wilts, Hereford, and Cheshire) had only one church. In Hampshire, Cornwall, Somerset, Wales, and Northern England, there was not a known General Baptist church. However, it is known that the General Baptists of Wales had a confession in the 1650's and that Henry Maurice listed some General Baptists in 1675.

2. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists were located south and north of the Midlands and in Wales. In West Anglia and Wales, Particular Baptists overwhelmingly outnumbered General Baptists. Particular Baptists had only a few weak and scattered churches in Northern England. From Berkshire southwestward to Cornwall there were only three General Baptist churches, compared to thirty-seven Particular Baptist churches. From Berkshire northward through Oxford and Warwick and westward through Wales, there were only nine General Baptist churches (four of which were in Warwick and Worcester), compared to forty-nine Particular Baptist churches. In East Anglia, Particular Baptists were in Essex and Norfolk only. Most of the East Anglian churches held Fifth Monarchy views and emerged out of Independency in the mid-1650's. In London, Hertford, and Bedford, Particular Baptists were stronger than General Baptists, and were only slightly weaker in Kent.

3. Effect of distribution on inter-relations. Being separated geographically, General and Particular Baptists had little possibility of inter-relations. The group which first planted permanent work in an area had a definite advantage there before 1660. The superiority of Particular Baptists in West Anglia and Wales, and of General Baptists in the Midlands, is adequately explained by this view. The appearance of Particular Baptist churches in East Anglia and Northern England is explicable by the advantage which Particular Baptists had in evolutionary separation from Independency; General Baptists separated radically from Independents, so they received little advantage in the 1650's when Independents were accepting believers' baptism.

#### B. Early Eighteenth Century

Baptists were less geographically separated in 1715 than in 1660. This was due primarily to the Particular Baptist invasion of characteristically General Baptist territory. Though General Baptists also established churches in new areas, they declined in strength.

1. General Baptists. General Baptists had fewer churches in 1715 than in 1660, but they were more widely scattered. They doubled their churches in the area from Berkshire westward and southwestward, but Particular Baptist churches still outnumbered them six to one. In the counties of Sussex, Kent, Essex, Norfolk, Oxford, and Bucks, General Baptists gained

thirty-two churches, compared to a Particular Baptist gain of only seven. These gains cannot be fully explained, but the following factors were contributory. First, Collier's deviation from Calvinism facilitated the increase of General Baptist churches in West Anglia. Secondly, the vigor of the association which met annually at Aylesbury in the latter part of the seventeenth century (sometimes during persecution) was the primary factor in the doubling of General Baptist churches in the general area centered in Bucks. Thirdly, Norfolk had strong General Baptist counties to the west, whence evangelism came. In 1685 Thomas Grantham, one of the most active General Baptist messengers, moved from Lincoln to Norwich;<sup>66</sup> the increase in Norfolk and Essex was due in part to his labors. Fourthly, the increase in Sussex and Kent was probably the result of splits over Caffynism. Therefore, the number of churches may be misleading. Some of these "splinter" churches adopted Particularism during the eighteenth century.

General Baptists lost heavily in the Midlands and contiguous counties. While Particular Baptists were gaining forty-eight churches, General Baptists were losing thirty-two. Most of these losses are attributable to anti-Caffynism and Particular Baptist proselyting.

2. Particular Baptists. Particular Baptists had about

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66. Jewson, op. cit., p. 431.

ninety more churches in 1715 than in 1660. Some of these were formerly scattered congregations of a single church. The increase in the Bedfordshire area is attributable to the division of scattered churches. However, some churches amalgamated and others dissolved; so the total increase is not fully explicable on the basis of division. The chief explanation is that Particular Baptists invaded predominantly General Baptist territories, especially in the Midlands. Particular Baptists were unable to establish churches in Lincoln, Nottingham, and Salop, but yet they gained forty-eight churches in the Midlands area. In 1715 there were no traces of Particular Baptist work in the two counties of Derby and Durham where there had been churches at an earlier date.

3. Inter-relations. Inter-relations broke down in the period when Particular Baptists were making inroads among General Baptists. The defections to Particularism and the growing conservatism of General Baptists have already been noted, but it needs to be pointed out that the antipathy of General Baptists toward Particular Baptists was a defensive mechanism. General Baptists looked upon Particular Baptists as serious competitors. Particular Baptists, on the other hand, seem not to have viewed General Baptists with alarm; the few new churches which General Baptists established were too impotent to disturb Particular Baptists, for the latter had much the better of proselytism throughout the nation.

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing data give the overwhelming impression that General and Particular Baptists were distinguished by themselves and others. They may have been partially mixed early in the 1640's, but the efforts of the seven churches theologically to differentiate them in 1644 and 1646 were successful. Within ten years it was widely recognized that they were two groups. General Baptists were on the defensive by the mid-1650's, and their position became more vulnerable as the century progressed. Neither the quietude of persecution nor geographical separation was able to shield General Baptists from the impingement of Calvinism.

General and Particular Baptists overtly appeared to be an integrated group during the Civil War period, for they had common foes which they attacked in a similar manner. However, they did not initiate a co-operative attack; independently working individuals attacked the same foes, and quoted each other in their polemics. In the 1650's General and Particular Baptists occasionally put up a common front against Quakerism, but they achieved greatest success in joint action in the defense of their civil liberties and political innocence.

Both claimed to be Baptists, and both were recognized as Baptists by their contemporaries. Nevertheless, interrelations were at a minimum; when they encountered each other the relationship was, in most cases, unfriendly. Their

denominational lives were characterized by independence of and isolation from each other--the results of four factors. First, theology was a religious matter of great importance. The seventeenth century was primarily concerned with ecclesiology, but this does not imply that there was theological indifference. The theological norm had been established in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; except for General Baptists and Quakers, Nonconformists were strict Calvinists. Because of the importance of theology, the differences between General and Particular Baptists prevented basic unity. Secondly, geographical separation facilitated non-relations in the initial phase of development, for both groups were infrequently found in the same place. When their lines later crossed, they viewed each other as competitors, and General Baptists became increasingly exclusivistic in their attempts to prevent defections to Particular Baptists. Thirdly, the two traditions had different psychologies. Both were sectarian, but sectarianism was more pronounced among General Baptists; this sectarianism prevented compatible inter-relations. Fourthly, Particular Baptists were a more integral part of Nonconformity than General Baptists. Whereas Particular Baptists differed from other Nonconformists over ecclesiology, there was a theological unity among Calvinists which transcended ecclesiological diversity. General Baptists were never wholeheartedly accepted by Nonconformity, and they took

some delight in this non-acceptance, for it was confirmation to them that they were in the tradition of the early church.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONS

#### BETWEEN BAPTISTS AND OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

During the seventeenth century, England was characterized by ecclesiastical diversity. Throughout most of the century, the Church of England was the established church, and it always claimed an overwhelming majority. Other ecclesiastical groups were Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, and Roman Catholics; there were also fringe groups of a sectarian nature, as Fifth Monarchists, Sabbatarians, Levellers, Familists, and Seekers. Non-Anglican groups were under legal proscription during most of the century. They never constituted a large percentage of the population, but they claimed a notable percentage of the religiously interested population. They were unrelated to each other as ecclesiastical bodies. Most of their inter-relations were on the personal level and of a competitive nature.

Baptists were the fourth group in size, being less numerous than Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. It is impossible to assess the strength of each denomination, for the extant records are incomplete in census and indiscriminate in classification. The strength of Nonconformity in 1675, according to episcopal records, was only four and a half percent of the population. However, this is an underestimate, as evidenced by an abnormally low estimate of

Baptist strength in known cases. Nevertheless, the records emphasize the numerical minority of Nonconformity.<sup>1</sup>

The century was one of uniformity, experimentation, and controversy. There were few who expected unity, and they were in the security of the National Church. John Dury and Richard Baxter were the two most outstanding ecumenicists of the century,<sup>2</sup> but Dury was despised by those in the Puritan-Separatist tradition, and Baxter was largely responsible for the continued nonconformity of Presbyterians during the Restoration. In 1640 the parish of Muggleswick in the bishopric of Durham lost its pastor. When "John Dury" was proposed as a successor, sixty-seven persons, including several who appeared as Baptists in the 1650's, petitioned the bishop to appoint someone besides "that Dury, because wee knew him to be no Preacher, and his life and conversation scandalous."<sup>3</sup> Baxter not only prevented the Savoy Conference of 1661 from agreeing on a system embracing Anglicanism and Presbyterianism,<sup>4</sup> but he also wrote in 1676 "perhaps the ablest defence of Nonconformist practice."<sup>5</sup>

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1. W. T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, revised edition, pp. 126f; cf. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Baptist Interest under George I," Trans., II (1910-11), 108f.

2. Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill, editors, A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948, pp. 134f, 142, 145f.

3. George Lilburn, A most Lamentable Information ..., 1640, broadsheet.

4. Rouse and Neill, op. cit., p. 142.

5. F. T. Powicke, "Richard Baxter's Relation to the Baptists and his Proposed Terms of Communion," Trans., VI (1918-19), 207.

Ecclesiastically, Baptists maintained complete independence from other denominations. The only exception was the experiment in open communion which was costly to Baptists; open communion involved, not ecclesiastical inter-relations as such, but a mixed membership of Paedo-baptists and Baptists within the same congregationally-governed church. Whereas Baptists maintained independence from other ecclesiastical bodies, they considered themselves as evangelical Christians.

The subject of relations between Baptists and non-Baptists involves negative as well as positive attitudes and acts. The subject is too broad for comprehension to be attempted, but inter-relations may profitably be studied. The areas which require investigation are organic union or uniformity, theological agreement, inter-communion, and persecution.

This chapter deals only with ecclesiastical inter-relations. It is difficult at times to distinguish between personal and informal inter-relations, and ecclesiastical inter-relations, but the distinction must be guarded. Ecclesiastical inter-relations are relations between Baptists and non-Baptists in areas of life and thought which involve more than independent individuals and which are directly related to institutional Christianity. Personal and informal relations are relations between Baptists and non-Baptists in areas which do not directly involve institutional Christianity.

## I. ORGANIC UNION OR UNIFORMITY

Religious uniformity was the dominant ecclesiastical ideal of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England. From the time of the reformation under Henry VIII to the institution of toleration by William and Mary, the Establishment, whether Anglican or Presbyterian, thought that it could effect uniformity, but at no time was uniformity achieved with any notable measure of success. The Toleration Act of 1689 was a testimony to the futility of attempted uniformity and a concession to the vitality of dissent. Though Episcopacy was preserved, the Toleration Act granted certain civil and religious privileges to Nonconformists who pledged political fidelity and affirmed trinitarian orthodoxy and the supremacy of the Scriptures.

Baptists were outside the mainstream ecclesiastical life of England, so they were not immediately involved in all of the efforts at union and uniformity during the seventeenth century. However, they were variously related to five union efforts, in 1645-57, in 1653, in 1658-59, in 1675-81, and post-1689. Baptists initiated none of these efforts at comprehension, and, except for a few individual deviations, Baptists uniformly rejected union and uniformity.

### A. Presbyterian Effort, 1645-1647

Presbyterianism, the product of Puritanism, had been developing over a period of eighty years before it had the

opportunity to erect its ecclesiastical system on a national scale. It was the ascendant party between late 1640 and 1648. In 1642 the Episcopal system and the Anglican liturgy were abolished. In 1643 Parliament enacted three bills calling for an ecclesiastical assembly whose duty would be to devise a new establishment; Charles I suppressed the first two bills, but the third passed. The Assembly convened at Westminster, whence it received its name. Its constituency of one hundred and fifty-one divines and laymen was preponderatingly Presbyterian, but there were nine Anglicans, five Independents, and a few Erastians.<sup>6</sup> Presbyterians were strong enough to impose their theology and government. However, the sects dissented from this establishment, even before it was effected, and petitioned for religious toleration and congregational government.

1. Opposition from Independency. The strongest opposition to the Presbyterian establishment came from Independents who differed from Presbyterianism only in ecclesiology. Before it became apparent that Presbyterianism would succeed, Independents hoped that the settlement would be "an accommodation" of Presbyterian and Independent views.<sup>7</sup> In 1646, however, it became evident that Presbyterians would ultimately

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6. David S. Schaff, "Westminster Assembly," in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, edited by S. M. Jackson, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), XII, 322-324.

7. \_\_\_\_\_, Wholesome Severity, 1645, pp. 36-40.

triumph, so Independents began to attack it. This change can be illustrated by the positions of John Saltmarsh, an Independent. In January, 1646, Saltmarsh published "a Designe for Peace and Reconciliation" between the various "contenders for Ordinances, for the Temple and the Vessels in it." He protested against Presbyterian discipline, government, and maintenance, and proposed several measures by which peace and love could be preserved.<sup>8</sup> John Ley, a Presbyterian member of the Assembly, immediately attacked Saltmarsh, calling him a "Ubiquitary in believe" for changing his mind on the establishment and rambling about in "speculation of opinions." Ley argued that Presbyterian demands were so reasonable that none should criticize them.<sup>9</sup> In April, 1646, Saltmarsh replied to Ley, asserting that Ley was so unsure of Presbyterian government that he would enforce silence on the subject of religion. Saltmarsh charged that "Presbyteries are not so singular, more free, convenient, more peaceable, more Apostolical, more authorized, then other Churches."<sup>10</sup> The calumny of Edwards in February, 1646, identified Independency with the sects because of the advocacy of toleration by Independents.<sup>11</sup> For two years or so Presbyterians published multiple pamphlets against toleration, directed against Independents and Baptists.<sup>12</sup>

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8. John Saltmarsh, The Smoke in the Temple, 1646, 70p.

9. John Ley, Light for Smoke, 1646, 97p.

10. John Saltmarsh, An end of One Controversie, 1646, p. 9.

11. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, 1646, I, 14f.

12. Illustrative of these attacks are: Richard Byfield,

2. Opposition from Baptists. Between July, 1645, and early 1647, several Baptists attacked Presbyterian uniformity. They repudiated the ecclesiastical establishment and argued for toleration. Baptists reacted more violently to this union effort than to any during the century, and their arguments were used at other times.

a. William Kiffin. In July, 1645, William Kiffin questioned the reformation which Presbyterians were claiming:

... as yet wee see no greatnesse, unless it be in the vast expence of Money and Time: for what great thing is it to change Episcopacie into Presbytery, and a Book of Common Prayer into a Directory, and to exalt men from Livinges of 100l. a yeere, to places of 400l. per Annum.<sup>13</sup>

Kiffin's objections to Presbyterianism were the same which Separatists and, to a lesser degree, Puritans had raised against the Church of England early in the century: hierarchical government, formal worship, and maintenance by tithes.

b. Christopher Blackwood. Christopher Blackwood, in January, 1646, attacked the national character of Presbyte-

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Temple-defilers defiled, 1645, 40p.; \_\_\_\_\_, Wholesome Severity, 1645, 40p.; \_\_\_\_\_, A Letter of the Ministers of the City of London, 1645 [January 2, 1646], 6p.; The Humble Petition Of The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, 1645 [January 17, 1646], 6p.; The Humble Petition of the Ministers Of the Counties of Suffolke and Essex, 1646, 6p.; Thomas Edwards, The Casting Down ..., 1647, 218p.; and \_\_\_\_\_, The Anabaptists late Protestation, [April 2, 1647], 6p. (un-numbered).

13. William Kiffin, A Brief Remonstrance ..., 1645, p. 7. Within five weeks Kiffin, accused of being the "grand ring-leader of that seduced Sect," was answered by Josiah Ricraft, A Looking Glasse for the Anabaptists, 1645, 26p.

rianism, which he viewed as a regression from the earlier Puritan position. The desired unity cannot be effected, he reasoned, "if every side, out of a confident tenaciousnesse of their own opinions," declines to be unified through charity with other religious parties. He distinguished six kinds of unity, based on verity, authority, persuasion, necessity, covenant, and charity. Verity cannot unify because it is one, yet "one man thinks this to be a truth, and another thinks that." Authority cannot unify for it must result either in making hypocrites or in persecuting those who violate the requirements of compulsory religion. Persuasion cannot unify, "seeing both in Presse, in Pulpit, all sides have endeavored to perswade one another, to little or no effect." Necessity cannot unify "for tyes of necessity usually bind no longer then one side hath need of another." Covenanting cannot unify for it can bind only against a common enemy; "yet it cannot tye us [sic] together among our selves."

What then remains as a most firm bond, to tye all the Godly part [Calvinists] together, but only the Vnity of Charitie: Which is, that conscientious men, be left to that light which GOD shall reveal unto them; each of them having a loving affection to all those that fear the LORD, however differing in judgment.<sup>14</sup>

c. William Dell. In February, 1646, William Dell declared that the uniformity advocated by Presbyterianism was "an unity of outward form in the Churches of God." It was a

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14. Ch. Blackwood, Apostolicall Baptism, 1645 [January 13, 1646], "To the Godly Reader."

mere "externall Uniformity," not a unity of faith. He based his objections to uniformity on variety in New Testament practice and diversity in nature. At Ephesus Paul did not impose uniformity; in the New Testament there is variety in praying, preaching, and celebrating the Lord's Supper; Ephesians 4:4ff, an abused passage, means "a manifold Unity, but no externall Uniformity." Not everything in the created order is alike; neither are all people alike. Therefore, "externall Uniformity" is "a monstrous thing," which would mean monotony of nature and tyranny of people. Uniformity would burden the saints, bind the Church, constrict the Spirit, limit Christ, and eclipse the Father. It is "the great Diana of the Presbyterians, and the Image that falls down from the brain and fancie of men." It is akin to "Prelaticall Conformity." Dell concluded that "Unitie is Christian, Uniformity Antichristian." He did not define Christian unity, but he applied the idea to the immediate problem under discussion:

... several Churches of Christ having unity of doctrine, faith, the spirit, ordinances, &c. may have divers forms of outward administrations, as God and Christ by the Spirit shall lead them; and ... every Church is in these things to be left free, and no Church forced by any outward power to follow or imitate another Church against its will.<sup>15</sup>

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15. William Dell, Uniformity Examined, 1646, p. 9 (un-numbered). Richard Laurence, The Antichristian Presbyter, 1647, 19p., also called the national character, or uniform character, of Presbyterianism anti-christian. The subtitle of Laurence's book is "Antichrist Transformed: Assuming The Nevvshape of a Reformed Presbyter, as his last and subtlest Disguise to deceive the Nations."

d. Samuel Richardson. In 1647 Samuel Richardson propounded certain questions to the Assembly, requesting that the Assembly "First peruse, then refuse." His book was inscribed: "Where Romish Tyrannie hath the upper hand, Darknesse of mind, and superstition stand." He declared that by "peace" Presbyterians meant "be presbyters and ye shall be in peace"; to secure peace, Presbyterians command the magistrates to imprison and kill all who do not assume Presbyterianism. By demanding uniformity, "the assembly of devisers" imply several things: the Presbyterian church is the Church; Presbyterians are the only lawgivers of rules for worship, doctrine, and discipline; they are infallible and omniscient; the Directory displaces the Bible; Presbyterians are to be deified; they are the sole "defenders of faith"; they would reduce all Christians to oneness under one universal head; their pretended uniformity is designed to deceive the people; they are more trusting of Parliament than of God; they are so afraid of "light" that they must suppress non-Presbyterian literature; and they desire a monopoly of preaching.<sup>16</sup>

3. Perfectionism, above ordinances. The controversy over church-order, which was precipitated by the proposed Presbyterian settlement, produced an extreme reaction against uniformity. In April, 1646, Paul Hobson de-ecclesiologized

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16. Samuel Richardson, The Necessity of Toleration, in E. B. Underhill, Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, pp. 276-279.

sectarianism, thus making ecclesiastical uniformity irrelevant. The controversy over church-order offended his understanding of essential Christianity, but he too engaged in such controversy in the 1650's. In 1646, however, he stated that love and Christ's presence are above ordinances. Whereas the ordinances are not to be neglected, they are not to be substituted for fellowship. As for ordinances,

these ye are to use to hold forth the discipline of Christ to the world, yet not to rest in these; these distinguish you externally from the men of the world; but you will be as of the world still for all them, if you enjoy no more than bare ordinances.<sup>17</sup>

There must be a life of Christian fellowship through love which transcends church-order. He noted that

the folly of man in these dayes [is] that they ty their loves only to that congregated body of which they are in fellowship with; and if they differ in judgment from them, they have no love to them.<sup>18</sup>

If saints do not enjoy fellowship through love in this life, they will not have it in the heavenly life, for "your heaven is here as well as hereafter in a degree." He predicted that

you will see (if I mistake not) ere long, Congregations pickt out of Congregations; of Men that have experience of this life, of living in God. And the ordinances shall be yet more and more purified; and yet they will not rest in ordinances, but shall haue the marrow of ordinances.<sup>19</sup>

Hobson's view of love was sectarian, not ecumenical, for

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17. Paul Hobson, Practicall Divinity, 1646, p. 86.

18. Ibid., p. 93; the page is numbered 77, but it should be 93, as pagination reverts to 77 after 92.

19. Ibid., p. 92.

only a few within gathered or congregated churches were capable of charity. He subverted unionism by minimizing the institutional character of Christianity. True Christians are those who separate from congregations which emphasize order, and join with others who observe pure ordinances in the perfection of love. The similarity between Hobson's views and the tenets of Quakerism is striking. Of course, Hobson did not become a Quaker; nevertheless, he was prophetic about the "Congregations pickt out of Congregations," for Quakers affirmed a perfectionism above ordinances. Hobson's emphasis on the absoluteness of Christian charity seemingly originated from a desire to prevent organic union. The Quakers propagandized for a Christian unity which was based on love and in which there was a life above church-order. Quakers carried to completion the minimization of church-order and the magnification of union with Christ and with each other through love, which were in Hobson's thought as early as 1646.

4. Evaluation. Baptists uniformly repudiated uniformity during the mid-1640's. They strongly defended free church polity. There was no via media between National Church uniformity and sectarian freedom. Religious comprehension, they felt, would result in the assimilation of their faith, worship, and discipline by a National Church. Having recently apprehended the principles of believers' baptism and congregational government, they were unwilling to surrender these new truths, or "further lights," and return to the National Church.

B. Independent Effort, 1653

1. Independent position. In 1653 Cromwell gave Independents an opportunity to establish a National Independency, a most contradictory establishment, to say the least. The former unity of Independents and Baptists against Presbyterianism deceived Cromwell into thinking that Independency could be established on a base broad enough to include Baptists. However, Cromwell misunderstood the character of ecclesiological conviction.

Independents supported National Independency with two arguments which both Anglicans and Presbyterians had used when they were seeking uniformity. Positively, the Church is one; negatively, differences over circumstantial matters should not disrupt the unity of the Church.<sup>20</sup> Independents argued for unity on the basis of the national solidarity of Israel (the alleged antetype of the Church) and the figure of the Body of Christ. They insisted that believers' baptism, which was the strong emphasis of Baptists, is a mere circumstantial element; baptism was made for man, not man for baptism; hence,

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20. Rouse and Neill, *op. cit.*, p. 134, call the issue of essentials versus circumstantials "the root principle of the ecumenical minds of his [Dury's] age." It is true that there was a controversy over what is essential and what circumstantial. However, all those who made the distinction were not ecumenicists. To the contrary, a dominant party always called the distinctives of a separating party circumstantial, arguing that dissenters based their objectives on non-essentials. It appears, therefore, that it was the conservative, not the ecumenical, mind that made a distinction between essentials and circumstantials.

it was designed for man's spiritual welfare, not for "his disturbance, danger, and distraction." Baptism, it was said, had been elevated by Baptists to a pre-eminence which does not rightfully belong to it, thereby causing "Church-breaking" and "Church-deserting." Independents appealed to Baptists to be more concerned for the unity of the Church than for a rite which is "extrinsecal to Church-constitution."<sup>21</sup>

2. Reaction of Baptists. Baptists reacted to Independent propaganda in two ways. First, some endorsed the principle of open communion. The most notable advocates of open communion were John Tombes and Henry Jessey. Open communion was more widely practiced in country churches, and churches which were just assuming the principle of believers' baptism were more susceptible to the principle. Secondly, most Baptists became more convinced that believers' baptism is a foundational principle of the Church, just as repentance, faith, and holy living are.

a. Principle of progressive reformation. Baptists defended separation from Independency by means of the principle of progressive reformation which Independents had formerly used against Presbyterians. It was recognized that Episcopacy was an improvement over Papism, Presbyterianism over Episcopacy, and Independency over Presbyterianism. In November,

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21. See John Goodwin, Water-Dipping No Firm Footing for Church-Communion, 1653, 90p., for a treatment of these arguments.

1653, William Kaye stated that each tradition had served a useful purpose in the reformatory process, "and all of them ... make preparations for the most glorious Apostolicall Government" (congregational government by baptized believers).<sup>22</sup> Experience should have taught the Independents, William Allen declared, not to claim a false security from their past progress; they need reformation at the point of believers' baptism.<sup>23</sup> He also predicted that within a generation the alleged baptism of infants into the universal church, not into the local congregation, would transform the gathered Independent churches into a National Church.<sup>24</sup>

b. Baptist denominationalism. The Independent effort at union failed, and Baptist denominationalism crystallized. Independent and Baptist ecclesiologies had already separated over baptism, but the two groups had maintained a functional unity because of their fears of a common enemy. By late 1650, however, Presbyterians ceased to be a threat, so there was no

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22. William Kaye, Baptism Without Reason, 1653, "To the brethren of the Ministry within the Election of Grace."

23. William Allen, Some Baptismal abuses Briefly Discovered, 1653, "To John Goodwin and Members of his Society."

24. Ibid., "To the Reader" (a premonition). Allen's prediction was not fulfilled in England, for Independency was unable to establish itself. In New England, however, the so-called "Half-way Covenant" was drawn up within ten years, calling for the baptism of the children of church members. Civil franchise was involved in this Covenant, for in the New England theocracy only church members could vote. By restricting infant baptism to the children of members, the members protected the civil rights of their posterity and withheld such rights from the progeny of non-members. The covenant purported to perpetuate "the rule of the saints," but in reality it effected a National Church.

common tie between Baptists and Independents when the latter sought establishment in 1653. In fact, from 1651 Baptists and Independents were becoming more distinct from each other; the Independent effort at union accelerated the process of separation and denominational consolidation of Baptists.

Baptists grew rapidly between 1651 and 1655. About sixty per cent of the Baptist churches which are known to have existed before 1660 were first identifiable as Baptist churches between 1651 and 1655. Over sixty-three per cent of those which appeared between 1651 and 1655 first appeared between 1653 and 1655. The churches which appeared in 1651 and 1652 were, for the most part, General Baptist churches.<sup>25</sup> General Baptists, it appears, were the first to realize in number that they were not one with Independency. Particular Baptists became more aware of their distinctiveness after the ambitions of Independency became more overt. The controversies over union and communion in 1653 were waged almost exclusively between Independents and Particular Baptists, and the grand effect was to expedite the development of a denominational integrity among Baptists.

#### C. Presbyterian Effort, 1658-1659

Independency's hope of effecting an establishment had dissolved before Cromwell's death in 1658. Cromwell had been

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<sup>25.</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Baptist Churches till 1660," Trans., II (1910-11), 236-254.

courting the Presbyterians since 1655, and shortly before his death he permitted Presbyterians and Republicans to return to Parliament. After the Protector's death, his son, Richard, took over the Government, but the Army, then stripped of Baptists, restricted his authority and soon forced him to retire. After a period of civil and ecclesiastical chaos, General Monk and a Presbyterian Parliament in 1660 invited Charles II to return.<sup>26</sup>

Presbyterians returned to power in September, 1658. For a few months a few Independents were associated with them in the Government, but Parliament soon became exclusively Presbyterian. Parliament, therefore, took steps to restore Presbyterian ecclesiastical uniformity. There were some Presbyterians who sought to establish a union of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, but they were a hopeless minority. Presbyterianism was too strong to compromise its system to effect such a union. As a result of Presbyterian domination, persecution fell upon Baptists late in 1659.<sup>27</sup>

1. Richard Baxter. On August 22, 1658, Richard Baxter, encouraged by a letter from the wife of Thomas Lambe,<sup>28</sup>

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26. W. E. Lunt, History of England, third edition, pp. 44f.

27. Whitley, op. cit., p. 101.

28. This Thomas Lambe was the pastor, not of the General Baptist church in Bell Alley, London, but of the Particular Baptist church in Lothbury, London; see \_\_\_\_\_, "Baptist Churches till 1660," Trans., II (1910-11), 246. Also, his associate, William Allen, is to be distinguished from the Army commander and native of West Anglia.

initiated correspondence with two Baptists, Lambe and William Allen. Baxter reported that John Tombes had recently preached on unity at Bewdley and that some members of Tombes' church were very much offended by his message on open communion and union. Baxter announced his intention of drawing up rules of agreement which would be acceptable to "many" Presbyterians, some Independents, and a few Baptists (open communionists). In a letter to Allen, dated November 8, 1658, Baxter said: "It is Uncharitableness and separation that have made the Re-baptized so odious throughout the world." He proposed three things which would ease the ecclesiastical situation. First, those who insist on baptism may receive it, if they will continue "loving communion in the Church." Secondly, Baptists who cannot remain in the Church should yet acknowledge Paedobaptist churches as true, and maintain "Brotherly love, and Distant Communion." Thirdly, rules should be drawn up for the regulation of differences, in order to prevent "hardning the Wicked, ensnaring the Weak, hindering the Gospel, and wronging the common Truths as we are agreed in."<sup>29</sup>

On February 28, 1659, Baxter extended "An Offer of Christian fraternal Communion to the Brethren that are against, or doubtful about, Baptizing Infants of believers." He did not anticipate great success, for most Presbyterians, he noted, objected to conciliation and Baptists were divided into three

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29. Powicke, op. cit., pp. 199-206.

groups. He knew that extremists (General Baptists) would reject his offer on two counts: (1) it would compromise believers' baptism and (2) it would put a restraint on their propaganda. Closed communion Particular Baptists might agree to some of the rules, he thought, but most open communionists would accept them. He proposed ten practical rules to implement the agreements which he had proposed in November, 1658.

- (1) The chief concern of all will be the promotion of brotherly love.
- (2) "... the Unity of the Church Catholick" will take precedence over "our different Opinions" which hinder unity.
- (3) Evangelism of the ignorant and ungodly, and the edification of the weak will be undertaken instead of controversy and proselyting.
- (4) Agreement in most truths will be magnified and disagreement in "Lesser points" will be minimized.
- (5) These agreements are to be published in all congregations.
- (6) Controversial issues will not be preached in another minister's church without his consent, and private assemblies of a competitive nature will not be held in an established parish.
- (7) "Zeal and Time and Speech" will be spent on "common Truths" rather than on "our different Opinions."
- (8) Ministerial criticism, public or private, will be discontinued.
- (9) Each church will honor another church's discipline rather than "receive ... any Scandalous Persons that fly from the discipline of other Churches, and pretend a Change of Opinion to cloak their scandals."
- (10) Defamations, accusations, and rumors will be ignored, and "private or un-

certain Faults" will not be divulged until private conference has failed to achieve satisfaction.<sup>30</sup>

A joint meeting of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists was held in London on September 30, 1659. "... the work went on merrily," reported Allen, until the matter of "furnishing the Nation with Preachers" arose. A Baptist proposed "state patronage and control" of these preachers, but he was accused by other Baptists of being a "Presbyterian,"<sup>31</sup> so the meeting came to nought. It is notable that a principle which was defined in the controversy with open communionists from 1654 to 1656, became the barrier to a comity agreement at the London meeting. From 1654 to 1656, one of the strongest Baptist objections against open communionists like Tombes and Jessey was ministerial maintenance by the State. By 1654 most closed communion Baptists who held parish livings had resigned, but open communionists saw no objection to State support. Except for a few Welsh preachers, strict communionists uniformly rejected State patronage.<sup>32</sup> Against the view of State support, Baptists developed their theory of congregational maintenance, and this theory prevented assimilation by Independency in the mid-1650's and obstructed the attempted Presbyterian comprehension in 1659.

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30. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-214.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 214f.

32. W. T. Whitley, "Baptists and Bartholomew's Day," *Trans.*, I (1908-09), 30-37.

The only notable result of Baxter's proposals was the conversion of Lambe and Allen.<sup>33</sup> However, Baxter's arguments were so convincing that they conformed to the Church of England when Episcopacy returned. In 1672 Lambe published A Stop to the course of Separation, addressed to the "New Separatists" (Presbyterians), using the same arguments which Baxter and other Paedo-baptists had used against Baptists on earlier occasions. Lambe observed that the separation of Independents and Baptists was justified on their own principles, but that Presbyterianism had no principle of separation:

... the Brownists and Anabaptists have always pleaded for the justification of their Separation from the Parish Churches, that our Churches, Ministry, and Worship were false, yea Antichristian; ... their erroneous consciences make their Schism less criminal before God, than the new Presbyterian Schism; because though they believe the Parish Churches true Churches, the Ministry a true Ministry, the Worship true Worship and therefore such as they may not only lawfully hold Communion with, but that sometimes they ought to do it: Yet presume to gather Churches out of them into distinct Congregations.<sup>34</sup>

In reply, Baxter wrote a classic defense of Nonconformity,<sup>35</sup> employing sectarian arguments which were well known to Baptists.

It is neither desirable nor necessary to impugn Baxter's motives, but his proposed terms of communion may be criticized with profit. First, he made his proposals from the security of a dominant party. To be sure, his Presbyterian confreeres

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33. Powicke, op. cit., p. 207.

34. Thomas Lambe, A Stop to the course of Separation, 1672, pp. 84f.

35. Powicke, loc. cit.

thought he was too liberal and repudiated his efforts, but he found a certain security in Presbyterian supremacy. Secondly, the maximum conditions of Christian unity were summed up in Presbyterian and Paedo-baptist ecclesiology; all other alleged fundamentals were in reality only circumstantials. Thirdly, Baptists were, by implication, accused of being solely responsible for church-disruption because of their uncharitable and unreasonable propaganda, as Baxter viewed it, in behalf of their own principles. Fourthly, Baxter's proposed comity agreement favored National Presbyterianism by disarming aggressive Baptist propaganda and by protecting Presbyterianism from Baptist proselyting. Fifthly, against Anglicanism he employed dissenting principles which he found unreasonable when advocated by Baptists. Baxter was an ecumenicist when he was in the dominant party, a sectary when in Nonconformity.

2. Opposition. Both Independents and Baptists objected to restored Presbyterianism. Politically, they were Republicans, so they had repudiated Oliver Cromwell's ambition to ascend the throne in 1657. After the "retirement" of Richard Cromwell, a group of Independents and Baptists, unified by antagonism toward "the late single Person" (Oliver Cromwell), declared in September, 1659, against any form of monarchical government. They proposed a government by "a certaine number of men qualified and limited according to His [Christ's] Word," and objected to the Presbyterian imposition of a

national ministry, formal worship, and ministerial maintenance by the State.<sup>36</sup> Their objections were essentially the same which they had jointly used against Presbyterianism in the 1640's and which Baptists employed against Independency in 1653. The unity which Baptists and Independents had achieved in the 1640's was based on the necessity of frustrating the union effort of Presbyterians, but the unity dissolved after Presbyterianism was debased; when a similar necessity returned in 1658 and 1659, their unity was revived. However, this unity was political, not ecclesiastical.<sup>37</sup>

#### D. Union Efforts in the Eighth Decade

After St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, Presbyterianism was lowered to the status of Nonconformity. Of course, Presbyterians did not suffer as heavily from persecution as Baptists,

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36. \_\_\_\_\_, Essay for the Settlement upon a sure Foundation, 1659, broadsheet. The signatories included Owen, Jesse, Powell, Vernon, Courtney, Allen (ex-quartermaster general), Danvers, Overton, etc. Great ecclesiological variety was represented: Independents, open and closed communion Particular Baptists, and General Baptists. The one thing which they had in common was antipathy to Cromwell, but this antipathy had developed irregularly. The Essay was slightly revised and published by several Independents and Baptists in Berkshire, under the title of A Testimony to truth.

37. \_\_\_\_\_, A Serious Manifesto and Declaration of the Anabaptist, And Congregational Churches, 1660, broadsheet, says: "we are not (if unified) an inconsiderable part of this Nation, both in respect of Power, Estates and Strength." The manifesto declared that the regal aspirations of Cromwell were responsible for the ruin of religious liberty and the restoration of "the implacable Enemies of our Churches" (Presbyterians). The advocates of congregational government stated that they would not submit "to any Qualifications of Parliament in point of Faith and Religion."

Quakers, and Independents. The Church of England failed to drive Nonconformists back into its fold by the rod, so it altered its strategy. The Church of England sought to comprehend Presbyterians by making a few concessions to their scruples, but there were irreconcilable differences over ordination.<sup>38</sup> State-supported Anglicanism also granted toleration to the sects, perhaps in the hope that Presbyterianism would be able to assimilate some of the sectaries.

1. Anglican uniformity and Baptists. Baptists were not immediately involved in the union efforts of Anglicans, except on a local level. The theology of General Baptists rendered them susceptible to Anglican comprehension, and an unknown number of General Baptists, particularly in the Midlands where there were few Particular Baptists at the time, seem to have engaged in discussion with Anglicans on Christian unity. In 1674 Thomas Grantham urged Baptists and others "to study to be quiet, and do their own Business," in honoring all men, loving Christian brethren, fearing God, and honoring the King.<sup>39</sup> He stated that love of the brethren is "a kind of fellowship."<sup>40</sup> However, affection is not the basis of Church-order; sentimentality may not displace divine intention:

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38. Rouse and Neill, *op. cit.*, pp. 144f. It was Baxter who led the way in undermining the Anglican effort at union.

39. Thomas Grantham, The Loyal Baptist, 1674, title page. (The copy in the British Museum is inscribed: "Benjamin Grantham, His Booke, 1684.")

40. Ibid., p. 15.

God intended to have the Christian Religion stated and maintained in all Nations, according to the pristine Simplicity of the Gospel, without mixtures of Legal Ceremonies, or humane Innovations.<sup>41</sup>

In 1680 Grantham addressed an epistle concerning "Christian Amity" to Anglicans. He noted that everyone was lamenting the divisions within Christianity, but he insisted that the obstruction of reformation is the cause of divisions. If the Church of England will restore verity and purity to its doctrine and practice, he proposed, unity will be achieved, and the Church will be happily integrated.<sup>42</sup> He recognized that "our greatest differences are about Ceremonies," the best of which is worth neither the loss of a soul nor the breach of peace. In a "friendly" manner, he asked for the candid consideration of differences between Baptists and Anglicans on six of the Thirty-Nine Articles, dealing with excommunication, membership of the visible church, compulsion in religion, regeneration and mode of baptism, subject of baptism, laying on of hands, formal prayers, discipline, ordination and preaching, ministerial maintenance and alms, mixed communion, and the relation of Church and State. It might be objected, he anticipated, that Baptists ask for many concessions while granting few, but only what is rational to Christianity is

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41. Ibid., p. 13.

42. Thomas Grantham, A Friendly Epistle to the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of England For Plain Truth and sound Peace Between The Pious Protestants in the Church of England and Those of the Baptised Believers, 1680, pp. 8f.

requested.<sup>43</sup> Grantham was not answered until 1684, and he then distilled his aforementioned objections to four (baptism, membership, discipline, and compulsion).<sup>44</sup> He strenuously denied that Baptists were solely responsible for division, and declared that Baptists cannot unite until the Church of England reforms; "it would be Hypocrisy and Baseness in us, to violate our Consciences in Things pertaining to Religion, to obtain Favour from Men."<sup>45</sup>

2. Unity of Nonconformity. Persecution effected a practical unity within Nonconformity. In 1661 Baptists, Quakers, and a few Independents were persecuted because of their suspected sedition. After August, 1662, however, Presbyterians and Independents found themselves the objects of propaganda for uniformity.<sup>46</sup> They refused to be assimilated, so Nonconformity was swelled by the inclusion of Presbyterians and Independents. During the 1660's, Nonconformity tended toward practical unity for purposes of self-conservation.

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43. Ibid., pp. 26-39.

44. T. Grantham, The Second Part of the Apology for the Baptized Believers, 1684, epistle. Elsewhere he names the objectionable features of Anglicanism: infant baptism, discipline, and the imposition of ceremonies.

45. Ibid., p. 3.

46. Roger L'Estrange, Toleration Discussed, 1663, 108p., is a refutation of toleration in the form of a colloquy between Conformity (Church of England), Zeal (Presbyterianism), and Scruple (Independency). L'Estrange describes the appeals for toleration as follows: "The Method, was Petitioning; the Argument, was Liberty of Conscience; and the Pretext, Religion; Popery, was the Bug-bear; and the Multitude were the Umpires of the Controversie" (pp. 29f).

The controversy on communion from 1672 to 1674 stimulated conversation on inter-relationships within Nonconformity. Whereas the communion controversy was largely a Baptist affair in the 1670's, the issue of inter-relationships concerned all of Nonconformity. The most important result was the revival of the question of the nature, meaning, and value of baptism. Henry Danvers defended believers' baptism from the Bible and antiquity.<sup>47</sup> In 1675 Baxter replied to Danvers, asserting that he found no fault with "sober Godly" Baptists who live "among us in Christian Love and peace" (open communionists), but

The other sort hold it unlawful to hold Communion with such as are not of their mind and way, and are schismatically troublesome and unquiet, in labouring to increase their Party.<sup>48</sup>

Baxter requested this "other sort" to consider three things: (1) they "unchurch almost all the Churches on Earth," holding themselves aloof from communion with Christians; (2) Christendom cannot unite on the principle of believers' baptism, for Paedo-baptists constitute the majority; and (3) Baptists serve the cause of "the great enemy of Love and Concord" by their "Temerarious audacity."<sup>49</sup>

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47. Henry Danvers, A Treatise of Baptism, first edition, 1674; second edition, 1675; Danvers, A Reply to Mr. Wills his Vindicae, 1675, 77p. Several prominent Particular Baptists came to the defense of Danvers in \_\_\_\_\_, The Baptists Answer ..., 1675, 14p.

48. Richard Baxter, More Proofs of Infants Church-Membership, 1675, p. 1.

49. Loc. cit.

Obed Wills also came to the defense of infant baptism, but he was immediately answered by Danvers. In 1676 Wills defended himself against Danvers' charge that he (Wills) was frustrating any hope of "accommodation" of the differences by "the unusualness of my Method, ... unlikeness of my Pattern, ... and impropriety of my Appeal."<sup>50</sup>

The most notable result of this effort at Nonconformist unity, largely prosecuted by Presbyterians, was the Baptists' definition of the absolute primacy of believers' baptism. Edward Hutchinson wrote a lengthy appendix "Concerning Unity," in which he repeated Blackwood's differentiation of unities and exhorted everyone to exercise love in the controversy. However, he unequivocally defended believers' baptism, and accused Baxter and Wills of unfair attitudes toward Danvers.<sup>51</sup> The theologically conciliatory confession of 1677 had a long appendix on the necessity of believers' baptism.<sup>52</sup> Kiffin's defense of closed communion in 1681 was designed to preserve the Ordinances of Christ in their purity and Order as they are left unto us in the holy Scriptures of Truth; and to warn the Churches To keep close to the Rule.<sup>53</sup>

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50. Obed Wills, Censura Censurae, 1676, p. 5.

51. Edward Hutchinson, A Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism, 1676, 56p., plus the appendix. Hutchinson describes Wills as a person of a friendly nature, given to loquacity and levity; "Its a pitty so much cruelty should lodge under so mild a countenance."

52. W. J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. 274-289.

53. William Kiffin, A Sober Discourse of Right to Church Communion, 1681, preface.

There were two other results of the conversation on baptism. First, Baptist theology was defined in highly Calvinistic terms in the confessions of 1677 and 1678, for Baptists desired to identify themselves as fully with other traditions as their principles would permit. Secondly, open communionist declined as a party, aligning themselves either with Paedobaptists or with Baptists. Churches which did not affiliate with Particular Baptists were susceptible to absorption by Congregationalism, and within a generation assimilation was well advanced.

E. Nonconformist Efforts after 1689

1. Heads of Agreement. In 1690 London Presbyterians and Congregationalists drew up a comity agreement<sup>54</sup> which was the basis of a partial, but unsatisfactory union.<sup>55</sup> The agreement covered church constitution, church membership, ministry, discipline, inter-communion, local officers, occasional meetings of ministers on "weighty" and "difficult" cases, magistracy, doctrinal definition, and relations with Christians who were out of communion with Presbyterians and Congregationalists. In 1691 a "Happy Union" was effected, but within three years doctrinal disagreement undermined it.<sup>56</sup> It should be noted

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54. The Heads of Agreement, in Cong. Trans., VIII (February, 1920), 38-48.

55. T. G. Crippen, "Ordination, Primitive and Congregational," Cong. Trans., VII (October, 1918), 340.

56. Rouse and Neill, op. cit., pp. 149f.

that Baptists did not participate in this experiment.

2. Three Denominations. In 1727 Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists founded an organization called the "General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster." It was designed to secure for Nonconformists all of the civil rights granted by the Toleration Act, and the chief objective was the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.<sup>57</sup> Ecclesiastical union was never attempted, and legal consultation and ministerial fraternization were the only permanent benefits of the "Three Denominations."

#### F. Conclusion

Throughout the seventeenth century, Baptists repeatedly repudiated the organic unity of Christianity. Union efforts were invariably sponsored by the National Church or a dominant party.<sup>58</sup> They were attempts either to assimilate or to subdue

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57. Ibid., p. 150.

58. Blackwood, op. cit., pp. 84f, states with clarity the motives and methods of uniformity: "Experience teaching us that every prevailing party, being prone, through pride, suspicion, or conscience, or some such grounds, to crush those of a different judgment, for fear they should become the greater number, and so should crush them, will hereupon endeavour to bring all manner of tenets different from what themselves hold, under one of these three heads: either Blasphemy, Idolatry, or Seducement: and so ... will be apt to tyrannize over all persons different from them in judgement: so that nothing shall be preached, printed, or published, but if it be different from what the prevailing party holds, it shall be branded with the infamous name of Seducement; and nothing shall be practised, either in worship, or discipline, but it shall be stigmatized with the brand of Idolatry; and nothing shall be spoken or written, against the present ways of worship or government, but it shall be defamed with the horrid name of Blasphemy."

aggressive sectaries who could not be controlled by propaganda. Uniformity was designed to reduce all Christians to one institutional form, and this form was the ecclesiology of the prevailing denomination. The only Baptists who were amenable to union were open communion Particular Baptists, but their union sentiments were reserved for those in congregationally governed and rigidly disciplined churches.

Primitive ecclesiology, as Baptists understood it, was too precious to compromise. In faith, both General and Particular Baptists desired to be, and were, Protestants; in order, they were obliged to be distinct from Paedo-baptist Protestants. Inasmuch as institutional Christianity is based on principles of order, Baptists rejected ecclesiastical unity. However, they repeatedly affirmed an inclusive Christian fellowship through love, but ecclesiology was such a vital concern during the seventeenth century that this ideal fellowship could not be sustained.

## II. THEOLOGICAL AGREEMENT

During the seventeenth century Baptists considered themselves as evangelical Protestants. This was the unanimous opinion of Particular Baptists; General Baptists were conscious that their theology differed from the dominant theology, but they believed that General Baptist theology is in, and in some respects the logical conclusion of, the tradition of evangelicalism.

### A. General Baptists

1. Reign of James I. There were theological variety and vacillation among General Baptists during the reign of James I. John Smyth repeatedly identified himself with Calvinism before he became a Baptist. In his great defense of believers' baptism, The Character of the Beast, Smyth defended his theological orthodoxy in Calvinistic terms, though he did not hesitate to dissent from Reformed ecclesiology. Smyth adopted certain Mennonite views within a year after becoming a Baptist. Thomas Helwys also manifested theological kinship with the Mennonites in his Synopsis fidei early in 1610. Within a year, however, Helwys returned to Calvinism on all doctrines save universal atonement and general election. John Murton's theology was perhaps essentially Calvinistic until the Arminian-Calvinian controversy of the second decade, which led him to adopt an Arminian theology.<sup>59</sup>

2. Civil War-Commonwealth period. General Baptists zealously defended their doctrines of universal atonement and general election during the Civil War-Commonwealth period. Nevertheless, they affirmed their Protestant orthodoxy. Henry Denne emphasized the doctrine that Christ died for all, but he affirmed that he was in the "Gospel" tradition. There are two groups, he said, which claim to be Christian. First, Papists, who are in the tradition of Law, make no distinction between

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59. Supra, pp. 29-63.

Law and Gospel, and attempt to impose the Law on the Gospel. Secondly, Protestants, who are in the tradition of the Gospel, emphasize justification by faith, and require mortification of the old man and vivification of the new man. Baptized believers are the truest Protestants, for they carry to completion the evangelical faith of sixteenth century reformers. Though evangelical Paedo-baptists retain the infant baptism of the Papists, the former are considered Protestants in theology, who need only to conform their order to their faith.<sup>60</sup>

The confession of 1651 was silent on the identity of General Baptists and other Protestants, for the confession was designed to serve the end of theological unanimity among General Baptists rather than agreement with Protestants.<sup>61</sup> However, the Standard Confession of 1660 proposed to demonstrate "our innocent Belief and Practice."<sup>62</sup> General Baptists published this confession on the assumption that their faith was not heterodox and their order not subversive.

3. Restoration. The most conspicuous General Baptist statements of oneness with Protestantism were made during the Restoration. General Baptists repudiated organic unity, but they desired to demonstrate their orthodoxy.

a. Thomas Grantham. A common theme of Thomas Grantham's

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60. Henry Denne, The Doctrine and Conservation of John Baptist, 1643, 54p.; cf. Thomas-Atwood Rotherham, A Den of Thieves Discovered, 1643, pp. 11-15.

61. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 96.

62. Ibid., p. 111.

pamphlets was the exclusive validity of believers' baptism.<sup>63</sup> This emphasis was designed to distinguish two parties: Papists and Baptists. All evangelical Paedo-baptists, he argued, carry the seed of Papism. The most vital principle of Protestantism is the supremacy of the Scriptures, the "only Rule, by which all Christians are to govern and manage themselves in all Matters of Religion."<sup>64</sup> General Baptists are perfectly in the tradition of Calvin, Luther, and Beza, in that they hold this principle inviolable; Paedo-baptists should perfect their professed Protestantism by adopting the Scriptural form of baptism.

In spite of his dogged insistence on believers' baptism, Grantham included unbaptized "Christians" (those who are not baptized after a profession of faith) in the Christian brotherhood which is divided into two groups. First, strictly speaking, the brotherhood pertains only "to truly constituted and well-governed Societies of Christians," or General Baptists.<sup>65</sup> Secondly, broadly conceived, the brotherhood is

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63. See the following works by Grantham: The Baptist against the Papist, 1663, pp. 56ff; Controversie about Infants Church-Membership and Baptism, Epitomized, 1680, 26p.; A Friendly Epistle to the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of England, 1680, pp. 23f; Presumption no Proof, 1687, 34p.; The Queries Examined, 1676, 43p.; The Querist Examined, 1679, pp. 29-64; Grantham, A Religious Contest, 1676, 34p.; The Second Part of the Apology for the Baptized Believers, 1684, 60p.; Truth and Peace, 1689, 91p.

64. Grantham, Truth and Peace, 1689, pp. 47f. Grantham quoted this from a "Protestant" book, as he calls it.

65. Grantham, The Loyal Baptist, 1674, p. 13.

all that own the holy Scriptures for the Rule of Faith, believing in the only true God, the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost ...; that Christ died for our Sins, and arose again for our Justification; that live soberly, according to the general Rules of Christianity, though they may be diversly persuaded in the Methods of Christian Worship. Or I could be content, (if the State of Christianity would bear it in these Days) to express myself in this Case in the Words of St. Paul ... All that in every place call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; among whom he found Diversities of Opinions, as well as Disorders in practice of Ordinances.<sup>66</sup>

In this larger brotherhood there must be "Brotherly Fellowship," even though "ample" or "Church-" communion is prohibited. This concept of a comprehensive brotherhood established on faith in Christ, moderated Grantham's exclusivism. Ecclesiologically, he was uncompromising; theologically and soteriologically, he reckoned himself in a large fellowship:

... though we differ from you and others, in some things relating to the Constitution and Government of a true Church, yet we do not therefore arrogate to our selves alone the Christian Name, nor exalt our selves in our Imaginations above others; but do believe and hope, that the Number of the saved Ones will be gathered out of all sorts of Christians, who heartily love God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and live holly and charitably among Men, though they be diversified in respect of Ceremonies, by reason of the Place and Government where they live.<sup>67</sup>

b. Confession of 1678. The Orthodox Creed of 1678 identified General Baptists as Protestants. The confession was concerned with protecting against Roman Catholicism on the one

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66. Ibid., p. 12.

67. Grantham, The Second Part of the Apology for the Baptized Believers, 1684, "To all Pious and Well-disposed Christians in the Church of England."

hand and defective Christology on the other. Inasmuch as Calvinism is strong against both, the theology defined in the confession inclined toward Calvinism. The confession was directed to all "well-meaning Protestants, that own the Authority and Verity of the sacred Scriptures." In England, it was stated, there are "three main Opinions" among the Protestants: (1) Anglican, (2) Presbyterian, and (3) Independent and Baptist. The differences between these opinions consist "much in Ceremonies, or Circumstantial things, and in their Discipline, and Government of the Church." However, "for their Faith in most, or all of the main Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, they do agree."<sup>68</sup> The confession attempted to avoid all heresies ("the dangerous Rocks of Pelagianism, Anti-nomianism, Arminianism and the Remonstrants" as well as "the extreams of Superlapsarians, and Sublapsarians"). No claim of singularity or novelty was made; rather, the "Truths, Doctrine, or Principles" of orthodoxy were affirmed:

... we are far off from assuming ... Singularity, but rather have studied a Concord, or Unity, with our Forefathers, in the good Old Way of the Gospel; and have laboured to speak in the very same Words, or Language of Canaan, that our Fore-fathers, the Godly Saints spoke in.<sup>69</sup>

The preface to the confession concluded with an appeal to Protestants and a desire for theological unanimity:

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68. A. H. J. Baines, "The Preface to the Orthodox Confession of 1679," *BQ*, XV (1953-54), 65.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 68. The accent of the Canaanite dialect is peculiarly Genevan.

Consider these things, Christian Reader, which are here humbly proposed, to that end the Protestant Interest might be united in the love of, and practice, and power of Godliness, in Church and Family; and Heresie oppugned, and Hereticks detected, Schism prevented, and Scandals removed, were undeserved and humble Souls comforted, and all good Christians in the unity of the true Faith, established according to God's Word; and Christian Congregations reformed and Obedience to Superiours (in all lawful things) performed.<sup>70</sup>

4. Toleration. After the promulgation of the Toleration Act, nonconforming denominations were again placed on a competitive basis. Consequently, they again magnified their differences. Nevertheless, General Baptists continued to identify themselves as Protestants. The General Assembly repeatedly ratified the ambiguous confession of 1660, and the General Association adopted the confession of 1678. General Baptists continued to distinguish themselves on the Six Principles, atonement, and election, but still they did not deny their Protestant kinship.

#### B. Particular Baptists

1. Collective statements. Particular Baptists uniformly identified themselves with evangelical Protestantism, by which they meant Calvinism. The only notable exception was Collier's moderate Calvinism. The confession of 1644 was a defense against the charge from Calvinists that Particular Baptists were heretical and seditious. The Calvinism of the

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70. Ibid., p. 71.

confession and its various editions is well known.<sup>71</sup> The Somerset confession purported to show agreement with Calvinism, but in reality it contained a moderating theology.<sup>72</sup> The confession of 1677 was designed to show complete theological agreement between Particular Baptists and Calvinists,

in all the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, as also with many others whose orthodox confessions have been published to the World, on the behalf of the protestants in diverse nations and cities.<sup>73</sup>

The General Assembly of 1689 concluded its session by declaring its intention "to venture their ALL for the Protestant religion."<sup>74</sup> The confession of 1704 was patterned after the Thirty-Nine Articles, in form and content, in order to convey the impression of orthodoxy.

2. Individual statements. The thought seems never to have occurred to Particular Baptists, as a whole, that they differed from evangelical traditions in anything save ecclesiology. As Particular Baptist denominationalism became more fixed, self-identification with Protestantism became more extensive, and the identification was recognized by non-Bap-

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71. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 171-200.

72. Ibid., pp. 201-215; cf. W. L. Lumpkin, The Local Baptist Confessions of Faith of the Civil War--Commonwealth Period, pp. 169-182.

73. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 224.

74. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and Ministering Brethren, of the Baptized Churches, met together in London from Sep. 3-12, 1689, from Divers Parts of England and Wales . . . , BAR, IV (1801-02), supplement, p. 56.

tists. In 1653 William Kaye addressed a pamphlet to "the Election of Grace" [Calvinism], in which he claimed that he too was in this tradition in everything save the matter of baptism.<sup>75</sup> Quakers distinguished three groups (Papists, Protestants, and Quakers) and included Baptists in the Protestant group.<sup>76</sup> In 1659 Nedham, in his attempt to prevent the restoration of the Stuart line, stated that Baptists are "Orthodox Protestants" in all points except baptism.<sup>77</sup> Thomas De Laune used two terms which were inclusive of Baptists. First, "dissenters" or "non-conformists" meant evangelicals who suffer civil repression for cause of religious dissent; he excluded Roman Catholic dissenters, in accordance with the Parliament's statements of January 10, 1680, and November 6, 1680.<sup>78</sup> Secondly, "evangelicals" meant Calvinists. William Kiffin, once called the "ring-leader of that seduced Sect," was a Baptist patriarch in April, 1687, when James II granted an indulgence for liberty of conscience to all dissenters, though James' real intention was to favor Roman Catholicism. Kiffin believed that "the design was the total ruin of the Protestant religion, which I hope I can say was, and is, dearer to me than life."<sup>79</sup> He advised Baptists and others

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75. Kaye, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-42.

76. J. P., An Abstract of the Book . . ., n. d., 2p.

77. Mar. Nedham, Interest will not Lie, 1659, pp. 17-19.

78. Thomas De Laune, A Plea for the Non-Conformists, a New Edition Enlarged, by F. Hodson, 1779, p. 74.

79. William Kiffin, Remarkable Passages in the Life of, edited by William Orme, p. 85.

not only to spurn the proffered liberty, but also to defend themselves against Roman Catholicism.

C. Joint Action with Other Protestants

Baptists did not join with other Protestants in constructive theological deliberations during the seventeenth century. Early in the eighteenth century, however, Arianism presented such a threat to English Christianity that Presbyterian, Congregational, Particular Baptist, and General Baptist ministers met at Salter's Hall, London, in February, 1719, to discuss the problem. Some voted to issue a statement on the doctrine of the Trinity, others voted against such a statement, and still others withdrew and voluntarily signed the Anglican doctrine. The majority of those who refused to subscribe were not Arians; they were dissenters from the practice of subscription, who favored liberty of interpretation. Twelve General Baptists and one Particular Baptist refused to sign, but not a single Baptist held Arian views.<sup>80</sup>

It should be noted that General Baptists were not fully represented at the Salter's Hall debate. General Baptist participants represented churches which, for the most part, had previously been affiliated with the General Association. Though the General Assembly and Association re-united during the first decade of the eighteenth century, theological tension between churches persisted.

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<sup>80</sup> F. T. Powicke, "The Salter's Hall Controversy," Cong. Trans., VII (November, 1916), 110-124.

#### D. Conclusion

Though Baptists zealously defended their ecclesiological distinctives, they identified themselves with evangelical Christianity. General Baptists held some views which Calvinists rejected, but they believed their views were consistent with, or the extension of, the evangelical reformation of the sixteenth century. Particular Baptists unanimously conceived themselves as Calvinistic Protestants.

Baptists believed that they epitomized Protestantism. Infant baptism, they thought, is inconsistent with evangelism, so Baptists more perfectly apply the principle of the primacy of faith. Faith applies to church-order as well as to doctrinal definition, they held, so Baptists are the purest Protestants.

### III. INTER-COMMUNION

Baptists rejected church-communion with other denominations. They premised this rejection on the essentiality of believers' baptism. General Baptists and closed communion Particular Baptists had no difficulty in justifying non-communion, for they made believers' baptism the condition sine qua non of communion at the Lord's Table.<sup>81</sup> Open communion

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<sup>81</sup> William Allen, Some Baptismal abuses Briefly Discovered, 1653, 119p.; Thomas Collier, The Right Constitution and True Subjects Of the Visible Church of Christ, 1654, p. 7; Thomas Grantham, The Loyal Baptist, 1674, pp. 13-16;

Particular Baptists had some difficulty, however, for they admitted both Baptists and Paedo-baptists who qualified as to faith and holiness. However, they guarded communion and vigorously objected to mixed communion.<sup>82</sup> Open communion was a minority practice which rapidly decreased around 1700.<sup>83</sup>

Inter-communion was repudiated, and Baptists who communicated in other churches, especially parish churches, were disciplined. After 1689, and particularly during the eighteenth century, some Nonconformists communicated occasionally in the Church of England. Prior to the Wesleyan revival, the securing of civil liberties was the motive for such communication; after the revival, evangelical individualism was largely responsible for the practice. However, it should be noted that occasional communicants were Presbyterians and Congregationalists, not Baptists.<sup>84</sup>

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Grantham, The Second Part of the Apology for the Baptized Believers, 1684, pp. 1-3; William Kiffin, A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion, 1681, 163p.; Thomas Paul, Some Serious Reflections . . ., 1673, 61p. (incomplete).

82. John Bunyan, A Confession of my Faith and a Reason for my Practice, in Complete Works (Gulliver's edition), pp. 815-840; John Tombes, Felo de Se, 1659, 56p.; M. F. Hewett, "John Gibbs, 1627-1699," BQ, III (1926-27), 315-322.

83. E. A. Payne, The Fellowship of Believers, enlarged edition, p. 77, states: "During the century following Bunyan probably the majority of the churches in the midlands and south of England were of this type" (open communion). The majority of these churches did not practice open communion throughout the century following Bunyan. The trend was away from open communion in 1700, but the evangelical revival and the modern mission movement facilitated the revival of open communion in the last half of the eighteenth century.

84. E. A. Payne, in Inter-Communion, edited by D. M. Baillie and John Marsh (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1952), p. 94. Rouse and Neill, op. cit., p. 150, incorrectly quote Payne.

General Baptists uniformly repudiated open and inter-  
 communion.<sup>85</sup> This investigation has uncovered only one case  
 of open communion among General Baptists, and it was after  
 1689 when General Baptists were divided over Christology.  
 It might be argued that the five churches which sought union  
 with the Waterlanders in 1626 favored inter-communion, but  
 such was not the case. It is true that these churches ini-  
 tiated correspondence about union, but the union could be ef-  
 fected only on Waterlander terms, so the attempt came to  
 nought. General Baptists refused to concede to Mennonite de-  
 mands on the rejection of oath-taking and magisterial office,  
 abstinence from war, administration of the Supper by ordained  
 ministers only, and the monthly observance of the Lord's Sup-  
 per.<sup>86</sup> Not only did the English churches reject these demands,  
 but they also rejected inter-communion and attendance upon  
 Anglican preaching. In 1630 the Waterlanders reprimanded the  
 English for excommunicating certain members whose only offense  
 was attending Anglican preaching. In reply the Tiverton church

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85. Payne, in Inter-Communion, pp. 98f, says that "They  
 /General Baptists/ were at first strict in matters of commun-  
 ion, having Table fellowship only with their own members. But  
 in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they were subject  
 to Anabaptist (Mennonite), Quaker and Socinian influences,"  
 which caused them to adopt "free communion." However, the  
 evidence cited in defense of liberal communion among General  
 Baptists comes from Polish Socinianism of the late sixteenth  
 century and an ill-founded observation of the German historian  
 Mosheim, in 1755. Payne's statements are further distorted  
 in Rouse and Neill, op. cit., p. 149.

86. See B. Evans, Early English Baptists, II, 24-51, and  
Trans., IV (1914-15), 252-254, for the correspondence.

said: "If we had known that you had such opinions when we asked for union with you, we should first have worked at your reformation."<sup>87</sup>

Both Particular Baptists and Paedo-baptists were excluded from communion in General Baptist churches. Grantham denied "ample communion" to all but baptized believers, by which he meant General Baptists. Members who adopted Particularism were excommunicated, and the tension between General Baptists and Calvinists around 1700 forced General Baptists to be even more strict in communion and worship. When James Foster began to propagandize for open communion in the mid-eighteenth century, he was answered by the grandson of Thomas Grantham, Grantham Killingworth, the most vigorous advocate of closed communion during the eighteenth century.<sup>88</sup>

#### IV. PERSECUTION

There were sporadic persecutions, varying in intensity, duration, and location, during the seventeenth century. The factor which necessitated persecution was the violation of religious uniformity by dissenting parties. Each prevailing party employed repression in one form or another when it was

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<sup>87</sup>. Evans, *op. cit.*, II, 50.

<sup>88</sup>. See Phillip E. Rodgerson, A Historical Study of Alien Baptism Among Baptists Since 1640, [unpublished Th.D. thesis], pp. 39-67, for a discussion of the controversy between Foster and Killingworth.

in power, for its religious ideal was uniformity. The influence of persecution on fellowship was varied, affecting relations between the persecuting and persecuted parties, relations within a persecuted party, and relations between persecuted parties.

A. Relations between the Persecuting and Persecuted Parties

Fellowship between a prevailing party and a dissenting party was impaired by repression and persecution. Persecution was usually the prevailing party's reaction to uncontrollable dissent. At no time in the century, however, did persecution achieve its goal of uniformity, for it normally intensified the convictions of dissenters.

1. Inter-communion. The inter-relations between Baptists and a persecuting Church were negative. Baptists reacted to persecution in three ways: non-communion, pamphleteering, and petitioning. Communion in the National Church was forbidden and violators were disciplined. Many Baptists apostatized to the National Church or became religiously indifferent in complying with the minimum civil demands of religion, but Baptist churches erected strict barriers to communion with the National Church. Illustrative of this is the case of the five English churches in 1630, which disciplined some who attended preaching, not communion, in parish churches. So violent was their opposition to Anglicanism that the Tiverton church reprimanded the Waterlanders for interceding in

behalf of the offenders.<sup>89</sup> Baptists were so antagonistic to the persecuting Church that many paid heavy fines or underwent imprisonment rather than compromise their convictions by going to parish churches.

2. Pamphleteering. Baptists defended their religious freedom by pamphleteering which was designed to stimulate popular antipathy against religious persecution. In pamphleteering, uniformity was attacked, the weakness of the dominant party emphasized, liberty of conscience advocated, and the horrors of persecution described. Self-defensive pamphleteering was countered by pamphlets from Conformists, who affirmed that they served God in suppressing dissent. The grand effect of this pamphleteering was the weakening of fellowship between the parties involved.

3. Petitioning. Whereas pamphleteering was addressed to the populace, petitioning was ostensibly addressed to political and governmental authorities. Most of the petitions were directed to King (Protector) or Parliament.<sup>90</sup> The ills of religious intolerance were pointed out, of course, but the innocence of persecuted persons and parties was emphasized. Petitions had as their objective the dissuasion of the Government from a proposed or active course in religious affairs.

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89. Evans., op. cit., II, 44-51.

90. See Underhill, op. cit., pp. 183-213, 288-293, 297-308, 321, 327-341, 343-351, 353-360, for representative petitions.

## B. Relations within a Persecuted Party

1. Ill effects. There were certain ill effects of persecution. First, members suffered both personal and property risks.<sup>91</sup> Secondly, churches were disrupted.<sup>92</sup> Attendance declined, members apostatized, and congregations divided into small conventicles. Thirdly, fellowship was largely restricted to local congregations, due to the difficulty and danger of maintaining connections with other congregations. Though there were some instances of extra-local connectionalism during persecution,<sup>93</sup> associational life was often suspended during persecution, and inter-relations were small in number when compared to inter-relations during periods of freedom or toleration.

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91. In a petition to Charles II, prisoners in the Maidstone jail in Kent stated in 1661 that their homes had been invaded, their property confiscated, and their persons imprisoned. "... such is our mean condition in this world, that almost all of us have our outward subsistence, ... on our daily labours. Also some amongst us that were employed in the public service at Chatham, and at sea, being yet unpaid. The bread which our families have eaten this ten or twelve months, hath been taken up upon credit. And all of us being detained from our employments, the cries of our families, who suffer hunger, become great" (Underhill, *op. cit.*, p. 299).

92. Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720, edited by E. B. Underhill, pp. 277, 279.

93. Benevolence and ordination were the two factors which stimulated the largest percentage of extra-local connections, which most commonly involved contiguous churches. However, there were instances of distant connections; the Amersham church repeatedly aided John Griffith ("as a token") while he was in prison; see The Church Books of Ford or Cuddington and Amersham, edited by W. T. Whitley, pp. 206, 223-225. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "church Records," as appropriate.)

2. Purification. Persecution had a purifying effect upon Baptist churches. Indifferent and irresponsible members were weeded out, and the convictions of those who withstood persecution were strengthened. The authenticity of the "Church of the Cross" became more evident. Persecution was proof to persecuted persons that they were in Christ's tradition, for true disciples are subject to trials in this world.<sup>94</sup> Persecuted persons came to view persecution as a stratagem of Satan who desires the overthrow of Christ's rule. The martyr complex was stimulated by persecution. However, persistent persecution weakened the martyr complex, for few could endure constant tension without a change of attitude.

3. Reactions to prolonged persecution. Two common reactions to prolonged persecution were apostasy to the National Church and the adoption of millenarian views. The former was a concession to external pressures; the latter was the idealization of the rule of saints. One became either mundane in his actions, or supramundane in his hopes.

a. Apostasy. The number of apostates during persecution cannot be accurately estimated, for most apostates were hidden

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94. The Records of a Church of Christ, meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-1687, edited by E. B. Underhill, pp. 265-270. (Hereafter this will be referred to as "Broadmead Records.") A similar attitude arose in the Independent Hubbard-How-More church; W. T. Whitley, editor, "The Hubbard-How-More Church," Trans., II (1910-11), 52. Puritans, Separatists, and Baptists were accused of taking pride in their lot during the late stages of the Laudian persecution; see \_\_\_\_\_, The Round-heads Catechisme, 1643, p. 10.

by obscurity. Few churches kept full minutes during persecution,<sup>95</sup> and minutes which were otherwise full became very brief during the harshest stages of persecution. There is every reason to conclude that apostasy during persecution was costly to Baptists.

b. Millenarianism. The millennial kingdom became the hope of sectaries during persecution. In halcyon days the churches seemingly preferred to conclude their epistles with the phrase "faith and fellowship of the Gospel"; during persecution the phrase "kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" became very common.<sup>96</sup> The latter is an eschatological expression, for "kingdom" refers to the inevitably triumphant kingdom of Christ, and "patience" refers to the necessity of passive endurance of present ills in anticipation of future vindication.

Eschatology was a conspicuous element of Knollys' ecclesiological exposition of the Revelation. The book was inspired by the attempt of James II to restore Catholicism. Knollys identified Babylon ("the Mother of Harlots") as "all

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95. Though the Bromsgrove church bought a church book in 1670, perhaps before the Second Conventicle Act was issued, there was only one entry during the year of 1670; see James Ford, "A Seventeenth Century Baptist Church: Bromsgrove," Trans., I (1908-09), 101. There are no minutes of the Warboys church between 1663 and 1682. There are only occasional entries in the Fenstanton records after 1659. The records of the Hubbard-How-More church, which deal with the age of persecution, are recollections of an aged member. The fullest records of persecution which were available to this student are those of Broadmead and the Bunyan Meeting, but they too have notable gaps.

96. Broadmead Records, pp. 290, 499.

National Churches, Parish Churches, Cathedral Churches, Provincial Churches."<sup>97</sup> Babylon is the established Church which has the enforcement powers of the State at its disposal. Because of its national character, Presbyterianism, which was the largest element of Nonconformity, was also identified as Babylon.<sup>98</sup> Unlike National Churches, the true "Churches of Christ" are those under persecution; they are broken, dispersed, scattered, and slain. Yet, these churches will be gathered again and will serve Christ with one consent. In the interim of persecution, saints are to assemble in small companies for preaching, celebration of the Supper (on any day or at any hour which is convenient), mutual edification, and prayer.<sup>99</sup> The true churches endure the hardships of the present, being confident that they will ultimately triumph with Christ.

Eschatology varied according to external circumstances. During the Commonwealth, the eschatological hope of the sectaries required activity; during the Restoration, it required passivity. During the Commonwealth, Fifth Monarchism (composed of Independents, Baptists, and Sabbatarians) agitated for the present rule of saints; during the Restoration, the saints became less confident of erecting a millennial utopia.

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97. H/anserd/ K/nollys/, An Exposition of the whole Book of the Revelation, 1689, p. 203.

98. Ibid., p. 200.

99. Ibid., pp. 62f.

The projection of the fulfillment of their eschatological hope into the future enabled Baptists and other Nonconformists to adjust to the rigors of transient persecution.

### C. Inter-relations of Persecuted Parties

The imposition of the Act of Uniformity aided Nonconformity, for it frustrated the fanciful hopes of Presbyterianism which anticipated an accommodation of Anglican and Presbyterian views. Presbyterians were "ejected" from the security of the Church of England into the harried way of Nonconformity, thereby raising the status of Nonconformity by virtue of the numbers and quality of Nonconforming Presbyterians. The Church of England had hoped to enforce uniformity, but Nonconformity was made less vulnerable and more intractable.<sup>100</sup>

1. Relaxation of tension over differences. Persecution contributed to the relaxation of tension over differences within Nonconformity, for survival was the chief objective of Nonconformists. Churches dispersed for security purposes, and Nonconformist conventicles of varied size and constituency appeared throughout the nation and principality. It was not uncommon for Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists to compose a conventicle. However, Presbyterians usually maintained their own conventicles, leaving Congregationalists

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<sup>100</sup>. Bernard Nutter, The Story of Cambridge Baptists and the Struggle for Religious Liberty, p. 55; Whitley, A History of British Baptists, pp. 113f.

and Baptists to amalgamate as they pleased.<sup>101</sup>

2. Security from public misfortune and mass conventicles.

Public misfortune and mass conventicles contributed to the security of Nonconformists. Edward Terrill, the Broadmead scribe, critically evaluated the effects of two misfortunes on persecution. When Bristol was hit by a plague early in 1666, the mayor ordered a relaxation of persecution. During the period of relaxation, Broadmead admitted "many" into the church and enjoyed the revival of "a spirit of life."<sup>102</sup> The entire populace was affected by the plague, so persecution was undesirable. In September, 1666, the central part of London was hit by a fire which raged for five days. It is estimated that thirteen thousand homes and eighty-nine churches were destroyed.<sup>103</sup> Conformists met with Nonconformists in conventicles, so, as Terrill noted, conventicles became public meeting-places. Nonconformists were given a certain liberty of worship in London, and the London example encouraged the relaxation of persecution in other places. Terrill stated that Broadmead enjoyed peace for four years as a consequence

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101. See Henry Maurice's "Catalogue of Congregated Churches in Wales" about 1675, in Broadmead Records, addendum B, pp. 512-518. Maurice names few churches which contained a mixture of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, but most contained Baptists (open communionists) and Congregationalists.

102. Broadmead Records, p. 87. A similar plague fell upon London in 1665; see W. P. Hall and R. G. Albion, A History of England and the British Empire (second edition; Boston: Ginn and Company, 1946), p. 370.

103. Hall and Albion, loc. cit.

of the London fire.<sup>104</sup>

The security of Nonconformists was in direct proportion to the number of conventicles within a given area, for enforcement was a problem to the State. Whereas there were many instances of injustice in the detection and arrest of conventiclars, the State prescribed a certain procedure in an effort to prevent tyranny. Churchwardens, or informers, were appointed to keep conventicles under surveillance, but they did not possess a deputized power of enforcement. Upon detecting a conventicle, these informers reported to the constabulary which had the authority to raid conventicles and to make arrests.<sup>105</sup> There were spatial limitations on enforcement officers, so Nonconformist churches and conventicles scheduled meetings simultaneously in order to receive maximum protection. It was a cause of grave concern to two Baptist churches and a Congregational church in Bristol when Presbyterians changed their time of meeting in 1676.<sup>106</sup> In 1683 the Bristol Presbyterians and Congregationalists discontinued services due to persecution; the two Baptist churches continued to meet regularly, but they had to worship clandestinely because of the increased threat to their meetings.<sup>107</sup>

3. Conventicle services. Conventicle services usually

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104. Broadmead Records, p. 88.

105. This pattern occurs repeatedly in the Broadmead Records; see the minutes for the decade from 1675 to 1685.

106. Ibid., pp. 341.

107. Ibid., pp. 473-477.

included little more than prayer and preaching. They were in reality "edification" services, designed to encourage believers. Conventicles rarely possessed a rigid ecclesiastical structure. This partially explains why a preacher who was licensed as a "Congregationalist" could preach in a meeting-place which was licensed as "Presbyterian." Theology, not ecclesiology, was the topic of preaching in conventicles, so it made little difference whether the preacher was a Presbyterian, Congregationalist, or Particular Baptist.

4. Joint activities. Joint services were sometimes planned by several Nonconformist churches, but the practice was not extensively employed. There were five types of joint services: committees for self-defense, prayer meetings, lectures, days of thanksgiving, and days of public prayer.

a. Committees for self-defense. Bristol Nonconformists reacted to the renewal of persecution late in 1674 by organizing a committee "to advise, consider, and manage matters of our general concern, for the four congregations, in their legal defence."<sup>108</sup> There were six Nonconformist congregations in Bristol, but two were rather small. The committee was established by the four large churches: closed communion Particular Baptist, open communion Particular Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian. These four churches were "public and popular meetings," and three of them were located in the

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108. Ibid., pp. 219f.

same parish.<sup>109</sup> The committee, composed of two men from each church, was given authority "to act for the whole." Before the licenses were revoked in February, 1675, the eight committeemen went to London "to observe the bishop's notions."<sup>110</sup> The Anglican bishops were the chief protagonists of revocation, so the four congregations felt it advisable to keep informed on their activities and intentions. In June, 1675, the congregations subscribed, on a pro rata basis, almost four hundred and fifty pounds "to defend ourselves as Englishmen."<sup>111</sup>

b. Prayer meetings. Immediately upon the revocation of the licenses on February 12, 1675, ministers were arrested and imprisoned. Ministers of three of the four Bristol congregations were arrested, and one of the ministers died in prison within eighteen days. On February 14, 1675,

some of each congregation ... met together to consult how to carry on our meetings, that we might keep to our duty, and edify one another now our pastors were gone. Some even were ready of thinking to give off, viz., of the presbyterians; that they could not carry it on, because of their principle, which was not to hear a man not bred up at the university, and not ordained. But the Lord appeared, and helped us to prevail with them to hold on, and keep up their meetings.<sup>112</sup>

The four congregations decided to meet together occasionally for prayer. The program which they devised was as

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109. Ibid., p. 214.

110. Ibid., p. 220.

111. Ibid., p. 251.

112. Ibid., p. 222.

follows: "for one to pray and read a chapter, and then sing a psalm, and after conclude with prayer." After the first person had finished, a second person would do the same thing, and then the assembly would adjourn. Each congregation was to supply, in its turn, the worship leaders.<sup>113</sup>

On May 15, 1675, while the Presbyterian and Broadmead ministers were on trial in London, the four congregations met together from seven in the morning till noon in a prayer meeting for the ministers.

Which union, and joint praying together, was much liked of by all parties. Thus being driven together by this universal trouble, endeavours were used (which should we not?) to strengthen against the bishop and his abettors, to meet all together upon the week days, and turn our four lectures into one, and by turn to be managed by all.<sup>114</sup>

This proposed combination of lectures was to be in addition to the weekday service in each church.

c. Lectures or preaching services. Eighteen members from the four Bristol congregations met in May, 1675, to "discourse this business of union." The Presbyterians objected to such a union, however, fearing that "a joining together so near might rather widen and hurt that union we had of late, and good thoughts of one another." They thought that there would be disharmony in four areas: (1) prayer for magistracy, (2) singing of psalms "with others besides the church," (3)

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113. Ibid., pp. 222f.

114. Ibid., p. 240.

importance of ordination for preaching, and (4) importance of believers' baptism. The other three congregations generally agreed to desist from violating a common agreement on these matters. The only dissent came from Gifford's closed communion church on the matter of singing; the church was divided on the issue, but it was finally agreed that those who object to singing had liberty either to refrain or to absent themselves during the singing. However, the Presbyterians still objected "against uniting the four lectures into one," so the other three churches then decided that it would be better to preserve unity in joint prayer meetings than to disrupt unity by attempting to combine four preaching services.<sup>115</sup>

In London there was some success in establishing joint preaching services, but such services were not sponsored by churches. Shortly after the indulgence was issued in 1672, several London merchants underwrote a public lecture. There were two objectives of "the Ancient Merchants' Lecture:" (1) to show evangelical agreement in theology even though agreement was lacking in church-order and (2) to propagandize for religious reformation.<sup>116</sup> The lecture was held in the Glass House or Pinner's Hall. The hall was the home of an open communion Congregational and Baptist society which sublet

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115. Ibid., pp. 241-247.

116.       , "The Ancient Merchants' Lecture," Cong. Trans., VII (April, 1918), 300f.

the building for the merchants' lecture on each Tuesday. The lectures were dominated by Presbyterians and Congregationalists. It was not until 1692 that a Baptist was chosen to preach; in that year Elias Keach, a recent returnee from Philadelphia, delivered several lectures.<sup>117</sup>

d. Days of thanksgiving. Upon the relaxation of persecution, churches held days of thanksgiving for their deliverance. During the 1670's, the Horsley-down church, of which Benjamin Keach was pastor, observed three days of thanksgiving, but it cannot be determined how public these meetings were. Keach claimed that they were open to the public and that congregational singing was practiced. Isaac Marlow charged that "they were kept separately by the Church." The only non-Baptists who attended, Marlow stated, were "husbands and wives" of "a few people of repute," who were specifically permitted to attend.<sup>118</sup> There is little reason to suppose that thanksgiving services of several churches were held.

e. Days of public prayer. After the promulgation of the Toleration Act, Nonconformists observed the days of public fasting and prayer which were scheduled by the Government.<sup>119</sup> An indefinite number of General Baptist churches objected to

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117. W. T. Whitley, "Baptist Meetings in the City of London," Trans., V (1916-17), 74-76.

118. Isaac Marlow, Truth Cleared, [1691], p. 33.

119. Loc. cit.

performing any religious service which the State appointed.<sup>120</sup> Their objections soon disappeared, however, and they complied with the requests of the State.<sup>121</sup> It appears that these days of public prayer were observed locally; churches held their meetings simultaneously, not jointly. However, the churches expressed a kind of Christian unity by engaging in prayer for the same thing at the same time.

f. Conclusion. Joint services were concessions to necessity. They were not ecclesiastical assemblies. Even among liberal Nonconformists, as in Bristol, it was impossible for them to agree on a formal program of preaching. Joint services persisted no longer than necessity demanded. After the Toleration Act was issued, all (or at least most) churches held days of public prayer simultaneously, but observance was largely local. The most successful joint services were those sponsored, not by ecclesiastical groups, but by interested laymen. In such services, however, the rudiments of the Christian religion, not ecclesiastical distinctives, were emphasized. These joint services aided fellowship, for unity of spirit in time of crisis was more desirable than ecclesiastical exclusivism.

5. Open communion. Open communion was assisted by persecution. During the Civil War period, unity against the

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120. Ford Records, p. 4.

121. Ibid., pp. 7, 12f.

Presbyterian attempt at uniformity caused some Independents and Baptists to advocate open communion. It was not until 1653, however, that there was much discussion on open communion; Independents hoped to include Baptists in National Independency, so they attacked Baptist exclusivism at the point of baptism. Some Baptists adopted open communion, but most became more convinced about closed communion. During the Restoration, persecution erased many of the ecclesiological lines between Baptists and Congregationalists, thereby facilitating the revival of the practice of open communion.

a. Seventh decade. Open communion became very prominent in Wales after the Restoration. In the 1650's most Welsh Baptists were closed communionists,<sup>122</sup> but persecution in 1661 revived open communion. In this revival Vavasor Powell was the most vigorous propagandist. Writing from prison in 1661, Powell observed that "those Churches never stood long, that made Opinion, and not Gods-self and Christianity the foundation of their nellowship /sic/."<sup>123</sup> He described the true Christian as one who

hath amity to all Saints, and seeks unity among all Saints, and makes Union-ship, and Saint-ship,<sup>124</sup> the ground of his fellowship, and Communion-ship.

When Powell was released from prison, he actively promoted

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122. \_\_\_\_\_, "Book Review" of Thomas Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, 1654-1662, BQ, II (1924-25), 45.

123. Vavasor Powell, Tsippor Bappack ..., or the Bird in the Cage, 1661, p. 71.

124. Ibid., p. 97.

the cause of open communion. He also developed a system of itineration which served Congregationalists and Baptists, and sometimes Presbyterians. During the height of persecution, his practice of open communion flourished. Around 1666, however, William Jones, a prison convert of the open communionist Jenkyn Jones, began to advocate closed communion. He had assumed closed communion principles after his release from prison, being influenced by the isolated Baptists of the Olchon Valley. He and other preachers became very active in South Wales, baptizing some who had formerly been baptized by Jenkyn Jones.<sup>125</sup>

Upon the expiration of the first Conventicle Act, ecclesiological differences were again emphasized, and Baptists renewed their propaganda. The results were the entrenchment of closed communion in South Wales and the loss of the open communionists of Montgomeryshire (Powell's home territory) who went over to Congregationalism.<sup>126</sup>

In England open communion also increased during persecution. The churches of the Bedford area were mainly of this type. When Bunyan was released from prison in 1672, he gave elaborate definition to the practice which his church and others had been observing for almost twenty years.

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125. \_\_\_\_\_, "Book Notice" on Thomas Richards, Wales under the Penal Code, 1662-1687, BQ, III (1926-27), 93-95.

126. Loc. cit.; cf. Thomas Richards, "Wales under the Indulgence, 1672-5," BQ, IV (1928-29), 280-287.

b. Eighth decade. The controversy over communion, which developed during the respite from persecution in 1672, aided the cause of closed communion. Initially, the participants in the controversy were Particular Baptists. After the Presbyterians rejected the Anglican attempt at comprehension, they attempted to win over Baptists to open communion, using the argument that water baptism or believers' baptism is not a prerequisite to church-membership and therefore should be no obstruction to church-communion. Baptism, instead of communion, became the issue, so Baptists became further convinced of the correctness of believers' baptism. Feelings were high on both sides. Many pious Christians were doubtlessly offended by the controversy. Baptists published a letter in which an observer said that Nonconformists, because of their common sufferings, should be united for prudence's sake, if not for piety's; he thought it unfortunate that differences over baptism should cause such "unhappy and pernicious" consequences.<sup>127</sup> The controversy was too violent to be arrested by persecution. After this, open communion lost ground.

#### CONCLUSION

Ecclesiastical relations between Baptists and other Christians were uncommon during the seventeenth century.

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127. \_\_\_\_\_, The Baptists Answer, 1675, p. 14.

Baptists were opposed to the attempts of established or dominant groups to achieve and enforce organic unity. These efforts derived from the desire of dominant groups to protect themselves from the threats of separating and aggressive sects. Baptists were so convinced of the validity of their church-order that they repudiated the stratagems of dominant groups to assimilate them. It appears that Baptist denominationalism was strengthened during periods of attempted religious comprehension.

Whereas Baptists maintained their independence as to ecclesiastical life, they yet were persistent in identifying themselves with Protestantism. Baptists thought that their theologies were evangelical. General Baptists felt that their church-order was the complement to evangelical theology, so they viewed themselves as the fullest and truest Protestants.

Inter-communion was not practiced by Baptists. Two factors fostered the rejection of inter-communion. First, the idea of the disciplined church, the central ecclesiological principle of a sect, was paramount. Throughout the century it was held that known, but undisciplined sins corrupt the entire community. Secondly, agreement in faith and order was considered essential to church-communion. It might be thought that open communion is the same as inter-communion, but such was not the case during the seventeenth century. Open communion was an ambiguous principle which was adopted only by

some Independents and some Particular Baptists. Moreover, open communion protected the disciplined church, and required agreement in faith and order.

There was some moderation of sectarian differences during times of persecution, but it was a concession to necessity. When persecution was relaxed, the differences were revived and denominationalism was preserved.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

Baptists maintained negative attitudes toward other Christians in their beginning phase. On the whole, General Baptists possessed more negative attitudes than Particular Baptists, not only in the beginning phase, but also throughout the century. There were varying degrees of exclusivism, but the general result was ecclesiastical isolation from Paedo-baptists. Exclusivism was the result of two factors: (1) real or apparent perversions of faith, order, discipline, or worship by non-Baptists and (2) a progressive discovery of the New Testament pattern of church life by Baptists. The former stimulated dissent and justified separation; the latter enabled Baptists to establish their own ecclesiology.

Soon after Baptists separated from other denominations, they organized themselves into local congregations. However, these could not remain isolated from each other, so Baptists consolidated into two denominations, General and Particular Baptists, according to theology. Baptists defined their theology with increasing rigidity in order to make their denominations theologically homogeneous, for the more numerous they became the greater was their need for theological standards. Starting out with a strict theory and practice of congregational government, Baptists elevated the ministry to a position which impaired congregationalism. In accordance with

their theory of the disciplined church, Baptist churches regulated the lives of their members. Due to their exclusiveness, General Baptists established stronger measures of regulation.

The missionary efforts of Baptists may be called proselytism, for they sought to convert professing Christians to Baptist ecclesiological views. In their proselyting Baptists magnified their differences from Paedo-baptists and vigorously pressed for decisions. Paedo-baptists were offended by Baptist propaganda, and Baptists questioned the authenticity of the professed Christian experience of Paedo-baptists. In this ecclesiological warfare, there was little fellowship between Baptists and Paedo-baptists.

The most gratifying expression of Christian fellowship beyond the local church level was Baptist connectionalism. It was premised on the unity of the "Body of Christ," or the universal church. It was held that a church fulfills its need for fellowship and satisfies the demands of Christ only by associating with churches of like faith and order, just as an individual Christian fulfills his need and responsibility only by participating in the common life of like-minded Christians. The initial experiments in connectionalism were of an informal nature, and involved churches which were closely related. Informal connections tended to become formal and associations developed. Associations were originally

regional in scope, but by the end of the century there was a national assembly in each denomination. Particular Baptists affirmed that the association is not a jurisdictional body with powers superior to the local congregation, and they consistently protected the rights of each local church. Most General Baptists held a similar view, but some thought that the local church must submit to the association, just as an individual submits to a local church. However, this view of associational authority was unpopular and unenforceable; it indicated weakness rather than strength.

Baptists possessed a sectarian disposition which facilitated separation from other denominations. However, when the two denominations sought to establish their own practices, this sectarianism was a disruptive factor. Sectarianism was more marked among General Baptists than among Particular Baptists, for the former felt that each issue, regardless of its importance, must be unanimously resolved. Inasmuch as there was not unanimity on every issue, General Baptists were constantly susceptible to disruption. Particular Baptists, on the other hand, employed an attitude of tolerance which permitted disagreement over circumstantials without the disruption of their inner life. The problems which caused disharmony were ecclesiological in nature; the result was a weakening of denominational unity and fellowship.

There is no evidence that General Baptists and Particular Baptists maintained fellowship with each other, except

on the personal level. They possessed different, and in some cases contradictory, theologies and different degrees of sectarianism. Rarely were both denominations represented in large number in the same area. Non-Baptists soon came to distinguish them. Few Particular Baptists became General Baptists after 1650, but particularism constituted a threat to General Baptists throughout the century. At the end of the century, General Baptists were so much on the defensive that they entertained overtly hostile feelings toward Particular Baptists.

Ecclesiology was the major religious concern of seventeenth century Englishmen, especially of the dissenting denominations. Therefore, each denomination sharply differentiated itself from the denomination out of which it came and employed conservative measures against a denomination which would go beyond its own position. Each denomination assumed that it had the correct ecclesiology. Puritanism (Presbyterianism) justified its partial rejection of Anglicanism because of the latter's errors, but argued that Separatism was disruptive to unity; Separatists (Independents or Congregationalists), because of their theory of congregational government, insisted on separation from Puritanism, but argued that Baptists were church-disrupters because of their ill-founded exclusivism about believers' baptism; Baptists defended their separation from Independency, but attacked Quakerism for breaking the unity of churches over their delusion

of a superior light. In this pattern, the liberal principle is separation because of error, and the conservative principle is uniformity because of correctness. Each denomination sought to establish uniformity in its moment of power or dominance. Baptists were never in a position to propagandize for uniformity, but their attacks on Quakerism carried the germ of uniformity. Baptists rejected all attempts at ecclesiastical union, for they were initiated by Paedo-baptists who desired to assimilate dissenters whom propaganda could not controvert nor compulsion frustrate. Moreover, Baptist denominationalism was strengthened whenever uniformity was discussed. Ecclesiastical exclusivism was moderated by persecution, but after the relaxation of persecution it was invariably revived.

During the seventeenth century, valid faith and correct order were considered the indispensable conditions of full fellowship. Baptists made a distinction between church-communication and the unity of believers in Christ. Whereas they affirmed that all believers in Christ should be unified in the spirit of love, they yet insisted that this unity will be more satisfactorily realized if Biblical, or more specifically New Testament, ecclesiology is preserved. Therefore, they refused to establish fellowship on Christian affections. Seventeenth century English Baptists knew nothing of the so-called "ecumenical spirit" which minimizes church-order.

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