

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Master of Sacred Theology Thesis

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1952

The Importance of Man in Baptist Theology

Erwin Kolb

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/stm>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kolb, Erwin, "The Importance of Man in Baptist Theology" (1952). *Master of Sacred Theology Thesis*. 187. <https://scholar.csl.edu/stm/187>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Sacred Theology Thesis by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAN
IN BAPTIST THEOLOGY

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

Erwin J. Kolb

June 1952

Approved by:

W. T. Spitz
Advisor

52815

J. S. Mueller
Reader

51739

BV
4070
C69
M3
1952
no.4
c.2

51739

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
The Name "Baptist".	3
Historical Divisions.	6
Baptists in the World	9
Baptists in the United States	12
II. MAN AND THE SCRIPTURES.	16
No Confessions.	16
The Bible and God	23
The Bible and Man	28
III. MAN AND SALVATION	32
Man Comes To God.	32
No Priests.	33
No Sacraments	34
No Liturgy.	38
God Provides Salvation.	39
Man Let's God Convert Him	42
The Call.	43
Election.	44
Revivalism and Evangelism	48
Sanctification.	51
Once In Grace Always In Grace	54
IV. MAN AND BAPTISM	57
Means of Grace.	57
Immersion	61
Infant Baptism.	66
V. MAN AND THE CHURCH.	70
Definitions	70
The Purpose	74
The Officers.	75
The Laws.	76
The Polity.	77
Recent Trends	78
Cooperation and Union	79

VI. MAN AND THE STATE.	83
Religious Liberty.	83
Separation of Church and State	87
Loyalty to Government.	89
The Situation Today.	90
VII. CONCLUSION	95
Baptist Distinctiveness.	95
Conclusions.	96
APPENDIX	98
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	103

In the rest of the Protestant world. Of the 250 Protestant denominations in the United States there is a wide diversity of beliefs, in many, and in growth.

It is important, we believe, for a church body, and its individual members to look at what other churches are doing, and especially those churches which are outstepping for some special reason. It was with that thought that we chose to study Baptist theology and practice, for the Baptist church is the largest denomination in our country, and the fastest growing.

Why do they have some special help from the Holy Spirit? Do they have special ways of winning people? Do they have doctrines which appeal to people? Several years ago in writing a paper for a pastoral conference we were impressed with the thought that perhaps the Baptists do have a set of doctrines which have special appeal to the middle and lower classes of people.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone likes to believe that the organization to which he belongs is the biggest and the best of its kind. Church members also like to feel that way. So it is easy for them often to become so engrossed with their own church and the strides that it is making that they do not bother to compare themselves with or recognize what is taking place in the rest of the Protestant world. Of the 250 Protestant denominations in the United States there is a wide difference in belief, in size, and in growth.

It is important, we believe, for a church body, and its individual members to look at what other churches are doing, and especially those churches which are outstanding for some special reason. It was with that thought that we chose to study Baptist theology and practice, for the Baptist church is the largest denomination in our country, and the fastest growing.

Why? Do they have some special help from the Holy Spirit? Do they have special ways of winning people? Do they have doctrines which appeal to people? Several years ago in writing a paper for a pastoral conference we were impressed with the thought that perhaps the Baptists do have a set of doctrines which have special appeal to the middle and lower classes of people.

In the present study we have investigated this thought further. We have made our emphasis the place that man plays in Baptist theology. Thus as we look at each area of Baptist theology, we attempt, wherever possible, to point out the importance of man in that area, and how this consideration plays a vital role. Thus as Fuller says all that Baptists believe and practice they are forced to believe and practice because of what they believe about man. We quote him:

The very externals of our organized life and of all our pursuits and practices to propagate the truth whereby we are saved are but the expressions of our conviction in outward and visible form. Our whole scheme of society, of government, and of Church is not ours by arbitrary proclamations or edicts. I would rather say that they are the resultants of our consistent behavior in human society and performance in the Kingdom of God, all of which are postulates which are inescapable because of what we believe about men.¹

¹Ellis A. Fuller, "Why Baptists," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), 19.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Name "Baptist"

The English word "Baptist" which we apply to the largest Protestant denomination¹ in America made its first appearance in England in 1644. It is claimed by some Baptists that there have been sects and persons holding their distinctive views in every century since the days of the Apostles. History agrees that, although the name "Baptist" was not used, the particular views of Baptists can be traced to at least the days of the Reformation. Further back than the Reformation would bring serious questions from many historians.

It is interesting to note how they trace their history. J. M. Cramp,² a Baptist historian, after indentifying the Novations as Baptists points to the individual instances in history where Baptist views were supported, as for instance:

1. In 741 Pope Zachary said immersion was essential to

¹World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1951, edited by Harry Hansen (New York: New York World-Telegram and The Sun, c.1951), p. 221. The total figure of the groups listed under Baptists is 16,330,655. We realize that Baptists do not classify themselves as a "Protestant" denomination.

²J. M. Cramp, Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Close of the Eighteenth Century (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publications Society, n.d.).

baptism. 2. In 754 Pope Stephen II said that an infant baptized in wine or with water and not in water, was not validly baptized. Then he points to the Councils which condemned those who rejected baptism of children:

Toulouse 1119
 Latern II 1139
 Lateran III 1179
 London 1391

Finally he takes the individuals whom he calls Baptists:

Berengar of Tours
 Peter of Bruys
 Henry of Lousanne
 Arnold of Brescia
 Cathari
 Thirty Waldenses in England
 John de Wycliffe
 Peter Waldo and his Waldenses

During the Reformation we find that Zwingli used the German "Täufer." He felt that the group placed too much stress on baptism, insisting that Jesus had instituted adult baptism only, and those who were baptized as infants must be re-baptized. The other expressions used in referring to these groups in Germany and Switzerland were "Anabaptists," "Katabaptists," and "Wieder Täufer." Baptists today object to being connected historically with these names since they consider them names of reproach. This is due largely to the unfavorable reputation of the Anabaptists of Münster in Westphalia, Germany, in the sixteenth century. Klotsche tells us that in 1533 Münzer, the leader of the group, established a "millennium with communism and polygamy and a reign of terror and licentious-

ness."³ The most recent Baptist history by a Baptist, Torbet, has a new approach. It claims that the leader of the Münster Rebellion was not an Anabaptist but merely a peasant with a strong mixture of radical, social and political views whose chief purpose was to lead the peasants and the church away from the conservative pattern.⁴

The other reason usually mentioned by modern Baptists for not wishing to be connected with the name "Anabaptist," is that they say they do not do much "re-baptizing" since most of their members are baptized for the first time when they join the Baptist Church. Perhaps Torbet sums up the latest thinking on this with these words:

With respect to the relationship between Anabaptists and Baptists, it is safe to say that the latter are the spiritual descendents of some [sic] of the former. No historical continuity between the two groups can be proved. Moreover, not all Anabaptists can be claimed as spiritual forebearers of Baptists, owing to the variance of their teachings. In fact, such a relationship can be traced only to those Anabaptists who taught believers' baptism, regenerate church membership and the supremacy of the Scriptures.⁵

³E. H. Klotsche, Christian Symbolics or Exposition of the Distinctive Character of the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches as well as the Modern Denominations and Sects represented in this Country (Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1929), p. 276.

⁴Robert G. Torbet, A History of the Baptists (Chicago: The Judson Press, c.1950), p. 43.

⁵Ibid., p. 54 f.

In England after the year 1644, when the term "Baptist" first appeared, there was a period of struggle until about 1690 to outgrow the expression "Anabaptists" and to substitute for it a better one. In 1672 the term "Baptist" was first used in a Royal license.⁶ In the search for a better expression some of the terms tried were: "Christians," "Apostolic Christians," "Brethren," "Disciples of Christ," "Believing Baptisted Children of God." In the year 1644 when the first Particular Baptist Confession appeared it was printed as the faith "of those churches which are commonly (though unfairly) called 'Anabaptists'." In the appendix of 1646 the group called themselves, "Baptized Believers." In 1688 these expressions were used: "Congregation of Christians baptized upon profession of their faith," "Baptized congregations."

Historical Divisions

In looking at the beginnings of the Baptists, the historians differ on a number of theories. One of the older and most generally accepted Torbet calls the Jerusalem-Jordan-John Theory. According to this theory Baptists have been in existence since the days of John the Baptist's ministry. The Anabaptist Spiritual Kinship Theory traces

⁶A. H. Neumann, "Baptists," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Samuel Macauley Jackson, Editor-in-chief (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), I, 456-80.

a spiritual relationship of Baptists through the Anabaptist sects, such as German, Dutch, Swiss Anabaptists, the Waldenses and Petrobrusians, the Henricians, the Novations and the Donatists. The final theory is known as the English Separatist Descent Theory, according to which Baptists originated with the English Separatists who came to believe in a believers' baptism.⁷

It is important to know the historical divisions into which the Baptist church has always been divided since the first record of its history as "The Baptist Church." They are the Calvinistic and the Arminian groups. The first Baptist churches organized in England in the beginning of the seventeenth century were largely Arminian or "General" because of the Mennonite influence from the Netherlands. They were called "General" because of their belief that the redemption of Christ was universal, while the Calvinists claimed that Christ died only for the elect. The Calvinists were called "Particular" Baptists.

The General Baptists of England claim they originated with John Smyth (d.1612), pastor of a church in Lincolnshire, which had separated from the Church of England. He rejected infant Baptism after fleeing to Amsterdam to escape persecution. (He retained affusion.) Some of his fol-

⁷Torbet, loc. cit.

lowers under the leadership of Helwys returned to England in 1611 and formed the first Baptist church of London. By 1660 it had grown to twenty thousand. It was only between 1640 - 1660, however, that they began to claim that the only correct form of Baptism was immersion. They were persecuted by Charles II but the Act of Toleration (1689) recognized them as the third dissenting denomination.

(The other two were the Presbyterian and the Independent.)

The General Baptist Church in England as a distinctive group is not in existence today. By the beginning of the eighteenth century they had become Anti-Trinitarian and by 1750 most of them were Unitarian. As a result of the Wesleyan revival an orthodox group was again organized under Dan Taylor (1783-1816) known as the New Connexion of the General Baptist Church. The rest or the Old Connexion gradually merged into the Unitarian church.

The first Particular or Calvinistic Baptist Church was organized by a group who separated from the Separatist Church in 1633 and were rebaptized. John Spillsburg became their minister. They grew and spread to Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It was from this group that the famous John Bunyan (1628-1688) came.

During the eighteenth century because of their excessive emphasis on the Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement they condemned missionary activity, and were almost complete fatalists. Again the Wesleyan revival had its

effect. Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall advocated milder views and in 1779 the Baptist Home Mission Society was organized and in 1792 the Baptist Missionary Society of Kettering, Northamptonshire, of which William Carey was the leader (1761-1834). To this group also belonged the great preachers C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) and Alexander Maclaren (1850-1907). Thus these two groups, the Calvinists and the Arminians, existed side by side in England for many years. In the year 1813 there was cooperation for missionary and educational purposes, and in 1891 there was a complete amalgamation into one body, "The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland." There are however throughout England today many "strict" Baptist churches outside the Baptist Union.⁸ The latest figures that we have seen (1926) show the membership of the church in the British Isles up to 416,665 with 3,124 churches and 2,069 ministers.⁹

Baptists in the World

In looking briefly at the European scene we again find that European Baptists have no direct historic connection with the Anabaptists of the Reformation period ex-

⁸Klotsche, op. cit., p. 278.

⁹"Baptists," The Encyclopedia Americana (New York: The Americana Corporation, c.1950), III, 221. All the following figures will be quoted from the same source unless otherwise indicated.

cept via America. The European Baptists originated in France in the nineteenth century. A church of six members was formed in Paris in 1835, the result of a mission to France. Progress has been very slow, partly due to the lack of native trained clergy and the power of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

In Germany the Baptist Church was the result of the conversion and work of a single man, John Gerhardt Oncken, a native of Oldenburg. He had been in England and served as a colporter of the British Continental Society. Through his own independent study of Scripture, he arrived at the Baptist views and when he met Professor Barnas Sears of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Hamilton, New York, who was in Germany studying, he was baptized with six others and they were the first church. After some severe persecution the church grew rapidly and now there are over 232 churches and 44,338 members. It has established missions in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Russia, Switzerland, which have been successful. In 1926 the membership of the Baptist Church in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic was estimated at over one million.

The Baptist church of Sweden owes its origin to Gustaf W. Schroeder, a Swedish sailor, who was baptized at the Mariner's Baptist Church of New York in 1844 and Frederick O. Niesson, also a converted sailor, baptized in 1847 by Oncken of Germany. They carried their faith home with them

and spread it among their own people. The church was so persecuted that most of them emigrated to Minnesota. It is noteworthy that Swedish Baptists were the first Christians to establish Sunday schools, Christian Endeavor Societies and other modern activities in their native land. They sent successful missions to Norway and Finland. In Sweden there are 54,584 members; in Norway 3,588; and in Finland 3,179.

Baptist missions have also been tried in Greece, Spain, and Italy. The most successful was in Italy where the Southern Baptists are training a strong and intelligent native ministry. They number about 1,362 members. The total number of European Baptists is figured at 202,682 members with 2,098 churches.

Baptist faith reached Canada through America, either through emigration or as a result of direct missionary activity. There was a church organized at Horton, Nova Scotia, as early as 1778. Since 1846 the Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces directed the activities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward's Island. This group in 1888 consolidated and formed the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. Recently they have begun to expand and have found fruitful fields in the great western provinces of Canada. They now number 1,276 churches and 130,773 members.

Among the other parts of the world where there are Baptists of any number are Australia, 33,534; South Africa, 67,727; West Indies 54,944. From Torbet we get the additional figures: India 126,000; South America 67,345; Central America and West Indies 76,124.¹⁰

Baptists in the United States

While it is said that there were some "Anabaptists" among the first settlers, the first Baptist church in America was organized in Rhode Island in 1639, by Roger Williams, an English Puritan. He was called as pastor of the church at Salem after fleeing to America from the Church of England in search of religious liberty. The Civil Court tried to deport him for his beliefs. He believed and taught that the civil magistrate could punish only civil offenses not religious. He fled and after purchasing some land from the Narragansett Indians established the colony of Rhode Island. His was the first government in the world built on absolute religious liberty.

A year after the colony was established Williams and some of his followers decided that baptism of infants was unwarranted, so Williams was rebaptized by one of his members, Ezekiel Holliman, and then he baptized the others.

¹⁰Torbet, op. cit., p. 504

Thus the first Baptist Church of America was established in March 1639 with ten members. About the same time a colony under the leadership of John Clarke, an English physician was established at Newport, Rhode Island. They were or became Baptists.

Baptist churches continued to spring up here and there and to grow, but wherever they were they were severely persecuted. The ministers and members were imprisoned, beaten, and churches were nailed shut.

The majority of the early churches were General or Arminian Baptist, with the exception of those around Philadelphia who were Calvinistic, Particular or Regular. This small group organized the Philadelphia Association in 1707 for mutual intercourse. This organization then became a stronghold around which many other baptist churches rallied. For this reason we see such a large number of Calvinistic Baptists today. At first their growth was a little slow but after the impetus of the Great Awakening they started growing and have not stopped.

It was in 1814 that "The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of American for Foreign Missions" was established in Philadelphia. In 1845 came the great split over the slavery question. Many of the southern Baptists were slaveholders. The North was not in full sympathy and refused to allow a slaveholder to be a missionary. The Southern Baptists

withdrew and formed the present Southern Baptist Convention. Other causes stated for the split are: 1. Resentment in the South over the fact that more missionaries were being sent to the area north of the Ohio River than in the Southern territories and Texas. In 1844 there were 308 in the North and only 44 in the South; 2. The growing spirit of secularism as the country grew; and Stealey adds: 3. "One of the influences working toward division was the ideal among many Southerners for a strongly centralized denominational organization."¹¹

The Northern group became known as the Northern Baptist Convention until 1950 when it was changed at the Convention in Boston to American Baptist Convention.¹²

Today according to the 1951 World Almanac and Book of Facts there are twenty-two different groups of Baptists totaling 16,330,455 members. In addition to these listed there may be independent Baptist churches which have no connection with any of these groups and a number of foreign speaking Baptist bodies in the United States. There is, however, no way of knowing their number. We list the twenty-two major groups in the appendix with the number of

¹¹Sydnor L. Stealey, "American Baptists Organizations," Review and Expositor, XLIII (April, 1946), 167.

¹²Hansen, op. cit., p. 481.

members and a few identifying remarks, where we have been able to find them.

Thus with this brief historical introduction we introduce ourselves to the Baptists. We have seen where they come from and how fast they have grown and spread over the face of the earth and especially in the United States. Now we are prepared to look at some of their beliefs and practices which contribute to our purpose of getting a rounded picture of the Baptists and especially seeing how their emphasis rests on man.

Man has the right to interpret Scripture as he sees it. This accords them the determining what is error and what is truth. His opinion may be biased and his interpretation wrong, but he is the sole judge. Let the Baptist say it himself: "The right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture is just as important an article of faith, and just as essential to complete Christian life, as is the authority of Scripture itself."

10. Confessions

To be consistent with this idea of the man's right of private judgment, the Baptist must be free of all restrictions.

Published by the Baptist Board of Christian Education, 1910, New York, N. Y.

CHAPTER II

MAN AND THE SCRIPTURES

In studying the Baptist view of Scripture and Scripture interpretation, one of the first impressions we received of the modern Baptist is that he regards man as more important than the Bible. While the Baptist calls Scripture God's Word, he is not willing to accept verbal inspiration, but is ready to say the Bible is human and contains errors in some things that are not necessary to salvation. Man has the right to interpret Scripture as he sees it. This amounts then to determining what is error and what is truth. His opinion may be biased and his interpretation weird, but he is the sole judge. Let the Baptist say it himself: "The right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture is just as important an article of faith, and just as essential to complete Christian life, as is the authority of Scripture itself."¹

No Confessions

To be consistent with this idea of the man's right of private judgment, the Baptist must be free of all restric-

¹Augustus Hopkins Strong, Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, c.1899), p. 134.

tions or restraints such as might be imposed by a confession or statement of faith. Thus the Baptist adheres to no written confession. In fact the Baptist looks at the church that uses a catechism or a written confession to which its members must subscribe, as a church which is substituting man's writings and human doctrines for God's Word which is the only truth, and is thereby violating man's liberty. For this reason there are few Baptist confessions used today and those that are used are not binding on any church, since that again would infringe on the individual's liberty.

Historically, Torbet says that Baptist confessions have been used in five different ways:

1. to maintain purity of doctrine; 2. to clarify and validate the Baptist position; 3. to serve as a guide to the General Assembly or local associations in counseling churches; 4. to serve as a basis for fellowship within local churches, associations, or a General Assembly; 5. to discipline churches and members.²

The last one will sound strange to the ears of most people who know a little about Baptist insistence on the individual's liberty. Torbet understands this and explains that this is not the same as using formal creeds to enforce conformity to an authorized interpretation, but rather a means of protecting the individual's right of religious be-

²Robert A. Torbet, A History of the Baptists (Chicago: The Judson Press, c.1950), p. 74 f.

lief and practice. It has been used on occasion by withdrawing fellowship from those whose doctrine "might prove harmful to the accepted teaching of the churches in the Baptists fellowship."³

Now let us look at the various confessions in existence and how they are used today. There were a number of creedal statements formulated by English Baptists prior to 1689 when the Act of Toleration was passed by Parliament. Among the most prominent are these:

1. The Confession of John Smyth, drawn up probably in 1609.
2. The Confession of Thomas Helwys (Smyth's associate who accused him of committing the sin of the Holy Ghost, excommunicated him, and drew up his own confession, in 1611).
3. The "First London Confession" drawn up in 1644 by the seven London churches which were Calvinistic or Particular. Its purpose was to distinguish the Particular Baptist from the Anabaptist and the General Baptist.
4. The first General Baptist Confession of Faith, published in 1651 by thirty congregations in Leicestershire.
5. The Somerset Confession published in 1656 by sixteen churches of Particular Baptists in the Somerset Association to show their agreement with the London churches.

³Ibid.

6. The Confession of the General Baptists, signed by representatives of twenty thousand Baptists in 1660 to persuade Charles II upon his restoration to the throne of England, that they were law-abiding citizens, rather than anarchistic Anabaptists.

7. The Second London Confession of Particular Baptist which was written in 1677 to show their agreement with the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians in practically all points but Baptism. It was signed by representatives of one hundred seven churches and called, "A Confession of Faith, put forth by the elders and brethren of many congregations of Christians (Baptized upon profession of their faith) in London and the Country."⁴

8. The Orthodox Creed drawn up by General Baptists in 1678 "to unite and confirm all true Protestants against the errors and heresies of Rome."⁵

Perhaps the most important confession of the London churches was the Confession of the Particular Baptists of 1677 (No. 7). It had the biggest influence on the thinking and molding of theological thought among the Baptists of America. It appeared again in London in 1688 and 1689.

⁴J. M. Cramp, Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Close of the Eighteenth Century (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publications Society, n.d.), p. 358.

⁵Torbet, loc. cit.

It agrees with the Presbyterian, Westminster Confession of 1647 and the Savoy Declaration of 1658 with the exception of changes on church polity and the mode of Baptism. In America it was this confession that became the basis of the Confession adopted by the Philadelphia Association in 1742, a few additions were made, but as a whole it agrees, and then of course is strongly Calvinistic. This is one of the important confessions of American Baptists.

Another is the confession known as the "New Hampshire Confession of 1832," prepared by Dr. J. N. Brown. The Free-will Baptist issued a special confession in 1834 and again in 1868.

These are the main confessions although not all of the creedal statements of the American Baptists. It is not unusual for each separate group to have their statements of faith. This is especially true when new groups come into existence through divisions or mergers. It is to be remembered, however, that none of these confessions, not even a statement of faith is binding on any individual church or on any individual member of a church, and they have no special authority. Their purpose is to state what the majority of the group believes.

Perhaps we can get an indication of the modern attitude in the question which came before the annual convention of the Northern Baptists at its meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana. The fundamentalists were seeking to safeguard

orthodoxy in the face of modernism, and asked, "Shall Baptists adopt a Creed?" Dr. William B. Riley of Minneapolis presented a resolution "that the New Hampshire Confession of Faith be recommended by the Convention to all such local Baptist churches within its bounds 'as felt the need of a clear and competent confession, and stand ready to announce their faith both to the believing and the unbelieving world'." The opposition led by a New York minister, Dr. Cornelius Woelfkin, offered a substitute motion to the effect that "the Northern Baptist Convention affirms that the New Testament is the all-sufficient ground of our faith and our practice, and we need no other statement." By a vote of 1,264 to 637 Woelfkin's motion was carried.⁶

The final result was the breaking away of the fundamentals into the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (North) which adopted the New Hampshire Confession of Faith with a premillennial interpretation of the last article. Again in 1946 the Northern Baptist Convention refused to adopt a confession of faith, preferring to subscribe only to the New Testament as the norm of faith and practice.

The Southern Baptist Convention has gone farther. They actually authorized publication of the New Hampshire Confession of faith with ten additional sections concerning

⁶Torbet, op. cit., p. 445 ff.

the resurrection, the return of the Lord, religious liberty, peace and war, education, social service, co-operation, evangelism, and missions, stewardship, and the kingdom of God. It was intended to be expressive of the faith generally held by Southern Baptists, rather than to be authoritative and binding upon them.⁷

Thus in studying Baptist theology⁸ one must always remember that a general statement cannot be absolute. You cannot say this is what all Baptists believe, for you have no way of knowing how many believe it and how many do not. Each individual is free to believe what he wishes as long as he abides by certain general rules as being baptized by immersion as the Northern Baptist Convention says in an amendment to its by-laws:

The Northern Baptist Convention recognizes its constituency as consisting solely of those Baptist churches in which the immersion of believers is recognized and practiced as the only Scriptural Baptism; and the convention hereby declares that

⁷Ibid.

⁸In preparing a paper for the Southern Illinois District-Missouri Synod Pastoral Conference this writer found a statement of articles of faith as an appendix to What Baptists Believe, an exposition of the New Hampshire Confession for young people, which was called, "Abstract of Principles of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky." We wrote to the faculty of that institution to inquire whether the Seminary still considered these articles of faith a fair statement of their general convictions. The letter was never acknowledged.

only immersed members will be recognized as delegates to the Convention.⁹

The Bible and God

In this thesis, we have done what is the only alternative, taken the written statements of the leading Baptists and using that as what is generally believed. In this chapter on the Scripture, we have leaned heavily on Dr. Augustus Strong, Systematic Theology, and his other work in a lesser degree, Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism.

Dr. Strong first published his comprehensive, one volume, dogmatic in 1907, but it had been reprinted nine times; the last time in 1946. We have taken Dr. Strong's word as the voice of the historic Baptist, fully realizing, however, that each member of the Baptist church today may or may not accept it as such. We are a little handicapped for other sources in this specific subject since there is not too much printed. The opinion seems to be "No particular theory of inspiration is essential to Christianity."¹⁰

In beginning our investigation of the doctrine of inspiration of the Baptists we first quote the definition of Dr. Strong:

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Strong, op. cit., p. 204.

Inspiration is the influence of the Spirit of God upon the minds of the Scripture writers which made their writings the record of a progressive divine revelation, sufficient, when taken together and interpreted by the same Spirit who inspired them to lead every honest inquirer to Christ and to salvation.¹¹

Many Christians will not accept this as the Bible teaching of inspiration. First Dr. Strong says that inspiration is an influence. He doesn't seem to believe that it is an inspiring. We believe that I Peter 1:11, "The Spirit of God was in them," and 2 Peter 1:21, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" is more than an influence. It is an actual inspiring, an inbreathing that motivates, God telling men what to write, how to write and even when to write. Wallace, the Southern Baptist, in his exposition of the New Hampshire Confession puts it stronger:

These men whom God selected because of their fitness for the task were not left to themselves. They needed something more than natural endowments and the influence of their age. They needed special illumination and guidance. This special qualification was given directly from God. His Spirit acted continually upon the spirit of the man whom he had selected to write. This gave spiritual energy as he wrote. It also prevented him from introducing error which would have misrepresented the thought of God.¹²

¹¹Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology (Chicago: The Judson Press, c.1907, reprinted 1946), p. 196.

¹²⁰. C. S. Wallace, What Baptists Believe, The New Hampshire Confession, An Exposition (Nashville: The Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, c.1913), p. 15.

We notice in Dr. Strong's further explanations that inspiration may be identified with revelation or illumination, or even both. He explains it this way:

1. Inspiration without revelation, as in Luke or Acts, Luke 1:1-3.
2. Inspiration including revelation, as in the Apocalypse, Rev. 1:1,11.
3. Inspiration without illumination, as in the prophets, I Peter 1:11.
4. Inspiration including illumination, as in the case of Paul, I Cor. 2:12.
5. Revelation without inspiration as in God's words from Sinai, Exodus 20:1,11.
6. Illumination without inspiration, as in modern preachers, Ephesians 2:20.¹³

Throughout his explanation Dr. Strong refuses to put the matter into God's hands completely and let the Bible be the work of God. He insists on man's cooperation. On this basis he allows for error in Scripture. "Inspiration did not guarantee inerrancy in things not essential to the main purpose of Scripture."¹⁴ There can even be "great imperfections,"¹⁵ he says, in its non-essentials.

We think the following is quite a clever circumlocution to substantiate his point:

Thought is possible without words . . . The Scripture writers appear to have been influenced by the Holy Spirit that they perceived and felt even the new truths they were to publish, as discoveries of their own minds, and were left to the action of their own minds in the expressions of these truths with the single exception that they were super-

¹³Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 197.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 220.

naturally held back from the selection of wrong words and when needful were provided with right ones.¹⁶

The conclusion then is that "inspiration is therefore not verbal," while yet he claims that no form of words taken in its connections would teach essential error has been admitted into Scripture.¹⁷ We believe this is ambiguous. You say that the Bible is true, that it is God's word and inspired by him, and there is no essential error in it. Yet if someone has a strong argument to show you that there is error on some small point, you don't argue with him, but you admit that there are "imperfections in its non-essentials." This is certainly a trend away from the more conservative declaration of the New Hampshire Confession:

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.¹⁸

More Christians would accept this as Bible teaching than the statements of Dr. Strong on inspiration. The kind of statements one reads in modern periodicals are usually quite general, such as: "Together we believe that the Bible is an

¹⁶Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Wallace, op. cit., p. 10.

inspired, and infallible record of God's perfect revelation through Christ."¹⁹ "We must be fully persuaded of the divine inspiration and authority."²⁰

The Scriptures are however highly regarded by Baptists and loved dearly by them. They study their Bibles and have one of the largest percentages of their members in Bible Classes. To them it is the only standard of faith and one must conform his entire life to it. We read:

If men differ in respect to the doctrine of religion, it must be because some or all of them fail of conforming to the Word of God . . . The prospect of such agreement among them must be in proportion to the intelligence, candor, and sincerity, and zeal with which they apply themselves to the study of the Bible.²¹

The attitude is very well stated in an address by Dr. R. J. Willingham of Richmond, Virginia, to the second Baptist World Congress held in Philadelphia in 1911. The title of his address was "An Authoritative Creed."

The desire for an authoritative creed is surely a departure from the standpoint of our Baptist sires. It is an endeavor to escape from spiritual crisis by artificial aids and so in^sscarcely honoring to one another nor to Him who is supposed to be our chosen Guide. Let us insist on spirituality and loyalty and having these be well content to pay the price of liberty. A Baptist is a man who,

¹⁹Ellis A. Fuller, "Why Baptists," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), 16.

²⁰Editorial, The Watchman-Examiner, XXXVIII (November 30, 1950), 1149.

²¹Ibid.

through his baptism, declares not only that he is, through Christ, in vital connection with the Father, but also that the words of Christ, historically interpreted are not his laws, and such a man is surely worthy to be trusted in the realm of religion, anywhere. For three hundred years the Baptists in both hemispheres have stood for loyalty to Christ and liberty amongst each other and the principle which has sufficed to make us powerful will suffice to keep us true.²²

The Bible and Man

Man interprets his own Scripture. He is to be trusted, even when his only criterion is his reason. In Reformed tradition, the Baptist must satisfy his reason, as Cramp says, "In religion, the stand taken by the old Reformers is fully recognized; nothing is to be admitted which cannot be sustained by Scripture and necessary reason."²³ That is a good statement if one understands "necessary reason" in the right way. Often among Baptists and Reformed people this is very flexible and changeable. For instance in something like the Lord's Supper. The Baptist cannot understand how a man can actually eat of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, a person who lived nineteen hundred years ago, and who is now supposed to be heaven. How can he be in heaven and at every communion table at the same time. So, make it fit reason. To the Baptist then, the Lord's Supper

²²Torbet, loc. cit.

²³Cramp, op. cit., p. 584.

becomes an ordinance, an outward supper in which there is presented and figures before the eyes of the penitent and faithful that spiritual supper which Christ maketh of his flesh and blood; which is crucified and shed for the remission of sins . . . which is eaten and drunken . . . only by those which are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, in the communion of the same spirit.²⁴

In an interesting article in the Journal of Religion Harkness traces some customs of the Baptists and shows how they have changed their beliefs as to whether certain things were Bible doctrines or not. He does this by looking at the early associations that was formed and the opinions that they rendered. This may prove nothing conclusively, but it does give us an insight into the way man's liberty and reason can work.

Concerning Footwashing:

1771 Dividing Creek Association: It is necessary; 'Can not otherwise be determined than by fixing the genuine sense of that Scripture John 13:1-17.'

1792 West Creek Association: Only a pattern of humility, no objection.

1807 Sandy Creek Association: An ordinance of God, to continue in his church until Christ's second coming.

1812 Warren Association: Not an ordinance, from I Timothy 5:10, appears as if some churches never did it.²⁵

²⁴The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Samuel Macauley Jackson, Editor-in-chief (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), I, 458.

²⁵R. E. E. Harkness, "Some Early Practices of the Baptists in America," Journal of Religion, XI (October, 1931), 533-53.

Concerning Laying on of Hands:

1783 The Philadelphia Association: In answer to request by the Newton Church, 'imposition of hands on baptized persons has been the general practice of churches in union with this Association and is still used by most of them . . . Resolved: That any person refusing to submit thereto, may be admitted to the fellowship of the church without it.'

1790 Strawberry Association: Apostolic practice . . . not obligatory upon us.

1808 and 1809 Sandy Creek Association was in the affirmative but in 1910 'it was left to the discretion of the church and it soon dropped out.'²⁶

This is an example that shows the disagreements that will arise when each individual, church or association is left to decide on all matters themselves and be their own judge; and to show that Baptist custom and practices have changed and we believe will continue to change as man wishes to change it, to suit the times in which he lives.

In conclusion let it be understood that there are many and varied opinions among Baptists today. There is no conceivable way of knowing what these beliefs or opinions are, but it is sufficient to know that they exist and vary from the strictly conservative and orthodox to the extremely liberal and modernist. The trend seems to us to be toward the liberal wing and placing even more emphasis upon man and his importance and liberty.

²⁶Ibid.

Whether the Scripture is inspired or not is becoming of less importance; what is important is what Scripture does for man and how man can use it. Scripture brings man to God and then becomes the rule for his Christian life. Man determines however what Scripture teaching is. Man decides what is God's truth in Scripture and what is man's error. To Baptists then man and his freedom is more important than any doctrine of inspiration.

CHAPTER III

MAN AND SALVATION

The purpose of all religions is to bring man and God together on friendly terms, if not in this life at least in the life that is to follow this earthly existence. The Buddhist, the Hindu and the Mohammedan each have a different formula on how this is accomplished, but basically they are trying to fill the same need of putting man right with God. So also the Christian religions have somewhat different formulas or emphases. The center of the Christian religion is Christ and his work of atonement, but there are different emphases in the transfer of the atonement to the individual. Catholicism emphasized works; Lutheranism grace; and the Reformed the sovereignty of God. We believe that in the Baptist church the emphasis is shifting from the traditional reformed emphasis on the sovereignty of God to the sovereignty of man. Man is becoming the center salvation to the Baptist.

Man Comes to God

Historically the Baptists have always emphasized the responsibility of each individual for his own destiny. They have fought and died for the freedom of the individual to come directly to God without the aid of ecclesiasticism. That emphasis is as strong in our freedom loving American

Baptists as it has ever been. In fact it often even becomes a thing of boasting and pride. Someone has said that the cries of "Liberty and Equality," which is so sweet to American ears, the Baptists have been shouting for years.

No Priests

The Baptists believe that an individual needs no intercessor of priest, no sacraments, no liturgy, nothing but faith and prayer to come to God.

. . . Each one has direct and continuous access to God by faith and prayer; that before God they are on equality, one with the other, but bound together by the ties of a mutual faith in Christ as the supreme head.¹

The minister in a Baptist church is one of the two church officers prescribed by the New Testament, but he has no superior authority, no superior rights before God or no superior ruling power over the people. They say,

All historians agree that the ministry in the first century was produced within the Christian body and had no superior authority. . . the laity was the basic reality, the clergy was its creation.²

"Thus the Christian Church is a church of individuals, a laymen's church; all sacerdotalism and all technical sacra-

¹W. E. Carver, "The Church and Its Functions," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (February 8, 1951), 134.

²W. Owen Carver, "Nature of the Distinction Between the Clergy and the Laity," Review and Expositor, XLIII (January, 1946), 22.

mentalism are eliminated and excluded."³ In other words the Baptists says, "I am a priest before God. I do not need an earthly priest to be my go-between." This is a healthy attitude, but can be overstressed.

No Sacraments

The Baptist needs no sacrament as a means of grace; no vehicle to carry the Gospel into his heart. The Holy Spirit works directly on the heart of the individual when he wills and needs no restricted means. "We must not imagine that the biblical revelation removes the necessity for the direct action of God's spirit upon men."⁴ While the Holy Spirit will use the Word as a means to open and soften men's hearts he is not restricted to that means. But the Word is a definite means: "It is the instrument of the Holy Spirit in his regenerative and sanctifying influences."⁵ It is important then when attempting to discuss or define Baptist theology to be sure of what is meant by the expression, "means of grace." We think that Mullins gives a good definition for the Baptists:

³Ibid., p. 28.

⁴Edgar Young Mullins, The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, c.1917, reprinted 1946), p. 152.

⁵Ibid., p. 153.

Everything which may be employed by God's Spirit for seeking and influencing men is in some sense a means of grace . . . preaching . . . witnessing . . . the Bible, the church, and its ordinances and officers, its worship, its activities . . . all the providential dealings of God with us, all life's experiences, our fellowships and our struggles, our prayers, our sufferings and losses. All these are means employed by the Holy Spirit to teach us truth of God . . . All the means of grace are means for conveying spiritual truth to us.⁶

So when the Lutheran discusses the Means of Grace with a Baptist, he must first be sure that there is an understanding of each other's terms. So also with the word "sacrament" which the Baptists use at times. When he uses the expression he means by it an entirely different thing than much of the rest of the Protestant world. Actually the Baptists recognize no sacraments as Lutherans understand them. They need none. Each individual comes to God and God comes to each individual without the aid of sacraments.

The important thing then for man to find salvation is to find faith in Jesus Christ. He is not to be bothered or hindered with anything else. He as a self-sufficient individual comes directly to God and accepts Christ into his heart. "Faith alone" (*sola fide*) is stressed so much, Rushbrooke says in an article in the *Review and Expositor*,

⁶Ibid., p. 363.

See, "Thoughts on the Value of Baptism and the Lord's Supper," *REVIEW AND EXPOSITOR*, X (April, 1933), 126.

Willis A. Fuller, "Why Baptists," *REVIEW AND EXPOSITOR*, XVIII (January, 1931), 34.

that "the study of the New Testament by the pioneers of the Baptist movement issued in convictions more consistently Lutheran than Luther's own."⁷ The important factor then to the Baptist is this inner experience of Christ, all else is subordinate. Even the ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are subordinate. Some Baptists have leaned strongly toward the importance of the ordinances and even put some saving value in them. Fuller bemoans the fact:

When will this delusion be lifted from the minds of people, in the Churches and out of them? The fact is that there is no group of Christians anywhere to whom the ordinances are as utterly destitute of saving efficacy as they are in the thinking of Baptists. To us the ordinances are not sacraments; that is, they are not vehicles of grace. They are teaching ordinances and valuable only because they symbolize the two truths which constitute the eternal gospel of grace, namely, our Lord's death and His resurrection.⁸

This is the historical position of the Baptists. In the July issue of the Review and Expositor, 1950, we were surprised to read a little different attitude presented by Luther E. Copeland of the Baptist Seminary, Seinan University, Fukuoka City, Japan. He says that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are more than symbols. They are "indispensable for the most effective conveyance of Christian

⁷J. H. Rushbrooke, "Thoughts on the Values of Baptism and the Lord's Supper," Review and Expositor, XXX (April, 1933), 136.

⁸Ellis A. Fuller, "Why Baptists," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), 14.

truth."⁹ They are like a drama. In Baptism the individual is acting out Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and even acting out his own. The effect of this on the witnesses is a visible sermon. In the Lord's Supper a person acts out what he does by faith; receives the body of Christ; he preaches a sermon on Christ's death; a sermon on the nature and foundation of the church, since Christ's blood has created a new community of believers; and a sermon on the unity of the church (I Cor. 11:17-20). It is interesting also to note here why they throw private communion out. Copeland says communion is "the expression of fellowship, the common tie which binds together the church of Christ's followers. Not designed for individuals, and has no meaning to the individual privately."¹⁰ Perhaps this is an indication that there is some thinking which would place more value on the ordinances. As of today the majority still maintain the attitude of ridicule toward anyone who believes there is benefit in sacraments or ordinances. We read repeated and emphatic statements such as this by Wade Freeman in 1951:

Neither ordinances nor sacraments administered at the hands of preacher or priest, nor works of

⁹Luther E. Copeland, "Baptism and the Lord's Supper: A Positive Interpretation," Review and Expositor, XLVII (July, 1950), 330 f.

¹⁰Ibid.

righteousness which mankind may perform can cleanse one's sin or change our sinful nature; it is only through the blood of Christ that man is cleansed from all sin.¹¹

No Liturgy

In Christ there are no priests; no sacraments as means of grace; and no liturgy or ritualism. The Baptist church service is very plain and informal. There is no altar, but the Baptistry takes the position of the altar. There is no pulpit, merely a stand usually in front from which the service is conducted. There is no formal order of service. It is conducted like a meeting. The singing is directed by the pastor or a song leader, with the prayers interspersed by both laymen and pastor. The pastor has a sermon but he does not wear a robe, for he is merely one of the members of the congregation hired to organize and lead the service. Perhaps the attitude of the Baptist toward worship can be put into the words of Bruce Price, a Baptist pastor in Newport News, Virginia:

Education is needed, but primarily in the fact that worship is not in form, but in faith; not in ritual but in righteousness; not in liturgy but in love; not in creed, but in communion; not in rite but in reverence; not in symbol, but in spirit; not in altar but in adoration; not in temple, but in truth; not in priest,

¹¹Wade C. Freemann, Frank Weeden, C. B. Jackson, Jesse Yelvington, Evangelism in Action Through Christ-Centered Messages (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, c.1951), p. 63.

but in prayer; and not in candle, but in Christ.¹²

God Provides Salvation

Man is sufficient of himself to come to God. God has provided the salvation which man comes to get. He provided it through his Son Jesus Christ. Most Baptists accept the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, most that is, except the extreme liberals and modernists who would take him to be a good man. But historically, and we believe quite universally today, Baptists accept Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Mullins says,

The two-nature conception has been made to dominate too completely in many efforts to define Christ's person. It has been almost impossible to hold the one-person conception in combination with that of the two-natures where the latter is taken as the fundamental fact . . . If we begin with the one Person who united in himself the divine and the human elements, who is both God and man, we are much closer to the New Testament teaching generally.¹³

Although there are and have been differences the Person of Christ with the two natures, the human and the divine, united in one person is the teaching of Baptists. Dr. Strong sums it up for us:

Distinctly as the Scriptures represent Jesus Christ to have been possessed of a divine nature

¹²Bruce H. Price, "Liturgy in Worship," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (April 5, 1951), 322.

¹³Mullins, op. cit., p. 178 f.

and of a human nature, each unaltered in essence and undivested of its normal attributes and powers, they with equal distinctness represent Jesus Christ as a single undivided personality in whom these two natures are vitally and inseparably united, so that he is properly, not God and man, but the God-man.¹⁴

Wallace, another Baptist source agrees, "He identified himself with the impotence of men as well as with the nature of men, that He might be in deed and in truth, the Son of Man."¹⁵ This is sufficient for our purposes on the person of Christ. We understand that there are other teachings among Baptists concerning the Person of Christ, but we find it does not contribute to our purpose. We will include one more quotation. Martin Luther in his commentary on Galatians (Chapter 3:13) represents Christ as a sinner "of all sinners the greatest." Pendleton says:

This is absolutely horrible, and no blind veneration for Luther should prevent a denunciation of so odious and blasphemous a sentiment. When Jesus suffered, God laid on him the iniquity of us all; but our iniquity was not so laid on him as to make him a sinner. He was personally as holy when he hung on the cross as he was before he left the throne of glory.¹⁶

¹⁴Augustus Hopkins Strong, Outlines of Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, c.1908), p. 183.

¹⁵C. C. S. Wallace, What Baptists Believe, The New Hampshire Confession, An Exposition (Nashville: The Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, c. 1913), p. 47.

¹⁶J. M. Pendleton, The Atonement of Christ (Philadelphia: American Baptists Publication Society, 1885), p. 21 f.

God has provided Salvation through his Son, who became the God-man, one person with two natures, who became the Savior of the World. That is, we believe, the general belief of the average Baptist. Again we do not believe it is essential to our purpose to attempt to cover the subject thoroughly, but we shall merely point out some of the various shades of differences that exist among Baptists.

Mullins at first seems to be quite good:

Justification is God's act, declaring the guilty free from the penalty of sin, and it is grounded in the atoning work of Christ . . . Forgiveness and justification are related in the closest manner. In the New Testament justification is the act of God which declares the new relation. Forgiveness established that relation.¹⁷

But then a few pages following this he seems to confuse what we usually speak of as objective and subjective justification. "Forgiveness pronounced upon the unforgiving would be lacking in all that is essential in forgiveness."¹⁸

Dr. Strong gets quite involved. He says that Christ in taking humanity to himself took not the guilt of the personal sin, not even the sin of inherited depravity, such as belongs to infants and to those who have not reached the age of moral consciousness, but solely the guilt of Adam's sin which belongs to every member of the human race who has

¹⁷Mullins, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 54.

derived his life from Adam. Since Christ is free from personal guilt, he can vicariously bear the penalty due man's guilt. To him the atonement is based on two things, (1) the holiness of God which condemns sin and (2) the love of God which itself provides the sacrifice for the sins of men by the suffering and death of his own Son. And yet:

The historical work of the incarnate Christ is not itself the atonement; it is rather the revelation of the atonement. The suffering of the incarnate Christ is the manifestation in space and time of the eternal suffering of God on account of human sin. Yet without the historical work which was finished on Calvary, the age-long suffering of God could never have been made comprehensible to men. The historical sacrifice of our Lord is not only the final revelation of the heart of God, but also the manifestation of the law of universal life; the law that sin brings suffering to all connected with it, and that we can overcome sin in ourselves and in the world only by entering into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and Christ's victory, in other words, only by union with him through faith.¹⁹

Man Let's God Convert Him

Thus, despite the differences and the errors, if we wish to label them as such, one thing is agreed: God has provided the salvation which man is to come to get. Man is the center. He is the purpose of the suffering and death of Christ. He is the object of God's love and plans. Now we ask, how does man accept this salvation? This may seem

¹⁹Strong, op. cit., p. 193.

an odd way of putting it, but it is the only way that sounds consistent to us, "Man let's God make him accept salvation." God converts man, but man lets him do it. It is a type of Pelagianism, a cooperation between God and man, and this amount of cooperation varies according to the various Baptist groups and individuals.

The Call

First let us look at the call which is extended to all men, the invitation which is given to non-believers to accept the salvation which God has provided. In theory and in practice this call is universal. It is given to all men. Some, of course, do not accept it. In answer Mullins says that all do not accept it because God does not give them sufficient grace to accept it.²⁰ Strong goes into detail to explain the difference between the "general or eternal call to all men through God's providence, word, and Spirit," and "the special, efficacious call of the Holy Spirit to the elect."²¹ He goes on to explain that God's general call is sincere, and is forced to go into much detail to answer the question "Is God's special call irresistible?" He answers that it is efficacious. While the call always accomplishes its purposes,

²⁰Mullins, op. cit., p. 366.

²¹Strong, op. cit., p. 210.

It is not an outward constraint upon the human will, but that it accords with the laws of our mental constitution. We reject the term 'irresistible' as implying a coercion and compulsion which is foreign to the nature of God's working in the soul."²²

Election

We see immediately that we have no Calvinistic double election. One way Baptists explain their election is by decrees:

1. the decree to create; 2. the decree to permit the Fall; 3. the decree to provide a salvation in Christ sufficient for the needs of all; 4. the decree to secure the actual acceptance of this salvation on the part of some, or, in other words, the decree of Election.²³

Thus man comes to God to receive salvation but only those whom God himself has chosen will receive it. The New Hampshire Confession lists election under the topic in Article IX "Of God's Purpose of Grace."

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of the means in the highest degree that it may be ascertained by its

²²Ibid., p. 211.

²³Ibid., p. 207.

effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.²⁴

This sounds like a good Biblical definition of the doctrine of election, but it has its various colorings among Baptists. Mullins goes so far as to say that, "The Gospel is efficacious with some and not efficacious with others because God's grace is operative in the one case and beyond the degree of its action in the other."²⁵

Our own view, as we have just stated it, holds that under the moral and spiritual conditions involved in man's sin and freedom, God could not save all. God's choice becomes effective through special grace based not at all on human merit, and on no principle which makes possible a rapid movement toward his all-embracing purpose for the human race.²⁶

Mullins is again trying to put man in the center of things, and he frees man from the responsibility of his own damnation by saying that he is lost only because God did not choose him since he did not fit into his purpose. He begins with the thought that man must meet certain "definite spiritual conditions" such as repentance. Then the initiative comes from God:

The sinner's response to the gospel message is an act of moral freedom. God graciously ap-

²⁴Wallace, op. cit., p. 94.

²⁵Mullins, op. cit., p. 343.

²⁶Ibid., p. 350.

proaches men with the offer of salvation through Christ. But the divine forces which operate through the gospel are adjusted and adapted to evoke a free moral response on man's part. Coercion here, as elsewhere in the moral realm, would destroy the highest element in man's nature.²⁷

There is a reciprocal^o action between God and man. This reciprocity and mutuality are necessary to the competency of the divine operation. The response of our wills, the conscious acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord, are the human response to the divine approach without which the moral change would not take place.²⁸

Thus we see the insistence that man is the center, that the salvation of man's soul be not merely an act of God, but a conscious cooperation in which man does his share along side of God. While conversion is the "result of God's gracious action in creating us anew in Christ" it is also at the same time, "the result of our own free action. In conversion we choose the way of life in response to motives and appeals presented to us in the gospel."²⁹ Fuller puts it like this:

We recognize that the final authority for accepting or rejecting the teachings of this Book rests with the individual, who alone by the aid of the Holy Spirit can lift the truths out of this printed page and transcribe them upon his own heart of flesh.³⁰

²⁷Ibid., p. 51

²⁸Ibid., p. 59.

²⁹Ibid., p. 378.

³⁰Fuller, op. cit., p. 20.

Thus we arrive at our expression "Man let's God convert him." Fuller explains it further in speaking of the "incompetence in spiritual matters" which he explains as "man's right to make a direct approach to God for redemption . . . to avail himself of the divine grace whereby he is enabled to meet the conditions prescribed by the Triune God for his redemption." Then he goes onto "man's immeasurable responsibilities," by which he means man's right "to let God deliver him from the realm of darkness and translate him into the Kingdom of the Son of his love."³¹

So we have arrived thus far: Man is sufficient of himself to come to God. God provides the salvation, and man let's the Holy Spirit work in his heart the faith to accept that salvation. Because of the importance of man in this process, and the ability of man to cooperate, and we are sure that often it goes beyond this and man takes over as God fades out of the picture. Baptists have always placed an extreme emphasis on a personal religion, a personal relationship with God and man makes the final decision whether he will surrender himself to God. One of the manifestations of this type of religion is the revivalism for which Baptists have been famous.

³¹Ibid.

Revivalism and Evangelism

Baptists themselves say that most of their conversions, eighty per cent, take place in revivals. When W. W. Sweet in his Revivalism in America points to the decline of the power of revivalism, he is forced to make the exception, except in the Southern Baptist Convention. In recent years there has been some serious re-thinking, evaluation, planning, and real action in this field. The pros and the cons have been weighed and a new program emphasizing personal evangelism proceeds side by side with mass revivalism, which is very effective. Hemans evaluates the evils of the old protracted meetings with its sawdust trail:

1. A mere man made excitement, in which the effort is rather to inflame the religious feelings than to enlighten and strengthen religious conviction . . . results ordinarily in disastrous reaction . . . many a field has been burnt over by these pseudo-revivals . . .
2. A protracted meeting entered on for secondary ends as to pay off a church debt . . .
3. A tendency to dependence upon protracted meetings to the disparagement of the ordinary means of grace . . .
4. In the reaction which occurs after the extreme nervous tension of a protracted meeting, guard against relapse in the converts.³²

The Baptists themselves have seen all of the evils and

³²G. Blair Hemans, "Revival First - Then Evangelism," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (March 1, 1951), 598.

dangers connected with revivalism and are on guard against them. They themselves list all the dangers and evils that conservative protestants have hurled at them, and even more. Stealey makes a list of nine of the dangers:

1. Professional evangelists go to excess in high pressure . . . reducing influence of the pastor
2. Too much attention to numbers and statistics
3. Excessive emotionalism
4. Lack of follow up with teaching and fellowship
5. Public demonstrations
6. Too narrow subject matter
7. Becomes crude
8. Showmanship reflects sincerity
9. Professionalism tends to hurt vitality and sincerity.³³

Revivalism shall continue to be emphasized by Baptists, and it shall continue to be a big tool in winning souls to Christ and to the Baptist fold. This year the Southern Baptist Convention is sponsoring a "Simultaneous Evangelistic Crusade" for all of their eighteen thousand churches to have revivals at the same time. In the past, six out of ten converts were lost, but that figure is changing and will continue to change as Baptists put more emphasis on instruction as to what conversion, and the new life implies, and what is expected by Jesus of a Christian after he is converted. Findley sets up these points as helps in keeping converts after the revival:

³³S. L. Stealey, "The Revival Method of Evangelism," Review and Expositor, XLII (January, 1945), 32 f.

- a. Interest in the church organizations
- b. Special receptions, banquets, etc.
- c. Christian companion, who is to encourage and strengthen him for three to six months
- d. Special class for new members, on Sunday morning during the Sunday School hour or in the evening for a period of four to twelve weeks. Study together the significance of conversion, the Baptist doctrines, the program of the local church and the program of the denomination.³⁴

A revival is not merely something which a church may or may not have as it decides or chooses. It is considered an absolute essential to the living growing church, and it is taken for granted that every church have at least one revival a year either with a special evangelist or with the local or neighboring pastors. Freeman says,

A revival is the movement of the Holy Spirit among people resulting in the awakening of Christians and the conversion of the unsaved. It is that which makes people God conscious. A revival causes people to repent of their sins, clean up their lives enjoy their religion, and share it with others. A revival is not secondary or incidental, but primary and fundamental.³⁵

Real revivalism produces real personal evangelism. In all periodicals that emphasis today is very evident. Personal soul winning is the battle cry. Listen to the Watchman-Examiner editorialize:

³⁴Findley Edge, "After Evangelism What?," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), 67 f.

³⁵Freeman, op. cit., p. 8.

A burden for souls is the heart condition of every Christian grateful to the Savior for salvation received. That man who can look at his salvation and what it means for five minutes and not begin to think of relatives, neighbors, and friends who are without Christ and without hope is either poorly instructed or else he is so hardboiled that he had better review whether or not he is really saved. For salvation's first effect is to burden us with the state of those who are still lost.³⁶

Sanctification

When man comes to God and lets the Holy Spirit convert him, the Holy Spirit continues to work in his heart to sanctify him. With his help the believing Baptist carries on the struggle between his new life and his tendency to evil which lasts until the grave. But as he appropriates more and more of Christ to himself, he is enabled more and more to conquer his sinful self and serve the Lord in true devotion and sincerity. This conquering of sin to the Baptist means not perfection but a certain holiness of living and separation from the world.

While some Baptists today are very extreme on this, others are becoming more liberal. Traditionally Baptists in America have followed the Puritan pattern of conduct. This includes fighting the use of liquor, tobacco, profanity, gambling, dancing, covetousness, church attendance, and

³⁶Editorial, "Personal Soul-Winning," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (February 22, 1951), 177.

Sabbath desecration. While this conduct was once required, Baptist discipline has become rare, and today only for flagrant immoral conduct will a name be dropped from the roll.

Concerning the use of alcohol this is the reasoning:

It is first selfish to use it for it is for personal gratification. It becomes a stumbling block to the individual and to the church. Those who use it moderately usually also take their religion moderately. It is harmful, it deadens judgment, self-control, and so therefore the church must preach abstinence.³⁷

It seems that they are a little hesitant to come out and call drinking a sin and condemn anyone who drinks, although it may someday come to that. The Watchman-Examiner entitled one of its editorials as "The Sin of Drunkenness." It made the statement that "No person who intends to sin can pray. No person who intends to tempt himself as the drunkard always does, can say 'Lead (me) not into temptation; but deliver (me) from evil.' No person who cannot pray can be saved." Thus in a roundabout way it calls the drunkard not saved but qualifies the idea of drunkard by saying, "The man who drinks spirits regularly ought to consider himself as already on the way to habitual intoxication."³⁸

³⁷R. Wilson Black, "The Church and the Cocktail Christians," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXVIII (November 30, 1950), 1153.

³⁸Editorial, "The Sin of Drunkenness," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (April 12, 1951), 342 f.

They cannot find Scriptural proof that it is a sin and absolutely wrong although they try to. Thus they have to be content with condemning drinking merely as a social evil or placing a temptation in front of ourselves. Anderson calls it a social evil:

As long as Christian people subscribe to magazines that carry liquor ads, as long as we permit our readers to blare out into our homes their evil suggestions; as long as we are making any contributions whatever to the movie industry, which has so glorified drink, sensuality, and vice; as long as many will take a social glass; as long as business deals have to be completed in the bar--just so long will America stagger along in her drunken way.³⁹

Another pressure is used to attempt to forbid the use of alcohol and this one is also used very much to forbid the use of all tobacco. They say it is harmful to the body and to the mind, and anything that is harmful to the body or mind is wrong. St. Paul said, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things; . . . I keep un-der my body, and bring it unto subjection; lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (I Corinthians 9:25-27) They point to the duty of self-conquest and say a Christian should be able to say with Paul, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be

³⁹Stanley A. Anderson, "Fighting A Social Evil," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (February 22, 1951), 180.

brought under the power of any." (I Corinthians 6:12)⁴⁰

Once in Grace Always in Grace

And now the final section of this chapter, what about the Christian who has found salvation and sanctification? Can he fall away and be lost? Although you do not read much about this today in Baptist periodicals, the historical Baptist position is in the true Reformed Calvinistic tradition which says, "Once in Grace always in Grace." Dr. Strong states it for us:

The Scriptures declare that, in virtue of the original purpose and continuous operation of God, all who are united to Christ by faith will infallibly continue in a state of grace and will finally attain to everlasting life. This voluntary continuance on the part of the Christian, in faith and well-doing we call perseverance. Perseverance is, therefore, the human side or aspect of that spiritual process which, as viewed from the divine side, we call sanctification. It is not a mere natural consequence of conversion, but involves a constant activity of the human will from the moment of conversion to the end of life.⁴¹

Wallace's principles of the Southern Baptist Seminary says:

Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall, through neglect and temptation,

⁴⁰Harry J. Jangston, "The Social, Physical, and Biological Effects of the Use of Tobacco and Liquor on Growing Boys and Girls," Review and Expositor, XXXI (January, 1934), 32-9.

⁴¹Strong, op. cit., p. 232.

into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.⁴²

Wallace goes on to explain this exposition of the New Hampshire Confession by saying that all those who do fall away have not been true believers, not real saints in the New Testament sense, as for instance Judas. Once a person has surrendered himself wholly to Christ and has responded to the purifying power of the Holy Spirit they are new creatures in Christ and can never be lost. This is the real test of faith--when it endures to the end. Anyone who falls has not had real faith. This is a little confusing. After placing so much emphasis on the importance of man in everything including his own conversion, once he is converted then it is God's responsibility to keep him safe for heaven. God will never let him fall away. The emphasis has shifted from man to God.

This is traditional Calvinism. We feel quite sure, however, that many Baptists today in their weakening Calvinism are softening also here. As the emphasis on the importance of man grows the responsibility for final salvation shifts from the shoulders of God to broad imaginary shoulders of man.

⁴²Wallace, op. cit., p. 16.

CHAPTER IV

MAN AND BAPTISM

If anywhere in the field of Baptist theology Lutheran theologians and scholars have been writing, it is here in the doctrine of Baptism. We are grateful to them for their refutations of Baptist views and expositions of the true Biblical doctrine. We do not find it in the scope of this thesis to rewrite all that has been written in every point of doctrine. While we feel we must treat Baptism quite thoroughly, since this is the vital point of difference, we intend to remain brief and with emphasis. We will see that Baptism is subject to man, and that man is more important than Baptism.

Means of Grace

We have already treated in the previous chapter the Baptist view of the means of grace. There is no need for restricting God to certain means, so Baptism and the Lord's Supper become mere "symbols" as they were to Zwingli. The Baptist thinks of his Baptism as a sign, as a public and open profession of his faith in Christ as his Savior. We quote some of the definitions:

Living expression of the inmost reality of the Christian faith . . . monumental symbols of the

truth of God.¹

The new convert goes down into a watery grave, picturing the burial of Christ and picturing his own death to sin, the crucifixion of the natural man.²

A personal and public testimony on the part of the believing one to his identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in his death, burial and resurrection . . . the visible symbol of a spiritual and invisible reality.³

Most Baptists do, however, recognize that the view of Baptism as a means of grace did exist in the history of the church. So they are forced to try to find explorations of how it came about and why it came about. J. M. Cramp after saying that he didn't think Justin or Iraenaues thought they were regenerated by Baptism gives us this exploration of how it developed:

And as the act of obedience to the Savior in the ordinance was commonly associated with spiritual enjoyments and manifestations, and happy converts. like the eunuch, 'went on his way rejoicing,' there were some who came to the conclusion that what was connected with baptism was produced by it. If the convictions that led the candidate to the baptismal water, and impelled him to the act of dedication to the Savior's service, were greatly strengthened at his Baptism, so that he then experienced a more in-

¹O. C. S. Wallace, What Baptists Believe, The New Hampshire Confession, An Exposition (Nashville: The Sunday School Board, Southern Baptists Convention, c.1913), p. 16.

²John R. Rice, Bible Baptism (Wheaton, Illinois: Sword of the Lord Publishers, c.1943), p. 8.

³Arthur Franklin Williams, Christian Baptism As Set Forth in Holy Scriptures (New York: First Baptist Church, n.d.), p. 24 f.

tensely satisfying consciousness of pardon and union with Christ, results were confounded with causes, and the new believer was taught to ascribe to baptism the blessings which he had in fact enjoyed before, but which he realized more vividly when he obeyed the Lord.⁴

The Baptist arrives at these conclusions concerning Baptism using the same Scripture and the very same passages that Lutherans use to prove that Baptism is a means of Grace. The difference lies in the interpretation or exegesis. Here we have an opportunity to see how the Baptist uses his Scripture. Man is most important. He comes to God and lets God convert him. He doesn't need Baptism to convert him, so when he now goes into Scripture and sees passages that tell of Baptism as a means of grace, he must use his reason to find a suitable explanation for them. Let us look at a few:

Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Baptists say that Baptism is "an act of righteousness" which we have done, and thus Titus is telling us that God saves us with his washing of regeneration which is an inward washing of the heart by the Word of God. The Baptist Robertson

⁴J. M. Cramp, Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Close of the Eighteenth Century (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publications Society, n.d.), p. 26 f.

says, "Man submits to the Baptism after the new birth to picture it forth to men." When we go to the original we read "by means of the bath of regeneration." We understand that God does the saving through his "bath of regeneration," which we call Baptism. The Baptist says his Baptism is a picture, a symbol to the eye of what takes place in the heart.

John 3:5: Jesus answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 5:26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word."

Both of these passages are treated the same way. The washing to the Baptist means "inwardly washed by the word of God and made spiritually alive."⁵ Again they deny that either of these refer to Baptism.

When they come to a passage like Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," they say that the word "for" or the Greek "eis" could better be translated "Baptized referring to, or pointing toward the remission of sins." When one repents he receives the remis-

⁵Rice, op. cit., p. 32.

sion of sins, and then with an obedient heart he is baptized.

So we could go on with Baptist exegesis. Throughout the Baptist insists on thinking of Baptism as merely a picture, even if he has to turn around Peter's comparison in I Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh . . .)" and Paul's in Romans 6:9: "Therefore we are buried with him by 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." In so doing the Baptist is listening to his reason rather than God. He sees in Scripture that man is saved by faith, thank God that he does, but his reason tells him that if he has remission when he repents, how can Baptism help him? He sees no need for believing Baptism is a means of grace.

The Baptist often fails to see that Lutherans also believe salvation by faith, and even without Baptism. He thinks Lutherans use Baptism as a means of converting adults, while it is merely an additional means of bestowing the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is to strengthen and engender faith continually, to comfort and admonish the believer. Gerhard says, "These adults receive an increase of those gifts by Baptism." In direct opposition to Baptist thinking, K berle puts stress on the fact that grace is offered in Baptism: "Here grace is offered that is nothing by

but grace because it is absolutely free; that is not conditioned by any scheme of cooperation between man and God; that is not limited by an ethical condition in man . . ."6

Immersion

Baptists insist that there is only one correct form of Baptism--by immersion. This is the way it was done in the New Testament, they say, so that is the only valid way of doing it today. The New Hampshire Confession reads:

"Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of the believer." The London Baptist Confession: "Immersion, or dipping, of the person into water is necessary for a proper administration of this ordinance."⁷ This is the logical formula which they use:

1. Water Matthew 3:11: 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.'
2. Much water John 3:23: 'John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there.'
3. A going down into the water Acts 8:38: 'And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him.'
4. Burial in water Romans 6:4: 'Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death; that like as

⁶Adolf Koberle, The Quest for Holiness, A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Investigation (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1936), p. 63 f.

⁷F. E. Mayer, Th. Engelder, W. Arndt, Th. Graebner Popular Symbolics, The Doctrines of the Church of Christendom and of Other Religious Bodies Examined in the Light of Scripture (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1934), p. 267.

Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life.'

5. A resurrection from the water Romans 6:5: 'For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.'

6. Coming up out of the water Matthew 3:16-17: 'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'⁸

Thus they conclude that the only correct form of Baptism is immersion since "no spoonful of water nor glassful of water on the head can picture a burial and resurrection, as the Bible says Baptism does."⁹

We must look at the word "baptize" itself. Baptists contend that the word in the Greek, "baptizo" means literally "to immerse" and should be translated that way. They say King James refused to allow the translators to use the word "immerse" because it would have caused embarrassment and confusion to the Church of England, so he instructed the translators not to translate the word, but to spell it with English letters. Thus the word "baptize" was first heard in the English language when it appeared in the King James translation of the Bible.

⁸Rice, op. cit., p. 42 f.

⁹Ibid.

They are partly right. The etymological and primary meaning of the Greek word "baptizo" as well as the German term "Taufe" and the Latin "mersio" is "immerse."¹⁰ In actual use, however, "baptizo" does not mean exclusively "immerse," but "wash" without reference to mode. This is the way it is used in the Bible. Krauth points out that in warm or temperate climates the mode of washing is usually by immersion and so the words for the two ideas of immersing and washing came to be synonymous. Even in the English language the actual use of words differ from their etymological force. For instance we use the word "bathe," when we take a shower bath, a sponge bath even if primarily "bathe" means "to immerse." Other examples are "carnival" is a farewell to meat; "courteous" has its root in a word which meant "cow-pen;" the German "schlecht"--bad, originally meant "good;" "selig," blessed, is the original of our English word "silly." Thus the Baptist argument that because etymologically "baptismos" means immersion it must always in actual use mean immersion does not hold water.

We look at the actual use of "baptizo" in Scripture and

¹⁰Charles P. Krauth, The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology, As Represented in the Augsburg Confession, and in the History and Literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1871), pp. 518-84. Luther is attacked as an immersionist because of his sermon "Von Sacrament der Taufe" of 1519 where he speaks of the etymological and symbolic meaning of "baptismos."

we see that it is used to mean "wash." Hebrews 9:10 states: "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." "Baptismos" is translated "washings" by the King James Version; "^{ablutions}absolutions" by Moffat and the Revised Standard Version and "baptisms" by Lenski. These were ceremonial washings which do not demand immersion.

Mark 7:4 states: "And when they come from the market except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." "Baptismos" is translated in most versions here "washings." They baptized or washed, cups, pots, brazen vessels, and many texts add tables or couches. Cups and pots could be immersed but they usually were not. Couches definitely were not. So "baptismos" means a washing and can not mean immersion here.

Matthew 3:11 states: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In the parallel phrases "en udati" and "en pneumati" the preposition "en" must have the same meaning. Immersion would not fit, for no immersion took place on Pentecost. Some have taken "en" locative and some as instrumental, but we take it in its ordinary sense, "in connection with." John the

Baptist baptized "in connection with" water and Christ would perform a baptizing "in connection with" the Holy Ghost and fire.

So we fail to see how one can understand the Biblical use of "baptizo" to be immersion. Other reasons that have been used by our writers are that three thousand could not have been baptized in Jerusalem one day, since there would not have been enough water. There is no case in Acts where preparations are mentioned as removing of clothes, but each baptism is performed immediately and without any difficulties.

Others have pointed to the Didache which commands "to pour water three times on the head" of the person to be baptized.¹¹ This Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve was written about A. D. 110. Ancient pictures show how Baptism was performed in the early history of the Christian Church with a person standing or sitting in water and having water poured on his head. Clement Rogers in his book Baptism and Christian Archeology¹² tells how he tried to prove that immersion was used exclusively in the early church. He found

¹¹J. T. Mueller, "Holy Baptism," The Abiding Word, An Anthology Of Doctrinal Essays for the Year 1946, Theodore Laetsch, editor (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), II, 402.

¹²Clement Rogers, Baptism and Christian Archeology (New York: The Oxford University Press, 1903).

that many of the early baptistries were so shallow a man could not be immersed in them, even if he lay on his back. He reversed his opinion.

So we can find nothing to prove the ancient Baptist insistence on immersion.

Infant Baptism

Now let us look at their other point, infant Baptism. Here we must first start with the need again. To a Lutheran infant baptism is necessary because he believes in an original sin which condemns and damns. He needs Baptism to save himself from that sin and regeneration. The Baptist, however, does not have the same necessity for he refuses to believe that man has an original sin which condemns infants. They believe in original sin, but only a sin which condemns when it grows into actual sin. Wallace says:

Holiness, or wholeness, was no part of the people who were born again. There was imperfection to every one . . . The heritage of sinlessness came to no one. Not only was sinfulness common; it was universal . . . Then sinful propensity leads to sinful choice and deed, the responsibility cannot be evaded . . . Those who being sinners by nature, become much more so by practice, and take voluntarily to paths of wrong doing are under the condemnation of the Law of God . . . A man needs to be saved from the sins of impulse and from sins of deliberation.¹³

Thus Mullins can speak of a "hereditary bias to sin," or a

¹³Wallace, op. cit., p. 38-44.

"tendency to sin" as derived from Adam.¹⁴ So they do believe that there is such a thing as hereditary sinfulness but there is no hereditary guilt. Children are sinful and yet they can enter the Kingdom of God. How? Mullins says, "The provisions of Christ's atoning work extends to them and God works in them the needed change."¹⁵

The Baptist thus sees no need for infant baptism since the child will not be condemned without it and baptism means nothing in itself, but is only an outward symbol. Only believers can be baptized who have first consciously accepted Christ. An infant cannot consciously believe, so they cannot be baptized. Note the emphasis, not on what God says in the Bible, but on what man reasons and thinks.

How can a child have faith? The Bible answers that infants can believe. Jesus uses a child as a model for adults and says, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me . . ." The entire context forces us to believe that Jesus meant a little child. Faith is worked by the Holy Spirit and who will dare to limit the power of the Holy Spirit and restrict his workings to adults only? John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost

¹⁴Edgar Young Mullins, The Christian Religion, In Its Doctrinal Expression (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, c.1917, reprinted 1946), pp. 286-93.

¹⁵Ibid.

(Luke 1:15) even before he was born, surely a child after it is born can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is true that the Bible does not specifically command the baptism of infants, but it also does not forbid it, just as it does not command or forbid the baptism of women. Infant baptism is taken for granted for Peter says that the promise for remission and the Holy Ghost to those who are baptized applies also to children, "for the promise is unto you and to your children." (Acts 2:28-29) When Jesus commands his disciples to make Christians of all nations by baptizing and teaching them (Matthew 28:19) he includes children. He sees beyond the first missionary stage of the gospel work when adults must be taught before Baptism is administered to them; he sees his church being established among the nations and children entering it in infancy and this means baptism.

In the actual instances of Baptism in the New Testament a few adults are mentioned individually--no children. Yet households are mentioned and we think of households containing children: Lydia, Acts 16:15; the Jailer at Philippi, Acts 16:33; and Stephanas, I Corinthians 1:16.

We can well say with Sasse:

The question (infant vs. adult Baptism) cuts no figure either in the New Testament or in Luther. Aside from the fact that adult candidates for Baptism voice their assent and confess their faith personally, Baptism has always been administered in the church 'just as though' the persons to be baptized themselves desired Baptism and believe

that which is spoken in Baptismal confession of faith. This practice must not be accounted for on the basis of liturgical traditionalism and ecclesiastical conservatism, but it belongs to the very essence of the rite. We baptize infants just as though they were adults, even as adults believe just as though we were infants. Whatever difference between adults and infants may signify for us humans and for our estimate of a man, for God it signifies nothing. A human being is a human being, is a child of Adam or a Child of God, without regard to age. This is the deeper reason why all baptismal rituals treat the infant 'just as though' it were grown up.¹⁶

Baptism then is subject to man. Man, the all important, uses baptism as he pleases, not as God commands. Baptism could be dispensed with easily and nothing be lost. Man can still come to God; still let God convert him; and still make a public profession of his faith.

¹⁶H. Sasse, Concordia Theological Monthly, XX (November, 1949), 869. This was published in the September, 1940 issue of Lutheran Outlook as translated by Prof. P. H. Burhring.

CHAPTER V

MAN AND THE CHURCH

Baptists have always claimed strict adherence to Scripture in every point of doctrine and practice. We have already seen in Chapter Two that while this is true, man is the one who determines what Scripture really teaches, and in Chapter Four we had some practical examples of this in connection with Baptism. Man is more important than Scripture and his reason is the arbitrary selector of the truth from Scripture.

When we come to the Baptist doctrine and practice of the church, we see that they follow closely the pattern of Scripture. The example of the New Testament church is the pattern for Baptist churches, for their polity and doctrinal statements.

Baptist churches are congregational in polity. They have always been, and this is one of the distinct characteristics of the Baptists, which they have carried with them through history, although today most people think of the Baptists as being distinct only for their teachings of Baptism, immersion, believer's baptism, and rejection of infant Baptism.

Definitions

Rushbrooke, the general secretary of the Baptist World

Alliance in an article, "The Historic Witness of the Baptists" maintains that the New Testament communities were essentially Baptist in their church polity, and that which has made Baptists distinct through history is their belief that only believers are members of the visible church.¹

In the definitions of the church which we find this is always the emphasis: the church is made of baptized believers. Strong calls it: "The whole company of regenerate persons in all time and ages, in heaven and on earth." He makes it identical with the kingdom of God, the body of Christ and uses the terms, "invisible" and "universal."² There is not too much stress put on this "invisible and universal" church. Carver even points out that the New Hampshire Confession "ignores the universal spiritual body of Christ."³

Thus it seems that while there are some differences of belief, as a rule the visible, or local or "individual church" is stressed much more than the "invisible" or

¹J. H. Rushbrooke, "The Historical Witness of the Baptists," Review and Expositor, XXX (October, 1933), 403-13.

²Augustus Hopkins Strong, Outlines of Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, c.1908), p. 183.

³W. A. Carver, "A Church: The Church," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (April, 1951), 151.

universal. In a statement of the Northern Baptist Convention (now American) of February, 1951, we read:

While we recognize the existence of a universal and spiritual or invisible church, we believe that the visible and local church, when properly constituted, is an assembly or body consisting only of those believers who have been Scripturally immersed upon their profession of faith in Christ as Savior and Lord.⁴

Strong explains the difference between the two in this way.

The visible or individual church is the universal church which takes on local and temporal form, and in which the idea of the church as a whole is concretely exhibited.

The individual church may be defined as that smaller company of regenerate persons, who, in any given community, unite themselves voluntarily together in accordance with Christ's laws, for the purpose of securing the complete establishment of his kingdom in themselves and in the world.⁵

Carver also gives us a traditional definition emphasizing again the fact that the church is made of individual baptized believers:

A congregation of baptized believers in Christ, worshiping together (voluntarily) associated in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; practicing its precepts; observing its ordinances; recognizing and receiving Christ as their supreme lawgiver and ruler; and taking his Word as their sufficient and exclusive rule of faith and practice in all matters of religion.⁶

⁴Editorial, "The Church and Its Functions," The Watchman Examiner, XXXIX (February 8, 1951), cover.

⁵Ibid., p. 235.

⁶Carver, op. cit., p. 147.

Carver comes up, however, then with a new idea. He feels that the traditional emphasis on the local congregation and its supremacy and importance as a worshiping unit is a "baptist error." He stresses what he terms the "city community church" idea in which each local church is a unit or part of that "city community church." Thus he tries to tie all believers together in what is probably the universal church.

Thus the traditional emphasis of the Baptists in their doctrines of the church has always been on the individual man. We begin with him. When he joins other believers like himself a congregation is formed. If there are others in the group who do not believe in Christ, they are not really members of the church. That is why baptism is made a requisite for membership and confession of faith is a requisite for baptism. "Members of the visible church consist only of those who are consciously disciples of Jesus Christ. Apart from faith no church membership."⁷

This has been called a democratic form of church government. Fuller calls it the "purest demonstration of democracy to be found anywhere . . . No ecclesiastical sovereignty except the local church and this sovereignty is recognized only because the individual Christian who constitutes the local

⁷Rushbrooke, op. cit., p. 407.

church can appear in person to exercise his rights."⁸

The Purpose

Each congregation is supreme and is ruled only by the laws of the New Testament, which forms the pattern of the organization itself. Strong goes into detail listing points justifying the organization of the church. He lists the following points as proof of the organization of a church in the New Testament:

- Stated meetings
- Elections
- Officers
- Designations of its ministers
- The recognized authority of the minister and the church
- Its discipline
- Its contributions
- Letters to the churches
- Register of widows
- Uniform customs
- Ordinances
- Order enjoined and observed
- Qualifications for membership
- Common work of the whole body⁹

Why organize a church? Because it has been established in the New Testament. The purpose why the New Testament established the local congregation Strong says: "The sole object of the local church is the glory of God, in the complete establishment of his kingdom, both in the hearts of

⁸Ellis A. Fuller, "Why Baptists," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), 18 f.

⁹Strong, op. cit., p. 237.

believers and in the world."¹⁰ The statement of faith of the Northern Baptist Convention Theological Seminary in Chicago gives us a more complete definition of the purpose of the church:

. . . that the purpose of the church is for the worship of God, for service and for the carrying out of Christ's great commission in its divinely given order:

- (1) of imparting the gospel message to every creature
- (2) of baptizing believers, and
- (3) of teaching them to observe whatsoever he has commanded;

that such Gospel churches are independent bodies and self-governing in accordance with Scriptural procedure, but that they cooperate with churches of like faith and order upon the basis of the Lordship of Christ for the furtherance of his gospel and the advancement of his kingdom.¹¹

The Officers

The officers of the church then must be the only two which Scripture speaks of, the bishop, presbyter or pastor, and the deacon. The bishop, or elder, is the spiritual teacher in public and private, the administrator of the ordinances, the superintendent of discipline, as well as presiding officer of the meetings. The deacon is the helper of the pastor in both spiritual and temporal affairs.¹²

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Editorial, loc. cit.

¹²Strong, op. cit., p. 240.

The Laws

The only laws that are in force for the local congregation are the laws of the New Testament, or of Christ himself. Wallace says, "Churches of today must be formed after the pattern of the New Testament church in principles and polity, in doctrinal character and life," and then he lists the laws of Christ as quoted from Dr. Augustus Strong in "The Essential Principles of a Baptist Church:"

1. The unity, sufficiency and sole authority of Scripture as the rule of both doctrine and polity;
2. Credible evidence of regeneration and conversion as a prerequisite to church membership;
3. Immersion only, as answering Christ's command of baptism, and to the symbolic meaning of the ordinance;
4. The order of the ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, as of divine appointment, as well as the ordinances themselves;
5. The right of each member of the church to a voice in its government and discipline;
6. Each church, while holding fellowship with other churches, solely responsible to Christ;
7. The freedom of the individual conscience, and the total independence of church and State.¹³

This we believe is a good summary of the Baptist doctrine of the church, but from this each congregation makes its own variations both in doctrine and practice.

¹³0. C. S. Wallace, What Baptists Believe, The New Hampshire Confession, An Exposition (Nashville: The Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, c.1913), p. 147 f.

The Polity

It is essentially a laymen's church in which there is room for any church hierarchy. Each congregation is in itself supreme. This is true because it is made up of individuals who are supreme in themselves. The polity then could be called congregational. Each member of the church has a voice in the church. When a matter is to be decided, the members vote for the decision, and each baptized member, men, women and children have a right to vote.

Because man and his freedom lies at the center of the Baptist doctrine of the church, Baptists have been very careful in forming associations and conventions and in joining other denominations in cooperative efforts. They do not want to infringe on the right of the individual, and the local congregation. The Southern Baptists have been very insistent on this. Keegan says,

The emphasis of the Southern Baptists has always been on the autonomy and independence of the local church. This conviction has stemmed from our adherence of what we believe to be the simple, obvious teachings of the New Testament, unhampered by traditional ecclesiasticism.¹⁴

In this same article Keegan points out that when Baptists began forming their associations they were careful and

¹⁴G. Kearnie Keegan, "The Ecumenical Movement and Southern Baptists," The Watchman Examiner, XXXIX (March 15, 1951), 50.

had so-called "safeguards" to prevent an ecclesiastical hierarchy from developing as in some other churches. He mentions:

1. Messengers elected by the local churches to represent them have no delegated authority /sic/ which would make any action taken by them binding upon the local churches which they represent.
2. The three principal organizations to which local Baptist Churches send messengers (the Association, state convention or general association, and the Southern Baptist Convention) work together on a purely voluntary basis . . .
3. The Southern Baptist Convention, by the nature of its organization, constitution and bylaws, is powerless /sic/ to join any ecumenical movement and speak authoritatively for the local churches. The same is true of the state conventions and associations.¹⁵

Recent Trends

It has become evident to students of Baptist history that in recent years, however, a trend has appeared toward centralization. Baptists are showing a feeling of denominational consciousness. They are looking more and more toward the state associations; the national conventions for leadership. This seems a natural development in the complex society of our United States where everything tends to become bureaucratic. Torbet lists five reasons for this trend toward centralization which one historian calls

¹⁵ibid.

"ecclesiology." This is true particularly of the Southern Baptist Convention.

1. an early union of Baptist forces to protect themselves from persecution
2. a general Baptist background with its more centralized polity
3. a developing centralization in state conventions quite early in the 19th century
4. a typically American criticism of the financial basis of representation which is inherent in the older cooperative society system
5. pressure of the land-markists to substitute a church basis for the financial.¹⁶

This trend is also affecting church polity, although Baptists are not eager to admit it. Denominational lines are becoming stronger. The state associations and especially the National Conventions are assuming more control and authority. This trend will probably never become as pronounced as it has in other denominations, for Baptists still cling to their insistence on the freedom of the individual Christian and the individual congregation.

Cooperation and Union

As far as cooperating with other denominations the Baptists have been very free to share in unionistic services and any cooperative endeavors on the local congregational level. They are, however, less receptive than most denominations to join other church bodies in larger cooperative

¹⁶Robert G. Torbet, A History of the Baptists (Chicago: The Judson Press, c.1950), p. 458.

endeavors above the local congregation because of the fear that it will infringe on their individual freedom.

Stanley Jones challenge 'Unite or die' may be a just challenge to some church groups, but not to the Baptists for we face no such alternative. We need no escape mechanism in the form of ecumenicity to save us from death . . . We need only the road of absolute freedom, the road which we ourselves build.¹⁷

Baptists have always cooperated in missionary activities. Such things as agreeing to territorial limitations in the mission fields, but beyond that they have been slow to join any joint endeavor. This is true particularly of the Southern Baptists. The Southern Baptists have never joined the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America while the Northern Baptists have been a member since its organization in 1908. When the Southern Baptists received their invitation to the World Council of Churches meeting in Amsterdam in 1948, they returned it. They explained this action like this: A great over all world ecclesiasticism would depend more on political pressure than upon spiritual power, and a close compact union of non-Catholics would intensify the conflicts of Christendom by arousing the Roman Catholics. It would threaten the autonomy of the local church and would jeopardize the witness of Baptists to believer's baptism and a regenerate church. This view was al-

¹⁷Fuller, op. cit., p. 22.

so upheld by the World Alliance of Baptists, but Torbet adds that they feared that paedobaptists would dominate the Council. Of course the Northern Baptist Convention accepted their invitation.¹⁸

There are perhaps a multiplicity of reasons for this trend toward more cooperation with other denominations. Torbet mentions some of the factors that are involved; radio; the intermarriage of Baptists with those of other denominations; the influence of the World Wars; and the experiences which have come out of the cooperation which has already taken place. But again let it be said to the honor of the Southern Baptists they have remained practically immune to the cry for union. They have clung to their insistence on the freedom of the individual congregation and their democratic polity which wants no dictation from higher organizations. Yet it is strange perhaps that it is just in this group that the trend toward centralization is the strongest and in the unionistic, Northern Baptists hardly appears.

In closing let us gain take note of our theme, the importance of man. It seems quite evident that the doctrine of the church revolves around man. The congregation exists by the demand of the New Testament, but it is formed by the

¹⁸Torbet, op. cit., p. 460 f.

CHAPTER VI

MAN AND THE STATE

The relation of the church to the state could be discussed under the doctrine of the church. This would eliminate this chapter heading and combine this material with the previous chapter. We have chosen, however, to make this a special chapter because of all that it involves and because of its importance in the light of recent developments.

Religious Liberty

The separation of the church and state is a logical conclusion to the Baptist principle of religious freedom. Some Baptists have called this principle of religious liberty their most distinctive principle. They claim that they have had this principle and upheld it since the early church and that they have had to stand alone in upholding it until the nineteenth century. They base their principle of religious liberty on Scripture and their belief that Scripture says each individual is responsible for his own eternal destiny.

Thus they have maintained the right of individuals and groups to worship God in their own way and to believe in God or even to disbelieve him. This principle was set forth already very clearly by John Smyth in 1611:

That the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience to force or compel men to this or that form of religion or doctrine; but to leave the Christian religion free, to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions (Rom. 13) injuries and wrongs of man against man, in murder, adultery, theft, etc., for Christ only is the King, and law-giver of the church and conscience. (James 4:12)¹

Thomas Helwys wrote in his "A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity:"

Let the King judge, is it most equal that men should choose their religion themselves, seeing they only must appear themselves before the judgment seat of God to answer for themselves.²

In the inscription of this work Thomas Helwys had the courage to write in a day when the King determined the religion of the people, "The King is a mortal man and not God, therefore hath no power over mortal souls of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them and to set spiritual Lords over them."³ He was of course put into prison for this statement.

This principle of the importance of man and his right to individual religious liberty, they claim, is the historic heritage of only the Baptists. They go so far as to say,

¹Robert A. Torbet, A History of the Baptists (Chicago: The Judson Press, c.1950), p. 479.

²Ibid., p. 480.

³Ibid.

"Baptists are the only people who did not come to the idea of religious liberty gradually. They possessed and maintained the full idea from the beginning."⁴ They do recognize, however the contribution made by the reformation and especially Luther in his principle of the right of private interpretation of the Bible. This was, they say, the germ but it lay dormant and

Luther lacked the courage to permit such freedom lest it destroy his state-church connection. It was left, therefore, to the Anabaptists and the Baptists to maintain consistently, and at times to defend with their lives, the right of individuals and groups to worship God in their own way and to believe or disbelieve.⁵

Thus in this way the Baptists claim they have made a real contribution to the history of the world. They have given leadership by their consistent witness to this principle of religious liberty and "the world is their debtor."⁶

It was here in the United States that this principle was made crystal clear and where real leadership was apparent. The teachings of such men as John Clarke, Roger Williams and Isaac Bachus. The first government that was

⁴M. E. Dodd, "Separation of Church and State and Religious Liberty," *The Watchman-Examiner*, XXVIII (October 17, 1940), 1100 f.

⁵Torbet, op. cit., p. 479.

⁶Robert G. Torbet, Baptist Leadership (New York: The American Baptists Home Mission Society, Department of Evangelism, 1951), p. 2.

established which separated the union of church and state was the government of Roger Williams in the providence of Rhode Island in 1636. Here there was for the first time, absolute religious liberty. In the colony of Maryland where Lord Baltimore established religious liberty in 1634, it was only for those who believed in Christ, so Strong insists that this was not religious liberty.⁷

During the revolutionary war, every Baptist association in the colonies had committees working to write religious liberty into the constitution. The Association at Rhode Island in 1777 voiced the universal Baptist opinion, "For a civil assembly to impose religious taxes is more certainly out of their jurisdiction than it can be for Britain to tax America."⁸ That they were successful is evident by our present constitution and the amendments in the Bill of Rights. Baptists are not delinquent in claiming their share of the credit. Historian Torbet says,

America should be eternally grateful to the Baptists of colonial New England and Virginia for it was, in part at least, their struggle for religious liberty which culminated victoriously in the omission of any religious tests or restrictions when the constitution of the United States was framed.⁹

⁷Augustus Hopkins Strong, Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, c.1899), p. 24.

⁸R. E. E. Harkness, "Some Early Practices of the Baptists in America," Journal of Religion, XI (October, 1931), 547.

⁹Torbet, A History of the Baptists, p. 481.

Separation of Church and State

The logical corollary of the doctrine of religious liberty is the principle of the separation of church and state. The two must go hand in hand, for under a state church program serious restrictions may be made upon the individual's right of religious liberty. Thus it was to preserve and safeguard these beliefs of the priesthood of believers and religious freedom that Baptists have always insisted upon the separation of church and state. The church should not dominate the state and the state should not dominate the church. Either of these, Baptists feel brings with it disastrous results.

Again Baptists point to the failure of the Reformation. In fact they say that here is the reason why Luther's reformation was not permanent in Germany. He failed to revise the doctrine of the Church. He did not trust the believers.

He did not trust enough in the self-governing powers of the body of true believers, and so he gave over to the State the government of the church . . . It was the Roman Principle modified . . . Luther mixed up Church and State once more but he had his misgivings, 'Satan remains Satan,' he said, 'under the Pope, Satan pushed the Church into the State; now he wishes to push the State into the Church.'¹⁰

¹⁰Strong, op. cit., p. 220.

Luther and his Reformation failed to separate the church from the state. It remained for the Anabaptists to do it. Strong immediately following the section quoted above shows how the Anabaptists tried to do it. He says the first confession to claim absolute religious freedom for themselves and grant it to others was in 1527 published by Anabaptists in Schleitheim, a little village near Schaffhausen.

They were the first martyrs of soul-liberty in Europe; the first who dared proclaim even unto death the New Testament doctrine of a wholly spiritual church; the first who pushed to its logical consequences the principle that civil government has no authority over conscience. We glory in the fact that these reformers of the Reformers were Baptists.¹¹

Let us now look at their definition of this principle of the absolute separation of State and Church. M. E. Dodd in an address at Baptist Day at the New York World's Fair on October 5, 1940, addressed a packed house on the subject of "Separation of Church and State and Religious Liberty." He states the general Baptist belief that both the church and the state are of divine origin, and both have their sphere of activity fixed. The church must operate in the sphere of spiritual and eternal needs of man, while the state ought to concern itself only with the secular and

¹¹Ibid., p. 229 f.

temporal needs of man.¹² Strong says,

Side by side with the church, but in entire independence of it, stands the State. It too is a divine institution and is clothed with a divine authority. But it has to do only with men's outward and earthly and temporal affairs.¹³

Thus Baptists say that the state has no right to interfere with the religious beliefs and practices of the individual or congregation, and the church has no right to interfere with the program of the state as long as it remains in its own sphere. The church has no right to seek or expect financial support from the state. So Baptists claim that they introduced the new principle of voluntary church support which is the principle used by all of our churches in America.

Loyalty to Government

It is significant to note here that while Baptists fight vigorously for the separation of state and church, they always have insisted upon the divine right of the State to rule. They thus have been obedient citizens where there was no infringement upon their conscience. Thomas Helwys stated the basic principle that is still in force.

¹²Dodd, loc. cit.

¹³Strong, op. cit., p. 211.

(We) profess and teach that in all earthly things the king's power is to be submitted unto; and in heavenly or spiritual things if the king or any in authority under him shall exercise their power against any they are not to resist in any way or means, although it were in their power, but rather to submit their lives as Christ and his disciples did, and yet keep their consciences to God.¹⁴

Torbet points out that while Baptists have always been opposed to war, when their country called for them to fight in its armed forces, they have been ready and willing to go. They have never encouraged their people to be conscientious objectors, and the number of them in the last war was insignificant. They have always filled their quota of chaplains.

The Situation Today

What is the situation today with American Baptists? They are still fighting for separation of church and state and religious liberty, on a much more organized scale than they have ever done in the past. As far back as 1892, Dr. Strong set up a goal in a sermon to the American Baptists Home Mission Society:

If now we could only secure the insertion in both the Federal and the State constitutions of a provision that no public money shall be appropriated to sectarian institutions, the record of American Baptists would be complete.¹⁵

¹⁴Torbet, A History of the Baptists, p. 480.

¹⁵Strong, op. cit., p. 243.

Today Baptists do not state this as a definite goal, but they are constantly on guard against any trends that might endanger their beloved principles. They have organized and become systematic. The Southern Baptist Convention in 1936 expanded the duties of its commission on Chaplains of the Army and Navy to "include all matters involving the relations of our organized work to our own and other governments." The name of the committee was changed to the Committee on Public Relations. Then the Northern Baptist Convention set up a similar committee and these two joined hands in 1938 to form the "Joint Conference on Public Relations." To this Conference then was added representatives from the Negro Baptists, the National Baptists Convention, U. S. A., Inc., and the National Baptist Convention of America. Thus this one committee, which maintains its office in Washington and keeps a constant vigil on all legislation, represents more than fourteen and a half million Baptists.

The two issues at present which Baptists feel threaten the separation of church and state and thus their religious liberty are the efforts of the Catholics to gain state support for transportation to parochial schools, and the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican. When President Roosevelt appointed Myron C. Taylor as his special envoy to the Vatican there was some protest. Recently when President Truman nominated Major General Mark W. Clark as the

ambassador to the Vatican, subject to the approval of Congress, there were some violent reactions among all Protestant groups, and especially Baptists. Dr. J. M. Dawson, the Executive Director of the Joint Committee on Public Affairs made this statement,

It is a deplorable resort to expediency which utterly disregards our historical constitutional American system of separation of Church and State.

It will be disruptive of national unity and dissipate good will between Protestants and Catholics. It is a blundering policy for combating Communism as Protestant countries throughout the world are making the most effective stand against Communism.

The best way to lose the battle against a totalitarian state is for free countries to form a coalition with the people under a totalitarian Church.¹⁶

The President of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. J. D. Grey said:

The Presidential nomination of General Clark as ambassador to the Vatican is not only unconstitutional and illegal, but ill-timed and divisive . . . The Vatican is a small de facto state of only 108 acres with no military force and with whom we have no exchange of commerce or citizenry. Most of the thirty-seven nations with delegations at the Vatican hold the union of Church and State in a manner repugnant to our democratic concept . . .

The President has disrupted our national unity at a time when he can least afford disunity. However, he has aroused freedom-loving America and alerted us to battle against the growing

¹⁶Editorial, The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (November 8, 1951), 1059 f.

efforts of an organized minority to breach the wall separating Church and State.¹⁷

Baptists feel that the call of our day is to battle against the forces which are pitted against religious liberty all over the world. Those that have religious liberty must bring it to others. The keynote, we believe, was sounded by the Baptist World Alliance in their "Mid-Century Call to Religious Freedom," a Manifesto on Religious Freedom which was prepared by the Commission on Religious Liberty of the Baptist World Congress and adopted by them in session at Cleveland, Ohio, July 25, 1950. In this Manifesto the present dangers of Religious freedom from Communism and the Roman Catholic Church was called to attention and the conclusion is drawn that at "no time in the history of Christianity has there been greater danger of losing sight of the principles and ideals" of religious freedom and basic human rights. The historic Baptist position is reaffirmed and the Congress pledges itself "to seek for all men the right of free and unhindered access to God and the right to form and propagate opinion in the sphere of religion without interference by civil and religious powers." It supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the United Nations and calls for action from all Baptist churches; Protestant state-churches; Roman Catholic Churches; rulers of communist countries; the United

¹⁷Ibid.

Nations; and to all nations to "demonstrate their support of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."¹⁸

Thus Baptists continue to fight for their cherished principles; the separation of church and state, and the religious freedom of the individual. Again we note that at the center is man and his importance. Man's freedom must be maintained. Nothing must touch that freedom. The state must stay away from religion so man's freedom is not endangered. Here again one of the basic principles of Baptist theology is based on the importance of man.

¹⁸Manifesto of Religious Freedom (Washington, D. C.: Baptists World Alliance, 1950).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Baptist Distinctiveness

Before drawing our final conclusions, let us say a few words about the Baptist's pride and the distinctiveness of the Baptists. In reading Baptist literature, especially popular periodicals, one can feel this pride which often borders on boasting. Historically Baptists have always been considered a sect by the world and have been severely persecuted. Perhaps this helps explain how this pride developed.

The Baptist does not consider himself a Protestant. To the Baptist there are four groups, namely, (1) Jews, (2) Baptists, (3) Roman Catholics, (4) Protestants. It is important to notice the order, for the Baptists follow the Jews. Baptists started with John the Baptist and later the Catholics split from the Baptists. Finally the "Protestants came out of the Catholic Church, protesting certain doctrines and practices of the Catholics . . . Baptists did not come out of the Catholic Church . . . Baptists have never protested anybody's religion."¹

¹"Baptists Are Not Protestants," The Expositor, LIII (October-November, 1951), 356.

Another Baptist tells us that in the nineteenth century when Protestantism was denouncing the pope as the "antichrist and Great Whore of the Book of Revelation, Baptists included Reformed churches as the 'daughters of the Great Whore.'"² It is not unusual in present day writings to find statements of extreme loyalty and thoughts like this: "Who knows but that the Baptist people have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?"³

Conclusions

Baptists are proud to be Baptists. When one asks the question, "Why?" we may think of a number of reasons, but we believe that it is largely due to the great emphasis on man in Baptist theology and practice. Baptist theological thinking revolves around the importance of man and man is pleased and proud of it. The individualism which makes each man sufficient to come to God by himself; makes him responsible for his own salvation; makes him free to choose in all matters of faith and life; makes him the center of church polity; which gives him freedom from the state fits in very snugly with man's innate selfish pride, and the

²W. O. Carver, "Are Baptists Protestants?," The Christian Century, LXVIII (January 21, 1951), 140.

³Findley, Edge, "After Evangelism What?," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), 67.

modern American's ideas of freedom and democracy.

Thus we believe that one of the reasons for the outstanding growth of the Baptist Church is the emphasis they place on the importance of man in all of their theology and practice. We believe that they by this emphasis have developed, and are still developing, a set of doctrines and practices which have special appeal to Americans.

We cannot overlook the fact that there are definitely many other causes for the rapid growth of the Baptist Church. They have worked at it harder than many other churches with their emphasis on revivalism and evangelism, and it is true that many Baptists have a "zeal for souls" which some more conservative churches do not show. They have for the most part stayed close to Scripture and preached Christ and Him crucified as the only way to heaven.

Thus Baptists are more than a sect today. They are becoming one of the important segments of the Christian Church in the world of 1952. May God give them the pure Gospel!

APPENDIX

BAPTIST BODIES¹

1. American Baptist Convention. 1,561,073
Organized in 1907 as the Northern Baptist Convention and changed to its present name at their convention on May 24, 1950. This group is historically Calvinistic but today tolerates almost any views within its fold, from views bordering on the holiness area to the extremely liberal views of men like Fosdick, Shailer Matthews, Rockefeller, etc.
2. National Baptist Convention of America . . . 2,580,921
Organized in 1895. Not incorporated. Colored. Calvinistic.
3. National Baptist Convention of U. S. A., Inc. 4,385,206
Organized in 1880. Incorporated in 1915. Colored. Calvinistic.
4. Southern Baptist Convention. ? 313,817
This group developed as the result of a split from the Northern Baptists in 1845. The largest single group of Baptists and the most conservative.

¹As listed in the World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1951 (New York: The New York World-Telegram and The Sun, Edited by Harry Hansen, c.1951), together with identifying explanatory data.

5. Christian Unity Baptist Association. 497
Organized in 1634 in Tennessee and Virginia.
6. Colored Primitive Baptists 43,897
This group broke away from the Primitive Baptists after the Civil War. As the Primitives, they are Calvinistic. Opposed to Church organization. In Florida.
7. Duck River (and Kindred) Associations of Baptists 7,951
Also known as the Baptist Church of Christ, this organization was effected when the conservatives broke away from the Elk River Association in 1808. Calvinistic. No general organization. In Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi.
8. Evangelical Baptist Church, Inc. 400
9. Free Will Baptists 221,317
Officially the National Association of Free Will Baptists, this group corresponds in doctrine and practice to the English General Baptists, but originated in 1727 in the United States in North Carolina and Virginia. Arminian. Now in the South and Middle West.

10. General Baptists. 39,600
 Arminian. Transplanted from England to Virginia
 in 1714.
11. General Six Principle Baptists 280
 This small body dates from the seventeenth century.
 It is called "Six Principle" because it has as its
 creed the six doctrines mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-2:
 (a) repentance from dead works
 (b) faith toward God
 (c) the doctrine of Baptism
 (d) the imposition of hands
 (e) the resurrection of the dead
 (f) eternal judgment
 Found mainly in Rhode Island.
12. Independent Baptist Church of America. 128
 The founders of this group in 1893 were of
 Swedish extraction. Originally located chiefly
 in Minnesota, now in Middle West and South. It
 is opposed to participation in war.
13. National Baptist Evangelical Life and Soul
 Saving Assembly of the U. S. A. 79,843
 Organized in 1921 by A. A. Banks, Sr., as a
 charitable, educational and evangelical body.
 In the Middle West.
14. Primitive Baptists 69,157
 At one time this body was also called "Old-School,"
 "anti-Mission," and "Hard-Shell" Baptists. It is

opposed to missions, to Sunday Schools and in general to religion in human institutions.

They began about 1835, and are strongly Calvinistic. Mainly in the South.

15. General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. 85,000

This group is a split organized in 1933. It claims to represent the original Baptists before there was a distinction between Calvinistic and Arminian.

Thus they are a compromise.

16. Separate Baptists 6,490

The origin of this group dates to 1758, the days of the Whitefield revival. It opposed Whitefield's methods and insisted that one must feel conversion. They were called New Lights. They are Arminian and have added foot washing to the ordinances. Originated in North Carolina. Now they are found also in Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, and Illinois.

17. Seventh Day Baptists 8,100

This body differed from other Baptists only in that they observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord. They appeared in England in the latter part of the sixteenth century under the name "Sabbatarian Baptists," and they first came to the United States in 1671 and adopted their present

name in 1818. Arminian. Originally in Rhode Island, and now in the Middle West.

18. Seventh Day Baptists (German 1729). 125

A group of refugees from Palatinate, Germany, came to Philadelphia in 1720. In 1727 they chose John Conrad Bussel as their pastor in Conestoga, Pennsylvania. He practiced celibacy and followed the Seventh Day Baptist Church. With others he moved to Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in 1732, and founded the "Ephrata Society." Separate homes were built for the men and women. Industries were carried on in a communal way.

19. Two-Seed-In-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists. . 201

Manichaeian in doctrine, this group holds that there are two seeds, one good and one evil. The doctrine is credited to Elder Daniel Parker of Virginia, who lived in the last half of the nineteenth century. Calvinistic.

20. United American-Free Will Baptists. 130,000

Organized in 1901, in the South. Arminian.

21. United Baptists 27,000

This group is the result of a merger of some of the Regular Baptists in Kentucky in 1838. They retained foot-washing and practice closed communion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

- Anderson, Stanley A. "Fighting A Social Evil," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (February 22, 1951), pp. 179-80.
- Benedict, David. A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World. New York: Lewis Colby Company, 1849.
- Black, R. Wilson. "The Church and the Cocktail Christians," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXVIII (November 30, 1950), pp. 1152-54.
- Brown, Ernest. "Listening to the Voice of God," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (February 8, 1951), pp. 132-34.
- Carver, W. Owens. "A Church: The Church," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (April, 1951), pp. 147-160.
- , "Are Baptists Protestants?," The Christian Century, LXVIII (January 21, 1951), pp. 140-42.
- , "Nature of the Distinction Between the Clergy and the Laity," Review and Expositor, XLIII (January, 1946), p. 22.
- Cook, Richard B. The Story of the Baptists in All Ages and Countries. Baltimore: R. H. Woodward & Co., 1891.
- Copeland, E. Luther. "Baptism and the Lord's Supper: A Positive Interpretation," Review and Expositor, XXXXVII (July, 1950), pp. 324-32.
- Cox, F. A. and J. Hoby. The Baptists in America, A Narrative of the Deputation from the Baptist Union in England to the United States and Canada. New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1836.
- Cramp, J. M. Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Close of the Eighteenth Century. Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, n.d.
- Cutting, George. Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment. Fort Dodge: Walterick Printing Co., n.d.

- Dobbins, G. S. "An Adopted Evangelism," Review and Expositor, XLVII (October, 1950), pp. 413-26.
- Dodd, M. E. "Separation of Church and State and Religious Liberty," The Watchman-Examiner, XXVIII (October 17, 1940), p. 1100.
- Edge, Findley. "After Evangelism What?," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), pp. 67-80.
- Ernest, James. Roger Williams, New England Firebrand. New York: Macmillan Co., 1932.
- Freeman, C. Wade and Others. Evangelism in Action Through Christ-Centered Messages. Wheaton: Van Kampen, c.1951.
- Fuller, Ellis A. "Why Baptists," Review and Expositor, XLVIII (January, 1951), pp. 13-23.
- Hagemann, Frank G., Jr. "The Communion of Saints," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (April 5, 1951), p. 322.
- Harkness, R. E. "Some Early Practices of the Baptists in America," Journal of Religion, XI (October, 1931), pp. 533-53
- Harvey, H. The Pastor: His Qualifications and Duties. Philadelphia: American Baptists Publication Society, 1879.
- Hemans, G. Blair. "Revival First--Then Evangelism," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (March, 1951), p. 598.
- Holman, Thomas. Doctrinal and Practical Tracts. I. New York: Thomas Holmann Printer and Publisher, 1884.
- Jones, T. G. The Baptists: Their Origin, Continuity, Principles, Spirit, Polity, Position and Influence. A Vindication. Philadelphia: American Baptists Publication Society, n.d.
- Keegan, G. Kearnie. "The Ecumenical Movement and Southern Baptists," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (March 15, 1951), p. 250.
- Langston, Henry J. "The Social, Physical and Biological Effects of the Use of Tobacco and Liquor in Growing Boys and Girls," Review and Expositor, XXXI (January, 1934), pp. 32-9.

- Laws, Gilbert. "Four Baptists on Baptism," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXVIII (November 30, 1950), p. 1150
- Lorimer, George C. The Great Conflict. A Discourse Concerning Baptists and Religious Liberty. Boston: Lee & Shepard, Publishers, 1877.
- Manifesto On Religious Freedom. Washington: Baptist World Alliance, 1950.
- Minear, Paul S. "The Mystery of Baptism," Religion in Life, XX (Spring, 1951), pp. 225-235.
- Mullins, Edgar Young. The Christian Religion In Its Doctrinal Expression. Philadelphia: The Judson Press, c.1917.
- Orr, Wm. W. God's Answer To Young People's Problems. Los Angeles: Bible Institute of Los Angeles, n.d.
- Pendleton, J. M. The Atonement of Christ. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1885.
- "Personal Soul-Winning," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (February 22, 1951), p. 177.
- Price, Bruce H. "Liturgy in Worship," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (April 5, 1951), p. 322.
- Rice, John R. Bible Baptism. Wheaton: Sword of the Lord Publishers, c.1943.
- Rider, R. P. "The Pioneer Period of Baptist History in Missouri (1796-1834)," The Journal of Religion, VII (July, 1927), pp. 387-95.
- Rushbrooke, J. H. "The Historic Witness of the Baptists," Review and Expositor, XXX (October, 1933), pp. 403-13.
- "Thoughts on the Values of Baptism and the Supper," Review and Expositor, XXX (April, 1933), pp. 136-46.
- Torbet, Robert G. A History of the Baptists. Chicago: The Judson Press, c.1950.
- Baptist Leadership. New York: American Baptist Home Mission Society, Department of Evangelism, 1951.
- What Baptists Believe. New York: American Baptist Home Mission Society, Department of Evangelism, 1951.

- Stealey, Sydnor L. "American Baptist Organization," The Review and Expositor, XLIII (April, 1946), p. 167.
- ". "The Revival Method of Evangelism," Review and Expositor, XLII (January, 1945), pp. 26-35.
- Strong, Augustus Hopkins. Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism. Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, c.1899.
- ". Outline of Systematic Theology. Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, c.1908.
- ". Systematic Theology. Chicago: The Judson Press, c.1907.
- "The Church and Its Functions," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (February 8, 1951), cover.
- "The Church's Duty to Laymen," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (January 4, 1951), pp. 8-9.
- "The Sin of Drunkenness," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (April 12, 1951), pp. 342-43.
- Thompson, Calvin M. "Baptists in the World Today," Review and Expositor, XLII (July, 1945), p. 308.
- Wallace, O. C. S. What Baptists Believe. The New Hampshire Confession: An Exposition. Nashville: Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, c.1913.
- Watson, Louis E. "To Every Creature," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (April 22, 1951), pp. 344-45
- Weaver, Rufus W. "Christian Education as Fostered by Southern Baptists During the Past Quarter Century," Review and Expositor, XXIX (January, 1932), pp. 20-41.
- Whitesell, Paris D. "Elements in Lord's Supper," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (January 11, 1951), p. 34.
- Williams, Arthur Franklin. Christian Baptism as Set Forth in Holy Scriptures. New York: First Baptist Church n.d.
- Zwemer, Samuel M. "The Keys of the Kingdom," The Watchman-Examiner, XXXIX (April 12, 1951), pp. 346-47.

B. Secondary Sources

- "Baptists." The Catholic Encyclopedia. II. New York: Robert Appleton Co., c.1907.
- "Baptists." The Encyclopedia Americana. III. New York: The Americana Corporation, c.1950.
- Buck, Charles. A Theological Dictionary. Revised edition, corrected by George Bush. Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowpenthwart & Co., 1838.
- Carter, M. N. Lutheran Customs. A Popular Presentation of Some Practices of the Lutheran Church. Chicago: St. Philip's Lutheran Church., n.d.
- Drews, P. "Baptism, Liturgical Usage." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. I. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Engelder, Th. and Others. Popular Symbolics. The Doctrines of the Churches of Christendom and of Religious Bodies Examined in the Light of Scripture. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. c.1934.
- Feine, P. "Baptism, Biblical Doctrine." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. I. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Fox, Norman. "The Baptist Position Concerning Immersion and Infant Baptism." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. I. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Fritz, John H. C. Pastoral Theology. A Handbook of Scriptural Principles Written Especially for Pastors of the Lutheran Church. Revised edition. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945.
- Hansen, Harry, editor. The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1951. New York: New York World Telegram and The Sun, c.1951.

- Kattenbush, F. "Baptism, Church Doctrine." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. I. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Kerr, Hugh Thompson. A Compend of Luther's Theology. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1943.
- Klotsche, E. H. Christian Symbolics or Exposition of the Distinctive Character of the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches of as well as the Modern Denominations and Sects Represented in this Country. Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1929.
- Köberle, Adolf. The Quest for Holiness, A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Investigation. Translated from the third German edition by John Mattes. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1936.
- Krauth, Charles P. The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology, as Represented in the Augsburg Confession, and in the History and Literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1871.
- Kuiper, B. K. The Church in History. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.
- Luther, Martin. The Works of Martin Luther. The Philadelphia Edition. I. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1915.
- Mueller, John Theodore. Christian Dogmatics, A Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934.
- , "Holy Baptism." The Abiding Word, An Anthology of Doctrinal Essays for the Year 1946. II. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947.
- Neve, J. L. Churches and Sects of Christendom. Revised edition. Blair: Lutheran Publishing House, 1944.
- Newmann, A. H. "Baptists." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. I. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Rogers, Clement. Baptism and Christian Archeology. New York: The Oxford University Press, 1903.

- Sasse, H. Concordia Theological Monthly, XX (November, 1949), p. 869.
- Schaff, D. S. "Baptism of Infants." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. I. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Seiss, Joseph A. The Baptist System Examined, A Review of Dr. Richard Fuller and Others on Baptism and the Terms of Communion. Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1907.
- Warfield, Benjamin B. "The Argument Against the Necessity of Immersion." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. I. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.