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**Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the
Particular Baptists**

by Glen Harold Stassen

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Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth
Psalm 60:4

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ANABAPTIST INFLUENCE IN THE ORIGIN OF THE PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

GLEN H. STASSEN ^{F1}

Before the influence of Anabaptists on the origin of the Baptists can be determined, it is necessary to decide which Baptists are meant. *Two distinct kinds of Baptists* developed in early seventeenth-century England, with separate historical origins, conflicting theologies, and little contact with one another. The General Baptists began in the first decade under the leadership of John Smyth and Thomas Helwys. The Particular Baptists began independently in 1638 or 1640 and were led by John Spilsbury and Richard Blunt.

Baptist historiography has concentrated on the former group. ^{f2} However, there are at least *five conclusive reasons* why the historical spotlight should shift to the Particular Baptists:

First, the Particular Baptists are the fathers of present-day Baptists. Their decision on baptism, and not John Smyth's decision, is the origin "from which modern Baptists both in England and America have generally sprung. General Baptists largely died out, trailing off into unitarianism." ^{f3}

Second, the Particular Baptists introduced the meaning of baptism as a testimony to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The General Baptists merely retained the prevalent meaning of baptism as a sacramental washing and purifying of the recipient, while shifting the emphasis to the inner washing of the heart or the con-science of the individual. ^{f4}

Third, the Particular Baptists introduced the Baptist form of baptism as immersion, while the General Baptists practiced sprinkling. ^{f5}

Fourth, the Particular Baptists began without demonstrable influence from the General Baptists, and with different motives. They did not merely add immersion to a General Baptist understanding of baptism; they began not as General Baptists but as Congregationalists, and they developed their theology with concepts foreign to the General Baptists. Their reasons for adopting believers' baptism, for transforming the meaning of baptism, and for practising immersion were different from the reasons which motivated the General Baptists. ^{f6} Therefore Baptist origins are badly distorted if we concentrate on the General Baptists and merely credit the Particular Baptists with adding immersion.

Finally, as the Particular Baptists themselves realized, their decision was a new and serious departure, unique and independent, and not a minor modification of a tradition in which they did not stand. They did not know how many men would follow them in their decision, but they did know that they were venturing something totally new in England, something about which to pray and confer earnestly, seek counsel and proceed cautiously.¹⁷ Their decision merits our study.

For these five reasons we must concur with Norman Maring's plea that the question of Baptist origins concentrate on the Particular Baptists rather than the General Baptists.¹⁸ To do so is our task.

Besides the decision to concentrate on the Particular Baptists, one other preliminary distinction is necessary. We must distinguish between the question of Anabaptist influence upon the Baptists and the question of the basic orientation of the Baptists. The basic orientation of the Particular Baptists clearly was and remained non-separatist Congregational Calvinist, and not Anabaptist. To dispute that fact makes little sense. But it does make sense to ask whether Anabaptist influence was responsible for some of the new doctrines which the Baptists added to their basically Congregationalist position.

Winthrop Hudson illustrates the difference between the question of basic orientation and the question of influence in his article, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists."¹⁹ To answer the question of basic orientation, he lists the distinctive features of Anabaptist life and thought which were directly opposed to the thought of English Congregational Calvinists. On all but baptism, the Baptists rejected these Anabaptist distinctives in favor of Congregationalist doctrine. Furthermore, Dr. Hudson points out, most of the Baptists originally had been Congregationalists before they changed their doctrine of baptism. Thus by the method of comparing distinctives and identifying the tradition from which Baptists developed, we can answer the question of basic orientation. The Baptists were basically Congregationalists rather than Anabaptists. Missing that fact, Dr. Hudson contends, threatens to distort the historical origins, to destroy the quest for theological foundations, and to derail the ecumenical thrust of the Baptists. If we can keep the question of Anabaptist influence separate from the question of basic Congregational Calvinist orientation, we can satisfy Dr. Hudson's valid contention and can increase rather than threaten our historical accuracy and our ecumenicity.

In the latter part of his article Dr. Hudson raises the question of influence. He asks whether Anabaptist ideas were responsible for the doctrine of baptism, on which Baptists strongly deviated from Congregationalists. Dr. Hudson's method for attacking this problem is to ask questions designed to uncover the

most likely explanation for the origin of the new doctrine. What convictions does the new doctrine presuppose? Are those convictions present in the Congregationalist theology or do they point to ideas peculiar to Anabaptists? What were the stages in the development of the thought of the original Baptist leaders? Are these stages best explained by evolution from Congregationalist ideas, or is the injection of peculiarly Anabaptist ideas likely? Dr. Hudson applies such questions to the General Baptists, but not to the Particular Baptists. On the General Baptists, his conclusion is unequivocal:

The insistence upon believer's baptism was a logical corollary drawn from the Reformation emphasis upon the necessity for an explicit faith and from the Congregational concept of a gathered church, as well as from the common storehouse of Biblical precept and example, rather than being the result of any supposed Anabaptist influence.^{f10}

Our task is to apply the same method to the Particular Baptists. *First* we must survey what can be known about the development of the thought of the original Baptist leaders. *Then* we must describe as carefully as possible the aspects of Particular Baptist theology which differed from Congregational theology. *Finally* we must seek the most likely explanation for the origin of the new doctrines.

PRE-BAPTIST DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORICAL CONTACTS WITH OTHER TRADITIONS

Our knowledge of the immediate beginning of the Particular Baptists is sparse.^{f11} The sources give us but a few inconclusive hints of many different possible influences upon their thought. We know that the Particular Baptists grew out of the non-separatist Congregational church founded by Henry Jacob.^{f12} But when and by what stages they grew is not at all clear. Several groups with variant views on baptism left the Jacob Church between 1633 and 1640. The conviction that baptism is for professed believers was involved in one case. But we do not know whether the differing concepts were due to original thought, separatist Congregational influence, General Baptist influence, Mennonite influence, or some other theology present in London in the 1630's. We have no information about the members who formed new groups, and the descriptions of convictions are never more than a one-phrase indication of an aspect of their thought. Furthermore, it is not valid to consider each new splinter group as a new stage in a continuous development; the later groups were composed of members who did not participate in the earlier departures, and there is no evidence that the theological concerns of the earlier groups were shared by the later groups. With such information, we must admit everything as possible and nothing as proved.

The climax came in 1640, when a church was formed under the leadership of Richard Blunt. One other leader participated, but his name is lost due to a break in the text.^{f13} The formation of Blunt's church is described by the original records in much fuller detail than the departures of the earlier splinter groups. Because of the importance of the event, we shall quote the record in full.

3d Mo: [From margin: "1640"] The Church became two by mutual consent just half being with Mr. P. Barebone, & the other half with Mr. H. Jessey. [Break in text here.] Mr. Richard Blunt with him being convinced of Baptism that also it ought to be dipping the Body into the Water, resembling Burial & rising again. 2 Col. 2.12 [sic]^{f14} Romans 6.4. had sober conference about in the Church, & then with some of the forenamed who also ware so convinced: And after Prayer & conference about their so enjoying it, none haveing then so so [sic] practised in England to professed Believers, & hearing that some in the Nether Lands had so practised they agreed & sent over Mr. Rich. Blunt (who understood Dutch) with Letters of Commendation, who was kindly accepted there, & returned with Letters from them to: Batte a Teacher there, & from that Church to such as sent him.

[From margin: "1641"] They proceed on therein, viz, Those Persons that ware persuaded Baptism should be by dipping the Body had mett in two Companies & did intend so to meet after this, all these agreed to proceed alike together. And then Manifesting (not by any formal Words a Covenant) which word was scrupled by some of them, but by mutual desires and agreement each Testified:

Those two Companyes did set apart one to Baptize the rest; so it was solemnly performed by them.

Mr. Blunt Baptized Mr. Blacklock that was a Teacher amongst them, & Mr. Blunt being Baptized, he & Mr. Blacklock Baptized the rest of their friends that ware so minded, & many being added to them they increased much.^{f15}

Richard Blunt: spoke Dutch. At a time when much that was being printed in Dutch concerned Mennonites, Blunt probably was acquainted with at least some Mennonite ideas. The Baptists knew of the small Arminian sect in Rhynsburg which was immersing, and they sent Richard Blunt to confer with the Rhynsburgers. We can hardly maintain that Blunt's church was ignorant of main Mennonite happenings when the church had such knowledge and interest in a far smaller and less significant Dutch sect.^{f16} But these are only likelihoods which by themselves are not sufficient to indicate definite Mennonite influence.

THE ASPECTS OF PARTICULAR BAPTIST THEOLOGY WHICH DIFFERED FROM CONGREGATIONALISM

Because the sources for the pre-1640 development suggest many possible avenues of influence and eliminate none, we must look to the later theological statements of the group in order to establish the likelihood of specific influences. First we must determine the aspects of the Particular Baptist theology which differed from their original Calvinism. Then we must seek the most likely explanation for the innovations.

The best way to understand the theology of the early Particular Baptists is to study carefully their first theological writing extant, the London Confession of 1644. It was written and signed by representatives of the seven Particular Baptist churches in London just three years after Richard Blunt and his followers formed a church and baptized by immersion.^{f17} This early confession is a careful, consistent, profound, and often beautiful statement. The Baptist fathers must have labored long in order to write it. Therefore it is the best window we have into their theological position. If we look carefully we can see the theology which motivated their labors and which expressed itself in their writing.

An unusual aspect of the London Confession gives us a precise method for detecting the changes which Baptists made in Congregationalist theology. They based their confession on the True Confession of Faith, which had been written in 1596 by Francis Johnson and his Congregationalist Church.^{f18} Half of the True Confession was copied verbatim by the Baptists. The alterations, omissions, and additions which they made do not depart from the basic Calvinist position of that pioneer Congregational statement.^{f19} But the Baptists did modify the True Confession. They said some things — some crucial things — differently. A careful comparison of the two confessions shows that they slightly modified the very core of the Congregational theology, and that this modification is expressed most explicitly and most comprehensively in their article on baptism. Because their easiest course was to alter their model as little as possible, the significance of their alterations is doubled. And because the model is available to us and is so similar to the London Confession, we can note every word of change and construct a detailed description of the new Baptist emphases. Our only danger lies in being too precise and detailed. After the comparison is made we should therefore test whether the details are accidental or purposive.

For the purpose of brevity, we shall abbreviate True Confession as TC, and London Confession of 1644 as LC.

We are immediately struck with the Baptists' lack of concern about the nature of the church. Neither separation from an impure church, nor gathering a pure church, nor constructing a church and an ecclesiology which are special and uniquely Baptist, receives any emphasis. Whereas TC has twenty-one articles (17-34, 36-38) on the church, covering seven pages in Lumpkin's edition, LC has only twelve articles (33-38, 42-47), covering only three pages. Much of this reduction is attributable to the fact that the Baptists removed every word which denounced other churches as false or ungodly.

Not only do the Baptists eliminate TC's theme of separation from false churches, (TC Art. 28-33), but they also shorten or omit many of the constructive statements of ecclesiology (TC Art. 17, 19, 23, 27, 37).^{f20} The constructive statements which do remain are not unique. They are taken wholly from the TC. LC Article 33 is the one exception.^{f21} Its main substance is identical with that of TC 17, 37, 38, and especially 33. The one real difference is the substitution of baptism for covenant. This is a real difference, but it is one difference among many identical articles on the church in which LC is a verbatim copy of TC. LC has so few articles on the church, and adds so little to TC, that we conclude that the church was not their main concern. It was the radically different doctrine of baptism which altered slightly the doctrine of the church, rather than the converse. In their doctrine of baptism, they mention not a word about the church, about the nature of the church, or about baptism as a means of becoming a church member. Their decision for baptism is not to be explained in terms of their ecclesiology.

What then is the main concern in their definition of baptism? What does baptism signify for them? They tell us

That Baptism is an Ordinance of the New Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed only upon persons professing faith, or that are Disciples, or taught, who upon a profession of faith, ought to be baptized (LC 39).

The way and manner of the dispensing of this Ordinance the Scripture holds out to be dipping or plunging the whole body under water: it being a sign, must answer to the thing signified, which are these: first, the washing the whole soul in the blood of Christ: Secondly, that interest the Saints have in the death, burial, and resurrection; thirdly, together with a confirmation of our faith, that as certainly as the body is buried under water, and riseth again, so certainly shall the bodies of the Saints be raised by the power of Christ, in the day of the resurrection, to reign with Christ (LC 40).

Later editions omitted the word "only" in 39 and "the Scripture holds out to be." This is an accommodation to Dr. Featley, and a deemphasis on the scriptural authority. The phrase, "first, the washing the whole soul in the blood of Christ" was also omitted. It was a vestige of the traditional means of

baptism, and is not to be considered a part of the unique Baptist doctrine. “Of Christ” was added to “that interest the Saints have in the death, burial, and resurrection.”

Death, burial, and resurrection is clearly the central motif of this doctrine of baptism. The act of God in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was at the center of what persons professed when they professed faith, as the articles on faith and justification show. Baptism signifies the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, our burial and resurrection in baptism, and our future death and resurrection by the power of Christ. The centrality of this motif corresponds directly with the basis for the 1640 decision of Richard Blunt’s church: they were “convinced of baptism that it ought to be by dipping the body into the water, resembling burial and rising again. 2 Col. 2:12; ~~6:4~~ Romans 6:4.”^{f22}

This language about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and its application to the Saints, is not to be found in the True Confession. Without exception, the other English Calvinist confessions of this period were describing the event of the cross in a completely different language. They all spoke of the priestly office of Christ, the pure, obedient, spotless lamb chosen by the Father to shed his blood as a sacrifice on the altar, paying the price which was ours to pay and washing away our sin. Their stress on the pure, spot-less church and the pure, spotless Christian can be seen as a corollary of their Christology and as a key to their whole position. Their baptism signified the washing and making pure of the one baptized, rather than the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Such imagery comes from another source than that of the Baptists, who saw the power of God not so much in the spotless obedience and sacrifice of Christ as in the mercy and power by which Christ died, was buried, and was raised again.

The significance of this different emphasis is apparent when we look at its relationship to the other changes which the Baptists introduced. All the major changes can be seen as consistent corollaries derived from the new Christological and baptismal conceptions. For instance, LC adds articles 22 through 32 to TC, defining more fully the aspects of God’s application of the gospel to the believer, such as justification, faith, sanctification, and perseverance. This can be understood as an emphasis on the faith and discipleship which were stressed in the doctrine of baptism. And when this faith and discipleship are defined, the stress is Christological. And again the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ appears along with such basic Congregational themes as the sacrifice of the righteous lamb. Article 25 asserts

That the tenders of the Gospel to the conversion of sinners, is absolutely free, no way requiring, as absolutely necessary, any qualifications, terrors of the

Law, but only and alone the naked soul, as a sinner and ungodly to receive Christ, as crucified, dead, and buried, and risen again, being made a Prince and a Saviour for such sinners.

Article 28 defines the crucial doctrine of justification. It is a combination of the Congregational theme of satisfaction by Christ's blood with the Baptist addition of union by faith with Christ in his death. ^{f23}

The Baptists identify more closely the activity of God in the sinner with His activity in Christ. This may be seen as a shift to a more concrete Christological emphasis from the Calvinist concentration on God who is sovereign and omnipotent. This emphasis on the Christlike activity of God is seen in the unique phrase at the end of article 24 which describes how faith comes. It says that the creature "is converted by no less power, than that which raised Christ from the dead." The power of God working in us is identified with the raising of Christ from the dead. Article 26 repeats the assertion in the realm of discipleship: "the same power that converts to faith in Christ, the same power carries on the soul still through all duties, temptations, conflicts, sufferings, and continually whatever a Christian is, he is by grace. ..."

Both TC and LC are aware of the temptations and failings in the Christian life, but they also both stress striving after perfection. The Baptists stress this a little more than the Congregationalists, adding an emphasis on obedience to the commands of Christ, just as they did in their opening statement on baptism as the ordinance of Christ which is to be carried out obediently. ^{f24} Articles 31 and 32 are significant because of their realistic or non-utopian view of the continuing struggle with sin and self and their reservation of the victory for God through Christ partially now and finally at the eschaton, rather than in the believer's ethical holiness and pure selfhood in the time of this life. Against the background of a period which tended to be utopian and perfectionistic, these can be truthfully called strong statements. They are also significant for their reliance upon the strength of Christ, who himself knows suffering and is engaged with them in their struggles.

These eleven articles on God's application of the gospel to the believer are not wholly unique. TC includes some of the same concepts in one article (15). But LC in its eleven articles certainly gives greater clarity and emphasis to those points we have mentioned, and is unique in its language about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and about "that same power ... which raised Christ from the dead" converting us and carrying us through.

The Baptist Confession also doubles the True Confession's strong emphasis on the offices of Christ. They add very little that TC did not already say, but say it twice as strongly. To do this, they select some passages from the Puritan theologian, William Ames, which stress the completeness and perfection of

Christ's work, and which add to TC the strong assertion that Christ was both God and man in each office. ^{f25} They do not quote Ames' several statements that the divinity of Christ was not involved in the humiliation and death. ^{f26}

The Baptists also omit the word "remission" when they copy TC's article 15, and they stress "reconciliation" in their new article 21. Similar to this additional stress on reconciliation is the content of article 27, which stresses the "union and oneness with God" of all believers. This shift from remission of sins to reconciliation or union with God does correspond to the shift in the doctrine of baptism from washing and being made pure to union with Christ in his baptism into death, burial, and resurrection. The same shift is seen in article 21, which is purely Baptist and not copied from TC:

That Christ Jesus by his death did bring forth salvation and reconciliation only for the elect, which were those which God the Father gave him; and that the Gospel which is to be preached to all men as the ground of faith, is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the ever-blessed God, filled with the perfection of all heavenly and spiritual excellencies, and that salvation is only and alone to be had through the believing in his Name (LC article 21).

In the articles which deal with election, predestination, and reprobation, the Baptists can be observed making a small shift in the Calvinism of TC. This shift is less apparent than the major ones on baptism, the application of the gospel to the believer, and Christology. But though less obvious, it is especially interesting because it concerns the doctrine of particular election from which they received their name. The doctrine of particular election is expressed in article 21, quoted immediately above. On the one hand, LC is even stronger than the thoroughly Calvinist TC in eliminating man's cooperation in salvation. Articles which are unique to the Baptists stress that Christ's death is only for the elect, ^{f27} that "faith is the gift of God wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Spirit of God," ^{f28} and that in spite of the storms which do come, those who have this faith "shall be kept by the power of God to salvation." ^{f29} But on the other hand, LC softens the double predestination and the reprobation, by making man responsible for reprobation and by making God's reprobation more of a passive or secondary act. ^{f30} These changes may be merely the natural softening of the harshness of TC. But the changes could be seen as the logical working out of the basic Christological change which we have already noted. TC's Christology, with its concentration on the satisfaction of God by the sacrifice of a righteous lamb, may have been more compatible with the conception of a God of wrath who foreordains men to eternal condemnation. But the new Christology, with its concentration on God's mercy and power in reconciling man through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, probably could not live with such a harsh doctrine of foreordination. Thus the Baptists sharpened Calvinism where it gave glory to the

act of God in Christ, and they softened it where it detracted from their conception of God as the One who acted in Christ. Their innovations were consistent with their central new concept of how God acts in Christ.

There are a few other minor changes which are made. Where TC 14 says "... by which God ... might be reconciled to his elect," LC 17 changes it to "... by which God ... might reconcile his elect only." The one who needed reconciliation was man rather than God, they seem to be suggesting. ^{f31} They omitted the doctrine of creation out of nothing. ^{f32} They added an emphasis on the excellence of the Scriptures "as they hold forth the glory of God ..., the excellency of Christ ..., and the power of the fulness of the Spirit. ..." ^{f33} There is the substitution of language about Christ for language about God's dealings with Israel. ^{f34} The differences on the authority of the civil rulers over the church are familiar, and we must pass them by for the sake of brevity.

In 1645 a truly humble conclusion was added to the London Confession. Its authors disavow any claims for themselves and show their appreciation of the relativity of their own knowledge. One sentence says, "Also we confess that we know but in part, and that we are ignorant of many things which we desire and seek to know: and if any shall do us that friendly part to slim us from the Word of God that we see not, we shall have cause to be thankful to God and them." ^{f35} Seen in connection with their actual acceptance of many of Dr. Featley's criticisms even on the crucial doctrine of baptism, and with their expurgation from TC of all elements which suggest that other churches are more false than they, this confession of ignorance and openness is truly significant.

We have seen that the Baptists did make a real contribution to the basic Congregational position out of which they came. This contribution included not only marginal modifications but the introduction of a basic new motif. The new motif centered in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and its manifestation in the believer. All the major innovations are readily understandable as the consistent carrying out of the implications of that new center. Therefore the Baptist contribution in the London Confession seems to be more than an *ad hoc*, fleeting expression representing only the need to say something for the moment. Its consistency and careful composition along with its repeated republication argue for its real representative character. But more than that can be said. The same positions re-appear almost totally in the Confession of the Particular Baptists in the Midlands in 1655 ^{f36} and in the Somerset Confession of 1656. ^{f37} These other confessions have very different forms, and the latter includes strong General Baptist elements. But the London peculiarities shine through.

All the more significant is the Second London Confession of 1677. The authors refer to their verbatim copying of most of the Presbyterian Westminster Confession and of the Congregationalist Savoy Confession:

... we did in like manner conclude it best to follow their example, in making use of the very same words with them both, in those articles (which are very many) wherein our faith and doctrine is the same as theirs. ... and also to convince all that we have no itch to clog religion with new words. ... ^{f38}

They refrained so well from the itch that Curtis could say, “Its thirty-two chapters are simple a Baptists recension of the Westminster Confession, altered only in the chapters dealing with the Church and the Sacraments.” ^{f39} Philip Schaff gives a similar judgment. ^{f40} As both Lumpkin and the foreword to the Confession point out, however, there are significant differences. ^{f41} Curtis, Schaff, and Lumpkin have not stated the Baptist changes quite accurately, although the latter’s summary is far the best. They have all missed some of the changes, and have given the Baptists credit for some contributions which are mere reproductions of the Savoy Confession. When we compare all three confessions word for word, we can note all the minor changes which the Baptists made. And the correlation between these changes and those the Baptists made in the London Confession of 1644 is so high that the position of the Particular Baptists appears amazingly consistent. With few exceptions, they made exactly the same changes in 1677 as they did in 1644. Thus we can summarize this stage of our investigation by listing the peculiarities we have already found in the 1644 confession, and indicating in brackets the article in the 1677 London Confession in which the identical change appears vis-a-vis its parent confessions.

1. Ecclesiology is merely a shortened Congregational ecclesiology with an added mention of baptism.	[XXVI, compared with Savoy XXVI and Platform]
2. (a) Eliminate polemics against other churches.	[X. 5, XXV. 3]
(b) Humble attitude toward being taught by others.	[Foreword. pp. 244-48 in Lumpkin]
3. Baptism. ^{f42}	[XXIX. 1]
(a) Ordinance of N.T., given by Christ, (not sacrament)	[XXIX. 2]
(b) Only upon persons who profess faith,	[XXIX. 2]
obedience or discipleship	[XXIX. 2]
are taught,	[not in 1677]
profess repentance [not in 1644].	[XXIX. 2]
(c) Signifies Christ’s	[XXIX. 1]
death	[XXIX. 1]
burial	[not in 1677]
resurrection	[XXIX. 1]

Applied to us: shall be raised by same power with Christ.	[XXIX. 1 speaks of “fellowship with” Christ in his death and resurrection.]
(d) Elimination of regeneration by washing as a meaning of baptism, with some vestiges remaining.	[XXIX. 1]
4. Additional emphasis on application of gospel to the sinner and believer, via:	
(a) death, burial, and resurrection of Christ manifested in faith.	[not in 1677, but see footnote ^{f43} below]
(b) the same power which raised Christ from the dead.	[X. 2]
(c) obedience to the commands of Christ.	[XII. 3]
(d) reliance on Christ in spite of struggle with sin and self.	[XVII. 1]
5. Extra emphasis on offices of Christ, God and man.	[VIII. 2, 9, 10] ^{f44}
6. Shift from remission to reconciliation.	
7. Shift on foreordination, election, and predestination.	[VIII. 8, 10]
(a) strengthen the denial of man’s cooperation in grace.	[VIII. 8; X. 2]
(b) soften God’s reprobation.	[III. 3, 7; X. 1] ^{f45}
8. Omit creation out of nothing.	[IV. 1]
9. It is man rather than God who is reconciled.	[not in 1677]
10. Stress the excellence of Scriptures as they hold forth God, Christ, the Spirit.	[XIV. 2]
11. God’s dealings through Christ rather than through Israel.	[VII. 2, 3]
12. Independence of church from civil rulers.	[XXIV. 3, 4]

There is no other peculiarity in any significant word in the Second LC over against the Westminster and Savoy Confessions. Thus, the Baptists in 1677 not only made all but five of the approximately twenty-eight changes which the Baptists of 1644 had made; they also demonstrated the consistency of the pattern by making no new changes except those mentioned in the footnotes below. Those new changes do employ terminology which is different from that of their Baptist predecessors, but in most cases it could be said that “the substance of the matter is the same.” ^{f46}

It is clear that we may be able to ask about the source of this Baptist pattern. We have a detailed description of a consistent theological tradition, which has the same basic thrust and approximately the same twenty-eight subpoints in both of their most important confessions. We are ready to seek the most likely explanation for the origin of this consistent theological pattern.

THE DIFFICULTY OF EXPLAINING THE BAPTIST INNOVATIONS WITHOUT POSTULATING ANABAPTIST INFLUENCE

The central motif of the Baptist innovations is an interpretation of baptism which is discontinuous not only from the Congregational doctrine of baptism, but from all the Congregational doctrines. The convictions which it presupposes are absent from Congregational thought.

The central conviction involved in the new interpretation of baptism is the concentration on the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The terminology and meaning of this central theme is no-where to be found in the Congregationalist confessions. The Congregationalists thought in terms of the benefits of the blood of the spotless Lamb, which are imparted by washing and purifying. The Baptists are focusing on a meaning of baptism which supplants and moves in a different direction from the Congregational conceptions. Therefore the Baptist focus is not likely to have grown out of doctrine already stressed by the Congregationalists. It is not merely a logical outcome, or a marginal correction, of the Congregational system.

The other focus of the Baptist doctrine of baptism is profession of faith and discipleship (LC 39). But there is no stress in the Congregational position on discipleship or faith. Whereas the Baptists added eleven articles defining faith and its expression, the Congregationalists have not a single article in the True Confession which de-fines either faith or justification by faith. Instead the thrust of the Congregational position concentrates on God decreeing, electing, calling, and conferring benefits upon man through Jesus Christ as prophet, priest, and king who paid our price for us. Faith is only one of the many benefits of his kingship and of the gift of his Holy Spirit, which “begetteth and nourisheth in them repentance, faith, love, obedience, comfort, peace, joy, hope, and all Christian virtues ...” (TC 15). Discipleship is not mentioned at all. The logical extension of this sort of theology is a baptism which signifies God conferring and nourishing benefits through washing in the blood of Christ, just as TC does in fact define baptism.^{f47} To define baptism as following profession of faith and discipleship, and signifying the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is the very opposite of a logical extension of the Congregational theology. It is a new departure and emphasis. The new departure is symbolized by the fact that the Baptists omitted every word which TC used in defining baptism.

We have already excluded the doctrine of the church as a source. We conclude that the most likely possibility from within the Congregational theology would be that the two Scripture passages the Baptists quote, in combination with their religious experience of being baptized, could have been the source of their new

awareness. ^{<S1012>}Colossians 2:12 and ^{<S1012>}Romans 6:3-5 are very similar to their description of the significance of baptism. Yet the words are not the same. The doctrine of baptism is not a quote of these verses, but an original theological statement. These men were not Biblical literalists in their confessions. They were biblically-oriented Christological Calvinist theologians who gave their interpretations of systematic doctrine. Thus here they did not repeat all of the motifs in ^{<S1012>}Colossians 2:12 and ^{<S1012>}Romans 6:3-5, but selected their favorite motif. Furthermore they turned away from the approximately sixty Scripture passages to which the Congregationalists had referred in substantiation of their position (TC 35). Instead they concentrated on ^{<S1012>}Colossians 2:12, which TC does not mention, and ^{<S1012>}Romans 6:3-5, which is only included generally by TC's reference to Romans 5-8. To quote these Scripture passages and propound these interpretations is by no means the only obvious procedure for Baptists, as we shall see when we look at the General Baptists, who used different interpretations of different Scriptures. This single-minded theological interpretation, and this exclusion of the Congregational passages and concentration on two new Scripture passages to substantiate their new theological position, do not force us to postulate the influence of another tradition. But they do at least strongly suggest it. If another tradition were available to them which had the same single-minded emphasis, discrediting its influence would be difficult.

Many directions can be followed in the search for such a tradition. The Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles do mention the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in Article II and the beginning of IV, while stressing the merit of Jesus Christ (XI) and the sinless "lamb without spot" whose sacrifice takes away the sins of the world (XV). Westminster Confession follows this almost exactly. But in neither of these do the death, burial, and resurrection stand out decisively. Nor do they stress the office of Christ or the application of the gospel to man with any unusual vigor. And, of course, their doctrine of baptism has nothing in common with the Baptist doctrine of baptism. James Arminius could be a possibility. But the very same disqualifications which apply to the Thirty-Nine Articles and to the Westminster Confession are equally applicable to the teachings of Arminius. ^{f48} The Aberdeen Confession is suggested by Robert Hannen. It is clearly not what we are looking for, however. ^{f49}

Nor do the General Baptists provide an explanation for the Particular Baptist ideas. John Smyth, the General Baptist leader, thought of Christ in terms of merit and of the blood of the spotless Lamb which washes us pure.

The Son only meriteth and deserveth and obtaineth our prayers, having only assumed our nature, and therein merited and prayed and obtained. ... he is

just, having perfectly fulfilled the law; and he is also a propitiation for our sins, or sustaining the punishment and meriting for us. ... ^{f50}

Christ was the lamb slain from the beginning of the world. Revelation 13.8. and he by his blood purged the sins of the former testament: Hebrews 1.15. ... Christ is a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedech, as well as he was a lamb slain from the beginning of the world: and as his blood served for the purgation of the sins of the former testament which lived before Christ was slain, so also it serveth for the cleansing of the Church which now standeth up after his death. ... ^{f51} This righteousness which Christ has earned before God is imputed to man and actually cleanses and makes man inherently and empirically righteous. ^{f52}

God is seen as a just and righteous judge who can no more forgive without a satisfaction of meritorious obedience than he can cease to be just or cease to be good; Christ obtains such merit; we receive it by cleansing our heart, by applying his merit to ourselves through faith in his merit, and by living a pure and righteous life. This is just the sort of theology which the Particular Baptists dropped in favor of their concept of God as the one who has reconciled us through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and who will act in the same way to sustain us in our continuing struggles with sin. Smyth referred to Christ in terms of death, burial, and resurrection only once, in his Last Book, long after he had had close contact with the Mennonites, and even then he spiritualized the meaning. ^{f53}

For the General Baptists, baptism signified not the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, but the inward washing or purifying of the heart by prior repentance and a subsequent pure and righteous life. Baptism testifies to the heart of the individual. ^{f54} Thomas Helwys defined baptism in terms of amendment of life and a washing clean of the conscience:

the baptism of Christ, is the baptism of amendment of life, for the remission of sins. Mark 1.4. And our Saviour Christ saith: Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John 3. and Hebrews 10.22. Let us draw near with a true heart in assurance of faith, our hearts being pure from an evil con-science, and washed in our bodies with pure water.

Here is the true baptism set down, which is the baptism of amendment of life for the remission of sins: and here is the true matter wherewith men must be washed, which is water, and the Holy Ghost, that is pure from an evil conscience, and washed with water. ^{f55}

Such a meaning of baptism was the basis for Smyth's main argument against infant baptism:

for considering what baptism is, an infant is no more capable of baptism than is any unreasonable or insensible creature: For baptism is not washing with water: but it is the baptism of the Spirit, the confessing of the mouth, and the washing with water ... the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience. ^{f56}

He repeatedly argued that infants have neither “a good conscience unto God, I Peter 3:21, nor the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, Hebrews 10.22 ...”^{f57} In addition to these arguments Smyth also stated that “there is neither

precept nor example in the New Testament of any infants that were baptized by John or Christ’s Disciples ... ~~<1010>~~Mark 1:4, 5. ~~<1087>~~Acts 8:37.” ^{f58}

Furthermore, he maintains that teaching and discipleship are necessary:

~~<1289>~~Matthew 28:19, ~~<1301>~~John 4:1. And finally, he presents a complex argument about carnal seed versus spiritual seed, mentioning many Scripture passages, none of which appear in Particular Baptist confessions. ^{f59} Buried within the concept of baptism as a testimony to what the Spirit is doing in the heart of the subject, Smyth did mention death and resurrection as something done by the Spirit in the heart; there is a “mortifying and burying of sin and a resurrection from sin.” ^{f60} But this theme is neither strong enough, nor clear enough, nor similar enough to the Particular Baptist emphases, to provide a thinkable explanation for the origin of the Particular Baptist position. The General Baptists placed their emphasis on concepts which do not even appear in the Particular Baptists. They included only a few concepts which do appear in the latter. They did not stress any of the six key Scripture passages which the Particular Baptists stressed, and the approximately forty Scripture passages which the General Baptists did mention in connection with baptism include only three of the six key Particular Baptists passages — and then only the same general location but not the same verses. Two conclusions can be reached from this.

First, the General Baptists are not the source for the Particular Baptist concerns.

Second, there are many different ways to argue for believers’ baptism: the fact that the Particular Baptists used the same arguments which Menno used can not be brushed aside as if there were only one obvious way to argue.

MENNO SIMONS’ FOUNDATION-BOOK

Menno Simons’ *Foundation-Book* exactly fulfills all the requirements for explaining every detail of the Baptist innovations.

The *Foundation-Book* was likely to have been available to the Baptists, both because of its widespread distribution and because it was the book which shaped the basic doctrines of the Mennonites. The frequency with which it was republished is phenomenal. Its Dutch publication dates before 1640 are 1539,

1558, 1562, 1565, 1567, 1579 [2], 1583, 1613, 1616, and two undated editions published in German in 1575. ^{f61} Cornelius Krahn points out that the *Foundation-Book*

is the most important ... book of Menno Simons, ... one of the most important instruments for gathering the true, peaceful, and Biblical Dutch Anabaptists — after the Munster catastrophe — into a body of believers, a church of Christ, which soon became known as the Mennonites. In simple language he presents the basic doctrines and ethical standards based on the New Testament to a bewildered, seeking group, who found in the book the guide they needed and were looking for. ... No other Mennonite author has ever written a book which found such an immediate widespread acceptance and so specifically met a need as the *Foundation-Book* of Menno Simons. ^{f62}

Thus the Baptists could have learned its basic contents either by reading it or by talking with almost any articulate Mennonite.

The over-all emphases of the *Foundation-Book* are strikingly similar to the emphases of the Baptist innovations. Menno stresses discipleship, repentance, faith, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, Christ as Lord and example, along with an appeal to the magistracy. The section on baptism is even more striking in its similarity to the core of the Baptist pattern. The emphases are almost identical. The order of their presentation is almost identical. The Scripture passages which are mentioned are almost identical. The almost complete identity can be seen readily in the following outline which indicates in order the chief points and Scripture passages in Menno’s and the Baptists’ sections on baptism.

<i>Menno</i>	<i>Baptists in 1644</i>
A. Christ’s commandment according to the ordinance of God. <4128> Matthew 28:18 f; <4166> Mark 16:16	A. Ordinance of New Testament given by Christ. <4288> Matthew 28:18 f; <4166> Mark 16:16
B. Only upon persons who: hear the gospel preached believe it are taught no New Testament ceremonies for infants	B. Only upon persons who: profess faith are disciples are taught
C. Signifies: profession of faith declaration of discipleship <4425> Acts 2:37f; 8:36f Christ’s death burial resurrection	upon a profession of faith <4425> Acts 2:37 f; 8:36 f; 18:8 C. Signifies: Christ’s death burial resurrection

desired by us <41618> Romans 6:3-5.	applied to us <41618> Romans 6:3-5
D. Elimination of regeneration by washing as a meaning of baptism, with some vestiges remaining. by washing as a meaning of baptism, with some vestiges remaining.	by washing as a meaning of D. Elimination of regeneration baptism, with some vestiges remaining.

Menno's first words on baptism are, "Christ, after His resurrection, commanded ...," and then the words of ~~<41618>~~Matthew 28:18 f. follow. ^{f63} He explains that "Here we have the Lord's commandment concerning baptism, as to when according to the ordinance of God it shall be administered and received; namely, that the Gospel must first be preached, and then those baptized who believe it, as Christ says: [~~<41616>~~Mark 16:16 is quoted]. ... Young children are without understanding and unteachable ... in the New Testament no ceremonies for infants are enjoined. ... ^{f64} This includes almost the identical elements contained in the beginning section on baptism in the London Confession. Menno explicitly mentions hearing the Word of God, which is only implicit in the Baptists. The Baptists mention discipleship, which Menno does not mention at the same place in this passage although it is a central theme elsewhere.

Menno next mentions Christ's own receiving of baptism from John in the Jordan. This is lacking in the Baptists, who think of Calvary more than the Jordan when they speak of Christ's baptism. But so indeed does Menno, for when he speaks of the Jordan, he has Calvary in mind. Obedience unto the death on the cross was the significance of Christ's baptism. He went to John

to be baptized of him, that He might fulfill all righteousness. He prepared Himself to meet temptation, misery, the cross, and death, and as a willing, obedient child resigned himself to the will of his al-mighty Father, as He Himself said that He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. ^{f65}

Menno urges that we must do as Christ commanded, as Christ was baptized, and as the apostles taught and practiced. Baptism is to ensue upon faith, and is not for children.

Then Menno succinctly states the significance of being baptized. Each aspect of the Baptist pattern appears, and the sequence is identical: The ordinance of the Lord, hearing, believing, professing faith, discipleship, death, burial, and resurrection with Christ. The Scripture Menno quotes is the same Scripture which the Baptists quote.

This then is the Word and will of the Lord, that all who hear and believe the Word of God shall be baptized as related above.

Thereby they profess their faith and declare that they will henceforth live not according to their own will, but according to the will of God. For the testimony of Jesus they are prepared to forsake their homes, possessions, lands, and lives and to suffer hunger, affliction, oppression, persecution, the cross, and death for the same; yes, they desire to bury the flesh with its lusts and arise with Christ to newness of life, even as Paul says: Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We are buried with him in baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.^{f66}

Two paragraphs follow explaining “that even as Christ was buried, so also ought we to die unto our sins, and be buried with Christ in baptism.” But “Think not that we teach that Christians are to die unto sin to such an extent as to sense it no longer.” Then a paragraph follows explaining the need to “arise with Christ Jesus from the power of sin unto a new life to the praise of the Lord ... righteousness and holiness. ...”^{f67} There is but one significant difference between this definition of baptism and the Baptist definition. Each aspect is the same, and follows in the same sequence. But for Menno the emphasis is on the act of the believer in Christ, expressing his desire to be baptized with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. The language is primarily ethical. For the Baptists the emphasis is on the act of God in Christ, with whom we were and shall be baptized into death, burial, and resurrection. The language is primarily theological. Menno was an Anabaptist and the Baptists remained Calvinists.

It is interesting to note that Menno retains a vestige of the meaning of baptism as the washing of regeneration, but reinterprets it so that it means immersion into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, an inward change, rather than the Roman Catholic regeneration by immersion into water. Thus he refutes infant baptism because baptism signifies death, burial, and resurrection with Christ:

It is also impossible for little children to die to sin as it has not become alive in them. Neither can they rise to a new life, as long as they are not born of God through faith, and by the Spirit of God led into righteousness ... beware, for the symbolism of baptism is to bury sin, and to rise with Christ in a new life, things which can by no means be said of infants ... as if regeneration were simply a matter of immersing [*Indrucking*] in water.^{f68}

From the viewpoint of Particular Baptist origins, such a statement is greatly significant, not only because its central concept is death, burial, and resurrection, but also because it actually speaks of immersion. And it is

especially significant in that it argues against baptism on the same basis which was central to the Particular Baptists, and which is not to be found in the General Baptists. Menno and the Particular Baptists favor adult baptism on the basis of Romans 6, Colossians 2, and the symbolism of death, burial, and resurrection. The General Baptists favor adult baptism on the basis of ^{<41004>}Mark 1:4, ^{<8102>}Hebrews 10:22, ^{<4181>}1 Peter 3:21, and the symbolism of sprinkling the heart from an evil conscience, all of which is foreign to Particular Baptist writings.

Menno continues by stressing that the efficacy of baptism for the forgiveness of sins is “not through the virtue of the image, but through the power of the divine Word received by him through faith ... not on account of the water or the administered signs ..., but on account of the power and truth of the divine promise which we receive by obedience through faith.”¹⁶⁹ This amounts to a double basis for the efficacy — the power of God’s word and the receipt of the Word by obedience through faith. At once we see Menno’s similarity to and difference from Calvinism. Menno is not saying that the efficacy is dependent only on something man does or desires, but on God’s Word received by the believing disciple. The stress is certainly different, however. Where Calvin would say, “the receipt of the Word by grace through faith,” Menno says “the receipt of the Word by obedience through faith.” This pinpoints the difference. The Baptists, as we have seen, incorporated Menno’s stress on obedience, but they did so in a more Calvinist manner. They would base the efficacy on “God Who calls and predestinates the elect to receive the Word by grace through faith,” and would not tie efficacy to obedience. They remain completely within Calvinism, but are influenced by Menno. Menno concludes, “For in Christ nothing matters but faith working by love, the new creature, and the keeping of the commandments of God.”¹⁷⁰ The Baptists say that in Christ what matters is God’s act of election, salvation, and preservation through Christ’s Prophecy, Priesthood, Kingship, death, burial, and resurrection. God acts to make us a new creature and to keep us ultimately in faith, love, and obedience to His commandments, even though we still struggle with sin and self through our unbelief. The Baptists are Calvinists who incorporate Menno’s emphases where they fit into the Calvinist framework, and reject those aspects which do not fit. They ignore Menno’s distinction between inward and outward baptism and instead speak of the baptism of Christ, meaning His death, burial, and resurrection, and God working by that same power in us.

Menno also gives another definition of baptism which again follows the same order as the more comprehensive definition at the beginning of his teaching on baptism. But the thing signified is even more explicitly centered in the believer rather than in Christ. This is seen especially at the point where Christ’s death

and burial is omitted in favor of the believer's inward death and burial, i.e., repentance.

Baptism is a sign of obedience, commanded by Christ, by which we testify when we receive it that we believe the Word of the Lord, that we repent of our former life and conduct, that we desire to rise with Christ unto a new life, and that we believe in the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. ^{f71}

Menno then adds four pages of refutation of other views of baptism, centered primarily in the need to obey the commands of God in the Scriptures, which clearly do not command infant baptism. The Baptists were consistent with their non-polemical stance, omitting this just as they omitted the polemics of the True Confession and of the Westminster Confession. They learn from Menno, however, and omit those doctrines against which Menno teaches: infant baptism and baptism as “pardon and the washing away of original sin ... the remission of sins through baptism. ...” ^{f72}

We have now covered Menno's definition of baptism in this treatise. The identity of it with the Baptist pattern, except at the two points where it did not fit with the Baptists' theocentric and non-polemical stance, is undeniable. To believe that this is mere coincidence is extremely difficult. They stress the same Scripture passages, the same aspects of baptism in the same sequence, except that discipleship is placed differently. Menno concludes the section by repeating his doctrine of baptism.

This is our doctrine, position, and belief concerning baptism according to the instruction of the words of Christ; namely, that we must first hear the Word of God, believe it, and then upon our faith be baptized. ... We with a sincere heart desire to die to sin, to bury our sins with Christ, and with Him to rise to a new life, even as baptism signifies. ^{f73}

This same pattern reoccurs with remarkable consistency in Menno's definitions of baptism. ^{f74}

We have concentrated on this key section of this one treatise because it represents the Mennonite teachings which probably were the most readily available to Richard Blunt and his group. It is this teaching on baptism which is the core of Menno's teachings, the doctrine for which his followers underwent persecution and which they were likely to have urged upon listening ears. ^{f75} And it is just this doctrine which is at the center of the special Baptist theology.

If the Baptists had ears to hear what such a teacher had to say to them, they would also have heard much about discipleship and obedience to Christ; about faith in Christ who was obedient unto suffering, death, burial, and resurrection for us; about the relationship between the gospel and the life of the believer;

about “walking in the resurrection.” These emphases are just what we find in the Baptist innovations. On the other hand, the Baptists would have been deaf to those two aspects of Menno which are absent from the London Confession. Because they were good Calvinists, they would have heard Menno’s central emphasis on death, burial, and resurrection more as a reference to God’s act in Christ than to the believer’s desire to die to sin and live righteously. Because they were opposed to polemics, they would have been deaf to Menno’s censoring of infant baptism while hearing his positive statements about the meaning of baptism. The development from non-separatist Congregational Calvinism to the London Confession of 1644, with the aid of Menno Simons’ *Foundation-Book*, is so straightforward that we need not go into further detail. The *Foundation-Book* provides a straight-forward explanation for the origin of every detail of the Baptist innovations. No other influences upon the London Confession need to be postulated besides the True Confession, William Ames, and the *Foundation-Book*.

We return to Winthrop Hudson’s article. He stresses the Baptists’

Firm rejection of the distinctive features of Anabaptist life and thought — opposition to civil magistracy, the holding of public office, military service, oaths, and going to court, as well as their peculiar doctrine of soul-sleeping, their contention that Christ did not receive his flesh from Mary, and their confidence in the essential goodness of man and their consequent rejection of original sin. ^{r76}

We now see how it was possible for the Baptists to have been influenced by an Anabaptist and yet not adopt “the distinctive features of Anabaptist life and thought.” Most of these “distinctives” are found in the *Foundation-Book*. Those which are found are not stressed. Furthermore, it is not distinctive or unique features which impress the reader of this treatise. The reader is impressed with those features which Menno stresses, which make up his gospel. Except for the voluntarist and separatist aspects of that gospel, the features which Menno stresses are the features which seem to have impressed the Baptists. Should we not conclude that Biblical Calvinists who were sincerely open to being taught could accept the basic teachings of Menno, while translating the uncalvinistic voluntarism into theocentric language? The evidence seems to suggest that the Baptists did in fact remain Calvinists while being influenced by a Mennonite who, if he was not Menno himself, was a disciple so true that the difference is hard to discern.

If this be granted, then further research into other similar Anabaptist writings is a likely avenue of inquiry, just as is further research into the writings of the Congregationalists. In the meantime, it is difficult to refrain from a tentative conclusion. The Baptists are probably indebted either to the *Foundation-Book*, or to another treatise or Mennonite whose position was extremely similar to its

contents. The indebtedness includes such doctrines as believer's baptism, the meaning of baptism as signifying the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, immersion, Christology, and that large area we have called the application of the gospel to the believer. The Baptists were firmly rooted in nonseparatist Congregational Calvinism. The separatist, anthropocentric, and other currents in Menno which would have pulled up their roots did not affect the Baptists. But the peculiar Baptist bent is the result of a fresh breeze from Holland.

ENDNOTES

- ^{ft1} Glen H. Stassen is a candidate for the Ph. D. degree at Duke University.
- ^{ft2} A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1947), devotes only six pages to the Particular Baptists, while spending 28 pages on the General Baptists. The origin of the Particular Baptists is barely mentioned, the possibility of Anabaptist influence upon their origin is dismissed with a word, and their theology is not discussed at all. The only mention of the London Confession of 1644 is the quotation from the article on immersion. The same can be said of Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia, 1907); W.T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London, 1932); and of R. G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia, 1950), where the General Baptists receive four times as much space as the Particular Baptists. The same emphasis and the same overlooking of the theology of this group continues in recent periodical articles. For Norman H. Maring's review of some of these articles, see *Foundations*, I, Number 3 (July 1958), pp. 91-95. Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, II (London, 1912), pp. 302f., does give proper stress to the origin of Particular Baptists, but, partly because of the nature of his studies, he does not discuss their motives or theology. He merely classifies them as separatists. Whatever the reasons for this lack, its consequence is that the most profound Baptist theology of this period just simply seems not to have been investigated. This injustice cries for righting.
- ^{ft3} Charles R. Andrews, "The Maine Wheel That Sets Us Aworke . . .," *Foundations*, I, Number 3 (July 1958), p. 29. In defense of the General Baptists, it should be said that Mr. Andrews may have overgeneralized a bit in consigning them all so finally to death and Unitarianism. A few did live on, some joined the Mennonites, the Quakers, and the Particular Baptists. But we do agree with his point that the Particular Baptists are more important for the ongoing Baptist movement than the General Baptists, and that the emphasis of Baptist historiography should shift toward the Particular Baptists.
- ^{ft4} This will be shown later in this paper.
- ^{ft5} There is one extremely shaky piece of evidence that "one Baptist" (General Baptist? Anabaptist?) practised immersion in 1635. The reference to him gives neither his name nor his location, and does not even say explicitly that he practised immersion. Furthermore, the reference is made by someone who was attempting to counter the polemic that "A succession of Baptizers did not continue in those persecuting times, and so no man hath

that Authority to baptize.” cf. Burrage, *Early English Dissenters*, I, pp. 378-79. Even if we accept such shaky evidence, it itself admits that it is reporting only an isolated and unusual incident. Thus it agrees with the universal conclusion of contemporary scholarship that it was the Particular Baptists who are to be credited with the origin of believers’ baptism by immersion within the Baptist denomination.

^{ft6} This will be shown later.

^{ft7} See their own description of their decision, which is quoted on page 326.

^{ft8} Maring, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94. General Baptists “always represented a small part of the Baptist life in England, and an even smaller part in America. Their influence upon the main currents of Baptist life in either country appears to have been slight. Indeed, if one were to concede their connection with Anabaptists. this conclusion would have little bearing upon an understanding of the mainstream of Baptist life and thought.” This position has similarities to the positions of W.H. Whitsitt, A.H. Strong, and J.H. Shakespeare, as summarized in Torbet, *op. cit.*, p. 61. Torbet, on the other hand, states that he follows Vedder in his conclusion that “after 1610 we have an unbroken succession of Baptist churches.” (p. 61). Our point, however, is that the Particular Baptists did not succeed from the General Baptists, nor were they in the same tradition, nor did they mean the same thing by baptism. Thus although Baptists had their origin in England in 1610, they had a second and independent origin in 1638-41. And it is this second, independent origin which is our primary interest. It cannot be understood as a continuation of the General Baptist movement, with the addition of immersion as the form of baptism. The General Baptists should not be ignored as the Particular Baptists now are. But surely a balanced presentation would require some shift in emphasis.

^{ft9} Winthrop Hudson. “Baptists Were Not Anabaptists,” *The Chronicle*, XVI, Number 4 (October 1953), pp. 171 ff.

^{ft10} *Ibid.*, p. 176.

^{ft11} Sec Champlin Burrage, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 326-35, and Vol. II, pp. 292-305 for the original sources and an account of the information which we do have.

^{ft12} Cf. H. Shelton Smith, *American Christianity*, I (New York, 1960), pp. 82-85, for a brief description of non-separatist Congregationalism, which had its origin in the Jacob Church. English Separatism is the name which identifies the followers of Robert Browne. Separatism describes not merely the act of forming a new church, but the main motif in their theology. Their central concern was to prove that all other churches — especially Anglican churches — were false, and to establish a pure church. Non-separatism

identifies the followers of Henry Jacob, who contended that the Church of England was a true church, and maintained fellowship with them as long as possible. Although they actually formed their own churches, it is important to distinguish them from the Separatists, since the theologies of the two groups were of radically different cloth. The central concepts in the theology of the Separatists were falseness and purity, and their spirit was polemical. The central concept in the non-separatists was Calvin's doctrine of God, and their spirit was ecumenical. The General Baptists originated in the Separatist movement, and their central concepts were falseness and purity. The Particular Baptists originated in the mother church of Non-separatism and were Non-separatists; their theology was Calvinistic and was not concerned to establish a pure church or a pure individual; how consistently nonpolemical they were will be seen as we proceed.

^{ft13} Burrage, op. cit., II, p. 302, points out that Henry Jessey did not become an immersionist until June 1645, and therefore could not be the other leader.

^{ft14} There is, of course, no "2 ~~<S10212>~~Colossians 2:12." ~~<A10212>~~2 Corinthians 2:12 cannot be meant, since it has no relevance to the discussion. Therefore "2 ~~<S10212>~~Colossians 2:12" dearly means "~~<S10212>~~Colossians 2:12, which is directly relevant.

^{ft15} Quoted from Burrage, op. cit., II, pp. 302 ff., with some modernization of spelling. This is the so-called Kiffin manuscript, and is apparently our only source of any detail for the events of the decision. I take it from Burrage's several discussions of this manuscript that it was written by William Kiffin himself, than whom no better source of information could exist (since he was a member and leader of the group almost from the beginning), and that it is "Most assuredly... trustworthy.." Vol. I., p. 333. Cf. Vol. I, pp. 336 *if.*, 347 *if.* and especially p. 327, note 2; also "The Restoration of Immersion by the English Anabaptists and Baptists," *American Journal of Theology*, XVI, Number 1 (January 1912), pp. 70 ff.

^{ft16} For information about Blunt's trip and about this small sect, see Burrage, op. cit., I, pp. 331-35; Champlin Burrage, "The Restoration of Immersion By the English Anabaptists and Baptists," *American Journal of Theology* (January, 1912), pp. 70-89; Champlin Burrage, "The Collegiants or Rhynsburgers of Holland: Through Whose Co-operation the Members of the First Immersionist Anabaptist Congregation in London Procured Their Baptism in 1641," *Review and Expositor* (October 1910), pp. 526-47.

^{ft17} W.L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 144 ff. Lumpkin briefly gives its setting, signers, reception, salient features, and then prints the full text. Henceforth quotations taken from all confessions except the Westminster Confession will be taken from Lumpkin. The Scripture references which are cited but not quoted, and *which* appear only

in the margin and not within the text itself, will not be quoted in this paper except when they are especially significant. This is an admitted distortion for the sake of brevity.

- ^{ft18} Barrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, *op. cit.*, p. 153, asserts Johnson's influence and shows the unlikelihood of Ainsworth's influence in the True Confession, *contra* W. Walker, *Creeeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York, 1893), p. 43.
- ^{ft19} See L. J. Trinterud, "Origins of Puritanism." *Church History*, XX, Number 1 (1951), p. 45, for a clear distinction between Calvinist theology and covenant theology. "In the covenant theory of the Rhineland and of the English Reformers the covenant is a conditional promise on God's part, which has the effect of drawing out of man a responding promise of obedience, thus creating a mutual pact or treaty. The burden of fulfillment rests upon man, for he must first obey in order to bring God's reciprocal obligation into force." In the Calvinist theology of Geneva, on the other hand, God has already fulfilled the covenant in Christ and God accepts the obligation to manifest the fulfillment in the believer. "Theologically, of course, the difference between these two views is of the greatest moment." On this perhaps exaggerated scale, the Particular Baptists are conclusively Calvinist sons of the Reformation rather than covenant sons of late Medieval Augustinianism. It is in this sense that *we speak of the Baptists as Calvinist Congregationalists*.
- ^{ft20} Since the total length of each confession is the same — 15 pages each in Lumpkin — we are warranted in assuming that a decisive shortening or expanding of a doctrine by the Baptists is a good indicator of a decrease or increase in emphasis on that doctrine.
- ^{ft21} "Which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints, called and separated from the world, by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of faith of the Gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joined to the Lord, and each other, by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King." London Confession, Article 33.
- ^{ft22} Burrage, *Early English Dissenters*, *op. cit.*, II, p. 303; The Kiffin Manuscript.
- ^{ft23} "... Those which have union with Christ, are justified from all their sins, past, present, and to come, by the blood of Christ; which justification we conceive to be a gracious and free acquittance of a guilty, sinful creature, from all sin by God, through the satisfaction that Christ hath made by his death; and this applied in the manifestation of it through faith." London Confession, Article 28.

- ^{ft24} “... in truth and reality separated, both in soul and in body, from all sin and dead works, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, whereby he also presseth after a heavenly and Evangelical perfection, in obedience to all the Commands, which Christ as head and king in this new Covenant has prescribed to him.” London Confession, Article 29.
- ^{ft25} William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* (London, 1638), pp. 74, 75, 76.
- ^{ft26} *Ibid.*, pp. 71-73, 94.
- ^{ft27} *Ibid.*, Article 22.
- ^{ft28} London Confession, Article 21.
- ^{ft29} *Ibid.*, Article 23.
- ^{ft30} London Confession, 3, compared with True Confession, 3. Compare also LC 19 with its model, TC 14. TC says, “... to the execution of his determinate counsel], to wit to their seduction, hardening and condemnation, delivering them up to a reprobate mind, to be kept in darkness, sin and sensuality under judgment.” But LC 19 alters it to soften God’s reprobation and to assert that man deserved it! “...to the execution of his determinate counsel, delivering them up to a reprobate mind, to be kept through their own deserts, in darkness and sensuality unto judgment.” LC 20 eliminates those elements in TC 16 which assert that Christ shall “put all his enemies under his feet, ... punish the wicked with ever-lasting perdition from his presence.”
- ^{ft31} This was apparently an important difference from the General Baptists. Cf. Edward Bean Underhill, *Records of the Churches of Christ ...* (London, 1854), pp. ix and 373 ff., for the writing of a prominent General Baptist on this topic in 1645, the year after the first London Confession.
- ^{ft32} True Confession, Article 4, compared with London Confession, Article 4.
- ^{ft33} London Confession, Article 22
- ^{ft34} London Confession, Article 7.
- ^{ft35} Lumpkin, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
- ^{ft36} *Ibid.*, pp. 195 ff.
- ^{ft37} *Ibid.*, pp. 200 ff.
- ^{ft38} Lumpkin, p. 245. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 235.37 and 244.48 for the introductions by Lumpkin and by the original authors, both of which point out reasons for manifesting unity with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists.
- ^{ft39} William A. Curtis, *A History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith in Christendom and Beyond* (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 30.
- ^{ft40} Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, I*, pp. 855-56.

^{ft41} Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 246.

^{ft42} The 1677 Confession adopts from the Westminster Confession some additional meanings of baptism besides those we have listed. We are listing only the *changes* which the Second London Confession made in its models.

^{ft43} The Second LC does not introduce this phrase at any point. It does, however, add in XVIII. 3, “Yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.” Since their picture of repentance and perseverance is informed by a death, burial, and resurrection motif (XV. 3). there could be a vague correlation.

^{ft44} The Second LC has a higher doctrine of the Trinity than Westminster; that is, the absolute deity of the three persons almost overshadows the distinctions between the persons (11. 3. This could be seen as a corollary to the higher Christology of the Baptists, which we have noted in the first London Confession.

^{ft45} The Second LC adds a specific statement of original righteousness before the fall in VI, I. This follows the first LC. It could be seen as a suggestion that man, not God, was to be blamed for the fall.

^{ft46} *Ibid.*, p. 244. (The foreword to the Second London Confession).

^{ft47} Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 93, Article 35, “On the Sacrament.” ... Bread and wine, in which elements, as also in the water of baptism, even after they are consecrated, there is neither transubstantiation into, nor consubstantiation with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. ... But they are in the ordinance of God signs and seals of God’s everlasting covenant, representing and offering to all the receivers, but exhibiting only to the true believers the Lord Jesus Christ and all his benefits unto righteousness, sanctification and eternal life, through faith in his name to the glory and praise of God.”

^{ft48} James Nicholas, ed., *The Works of James Arminius* (London, 1825 and 1828), I, pp. 339 IT; H, pp. 42.52. 211-35, 379-89, 400.10, 435-43, especially p. 441.

^{ft49} Robert B. Hannen, “A Suggested Source of Some Expressions in the Baptist Confession of Faith, London 1644,” *Baptist Quarterly*, XII, Number 10-11, April-July 1948, pp. 389 if.. suggests that the authors of the 1644 LC “consulted and used” the 1616 Aberdeen Confession of Faith. He apparently was not familiar with the True Confession, to which Lumpkin points us. The True Confession explains every similarity to which Hannen points, and is not merely similar as the Aberdeen Confession is, but is identical in half of the articles. Furthermore, the Aberdeen Confession contributes neither any of the special language nor any of the special emphases which appear in either the TC or the Baptist pattern of the LC. A

comparison of the three indicates decisively that Lumpkin is right and Hannen is wrong. The Aberdeen Confession can be found in David Caldenvood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1845), VII, pp. 233-43.

^{ft50} W. T. Whitley, ed., *Works of John Smyth*, I, p. 117.

^{ft51} *Ibid.*, pp. 28 and 29.

^{ft52} *Ibid.*, p. 164.

^{ft53} *Ibid.*, p. 760.

^{ft54} *Ibid.*, p. 173.

^{ft55} Thomas Helwys, *The Mystery of Iniquity* (London, 1612), p. 139.

^{ft56} W. T. Whitley, ed., *Works of John Smyth*, *op. cit.*, p. 567.

^{ft57} *Ibid.*, p. 671. *Cf.* also p. 675, where the same argument and same Scripture are given.

^{ft58} *Ibid.*, p. 574.

^{ft59} *Ibid.*, p. 574.

^{ft60} *Ibid.*, p. 586. *Cf.* also p. 675, and Lumpkin, *op. cit.*, p. 101, article 14.

^{ft61} *Catalogus Der Werken Over De Doopsgezinden En Hunne Geschiedenis Aanwezig In De Bibliotheek ... Amsterdam* (1919), p. 88. A second edition is a rarity in this catalog of works concerning the Anabaptists, and I do not believe there is another book therein which can even approach the record of twelve editions before 1610. See Irvin B. Horst, *A Bibliography of Menno Simons* (Nieuwkoop, 1962), pp. 51-69!

^{ft62} Cornelius Krahn, "Foundation." in *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale), p. 358.

^{ft63} *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottsdale, 1956), p. 120.

^{ft64} *Ibid.*, p. 120.

^{ft65} *Ibid.*, pp. 120-21.

^{ft66} *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22.

^{ft67} *Ibid.*, p. 122.

^{ft68} *Ibid.*, pp. 122-23.

^{ft69} *Ibid.*, p. 124.

^{ft70} *Ibid.*, p. 124.

^{ft71} *Ibid.*, p. 125.

^{ft72} *Ibid.*, pp. 130 ff.

^{ft73} *Ibid.*, p. 129

^{ft74} *e.g.*, *Ibid.*, pp. 237-241, 263, 513.

^{ft75} *Ibid.*, p. 236.

^{ft76} Hudson, *op. cit.*, p. 172.