INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

CONFEDERATE AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH: AN ECUMENICAL ANALYSIS AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF CHURCH AND CHURCH AUTHORITY 1707-1814

by

Rev. Francis W. Sacks, C.M.

Dissertation submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
of the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in
Theology and the degree of
Doctor in Theology [University
of St. Paul]

Université d'Ottawa
BIBLIOTHÈQUES
LIBRARIES
University of Ottawa

OTTAWA

1978

UMI Number: DC52563

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI®

UMI Microform DC52563
Copyright 2007 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

CONFEDERATE AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

by

Rev. Francis W. Sacks, C.M.

VOLUME I

OTTAWA

1978

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

CONFEDERATE AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH: AN ECUMENICAL ANALYSIS AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF CHURCH AND CHURCH AUTHORITY 1707-1814

Rev. Francis W. Sacks, C.M.

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology, August 1978
(M.Th., University of Ottawa, 1969)
(S.T.L., University of St. Paul, 1969)
(M.Div., Mary Immaculate Seminary, 1967)

Directed by Roger Lapointe

The purpose of this study is threefold. First of all, the author uncovers new insights into the tradition of church and church authority in the Philadelphia Baptist Association of the eighteenth century (hereafter: P.B.A.). Secondly, he indicates the strengths and weaknesses in that tradition. Thirdly, he uncovers the principles, both explicit and implicit, which support the Philadelphia Baptist tradition.

The work includes two introductory historical chapters which describe the British and American roots of the Philadelphia Baptists. These chapters also provide the genealogy for the official Philadelphia Baptist Confession of 1742 (Second London Confession of 1677 and 1689), and the second chapter introduces other official P.B.A. sources used in

this study: the Church Disciplines of 1743 and 1798, an essay of 1749 on the power and duty of an association, and various associational sermons and letters.

The analysis of official sources of the P.B.A. includes a comparison of the Confession with its background sources: the Westminster Confession of 1646, the Declaration of Savoy of 1658, the Particular Baptist First London Confession of 1644, and other British Baptist and Separatist sources. By searching through the evidence from the primary sources, the author gathers insights into the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of universal Church (chapter 3), gathered church (chapter 4), and the council and association (chapter 5). He proposes composite definitions for church and association based upon evidence in the sources, and, in chapter 6, draws together previous findings about the nature of church authority in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the eighteenth century.

The author provides historical explanations for an apparent discrepancy between the explicit P.B.A. theology of universal Church and the practice of the Association. According to the author, the basic models of church operative in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the eighteenth century were those of covenant and communion. The covenant model appears as primary because the formal cause of church was the covenant. The communion model, however, is shown to be more pervasive, with elements of other models (especially institutional and herald models) also in evidence.

The study reveals that the P.B.A., in its explicit associational theory, differentiated the council from the association. The former was compulsory; the latter, totally voluntary as a style of interchurch fellowship. The analysis also shows that Philadelphia Baptists viewed the church covenant, church-power, and excommunication in limited terms, and that they overlooked the missionary dimension of both the church and the association.

The study highlights major underlying principles operative in the P.B.A. tradition of church and church authority, and the author specifies which of these are more basic than others. He also provides a scenario of the process of discerning the authentic meaning of Scripture among Philadelphia Baptists who accepted the theory expressed in the sources.

The analysis of official P.B.A. sources shows that the P.B.A. accepted church authority at several levels of the local congregation, the church officers, the church council, and the association. The author develops categories from the evidence in the sources in order to characterize these powers: association-power ad intra is distinguished from ad extra (those concerning the inner life of the association and those concerning the life of the churches); ecclesiastical powers of divine origin are differentiated from those of ecclesiastical origin.

The author describes each power in detail and clarifies their interrelationship. He shows, moreover, that Philadelphia Baptists practiced a true delegation of authority and power, and that the

Association had ecclesiological significance even though it was merely of ecclesiastical origin and historically conditioned.

According to the author, the P.B.A. view of church and its associational theory manifested certain limitations, but these are outweighed by their advantages. By way of extrapolation, the author suggests the relevance of the eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist tradition for the Churches today, and he asks specific questions of both Catholic and Baptist theology.

Part of the value of this work is its appendices and bibliography. The appendices collect eighteenth century statements about church from official P.B.A. and other sources. Appendix C offers an extended note on Calvinism and Arminianism that situates Philadelphia Baptists within the Reformed theological tradition. Extended annotations on primary Baptist sources offer a useful tool for further research into the Philadelphia Baptist tradition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES x

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xi

SOME NOTES ON THE USE OF FOOTNOTES xii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xiii

INTRODUCTION 1

Context and Reasons for the Study 1
Reasons for Selecting the Philadelphia Baptist Association 4
Purpose of the Study 7
Statement of the Objectives 7
Previous Studies of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 7
Importance of the Study and Contributions to Knowledge 11
Method of the Study 15
The Primary Sources 16
Problem of Dating Prior to 1752 19
Limits of the Study 20
The Hermeneutical Task 22
Past Horizons for Interpretation 24
Present Horizons for Interpretation 27
Conclusions from Previous Studies 32
Preliminary Definitions 34

Chapter
I. BRITISH INFLUENCES ON THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION 38

Stages of Baptist Development in England 41
Early Dissent under Elizabeth and Baptist Origins under the Early Stuarts 41
The Rise of General and Particular Baptists 43
Differences in Theology and Orientation between General and Particular Baptists 46
Significance of the General Baptists 49
Baptist Expansion during the Commonwealth Period . . . 53
Baptist Church Extension 54

Development of Baptist Church Organization 57
Associations 57
Church Messengers 59
General Assemblies 60
Bases for Connectionalism 61
Confessional Statements in the Reformed Tradition 64
The Westminster Assembly 65
The Synod of Savoy 73
Significance of the Commonwealth Period for Baptists 83
Eventual Toleration for Baptists under the Restored Monarchy 85
Summary about Baptist Origins and Development in England 90
Particular Baptist Genealogy of the Philadelphia Confession 92
Particular Baptist Confessions and Church Disciplines 93
The First London Confession of 1644 94
The Midland Association Confession of 1655 96
The Second London Confession of 1677 and 1689 . . . 98
The Keach Confession and Church Discipline of 1697 101
Conclusions about the Particular Baptist Genealogy of the Philadelphia Confession 106

II. AMERICAN CONTEXT OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AND ITS SOURCES 108

Revivalist Movements and Their Effects on the Philadelphia Baptist Association 109
The Great Awakening in America 110
The Newer Evangelicalism Arising from the Great Awakening and Its Indirect Impact among Philadelphia Baptists 113
John Gill (1697-1771) 116
Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) 117
Separate Baptists Emerging from the Great Awakening and Their Direct Impact upon Philadelphia Baptists 119
Separate Baptists in the South 120
Separate Baptists in New England 123
The Erosion of a Theological Basis for Associations among Baptists 127
An Ecclesiastical Pragmatism Lacking a Clear Theology 127
Religious Roots of Individualism among Baptists of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 129
Social and Political Theories of Individualism . . . 131

Select Specific Events and Literature of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 135
Origin and Early Development of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 136
Charter Members of the Association 136
Early Stages of Affiliation 142
The General Pattern for Association 144
Association Sermons 145
Circular Letters and Correspondence 147
Growth among Baptists of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 149
Main Concerns and Functions of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 154
A Concern for a Sound Ministry 155
Interest in Promoting General Education 161
Promotion of Missions and Evangelism 164
Rise of Missionary Societies 168
Society Method Overtakes Association Method . . . 170
Unsuccessful Plans for National Unity 174
The Philadelphia Plan 175
The Plan of Morgan Edwards 176
The Virginia General Committee 177
The Warren Proposal 177
The Second Philadelphia Plan 178
The Promotion of Denominational Solidarity 181
Bases for Advice of the Association 183
The Sources of the Eighteenth Century Associational Theory among Philadelphia Baptists 184
The Plan of the Association of 1707 184
The Decisions of 1742 185
The Philadelphia Confession of 1742 186
The Church Discipline of 1743 191
The Essay on Associations of 1749 194
The Warren Documents on Association of 1766-69 195
Morgan Edwards's Treatise of 1768 197
The Church Discipline of 1798 200
Association Sermons and Letters 202
Reflections Based upon a Consideration of the British and American Contexts of the Philadelphia Baptist Association and Its Sources 203
Important Axioms for an Interpretation of the Sources in the Philadelphia Tradition 204
Conflicting Attitudes about Church Life Among Baptists of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 208
Themes for a Study of the Philadelphia Tradition and Basic Questions 211

III. THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF UNIVERSAL CHURCH 214

A Comparative Study of the Sources Behind the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 216
The Nature of the Universal Church 218
The Nature of Church Synods and Councils 227
The Administration of Ordinances to Churches Lacking Officers 232
Conditions for Establishing an Essential Church . . . 234
Churches Contrasted to Congregations 236
Ministerial Care of Non-members in the Same Territory 237
Conclusions from a Comparison of Confessional Views on the Nature of the Church 239
The Philadelphia Baptist Tradition about Universal Church 242
The Explicit Teachings and Historical Roots of the Philadelphia Tradition about the Invisible Universal Church 243
The Philadelphia Tradition Contrasted to General Baptist Views 246
The Roots of the Philadelphia Tradition of the Invisible Universal Church 249
The Historical Reasons for the Explicit Philadelphia Tradition about the Invisible Universal Church . . . 254
Some Paradoxical Indications that Philadelphia Baptists in Practice Accepted the Visible Church beyond the Local Congregation 257
The Use of the Terms Fellowship, Communion and Excommunication 258
The Symbolic Act of Extending the Right Hand of Fellowship 265
The Call to Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace 268
The Use of the Terms Church and the Body of Christ in the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 270
Conclusions about the Philadelphia Tradition of the Universal Church 271

IV. THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION AS GATHERED CHURCH OF VISIBLE SAINTS 279

The Distinction Between an Essential and a Complete Church 280
Towards a Definition of Visible Church in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 283
The Matter of Visible Churches: Visible Saints 285
The Visible Saints as Saints 286
Effectual Calling 287

Saving Faith 288
Soul Competency or Individual Liberty 290
The Visible Saints as Visible 293
Believers' Baptism 294
Personal Spirituality 298
The Formal Cause of Visible Churches:
Church Covenant 302
The Roots of the Philadelphia Baptist Understanding of Church Covenant 302
The Triple-Covenant of Grace 303
The Dimensions of Church Covenant 306
The Philadelphia Practice of Constituting Essential Churches 309
A Partial Working Definition of Gathered Church in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 311
The Purpose of Visible Churches: Christ's Visible Reign 312
The Prophetic Function: to Preach the Word 314
The Priestly Function: to Administer the Ordinances of Christ in Public Worship 316
The Ordinances 317
The Ruling Function: to Maintain Gospel Discipline 320
And Addition to the Working Definition of Gathered Church in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 322
The Authority and Power of Visible Churches:
Church-Power 323
The Nature of Church Authority 325
The Definition of Church-Power 328
First Church-Power: Admitting and Dismissing Members 329
Second Church-Power: Calling and Ordaining of Church Officers 332
The Number of Church Officers 332
The Ceremonies of Ordination and Settling of Pastors 338
The Nature of Office-Power 341
Third Church-Power: Disciplining of Church Members 348
The Nature and Kinds of Church Censure and Their Effects 349
Admonition or Rebuke 350
Suspension from Communion but not from Union . . 351
Excommunication or Exclusion from Union and from Communion 352
The Process of Church Censure 357
The Complete Working Definition of Gathered Church in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 364
A Critique of the Philadelphia Baptist Definition of a Gathered Church 365
The Models of Church Operative in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Gathered Churches 366

The Bonds Unifying Members of Gathered Churches . . 371
The Beneficiaries Served by Gathered Churches . . . 374
The Benefits Bestowed by the Gathered Churches . . . 377
Conclusions about Church Models in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 381
The Positive Value of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Gathered Churches 383
The Limitations of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Gathered Churches 385
Conclusions about the Philadelphia Tradition of Local Congregations as Gathered Churches of Visible Saints 388

V. THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF THE ASSOCIATION AS A VOLUNTARY FELLOWSHIP OF INDEPENDENT CHURCHES 392

The Official Philadelphia Baptist Sources Dealing with Connectionalism 394
Major Developments in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia Baptist Associational Theory 398
Consistencies in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia Baptist Views of Associations 398
The Advisory Nature of Associations 399
The Grounds for Justifying Associations 401
The Practical Utility of Associations 401
The Biblical Justifications for Associations . . . 403
The Theological Justifications for Associations . 407
The General Purpose of an Association 412
Significant Developments in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia Baptist Views of the Association . . . 414
The Introduction of the Term Delegate by Benjamin Griffith in 1743 415
The Development of the Confessional Statements by Benjamin Griffith in 1743 418
The Clarification about the Positive Power of the Association by Benjamin Griffith in 1743 . . . 426
The Emergence of the Warren Association Documents from 1767 to 1769 430
Conclusions about Eighteenth Century Philadelphia Baptist Associational Theory 434
The Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of the Association . 438
The Nature of the Association Covenant 439
Contents of an Association Covenant 440
The Association Covenant Compared to the Church Covenant 441
The Association Compared to the Church Council 447
The Nature of Association-Power 456
The Basis and Nature of Association-Power 457
The Basis of Association-Power 457
Association-Power Contrasted to Church-Power . . . 460
Conclusions about Association-Power 464

The Functions and Exercise of Association-Power . . 465
Association-Power Ad Intra 466
Association-Power Ad Extra 477
Association-Powers Relating to the Exercise of Church-Powers 478
Association-Powers Relating to the Common Good of the Member Churches 490
The Definition of an Association in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 496
Conclusions and Critical Reflections about the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Associations 497
Conclusions and Critical Reflections on the Philadelphia Baptist View of the Association 498
The Positive Value of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Associations 507
Some Limitations of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Associations 510

VI. THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF CHURCH AUTHORITY . . 517

The Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority 518
An Overview of Church Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 518
A Comparative Study of the View of Scripture in the Philadelphia Baptist Confession 523
The Complete Philadelphia Baptist Teaching about Scriptural Authority 528
The Use of Scripture Among the Philadelphia Baptists 531
Underlying Principles in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority 550
Clarification of Terms and Categories of Church Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 563
Clarification of Terms and Categories of Authority and Power in the Church 563
The Levels and Sources of Church Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition . . . 571
Church-Power 571
Office-Power 575
Council-Power 581
Association-Power 584
Conclusions about Levels of Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Association 590
A Reconstruction of the Process of Discernment in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition 598
Critical Reflections about the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority 606
Conclusions and Critical Reflections about the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority 607

Advantages in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority 609
Some Limitations of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority 611

VII. CONCLUSIONS 615

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition for Ecclesiology Today 622
Some Questions for Catholic Theology 627
Some Questions for Baptist Theology 631

APPENDICES 633

A. Documents on the Association of Churches during the Eighteenth Century in the Philadelphia Baptist Association 634

B. Additional Sources on Associations 711

C. An Extended Note on Calvinism and Arminianism 748

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 767

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure
1. Growth in Number of Baptist Churches in America: 1660-1780 150
2. Territory of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 152
3. Comparison of Chapters in the Confessional Family of the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 192
4. Basic Principles Underlying the Philadelphia Baptist View of Church Authority 560
5. Schema of Types of Divine and Ecclesiastical Powers . . . 589
6. Outline of Church Powers in the Philadelphia Baptist Association of the Eighteenth Century 591

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.H.S.--American Baptist Historical Society archives, Rochester, New York
CD--Summary of Church Discipline of 1772 of the Charleston Baptist Association
DCC--The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd ed. (London: 1974)
E--The Customs of Primitive Churches of 1768 by Morgan Edwards (unofficial P.B.A. source)
EA--The Encyclopedia Americana, 1934 ed.
* G--Essay on the "Power and Duty of an Association of Churches" of 1749 by Benjamin Griffith
** K--A Short Confession (Keach Confession) of 1697 by Benjamin and Elias Keach
** 1K--The Keach Discipline of 1697 by Benjamin and Elias Keach
** 1L--First London Confession of 1644 of Particular Baptists
** 2L--Second London Confession of 1677 (and 1689) of Particular Baptists (later P)
** MA--Midland Association Confession of 1655 of Particular Baptists
NCE--New Catholic Encyclopaedia, 1967 ed.
OC--An Orthodox Creed, Confession of 1688 of London General Baptists
OOSP--St. Paul's University library, Ottawa, Ontario
* P--Philadelphia (Second London) Confession of 1742
* 1P--A Short Treatise of Church Discipline of 1743 by Benjamin Griffith
* 2P--A Treatise of Church Discipline of 1798 by Samuel Jones
P.B.A.--Philadelphia Baptist Association
PS--Platform of Church Polity of 1658 of Congregationalists of Savoy
PBL--Lehigh University library, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
1S--A Declaration of the Faith, Confession of 1658 of the Congregationalists of Savoy
2S--Adaptation of 1S in 1608 by Massachusetts Synod
3S--Adaptation of 1S in 1708 by Saybrook Synod
TC--A True Confession, Confession of 1596 of English Separatists
W--Westminster Confession of 1646

---

*Official sources of the P.B.A.

**Particular Baptist sources influencing the P.B.A.

SOME NOTES ON THE USE OF FOOTNOTES

1. For convenience, the author has devised his own list of abbreviations (q.v.). In footnotes, numbers refer to chapters and sections (e.g., 1S, 20.2 refers to the Savoy Declaration of Faith of 1658, chapter 20, section 2; 1K, p. 10.5 refers to the Church Discipline of Keach, page 10, section 5.).

2. Whenever the materials given in the appendices A and B are cited in footnotes, to help the reader find his place, parenthetical citations are given to the pertinent lines. Thus, P,27 (A406-593) indicates that chapter 27 of the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 can be found in appendix A, lines 406 to 593.

3. References to Abram Dunn Gillette's edition of the minutes of the Philadelphia Association are to the year (with the first two numbers deleted), followed by a colon, page number, and, when appropriate, section number. Thus, Gillette, 69:108.5 indicates minutes for the year 1769, found in Gillette's edition, page 108, section number 5. The nineteenth century references have the full year indicated, e.g., Gillette, 1805:52.4, for the year 1805.

Whenever the references by year seem inappropriate, or unnecessary for purposes of interpretation, the work is simply cited by page numbers, e.g., Gillette, pp. 53, 64, etc.[1]

---

[1]Abram Dunn Gillette, ed., Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, from A.D. 1707, to A.D. 1807; being the first One Hundred Years of its Existence (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to persons too numerous to mention by name. Since beginning this project eight years ago, he has had the good fortune to meet Baptists who encouraged him to continue the work. Among these, Mr. Edward C. Starr, the former curator of the American Baptist Historical Society archives in Rochester, New York, deserves special mention.

A special thanks to all my confreres in the Congregation of the Mission whose generosity in allowing me time for this project has been most gratifying. Thanks too to Dr. Mary Minella (S.T.D. [Washington, D.C.: C.U.]), Chairperson of the Department of Religious Studies, Niagara University, New York, for her careful, critical reading of the preliminary draft. My indebtedness extends in a special way to my patient and wonderful typists, Mrs. Sandy Ramey and Mrs. Sharon Harper, of Auburn, Alabama.

Finally, I remain most appreciative to my dissertation mentor, Dr. Roger Lapointe (D.E.S. [Rome: P.I.B.]), of the University of Ottawa. While this work, including its imperfections, remains my own, it could never have come to light without his encouragement and assistance.

In love, I dedicate this study to my parents.

THE AUTHOR
July, 1978
Auburn, Alabama

INTRODUCTION

Context and Reasons for the Study

In recent years theological discussions within an ecumenical context have reached new heights. The comparative theologizing typical of Faith and Order work, and the controversial theologizing typical of German scholarship of a few years ago, have given way to a new spirit of dialogue between Christian theologians of differing traditions. John F. Hotchkin, who heads the American bishops' committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, stated recently in a popular Catholic magazine:

> Dialogists were hunters stalking the truths that are hidden in the depths of positions held by separated Christians.[1]

These sentiments are similar to those of Avery Dulles. In his comprehensive review of the different models of Church, this noted Jesuit scholar radiates his own conviction that any longstanding Christian tradition has something to offer to the joint theological task. He writes:

> . . . what any large group of Christian believers have confidently held over a considerable time should be accepted unless one has serious reasons for questioning it. Even if one comes to the conclusion that the tenet was false, one should at least make the effort to unveil the positive reason that made people accept error and thus to disclose the truth at the heart of the heresy.

---

[1]John F. Hotchkin, "An Ecumenical View from a Catholic Perspective--1977," New Catholic World 220 (1977):160-63. This entire issue of New Catholic World is devoted to ecumenism.

> . . . men are more apt to be correct in what they affirm than in what they deny. . . .[2]

Such an openness to discovery of truth in another's viewpoint has awakened among Christians across denominational lines a renewed awareness of the core of the Gospel resonant in each tradition and of a fundamental agreement in faith. Significant strides forward have already taken place in Roman Catholic dialogs with Lutherans and with Anglicans. For example, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission has published significant consensus documents on the Eucharist (Windsor Statement of 1971), on the ministry (Canterbury Statement of 1973), and on church authority (Venice Report of 1977).[3] In his 1977 address marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pope Paul VI noted:

> . . . positive convergence is constantly taking shape, even on questions which in the past have strongly divided Christians, such as the fundamental issues of the reality of the Eucharist, ministry and authority in the Church.[4]

Even discussions about the thorny problem of papal primacy have led to some astonishing results. In addition to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission's Venice Report, the Lutheran-Roman

---

[2]Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1974), pp. 182-83.

[3]On the Anglican-Roman Catholic discussions see Herbert J. Ryan, "Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue," New Catholic World 220 (1977):168-72. On the Lutheran-Roman Catholic discussions see Carl J. Peter, "Ambiguity, Criticism, and Promise," New Catholic World 220 (1977):187-90.

[4]Cited by Hotchkin, p. 162.

Catholic discussions in the United States offered a consensus viewpoint in Papal Primacy and the Universal Church.[5]

Encouraging as such studies have been, the Roman Catholic theology of Church and church authority continues to remain an obstacle to full communion among the Christian Churches and ecclesial communities. The Catholic stance on authority seems particularly far removed from views of a Reformed theology especially among the Free Churches.[6] In an effort to lessen the gap between Catholic and Free Church views, this study touches upon a specific Reformed tradition in colonial America, the Philadelphia Baptist Association (hereafter: P.B.A.). It presents a single Roman Catholic analysis and interpretation of a valuable Christian tradition of confederate church authority that thrived during the whole of the eighteenth century. In the spirit of the newer dialogical approach to ecumenical studies, the present author offers his own reading of the events that shaped and conditioned the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of Church and church authority.

---

[5]Papal Primacy and the Universal Church, ed. by Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974); also background articles in Peter in the New Testament: a Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reuman (New York/Paramus/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1973). Another collection is A Pope for all Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern Church, ed. by Peter J. McCord (New York/Paramus/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1976). Essays in the latter include Joseph A. Burgess (Lutheran), Avery Dulles (Catholic), C. Brownlow Hastings (Baptist), Ross Mackenzie (Reformed), John Meyendorff (Orthodox), J. Robert Nelson (Methodist), and J. Robert Wright (Anglican).

[6]Free Churches is a general classification for Churches independent of any civil or ecclesiastical authority beyond the local congregation. For the difference between Church and church see below, p. 34.

Reasons for Selecting the Philadelphia Baptist Association

The author, who focused his attention on the beginnings of religious life in America, and who had been directed to areas of Baptist history, became acquainted with an influential Baptist organization, the P.B.A. Initial investigations revealed that this Association merited further study since it was the watershed for Baptist groups in America, both in the North and in the South.

The P.B.A. played a major role in the early development of Baptists in America. For Winthrop S. Hudson, the renowned American Baptist historian, the P.B.A. "may be regarded as more or less normative and may serve as a case study of the associational pattern among Baptists."[7] Robert T. Handy, Baptist historian-theologian, suggests that, because future associations adhered to the pattern of the P.B.A., "a focus on the faith and life of the Philadelphia body gives the key to the whole development of Regular Baptists in the eighteenth century."[8]

The first Baptist association in the new world, the P.B.A. remained for forty-four years the only significant group of Baptist churches in America. Baptists of the time looked to the Association

---

[7]Winthrop S. Hudson, "The Associational Principle Among Baptists," Foundations 1, no. 1 (1958):13.

[8]Robert T. Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," in Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. by Winthrop S. Hudson (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1959), p. 32. This book contains a whole series on the historical and theological issues that have produced changes in church order among Baptists in America; a basic collection of contemporary studies by Northern Baptists trying to reinterpret Baptist traditions.

For the meaning of Regular Baptist see below, p. 36.

for advice and assistance. Throughout the eighteenth century the P.B.A. dominated American Baptist life. Though small in its initial membership, it could even be considered a national group.[9]

The P.B.A. provided the organization needed to help Baptists weather the demands of the times in education, missions, communications among scattered churches, response to social issues like gambling, religious nonconformity and slavery, and Baptist relationships to other groups like the Free Masons and other Protestants.[10] Perhaps the most significant influence was the Calvinistic theological tradition which the P.B.A. passed on to American Baptists through its ministers, sister associations, and the Philadelphia Confession of Faith officially adopted in 1742.[11] The historian, Henry C. Vedder, writing at the turn of the century, summarized the importance of the P.B.A. for the Baptist theological traditions:

> Its [The P.B.A.'s] adoption of a strongly Calvinistic Confession in 1742 (or possibly earlier) was a turning-point in the history of American Baptists, as it ensured the prevalence of that type of theology. Up to this time the Arminian Baptists had been the stronger in New England, and the colonies of New York and New Jersey, and it was at one time probable that they would control the development of the denomination. It was the Philadelphia Association that turned the tide, and decided the course of Baptist history. The Association speedily became the leading body among American Baptists--a position it has not wholly lost to this day [i.e. 1907]. Pretty much everything good in our history, from 1700 to 1850, may be traced to its initiative or active co-operation.[12]

---

[9]Handy, pp. 31, 52. See also Robert G. Torbet, History of the Baptists, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1963), pp. 212-14 (Hereafter: History).

[10]Torbet, History, p. 213.

[11]Torbet, History, p. 254.

[12]Henry C. Vedder, A Short History of the Baptists, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907), p. 306

Though Vedder was excessive in his praise of the P.B.A., he recorded the truth. The Association deserves attention because of its privileged place in the early history of American Baptists.

Recognizing the place of the P.B.A. as a significant eighteenth century experience of Free Church, the author was faced with the best approach for a study of the P.B.A. view of Church and church authority. E. S. Gaustad pointed out the way. In his article suggesting themes for research in American Baptist history, he mentioned articles by Dr. Hudson:

> Recent articles by Winthrop S. Hudson in Foundations (vol. i, nos. 1 and 2; vol. iv, no. 4) indicate the need for and value in re-examination of the idea of congregational polity among Baptists. A study of the authority and status of the early association (most conspicuously Philadelphia, Charleston and Warren) seems to be the most helpful approach to this issue, revealing--as it tends to do--just where, between anarchy and tyranny, the power of the local church lay.[13]

Hudson, in his articles, suggested four basic sources of the P.B.A. that need to be investigated. These sources, listed below, are likewise affirmed by Dr. Handy in his essay on Baptist concepts of the Church.[14]

Thus, documents exist for a thorough study by a Roman Catholic of the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of Church and church authority.

(Hereafter: Short History). On Arminian vs. Calvinistic theology see app. C and discussion in chap. 1, pp. 43-49.

[13]E. S. Gaustad, "Themes for research in American Baptist History," Foundations 6 (1963):146-73, 152.

[14]Winthrop S. Hudson, "Documents on the Association of Churches," Foundations 4 (1961):323-39; and Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," pp. 31-33. For a fuller description of these and other primary sources see chap. 2, pp. 184-203. The four sources are those mentioned below, p. 17.

Other scholars have made use of the same sources, but none of them has dealt exclusively with the Philadelphia tradition, and none has posed some of the questions discussed in this study.

Purpose of the Study

Statement of the Objectives

This study is a critical analysis from an ecumenical perspective of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of Church and church authority during the eighteenth century. It seeks to uncover new knowledge about that tradition. That knowledge today might help to explain the apparent discrepancies between a theory of church independency and a practice of church interdependency exemplified, in part, by the P.B.A. itself.

As such the work centers upon the Philadelphia tradition of Church as expressed in official P.B.A. documents of the eighteenth century. Moreover, the study brings to light the explicit and implicit principles operative within the eighteenth century P.B.A. ecclesiology. It also highlights the strengths and weaknesses in the same tradition. By way of concluding remarks and questions, the work indicates the relevance of the P.B.A. views both for Roman Catholics and for Baptists today.

The specific aim of this work is threefold: (1) to uncover new insights into the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church and church authority in the eighteenth century; (2) to reveal the strengths and weaknesses in that tradition; and (3) to uncover the principles, both explicit and implicit, that underlay the tradition, and that are

conditions necessary for any reconstruction of the theory of church authority among P.B.A. Baptists of the eighteenth century.

In the process of pursuing this threefold objective, the study also offers critical remarks about the nature of the P.B.A. itself, its ecclesial shape, and the forces at work in the eighteenth century that explain the explicit ecclesiology, and the church praxis, of the same Association.

Previous Studies of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

Several dissertations have treated associations among Baptists. Some have dealt with aspects of the P.B.A. None of these works, however, has dealt exclusively with the theory of church authority in the P.B.A. or sought to explain in depth the Philadelphia tradition as such.

One of the most thorough treatments of associational life among American Baptists of the eighteenth century is the analysis by Walter B. Shurden.[15] In 1967 he undertook a critical appraisal of all Baptist

---

[15]Walter B. Shurden, "Associationalism among Baptists in America, 1707-1814" (Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Seminary, 1967); see also his article, "The Development of Baptist Associations in America, 1707-1814," Baptist History and Heritage 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1969): 31-39.

Studies on some aspect of Baptist associations include (1) *Ralph E. Ehren*, "Connectionalism in Baptist Life before 1826" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966). Film copy in Rochester, New York, American Baptist Historical Society Archives (Hereafter: A.B.H.S.); (2) *Frank R. Bennett*, "A Theological Study of the Association as an Ecclesiological Organization within the Southern Baptist Convention" (D.R.E. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1965). Abstract attached Univ. microfilm no. 65-10431; (3) *G. R. Ford*, "The Baptist District Associations of Virginia, 1766-1950" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1961). Film in A.B.H.S.; (4) *G. Hugh Wamble*, "The Concept and Practice of Christian Fellowship: the Connectional and Interdenominational Aspects Thereof, Among Seventeenth Century English Baptists" (Th.D.

associations from 1707 to 1814. Recording Baptist reactions to associations in eighteenth century America, Shurden deals with the following: the bases for associations, biblical, theological and practical; the philosophy of associational authority; and the contributions of Baptist

---

dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1955). Film in A.B.H.S.; (5) *George M. Starbird*, "The Adaptation of the Baptist Associational Movement in America to Its Environment" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago Graduate Divinity School, 1924). Zerox copy of the author; (6) *Robert A. Chapman*, "Theological Interests of the Early American Baptists Associations" (B.D. dissertation, University of Chicago Graduate Divinity School, 1921). Film in A.B.H.A.; and Idem, "The Development of Baptist Associations during the Colonial Period" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago Graduate Divinity School, 1920). Film in A.B.H.S.; (7) *William H. Allison*, "Baptist Councils in America: a Historical Study of Their Origin and the Principles of Their Development" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago Graduate Divinity School, 1906). [Published: (Chicago: Press of Geo. K. Hazlett and Co., 1906).]

Studies on some aspect of the P.B.A. include (1) *William D. May*, "The Philadelphia and Charleston Baptist Church Disciplines: a theological analysis" (M.Th. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1961). Film copy in A.B.H.S.; (2) *James L. Clark*, "Some Influences of the Philadelphia Baptist Association upon Baptists of America to 1814" (Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1948). Film copy in A.B.H.S.; (3) *Weston Brunner*, "A Query in Baptist History: The Philadelphia Association, was it in its organization and early history strictly Calvinistic?" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1894). Film copy in A.B.H.S.; plus the studies published by (A) *Robert G. Torbet*, A Social History of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707-1940 (Philadelphia: Westbrook Publishing Co., 1944). (Hereafter: Social History); (B) *Henry C. Vedder*, History of the Baptists in the Middle States (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898); and (C) *David Spencer*, The Early Baptists of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore, 1877).

Studies related to areas of the present one include: (1) *Bobby D. Compton*, "Baptist Church Manuals in America: a study in Baptist polity and practice" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968). Film copy in A.B.H.S. University microfilm no. 68-7825; (2) *Donald M. Lake*, "Southern Baptist View of the Church: an analysis of the Ecclesiology of the Churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention based on selected literature between 1925 and 1963" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967). Film copy in A.B.H.S. University microfilm no. 67-16814; and (3) *Paul M. Harrison*, Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition: a social case study of the American Baptist Convention (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959). [Reprint: (Carbondale and Edwardville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971)]; Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1959.

associations to denominational life. Comprehensive in scope, the study provides the general context for American Baptist associational theory. It establishes convincing arguments to support the view that associations were constituted of member churches, not just of individual Baptists. It indicates that while Baptists found associations practical, they also developed biblical and theological justifications for their affiliation.

An admirable achievement, Shurden's work makes use of the extant minutes from among some 125 Baptist associations in America, as well as the related histories of those associations.[16] The author uses the same sources from the P.B.A. which are basic to the present work. His objective, however, differs from the present author. Shurden strove for a critical appraisal of all Baptist views in the eighteenth century. The present author deals primarily with the P.B.A., specifically, with the limits of associational theory as stated within the official documents of the P.B.A. and with issues which concern the author as a Catholic interested in ecumenical discussion. The issues, however, are always those which emerge from a study of the sources themselves, and they are discussed in the context of Congregational views of the eighteenth century.

Shurden's synthesis, nevertheless, provides an adequate statement about what was, in fact, the understanding of associations among Baptists of the period. The present study intends to move beyond those

---

[16]Shurden, p. xiii; for a complete listing of associations by states see his bibliography, pp. 246-53.

facts to understand more fully why Philadelphia Baptists believed what they did, and why they could not move beyond their stated positions in the eighteenth century.

Importance of the Study and Contributions to Knowledge

This study leads to new knowledge in the following five areas. First, it provides a critical view different from that of previous scholars studying Baptist associations--the view of a Roman Catholic. Second, it deals in greater detail with the Philadelphia Baptist theory of Church and church authority than have previous studies.[17] Third, the study uncovers those principles operative in the eighteenth century theory of church authority which are the conditions needed to reconstruct the P.B.A. view of church order today. Fourth, the study points to historical factors which help to explain the apparent opposition between the explicit statements about Church in official P.B.A. documents and the eighteenth century praxis of church affiliation within the same Association. Fifth, the ecclesial significance of the P.B.A. as an association of independent Baptist churches is examined, and a statement of associational authority provided that harmonizes with eighteenth century P.B.A. thinking.[18]

---

[17] On the spelling of Church and church see below, pp. 34-35.

[18] The precise sense of ecclesial is defined below. It connotes elements in church life which are theologically based, according to Baptist views, in Scripture itself (see below, p. 35).

These areas of new insight into the Philadelphia Baptist view of Church and church authority should prove beneficial today both to Baptists and to all who study ecclesiology.

The eighteenth century was probably the time when Baptists maintained the greatest balance between the independence and interdependence of their churches, between the "local autonomy" of each congregation and the cooperative association among the churches. The associational principle, so basic to Baptist connectionalism, was developed in the ongoing life of the P.B.A. Already in the late eighteenth century, however, that very principle came under attack. By the nineteenth century a rugged individualism had effectively undermined the theological foundations for Baptist connectionalism.[19]

In recent decades, American Baptists have developed a renewed interest in their original heritage. In 1959, theological discussions about the Church were conducted at Green Lake, Wisconsin.[20] The state of affairs among Northern Baptist churches has been characterized by Hudson as "stumbling into disorder."[21] Hudson's feelings seemed

---

[19]For a discussion of the erosion of the theological basis for associations see chap. 2, pp. 127-35.

[20]This was the second theological conference sponsored by the American Baptist Convention at Green Lake on July 6-11, 1959. The first conference, also at Green Lake, was in 1954, with regional conferences in 1956. The fruits of the first conference, plus regional sessions, are collected in Great Themes in Theology, ed. by Lynn Leavenworth (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1958). The papers resulting from the second conference appear in Baptist Concepts of the Church, op. cit. (see n. 8).

[21]Winthrop S. Hudson, "Stumbling into Disorder," Foundations 1, no. 2 (1958):45-71. Hudson discusses the shift from the associational pattern (with representation from churches) to the society pattern (with life membership based on voluntary support); see discussion in chap. 2, pp. 170-74.

justified when Paul M. Harrison's sociological study appeared. In 1959, Harrison analyzed the structures of authority in the American Baptist Convention, at the time the fourth largest group of Baptists and a major group that evolved from the P.B.A. He studied the problem of the "presence of power and the absence of authority" and developed his own terminology to describe the American Baptist Convention. Setting the study in a framework of a theory of authority and power, he called for a reinterpretation of the doctrine of the Church by Baptists. Harrison writes:

> In recent years some Baptists have called for recognition and acceptance of the power of the denominational leaders. But it is extremely difficult to make a formal change in the polity system without altering the doctrine of the church. Therefore, it is not likely that a significant change will occur with respect to patterns of authority unless it is preceded by a reinterpretation of doctrinal formulas. . . .[22]

In order to re-establish the theological foundations for associational authority among Baptists, an authority that had existed in the eighteenth century, a fundamental retrieval must take place. Baptists themselves must rethink their present doctrinal views and practices in the light of their own heritage. Some initial studies have been done.[23] Among the Baptist historical records to be investigated are the eighteenth century sources employed in this study.

---

[22]Harrison, p. 7. (Italics mine.); also p. 52.

[23]Notably the works already cited in n. 20: Great Themes in Theology and Baptist Concepts of the Church; and Hudson, "Stumbling into Disorder." Another work by a Northern Baptist is Robert G. Torbet, "Baptist Thought about the Church," Foundations 1, no. 2 (1958): 18-37.

Recent studies among Southern Baptists include Edwin G. Dargan, Ecclesiology: A Study of the Churches (Louisville: Chas. T. Dearing, 1897); Duke K. McCall, ed., What is the Church? A Symposium of Baptist

While the present work touches upon the same territory that must be investigated by Baptists, it cannot make any claim to be an authentic interpretation for Baptists themselves. Nevertheless, the work deals directly with the period prior to the erosion of Baptist theological foundations for associational affiliation. In so doing, it offers support to Baptist theologians and historians who search for the foundations of their faith within their own traditions.

Besides having value for Baptists themselves, this study has value for all Christians. It provides information necessary for a fuller theology of Church today. The theologian of today must incorporate insights from every longstanding tradition if he hopes to develop a comprehensive theology of Church and church authority. By taking up the study of the Philadelphia Baptist view of church authority, a tradition very different in ethos from a Roman Catholic one, this author hopes to uncover the positive insights that can speak meaningfully to the general issues of ecclesiology today.

The Philadelphia tradition of the P.B.A. exposes one to an instance of confederate authority in the Church. Whatever emerges from

---

Thought (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958); and the studies in n. 15 by Bennett, Compton, and Lake.

British Baptists have debated the nature of the Church within their own ecumenical context. Their work, highly theological, includes Henry Cook, What Baptists Stand For (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1947); Arthur Dakin, The Baptist View of the Church and Ministry . . . (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1944); Ernest A. Payne, The Fellowship of Believers: Baptist Thought and Practice Yesterday and Today (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1944; enl. ed. 1952); Robert C. Walton, The Gathered Community (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1946); and The Lord's Supper: a Baptist Statement by Principals of the Baptist Colleges of Great Britain (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1951). Much of the theological discussion in the 1950's appears in The Baptist Quarterly.

a Catholic interpretation of that tradition should prove useful to the church historian and to the theologian. Because this study serves the theological task moving towards an ever more adequate ecclesiology, it takes on its own significance and justification.

Method of the Study

Theological ideas, statements of belief, and church practices arise within specific historical contexts. The latter are most important for a proper understanding of Christian thought and life. Consequently, the theologian must always seek to understand, as fully as possible, those cultural forces--intellectual, social and political--that shaped the ideas he investigates. A concern for the historical is perhaps all the more necessary for a Catholic researcher endeavoring to interpret the Philadelphia Baptist tradition. The Baptists of the P.B.A. had their peculiar historical origins and influences. It is therefore necessary to begin this work with an extended historical introduction.

For the reader unfamiliar with Baptist history, the first two chapters provide an account of the major historical influences that shaped the eighteenth century P.B.A., both in England and in America.[24] Besides introducing the reader to Baptists, the opening chapters aid in an understanding of the sources that are used in this study of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition.

Chapter 1 discusses the rise of Baptists in England and the Presbyterian and Congregational views that helped to shape the

---

[24]Anyone already familiar with the Baptist tradition could begin reading with p. 90.

Philadelphia Confession. Chapter 2 gives the American context within which the P.B.A. emerged. It discusses the various strains of Baptist life in the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century and situates the primary sources for this study in a brief overview of that Association. Both chapters include information from secondary sources, most of which are works by Baptists. Basic information is chosen to help one to understand Baptists of the P.B.A. and the sources that deal with their views of church and church authority.

The method employed in this work is historical and theological. This is a search through P.B.A. sources to bring to light for today the meaning of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of Church and church authority in the eighteenth century.

The Primary Sources

The sources used in this study are those officially adopted by the P.B.A. during the eighteenth century. They record the views of Philadelphia Baptists about Church and church authority. While these official statements were never normative in the same sense they are in Catholic Church teaching, they nevertheless captured, and continued to influence, the thinking of the group that formulated them.[25]

The primary Philadelphia Baptist sources are the four enumerated by Handy and Hudson in their articles cited above:[26]

---

[25]On Baptists' views of confessions see below pp. 24-27.

[26]On P.B.A. sources see chap. 2, pp. 184-203. Excerpts of the sources appear in app. A. References are to lines, e.g., A1-100 means app. A, lines 1 to 100. These four sources are: (1) A Confession of faith, put forth by the elders and brothers of many congregations of christians, (Baptized upon profession of their faith) in London and the Country. Adopted by the Baptist Association met at Philadelphia,

1. The Philadelphia Confession of 1742

2. The Church Discipline of 1743

3. The essay of 1749 on "The Power and Duty of an Association of Churches"

4. The Church Discipline of 1798

In addition to these, the author has included documents addressed to the Warren Baptist Association in New England and some associational sermons and letters by members of the P.B.A.[27]

Sept. 25. 1742. The Sixth Edition. To which are added two Articles viz. Of Imposition of Hands, and Singing of Psalms in Publick Worship, 1st American ed., 6th British ed. (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1743). [Bound with A Short Treatise of Church Discipline, by Benjamin Griffith.] (Hereafter: P; excerpts, A1-817; see also chap. 2, pp. 186-91; on genealogy of P from British confessions, chap. 1, pp. 92-107); (2) Benjamin Griffith, A Short Treatise of Church-Discipline (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1743). [Bound with A Confession of Faith . . .] (Hereafter: 1P; excerpts, A818-1497; see also chap. 2, pp. 191-93); (3) Benjamin Griffith, "The Power and Duty of an Association of Churches," in Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from A.D. 1707, to A.D. 1807; being the first one hundred years of its existence (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851), pp. 60-63. (Hereafter: G, for essay; Gillette, for Minutes . . .; essay included in A1498-1637; see also chap. 2, pp. 194-95); and (4) Samuel Jones, A treatise of church discipline and a directory. Done by appointment of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. By Samuel Jones (Philadelphia: S. P. Ustick, 1798). (Hereafter: 2P; excerpts, A1706-2388; see also chap. 2, pp. 200-202). P 1P G 2P

[27] On associational sermons and letters see chap. 2, pp. 202-3. These include: (1) Oliver Hart, A gospel church portrayed, and her orderly service pointed out. Sermon delivered in the city of Philadelphia at the opening of the Baptist association, October 4, 1791 (Trenton: Isaac Collins, 1791). (Hereafter: Hart; excerpts, B377-755); (2) Richard Furman, A Sermon, on the Constitution and Order of the Christian Church, Preached before the Charleston Association (Charleston: Printed by Markland & M'Iver, 1791). (Hereafter: Furman; excerpts, B756-1006); (3) Philadelphia Baptist Association to Warren Association, Philadelphia, Sept. 14-16, 1766, in Life, Times and Correspondence of James Manning and the Early History of Brown University, by Reuben A. Guild (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1864), pp. 76-77. (Hereafter: P.B.A. to Warren; copy in A1638-1705); and (4) The Sentiments and plan of the Warren [Baptist] Association (Germantown: Printed

Another basic source for this study is the collection of minutes of the proceedings of the P.B.A. for the period under investigation, 1707 to 1814. The minutes of the proceedings of the P.B.A. have been reserved in the archives of the American Baptist Historical Society, Rochester, New York. All available manuscripts have been gathered into a single volume published in 1851. This collection was mandated by the P.B.A. in 1843. The Association appointed Abram Dunn Gillette as the editor. By the time of publication, it was believed that all available materials had been collected.[28]

The edition by Gillette includes a preface by H. G. Jones, the Centennial Sermon delivered by Samuel Jones, and a narrative of the churches of the Association. The last was information gathered by Benjamin Griffith by order of the P.B.A. in 1746.[29]

The final compilation of minutes contains a few lacunae. Entries for earlier years at times give sparse information about activities of the P.B.A. No records survive for the years 1712 through 1721. The Association did not transact any business in 1720 or in 1777. In the former instance, no business came before the P.B.A.; in the

---

by Christopher Sower, 1769). (Hereafter: Manning, Sentiments, or Warren, Plan; copy in B170-259).

[28]Abram Dunn Gillette (op. cit. in n. 26). Citations from Gillette's edition are to the year (with the first two digits omitted), colon followed by page number and, whenever appropriate, period followed by sec. number, e.g. Gillette, 84:199.3 is Gillette, entry for 1784, p. 199, sec. 3; the full digits are given for 1800's, e.g. Gillette, 1806:421.6. Occasionally, when the precise reference seems unnecessary, the page is given e.g., Gillette, p. 204.

[29]Gillette, 46:71.

latter case, the British occupation of Philadelphia prevented the annual meeting.

Gillette's edition is a rich source of information about Philadelphia Baptists and a most useful resource for the present study. It covers the period 1707 to 1807. The remaining years up to 1814 are provided by annual printed minutes of proceedings located in the Baptist archives in Rochester, New York.

These official sources of the P.B.A. provide the picture of the Philadelphia tradition of Church and church authority. They are the foundation for the present study. Background for the ideas expressed within these primary sources can be gathered from Congregational and Baptist sources of the same period. Some of the latter are provided in appendix B.[30]

Problem of Dating Prior to 1752

In 1752, the British Isles and colonies adopted the Gregorian calendar.[31] Prior to that year, in the Julian calendar, the first month was March, and the year began after the first equinox on March 25. At that time, the names September through December actually designated

---

[30]App. B includes the following excerpts from sources of the period: (1) The Platform of Church Polity of Savoy of 1658, i.e., sections not used in the Philadelphia Confession (B1-119); (2) Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689 (B120-169); (3) The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association, adopted at the third session in 1769 (B170-259); (4) The Narrative of the Proceedings of the P.B.A. (B260-376); (5) A Sermon on a Gospel Church Portrayed and Her Orderly Service Pointed Out in 1791 (B377-755); (6) A Sermon on the Constitution and Order of the Christian Church in 1789 (B756-1006); and (7) A Summary of Church Discipline of the Charleston Association in 1831 (B1007-1327).

[31]Spencer, p. 24.

months occupying the seventh to the tenth places. In 1752, January became the first month of the year.

This adjustment helps to account for Morgan Edwards's dating of the constitution of the church at Lower Dublin: "[January, 1687-88]."[32] It was founded in the eleventh month, 1687, which actually becomes, according to the present mode of reckoning, January, 1688.

In the present work, whenever the date needs to be adjusted, it is given according to present practice, and no further indication of any changes is mentioned unless a greater precision is necessary. In the latter cases, the dates are given with a slash between the years, for example, January 1687/88.

Limits of the Study

This study deals with the P.B.A. from the time of its foundation in 1707 until 1814, the year when the Trienniel Convention was formed. This was most probably the period of the greatest balance between the principles of independence and interdependence among Baptist local churches. As a case study of the P.B.A. in the eighteenth

---

[32]Torbet's dating for "an association of messengers" in Philadelphia on July 27, 1707 might possibly need adjusting too. He cites William W. Keen who could have overlooked the need to adjust the date to Sept. 27, 1707 because Gillette records: "our general meeting, held at Philadelphia, in the seventh month, 1707. . ." The latter, by today's reckoning, is September, not July (See Gillette, 7:25; Torbet, History, p. 212, citing Keen, The Bi-Centennial Celebration of the Founding of First Baptist Church of the City of Philadelphia, p. 461; Keen's work could not be located for examination by this author.); on dating of church at Lower Dublin see chap. 2, p. 138.

century, this work concentrates upon the period when the harmony of both principles was most clearly expressed and lived.[33]

Besides having definite chronological limits, this study also is limited in its scope. It is an interpretation of a Baptist tradition of Church and church authority as exemplified in the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century. It is an exercise in critical, historical interpretation which uses the P.B.A. as a case study of Congregational, confederate church authority from 1707 to 1814. The texts studied are primarily those of the P.B.A. during that period. This work is not an exhaustive exegesis of biblical texts, not even of those texts which are used in the sources. The aim is not biblical but systematic theology, seeking always to arrive at the meaning of the sources as such.

The focus, or horizon, for understanding the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century is the historical and theological context of Baptist themselves. Questions are posed as they appear in Baptist sources. Thus, questions not arising from within Baptist materials, such as papal infallibility or primacy, are not directly considered.

While the study remains so limited, concluding remarks will offer, by way of extrapolation, some suggestions about the relevance of the findings for the exercise of church authority today. These, however, will remain merely suggestive. The utility of this study lies in its interpretation of one experience of Congregational church order in the eighteenth century, that of the P.B.A. Successive chapters

---

[33]On the general development of the P.B.A. during the eighteenth century see chap. 2, pp. 136-53.

consider the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of universal Church (chapter 3), local church (chapter 4), the association and church council (chapter 5), and church authority (chapter 6). A final chapter provides the major conclusions of this study of the Philadlephia Baptist tradition of Church and church authority. It also indicates the limitations and positive value of that tradition and poses some basic questions for Catholics and Baptists today.

The Hermeneutical Task

The method employed in this study is historical criticism. Such a method fully respects the sources and allows them to shed the maximum light upon the meaning of Congregational authority for Baptists of the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century.

The historical approach allows the student to let appear what is appearing as he scans the evidence recording Baptist attitudes. It permits the observer to move towards insights and conclusions from within the sources themselves. Thus, it is the P.B.A. official sources that will provide the picture of the attitudes and horizons of thought of the Philadelphia Baptists. This study consistently takes its cue from the sources.

Once the evidence has been reviewed, the interpreter can attempt to order the ideas and to probe the underlying attitudes that explain the evidence. To achieve this, of course, demands establishing some point of comparison, some viewpoint. All interpretation depends upon horizons for understanding. In this work, the author uses points of view not only from the past, but also from the present, in order

to uncover the existential significance of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition.

This author accepts the understanding about textual interpretation advanced by spokesmen of the New Hermeneutic. As one author puts it:

> Part of the hermeneutical task is locating the meaning of texts in their original historical setting, but the full scope of understanding and textual meaning is not confined to this level. The historical situation of the interpreter as well as that of the text must be kept in mind. The mediation of past into present, an awareness of the existential significance of tradition, thus becomes an essential function of interpretation. The past can only be fully understood from and by being translated into the horizons of interpretation.[34]

Ultimately, this interpretation of eighteenth century P.B.A. views seeks to uncover for today the existential significance of the past theory of confederate church authority among Philadelphia Baptists. One of the major functions of this study is to uncover aspects of the truth about confederate authority which lie hidden in past expressions within the P.B.A. It may even be possible for a Catholic to say today what, for historical and sociological reasons, could not be said in the past, and to do so without violating the inner meaning of what Baptists believed in the past. Such a retrieval, to use a favorite notion of Martin Heidegger, can lay open the hidden sense in what was not said and could not be said in its original context. To achieve such a retrieval of hidden meaning the interpreter looks at his sources from horizons of the present as well as from those of the past.

---

[34]Thomas B. Ommen, "The Hermeneutic of Dogma," Theological Studies 35 (1974):605. (Italics mine.)

Past Horizons for Interpretation

The past horizons that shed light upon the theory of Church and church authority within the P.B.A. include Congregational views of church polity and Calvinistic views of salvation in seventeenth and eighteenth century England and America. It is necessary always to respect the points of view among Baptists of the eighteenth century.

Thus, for example, the Baptist view of confessional statements must be respected. Unlike Catholics, Baptists do not accept past traditions as normative for the development of doctrine and church life. For them, as for all Christians in a Free Church tradition, not even creeds are normative in the same way they are for Catholics. Confessional statements, moreover, are not themselves creedal in nature![35]

Both General and Particular Baptists, like other denominations of their day, developed their own confessions.[36] These served various needs of the individuals and groups that formulated them. Unlike other Christians who set up standards to be universally upheld, Baptists simply made ad hoc statements as specific problems demanded attention,

---

[35]"Confessions are not creeds. They presuppose creeds, and often they elaborate the beliefs set out in creeds; but: themselves they are manifestos, sometimes in the form of extended theological treatises, sometimes in the form of polemical statements. They differ from creeds chiefly in being characteristic of an age in which the unity of the visible church was precisely not the primary assumption. A confession becomes the manifesto of a communion which wishes to make clear its difference from another, or from all others. It is not the founding principle of a Dissent, but the objectifying (with a greater or less degree of self-deception) of that Dissent. . . ." (Erik Routley, Creeds and Confessions: from the Reformation to the Modern Church [London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1962], p. 6).

[36]On the differences between General and Particular Baptists see below, pp. 34-35; also chap. 1, pp. 46-53.

such as slanders from opponents, or dangerous teachings among their own members, or the need to affirm solidarity with other Baptists or other denominations, or the need for some basic instruction and direction for their churches or for their assemblies. As the needs shifted, so did the tone of the confessions. Baptists always preferred revision to a fixed creed in order to explain themselves.[37]

Baptists distinguish six functions of confessions.[38] The first is an apologetic or propaganda function. Confessions were used to propagate Baptist ideas, to clarify and validate the Baptist position. They defended Baptists against slanders and criticisms and indicated agreement with other Protestants.

Another function is the doctrinal one. Confessions helped Baptists maintain purity of doctrine and distinguished them, on the basis of belief, from other denominations. At times confessions helped to refute heresies like the Hoffmannite Christology or a hyper-Calvinistic antinomean soteriology.[39] Confessions today reflect the doctrinal consensus among Baptist groups that formulated them.

A third function of confessions is disciplinary. On the basis of confessional statements Baptists could discipline churches and members who denied what had been mutually expressed and accepted.

---

[37]William T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, 2nd. ed. (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1932), pp. 30, 93. (Hereafter: British Baptists.)

[38]Torbet, History, p. 46; also William L. Lumpkin, ed., Baptist Confessions of Faith, rev. ed. (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1969), pp. 16-17.

[39]On Hoffmannite see chap. 1, p. 88, n. 114; on Antinomeans, chap. 2, p. 117, n. 19.

Another is the instructional function. Both for individuals and for churches, confessions offered guidance. Persons could find in confessions orientations to the study of Scripture, without substituting the former for the latter. Associations, churches, and ministers could find help in counselling churches and in settling disputes and questions.

The constitutional function is served whenever a group of churches gather in confederation. As Baptists voluntarily associated, they often found a basis for fellowship in their confessional statements. This was true for the gathering of a single church and for the gathering into association of several churches.

The sixth and final function of confessions is the historical one. Having served the immediate needs of Baptists in some period of crisis, confessions today offer valuable insights for the student of Baptist theology and history.

Lumpkin claims that in America "instructional and propaganda [apologetic] purposes have been paramount." He goes on to say:

> Their permanent value is two-fold: they define the doctrinal consensus of Baptist groups at particular times and they illustrate Baptist history. In either of these connections, the confessions are indispensable to the student of Baptist history.[40]

Thus, while Baptist confessions were never considered normative in a Catholic sense, they nevertheless provide for the present study the main repositories of Baptist "tradition." The same may be argued for Baptist church disciplines. If Baptist traditions exist at all, these are surely to be discovered in the written legacy left by Baptists

---

[40]Lumpkin, p. 17.

themselves in their confessions, church disciplines, and other written records.

This study cannot validly claim that Baptists must believe what is recorded in the P.B.A. documents. It can, however, make the claim that Baptists of the P.B.A. believed what they recorded. Whether an inner consistency emerges from an analysis of official statements of the P.B.A., and whether the Philadelphia tradition has value for today, remain fundamental concerns of this work. Nevertheless, even when the present author claims that a past Baptist tradition has validity for today, that claim cannot be binding on Baptists themselves. From a Catholic perspective, however, a whole century of Baptist life and thought has a positive value for today's comprehensive theology of the Church of Christ and her authority.

Present Horizons for Interpretation

This study looks not only to past horizons for understanding the P.B.A. but also to present ones. At times the vantage point of contemporary Baptist theologians provides insights for a fuller understanding of past Baptist tradition.[41] Furthermore, the opinions of the present author influence his interpretation. A Roman Catholic studying Baptist traditions had better acknowledge his own presuppositions. The latter are stated here without any extensive demonstration.

---

[41]For recent studies by Northern, Southern, and British Baptists see above, p. 13, n. 23.

A Catholic Ecclesiology

A Catholic studying Baptists has a view of Church quite foreign to his sources. For example, the basic paradigm of local Church for the Catholic is the diocese and, analogously, Catholics accept a visible universal Church. At these levels beyond the local parish, the Church of Christ has a visible, tangible structure. Moreover, Catholics accept at various levels an authority in the ordained ministry for unity of faith and order. This exists on the highest structural levels. Such authority is accepted jure divino, as willed by Christ, and even the Pope personally speaks infallibly when solemnly proclaiming revealed truths of faith or morals. The list of implications flowing from such a Catholic faith stance could be extended to every level of Church life.

In itself, such a preconception of Church presents many challenges for the present study. An extra effort must be made to remain faithful to Baptist sources and not to read into them notions completely absent. Baptists could never encompass Roman Catholic traditions logically at odds with their own faith stance. Yet the positive faith stance of Baptists in the eighteenth century P.B.A. can be grasped by a Catholic today and, in the view of this writer, can be restated to communicate to a Catholic tradition without doing violence to the inner meaning of Baptist belief.

Church Life as Orthopraxis

The second presupposition is not exclusive to Catholic theology, although it stems largely from a Catholic view of society and Church.

It is simply the conviction that the Lord leads His People to remain faithful, and, over an extended period of time, the Church's experience becomes itself a type of repository of faith. Current theologies of liberation argue that orthopraxis itself is a source of theology.[42] The theologian develops a pastoral theology not only by his meditation upon Scripture but also by his reflection upon the pastoral life of the Church. He must view the lived tradition as a prime source for theological reflection.

Without here arguing for the validity of this claim to orthopraxis for all Christian traditions, this study begins with the assumption that, to a great extent, such orthopraxis exists in any longstanding Christian tradition. In a sense, this is simply an application to church life of the working principle outlined by Dulles and cited above:

> . . . what any large group of Christian believers have confidently held over a considerable time should be accepted unless one has serious reasons for questioning it. . . . men are more apt to be correct in what they affirm than in what they deny.[43]

In the long run the Spirit guides all Churches to sustain and to live the truth grasped by them. Each historical Christian tradition, in its lived experience as well as its faith, has some positive value for today's theology and Christian belief.

---

[42]Gustavo Guttierrez, A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation. Tr. & ed. by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 11-12.

[43]See above, p. 1.

Different Models of the Church

Contemporary theology has become increasingly aware of the varied ecclesiologies in the New Testament and in the history of the Church. One of the most valuable contributions to a comprehensive discussion of ecclesiologies is the short work by Avery Dulles, Models of the Church. The method of models is applicable to all of theology, but Dulles has used it effectively in ecclesiology. He discusses five basic mind-sets that affect attitudes towards the Church.[44] One of the aims of this work in interpreting the P.B.A. tradition is to clarify the mind-set of Philadelphia Baptists and thereby to appreciate more fully the views they held about Church and church authority.

Church Authority as a Complex Question

The notion church authority is a highly complex one, as are all theological themes. Theological notions cannot remain purely theological. All meaning, as discussed previously, arises from some historical context. All meaning, moreover, is limited in part by that historical context.

In attempting interpretations of history, there are always underlying problems of the meaning of language and of the philosophical horizons for understanding a particular theological notion. In the case of church order and authority, issues involving the interaction of human beings, the theologian must consider what light can be shed by the social sciences, psychology, political science and sociology.

---

[44]Dulles, p. 10 and passim; see also critique of the P.B.A. view of church in chap. 4, pp. 369-83.

The theme of this study, therefore, could demand the attention of the social and political scientist as well as the sociologist of religion. The insights from such disciplines, however, do not occupy the central stage in this work. The present author focuses rather upon theology. Sociological and political theories appear only when they help to shed additional light upon the origin of Philadelphia Baptist ideas.

This project, then, is not primarily a work of philosophy or sociology or history, but one of theology. It is theological for at least four reasons.

First, the theme comes from theology--church authority. Second, the author's assumptions are grounded in a faith stance that is quite foreign to other sciences. This is particularly true for the author's presumption about orthopraxis and for his belief in the Spirit guiding all Churches in a continual process of renewal. Third, the basic attitudes of Baptists themselves towards Church and church order were initiated in a biblically based faith. Baptist confessions and church disciplines offer more than simple historical records or instances that support sociological theories. The documentary evidence records Baptists' beliefs, and that evidence is here treated precisely as faith-evidence. Fourth, the author, in his critical study of a past tradition, seeks to uncover the existential meaning of that tradition for today's Church.

Conclusions from Previous Studies

The various studies listed above made use of the primary sources analyzed in this one, but all of them have approached their materials with perspectives different from that of the present author. He centers his full attention upon the Congregational theory within the P.B.A., expressed in official sources of that Association. While lacking the breadth of previous studies like Shurden's, the present one offers a deeper search into the meaning of associational life within the P.B.A. In some respects the study provides a theological analysis that complements the sociological analysis of Paul Harris, except that Harris dealt with a twentieth century group, the American Baptist Convention, while this author discusses an earlier eighteenth century group, the P.B.A.

Different issues that have been researched at length by other scholars are here taken as proven. Among these are the following seven significant findings. They appear in the present study but have been more fully demonstrated in other works.[45]

First, there are the antecedents for American Baptist interdependence in the councils and the associations that emerged among British Baptists of the seventeenth century.

---

[45]Citations to various studies substantiating these conclusions appear in the text below. Among these are the following: 1st concl., see origins and British influence on association, chap. 1, pp. 57-58, 61-62, esp. nn. 46-47, 56; chap. 2, pp. 136-42, 145, esp. nn. 58, 79-80; 2nd concl., see chap. 1, pp. 61-63, esp. nn. 56-60; also chap. 5, pp. 401-11; 3rd concl., same references as 1st; 4th concl., same references as 1st; 5th concl., see chap. 2, p. 143, esp. n. 72; also chap. 5, pp. 447-56, 489, esp. nn. 103-5 , 109, 113, 181; 6th concl., see chap. 1, p. 64, esp. n. 62; and 7th concl., see chap. 2, p. 153, esp. n. 109.

Second, Baptist associations have theological foundations in Baptist interpretations of the biblical sense of the Holy Spirit and the Church. Baptists from the beginning saw Church as both the free and local congregation and the universal (invisible) Church of all believers. Fellowship followed as a necessity upon the biblical nature of the Church.

Third, Baptist principles of independence and interdependence of the churches are therefore compatible. Both principles remain necessary, and the expression of these principles in Baptist life is essential for a full Baptist life.

Fourth, the association was historically one instance of an expression of the related, essential principles of independence and interdependence of Baptist churches. Baptist associations were of great importance for maintaining essential Baptist principles while adapting church life to a changing environment.

Fifth, the council was another institution expressing the same principles. As councils developed in relationship to associations, they took on a degree of permanence and dealt with specific purposes, for example, ordinations.

Sixth, during the eighteenth century, associations were composed of churches represented by their messengers. Membership included not just individuals, but churches.

Seventh, a significant function of associations was the direction they provided through their leadership for faith and theology among Baptists in America.

This study, while accepting these findings as proven, takes a closer look at the Philadelphia tradition of Church and church authority. It seeks to achieve a greater understanding of the P.B.A.'s views by analyzing them in greater detail, by situating them against the historical and theological context of the eighteenth century, and by uncovering the conscious and implicit horizons of thought of Philadelphia Baptists themselves.

Preliminary Definitions

The following terms used in this study have technical meanings. These are further refined in the course of this analysis of the Philadelphia tradition of Church and church authority.

Arminians--those who held the views of Jacobus Arminius about conditioned election, universal atonement, free will, and the possibility of falling away from grace.[46]

Association-power--that power proper to an association; power authorized by the mutual consent of the churches in a confederation; thus, power of human, ecclesiastical origin.[47]

Authority--the right to exercise power in the church or Church, or the authorization to do so. Authority is of three types depending upon the origin: divine, from the Scriptures; ecclesiastical, from the churches or church; and human, from the nature of a society.[48]

Calvinists--those who held the strict views of unconditioned election (and damnation), limited atonement, no free will, and irresistible grace.[49]

Church--spelled in the upper case, Church, the universal Church or a level of Church beyond the local congregation; spelled in the lower

---

[46]On Arminians see app. C, pp. 756-60; also discussion in chap. 1, pp. 46-49.

[47]See chap. 5, pp. 456-96; also chap. 6, pp. 584-90.

[48]See esp. chap. 6, passim; also chap. 4, pp. 323-28.

[49]On Calvinists see app. C, pp. 749-56 and passim.

case, church, the local church, which for Baptists, exists only at the level of congregation. The adjectival form, for example, church order or church authority, is always rendered in the lower case, even when the sense is obviously universal in application.

Church-power--that power proper to a church, including the three-fold technical power to admit and dismiss members, to call and ordain officers, and to exercise gospel discipline over all members; power given and authorized for the whole community by divine command in Scripture.[50]

Council-power--that power proper to an occasional council called by the churches that need the help from others to settle disputes; power given and authorized for the occasional council "according to the Mind of Christ" in Scripture.[51]

Ecclesiology (ecclesial or ecclesiological)--Church or churches considered in a doctrinal, theological sense; forms and structures of church life which are part of the object of faith; in Baptist terms, those church structures willed by Christ in the Scriptures.[52]

General Baptists--major type of British Baptists emerging in the seventeenth century that accepted the Arminian (q.v.) view of general atonement; contrasted to Particular Baptists (q.v.).[53]

Independents--those Puritans (q.v.) who stressed the local church (congregation) as an independent body of believers, subject neither to presbyterian nor episcopal rule; Congregationalists, some of whom were Separatists (q.v.); others, Non-Separatists (q.v.).

Non-Separatists--those Independents who sought to purify the Church of England without severing all ties with the established Church.

---

[50]See chap. 4, pp. 328-63; also chap. 6, pp. 571-75.

[51]See chap. 5, pp. 447-55; also chap. 6, pp. 581-84.

[52]The terms ecclesial and ecclesiological, in this work, do not apply in the usual Catholic sense of church structures that have evolved in history (for example, papal primacy), that have some doctrinal basis in Scriptural revelation as interpreted in later church teaching, and which Roman Catholic theology has deductively and analogously argued are established jure divino by Christ.

[53]See app. C, pp. 762-63; also chap. 1, pp. 43-49; also pp. 49-53.

Office-power--that power proper to ordained officers of the church (namely, deacons, ruling elders, or pastors); power given and authorized by Christ through the church's call and ordination.[54]

Particular Baptists--major type of British Baptists emerging in the seventeenth century that accept the Calvinistic (q.v.) view of limited atonement; contrasted to General Baptists (q.v.).[55]

Polity--Church or churches considered in a political sense; term commonly in use among Protestants for the organization and discipline of church life that is the result of free and mutual decisions about how Christians will interrelate.[56]

Power--the ability of a person or of a group to influence effectively the actions of others. Power may be legitimate or not depending upon whether or not it is authorized.[57]

Puritans--a general term characterizing a Protestant outlook of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England and America; denominationally speaking, those Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Baptists with similar attitudes characteristic of Puritans.[58]

Regular Baptists--major type of American Baptists emerging after the Great Awakening; those opposed to the emotionalism of the revivals, contrasted to Separate Baptists (q.v.).[59]

---

[54]See chap. 4, pp. 341-46; also chap. 6, pp. 575-81.

[55]See chap. 1, pp. 43-49.

[56]The term polity in this work is used when the author deliberately chooses to bypass the question of the ecclesial (doctrinal) foundations of church order.

[57]One of the main concerns of this study is to clarify the levels of power in the church among P.B.A. Baptists and the source and origin of the authority for such powers.

[58]See John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity Interpreted through Its Development (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1954), pp. 99, 108-109.

[59]Besides Baptists, other denominations experienced divisions after the Great Awakening: Old Light Congregationalists and Old Side Presbyterians were similar to Regular Baptists; New Light Congregationalists and New Side Presbyterians were similar to Separate Baptists (see chap. 2, pp. 119, 122).

Separate Baptists--major type of American Baptists emerging after the Great Awakening; contrasted to Regular Baptists (q.v.). The term Separate describes those strict Congregationalists who separated themselves from churches that had begun to compromise their positions about regenerate church membership; many of these joined Baptist ranks.[60]

Separatists--those Independents in Britain who were not satisfied with the purification of the established Church in England; those who separated from the Church of England.[61]

---

[60]See chap. 2, pp. 119-27.

[61]The distinction between British Separatist and Non-Separatist Independents is useful for this study because the Congregational theorists who influenced P.B.A. writers were mostly Non-Separatists. Among those mentioned by Hudson to have influenced Philadelphia Baptists, and whom Perry Miller "identified as non-separatist Independents," are the following: John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Thomas Hooker, and two men used by the Particular Baptist writer Benjamin Keach: William Ames and Isaac Chauncey (See Hudson, "The Associational Principle Among Baptists," p. 12, note; also chap. 1, pp. 80-83).

CHAPTER I

BRITISH INFLUENCES ON THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

In order to interpret the official sources of the P.B.A. to arrive at the existential significance for today of an eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist theology of Congregational authority, one must first appreciate the contexts of those documents.

An understanding of theological ideas depends upon a particular historical context. The latter is vitally necessary for validating any hermeneutical approach. While the attempt to uncover precisely all the influences upon particular authors of the P.B.A. documents is impossible, some effort must be made to understand the genesis of ideas and environment of authors. Thus, before looking directly to the sources of the P.B.A., the first two chapters elucidate the religious roots of Baptists of that Association.

The place to begin is England. The present study accepts the English Separatist theory of Baptist origins. The best historical evidence today would support the observation of Norman H. Maring: "The only point of beginning to which Baptist history can be clearly traced is to English Congregationalism."[1] Anabaptists, even those present in

---

[1]Historians speak of three theories of Baptist origins: the successionist theory which assumes continuity with New Testament times; the spiritual kinship theory which argues a direct link with continental

England, were not the seed plot of Baptists. Rather, native Englishmen who pushed the principles of the English Reformation to their logical conclusions began the distinctive group known as the Baptists.[2]

Anabaptists; and the separatist theory which sees Baptists emerging from English Independency movements. For a full discussion see the works of W. Morgan Patterson, Baptist Successionism: a critical view (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1969); "Baptist Historiography in America in the 18th Century," Review Expositor 52 (1955):483-93; also "A Critique of the Successionist Concept in Baptist Historiography" (Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1956).

As early as 1894 the successionist theory was attacked by Weston Brunner, "A Query in Baptist History: The Philadelphia Association, was it in its organization and early history strictly Calvinistic?" (Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1894). Film copy in A.B.H.S.

There is still some scholarly difference of opinion about the degree of influence the Continental Anabaptists had upon British Particular Baptists (See the opposing viewpoints of Ernest A. Payne and Winthrop S. Hudson in Baptist Quarterly 16 (1956):303-12 and 339-42 and bibliographical notations in secs. 2 and 3 under those authors).

Norman H. Maring, American Baptists Whence and Whither (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1968), p. 17.

[2]Alfred C. Underwood, A History of the English Baptists (London: Baptist Union Publication Department, 1947), p. 27.

Anabaptists literally re-baptizers. A term that comprehends various sixteenth century groups on the continent. They denied infant baptism and practiced adult (believer's) baptism only. One group, refugees in Münster, set up a Kingdom of Saints in 1533-35. During a seige of the city they practiced polygamy. Their fanaticism and excesses gave a bad name to Anabaptists generally.

Anabaptists lived in England as early as 1534, but most of them lived on the continent. Early English Separatists and Brownists [Congregationalists], in their exiles on the continent, probably were influenced by them. John Smyth's General Baptist group definitely had close contact with the Dutch Waterlander Mennonites.

The Mennonite Anabaptists followed the views of a third group, the Swiss Brethren, who were led by Balthasar Hübmaier (?1485-1528). Both groups stressed believer's baptism, a connectional type of church organization with stress upon the local congregation's rights and obligations, a total pacifism, and the denial of the right of Christians to participate in civil rule. Like Hübmaier, Mennonites held to Arminian views of salvation. (See "Anabaptists," and "Mennonites," in The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. by F. L. Cross and E. A.

Baptists emigrated from England and arrived first in New England. Later, in comparatively greater numbers they came to the middle colonies: Pennsylvania, New York, and the Jerseys. Together with most colonial Protestants they shared a Calvinism born in the religious revolts of their mother country England. That same Calvinism took root within Baptist traditions in America largely through the influence of the Philadelphia group, the P.B.A.[3]

As noted in the introduction, this Association was the first grouping of Baptist churches in colonial America to exercise any great influence within the denomination.[4] For almost a half century it was the only stable body of Baptists in America. Largely a phenomenon of the middle colonies, its historical roots lay more in England than in

---

Livingstone, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 47 and 902 (Hereafter: DCC.); on Arminianism see app. C, pp. 756-60. DCC

English Baptists labored hard to dissociate themselves from the label Anabaptists for two reasons: (1) the negative connotation derived from the Münster group and the consequent denunciation by Luther, Calvin and Zwingli; and (2) the fact that Baptists did not accept all Mennonite views, e.g. about magistracy and pacifism. Early Baptist confessions reflect their concern to prove they were not Anabaptists, notably the London Confession of 1644 of Particular Baptists. This statement provoked a disbelieving and critical response in 1645 from Dr. Daniel Featley (1582-1645), a liberal clergyman of the Church of England. To meet some of the criticism, and even at the expense of some of their views, the Particular Baptists reworked their Confession, esp. articles on magistracy (See Lumpkin, pp. 144, 147-49).

[3]On Calvinism see app. C, pp. 749-56 and passim.

[4]The only other group before the foundation of the P.B.A. in 1707 was the general meeting of General Baptists of New England (See Henry S. Burrage, A History of the Baptists in New England [Philadelphis: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894], p. 80). These General Baptists exercised little, if any, influence upon the denomination as a whole.

the early Baptist settlements of Providence and Newport in Rhode Island.[5] Through numerous immigrants and already existing sources, the P.B.A. inherited Baptist views directly from the British Isles, especially from England, Wales and Ireland.[6] This heritage, moreover, was of a particular type. Any serious study of the P.B.A. documents in the eighteenth century must keep in mind their British genesis as well as the more immediate religious and political influences shaping these documents in American life.

STAGES OF BAPTIST DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND

Historically speaking religious reforms in England moved steadily towards a Calvinistic theology which eventually found expression in the Westminster standards of 1646. Baptists shared in the movement which advocates saw as a "purification" of the Church of England.[7]

Early Dissent under Elizabeth and Baptist Origins under the Early Stuarts

While Baptists as such did not emerge until a later period, their ancestors, the Puritans, had already come into prominence in the

---

[5]Henry C. Vedder, Short History, p. 305.

[6]Torbet, History, p. 201. The present study investigates Particular Baptists' beginnings and development in England. The latter related to Irish and Welsh Baptists of the P.B.A. because Welshmen were active in the London meetings. An area to be studied further, requiring a facility in the Welsh tongue, is the causal relationship between Welsh and British Particular Baptists. The question of Welsh influences does not directly affect the thesis and method in the present work.

[7]The following treatment of the religious and political context in England relies heavily upon Underwood, pp. 28-33; 56-57; 63-66; 98-115; 116-18.

reign of Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603).[8] These dissenters hoped to remain within the Church of England and simply to reform it. One of their number, Robert Browne (ca. 1550-1633), suffered imprisonment and later emigrated to Holland. There, in 1582, he wrote the first work to propose a congregational polity for the Church.[9]

Puritan Separatists suffered much during Elizabeth's reign. They could not assemble for worship, and were hounded out as heretics and enemies of the crown. In 1593, three suffered execution for their convictions. Two of these had co-authored A True Description out of the Word of God of the Visible Church. This work was to have a great influence upon Independents, including Baptists.[10]

Thus, while Baptists had not yet emerged as such, the vine that would nourish their views on church order was already planted by those Puritan dissenters who developed Congregationalism. An English Separatist church in Amsterdam published its faith in A True Confession, which displayed a more detailed church polity than the previous work noted above.[11]

---

[8]Underwood, p. 30.

[9]Robert Browne, A Book which sheweth the Life and Manner of all True Christians (Middleburg, 1582), mentioned in "Browne, Robert," in DCC, p. 204. Some call Browne the father of Congregationalism; in fact the early Congregationalists were called Brownists. On the meaning of polity see intro., p. 36.

[10]Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, A True Description out of the Word of God of the Visible Church (1589), mentioned in "Congregationalism," in DCC, p. 333. The third Separatist martyr was John Penry (Ibid.; also Underwood, p. 32).

[11]Lumpkin, pp. 79-81; text on pp. 82-97. The seven Particular Baptist Churches of London used this Confession as a model when they

The Rise of General and Particular Baptists

Baptists emerged first during the Stuart period. They were of two types, General Baptists and Particular Baptists.[12]

Under James I (r. 1603-25) Puritans still suffered from the persecutions of William Laud (later Archbishop of Canterbury, 1633-45) who strove to establish religious uniformity at the expense of Puritan reforms.[13] Some chose self-inflicted exile to escape troubles. Among these was a group who became the first Baptist church.

According to early historical records English Separatists of Gainsborough formed themselves as the first Baptist church.[14] In 1608 the group fled in voluntary exile to Amsterdam with their pastor, John Smyth, aided by Thomas Helwys who financed the trip. In Holland, Smyth became convinced on scriptural grounds that infant baptism, including his own, was invalid. Thereupon he baptized himself and his congregation in 1609. This group is the first known Baptist church. It began on foreign soil, and its theology was Arminian.[15] This marks the beginning of the major stream characterized as General Baptists.

---

drew up their earliest Confession in 1644. Thus the Separatist Confession entered Baptist life (See below, p. 95, n. 129).

[12]For a fuller discussion of the differences between General and Particular Baptists see below, pp. 46-49.

[13]Underwood, p. 63.

[14]Underwood, p. 34. On the history of General Baptists see Vedder, pp. 201-205; Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 17-58; Underwood, pp. 28-55; and Torbet, History, pp. 37-40.

[15]Underwood, p. 38. Arminians were so named after Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), the Dutch Reformed theologian whose views were condemned at the Synod of Dort (1619). See "Arminianism," in DCC, p. 90; also app. C, pp. 756-62.

Smyth's overtures to the neighboring Mennonites, as well as his scruples about his own baptism, eventually led some of his congregation to separate from his leadership. This segment returned to England with Helwys as their minister. In 1612, at Spitalfield, it became the first Baptist church on English soil. Its members were Arminian in doctrine and their mode of baptism was affusionist.[16]

By 1626 there were at least four sister churches which joined Helwys's group in correspondence with the Dutch Anabaptist group, the Waterlander Mennonites. Unlike Smyth's church, which joined these Anabaptists after his death, Baptist congregations in England eventually broke off their correspondence and finally decided against formal affiliation with the Dutch.[17]

As far as can be determined, Particular Baptists had no direct contact with Anabaptists. They were an outgrowth of Puritan Separatism, "the last stage in the evolution of English Separatism as it moved to its logical outcome in believer's baptism."[18] They appeared in England and emigrated to America during the rule of Charles I (r. 1625-44).

The mother church in England was the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church, a Non-Separatist, Independent congregation at Southwark, London. Named after its first three pastors, the church was originally founded in 1616.[19]

---

[16]Underwood, p. 46; Torbet, History, p. 37.

[17]On Anabaptists see n. 2 above.

[18]Underwood, p. 56.

[19]Henry Jacob, pastor from 1616 until 1622, emigrated to Virginia in 1624; John Lathrop, pastor from 1624 until 1632, moved to New England

Around 1630 scriptural arguments over the issue of baptism led to factions, eventually forcing many of the latter to separate themselves from the mother church.[20] As early as 1630 the first group left with Mr. Dupper because it considered baptism administered by parish clergy of the established Church to be invalid. Apparently the group still retained infant baptism. Three years later a second group left. Headed by Samuel Eaton, it may have been the first to reject infant baptism. If so, it was the first Particular Baptist church, but the records remain unclear. In 1638, however, a third group that definitely held Baptist views separated from the mother church. Whether this was Eaton's group under a new leader, John Spilsbury (or Spilsbery), or an entirely new group, remains obscure. Spilsbury's church at any rate is generally regarded as the first Particular Baptist church.[21]

Later, in 1643, another group separated from the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church with Hanserd Knollys. Two years later the church's third pastor, Henry Jessey, also became a Baptist. He joined a Baptist church that had been established by William Kiffin in 1644. Kiffin himself had accepted Baptist views in 1641 and had been a member of Spilsbury's church.

What all these churches shared in common was a Calvinism more akin to that of British Independency than to General Baptists. Yet, on

---

in 1634 with thirty of his followers in order to escape Laud's persecution; Henry Jessey, pastor from 1637 until he became a Baptist in 1645 (See Underwood, p. 57).

[20]Torbet, History, p. 40.

[21]Lumpkin, p. 143; also Torbet, History, p. 42 and Underwood, p. 58.

the basic issues of infant baptism and separation of Church and State they agreed with all Baptists.[22]

Differences in Theology and Orientation between General and Particular Baptists

General and Particular Baptists differed not only in their origins, but also in their theological emphases and general orientations. This was so despite the fact that both stood within a Calvinistic tradition.[23]

The General Baptists were Arminian in their theology.[24] As General indicates, they accepted a doctrine of general atonement. They affirmed general election by God's grace and the universal atonement by Christ. They stressed man's free will to accept justification in faith or to refuse it, and believed that it was possible for a man to fall away from grace by his own choice. Some even denied original sin.

---

[22]In America, during this period of the Stuarts, Roger Williams (c. 1604-83) and John Clarke (1609-76) had immigrated to escape Laud's persecution. By 1636 the Massachusetts Bay colony had already exiled Williams who moved to Providence. There, in 1639, he formed the congregation reputed to be the first Baptist church in America. Clarke also gathered a Baptist church at Newport. The foundation of this church may have been as early as 1638. The records of the Newport church, however, go back only to 1648 (Torbet, History, pp. 202-3).

[23]Torbet, History, pp. 22, 44; also Wamble's study, p. 16.

[24]On Arminianism, see extended note in app. C, pp. 757-60. The general characteristics of Arminian theology are given in "Arminianism," in DCC, p. 90; also W. A. Curtis, "Confessions," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1st ed., 13 vols. (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1910-27), 3:883.

Particular Baptists, by contrast, accepted the more dominant view of a stricter Calvinism.[25] As the term Particular suggests, they believed in particular or limited atonement. They took their stand, moreover, within the covenant theology which came to be embodied in the Westminster standards.[26] Affirming both original sin and final perseverance, they tended to deny the place of man's free will in choosing to accept salvation.

Besides theological differences, there were others. General and Particular Baptists manifested specific orientations in their church life.[27]

General Baptists, at least in spirit, were akin to Anabaptist Mennonites and English Quakers.[28] They accepted the subjectivity of

---

[25]On orthodox Calvinism see extended note in app. C., pp. 749-56 and passim.

[26]On covenant theology see below, pp. 69-72; also chap. 4, pp. 302-6.

[27]For the contrast between General and Particular Baptists, see Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," in Baptist Concepts of the Church (op. cit.), p. 13; Torbet, History, pp. 56-57; and Wamble's study, pp. 84-86.

[28]On Anabaptists see above, n. 2, p. 39. General Baptists were in touch with the Dutch Mennonites in Waterlander. Quakers, to a large extent, drew their early recruits from General Baptist ranks. Many of the remaining General Baptists turned to Unitarianism. Some joined Particular Baptist churches. A few retained Baptist views distinct from Particular Baptists.

Quakers refers to the "spiritual trembling" sometimes evident in meetings of the Religious Society of Friends. Their founder, George Fox (1624-91) emphasized the immediacy of Christ's teaching and the central tenet of the Inner Light. The doctrine was set out by Robert Barclay (1648-90) in Theologiae Verae Christianae Apologia (1676). Views about the Inner Light led to a rejection of sacraments, ministry, and all set forms of worship, although Quakers accept spiritual baptism

the inner response to the Spirit, distrusted human learning, and were more extemporaneous in their worship. Their faith and practice were based on the six principles from Heb. 6:1-2. They stressed the laying on of hands at baptism, and observed three distinctive ordinances: foot washing, the love feast, and anointing with oil. They frowned upon the singing of hymns.

Like all Arminians, moreover, General Baptists stressed the uniting of their congregations into one great assembly, and tended to give their organizations and leaders greater authority than Particular Baptists. Yet General Baptists were more sectarian. They contended that the established Church of England was a false church, and insisted that the break should be complete and uncompromising. One might suppose that such a lack of ecumenical spirit was logically at odds with their own theology of general atonement. A theology of that type should have inspired a greater spirit of evangelization and a more practical sense of a broader fellowship beyond Baptists. But it had little positive effect for ecumenism or evangelism among General Baptists.

Particular Baptists, despite their views on particular election, were less sectarian than General Baptists. Some of their roots lay in a Non-Separatist Independency; therefore they tended to maintain a sense of their unity with other Christians. They remained reluctant to denounce the Church of England, or to condemn established parish churches. While they established their own congregations with "purer"

---

and spiritual communion (See "Quakers," and "Friends, Society of," in DCC, pp. 1149 and 538-39).

On General and Particular Baptist confessions written in opposition to Quakers see below, chap. 6, p. 527, n. 19.

worship, they did not condemn parishes as utterly devoid of the marks of the true Church.

Nevertheless, in their stress upon the covenantal basis of church order they were closer to Congregationalists and Presbyterians than to General Baptists. Their reluctance to form any kind of national organization reflected a leaning towards local church autonomy which they inherited from English Separatists. Particular Baptists were careful to limit the authority of their regional associations.

During the Commonwealth period (1640-60) and following it, Particular Baptists drew more converts from the educated classes and from higher social levels than did the General Baptists.

Significance of the General Baptists

As early as 1660 the General Baptists in England were losing ground to the Particular Baptists.[29] Nonetheless, General Baptists remain historically significant. Admittedly they were a tradition

---

[29]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 63.

In America, especially in the middle colonies, General Baptists suffered a similar fate. Yet they were the first English Baptists to emigrate to America. They settled in New England and initially outnumbered other Baptist groups in New York and the Jerseys. They were also the first Baptists in Virginia. Conditions in their new land, however, prevented them from gaining recruits. This was especially true in New England where all Baptists suffered initially under the newly established Congregational order, and where the impact of Arminian views led some to defect towards Unitarianism and Quakerism in the eighteenth century.

When orthodox Calvinism was assured, largely through the leadership of the P.B.A., General Baptists also declined by shifts towards Regular, Calvinist Baptist churches. While some small groups still survive, most General Baptists merged with Particular Baptists by 1891 in England, and by 1911 in America (See app. C, p. 763 esp. n. 3; see also Torbet, History, pp. 214-15 and Idem, Social History, p. 18.).

that could not find a place alongside a stricter Calvinism. Yet theologically the movement anticipated a modified Calvinism that arose through the influence of men like the Baptist theologian, Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) and the Methodist evangelist, George Whitefield (1714-70).[30] By the time that Fuller came into prominence, however, General Baptists had already ceased to have any significant impact upon English or American Baptist life. Indeed, other currents of Baptist thought already had footholds among Baptists of the P.B.A. in the aftermath of the Great Awakening.[31]

The importance of General Baptists for the present study is their attitude towards church associations and officers. As suggested above, General Baptists tended to be strongly connectional.[32] As early as 1624 five of their congregations had united in a dialog with the Dutch Waterlander Mennonites. Very quickly they developed the church polity that was later adopted, independently, by the Particulars. The Generals showed a greater willingness to join associations. For example, in the Midlands (a General Baptist stronghold) only seven of

---

[30]Andrew Fuller was a Baptist theologian who published The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation (ca. 1785). This work criticized a hyper-Calvinism that denied there was any good in the unregenerated person. It was a work that inspired the first British Baptist foreign missioner, William Carey (1761-1834).

George Whitefield was a Methodist evangelist who, in his several trips to America during 1739 to 1744, helped to advance the Great Awakening (1740-60). See below, chap. 2, pp. 110-11 and pp. 117-18.

[31]Notably, Separate Baptists and those spurred on by the newer evangelicalism of the awakening. See below, pp. 109-27.

[32]Connectional (connectionalism) is a Baptist term meaning church-relatedness or an affiliation among Baptist churches.

fourteen Particular Baptist churches associated in 1655.[33] By contrast, the General Baptists had already set up a national assembly in 1654 which met annually, except during those times when such meetings were impossible because of wartime conditions.[34]

The attitudes of General Baptists towards connectionalism are expressed in confessions. Among these An Orthodox Creed of 1678 merits special attention.[35] This Creed represents an early attempt towards centralized church authority. Its unique view of the competence of assemblies over local churches in article Thirty-Nine: "Of General Councils, or Assemblies," relates to this study on church authority. It deserves to be cited in full:

> General councils, or assemblies, consisting of Bishops, Elders, and Brethren, of the several churches of Christ, and being legally convened, and met together out of all the churches, and the churches appearing there by their representatives, make but one church, and have lawful right, and suffrage in this general meeting, or

---

[33]Lumpkin, p. 195.

[34]Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 92-93.

[35]Lumpkin, in his collection of Baptist confessions, includes the following significant General Baptist statements: (1) A Declaration of Faith of the English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland, first General Baptist Confession of 1611 published by T. Helwys (pp. 114-15; text, pp. 116-23); (2) The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations Gathered According to the Primitive Pattern, 1651 statement of the Association of General Baptists at Leicester (pp. 172-73; text, pp. 174-88); (3) The True Gospel-Faith Declared According to the Scriptures, 1654 defense of London General Baptists against Quakers and others, first Baptist confession to prescribe laying on of hands for baptized believers (pp. 190-91; text, pp. 192-95); (4) The Standard Confession, 1660 statement of the General Assembly of the General Baptists of England, known and used in America by General Baptists (pp. 220-23; text, pp. 224-35); and (5) An Orthodox Creed of 1678, discussed in text above, unofficial statement approved by several churches of the General Assembly of General Baptists (pp. 295-96; text, pp. 297-354).

> assembly, to act in the name of Christ; it being of divine authority, and is the best means under heaven to preserve unity, to prevent heresy, and superintendency among, or in any congregation whatsoever within its own limits, or jurisdiction. And to such a meeting, or assembly, appeals ought to be made, in case any injustice be done, or heresy, and schism countenanced, in any particular congregation of Christ, and the decisive voice in such general assemblies have lawful power to hear, and determine, as also to excommunicate.[36]

An Orthodox Creed was the only Baptist Confession in history to elevate the assembly as a divinely authorized institution over the local churches. It never received official sanction from the General Assembly, although several churches subscribed to it. Indeed some even accepted the office of messenger as of divine origin. Thomas Grantham, himself a General Baptist messenger, argued for such a viewpoint.[37] Such exhalted views of office and organization apparently did not sit well with all General Baptists, but especially not with Particular Baptists.

General Baptist views offer a useful counterpoint in an analysis of the Particular Baptist thoughts so influential within the P.B.A. And especially in the area of a theology of general atonement, General Baptist notions help to explain some of the tensions which existed among Baptists of that Association, notably the prevalence of spokesmen for universalism.[38] Just because the P.B.A. officially sanctioned

---

[36] An Orthodox Creed, or A Protestant Confession of Faith, Being an Essay to Unite and Confirm All True Protestants in the Fundamental Articles of the Christian Religion, Against the Errors and Heresies of Rome (London: Printed in the year, 1679), in Lumpkin, p. 327 (Italics mine). (Hereafter: for An Orthodox Creed, OC.) OC

[37] Thomas Grantham, The Successors of the Apostles (ca. 1674), p. 3, cited by Underwood, p. 120.

[38] The P.B.A. dealt with the problem of universal restoration from the years 1781 onward. Universal salvation was the subject of the

Particular Baptist views does not mean that all General Baptist views disappeared completely in the Philadelphia Association. In fact, some members of the P.B.A., as indicated below, held Arminian views.

Baptist Expansion during the Commonwealth Period

The Commonwealth period (1640-60) was a time of rapid political and religious changes. A most unstable period, it witnessed great religious upheaval.

Archbishop Laud's efforts to restore Episcopalism in England helped pave the way for armed resistance in conflicts like the Civil War of 1642-45. After this struggle, Presbyterianism became the newly established religion until 1653. For those who preferred a congregational form of church life this situation proved as intolerable as established Episcopalism.

For a brief period congregational Independency held sway as the official church structure under the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, who ruled from 1653 until 1658.

Still there were some, including Baptists, who sought an even more radical solution. They wanted nothing short of the complete disestablishment of state religion. Some even turned to fanaticism, such

---

circular letter of the P.B.A., written by Samuel Jones, in 1790 (See Gillette, pp. 257-60; also 174, 256, 293, 311-12). As late as 1803 John Stanford complained to his friend Samuel Jones in correspondence: "Rev. G. Strebeck has engaged in a public dispute with the Universalists of NY. In my opinion, no man who stands on Armenian [sic] ground, called by what name he may, can vanquish a Universalist; such will eventually, be found to be of the same family; whether near, or more distantly, related. . ." (John Stanford to Samuel Jones, March 3, 1803, McKesson Papers, A.B.H.S. Library, Rochester, New York (Hereafter: McKesson Papers).

as the Fifth Monarchy Men, who threatened the very existence of civil and religious life.[39] Such upheaval could be contained only by the forcible suppression of fanatics and some return to normalcy. To accomplish the latter, the monarchy was restored under Charles II (r. 1660-85) which brought the Commonwealth period to an end.

The Commonwealth era was the best of times for Baptist development in many ways. Paradoxically, however, the same period caused great hardships for Baptists who suffered much for their convictions. It was, nevertheless, the highpoint of Baptist growth. The latter was evident in (1) church extension through increased membership, (2) development of church structures and (3) formulation of significant Calvinistic confessions.

Baptist Church Extension

Unstable as these two decades were, they provided just the religious and social conditions needed for Baptists to grow, the

---

[39]Underwood (p. 66) mentions the following sects: Seekers, Ranters, Familists, Levellers, Diggers, Quakers and Fifth Monarchy Men. These were equally despised by the Presbyterians and the Anglicans. For the relationship of Baptists to these sects see Underwood, pp. 82-84.

Fifth Monarchy Men were a mid seventeenth century fanatical sect that strove to bring in the Fifth Monarchy of Dan. 2:44, succeeding the four empires of Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome. Originally supporters of O. Cromwell they turned against him when he threatened their dreams for a theocracy. After uprisings in 1657 and 1661 the leaders were beheaded and the sect died out. (See "Fifth Monarchy Men," in DCC, p. 512.)

On Seventh Day Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men see below, n. 42.

atmosphere of freedom to dispute religious differences, and the mobility of the New Model Army.[40]

The Commonwealth era provided an atmosphere that allowed free and public dispute about religious differences. The period had been surprisingly tolerant, despite repressive measures of Oliver Cromwell. It allowed an atmosphere in which the intense religious zeal of the common man could find free expression. In the midst of this freedom religious debates abounded.

In the process, Baptists, especially in their debates against infant baptist (paedobaptism), won many converts to their views. Whitley claims a score of clergymen of the established Church of England became ardent propagandists for Baptist principles.[41]

The extensive religious debates and the atmosphere of freedom to debate contributed to a multiplication of sects. For Baptists the Quakers and the Fifth Monarchy Men caused the greatest grief. Baptists debated with Quakers in London and defended themselves against their views in several confessions. Accused unjustly of supporting

---

[40]Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 61-98; Underwood, pp. 63-88. The New Model Army was a magnificently trained and effective fighting force which Oliver Cromwell used against Charles I in the Civil War of 1642-45. Parliament, impressed with the success of county associations set up for mutual defense against royalist plunderings, modelled the whole military system on associational lines. This New Model Army had a council for political action on which sat a representative from each regiment (See Whitley, British Baptists, p. 90).

For a discussion of the relationship between this New Model Army and Baptists' associations see below, pp. 57-59, and 64.

[41]Whitley, Briitsh Baptists, p. 70.

Fifth Monarchy Men, Baptists defended themselves through new confessions.[42]

Baptist expansion during the Commonwealth era was further facilitated by their participation in the New Model Army. The military experience afforded them both a pattern for associationalism (discussed below) and an opportunity for church expansion. The latter complimented the efforts of evangelists working to establish churches in Ireland and the west country of Britain. In towns and settlements where the military grouped, small Baptist churches developed.[43]

During this Commonwealth period Baptists became men of influence especially through membership in the military. They held positions in the army and fleet, as well as distinguished civilian posts.[44]

Paradoxically, along with successes came increased hostilities. Baptists were excluded from the Westminster Assembly (1643-53) and ridiculed for their practice of adult baptism by immersion. Unjust accusations that they practiced immoral rituals acted as catalysts for the formulation of Baptist confessions. Initially such statements

---

[42]On Fifth Monarchy Men see above, n. 39. Some argue that Seventh Day Baptists came mainly from the ranks of the Fifth Monarchy Men (See Whitley, British Baptists, p. 86; and Torbet, History, p. 54).
On Quakers see above, n. 28, p. 47. On Baptist confessions against Quakers see below, chap. 6, p. 527, n. 19.

[43]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 71.
Evangelists, or messengers, exercised a great influence upon Baptist life. The General Baptist Thomas Grantham and the Particular Baptist Thomas Collier were examples. In 1655 the latter was appointed General Superintendent and Messenger to all the associated churches of Wessex (Whitley, British Baptists, p. 71). On the office of messenger see below, pp. 59-60.

[44]Underwood, pp. 74-79.

served more of an apologetic aim than any pressing need among Baptists themselves.[45]

Development of Baptist Church Organization

The second aspect that made the Commonwealth era a highpoint for Baptists was the development of church organization, especially among the General Baptists. It was their involvement with the military experience, particularly membership in the New Model Army, which helped them develop church order. The major lines emerged clearly among General Baptists, less clearly among Particular Baptists. Three elements of church organization existed: associations, messengers, and general assemblies.

Associations

Both the General and the Particular Baptist assemblies of churches soon took on the name of associations, a term probably derived from the pattern of the New Model Army of Cromwell.[46]

---

[45]General Baptists issued the following during this period: The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations, Gathered According to the Primitive Pattern (1651); The True Gospel-Faith Declared According to the Scriptures (1654); and The Standard Confession (1660) (See Lumpkin, pp. 172-88, 188-95, and 220-35).

Particular Baptists issued confessions too: The London Confession (1644), The Somerset (Particular Baptist) Confession (1656), An Antidote Against the Infection of the Times (1659), and others of individual churches (See Lumpkin, pp. 195-200, 200-16, and 216-18).

[46]For an extensive treatment of the origins of associations among British Baptists consult the following studies: Bennett, chap. 2: The Baptist Association in a Socio-Historical Perspective, pp. 29-48; Ehren, chap. 3: The Association, pp. 65-75; and Starbird, chap. 1: Associational Origins and Early Historical Development, pp. 1-13; also Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 87-93.

In 1642/43 throughout the various counties, associations among the militia arose for mutual defense against royalist plunderings. At first these associations simply subscribed money. Eventually they raised troops. They were so successful that Parliament remodelled the whole military system along such associational lines. This New Model Army (1645-60) organized a council for political action, with each regiment represented.

In 1653 the portion of this army stationed in Ireland was largely Baptist. When the army was disbanded and the troops settled on the land, Baptist churches were formed. Without difficulty these Baptists transferred to their church relations the method of assembly that had proven so successful in their military life. They arranged for correspondence among their churches in Ireland and for meetings of church delegates. To such meetings the name association was quite naturally attached.[47]

The Irish association contacted London groups of Baptists who themselves were accustomed to meeting with one another. Soon the term association came into general use to describe the interdependence typical among Baptists. By 1655 the title was well known. After 1689 it became the popular term.[48]

---

[47]Whitley (British Baptists, pp. 90-93) argues in favor of this influence from the New Model Army which is here developed. For a strong critique of this view see Hugh Wamble, "The Beginning of Associationalism among English Baptists," Review and Expositor 57 (1957), 552-553. Both men agree that the military associational pattern alone does not explain the phenomenon of Baptist interdependence which was variously described as "general meetings," "meetings," and "assembly."

[48]Wamble, "The Beginning of Associationalism," p. 553.

To an extent Baptist associations were unique, compared to meetings of Puritans, Quakers and Presbyterians. Historically the Baptist associations antedated by several years those of the Puritans and Friends in England. More importantly Baptist meetings differed from those of the Presbyterians and the Friends in that they included laymen and thus embodied totally the Protestant conviction that all Christians share full responsibility for the Church.[49]

Church Messengers

The functions of church messengers were a natural development of the early Baptists' recognition of their duty to "evangelize." Following the New Testament example of commissioning men for special journeys, Baptists formally chose men and gave them the title messengers. At first men were sent for particular journeys only. Later they were set apart full time and supported as messengers. The latter title came eventually to have a technical sense of being sent by a group of churches that were in a position to provide support for such evangelists at large. Thus messengers came to be regular officers not just of one congregation, but of a group of churches.[50]

In addition to their main role as "evangelizers" such messengers soon assumed the related tasks of organizing new Christian communities and of counselling them in their early growth. Both General and

---

[49]See W. T. Whitley, "Associational Life Till 1815," Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society (London: Baptist Union Publication Department), 5 (1916-17) : 22, cited in Bennett, p. 35.
Also Vedder, History of Baptists, p. 92, cited by Bennett, p. 36.
Also Whitley, British Baptists, p. 92.

[50]On messengers see Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 87-88; also Underwood, pp. 119-23.

Particular Baptists had such emissaries of their associations. For the General Baptists the office became more exhalted, inclined as the Generals were to centralize their church life. Thomas Grantham, himself a messenger, even argued that the office was of divine origin.[51]

General Assemblies

General Baptists very early organized a General Assembly of all their churches. In 1654 this Assembly stood at the peak of the organizational chart. The practice may have been a carryover from the Anabaptist Dutch Mennonites. Whatever the origins, during the Commonwealth period there were several meetings of the General Assembly. It was at the 1660 meeting that the General Baptists approved their influential Standard Confession.[52]

The authority of this Assembly was merely advisory, though the impulse to assume a greater degree of power over the member churches expressed itself among some General Baptists. The views of the latter were articulated in An Orthodox Creed of 1678 noted above.[53]

Particular Baptists, less inclined towards connectionalism, did not have a general assembly during the Commonwealth period. They did, however, have local and regional associations. When the period of the protectorate ended, Baptists could not gather conveniently in the renewed atmosphere of oppression. Even during those difficult years from 1660 until toleration in 1688, General Baptists held a general

---

[51]Grantham, p. 3, cited by Underwood, p. 120.

[52]Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 92-93.

[53]On An Orthodox Creed, see above, pp. 51-52.

assembly in 1678. Particular Baptists also managed to meet, though their first general assembly came only later in the period of toleration.[54]

By the middle of the seventeenth century Baptists were well organized. This is reflected in the practice of the General Baptists of the Midlands by 1651, and the first Baptist group-document issued by the Particular Baptists in 1644. As Whitley wrote, all Baptists linked their churches "both to steady one another in doctrine and explain themselves unitedly to the world, to aid one another in time of need, and especially to propogate their views."[55]

The P.B.A., in its beginnings, already had British models of church organization. The extreme views of the General Baptists about the authority of assemblies and messengers, of course, disappeared as the General Baptists succumbed to the advance of Particular Baptists.

Bases for Connectionalism

The foundations and origins for Baptist connectionalism have been thoroughly researched by various scholars.[56] According to their

---

[54]Particular Baptists finally had their first general assembly in 1689 when they adopted the Second London Confession of 1677, later accepted by the P.B.A. in 1742.

[55]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 89.

[56]The following discussion draws upon Shurden (1967), pp. 69-111. He distinguishes (1) biblical, (2) theological, and (3) practical bases as noted in the text above.

Bennett (1970) suggests two existential factors (scattered churches and mobility of the army) and four essential factors: (1) the Anglican and Calvinistic tradition of congregational interdependency; (2) affirmation of the Church as both universal and particular; (3)

findings, the bases for associationalism involved more than simple expediency as a result of the social needs of Baptist groups. Almost from the beginning Baptists saw an analogy between their connectionalism and the practice of the early Church in Acts 15. Walter B. Shurden, in his study, showed the interrelationship between biblical, theological and practical bases for associations. He argued that practical needs led to affiliation, but the theological and biblical grounding for such association followed very quickly:

> Without doubt, the most significant factors in the rise of associations were practical. After they had developed, however, associations were [71] justified on three grounds: Biblical, theological, and practical. At least, that is how eighteenth century Baptists explained association. . . .
>
> While all three factors, . . . , were enunciated explicitly in associational documents, they rarely were delineated in a neat, organizational fashion. Repeatedly, the three bases existed in the same document, and even the same sentence. The 1798 discipline adopted by the Philadelphia Association declared that associationalism was "recommended by the reason of things [practical], the spirit of religion [theological], and apostolic practice (Acts XV) [biblical]."[57]

---

subordination of the ministry to the congregation; and (4) Calvinistic activism (p. 48; see discussion, pp. 37-49).

Wamble (1955) sees the determinative factor as belief in the Body of Christ (pp. 238, 342); he suggests five causative purposes in the development of associations: (1) to provide security and fellowship for small isolated churches; (2) to issue a confession to demonstrate Baptist theological orthodoxy, political innocence, and moral purity; (3) to preserve denominational unity; (4) to propagate Baptist views; and (5) to maintain fellowship through information, assistance and cooperation (Idem, "The Beginnings of Associationalism Among English Baptists," Review and Expositor 56, no. 4 [October 1957]:544-49, cited in Bennett, pp. 39-40).

See also studies by Ehren (1966), pp. 65-97 and Chapman (1920 and 1921), chap. 2.

J. D. Hughey posits three sources of church order: (1) biblical, (2) historical, and (3) expedient or charismatic ("What Determines Church Polity," Review and Expositor 52 [April 1955]:206, cited by Bennett, p. 39).

[57]Shurden, pp. 70-71.

The biblical justifications were several. Baptists appealed to Acts 15, Jn. 17:21, Eph. 4:4-6, Rom. 12:5, 1 Cor. 1:10; and Ex. 23:17 to justify their associations.[58] Their main theological justifications for connectionalism were two: first, the concept of the Church as universal, and second, of the local church as a mutual covenant with doctrinal and disciplinary restrictions placed on members of congregations.[59] The practical functions of associations with theological implications included the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism at associational meetings, occasional ordinations, restoration of excommunicated ministers, and the admitting of messengers of other associations to full membership. By right, these functions belonged solely to the local churches. At the request of the latter, associations of the eighteenth century participated actively, at least in a representative capacity, at these functions.[60]

Baptist associations emerged as a practical and theological necessity. They were the result of three circumstances.[61] First, unlike other Independents, Baptists included in their understanding of Christ's Church a sense of permanent fellowship among churches. They recognized the need for broader visible fellowship. Second, Baptists needed an effective means of mutual support to meet well the call to evangelize their members and to defend their views. Their need to rally their isolated small churches also required some type of cooperation to

---

[58]Ibid., pp. 73-84.

[59]Ibid., pp. 85-91.

[60]Ibid., pp. 92-99.

[61]See Lumpkin, pp. 171-72.

provide ministers for destitute churches. Third, the experience of Baptists within the New Model Army offered them a viable model. This they appropriated for their own purposes without doing violence to their own convictions about the full authority of the local church.

Perhaps the most significant conclusion from past research is the firm conviction of Shurden that associations represented the churches and not simply the individuals who made up the assemblies.[62]

The findings about the origins of Baptist associations are accepted as proven by previous research. The focus in this study lies with the Philadelphia tradition as such, and with a theological interpretation of the P.B.A. documents.

Confessional Statements in the Reformed Tradition

The Commonwealth period, besides helping Baptists to increase their numbers and to organize their church life, created the climate for the development of major confessional statements by Presbyterian and Congregational Calvinists. These, in a later period, proved of great benefit to Baptists in the formulation of their confessions. The Commonwealth era included two great denominational councils, the Westminster Assembly and the Synod of Savoy. Both meetings endorsed confessional statements that incorporated for all Englishmen the Reformed tradition of Calvin.[63]

---

[62]Shurden, pp. 51-58. A different emphasis appears in Ehren who seems, in the view of this author, to minimize the ecclesial shape of associations (See Ehren, pp. 163ff).

[63]On Calvinism and its various types see app. C.

The Westminster Assembly

During the reign of Charles I the Long Parliament appointed the Westminster Assembly to reform the English Church.

The king had refused to authorize Parliament's bill of October 15, 1642, convening the Assembly. The latter therefore issued its own ordinance on June 12 of the same year and nominated 121 members, thirty of whom were lay assessors.[64]

Membership included nine Episcopalians, four of whom were bishops, some ten or eleven Congregationalists, and a few Erastians who held that civil rulers possessed authority over the Church by divine right. The vast majority, however, were Presbyterians from Scotland and England.

Within the total membership, some were Independents who sympathized with Congregational attitudes. They exercised a disproportionate influence through the favor of Oliver Cromwell and the army.[65] While Baptists as such were excluded from the proceedings, their views on church polity were ably represented by Congregationalists and other Independents.[66]

The Westminster Assembly held 1,163 sessions between July 1, 1643 and February 22, 1649 and continued sporadically, thereafter, from 1649 to 1653, without the participation of the Scots. Once the

---

[64]"Westminster, Assembly (1643)," in DCC, p. 1472.

[65]Ibid.; also Williston Walker, The creeds and platforms of congregationalism (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1960), p. 342.

[66]The most important of these for the present study was Thomas Goodwin. On Congregationalist writers see below, pp. 80-83, esp. notes.

Independents were in control, the presence of Scottish Presbyterians was minimal.

In addition to its celebrated Confession the Westminster Assembly prepared a Directory of Public Worship and two Catechisms.[67] Violent controversies about the sacraments, the jurisdiction of the church courts, and church censures often delayed the proceedings.[68]

For the purposes of this study, the Westminster Assembly was significant for two reasons, (1) its confessional statement, and (2) its theological orientation which embodied a covenant theology.

The Westminster Confession of 1646. Parliament had originally mandated the Assembly to revise the thirty-nine Articles of Religion of 1563 of the Church of England in a Puritan direction. Changes were made with the help of the nine Lambeth Articles of 1595 and the nineteen

---

[67]There were two Catechisms published by the Assembly, a Larger and a Smaller Catechism. Schaff gives the latter in his collection (Phillip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes, 4th ed. rev. & enlarged [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1966], vol. 3: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with translations, pp. 676-70 [Hereafter: Schaaf]).

All the major denominations developed catechisms. Baptists modeled theirs after the Westminster ones. The most popular was the Keach Catechism of Benjamin Keach and William Collins (1693). It was revised by John Rippon and compared to previous editions in 1794. The Particular Baptists in 1789 published their own catechism, reprinted in America many times: The Baptist Catechism . . .

The P.B.A. promoted the above catechisms and had its own printed in 1781, The Shorter Catechism for the use of Baptist congregations (Philadelphia: Printed by Rober Aitken, 1781). (See annotations to bibl. below, sec. 1, headings: The Baptist Catechism . . .; Keach, B.; and PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, Catechisms, pp. 768, 776, 779-80.

[68]"Westminster, Assembly (1643)," in DCC, p. 1472.

Irish Articles of 1615. By the time the Assembly reached consideration of the fifteenth article, the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 appeared (discussed below). Strong anti-episcopal and anti-royalist feelings had crystallized in this politico-religious alliance between England and Scotland.[69] On September 25, 1643, both the English Commons and the Westminster Assembly threw in their lot with the Scottish Parliament and Assembly against King Charles I and Archbishop Laud.[70]

Since the Solemn League presupposed uniformity of doctrine between England and Scotland, under strong Scottish influence Parliament ordered the suspension of the Westminster revision of the Articles of Religion. On October 12, 1643, it ordered the framing of "a Confession of Faith for the three kingdoms (England, Scotland and Wales), according to the Solemn League and Covenant."[71] The task was given to a large commission that worked twenty-seven months.

Completed on December 4, 1646, the Confession expounded the leading articles of faith in thirty-three chapters.[72] According to the

---

[69]The Solemn League and Covenant is one of the great examples of the influence of a covenant theology among British dissenters (see discussion of covenant theology below, pp. 69-72).

[70]Curtis, "Confessions," p. 873.

[71]"Westminster Confession," in DCC, p. 1473.

[72]For the critical text of the Westminster Confession see S. W. Carruthers, The Westminster Confession of Faith. Being an Account of the Preparation and Printing of its Seven Leading Editions (Presbyterian Historical Society of England, Extra Publications No. 2, 1937), pp. 89-157; also John A. Hardon, The Spirit and Origins of American Protestantism: a source book in its Creeds (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum Press, 1968), pp. 121-56 (Hereafter: Source Book); and Schaff, 3:598-673 (Hereafter, for Westminster Confession: W).

W

Jesuit scholar of American Protestantism, John A. Hardon, it is "a masterpiece of thoroughness," recognizing the place of free will and the role of secondary causes in the divine decree while emphatically maintaining the Calvinistic doctrine of selective predestination.[73] Two covenants are outlined, a covenant of works made with Adam and his posterity and a covenant of grace made in Christ with believers. Faith is presented as the only condition to participate in the covenant of grace. The distinction between visible and invisible Church is held and great emphasis is placed on Sunday as the new Sabbath with the due observance of Sabbath rest applied to it.[74]

The Confession was formally approved by the General Assembly at Edinburgh on August 27, 1647. After some revision it was also approved by the Long Parliament on June 20, 1648. That body had ordered certain sections deleted and changed the title from Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines to Articles of Christian Religion.[75] It also asked for scriptural texts to substantiate each section.

Since Presbyterianism soon broke down in England, the Confession ordered by Parliament never had lasting influence in England. The changes ordered by Parliament, however, were implemented by the Savoy Synod of Congregationalists. Since Baptists later relied extensively

---

[73]Hardon, Source Book, p. 124.

[74]"Westminster Confession," in DCC, p. 1473.

[75]". . . ; but Parliament still debated, and finally, on June 20, 1648, adopted the Confession, with the omission of Ch. XX, §4 (relating to the punishment of heresy, etc.); Ch. XXIV, §§4 (in part), 5, 6 (on divorce); Ch. XXX entire (on church censures); and Ch. XXXI entire (on synods and councils). At the same time Parliament changed the title to Articles of Christian Religion. . . ." (Walker, p. 350, n. 5.)

on the Savoy version, they came closer to the English than to the Scottish version of the Westminster Confession.

A Covenant or Federal Theology. In producing its Confession (and Catechisms), Westminster was a good instance of the emerging Puritan theology that came to affect Particular Baptists from their origins. That theology was a distinctively Old Testament one that capitalized upon the idea of covenant. The theology which utilized this basic scriptural notion is called covenant or federal theology.[76]

Covenant is a bond voluntarily entered into by two parties. By it each pledges himself to do something for the other. The idea is found in Old Testament covenants between Yahweh and his people, Israel. The prophets, especially Ezechiel and Jeremiah, looked forward to that perfect relationship to be based upon an inward righteousness of the heart, a new and ethical covenant.

In the New Testament Christ took the idea of covenant further. The Greek term διαθήκη (diathēkē) is translated as covenant or testament. As Savior, Christ established a new covenant in his blood, an everlasting one for the forgiveness of sin.

The idea of covenant was used by the Scottish Presbyterians in their struggle against the English monarchy and episcopalism. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Scots bound themselves together by religious and political oaths to maintain the cause of their homeland's religion. Between 1556 and 1562 various small covenants were signed.

---

[76] On covenant see arts. in DCC: "King's Confession" (p. 782), "Solemn League and Covenant" (p. 1287), "National Covenant" (p. 955), "Covenant" (pp. 353-54) and "Covenanters" (p. 354).

In 1581, the King's Confession was signed by Scotsmen of all classes. Drawn up by John Craig (ca. 1512-1600), it was primarily a defense against the threatened inroads of "popery." All parish priests, and later all graduates, were required to subscribe to it. Reaffirmed in 1590 and 1595 it became the basis of the National Covenant nearly a half century later. In 1637 the English monarch, Charles I, attempted to introduce the Book of Common Prayer into Scotland. The Scots reacted the following year with their National Covenant.

After the outbreak of the Civil War, the English Parliament, as noted above, entered into alliance with the rebel Scots. Their agreement was the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. Its purpose was to join the forces of Parliament and Scotland against king and bishops. Scotland stressed the religious terms of the covenant. The presence of Scottish Presbyterians at Westminster greatly affected the character of its confessional standards. The Westminster Confession was drafted after the model of the Solemn League and Covenant.

Thus, the Westminster statement became one of the most famous embodiments of a covenant theology. During the restored monarchy, as is noted below, it was the rallying cry of all Puritans who joined forces against the oppressive measures of a Parliament allied with the bishops. It was "the most definitive covenantal confession in post-Reformation history."[77]

---

[77]Description of W from Sidney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 131 (Hereafter: Religious History). On Baptists' use of Westminster see below, pp. 87-88.

Englishmen in revolt against the established Church of England developed a contractual basis for their society, civil and ecclesiastical. A Puritan kind of piety helped to combine emerging eighteenth century social theory with religious ideas of God's sovereign and free choice of the elect. A renewed sense of covenant helped Puritans correlate irresistable grace with man's natural rights and freedoms.[78]

The covenant theology that developed stressed man's free choice as well as God's election. The Old Testament idea of election was transferred to various levels. Emphasis was placed upon personal appropriation in faith, on an "inward, overt, and obedient preparation, appropriation, humility, dedication, gratitude--and a commitment to walk in God's way according to his Law. . . ."[79] In time an individual conversion experience was demanded for membership in the Church. Church thus became a gathering of "visible Saints."

In its fullest development a covenant theology distinguished five levels of God's relationship with man: (1) a covenant of works between Adam and God his Creator, with eternal life given over and sustained on condition that man obey the natural law within him; (2) a covenant of works between Moses and Yahweh, with a promise of healing for the chosen people now depraved by Adam's fall if only Israel would trust in a future Messiah and abide by the Law which reaffirmed the natural law; (3) a covenant of grace between Christ and the Father, open to all believers who were baptized and lived in obedience to the

---

[78]Vernon J. Rutland, S.J., "Covenant Theology," in New Catholic Encyclopaedia (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), 4:405. (Hereafter: NCE.)

NCE

[79]Ahlstrom, Religious History, p. 132.

ordinances of the Word; (4) the church covenant between visible saints committed to one another under Christ their Head, and (5) the civil covenant whereby citizens freely agree to obey legitimate rulers under God's authority.[80]

Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists differed in their descriptions of these covenants. In particular, London Particular Baptists in 1677 and 1689 developed a triple covenant of grace in contrast to Westminster's double covenant. The differences are discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.[81]

In general, the value of a covenant theology was its ability to mitigate a stricter Calvinistic theology without doing violence to the sovereign election of the saints by God's predestination.

> The significance of the covenants was that, while theologically upholding the absolute sovereignty of God, they made God's absolutism tractable to man's ability to conform . . . [1094] . . . . Thus, Calvin's God of predestination and irresistable condemnation became a Puritan God who could be served by righteous living and who would thereby consider those so living among the elect. Puritanism in this way marked the midpoint between orthodox and liberal Protestantism, between voluntarism and rationalism, between the sovereignty of God and the sovereignty of man.[82]

By including all men, even those prior to Abraham, in God's covenant of grace, proponents of a covenant theology held to a view that could assimilate "heretical" teachings about universalism while sustaining Calvinistic beliefs about salvation.

---

[80]Rutland, p. 405.

[81]See below, pp. 303-4.

[82]Roger E. Matzerath, "Calvinism," in NCE, 2:1093-94.

The Synod of Savoy

During the Cromwell period, besides the Presbyterian Assembly at Westminster, the Congregational Synod at Savoy also brought about significant developments that had an impact upon later Baptists and the sources for this study.

Even before this period of the Commonwealth, Congregationalists had appeared. They were variously described as Brownists or Independents. Together with others sympathetic with Independency, such as the Baptists and even some not sharing the same views about church polity, they formed the backbone of Cromwell's efficient army.[83]

Congregationalists had participated in the Westminster Assembly. Their primary opposition to Presbyterianism had been due to church polity, not points of doctrine. In January 1644, five dissenting brethren had appealed from the Assembly directly to Parliament in An Apologeticall Narration.[84] They had hoped to shift the battleground between Presbyterians and Congregationalists from the Assembly to a higher tribunal, the opinion of Parliament and that of the nation. Unfortunately for Independents, so diversified in their own convictions, they could not present a united church polity without losing some of the support of the army. The Presbyterians, with their clear stand on church order, had carried the day.[85]

---

[83]"Congregationalism," in DCC, p. 333.

[84]Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes, and Sidrach Simpson, An Apologeticall Narration, Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament (London: January, 1644). On the dating see Walker, p. 343, n. 4.

[85]Walker, pp. 343-45.

A number of factors dovetailed to shift the political advantage from Presbyterians to Independents, specifically, the execution of the king, the successive purges of Presbyterians from Parliament, and the establishment of a Commonwealth under the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell.[86] Conditions favored another assembly, this time a Congregational synod.

Though the preparations for such a synod remain somewhat unclear today, Congregational ministers as a whole responded very favorably to the summons. Between the summons, however, and the actual time of meeting, the Lord Protector died on September 3, 1658. Still the Synod met on September 29. It represented some 120 churches. The majority of the members were laymen, but the leading ministers of Congregational England were also present.[87]

The finished work of the Synod yielded a Declaration of the Faith closely resembling the Westminster Confession, an appendix of thirty sections on the institution of the churches, and a lengthy, very tedious preface probably composed by John Owen. In essence the Savoy Declaration of Faith and its Platform of Church Polity declared that all necessary power is vested in each individual church. While it affirmed the existence of a visible Catholic Church, it repudiated any claim that Christ established a governing body beyond the local churches.[88]

---

[86]Cromwell's rule under the Instruments of Government began Dec. 16, 1653 and lasted till his death on Sept. 3, 1658.

[87]Walker, pp. 345-49.

[88]Curtis, "Confessions," p. 884.

The rise of Congregationalism in England is significant for this study of P.B.A. sources for three reasons: (1) the adaptation of the Westminster Confession by Savoy was known and used by Particular Baptists, (2) the Savoy Synod's Platform of Church Polity had a great impact upon the same group of London Baptists, and (3) Congregational writers provided the theory for the church polity of Particular Baptists of the P.B.A.

A Declaration of the Faith of 1658. For its Declaration of the Faith the Synod decided to draw up a new symbol substantially the same as the Westminster Confession.[89] The six-man committee chosen to prepare the Declaration, with the exception of John Owen, had participated in the Westminster Assembly fifteen years earlier.[90]

Compared to Westminster the Savoy meeting was very brief. It lasted only twelve working days. Having approved unanimously the work of its committee the Synod adjourned on Tuesday, October 11, 1658. The members claimed that their solidarity of vision was the effect of the Holy Spirit at work among various congregations; another plausible explanation is that all the Independent ideas had already been clarified in debate with Presbyterians at the Westminster Assembly. Moreover,

---

[89] A Declaration of the Faith and Order Owned and practiced in the Congregational Churches in England: Agreed upon and consented unto by the Elders and Messengers in Their Meeting at the Savoy, October 12, 1658 (London: Printed by John Field, and are to be sold by John Allen at the Sun Rising in Pauls Church-yard, 1658). A copy appears in Walker, pp. 340-402; also Schaff, 3:707-29 (excerpts). (Hereafter: 1S.)

[90] Besides Owen the committee included Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, and William Bridge (all three joint authors of The Apologeticall Narration along with Burroughes and Simpson), Joseph Caryl, and William Greenhill (See Walker, p. 349).

Parliament had already eliminated those sections of the Westminster Confession most odious to Independents. Congregationalists, therefore, had much of their work already done.[91]

Besides the omissions already required by Parliament the Savoy divines made further changes. In general, however, they did not alter the sense of the Westminster version. The most important addition was a whole chapter 20: "Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace thereof." Even this, while intensely Calvinistic and characteristic of Congregationalism's concern to stress grace above sanctions of law, was in no way antagonistic to the Westminster Confession.[92]

The Platform of Church Polity of 1658. The really original work of Savoy was its Platform of Church Polity.[93] It presented a briefer, more compact and generally more lucid view of Congregationalism than its American counterpart, The Cambridge Platform of the Synod of 1649.[94] Compared to the New England version the Savoy statement was

---

[91]See above, p. 68, esp. n. 75; also Walker, pp. 349-51.

[92]For other differences see Walker, pp. 350-51; also Curtis, "Confessions," p. 884. For the Second London Confession of 1677 and 1689, Underhill provides the Westminster and/or Savoy variations to the Baptist text (Edward Bean Underhill, Confessions of Faith and other Public Documents, illustrative of the History of the Baptist Churches of England in the 17th Century, edited by the Hanserd Knollys Society by E. B. Underhill [London: Haddon, Brothers, and Co., 1854], pp. 169-230). For differences in 1S used by Particular Baptists see below, p. 80; also parallel text of 1S and P in app. A (A352-783, passim).

[93]Of the Institution of Churches and the Order Appointed in them by Jesus Christ, in A Declaration of Faith . . . (op. cit.), pp. 55-64. Text appears in Walker, pp. 403-408; also in Schaff, 3:724-29. (Hereafter: PS.)

[94]A Platform of Church Discipline Gathered out of the Word of God: and Agreed upon by the Elders: and Messengers of the Churches

PS

more general and manifested the lack of a practical experience of Congregational life. English Congregationalism lacked the practical testing of theory that emerged from generations of struggle in New England. It payed much less attention to issues of baptism and church membership so vital to New Englanders.[95]

The Savoy Platform was necessary to differentiate views of church order from Presbyterianism. Their reworking of the Westminster Confession, chapters 25 and 26, on "Church" and "The Communion of Churches," had not really changed the context of the treatment. Congregationalists still affirmed a universal, visible and catholic Church, although they denied it had any church-power to administer ordinances. Thus they found it useful to delineate their understanding of church polity based on the Scriptures. Their ideas were distinctive compared to Presbyterians, Anglicans and Roman Catholics. At some points, Congregational views also differed from Baptists.[96]

Assembled in the Synod at Cambridge in New England. To be presented to the Churches and Generall Court for their consideration and acceptance, in the Lord. The Eighth Moneth Anno 1649 (Printed by S-G at Cambridge in New England and are to be sold at Cambridge and Boston, Anno Dom: 1649). Test given in Walker, pp. 194-237; also Hardon, Source Book, pp. 263-72.

In America Congregationalists sought to steer a middle course between a negative separatism on the left and a full compliance with Presbyterianism on the right. Their Platform spelled out their polity while leaving other doctrinal matters to be drawn from the Westminster Confession (See Hardon, Source Book, pp. 262-63).

[95]Walker, pp. 351-52.

[96]For a comparison of Savoy and Westminster see Walker, pp. 395-98.

For a comparison of the Second London Confession of 1677/89 [also the Philadelphia Confession of 1742] on church and church communion see P,27-28 (A406-620).

In thirty articles the Savoy Platform maps out the nature of the local church.[97] By God's appointment all power for "Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church" is supremely Christ's alone (article 1). The local congregation is called together by Christ to execute his power in the world (article 2). All the power and authority needed to carry out this power is given directly by Christ to each church gathered in his name (articles 4 and 5). No other grouping beyond the local churches is entrusted with power for the administration of Christ's ordinances or the execution of his authority (article 6).

Savoy expressed distinctive views about ministry in the churches. In classic Calvinistic terms, a "completed" church includes both members and officers. The latter are four: "Pastors, Teachers, Elders and Deacons" (articles 7 through 9). The ceremony of the imposition of hands at ordination by elders of the church is accepted as the way "appointed by Christ" to call to office. It is not, however, essential. Election by the whole church, acceptance by the candidate and the setting apart by "Fasting and Prayer," are the essence of the call (articles 11 and 12). The Platform makes allowances for lay preachers, though preaching the Word is properly the office of teachers and pastors (article 13). Pastors have a responsibility even for non-members in their parochial territories (article 14). Office-power requires the election and previous consent of the congregation. An ordination by another church does not suffice (article 15).

---

[97] The articles of the Savoy Platform are given in full in appendices A and B (see parallel places to P,27 [A435-593] for PS,1-13, 20-21, 25-26; for PS,14-30 see B1-118).

The exercise of church-power to administer the "seals" requires the presence of teaching officers or pastors, "nor can the Church authorize any so to do" (article 16). Admission to membersnip and the censure of members is the responsibility of the whole church (articles 17 and 18). Among the censures are admonition and excommunication (article 19). The power to censure is seated only in the local churches, not in any higher church structures (article 22).

Among the duties of church members is that of regular church participation in one's own locale (article 24). Churches ought to hold communion among themselves. In cases of difference, either in faith or practice, "it is according to the minde of Christ" that messengers of churches meet in a synod or council. The latter, however, are only occasional, as needs require. Moreover, they do not possess any church-power as such or jurisdiction over local churches (article 25 through 27). Open communion with persons "sound in Faith and of Conversation becoming the Gospel" is encouraged. Even occasional communion with "less pure" churches is allowed (articles 29 and 30).

The results of the Savoy Synod were formally presented to the inept Protector, Richard Cromwell, son of Oliver. In the turmoil of his protectorate, amid the ruin of both Presbyterian and Congregational aspirations at the restoration of the monarchy, the Declaration of Faith and the Platform of Church Polity of Savoy became dead letters in England. Among Congregationalists in the new world only the

Declaration survived because the Cambridge Platform had already provided New Englanders a platform of church polity.[98]

When Particular Baptists later made use of the Westminster standards for their Second London Confession of 1677 they followed the Savoy version for the most part. They imitated Savoy by including its chapter 20, by deleting entirely chapters 30 and 31 of the Westminster Confession, and by omitting sections from chapters 20 and 24 of the original Presbyterian version. Thus, both the Savoy and Particular Baptist Confessions, having deleted two whole chapters from the Westminster document and having added one new chapter, have only thirty-two chapters compared to thirty-three in the Westminster.[99]

In their treatment of the Church in chapter 27 Baptists made extensive use of the Savoy Platform of Church Polity.[100]

Congregationalist Theorists. Particular Baptists who made use of the Savoy confessional statements drew their general theological categories and language on church authority from Congregationalists of

---

[98]In 1680 the Massachusetts Congregationalists adopted the Savoy Declaration with very few minor alterations. Connecticut Congregationalists did the same in the Saybrook version of 1708 (The alterations to 1S are footnoted in the text given by Walker; see ibid., p. 353).

(Hereafter: 2S refers to 1680 changes; 3S to 1708.) 2S 3S

[99]See comparative chart of W, 1S, 2L (Second London Confession) and P below, figure 3, p. 192.

[100]See app. A below for a comparative presentation of the Second London Confession (Philadelphia Confession of 1742) and the Savoy and Westminster Confessions; also Lumpkin, pp. 236-38; also discussion in chap. 3, pp. 218-41.

their day. Among the most influential of these were John Owen (1616-83) and Thomas Goodwin (1600-80).[101]

John Owen, possibly the most influential spokesman of the Congregational Way, bore the major burden for the revision of the Westminster Confession in the Declaration of Faith at Savoy. He also wrote an extensive preface to the latter. Owen's work The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government was used universally. It exercised a great influence upon the Baptists of the P.B.A. in the formulation of their own church disciplines.[102]

Thomas Goodwin had attended the Westminster Assembly as one among five Independents. He co-authored the platform of Independency against Presbyterianism at the assembly, An Apologeticall Narration. He was present at Savoy and published works from 1681 to 1704 which

---

[101]Besides Owen and Goodwin, other spokesmen for a Non-Separatist congregational way include (1) William Ames (1576-1633), exiled under Archbishop Laud, the author of two works which strongly influenced American settlers; (2) John Robinson (?1576-1625), who was at least partly a Non-Separatist, whose views were amenable to Isaac Backus and the Separate Baptists of the Warren Association; (3) John Cotton (1584-1652) and (4) Thomas Hooker (?1586-1647), who emigrated together in 1633 and helped Congregationalism, the former in Massachusetts, the latter in Hartford, Connecticut; and (5) John Davenport (1597-1670), who arrived in New England in 1637 and helped found New Haven, Connecticut. See the works by these writers cited below, n. 105. On Non-Separatist Independents see intro. above, p. 35.

It is of some historical significance that the Baptists of the P.B.A. reflected ideas about Church which, by the standards of that time, were middle of the road.

[102]John Owen, The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government (London: William Marshall, 1689). On the use of Owen by P.B.A. writers see 1P, p. v; E (Edwards, Customs . . .), pp. 32, 38; and 2P, pp. 28 and 32.

extended to five volumes. Sections on church government were used by authors of the P.B.A.[103]

British Baptists relied heavily upon such Congregational authors for their ideas and expressions about church discipline and church polity. What is most significant is the fact that these writers were well-disposed to an Independency of a Non-Separatist type. They were generally respected by Anglican and Presbyterian theologians.[104] Both Owen and Goodwin were active at the Savoy Synod. They were recognized as spokesmen for Independency who saw the need for the reform of the established Church of England, but did not insist upon a radical break.

When Baptists cited authorities for their positions, why did they turn to Non-Separatists? The reasons are not known clearly, but the following ones suggest themselves: (1) their works were widely known and respected among all Independents; (2) they set out the early view of Congregationalism, before presbyterianizing tendencies set in and before opposition to infant baptism weakened; and (3) their views of complete church-power in the local church and office-power in

---

[103]Thomas Goodwin, Works . . . (London: Printed by J.D. and S.R. for T.G. and are to be sold by J. Robinson, 1681-1704), 5 vols., parts. Vol. 4: Of the object and acts of justifying faith, pts. 1-3: -Of the constitution, right, order and government of the churches of Christ; -The government and discipline of the churches of Christ; -Some letters which passed between the author and others concerning church-government. On the use of Goodwin by P.B.A. writers see 1P, p. v; and E, pp. 4 and 32.

On An Apologeticall Narration see above, p. 73, n. 84.

[104]Authors of the P.B.A., in their works, made use of some one or several of the Congregationalist authors discussed in the text and in n. 101.

ministers, and the ideal of regenerate church membership, were all one with Baptist views.

Whatever the reasons, these Congregational writers provide for today a rich and varied expression of a federal view of church authority. They help to situate the language and thought of Baptists on church polity.[105]

Significance of the Commonwealth Period for Baptists

Whitley describes this period of the Commonwealth as the "apostolic age again, but without a Paul."[106] Baptists on the whole lacked strong leadership. They came, for the most part, from the ranks of the uneducated, from the lower social strata. Yet it was a period of ecclesiastical liberty, a flowering period for Baptist churches, especially during the time of the New Model Army.

---

[105]In addition to the works of Owen and Goodwin noted in the text, the following may have had some influence upon the ideas expressed in P.B.A. sources: (1) William Ames, Medulla theologicae (Amsterdam, 1623, trans. in 1642 as The Marrow of Sacred Divinity); and De Conscientia, Ejus Jure et Causibus (1632, trans. in 1639 as Cases of Conscience); (2) John Cotton, The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven (1644) in John Cotton on the Churches of New England, ed. by Larzer Ziff (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 69-164; A Sermon Delivered at Salem (1636), in Ziff, pp. 39-68; and The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared, in Two Treatises (1648), in Ziff, pp. 165-364; (3) Thomas Hooker, A survey of the summe of church-discipline (London: Printed in 1648); (4) John Davenport, The Power of Congregational Churches Asserted and Vindicated . . . (London: Printed in the Year 1672); (5) Isaac Watts, Christian Discipline; or the Character of a Polite Gentleman (Boston: Reprinted by B. Meson, 1759); and (6) John Robinson, cited by Backus, History, 1:10-22.

[106]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 65.

In 1644 only seven Baptist churches existed in London, and forty-seven in the rest of England. Whitley calculates that by 1660 General Baptists had 150 churches and Particular Baptists, 130.[107] Baptist strength lay in the Midlands, in London and its environs, and in the southern counties. Well over half the churches prior to 1660 were concentrated in Middlesex, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Leicester, Somershire, Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire, and Wales. By 1660 denominational lines in England were clearly fixed. There were five parties: Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers.[108]

In general the Commonwealth period had helped Baptists take root. Their church organization, especially among General Baptists, was already set. Baptists had a denominational consciousness. While Baptists had been excluded from the Westminster Assembly they found useful reference points in a later period when they used the Westminster Confession of 1646 and its Congregational counterpart, the Declaration of the Faith of 1658.

Baptists participated in a general trend towards the Calvinism of Westminster and preferred the Congregational polity of Savoy. For the most part they were content to draw their theological language from others, notably Congregational Non-Separatist writers. They did, however, manifest a particular type of connectionalism in their associations with one another.

---

[107] Whitley lists these by counties in Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society, 2:236 ff., cited by Underwood, p. 85.

[108] Wamble's study, p. 89.

Eventual Toleration for Baptists under the Restored Monarchy

The highpoint of Baptist evolution in England had been the brief and turbulent years of the Commonwealth. The privileged position of Independency under Cromwell's protectorate soon gave way to the restoration of the monarchy under the later Stuarts, Charles II and James II. England turned again to monarchy to provide stability and order to public life. For those who dissented against episcopalism, however, such hopes were short-lived.

Baptists, along with other dissenters, seemed to suffer setbacks in comparison to the previous period of their history. Yet like the Cromwellian era of struggle, the one under Stuart rule proved to be a blessing. Baptists, like all dissenters, even without full toleration, witnessed some significant developments. Prior to the period of toleration which began in 1688, dissenting groups were far from dead. Nor were they totally out of sight.[109]

Under Charles II (r. 1660-85) Episcopalism was again in vogue. A new Act of Uniformity in 1662 became the first of a series of repressive measures against all Puritans. Not even the king through his Declaration of Indulgence (1672) could effect the right of dissenters to licensed preachers and to public places of worship. Because his

---

[109]During the Restoration Milton published his Paradise Lost, written from 1658 to 1665. George Fox organized the Friends as a distinct group in 1668, and set out on missionary journeys to North America in 1671. Robert Barclay, a Scottish Quaker, set forth the doctrine of the Inner Light in 1676. In America Roger Williams, with the help of another Baptist, John Clarke, sought a charter for Rhode Island in 1663, and William Penn founded the colony of Pennsylvania on a Quaker basis in 1682. Both colonial charters incorporated universal religious liberty [Historical note].

indulgence included papists as well as Puritans Parliament reacted strongly with the Test Act of 1673 that brought about persecution of all dissenting groups.

James II (r. 1685-88) also failed to mediate a settlement between the established Church of England and dissenters. He proved doubly disappointing to Reformed Protestantism, first, because of his Roman Catholicism and second, because of his leanings towards conciliation with the Church of England.

Episcopalian efforts at containment proved to be the catalyst that rallied various groups around a united cause which came to be symbolized in the Westminster statements. Despite the atmosphere of public repression of the right to practice their faith, Baptists in the period of restoration strengthened their religious life (1) through the publication of significant works, (2) through the formulation of confessions identifying with the Protestant cause, and (3) through a continued increase in the membership in their churches.[110]

To begin with, Baptists published important works during the late Stuart period. In 1674 the Particular Baptist Thomas Collier wrote his Body of Divinity, and the General Baptist Thomas Grantham published The Successors of the Apostles. Four years later Grantham published, in folio, Ancient Christian Religion. The latter spelled out Baptist doctrine, discipline and customs. That same year, 1678,

---

[110]Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 127-28; also Underwood, pp. 102-105.

Collier wrote his West Country Confession, partly in response to the Particular Baptist Second London Confession of 1677.[111]

The formulation of confessions was a second way in which Baptists developed during the period of restoration. Both the Particular Baptists and the General Baptists looked to the Westminster Confession of the previous generation for a point of agreement with Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

Particular Baptists accepted virtually everything in the Savoy and Westminster Confessions. In matters of church polity they followed the Congregational pattern, except in some aspects of church structure, ministry and sacraments. The only distinctive Baptist views were insistence upon believers' baptism, and a more exalted view of church and ministry. Unlike Congregationalists, Baptists believed churches were interdependent; they insisted, moreover, that each member had a duty to minister if called upon by the congregation. These Particular Baptist views were incorporated into the Second London Confession of 1677.[112]

General Baptists, at least some churches, also showed their basic agreement with Presbyterians and Congregationalists in their rather conciliatory statement, An Orthodox Creed of 1678.[113] The same

---

[111]Underwood, p. 53; Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 100, 134. On Grantham's works see nn. 37 (p. 52) and 158 (p. 105). Grantham probably had some influence upon P.B.A. writers like Morgan Edwards.

[112]Underwood, p. 105; Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 128-29. This same Confession was later republished after the Act of Toleration. In its 1688/89 edition it became the basic British Particular Baptist confession (See below, pp. 98-101).

[113]Text in Lumpkin, pp. 297-354; see discussion above, pp. 51-52.

Confession quite definitely attempted to refute the Hoffmannite views of Matthew Caffyn (1628-1715), a General Baptist messenger.[114] The preface and the expanded treatment of Christology both give evidence of such an attempt.

During the period of the restoration Baptists revealed a shift of emphasis in their confessions. The concern moved beyond a mere apologetics vis-à-vis other Protestants. The question of orthodoxy within Baptist ranks became a vital issue. Although all Baptists felt a greater need for denominational solidarity, General Baptists in particular tried to tighten their organizations. Already in 1654 General Baptists had united all their churches into one annual assembly that was national in scope. Particular Baptists were more careful to limit the authority of their regional meetings. The latter still displayed a reluctance to form any kind of national organization.[115]

A third advantage for Baptists in the restoration period was the increase in their numbers. Baptists saw a resurgence in existing churches and a sizable increase in converts. It is estimated that between the restoration in 1660 and the revolution in 1688 General Baptists increased in numbers approximately twenty to thirty thousand.

---

[114]Underwood, p. 106; Lumpkin, pp. 295-96.
Hoffmannite comes from Melchior Hoffmann (ca. 1500-43), a German Lutheran turned Anabaptist. His views on the imminent end of the world helped to spark the Münster Rebellion. His views in Christology were Docetic, claiming that the humanity and sufferings of Christ were only apparent. Hoffmannites denied Christ took flesh from Mary, and discarded non-resistance to grace (See Underwood, pp. 47, 127; Lumpkin, p. 41; also "Hoffmann, Melchior," in DCC, p. 655).

[115]Torbet, History, p. 44.

Particular Baptists too were steadily advancing in London as well as the surrounding counties, and in the north.[116] Despite the hard times, Baptists weathered the storm of the restoration.

The struggles and growth during the late Stuart period of restoration eventually gave way to the period of toleration. Political conditions had so worsened under James II that William and Mary's arrival in England was welcomed in the bloodless revolution of December, 1688. They finally brought a measure of legal toleration for dissenters in England. At least under the Act of Toleration in 1689 such Separatists were no longer labeled as criminals by law. All Puritans had a right to exist, Independents as well as Presbyterians.

It was a time for more meetings. The Particular Baptists finally had a national assembly in 1689. It was at this assembly that they endorsed a new edition of the Second London Confession of 1677, the edition adopted by the P.B.A. General Baptists too had met just a few days before the Act of Toleration took its legal effect.[117]

Paradoxically, eventual toleration did not coincide with progress for Baptists. They had begun to lose their initial religious fervor with its drive towards evangelism. All Baptists in England suffered from a religious decline. Seemingly the General Baptists lost the most. The Particular Baptists survived the setbacks until the return of religious enthusiasm in the latter part of the eighteenth

---

[116] Ibid., pp. 53-54.

[117] Underwood, pp. 116, 129; Torbet, History, pp. 211-12. That same year, 1689, a Baptist meeting of several churches in the middle colonies took place in Philadelphia. This was the forerunner of the P.B.A. (See below, p. 143).

century. That renewal was largely effected by the arrival of competent thinkers like Andrew Fuller and George Whitefield who also inspired Baptists in the colonies.[118]

Summary about Baptist Origins and Development in England

Baptists emerged from the English Reformation as the forerunners of a gospel of religious liberty and of complete separation of Church and civil authority. By the time of the Scottish Solemn League and Covenant (1643) they were already formulating their own confessions as a defense against those falsely and unjustly accusing them of associating with the fanatical wing of continental Anabaptists. The need to defend themselves against slander continued for a long time as popular opinion later identified them with Fifth Monarchy Men and accused them of sordid practices.

In the period prior to the Commonwealth era two main types of Baptists arose, the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists. Each had affinity with a different school of Calvinism: General Baptists were Arminian; Particular Baptists, more orthodox. Each group had a different orientation in its sense of church polity and relationship with other Christians.

Under Cromwell, Baptists together with all Independents became very influential in the New Model Army. This military organization provided Baptists with the secular model for their church polity, the association. The Commonwealth era proved a suitable incubator for

---

[118] On Fuller see below, pp. 117-18; on Whitefield, pp. 110-11; also above, p. 50, n. 30.

them. Confessional statements inserted them into the changing political and religious scene. By 1660 Baptists had already developed their church order: councils, associations, church messengers. Among the General Baptists associations already met in a General Assembly. The Westminster Assembly had set England upon a fixed course of Calvinistic theology. The Savoy Synod provided Baptists with a future direction for expressing their church polity. Competent Congregationalist authors set forth their distinctive theories of church polity.

All through the periods of restoration and toleration Baptists continued to function with a sense of their interdependence. Both General and Particular Baptists had meetings and formulated confessions that proved their theological solidarity with Presbyterians and their organizational affinity with Congregationalists. Confessional statements helped all Baptists to defend themselves from slanders and to keep their own doctrine pure.

By the end of the seventeenth century distinguishable types of Baptists already existed in England: the General Baptists, the Particular Baptists, and a few others.[119] What was happening in England was, on a lesser scale, mirrored in the American colonies.[120] By the time

---

[119]Torbet, History, p. 54. Torbet mentions two other types already on the scene, the Seventh Day Baptists and a cross section of General and Particular Baptists. He claims Seventh Day Baptists were recruited mostly from the disillusioned Fifth Monarchy Men. The mixed group of General and Particular Baptists came from the upper class and were more cultured than other Baptists. They easily fraternized with Congregationalists and paedobaptists (those who accepted infant Baptism).

[120]Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 153-59.

of the Act of Toleration in 1688 a dozen Baptist churches, representing different types, dotted the Atlantic coast.[121]

This overview of British history sets the ancestry of the P.B.A. Baptists and their official Confession in perspective. A basic source used in this study, the Philadelphia Confession, emerged during the unsettling period of the restoration of Britain's monarchy. At that time Particular Baptists aligned their beliefs alongside Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Baptist church polity drew upon the Savoy statements and upon Congregational writers such as John Owen and Thomas Goodwin.

Before proceeding to the American context, the author reviews the Particular Baptist genealogy of the Philadelphia Confession.[122] This genealogy provides a fuller description of the sources that lay behind the P.B.A. document which is basic to this study of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority and associations.

PARTICULAR BAPTIST GENEALOGY OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST CONFESSION

The Calvinism and attitudes towards church organization of the Particular Baptists took hold among members of the P.B.A. from the beginning. The transfer to America was effectively achieved through

---

[121]The American Baptist churches, in 1689, lacked the connectionalism of their British counterparts. The various strains of Baptist life continued to develop. The General Baptists were strong in New England. In the middle colonies the Particular Baptist viewpoint came to predominate in the P.B.A., established in 1707.

[122]The Philadelphia Confession is really the Second London Confession of 1677 and 1689. It is discussed in full in the section on American influences (See below, pp. 185-91).

the use of British confessions and church disciplines and the leadership of Particular Baptist ministers.[123]

Particular Baptist Confessions and Church Disciplines

Both General and Particular Baptist confessional statements can shed light upon views of church and church polity within the P.B.A., but one, the Second London Confession of 1677/89, remains special. It was used by the Association and formally adopted in 1742. The P.B.A. sources in this study also made use of other Particular Baptist confessions and church disciplines, directly or indirectly.[124]

---

[123]For information on the more important Baptist writers of the P.B.A. see bibliographical notes to sec. 1: Primary Baptist Materials, below, pp. 767-87. For a discussion of various emigrations from England, Wales and Scotland see Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 155-57, 190-91; and Torbet, History, pp. 209-12.

[124]In his collection Lumpkin provides the major Particular Baptist confessions: (1) The London Confession of 1644, discussed above (pp. 144-52; text, pp. 153-71); (2) The Midland Association Confession of 1655, discussed above (pp. 195-98; text, 198-200); (3) The Somerset (Particular Baptist) Confession of 1656, drafted by Thomas Collier, written to offset Quakerism, in Calvinistic framework approximating 1644 version, though independent in expression and milder in Calvinistic tone (pp. 200-202; text, pp. 203-16); (4) The Second London Confession of 1677/89, discussed above (pp. 235-40; text, pp. 241-95); and (5) A Short Confession or A Brief Narrative of Faith, 1691, by Thomas Collier, in opposition to aspects of 1677 confession, independent of both Westminster and Somerset Particular Baptist confessions (pp. 334-35; excerpts, pp. 336-39; full text in Crosby, 4, no. 1:1-42).

Lumpkin makes mention of other Particular Baptist confessions, notably An Antidote Against the Infection of the Times, 1656, a Welsh statement influenced by John Myles, refuting Quakerism, which drew heavy attack from George Fox in 1659 (pp. 216-18).

The Keach Confession and Church Discipline, discussed below are other Particular Baptist sources important to the study of the P.B.A. Lumpkin provides only the two chapters from Keach added to the Philadelphia Confession (pp. 349-51).

For a list of General Baptist confessions see above, p. 51, n. 35.

The First London Confession of 1644

As early as 1644 seven Particular Baptist churches in London formulated the first group confession among Baptists, The First London Confession.[125] It marked the birth of a distinctive denominational consciousness, that of the Particular Baptists. The statement, says Underwood, was intended to show that its proponents were Calvinistic in their views. But it was mildly Calvinistic, making room for the place of man's free will. The Confession had the additional apologetic purpose to distinguish its authors from Anabaptists.[126] Lumpkin mentions that the definition of church was novel. It included the concept of invisible Church, but it was not essentially at odds with the view of the Helwys congregation as stated in A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland (1611). The London text was also the first Baptist confession to stress immersion as the proper mode of baptism.[127]

The Confession underwent several editions: 1644, 1646, 1651, 1652, and two in 1653. By 1688 copies were scarce. However, the London Confession was republished as late as 1802 and 1847.[128]

---

[125] The Confession of Faith, Of those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists; . . . (London: Printed by Matthew Simmons in Aldresdate-street, 1644). Text appears in Lumpkin, pp. 153-71, taken from W. J. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith (Philadelphia: Baptist Publication Society, 1911), pp. 171-89. (Hereafter: 1L.) 1L

[126] On types of Calvinism see app. C, pp. 764-65. On Anabaptists see p. 39, n. 2.

[127] Underwood, p. 73; Lumpkin, pp. 144-46.

[128] Lumpkin (pp. 153-71) gives the 1644 edition, taken from McGlothlin (pp. 171-89), with notations about later editions. Underhill (pp. 13ff.) had published the 1646 edition, with the epistle

While it was essentially independent in its statement, the London text drew extensively from the Separatist Confession of 1596, A True Confession.[129] The latter was familiar to the former Congregationalists who signed the London Confession: William Kiffins, John Spilsbury, Thomas Sheppard (or Skippard), Thomas Munden (or Munday), Thomas Killcop, Paul Hobson and Thomas Patient. Another very likely source, according to G. H. Stassen, was William Ames's The Marrow of Sacred Divinity (1638), an Anabaptist source. Lumpkin sees another possibility in Spilsbury's A Treatise Concerning the Lawful Subject of Baptism (1643), and agrees with Robert B. Hannen that the Aberdeen Confession of the Scottish Episcopal Assembly of 1616 was another

---

dedicatory to Parliament. This included revisions of sections objectionable to the Anglican clergyman, Dr. Daniel Featley, in his The Dippers dipt, or, The Anabaptists duck't and plunged over Head and Eares, at a Disputation in Southwark (1645). Featley's volume underwent six editions.

The later editions of 1L in 1651-52, "the third impression corrected" and "the fourth impression corrected," omitted references to king and Parliament when Cromwell was in control of affairs. They were substantially reprints of the 1646 version, with the introduction replaced by an "Epistle to the Reader."

In March, 1653, Baptists in Leith, Scotland, issued "the fourth impression, corrected," which reprinted the 1651-52 editions with a short letter, "to the impartial reader," which showed their agreement with London Baptists. In the same year Henry Hills of London issued a "fifth impression corrected." There may have been other editions. (See Lumpkin, pp. 151-52; also B. R. White, "Doctrine of the Church in the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644," Journal of Theological Studies [new series], 19 [October 1968]:570, nn. 2-3.)

[129] A Trve Confession of the Faith, and Hvmble Acknovvledgment of the Alegeance, vvhich vvee hir Maiesties Subjects, falsely called Brovvnists, doo hould tovvards God, etc. (n.p., 1596). (Hereafter: TC.) The text of this Separatist Confession appears in Lumpkin, pp. 82-97; it is taken from Walker, pp. 59-74 (see discussion above, p. 42). TC

source.[130] The First London Confession, as such, provides an important source for Particular Baptist thought. Some of its ideas eventually came to be incorporated into distinctively Baptist sections of the Second London Confession of 1677 (later Philadelphia Confession of 1742).

The Midland Association Confession of 1655

During the 1650s three confessional statements were drawn up by Calvinistic Baptist groups allied to the London congregations that had sponsored the Confession of 1644. One of these was The Midland Association Confession (1655).[131] Like the others it probably was meant to be the basis of union for the Particular Baptists in General Baptist territory. In the Midlands, General Baptists were the stronger and thirty of their congregations had signed their Confession of 1651. By contrast only seven of the fourteen Particular Baptist churches in the same area joined in association in 1655. It was the Quakers who drove these Baptists to associate and to form new confessions.

Daniel King, the main author of the Particular Baptist Midland Confession, was a layman and the main proponent of the Association.

---

[130] Lumpkin, p. 145; G. H. Stassen, "Anabaptist influence in the origins of the Particular Baptists," Menonnite Quarterly Review 36 (October 1962):332; Robert B. Hannen, "A suggested sources for some of the expressions in the Baptist Confession of Faith, London, 1644," Baptist Quarterly 12 (1946-48):389-99.

White (pp. 572, 575-76, esp. n. 3) agrees about the Separatist Confession of 1596 and William Ames; however, he discounts the opinions about other sources.

[131] Sixteen Articles of Faith and Order Unanimously Assented to by the Messengers Met at Warwick, the 3rd Day of the 3rd Month, 1655 (Hereafter: MA).

Other laymen joined him in the push to affiliate, and in proposing and signing the Confession. The form, brief in style and concrete in language, so different from the London Confession, reflected the background of the authors. The Confession had only sixteen short articles, and yet its summary of Calvinistic Baptist doctrine, in the words of Lumpkin, was "careful and praiseworthy."[132]

Adopted by the member churches, the Confession was never published officially. The text given by Lumpkin was edited in 1905 from the Tewkesbury and Bourton Church books by Rev. W. Gwynne Owen and had appeared in McGlothlin.[133] Its primary purpose was instructional rather than apologetic. It proved very useful in the future. Lumpkin, citing a study by Stokes, suggests that the Midland Association Confession of 1655 lies behind the 1677 statement eventually adopted by the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689 and subsequently received by Philadelphia Baptists in 1742. In the opinion of this author, based on a textual comparison, this dependency upon the Midland Confession seems highly unlikely.[134]

---

[132]Lumpkin, p. 197.

[133]Ibid., p. 198, n. The text appears in Lumpkin (pp. 198-200), taken from McGlothlin (pp. xvii-xx, 1911 ed.).

[134]"According to Stokes, when the Particular Baptist General Assembly sought in 1689 to set forth an up-to-date doctrinal expression, the 1677 elaboration of the Midland Association Confession was adopted. . . ." (Lumpkin, p. 197, citing Stokes, pp. 5-16 bibliographical data lacking; this author was unable to locate Stokes's work to check his references.)

The Second London Confession of 1677 and 1689

For the present study the most important Particular Baptist source is The Second London Confession (1677) and the later version of it adopted by the first General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689. The political and religious situation in England evolved to a state wherein Baptists opted to show their solidarity with Presbyterians and Congregationalists.[135]

A circular letter calling for a general meeting in 1677 was sent to all Particular Baptist churches in England and Wales. By the time they gathered William Collins of Petty France Church, London, had composed a text of the Westminster Confession, with alterations as he saw fit according to Baptist beliefs. In 1677 this was published anonymously "by the Elders and Brethren of many Congregations of Christians (baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country."[136]

The first edition included an appendix about baptism. This was a defense against paedobaptists, in which the problem of open and close communion was also mentioned.[137]

"The controlling influence," says McGlothlin, "was undoubtedly the Westminster Confession, the increasing stability and regularity of

---

[135]Lumpkin, pp. 235-6; McGlothlin, pp. 215-16; see also historical section above, pp. 85-87.

[136]A facsimile of the title page appears in McGlothlin: 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 (London: Printed in the Year, 1677), [WHITLEY: 108]. Copy in Lumpkin, pp. 241-95, taken from McGlothlin, pp. 220-74. (Hereafter: 2L.) 2L

[137]The appendix is given in full by McGlothlin, pp. 274-89.

the Baptist churches, and the increasing desire for harmony with other Protestants."[138]

The authors claimed agreement with the First London Confession of 1644 but in fact they differed from it considerably. New subjects were treated: the Scriptures, the sabbath, marriage, and aspects of the Church and the ordinances. The Baptists greatly expanded the Westminster article on the Church, drawing extensively from the Savoy Platform of Church Polity.[139] Moreover, as McGlothlin states, the orientation to Calvinism is more pronounced than it was in 1644:

> . . . the Calvinism is much more pronounced in some respects, the view of the church is clearer and is more Calvinistic, the administration of the ordinances is more rigidly the function of officials, the view of the Supper is almost purely Calvinistic, and there is no restriction of it to those scripturally baptized. . . .[140]

Lumpkin also underscores the independence of thought of the new Confession compared to the London one of 1644. He points out other subjects particular to the Confession of 1677.

> . . . Peculiarly Baptist emphases appearing in the Assembly Confession concern the following subjects: the obligation to preach the Gospel in all ages and nations (new Chapter XX)[11]; the singing of "Hymns and Spiritual Songs" (added to the Westminster's injunction to sing Psalms, Chapter XXII); disuse of the term "Sacrament" and of the Presbyterian definition of sacraments (Chapter XXVII); and provision for lay preaching (Chapter XXVI.11). . . .

---

[11]Chapter XV. "Of Repentance unto Life," in the Westminster Confession defines the doctrine in general terms; in the Assembly Confession the chapter begins with an illustration of the doctrine in the case of a person converted "at riper years" and ends with

---

[138]McGlothlin, p. 217.

[139]See app. A (A405-593).

[140]McGlothlin, p. 217.

the fine evangelical note: "which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary."[141]

Whitley sees the Confession of 1677 as stressing two purely Baptist elements: (1) the insistence upon the duty of every member to preach if gifted and called by the Church; and (2) the need for a real connectionalism between the churches.[142]

Intended as an apologetic and educative instrument, the Second London Confession has a venerable history of editions. In 1688 William Collins, this time with the help of Benjamin Keach, published a second edition. Both men retained the rights to the publications until the fifth edition in 1720.[143] This new edition was put forth by the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689 without the appendix of the original. The Assembly also added as a preface an extract from its minutes, and all members signed the document.

In this 1689 copy, the Second London Confession became historic; it is the most important of all Particular Baptist confessions. Future editions appeared in Britain and in America, all carrying the same title. English editions were published in 1693 (2nd edition), 1699 (3rd edition), 1719 (4th edition), and 1720 (5th edition). The first American edition was the Philadelphia Confession of 1742; the title

---

[141] Lumpkin, pp. 237-38.

[142] Whitley, British Baptists, p. 129.

[143] ". . . having sold the property, right and title of the printing thereof, [to the Confession, Catechisms, and a brief Introduction] to John Marshall, bookseller, . . . , by us, William Collins and Benjamin Keach, it is desired that all persons [wanting copies] . . . apply themselves to him." (Advertisement in the 5th ed., 1720, in McGlothlin, p. 172.)

page describes this as the sixth [British] edition. Many subsequent editions followed, some published in England; others, in America.[144]

In his study, Paul Harrison claims the 1688 version [namely, Second London Confession of 1689] is more explicit than the First London Confession in defining inter-church relations.[145]

The Keach Confession and Church Discipline of 1697

Among the confessions from individual churches the most important for this study was the one gathered by a father and son team for their congregations. In 1697 Benjamin and Elias Keach published a shortened form of the London Confession of 1677/89. They sought to compensate for certain lacunae by, among other things, adding two articles on the imposition of hands, and the singing of psalms in public worship. Each published his small tract in the name of his congregation, Benjamin's at Horsley-down and his son's at Tallow Chandler's Hall, both in London.[146]

The body of the Confession is the same in both copies but each had a preface, dedication, and signatures appropriate to itself.[147]

---

[144] McGlothlin, p. 219; on the Philadelphia Confession see chap. 2, pp. 186-91.

[145] Harrison, p. 30.

[146] A Short Confession of Faith containing the Substance of all the Fundamental Articles in the Larger Confession, put forth by the Elders of the Baptized Churches, owning Personal Election and Final Perseverence (London: Printed in the Year, 1697), pp. xii, 40. (Bound with The Glory . . . of a True [Gospel-constituted] Church . . .) Copies in A.B.H.S. curator's office. [WHITLEY, A Baptist Bibliography . . . (London):20-697, 21-697.] (Hereafter: for Confession, K; for bibliography, K WHITLEY.)

[147] The Articles of the faith of the Church of Christ, or congregation meeting at Horsley-down, Benjamin Keach, Pastor, as asserted

An appendix on church discipline (discussed below), was attached to the tracts.

The Keach Confession of 1697

The Keach Confession by Benjamin and Elias Keach was the first one in use in America. It became the reference for settling doctrinal differences at Middletown, Jersey, in 1712. The members were exhorted to "subscribe to Elias Keach's Confession of Faith, at least the Covenant annexed to it." The subscribing majority became recognized as the reconstituted church. The Confession had some influence upon the version adopted by the P.B.A. in 1742 when the two Keach articles on hymn singing and laying on of hands were incorporated into the Philadelphia Confession.[148]

Particular Baptists were in the forefront of the promotion of hymn singing at their worship services. Unlike General Baptists who struggled with the question of congregational singing and the use of hymnals, Particular Baptists spearheaded the advance of English hymnody in two ways: (1) they introduced congregational singing, and (2) they included songs other than psalms in their hymnbooks.[149] In 1689

---

this 10th of the 6th Month, 1697 (London: Printed in the Year, 1697), pp. 40.

The Articles of the Faith of the Church of Christ, or congregation meeting at Tallow-Chandlers-Hall, Elias Keach, Pastor, as asserted this 2d of the 7th Month, 1697 (London: Printed in the Year, 1697), pp. 40.

The signatures follow a similar pattern: "Subscribed on behalf of the whole Church assembled at . . . on the . . . of the . . . Month, commonly called . . . , 1697, By Benjamin [Elias] Keach [other signatures follow]."

[148]Lumpkin, p. 349.

[149]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 188.

General Baptists repudiated all congregational singing and the use of hymnals, a decision which plagued them for almost a century.[150] Particular Baptists wisely decided that the introduction of congregational song did not violate any principle of the New Testament and that each church in the Association should follow its own claims in this matter.[151]

In 1691 Benjamin Keach printed some 300 hymns, and in 1696, his son Elias published several collections for his church. When the two collaborated in the reissuing of the Second London Confession of 1689 they added article 27: "Of Singing of Psalms, etc.," and the P.B.A. included it as chapter 23 of their Confession.

The practice of laying on of hands at baptism was a quality of the General Baptist tradition, and strong among the Welsh Baptists. Benjamin Keach, himself a convert from General Baptist views, encouraged the practice for his Particular Baptist congregation. Very likely his bent towards the practice came from his General Baptist background. In a book written in the 1670s, and reissued in 1697, Keach argued that the laying on of hands was a "sacred Ordinance."[152] Among Particular Baptists he had been an innovator both regarding hymn singing and the practice of laying on of hands. A direct causal link can be established

---

[150]Underwood, pp. 124-25; Whitley, British Baptists, p. 187.

[151]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 187.

[152]Lumpkin, p. 348.

between Keach's Confession and the additions mandated by the P.B.A. for its Confession.[153]

The Keach Church Discipline of 1697

Besides their influential Confession, the Keaches also published a Church Discipline for their congregations. Although they had slightly different titles, the Disciplines were identical.[154] In his bibliography, Whitley cites an early edition in 1668, the original of which is in the British museum. This may, however, be an incorrect dating from a misprint on the title page.[155]

When the father and son team published their work in 1697, the Church Discipline was bound together with the Confession and Covenant.

---

[153]The practice of laying on of hands was not uniformly observed in the P.B.A., even though the Association officially endorsed it as an addition in its Confession. When the Charleston Association accepted the Philadelphia Confession, it eliminated the article on laying on of hands (see below, chap. 2, pp. 188-89).

On the Philadelphia Confession and its additions from Keach Confession see below, pp. 187-88.

[154]Benjamin Keach, The Glory of a True Church, and its Discipline Display'd. Wherein a true Gospel-Church is described: together with the Power of the Keys, and who are to be let in, and who to be shut out (London: Printed in the year 1697), (iv), 5-74 pp. [Bound with The Articles of the faith . . . title: A Short Confession . . . 1697].

Elias Keach, The glory and ornament of a true gospel-constituted church. Being a brief display of the discipline of the Church of Christ, formerly meeting at Curriers Hall near Cripplegate, and now meeting at Tallow-Chandlers Hall upon Dowgate-Hill, London; Elias Keach, pastor (London: [n.p.], 1697), [Bound with The Articles of Faith . . . in A Short Confession of Faith . . . 1697].

(Hereafter: 1K.) 1K

[155]See WHITLEY:33-668; orig. in British museum, 109.a.43. The copy in the A.B.H.S. with t.-p. date 1668 is inaccurate! The preface in the same edition is dated 1697. Perhapd the t.-p. MDCLXVIII should read MDCCLXVIII. There is a 1768 edition of the discipline (see WHITLEY:1768P).

Written by Benjamin, the Discipline drew upon Isaac Chauncey and William Ames, Non-Separatist writers.[156] The author stated in his preface that many earlier disciplines existed, excellent works by "Reverend Divines of the Congregational Way." Keach moreover stated that he was unaware of any that had been written by a Baptist.[157]

Acutally, the impressive work by the General Baptist Thomas Grantham had been composed as early as 1678. That Christianismus Primitivus provided, as its full title intimates, comment about church discipline. If Keach did indeed publish his Discipline as early as 1668, then he was the first Baptist to do so. But the anachronistic dating of the edition of 1668 in which Keach's preface is dated 1697 brings up a real doubt. The present writer has not been able definitively to resolve this doubt with the materials available to him.[158]

Regardless of who was the first Baptist to write a church discipline, it was Keach's work that definitely influenced the P.B.A.

---

[156] On the influence of Chauncey see Lumpkin, pp. 239-40 and McGlothlin, pp. 289-90; on Ames see Hudson, "Associational Principle," p. 14, n.

[157] 1K, p. iv.

[158] One would need to consult the original, cited by Whitley, that is in the British museum and compare it to the version in the A.B.H.S. library. (See note above, n. 155.)

The full title of the work by Thomas Grantham, Christianismus Primitivus: or, the Ancient Christian Religion, in its Nature, Certainty, Excellency, and Beauty, (Internal and External) particularly Considered, Asserted, and Vindicated, from the many Abuses which have Invaded the Sacred Profession of Human Innovation, or pretended Revelation, Comprehending likewise the General Duties of Mankind, in their respective Relations, and particularly the Obedience of all Christians to Magistrates. And the necessity of Christian-Moderation about things Dispensable in Matters of Religion. With Divers Cases of Conscience Discussed and Resolved (London: [n.p.], 1678).

in later years. Thus, the Keach Discipline is more basic to this study. Comparisons of the headings in the Keach version to those in the two Church Disciplines of the P.B.A. show marked similarities.[159]

The Keach Church Discipline begins with a description of a gospel church. The works of a pastor (bishop or overseer) and of deacons are treated next. The duties of a church towards its pastor follow. After a discussion of the reception of church members the final and longest section deals with church censures. Among these are suspension, admonition ("withdrawing from") and excommunication ("casting out").

The ideas expressed by Keach will be later echoed by P.B.A. Baptists who authored the Association Disciplines, specifically Benjamin Griffith and Samuel Jones. The former composed the Discipline of 1743; the latter, the one adopted in 1798.[160]

Conclusions about the Particular Baptist Genealogy of the Philadelphia Confession

A review of its genealogy suggests that the Philadelphia Confession (discussed in chapter 2) borrowed some ideas from the early separatist A True Confession of 1596. As one of the basic sources in this study of the P.B.A. tradition of church authority the Association's

---

[159]For a comparison of subject matter of 1K to the early P.B.A. Discipline of 1743 (1P) and the later Discipline of the Association in 1798 (2P) see parallels to 2P in app. A (A2378-89).

[160]On the Discipline of 1743 see below, pp. 191, 193-94 on the one from 1798, pp. 200-202.

Confession has roots in the church polity expressed in Thomas Helwys's A Declaration of Faith in 1611.

More proximately, the Philadelphia source relates to the Second London Confession of 1677/89. While the latter follows closely the pattern and theology of the Westminster Confession of 1646 it incorporates ideas about the church from the Congregational Platform of Church Polity drawn up at Savoy in 1658.

Moreover, behind the same Particular Baptist Confession, in its American version, lie distinctively Baptist expressions, (1) notably the First London Confession of 1644, (2) possibly (though not likely) the Midland Association Confession of 1655, and (3) the Keach Confession of 1697, a shorter version of the Confession of 1677/89.

In interpreting the ideas of the Philadelphia tradition expressed within its Confession, this study must keep in mind this genealogy as well as the other ideas about Congregational church polity evident in works of men like John Owen and Thomas Goodwin.

Having considered the British context to develop a valid hermeneutic for interpreting the P.B.A. documents, it is necessary to consider in chapter 2 the American context from which arose the Baptists who formed the Philadelphia Association. Within that discussion more needs to be said about the P.B.A.'s own Confession.[161]

---

[161]On the Philadelphia Confession see below, pp. 185-91.

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN CONTEXT OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AND ITS SOURCES

The P.B.A. transported the organizational life and religious traditions of Particular Baptists from the old world to the new. Thanks to the Second London Confession, and to the leadership of ministers and writers, old world ideas became a major current among the Regular (Particular) Baptists of the middle colonies.[1]

Such British influences provide the context for understanding the origins of Baptists of the P.B.A. and for understanding some of the sources used in this study. Besides the British context, however, there were the more proximate American influences. The ideas expressed in the documents of the P.B.A. were shaped by those who lived in a country influenced by the general religious movements flowing from the Great Awakening around 1740.

---

[1] In America the older Baptists were called Regular in contradistinction to Separates. Other denominations used different distinctions: Presbyterians: Old and New Side; Congregationalists: Old and New Light. The basis for the distinction was the revivalism of the Awakening.

REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Besides Particular Baptist influences (and some lingering General Baptist views), two other currents of Baptist thought flowed into the mainstream of eighteenth century P.B.A. Baptist life. Both of them arose from the Great Awakening: a newer evangelicalism, and Separate Baptists inclined towards individualism in church life.[2] Both had an impact upon Philadelphia Baptist views of church authority and associations.

---

[2]Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," pp. 21-27.

Other groups of seventeenth and eighteenth century Baptists played relatively insignificant roles in the shaping of the P.B.A.: The German Baptist Brethren, nicknamed "Tunkers" or "Dunkards," sought asylum in Philadelphia in 1719, but these did "not 'amalgamate' with Baptists of English origins." (Whitley, British Baptists, p. 210; also Spencer, p. 54). The New Connexion General Baptists split from the General Assembly of General Baptists in 1770 and eventually merged with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland (See Ernest A. Payne, The Baptist Union: a Short History [London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1959], pp. 30-31; also Underwood, pp. 153-159; Torbet, History, pp. 76-78, 87). The American counterpart to this last group were the Free-Will Baptists, organized by the former Congregationalist, Benjamin Randall (See Maring, American Baptists, pp. 44-45; also Torbet, History, pp. 256-260). Six-Principle General Baptists insisted that laying on of hands at baptism was demanded by Hebrews 6 (See Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 65, 190; also Underwood, pp. 122, 128). Seventh Day Baptists came mainly from the ranks of the Fifth Monarchy Men during the Commonwealth era (See Whitley, British Baptists, p. 86; also Torbet, History, p. 54).

After the period under consideration (to 1814) many Baptist groups emerged, especially in the United States. In 1969 there were 27 Baptist bodies officially listed by National Council of Churches, Office of Planning and Program, Yearbook of American Churches: information on all faiths in the U.S.A., 1969 (New York: Council Press, ca. 1969), p. 84.

The Great Awakening in America

The major causes of the Great Awakening are disputed. Some claim that William Ames and continental Pietism were largely responsible.[3] Others look to more proximate causes. Notably, these were a widespread lack of religion and masses of unchurched colonists. Moreover, the Puritan spirit had always inclined towards an experiential piety, a stirring of the emotions in a personal response to God. Separates like the Rhode Island congregations of Roger Williams in 1639 and of John Clarke in 1644 sought a purer Christianity.[4]

All that was needed to spark the movement was a style of preaching that could prick consciences, convict sinners of their faults, and evoke personal crises of decision. Men like Gilbert Tennent (1703-1764) and George Whitefield (1714-1770) found conditions ready for igniting the religious fervor throughout the colonies.[5]

---

[3]Pietism was a seventeenth century Lutheran movement begun by P. J. Spener (1635-1705). In Pia Desideria (1675) he proposed six ways to infuse a new life into dogmatic, rationalistic orthodoxy. "Pietism was a response to the spiritual vacuum left by the defeat of Puritanism and the disarray of Calvinism." (Alan A. Heimert and Perry Miller, eds., The Great Awakening: documents illustrating the crisis and its consequences, American Heritage Series (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1967), p. xvii; also "Pietism," in DCC, pp. 1089-90).

[4]On the Great Awakening see Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, "Introduction," in Heimert-Miller, pp. xiii-lxi; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, Theology in America: the major voices from Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy, The American Heritage Series (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), pp. 33-37; also Idem, Religious History, pp. 280-94.

[5]The Great Awakening began in 1726 with Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, Dutch Reformed pastor in New Jersey and Gilbert Tennent, Presbyterian preacher in New Brunswick. The Northampton revival of 1734-1735, and the work of Jonathan Edwards, Congregational minister in New England, prepared for the great breakthrough when George Whitefield began his series of missions to the colonies (Winthrop S. Hudson,

While Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was the recognized theologian for America's time of awakening, the man largely responsible for drawing the movement together throughout the colonies was Methodist evangelist George Whitefield from England.

A confirmed Calvinist, Whitefield disagreed with Wesleyan views. He made seven journeys to America, the second of which (1739-1741) had the greatest impact in drawing the revivals of the colonies together. The historian Whitley claimed that this Methodist preacher was largely the one responsible for General Baptists losing territory to Particular Baptists in New England.[6]

The evangelicalism of the Great Awakening was "more a mood and an emphasis than a theological system."[7] Orthodox Calvinism, influenced in its preaching by the rationalistic approach of the time, failed to appeal to the common man. Consequently it was losing ground to Arminians by default. However, the Great Awakening brought about a new style of preaching orthodox Calvinism. It evoked in its listeners a strong sense of the need for personal religion, and for a conversion experience. Preachers of the Awakening appealed not only to men's minds, but to their passions and emotions. As a result, orthodox Calvinism came into its own again.[8]

American Protestantism, The Chicago History of American Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 31; Heimert-Miller, pp. xviii, xxv); see also Hudson, American Protestantism, pp. 30-32; Ahlstrom, Religious History, pp. 281-82, 294; and Idem, Theology in America, pp. 33-37.

[6]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 200; also Ahlstrom, Theology in America, p. 37.

[7]Hudson, American Protestantism, p. 30.

[8]On Calvinism and Arminianism see app. C, pp. 749-60.

Thoroughly Calvinistic in its teachings, the Awakening caused real changes, for example, in public worship, in the style of preaching, and in forms of architecture. The greatest change came in the attitude towards church mission that helped to bring about cooperative missionary efforts in Protestant America. Moreover, an effect of the new style of preaching was the surfacing of the issue of regenerate church membership. The latter was a notion "warmly received" by New England Separatists as well as by Baptists of the middle colonies.[9] Regenerate membership stressed the need for a personal conviction of the adult believer. It was not required by the old style Presbyterians and Congregationalists who viewed with suspicion the new enthusiastic style of preaching of the Awakening.

Sydney Ahlstrom of Yale claims that next to the strands of Puritan influence planted among the colonies, "no other force exceeded the Great Awakening in its shaping power on the institutions, piety, preaching, and thinking of the American Churches."[10] The "true religion" of traditional Calvinism, again preached with power, won out against an Arminianism that became identified by many with Rationalism and its related heretical stances of Arianism, Pelagianism, and Socinianism.[11]

---

[9]Heimert-Miller, pp. xlvii, liii.

[10]Ahlstrom, Theology in America, p. 37.

[11]Heimert-Miller, pp. xix, xxvi-xxvii.
Pelagianism after Pelagius, British theologian and exegete, student of St. Jerome. Heresy holding that man can take the initial and fundamental step towards salvation, on his own, without the help

The Newer Evangelicalism Arising from the Great Awakening and Its Indirect Impact among Philadelphia Baptists

Historical evidence indicates that Baptist expansion in America during the latter half of the eighteenth century was due, in large measure, to the effects of the Great Awakening. This was a time for revivals through itinerant and settled preaching, a time for

---

of God's freely given grace. Condemned finally at Ephesus (431), countered by St. Augustine and St. Jerome.

Pelagius's followers, Rufinus the Syrian and Celestius introduced denial of original sin. African Church instrumental in condemning Pelagianism, and getting Innocent I (410-17) to excommunicate both Celestius and Pelagius. Pope Zosimus (417-19) reopened the case, though under pressure from African bishops and Emperor Honorius's (395-423) decree against them reaffirmed condemnation in 418.

Pelagian views remained alive in Britain until Germanus of Auxere (ca. 378-448) helped to eradicate it at Verulamium (429). In Gaul, semi-pelagianism, which denied St. Augustine's strict views on predestination as well as Pelagian views, complicated the issue. Pelagianism was settled only at Second Council of Orange (529) through the influence of Caesarius of Arles (ca. 470-542).

Pelagian views never died, but reappear during the Middle ages and in fresh force during the Reformation. (See arts. in DCC on "Pelagianism" [pp. 1058-59]; "Semi-pelagianism" [p. 1258]; "Celestius" [p. 258]; "Germanus, St." [p. 560]; and "Caesarius, St." [p. 218].)

Arianism after the heretic Arius (ca. 250-ca. 336), principal heresy which denied the true divinity of Christ. Condemned by Bishop Alexander (d. 328) at synod of Alexandria (ca. 320) and finally settled by Emperor Constantine's convening of the General Council at Nicaea (325). Issues were kept alive during the complicated debates between advocates of Nicaea's homoousios (of one substance with the Father) of the Nicene Creed, the homoean party arguing homoios (like the Father), and the semi-Arians's homoiousios (of like substance with the Father).

For a time moderate Arian views received episcopal sanction at the double Councils of Seleucia in the East (359) and Arminum in the West (359). Semi-Arian forces were won over by the genius of St. Athanasius (ca. 296-373), successor to Alexander, and the three Cappadocians St. Basil the Great (ca. 330-79), St. Gregory Nazianzus (329-89) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330-ca. 395). Final victory against Arianism came at the Council of Constantinople (381).

The Arian views, however, were kept alive by Teutonic tribes, especially through Arian Bishop Ulphilas (ca. 311-83), who translated the Bible into Gothic from the Greek. (See arts. in DCC, "Arius"

a newer evangelicalism, that swept the colonies from 1740 to 1760. The doctrinal content of orthodox Calvinism remained intact, but the style of preaching was changed.

In the beginning the Awakening met with some indifference from Baptists. Eventually the religious forces unleashed helped to advance the Baptist cause. Evangelicalism had an indirect impact upon Baptists, while Separates (discussed below) directly increased Baptist numbers.

At the outset Baptists, especially of New England, generally were cautious about the Awakening.[12] Like many Congregationalists

---

[p. 87], "Arianism' [pp. 83-84] and "homoeans" and "homoousios" [p. 662].)

Socinianism, from Socinus, a latinized name of two religion teachers, an uncle and nephew. The former, Lelio Francesco Sozini (1525-62), knew reformers in Switzerland, France, England and Holland. His views on the Trinity were unsuccessfully challenged at Geneva. He convinced his nephew of his views.

The second, Fausto Paolo Sozzini (1539-1604; he spelled his name with two z's), published a work on John's gospel denying the essential divinity of Christ (1562) and rejected the natural immortality of man by 1563. He held a moderate Unitarian doctrine.

The latter's views were agreeable to Polish Unitarians and published by Valentin Schmalz and Johannes Völkel in The Racovian Catechism (Racow, 1605), German trans. (1608) and Latin trans. (1609). The Latin was sent to King James I of England, but was publicly burned in 1614.

As a challenge to orthodox Christianity's views of Trinity and Christ, Socinians were forerunners of modern Unitarianism. The latter began on biblical grounds in England with John Biddle (1615-62) and Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), but evolved into a purely rationalistic Unitarianism with James Martineau (1805-1900) in England and in America with William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) and Theodore Parker (1810-60). (See arts. in DCC, "Socinus" [p. 1285], "Racovian Catechism" [pp. 1154-55] and "Unitarianism" [pp. 1408-9].)

[12]Torbet, History, pp. 223-24.

they shied away from the religious enthusiasm of the newer evangelicalism. The latter seemed emotionally excessive and dangerous. The Separate Baptist, Issac Backus, a convert from Congregationalism, wrote in his history:

> A measure of it [The Great Awakening] was granted to the Baptists in London, Leicester, Brimfield, Newport, Groton and Wallingford; but as the work was begun and carried on almost wholly by Pedobaptists, from which denomination their fathers had suffered much, most of the Baptists were prejudiced against the work, and against Calvinian doctrine by which it was promoted.[13]

By contrast the impact upon Baptists of the P.B.A. was stronger. "In New Jersey and Pennsylvania the work was powerful among Baptists."[14] Initially the newer evangelicalism helped P.B.A. churches expand in the 1740's and 1750's.

When the Association in 1755 sent two ministers, Peter Peterson Vanhorn of New York and Benjamin Miller of Pennsylvania, to North Carolina, their mission to deal with General Baptist advances gained new converts through their effective preaching. The P.B.A. set up a fund in 1766 to aid churches in need of itinerant preachers. By 1771 the Association appointed Morgan Edwards its evangelist at large. The following year the New York minister John Gano (1727-98) replaced Edwards as the Association's evangelist. Missionaries of the P.B.A. from 1743 to 1762 founded at least four churches along the Atlantic Coast. These were as far south as Charleston, South Carolina. Yet

---

[13]Isaac Backus, A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists, 2nd ed., with notes by David Weston, 3 vols. in 2 (Newton, Mass.: Backus Historical Society, 1871), 2:41. (Hereafter: History of New England.)

[14]Ibid.

such early efforts at evangelism, as noted below, were not directed to heathens as such.[15]

The impact of the newer evangelicalism within the P.B.A. is easily explained. For one reason, all Baptists were spared the ecclesiological argumentation about the parallel issues of a converted church membership and a converted ministry. Unlike the Presbyterians around them, Baptists had always cherished believer's baptism and churches formed of gathered believers. Then too Baptists of the middle colonies did not have a history of struggle against the established Church in New England. Whether revivalists were Presbyterian or Congregational did not matter. The P.B.A. could remain more open to the work of the Spirit outside its own ranks than could New England Baptists paying unjust taxes to support a Congregational ministry. Moreover, P.B.A. theology agreed with the Calvinistic content of revivals. Yet the momentum towards evangelism was greatly reduced among American Baptists through the influence of the British Particular Baptist John Gill.[16]

John Gill (1697-1771)

The main reason why the missionary spirit of the Awakening dwindled for a time in the P.B.A. was the influence of John Gill, British Particular Baptist minister and author.[17] This successor to

---

[15]See discussion by Torbet, History, pp. 225-27. On evangelism and the P.B.A. see below, pp. 164-74.

[16]Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," p. 22.

[17]On Gill's view of the Church see John Woolman Brush, "John Gill's Doctrine of the Church," in Baptist Concepts of the Church, pp. 53-70.

Benjamin Keach held an exaggerated Calvinistic view of salvation. Logically consistent with his interpretation Gill maintained a very unevangelistic stance. "It was not his practice to address unconverted sinners, nor to enforce the invitations of the Gospel."[18] He was even accused of being an Antinomian.[19] Reportedly his congregation decreased in membership during his pastorate.

The first significant Baptist systematic theologian, Gill propogated his views very effectively in monumental systematic studies in doctrinal and practical theology.[20] His theological positions had the effect of countering any liberalizing tendencies among Baptists, including qualities of preaching and missionary outlook.

Andrew Fuller (1754-1815)

Fuller replaced Gill as the influential theologian of English Baptists.[21] His impact was great among Particular Baptists and brought the spirit of evangelicalism back into their lives.

---

[18]Joseph Ivimey, A History of the English Baptists, 4 vols. (London: Printed for the author, 1811-1830), 3(1823):448.

[19]Antinomian means against law. The term describes Christians claiming that grace keeps one free from the need of observing any moral law. St. Paul had been accused of such a view (cf. Rom. 3:8). Following the Lutheran teaching about justification by faith Anabaptists and English sects under the Commonwealth took such a stand, as did some Congregationalists of New England, notably Anne Hutcheson ("Antinomianism," in DCC, p. 65).

[20]John Gill, Body of Divinity, 2 vols. (1769) and A Body of Practical Divinity; to which is added, A Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes (1770).

Other editions were published in 1810 and 1839, the former in an abridged, one volume work, edited by William Staughton, Philadelphia minister and admirer of Gill.

[21]On Fuller's concept of the Church see Normal Hill Maring, "Andrew Fuller's Doctrine of the Church," in Baptist Concepts of the Church, pp. 71-105.

In 1785 Fuller published his highly influential apologetic for evangelism of the unregenerated. In The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation he opposed an extreme Calvinism that refused to see any good in the man without faith.[22] He wrote to bring out the responsibility of men both for their initial acceptance of Christ, and for their continual acceptance of him.[23] This work was written to refute members of Fuller's congregation, some of whom very likely were disciples of John Gill.[24]

Fuller's teachings helped Baptists of the P.B.A. to accept a missionary outlook beyond themselves. Together with the influx of Separates following upon the struggles of the Great Awakening, Andrew Fuller brought the P.B.A. into the mainstream of American Protestant cooperative effort to evangelize not only one's unregenerated fellow-countrymen but also heathens.

Thus, the second stream to nourish the P.B.A., a newer evangelicalism, flowed into Baptist life through several channels. At first some direct influence was felt, especially in the middle

---

[22]Andrew Fuller, The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation (London: Printed for the author, 1785), passim.

[23]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 231.

[24]Brush writes: "It is reassuring to read of a pastor from Gill's own native Kettering, namely, Andrew Fuller, who took a strong lead in thawing out this rigid Calvinism [of J. Gill] and awakening Baptists to the evangelistic and missionary imperative. Were some of Gill's disciples in Fuller's congregation at Soham when he pleaded for souls to accept the gospel offer of salvation? It was to answer these critics that Fuller wrote his famous tract, The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation." (p. 56)

colonies. The greater impact, however, came indirectly through the work of Fuller and through the converts from other denominations of the Awakening. Those converts were Separate Baptists as opposed to Regulars. The latter, of course, were the established Baptists of European ancestry who were not directly affected by the emotionalism and evangelicalism of the Awakening.

Separate Baptists Emerging from the Great Awakening and Their Direct Impact upon Philadelphia Baptists

Besides the influences of Particular Baptists and the impact of a newer evangelicalism, a third element, the Separates of the Awakening, affected the membership among Philadelphia Baptists in the later eighteenth century. The spirit of the Great Awakening had led to tensions in every denomination. Revivalists opposed anti-revivalists, New Light opposed Old Light Congregationalists, and New Side opposed Old Side Presbyterians. The splintering of denominations served to weaken the effectiveness of the Awakening. Separates withdrew from their own congregations to establish other churches or to join groups that already required a regenerate membership.[25]

In his history Backus mentioned the first principle of Separates, namely, to follow the leadings of the Spirit. The capital article of faith was very Calvinistic, a professed holiness as the result of saving grace alone.[26] Separates, both New Light

---

[25]Torbet, History, p. 223.

[26]Backus, History, 2:89-90.

Congregationalists and New Side Presbyterians, were revivalists. They insisted upon experiential religion, a religion of the heart. Many accepted the logical conclusion of their teachings and required a personal witness of faith prior to baptism. Thus, out of this process emerged Separate Baptists who insisted upon believers' baptism (adult baptism).

Some Separate Baptists, like Shubael Stearns and the Connecticut Baptists, were suspicious of confessional statements as bases for associations. Their opposition to the Philadelphia Confession (discussed below) delayed the union of Separates and Regulars in the South. Others, like Isaac Backus and Massachusetts Baptists, were strongly individualistic, and very suspicious of the inherent power in associations over independent churches.[27] Their opposition delayed the effectiveness of the Warren Association in Rhode Island.

In New England the amalgamation of Regular and Separate Baptists took place at a faster rate than in the South. The union, however, was initially limited to individual congregations. The strongest opposition to associations came from Massachusetts Baptists.[28]

Separate Baptists in the South

Two Connecticut Separates brought the New England revival to Virginia in 1754. The brothers-in-law Shubael Stearns (1706-71) and Daniel Marshall (1706-84) evangelized the South and established many Baptist congregations. Stearns's first foundation was at Sandy Creek,

---

[27]Lumpkin, p. 357.

[28]Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," pp. 23-26.

North Carolina, in 1755. Three more churches were founded by 1758. Within seventeen years forty-two Baptist churches existed in North Carolina alone. Marshall had similar success in Georgia.[29]

Stearns, like other Connecticut Separates, was not adverse to associations. By 1758 he had helped establish the Sandy Creek Association which included churches from Virginia and the Carolinas. In its early history this Association exercised great power over member churches. For a time the Sandy Creek Association had taken on powers that in theory were reserved only to local churches, specifically, the power of ordination and excommunication.[30]

Separates in the South, however, kept aloof from Regular churches. They could not accept the authority of the Philadelphia Confession which was the Regulars' basis for union.

The Separates did not object to any point of doctrine in the Philadelphia Confession, but to the idea that the basis of union could be a faith grounded in anything other than the Scriptures. Separates thought little of any human formulation. In 1784 William Rogers, a P.B.A. minister assigned to collect funds for Rhode Island College, complained to President Manning:

> . . . In Virginia and North Carolina, the regular Baptists are few in number. Many of them join in opinion with the

---

[29]Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. 74-75.

[30]Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," p. 27; also study by Shurden, pp. 151-160.

> Separates that Human Literature is of no avail in a religious point of view . . .[31]

The Virginia Plan of Union

The attitude of Separates towards the use of confessions was finally clarified in a compromise statement, The Plan of Union, between Separates and Regulars in Virginia. The P.B.A. rejoiced to hear of that union through an associational letter from Virginia, and it printed the basis for union in the minutes of 1787. The Philadelphia Confession was the basis for the union, but under very clear conditions:

> . . . But to prevent its [Confession of Faith] usurping a tyrannical power over the consciences of any, we do not mean that every person is to be bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained: yet that it holds forth the essential truths of the gospel, and that the doctrine of salvation by Christ, and free unmerited grace alone, ought to be believed by every Christian, and maintained by every minister of the gospel . . .[32]

Safeguarded in this statement was the Calvinistic doctrine held in common by the P.B.A. and Separates. This formula was not something entirely new. It expressed an attitude that Baptists had always had towards confessions. The compromise simply made explicit to Regular and Separate Baptists that they agreed with each other about the function of confessions for Baptists. In so doing they expressed the views of other groups. For example, the Savoy

---

[31]William Rogers to James Manning, Philadelphia, 2 April 1784, James Manning Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. (Hereafter: Collection designated, James Manning Collection.)

[32]Gillette, p. 233; also p. 227.3.

Congregationalists in 1658 had accepted the Westminster Confession "for the substance of doctrine," and the Presbyterian Adopting Act of 1729 was analogous to the Baptist formula of Virginia.[33]

Once the ambiguity over the nature of confessions was settled, Regular Baptists of the P.B.A. and Separate Baptists in the South worked in harmony. They "buried in oblivion" the terms "Regular" and "Separate," and were thereafter known "by the name of the United Baptist Church of Christ in Virginia."[34]

Separate Baptists in New England

The relationship of Baptists and Separates in New England took a different turn.[35] The process of amalgamation went along at a quicker pace, with existing General Baptist churches soon overrun by Calvinistic Separates. The establishment of an association, however, was delayed by the suspicion among Massachusetts Separates. Regular Baptist churches had no problem with the idea of associating. These were influenced by men like James Manning and Hezekiah Smith of the P.B.A. Even some Separates apparently did not object to connectionalism.

---

[33]Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," pp. 23-24.

[34]Gillette, p. 233

[35]See Edwin S. Gaustad, "Baptists and the Great Awakening in New England," Chronicle 15 (January 1952):41-48. He deals only with the New England situation.

On the relationship of Baptists to the Great Awakening see Clarence C. Goen, Rivivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962)

The Connecticut Separates, if they held views similar to Shubael Stearns, would have favored associations.

Some New England Baptists, however, did object to associations. The older Regular churches probably were anti-revivalists and therefore suspicious of Separates. Massachusetts Separate Baptists definitely had grave misgivings about setting up an organization of churches. They strongly insisted upon the complete independence of each local church. Such an individualism was born of the Massachusetts experience within Congregationalism. Self-rule for churches was required by the General Court. A regularly constituted body completing the ecclesiastical system was forbidden. The political system aggravated the situation. Merchants who had effective control over local politics and local churches jealously guarded their positions against outside interference. Among Separates this inclination towards individualism was heightened because they often found themselves in the minority, struggling for religious freedom from ministerial taxation to support Congregational preachers.[36] The greatest spokesman for this individualism was Isaac Backus (1724-1806). A Separate Baptist, Backus attended the organizational meeting of the Warren Association.[37]

The Warren Association

Eleven New England Baptist churches sent their representatives to Warren, Rhode Island, on September 8, 1767 to consider the

[36] Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," pp. 24-25.

[37] On Backus's view of Church see Edwin S. Gaustad, "The Backus-Leland Tradition," in Baptist Concepts of the Church, pp. 106-134.

formation of an association. The P.B.A. had sent a letter of good wishes, which stated:

> A long course of experience and observation has taught us to have the highest sense of the advantages which accrue from associations; nor indeed does the nature of things speak any other language. For, as particular members are collected together and united in one body, which we call a particular church to answer those ends and purposes which could not be accomplished by any single member, so a collection and union of churches into one associational body may easily be conceived capable of answering those still greater purposes which any particular church could not be equal to. And by the same reason, a union of associations will still increase the body in weight and strength, and make it good that a threefold cord is not easily broken.[38]

At least three ministers of the P.B.A. were present at the initial Warren meeting, Hezekiah Smith, President James Manning of Rhode Island College, and his brother-in-law John Gano, who was the moderator. Although Morgan Edwards was appointed a messenger in the P.B.A. letter sent to Warren, he did not attend. Isaac Backus acted as clerk. The moving spirits in the Association's formation were Manning, Gano, and Backus.

Those churches favorably disposed to associations formed the Warren Association that first year, 1767. Massachusetts, including Backus's church, did not join. The influential Backus recorded in his diary, "I did not see my way clear to join now [1767], if ever I do."[39] Three years later Backus's group did join. The change of heart was due to the effectiveness of the Warren Association as proponent of the struggle for religious freedom, and to the influence

---

[38]P.B.A. to Warren, p. 76; also Spencer, pp. 95-96 (A1660-72).

[39]Backus, History, 2:409, note.

of Manning's "Sentiments Touching on Associations."[40] Having become convinced that the Association would have no jurisdiction over member churches, and seeing the value of a coordinated Baptist effort for religious freedom in Massachusetts, Backus agreed to the Warren Association. The impact of Separatist views on individualism was decisive for the P.B.A. Thus, a polarity of those favoring a broader fellowship in a national organization, and those suspicious of such power, continued within the P.B.A. and other Baptist associations.

Backus and his younger colleague, John Leland (1754-1841), exercised great influence. The former became the spokesman for religious liberty at the Continental Congress and traveled extensively. Backus preached some 2,412 sermons between 1756 and 1767 and traveled almost fifteen thousand miles outside his parish.[41] His views embodied "the spirit of the Lockean individualism which was being popularized by Thomas Jefferson."[42]

Leland was even more extreme in his individualism than Backus. He questioned the need for a local church. Leland's influence in Virginia helps to account for the change in attitude among southern Separates. Originally they looked favorably upon the activities of

---

[40]"Sentiments Touching on Associations," in The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association (Germantown: Printed by Christopher Sower, 1769), p. 3. Manning's statement was prefixed to the plan and adapted between 1767 and 1769, at which time both were adopted. In the process of adaptation the biblical justification from Acts 15 was dropped, most probably out of deference to the Church at Coventry (see B170-95). (Hereafter: Manning, Sentiments; or Warren, Plan.)

[41]Torbet, History, p. 235.

[42]Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," p. 26.

their associations, but when the Warren Association called for a "continental association" in 1776, the Virginia Baptists posed the greatest opposition to the idea.[43]

The Erosion of a Theological Basis for Associations among Baptists

The inclination towards individualism coexisted with traditional respect for connectionalism. It was supported by a number of factors that dovetailed in the life of the P.B.A.: (1) the pragmatic approach to church life at the expense of a clear and explicit theology of associationalism; (2) religious roots of an individualistic spirit among Baptists of the Association; and (3) social and political philosophies that shaped the emerging American experiment.

An Ecclesiastical Pragmatism Lacking a Clear Theology

For a time the Philadelphia tradition stemming from Particular Baptist ideas survived in practice. But as a "tradition" it was being molded by the influence of Separates and evangelicalism. The almost total preoccupation of revivalists, with the conversion experience and a heart-religion, abstracted from the form of church polity. On the one hand evangelicalism could tolerate the highly individualistic temper of Separate Baptists, on the other hand it could develop into a highly centralized system as happened among Methodists. Baptists unfortunately were not very concerned about theological justifications for church affiliation in the latter half of the eighteenty century.

---

[43]Ibid., and Torbet, History, p. 233.

The P.B.A. acted effectively as the forum in a fluid church polity that met crises as they happened. The approach was a pragmatic one that did not express clearly, in unambiguous terms, the role of the Association in church life. Such an avoidance of theological precision was a mark of the "middle-of-the-road" travelers that P.B.A. Baptists were as American Calvinists.[44]

As the Association moved into the nineteenth century its members retained their Calvinistic teachings. These, fortunately, had been enunciated in their Confession. Nevertheless the Philadelphia Baptists lost the theological moorings for justifying their associational theory. Already during the eighteenth century any attempt to state clearly the authority of the Association met with opposition. Without a sustaining and developing theological tradition to bring cogency to their characteristic church polity nineteenth century Baptists, especially in the North, inevitably found themselves, in the words of Winthrop S. Hudson, "Stumbling into disorder."[45]

Nevertheless, it is the contention of this author that the pragmatism of the P.B.A. did carry with it certain theological dimensions. In fact, one can reflect upon the statements of the P.B.A. and extract all the explicit and implicit theological principles needed to articulate a theology of association and church authority today.

---

[44] On types of American Calvinism see app. C, pp. 764-66.

[45] See Hudson, "Stumbling into Disorder," pp. 45-71. Among other indications Hudson cites the New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1830, and the Landmarkist movement in the South.

Moreover, to see the changing church order of the P.B.A. during the nineteenth century as a stumbling into disorder, in the opinion of this author, puts a much too negative interpretation on the facts. What the pragmatic approach lacks in its explicit theologizing it gains in its capacity to deal effectively with shifts in the social and religious contexts. While asserting a positive value to the nineteenth century data, one must nevertheless admit there was also a negative side. To be sure, the pragmatic approach to church life minimized the chances of the P.B.A. to refine its theological justifications for church order.[46]

Religious Roots of Individualism among Baptists of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

The inclination towards individualism in the eighteenth century was more than a question of an "untheological" pragmatism in church life. There were religious roots to individualism among Baptists of the P.B.A. These were at least three, the inherited attitudes of Particular Baptists, the anti-missionary attitude of very strict Calvinists, and the individualism of Separate Baptists. All three have been noted above, but they bear re-emphasis here.

---

[46]This author is greatly indebted to Winthrop Hudson for his valuable insights about the underlying historical factors that explain the shift in nineteenth century connectionalism among Northern Baptists. However, by viewing the shift in church polity both positively and negatively the present author takes exception to Hudson's application of the label "Stumbling into Disorder." What is perceived as disorder could be interpreted as a necessary development of a more complex church polity among Baptists.

To begin with, Particular Baptists, unlike General Baptists, were not very inclined towards connectionalism. Their roots, moreover, lay within the Presbyterian covenant theology which assumed a voluntary nature to church affiliation, both to the local church fellowship and to the fellowship of churches. Baptists of the P.B.A. never lost their inherited respect for the freedom of the individual churches, though historically they found no difficulty in forming associations as an expression of the biblical imperative to achieve communion and fellowship. Such was their pragmatic approach. Respect for independent churches carried with it theological implications all through the eighteenth century.

Then too the anti-missionary mentality within the P.B.A., supported by the writings of the influential John Gill, continued to affect the Association's attitudes towards cooperative efforts. The need to join forces for evangelism was never universally recognized, not even at the turn of the nineteenth century when mission societies flourished in England and in America. A strict Calvinism that limited preaching to regenerated Christians had a definite negative impact upon efforts at joint evangelization.

Finally, Separate Baptists, especially those with roots in the New England struggles, were most wary of the Association gaining power over local churches.

P.B.A. Baptists from the middle colonies had no trouble expressing the real authority of associations. Their statements, however, had to be altered and nuanced so that the cardinal principle of local church independence would always be safeguarded. The result

was either a mild or a watered down statement about the purpose and justification for church associationalism.

Coupled to such deep religious feelings stirring within some members of the P.B.A., the ecclesiastical pragmatism noted above had even less chance to develop a clear and explicit theology of church authority and associations. The right and responsibility of all Baptists to abide by their convictions only added to the problem. Without any acknowledged central authority to direct the process, contradictory and conflicting ideas interacted freely among Baptists of the Association.

Social and Political Theories of Individualism

In addition to religious forces at work among Philadelphia Baptists, there were the political and social philosophies of individualism that affected both America's constitutional order and her religious life.[47]

---

[47]The interplay between religious ideas and political-social-economic factors is a complex question that goes far beyond the limits of this study. One should consider:

(1) For a critique of Protestantism and capitalism the celebrated study by Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1930) and the literature and bibliography in Robert W. Green, Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1959); also R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: New American Library, 1947) [orig. ed., 1926].

(2) On the social causes of denominationalism see the classic study by H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Hold and Co., 1929; reprint ed., New York: The World Publishing Co., 1967); and Ellsworth Faris, "The Sect and the Sectarian," American Journal of Sociology 60 (May 1955):75-90. For an analysis from a theological perspective see Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believers' Church: the history and character of Radical Protestantism

Men like Isaac Backus and John Leland, and the Separate Baptists generally, shared an individualistic spirit that was one with the political and philosophical tenor of the times.[48]

Lockean individualism, popularized by Thomas Jefferson, and the later pursuits of the rights of the common man in the nineteenth century Jacksonean era, were just two manifestations of the spirit of individualism in the political sphere.[49] That spirit was alive in the thinking and writing of Backus and Leland.

(London: Macmillan Co., 1968).

(3) One good summary of the relationship of sixteenth century religion to England's imperial expansion is Ahlstrom, Religious History, pp. 113-19.

[48]On Backus's and Leland's views of Church see Gaustad, "The Backus-Leland Tradition," pp. 106-34.

[49]John Locke (1632-1704), English philosopher, Christian rationalist and empiricist, foremost defender of free inquiry and toleration in the later seventeenth century. In Letters concerning Toleration (1689, 1690, and 1692) he argued for religious toleration for all except enemies of the state (i.e. atheists and Roman Catholics). His political philosophy expounding the principles of the Whig revolution of 1688 was published in Two Treatises of Government (1690). The substance of his philosophical thought is contained in Essay concerning Human Understanding (1690) which attacks Platonic "innate ideas" and claims only experience can cause ideas, either through sensation or through reflection (empiricism). In The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures (1695) Locke claimed the only secure basis of Christianity is its reasonableness (Christian rationalism).

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), from Monticello, Va., 3rd pres. of U.S., professed Deist, staunch advocate of the individual's natural rights and republican form of government by majority consent of the people. By his own testimony his views depended upon the principle of sensationalism of the English philosopher John Locke, the ideological theory or schematism of the Frenchman Destutt de Tracy (whose works he translated) the philosophy of common sense of the Scot Dugald Stewart (The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, ed. by Albert Ellery Bergh, 20 vols. [Washington: Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903], 15:273-74). (Hereafter: Works.) He claimed his doctrine of natural rights incorporated into his draft of the Declaration of Independence was common

Even in the struggle to arrive at a political confederation, America experienced the contrary pull towards individual states rights and local rights. As early as 1787, The Federalist (1787-88) of James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton bore witness to the lively debate precipitated by the national movement towards confederation.[50] It is no accident that most Baptists were opposed to the federal idea. Independency and interdependency were pitted against each other in a way that had not been felt in a previous period of harmonious church polity among P.B.A. Baptists.

What had once been accepted as an undisputed given of Christian order, connectionalism, came to be offset by a rugged

---

to the age "whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney . . ." (Works, 16:119). Jefferson's view of government as republican is one "by its citizens in mass, acting directly and personally according to rules established by the majority" (Works, 15:19). (See Robert C. Whittemore, Makers of the American Mind [New York: William Morrow & Co., 1964], pp. 139-49.)

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), 7th pres. of U.S., of Irish ancestry, frontiersman, little formal education, embodied spirit of the common man and the view that the government can be administered by the people. Idol of the common man, civilian and military, possessed strong frontiersman traits, e.g., individualism, loyalty to friends, hatred of enemies. Elected pres. in 1828 in protest against too much centralized power in national government, with great support in S. and W.; opposed to N.E. manufacturing, commercial, and financial interests. Had image for the common man, against all classes of privileged, monopolies, and centralized power. His two administrations were democratic: "Let the people rule." He believed final power was the will of the people, popular mandate being superior to acts of Congress or even to decisions of the Supreme Court. (Marcus W. Jernegan, "Andrew Jackson," in The Encyclopedia Americana [New York and Chicago: Americana Corp., 1934], 15:574-77.) (Hereafter: For Encyclopedia, EA.) EA

[50]Published under a pseud., Publius, The Federalist was 77 essays which helped to convince New York to join the federal government. Collected in book form the essays are a classic text on political science and an authoritative commentary on the federal constitution (see "Federalist," in EA, 1934 ed., 2:85).

individualism that many erroneously thought was the traditional church life among Baptists of the P.B.A.

The inclination towards an individualistic view of Church came from Baptists themselves, specifically from Calvinistic and Separate Baptist views. But the trend was heightened by the social and political views of the day. The turning away from associational theory in the nineteenth century came more from these influences than from any solid theological grounding in Scripture or Baptist history.[51]

To return to their foundations for church order Baptists need to probe their own eighteenth century associational life. The justifications for a renewed church polity lie not only in a rethinking of scriptural sources, but also in an understanding of their own history, their "tradition," the lived experience of gospel church life in the P.B.A.

More important to the present study, the sources of the P.B.A. must be continually read against the background of the forces at work within the Association. When the sources are cautious, the reasons for such caution are more than adequately understood in the light of the P.B.A.'s membership and orientation. By the same token, when the sources make affirmative statements about church authority and associations such evidence speaks eloquently when it is read in the context of late eighteenth century P.B.A. history.

It is the contention of this author, moreover, that Baptists of the P.B.A., when they formulated their ideas, were not fully

---

[51]Hudson, "By Way of Perspective," p. 28.

conscious of the very context which restricted their perspective. They were pragmatists, trying to search out ways of compromise to bring together disparate views in their ranks. In focusing upon the role of the local church as possessing full church-power from Christ they could not get beyond their basic, cardinal principle of church polity. Yet, as noted below, other underlying theological principles do exist in their statements. The sources provide all the material needed for an explicit theology of church authority and associations in keeping with the Philadelphia tradition itself. The fact that those very principles were not shaped into a coherent and comprehensive theology of church authority reveals both the strength of the P.B.A. as a viable body and the weakness of a Baptist pragmatic approach to church organization.

SELECT SPECIFIC EVENTS AND LITERATURE OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

While the influence of the British Particular Baptists was foundational to the ethos of the P.B.A. and the revivalist movements in America had a mitigating effect upon associational theory, these two contexts alone do not explain the development of the eighteenth century P.B.A. Certain specific events of the first one hundred years in the life of the Association also helped to shape its associational theory. The following discussion places the life of the P.B.A. in its specific context and, more important to this study, locates its sources on associational theory within the evolution of that group.[52]

---

[52]On the history of the P.B.A. see Spencer; Torbet, Social History and History, pp. 211-14, 232-34, and other places; and Raymond

Origin and Early Development of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

Philadelphia in the eighteenth century was the country's busiest seaport. It was also the intellectual center of the colonies.[53] What was more important for the development of Baptists was the favorable climate for religion. The policies of Pennsylvania Quakers and the Proprietors of the Jerseys guaranteed religious liberty for dissenters. There was no established Church. The few instances of oppression were mostly in New Amsterdam under the administration of Peter Styvesant.[54]

Charter Members of the Association

The P.B.A. began with five charter member churches covering the present tri-state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. The churches included one from Pennsylvania, at Lower Dublin in Philadelphia County; three from New Jersey, Middletown in Monmouth

---

J. Bean, "The Philadelphia Baptist Association," Foundations 20 (April 1957):51-66.

An earlier account appeared in Morgan Edwards, The Customs of Primitive Churches: Or, a Set of Propositions Relative to the Name, Materials, Constitution, Power, Officers, Ordinances, Rites, Business, Worship, Discipline, Government etc. of a Church . . . and Historical Narratives of the Manner in Which Most of Them Have Been Reduced to Practice (Philadelphia: Andrew Stewart, 1768), pp. 108-109; see app. B (B259-376); also Gillette, 7:25; 27:28; 39:40 and 76:97. (Hereafter: E.) Other early accounts of the P.B.A. are Samuel Jones, A Century Sermon: delivered in Philadelphia, at the opening of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, October 6, 1807 (Philadelphia: Bartram & Reynolds, 1807) (printed in Gillette, pp. 541-68); and Benjamin Griffith, "A Brief Narrative of the Churches Holding Believers Baptism, in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys," in Gillette, pp. 9-24. E

[53] Hicks-Mowry-Burke, p. 50.

[54] Torbet, Social History, p. 13, and History, p. 209.

County, Piscataway in Middlesex County, and Cohansey in Cumberland County; and one from Delaware, Welsh Tract in New Castle County. Besides these five, two other Baptist churches existed in the middle colonies by the time the P.B.A. was organized in 1707. Members of the oldest church at Cold Spring had already joined the one at Lower Dublin. The second one, the Philadelphia Church, was meeting at Lower Dublin till it became a separate church of the P.B.A. in 1746.[55]

The earliest Baptist church in the middle colonies was an Irish congregation driven from Newport, Rhode Island. The group moved to Pennsylvania in 1684 and established a Baptist church at Cold Spring with Thomas Dungan as pastor. Its claim to fame was the baptism and ordination of Elias Keach, the gifted twenty year old son of the renowned Benjamin Keach of London. By 1702 the remaining thirteen members of the Cold Spring Church joined the one in Lower Dublin.[56]

The most influential of the five charter members of the P.B.A. was the church that met near Pennepek Creek.[57] In the County of Philadelphia, it was variously named Pennepek (variant spelling Pennypack) and Lower Dublin. Five of the original twelve members were Welsh. They had arrived in the second emigration from Wales. Their original

---

[55]On the First Church of Philadelphia see Bean, p. 51.

[56]Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 157, 190-91; Torbet, History, pp. 209-10.

[57]Whitely, British Baptists, pp. 155, 191; Torbet, History, pp. 210-11.

parish was Llanddwoi in Radnorshire. In January 1687/88 they were constituted a church.[58] Elias Keach was the first pastor.

Keach had come to America at the age of twenty, not yet baptized, and still he delighted in wearing the garb of a clergyman. Taking advantage of his father's reputation he masqueraded as a preacher. During his first sermon, however, he admitted his deception. Baptized by Dungan at the Cold Spring church he was ordained for Lower Dublin (Pennepek) and proved himself a very energetic preacher. He influenced the orientation of his church which was the mother church of all the congregations that eventually formed the P.B.A. He returned to England in 1692. There he published versions of his father's Shorter Catechism and Church Discipline for his own congregation. Through Elias Keach's contacts with America the Keach Confession of 1697 made its way into American Baptist life.

John Watts succeeded Keach and remained pastor until his death in 1702. Then came Samuel Jones, Evan Morgan, and Joseph Wood. In 1712 the influential Abel Morgan arrived in Philadelphia and became pastor until his death in 1722. Morgan labored at other places and wrote the first Welsh concordance. He is also credited with a Welsh translation of the Second London Confession to which he added "An article relative to Laying on of hands; Singing Psalms; and Church Covenants." Records in the church at Welsh Tract indicate that this was the Confession of the P.B.A. signed at the quarterly meeting of

---

[58] "The 11th month of 1687" (Spencer, p. 23), according to our reckoning, is January 1688 (see above, pp. 19-20).

May 4, 1716.[59] For a time the pastorate at Lower Dublin was vacant until Jenkin Jones of Welsh Tract arrived in 1726. He was pastor until 1746.[60]

From its foundation Lower Dublin was staunchly Calvinistic, though Weston Brunner in 1894 concluded that some Arminian sympathizers were probably present.[61] Keach, a very effective preacher, attracted Baptists from a circle of congregations as widespread in distance as Trenton, Chester and other small towns in Pennsylvania and Jersey. As groups became larger, separate sister churches sprang up in Jersey at Middletown (1688) and Piscataway (1689) and in Pennsylvania at Cohansey (1690) and Philadelphia (1698). Some Keithian Quakers made use of the meeting house which had been built in 1692.[62] Around 1707 some

---

[59]Lumpkin, p. 349.

[60]On listing of ministers see S. Jones, A Century Sermon (Gillette, p. 455) and Griffith, "A Brief Narrative," p. 12.

[62]Brunner, p. 18

He makes a plausible case. The study does not show definite historical links to General Baptists, but argues from general characteristics. Brunner concluded that the P.B.A., in its origins, was not strictly Calvinistic because the early churches were a union of Arminian and Particular Baptists. His findings do not negate the fact that the leadership and orientation of the P.B.A. was Calvinistic. Torbet suggests: "It is quite likely the General Baptists, who were predominant in New England, New York, and New Jersey, were disturbed by the fact that the Association in 1742 had adopted a Calvinistic statement" (History, p. 214).

[62]George Keith (1639-1716) converted to Quakerism from Scottish Presbyterianism. He publicly attacked moral and disciplinary laxity among Pa. Quakers. In 1700 he became an ordained Anglican. The Keith sect quickly dissipated with the stronger Calvinists becoming Baptists (Ahlstrom, Religious History, p. 210).

joined Lower Dublin Church as Keithian Baptists. Very likely they were Quakers with stricter Calvinistic leanings.

The church at Middletown was founded around 1688. It met in two different locations, Crosswicks and Middletown in New Jersey. Keach ministered there in 1690/91. Other ministers of the P.B.A. supplied pulpits. Abel Morgan came from Welsh Tract in 1739.

In 1712 a dispute arose that was settled upon advice of the P.B.A. The Keach Confession "at least the Covenant annexed to it" became the touchstone of orthodoxy. The forty-two members who subscribed to it were recognized as the regular Baptist Church in Middletown; the twenty-six dissenting formed another church.[63]

The church at Piscataway, Jersey, was settled by Thomas Killingsworth in 1689.[64] It was very small, no more than six people. After two decades it had only twenty members. Killingsworth soon left to serve at Cohansey. The church did, however, continue to have the administrations of people from the P.B.A. up to the time when Mr. Drake was ordained its first pastor in 1715. He labored until 1726 when old age curtailed his ministry.

Brunner concludes the evidence towards a General Baptist presence remains unclear. Perhaps the Reverend Henry Lovall, who arrived about 1729 from New England, may have been a General Baptist.[65]

---

[63]Lumpkin, p. 349; Griffith, "A Brief Narrative," pp. 13-14.

[64]Griffith, "A Brief Narrative," p. 13. Torbet, History, p. 212. Griffith sets foundation date in 1686!

[65]Brunner, p. 21.

The Cohansey Church was settled by Irish and Welsh Baptists under the leadership of Thomas Killingsworth in 1690/91.[66] Two groups met separately, one with Timothy Brooks, the other with Killingsworth. With the help of the latter's leadership the two groups were eventually united in 1709, just one year after Killingsworth himself had died. Brooks, an Arminian, may have spread his ideas among others. According to Brunner, however, the church was strongly Calvinistic at its foundation.[67]

The fifth charter member of the Association was the church at Welsh Tract in the County of New Castle on the Delaware. The basic group had been constituted a church in Pembrokesshire, South Wales, in 1701. They were the third Welsh emigration to America. Their pastor was Thomas Griffiths.

For a time the church joined with Lower Dublin. Differences of language and of attitude towards the laying on of hands led the group to separate peacefully. Its members moved to Welsh Tract in 1703. Undoubtedly this church brought a fresh enthusiasm for associating. The year before leaving Wales it had participated in the reactivation of the Wales Association.[68]

---

[66]Whitley, British Baptists, p. 190; "Historical Sketch," in Printed Minutes . . . 1932, puts the foundation "Spring of 1690" (see note on dating above, pp. 19-20).

[67]Brunner, pp. 21-22.

[68]Joshua Thomas, A History of the Baptist Association in Wales, from the Year 1650, to the Year 1790, Shewing the Times and Places of their Annual Meetings Whether in Wales, London, or Bristol, etc., Including Several Other Interesting Articles, in The Baptist Annual Register, ed. by John Rippon, 41 issues in 4 vols. (London: n.p., 1790-1802), 4:26-27. (Hereafter: For Register, Rippon.)

Abel Morgan, the younger,[69] very influential in the P.B.A. through writings and sermons, eventually became pastor. Welsh Tract provided a succession of very influential men.[70]

The above five churches that eventually joined the P.B.A. were far from monolithic. Their origins were cosmopolitan.[71] Baptists came from England, Wales and Ireland, some via New England General Baptist influence. They held varying views about salvation. A few came from Quaker ranks. Yet the general orientation from the beginning was firmly established in a Calvinistic direction. The decisive leadership fell to the Lower Dublin Church, the mother congregation to three others. With the exception of Elias Keach and Thomas Killingsworth, the most influential ministers were all Welshmen, or descendents of the church at Welsh Tract. What is significant for this study is that all had experienced Particular Baptist connectionalism in England.

Early Stages of Affiliation

From the beginning Baptist churches in America helped each other. When disputes arose they were sometimes settled by calling

---

[69]Abel Morgan (1713-1785) to be distinguished from Morgan of Lower Dublin (1673-1722). The former native born, in Welsh Tract, pastor at Middletown, the "incomparable" Morgan of S. Jones ("A Century Sermon," Gillette, p. 455), "guiding intellectual spirit of the Middle Colony Baptists" (Heimert-Miller, p. 377).

[70]S. Jones (p. 456) mentions the following influential leaders from Welsh Tract: Jenkin Jones (minister to Lower Dublin, founder of 1st Philadelphia), Owen Thomas, David Davis, and "the great" Abel Morgan (minister of Middletown).

[71]See summary paragraph in Torbet, History, p. 212.

church councils. William H. Allison provided a list of such councils conducted in America prior to 1820.[72] Among the listed councils were those at Middletown in 1712 and at Cape May Court House in 1712. Of their nature councils were ad hoc meetings. Their usefulness continued after the establishment of permanent organizations like associations.

As early as 1688 several churches, at least Baptists from several towns, had a joint meeting at Lower Dublin to administer baptism, ordain ministers and provide inspirational preaching. Another meeting was held at Philadelphia in March of 1689. Thereafter Baptists gathered alternately at Burlington, Cohansey, Welsh Tract and Middletown. For townspeople of the respective places these were annual meetings, but for the ministers who tried to attend each session they were obviously quarterly.[73] Twenty-five "deputies" gathered on June 22, 1706 to deal with the question of the laying on of hands.[74]

On September 27, 1707 the character of the meetings was set. From the general meeting which was first held in 1689 emerged "an association of messengers authorized by their respective churches to mediate and execute designs of public good."[75] The center was Lower

---

[72]Allison, pp. 113-15.

[73]Jones, "A Century Sermon," p. 454; Torbet, Social History, p. 15, and History, pp. 211-12.

[74]Spencer, p. 41.

[75]From account of William W. Keen, The Bi-Centennial Celebration of the Founding of First Baptist Church of the City of Philadelphia, p. 461, cited by Torbet, History, p. 212, n. 24. Keen, probably following the minutes for 1707, sets the date in July. It is probable

Dublin (Pennepek). The five known Particular Baptist churches of the middle colonies--Lower Dublin, Middletown, Cohansey, Piscataway and Welsh Tract--formed the P.B.A. In his Century Sermon Samuel Jones claimed that outside Massachusetts and Rhode Island these were the only Baptist churches constituted. Seemingly his statement was accurate if one assumes he was speaking about Particular Baptist churches.[76]

The General Pattern for Associations

The pattern for the P.B.A. was similar to that of associations among Particular Baptists in Somerset and Midland counties in England and in Swansea, Wales. Moreover, the 1689 plan of the General Assembly of Particular Baptists of England provided a precedent.[77] The men who had set up the Association of Philadelphia had been "long concerned in the affairs of churches and associations in their [former] countries."[78] The minutes of proceedings for the P.B.A. reflect the same kind of organization as existed among Particular Baptists of London.

---

that he had not adjusted the dating. "In the seventh month, 1707" by our reckoning is not July, but September, 1707 (see introductory comments above, pp. 19-20).

[76]Jones, "A Century Sermon," p. 454. General Baptist churches existed in Charleston in 1693 and in Virginia from 1700 (see Torbet, History, pp. 207, 215-17).

[77]For a chronological list of British Baptist associations see Torbet, History, pp. 44-45; also Whitley, British Baptists, pp. 86-93. The 1689 plan of Particular Baptists is given below (B120-69).

[78]Phrase used in minutes of 1710 to describe Nathaniel Jenkins, John Burrows, Abel Morgan and some others who had been ruling elders in their churches (Gillette, p. 25).

It is also the same pattern that was generally in use among American Baptists during the eighteenth century. Shurden gives a description of the basic pattern.[79]

Messengers, representing each church, gathered to exchange letters and statistics. They had fellowship in order to hear edifying sermons and to share the ordinances.[80] Outside the P.B.A. some eighteenth century associations even ordained ministers. . Associations considered various disturbing "queries," presented by churches or individuals, composed circular letters, and eventually came to exchange correspondence with other associations.[81]

Association Sermons

The minutes of the P.B.A. first make mention of a sermon in 1729. It was preached "in the afternoon, as usual."[82] Beginning with 1731 preachers and their alternates were assigned a year in advance.[83] Starting in 1759 the subject matter of the sermon was to be "one of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith."[84] This practice

---

[79]Shurden, pp. 58-68. On the P.B.A.'s plan for the Association see below, pp. 184-85.

[80]On the Association's role in worship see Shurden, pp. 58-68. In the nineteenth century (and for associations other than the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century) Baptist associations presumed to ordain ministers and have the ordinances at associational meetings.

[81]Compare this summary to Morgan Edwards's description of the P.B.A. in E (B259-376).

[82]Gillette, p. 30.

[83]Ibid., p. 32.

[84]Ibid., p. 79.

continued until 1768 when sermons were based upon the scriptural text chosen by the preacher.[85]

In 1773 the P.B.A. called for sermons to be printed.[86] In practice not all were published, but only those requested by the Assembly. Among these were two by Oliver Hart (1723-1795). They offer a statement of ideas about ministry and Church which were prevalent within the P.B.A. Hart was a very influential minister at the church of Hopewell, New Jersey. He was four times the moderator of the P.B.A., helped to establish the Charleston Association in 1751, and co-authored the Church Discipline adopted by that Association in 1772.

The first Hart sermon was preached on October 21, 1783. It dealt with duties of officers and private members of the church, and was based on Haggai 2:4.[87] The second sermon was given seven years

---

[85]For a list of the doctrinal sermons see Clark, app. 2, p. 161.

[86]Gillette, p. 128.

[87]Oliver Hart, An Humble Attempt to repair the christian temple. A sermon, shewing the business of officers and private members in the church of Christ, and how their work should be performed; with some motives to excite professors ardently to engage in it. Preached in the city of Philadelphia, October 21st, 1783, at the opening of the Association, and published at their request . . . (Philadelphia: Robert Aiken . . . , 1785). [EVANS: 19033]. Reference is to Charles Evans, American Bibliography: a chronological dictionary of all books, pamphlets and periodical publications printed in the United States of America, from the genesis of printing in 1639 down to and including the year 1820. With bibliographical notes, 13 vols., 14th vol. is an index by Roger Pattrell Bristol (1959) (Chicago: Privately printed for the author by Blakely Press, 1930-1934; reprint, New York: Peter Smith, 1941-1959). (Hereafter: EVANS.)

later. It dealt with the nature of a gospel church and was based on 2 Chron 29:35.[88]

Circular Letters and Correspondence

Like their English forebears, Baptists of the P.B.A. made use of correspondence to link their churches. Each messenger brought to the Association a letter from his church. For its part the P.B.A. issued a circular letter each year to member churches. As other associations developed, the P.B.A. began to exchange correspondence with them through its representatives. Finally, in 1802, the Philadelphia group proposed and set up a "Committee of Correspondence."[89] The P.B.A. also kept in touch with London through correspondence largely concerned with appeals for funds and books.[90]

The P.B.A. followed the British practice of sending a general epistle (circular letter) to the churches, including an account of the proceedings. Unfortunately the early records, especially from 1713 to 1721, have been lost.[91] The earliest extant letter appears in the

---

[88]Oliver Hart, A Gospel church portrayed (cited in intro., n. 28). EVANS: 23429. Excerpts appear in app. B (B377-755).

[89]Among its members were Samuel Jones, Burgiss Allison and William Rogers. While it functioned for a time, submitting reports in 1803, 1805 and 1806, the committee never accomplished the Association's purpose of uniting all Baptist associations of America (Gillette, pp. 371.19, 381-82.23, 411-12.18, 425.32; see below, pp. 178-79.

[90]For letters from 1714 to 1717 see Ivimey, 3(1823):127-33; and Thomas Crosby, The History of the English Baptists from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I, 4 vols. (London: Printed for the author by John Robinson, 1738-1740), 4:162-64, 193-96. See also Gillette, pp. 28, 30, 83, 84-85 (copy of letter).

[91]See the entry for 1713 (Gillette, p. 27).

1731 entry of the records collected by Morgan Edwards, and later compiled by Abram D. Gillette.[92] Thereafter the Association's letters to the churches are included within the narratives of proceedings for each year. In 1761 these are designated, "Pastoral Addresses." The earliest printed letter still extant was in 1766, probably published by Morgan Edwards at his own expense.[93] In 1774 the P.B.A. fixed upon a different kind of letter, namely, "Circular Letters" that treated the successive articles of the Confession of Faith of the Association.[94]

These circular letters are a rich depository for Baptist theology in the eighteenth century. The letter of 1808 dealt with the Church of Christ in chapter 26 of the Philadelphia Confession.[95] The one for 1807 discussed the qualifications of a gospel minister.[96]

In 1766 the P.B.A. decided to keep in touch with its sister associations that had begun to form:

> Moved and agreed to: That a yearly intercourse between the Associations to the east and west of us [i.e. Warren, Rhode Island (1767) and Ketockton, Virginia (1765)] be, by letters and messengers, now begun, and hereafter maintained . . .[97]

---

[92]Gillette, p. 31.

[93]Ibid., p. 98, note.

[94]See Gillette, p. 136. A list of doctrinal circular letters appears in Clark, app. 2, pp. 162-63.

[95]Printed Minutes, pp. 6-10 [Bound in Collection of Printed Minutes, 1807-1834].

[96]Gillette, pp. 440-46.

[97]Ibid., p. 97. Other associations already existed in Charleston, S.C. (1751) and Sandy Creek, N.C. (1758). The latter was a

Samuel Jones was ordered to write to Warren, Rhode Island and Morgan Edwards, to Ketockton, Virginia. The letter by Jones, cited above, expressed the Association's best wishes for a successful organizational meeting at Warren the following year, 1767. In it the P.B.A. affirmed its experience of the positive usefulness of an association.[98]

Growth among Baptists of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

Baptists initially made a very modest appearance on the colonial scene. Edwin S. Gaustad, in his Religious Atlas, plots a graph of the numerical growth of Baptist churches from 1660 to 1780 (see fig. 1). From a mere group of four churches in 1660, to slightly over a score by the turn of that century, Baptists developed into ninety-six churches by 1740, and some 457 by 1780.[99] In a diagram comparing all Protestant denominations, Gaustad offers another picture of Baptists as the fastest growing Protestant group in the latter half of the eighteenth century. By 1800 the Baptists were the largest religious group in the new nation, with twice as many adherents as the next largest, the Congregationalists. By 1820 Methodists matched them in numbers, their increase due largely to the expanded

---

Separate Baptist group. The P.B.A. maintained correspondence with Charleston from 1774 when that Association proposed a plan for the establishment of a Baptist College [Rhode Island College, the future Brown University] (see Gillette, p. 135).

[98]For a citation from this letter see below, p. 194.

[99]Edwin S. Gaustad, Historical Atlas of Religion in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), figs. 3 to 6, pp. 3-4.

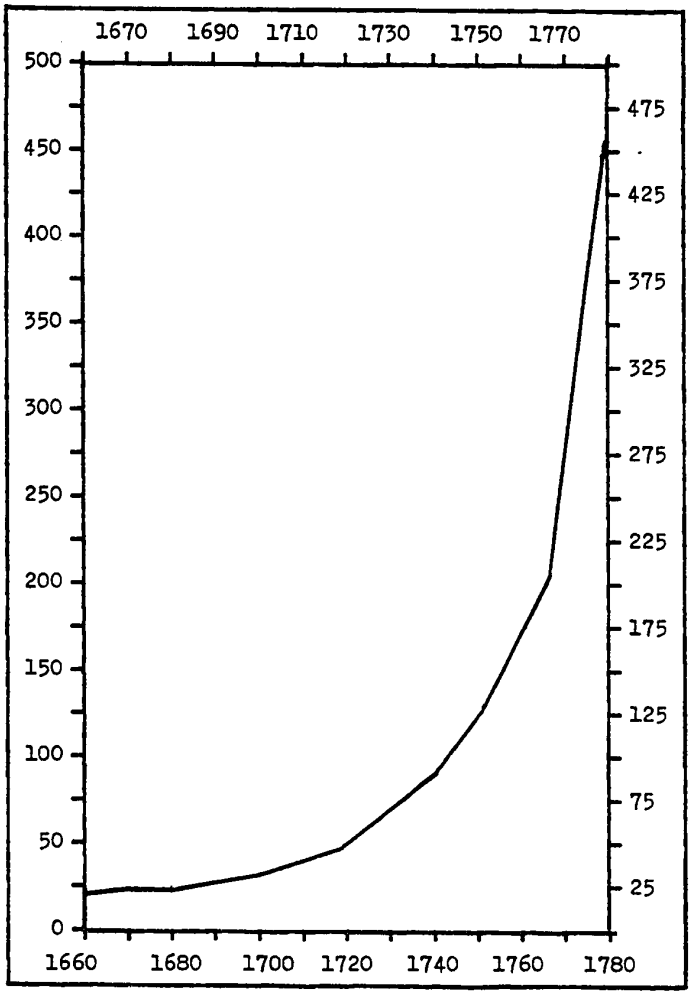

Fig. 1. Growth in Number of Baptist Churches in America: 1660-1780[100]

---

[100]SOURCE: Gaustad, Historical Atlas, fig. 11, p. 12. (An approximation.)

frontier and the work of circuit rider preachers in virtually every settlement. Around 1830 Methodists had outdistanced Baptists in the number of churches, around 2700 churches.[101]

In 1776 Baptists numbered one out of every 264 Americans. By 1800, they were one in fifty-three.[102] The main reason for such expansion was the thrust of the awakenings.[103] Additonal factors that explain the increase were the patriotic image of Baptists in the War of Revolution which gave them a better public image, the great sociological, ecclesiological and theological adaptability to frontier life, and especially their sturdy invididualism, sense of independence, and local participation that embodied the spirit of the times.[104]

The general rate of growth among American Baptists was reflected in the P.B.A. During the course of its first one hundred years, the Association had at least seventy-nine different member churches.[105] The extent of the territory covered by the P.B.A. fluctuated (see fig. 2). Only thirty-nine churches were part of the

---

[101]Ibid., figs. 7 and 31, pp. 5 and 43.

[102]Vedder, Short History, p. 319.

[103]See discussion about evangelicalism and Separate Baptists, above, pp. 113-17, 119-27.

[104]William W. Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840, pp. 110-14, cited by Shurden, p. 41, n. 125.

[105]Spencer listed churches (pp. 171-73).

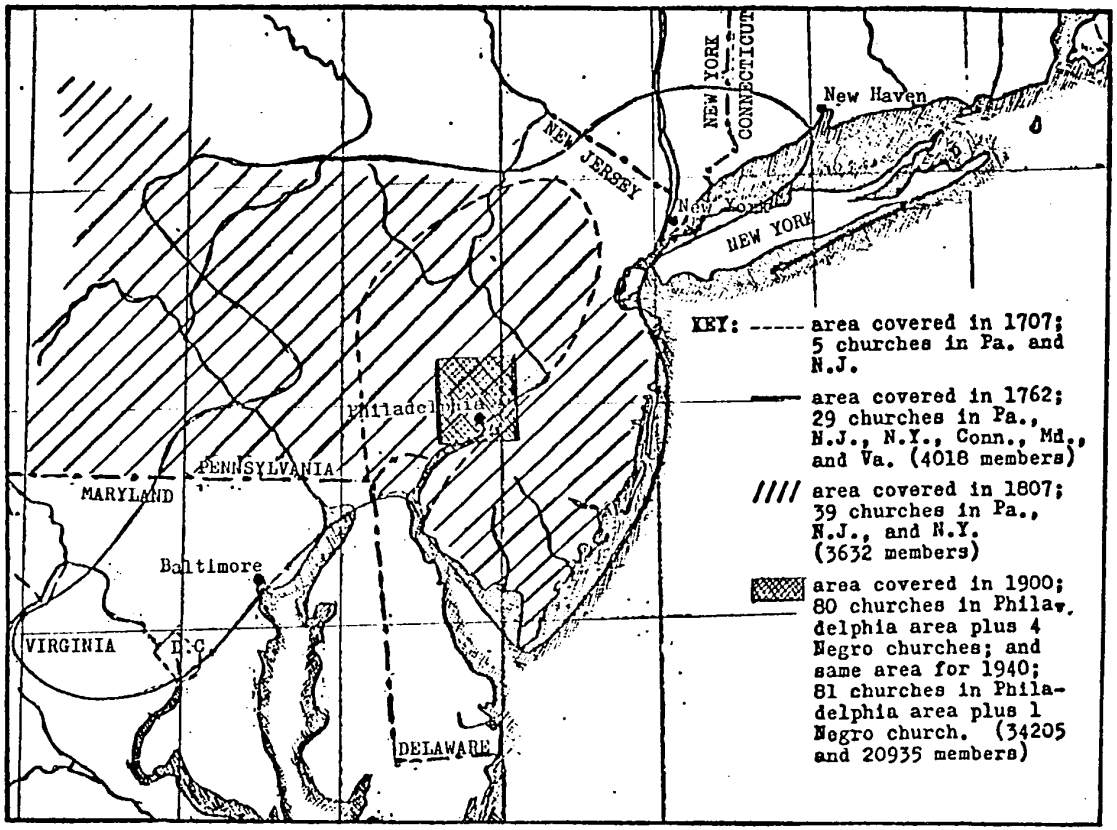

Fig. 2. Territory of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

---

[106]SOURCE: An adaptation of Torbet, Social History, p. 31, based on statistics from Gillette. (An approximation.)

Association in 1807; but many others had been dismissed in order to join other associations.[107]

During the later half of the eighteenth century, additonal associations served Baptist needs in the South, in New England, and in the middle colonies. Torbet states that by 1800, forty-eight such associations existed in the country, thirteen in the southern states, and eight beyond the Alleghenies, with six in Kentucky alone.[108] The P.B.A., however, continued to exercise a disproportionate influence. During the first one hundred years of its existence, it served as a "guiding force in a fluid polity which tended to make relatively easy the necessary adjustments to changing conditions."[109]

---

[107]P.B.A. churches joined the following associations: Ketockton, Va. (1766); New York (1791); Warwick, N.Y. (1791); Baltimore, Md. (1792); Central Union, N.Y. (1810); and New Jersey (1811), and others.

[108]Torbet, History, p. 232; Taylor (pp. 2-17) treats early associations by regions: New England, Middle Colonies, the South, and the West.

[109]John P. Gates, "The Association as it Affected Baptist Polity in Colonial America," Chronicle 6 (January 1943):31.

For a study of the influences of the P.B.A. on later associations see Clark, passim. He discusses the affect of the association on those to the East: Warren; to the South: Charleston, Ketockton, and Kehukee; and to the West: Elkhorn and Salem on the Kentucky frontier.

Shurden (pp. 23-24) mentions the reasons for the P.B.A.'s great influence: its central location and great, early solidarity; its very able leaders (e.g., Oliver Hart and James Manning); the religious insignificance of the General Baptists; the eventual merger of Separates and Regulars in Va. and Pa.; the general theological climate of Calvinism due to the Awakening; and the fact that it was the first association among groups not always formally constituted as churches.

Main Concerns and Functions of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

The minutes of the P.B.A. during the eighteenth century reflect the Association's major concerns, and also show in what capacities the Association served its individual and church members. The concerns of the Association were for a sound ministry, for education, for evangelizing of its members, and for denominational solidarity. The P.B.A., moreover, developed associational theory in the eighteenth century. It also grappled with social and political issues. The most significant political issue was the struggle for religious liberty for Baptists in New England. The P.B.A. joined with the Warren and Charleston Associations to lobby for a redress of grievances in the Continental Congress. Isaac Backus joined a member of the Philadelphia group in presenting the cause. Other social questions were temperance, slavery, and woman's suffrage.[110] Of course, Baptists supported the revolutionary cause in the War for Independence.[111]

---

[110] See especially the analysis by Torbet, Social History, part 1. Torbet deals with Baptist struggles for religious liberty, their contribution toward education, the liquor problem, the Catholic issue, and the slavery question (pp. 36-113). The work deals with two periods: 1707-1865 and 1865-1940.

On slavery issue see Gillette, 89:247 and 75:307; also Spencer, p. 146. On temperance, Gillette, pp. 5; 88:239, and Spencer, p. 142. On women's suffrage, Spencer, p. 93. On the New England struggle for religous freedom see Gillette, 70:115-16 and 74:141.

[111] American, as well as English, Baptists overwhelmingly opposed the Royalist side in the War of Independence.

A notable exception was Morgan Edwards, whose private convictions as a Tory brought him some disgrace among fellow Baptists (Torbet, History, p. 226). In 1778 the P.B.A. ordered its funds

A review of the activities of the P.B.A. will serve a double purpose. First, it will suggest areas to be considered in greater depth for an interpretation of the Philadelphia tradition of church and church authority. Thus, the focus for succeeding chapters will be served by a look at the life of the Association. Second, such an overview will provide a good picture of the nature of a Baptist association in the eighteenth century, and of the P.B.A.'s life in particular.

A Concern for a Sound Ministry

Like their British forebears, the Regular Baptists of the P.B.A., from the outset, were extremely concerned about the ministry and about the churches in need of preachers.[112] The very first year of the Association, it was agreed:

> . . . , that a person that is a stranger, that has neither letter of recommendation, nor is known to be a person gifted, and of a good conversation, shall not be admitted to preach, nor be entertained as a member in any of the baptized congregations in communion with each other.[113]

---

transferred to the "Continental fund" (Gillette, pp. 159, 163); and by General Washington's order of 1780, the Baptist College in Rhode Island was voluntarily transformed into a hospital for French wounded (W. Green to James Manning, 2 June 1780, Providence, James Manning Collection, p. 1). Isaac Backus mentioned reasons why Baptists supported the war (History, 2:197-98): (1) Baptists had little hope in siding with Anglicans who opposed them; (2) they had suffered for the same issues supporting revolution; and (3) they accepted justified, armed resistance.

[112]For discussions about the P.B.A.'s value for the ministry see the following: Clark, chap 2, pp. 31-58; Shurden, pp. 182-99; Ehren, p. 119.

[113]Gillette, 7:25.

The Association sometimes reprimanded a member for his disorderly scandalous conduct, warned churches against others, and "disowned" even ministers for immoral conduct or dangerous views.[114] Beginning around 1781, the dangerous ideas of universal salvation were countered by decisive leadership from the P.B.A.[115]

The P.B.A. supplied needy member churches and scattered Baptist families with the ministries of ordained preachers. The call to respond to the needs of Baptists at Great Valley and at Piscataqua was given at the 1730 session. The minutes of 1755 and 1756 offer representative exhortations from the Association:

> . . . that you might be free to spare your ministers some time to supply those who would otherwise be altogether destitute. . .

---

[114]The following ministers were "disowned" by the P.B.A. as recorded in Gillette: John Cooper (p. 422); Joseph Flood (p. 379); Duncan M'Clean (p. 227); Robert Morris (p. 173); John Rutter (p. 439); Artist Seagrave (p. 247); Joseph Stephens (p. 293); Elhanan Winchester (p. 174); and William Worth (p. 247).

It is interesting to note that the censures from the Association arose ca. 1731. The main question of orthodoxy was universal salvation.

[115]On universal salvation, and its relationship to General Baptist thought, see above, p. 52, n. 38. One of the major proponents of universalist views among Baptists was the Philadelphia minister, the Rev. Elhanan Winchester (See Spencer, pp. 128, 130-34; also Backus, History, 2:439-443).

Universalist views disrupted churches of the P.B.A. in Lower Dublin, Hopewell, and Philadelphia. The Association backed those opposed to universalist views in 1781. The controversy led to associational letters from the New York Association, Oct. 5, 1790, and from the P.B.A. Samuel Jones wrote the letter, printed in the minutes for 1790 (Gillette, pp. 174, 257-60). Among those condemned for universalist views were Winchester, Duncan M'Clean, Mr. Worth and Artist Seagreaves of Pittsgrove, Nicholas Cox, and Joseph Stephens of Upper Freehold (Gillette, pp. 174, 237, 227, 256, 293).

> Encourage and strengthen the hand of your ministers, and freely consent to their visiting vacant places, that others may share the blessings of the gospel of peace with you . . .[116]

In 1745 ministers were sent to Bethlehem, to assist at the ordination of Thomas Curtis, and to Cranberry, to help constitute that group a church on November 1, 1745.[117] Within ten years the Association began to mention specific churches to be supplied for the forthcoming year. That practice continued, almost without exception, for the remaining years of the eighteenth century.

The encouragement of vocations was another way the P.B.A. developed a sound ministry for the future. As early as 1722 the Association encouraged its members:

> . . . to make inquiry among themselves, if they have any young persons hopeful for the ministry, and inclinable for learning; and if they have, to give notice of it to Mr. Abel Morgan before the first of November, that he might recommend such to the academy on Mr. Hollis, his account.[118]

The fostering of ministerial vocations among churches appears as a recurring theme.[119] According to Samuel Jones, the P.B.A., soon after the Charleston Association had done the same, established a "fund for the education of young men promising for the gospel ministry."[120] Numerous candidates were helped in their education for the

---

[116]Gillette, pp. 72-73; also p. 31.

[117]Ibid., p. 49.

[118]Ibid., pp. 27, 81-82.

[119]See Gillette for the following years: 22:27; 31:32; 32:33; 40:42; 69:110; 89:246; 1800:350; and 1803:381.

[120]Jones, "A Century Sermon," in Gillette, p. 465, note.

ministry.[121] Prior to the education fund of 1789, money was taken from a general Association fund, begun in 1767, or from private bequests. The persons were required to return the money if they did not persevere for the ministry. By 1803, help was "not to exceed one year."[122]

In 1778 the P.B.A. established another fund and assigned it strictly for preaching.[123] It assisted in the Association's work of evangelism undertaken by men like Morgan Edwards and Jahn Gano, appointed evangelists of the P.B.A.

The Association encouraged strict standards for the ministry. In 1729 the P.B.A. counselled the church in Philadelphia against accepting ministers who did not themselves hold to laying on of hands for administering baptism. This advice shows the stand taken by Baptists of the P.B.A. on the practice of laying on of hands. It is also one of the best instances of advice given on the basis of Scripture and the Confession of Faith:

> Query from the church at Philadelphia. Suppose a gifted brother, who is esteemed an orderly minister by or among those that are against the laying on of hands in any respect, should happen to come among our church; whether we may allow such an

---

[121] Among those mentioned by Gillette were the following: Mr. Charles Thompson (1767 and 1768); Thomas Ustick (1769); Ebenezer David (1771); Thomas Gier and Peter Smith (1773); the Rev. Burgess Allison (1774 and 1776); Enoch Morgan and James Darrah (1776); Silas Walton (1789 and 1790); David Stout (1791); Thomas Jones (1800); and Samuel B. Harris (1804). See Gillette, 67:101 and 68:104; 69:109; 71:119; 73:131; 74:142 and 76:155; 89:246 and 90:254; 91:271; 1800: 350; and 1804:396.

[122] Gillette, p. 381.19.

[123] Ibid., p. 159.6.

> one to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper or no?
>
> Answered in the negative; because it is contrary to the rule of God's word: see Acts xiii.2,3; and xiv.23: compared with Titus i.5; 1 Tim. iv.14; from which prescribed rules we dare not swerve. We also refer to the Confession of faith, chap. xxvii, sect. 9.[124]

Ordination of deacons and preachers was strictly observed in the P.B.A. A ruling elder, according to advice given in 1767, did not need to have hands lain on him; ordination by "imposition of hands" was left "to the discretion of the churches." But in 1738 the P.B.A. advised that before a ruling elder could dispense ordinances, he had to be ordained:

> Query. Whether a person, ordained by laying on hands, for a ruling elder, who should afterwards be called by the church, by reason of his gifts, to the word and doctrine, must be again ordained by the imposition of hands? Resolved in the affirmative.[125]

While each congregation called forth its ministers, tried them in preaching, and finally ordained them, it was general practice to invite ministers of the P.B.A. to assist at the service. The associational minutes make references to such ordinations, and mention the persons officially sent by the Association. The narratives of the churches also indicate the same.[126] The practice was still in use when

---

[124]Gillette, p. 30; see also the decision of 1744 in Gillette, p. 49.

[125]Gillette, p. 39. Spencer (pp. 91-92) records the ceremony of an ordination of a deacon in Philadelphia in 1763. See also Gillette, pp. 51, 52, 102.

[126]See the ordinations described in the narratives of member churches of the Association. Additional ordinations are mentioned in Gillette: Mr. Thomas Curtis, ordained October 28, 1745, with "Rev. brethren, Nathaniel Jenkins and Jenkin Jones" present (p. 49);

John Gill published his Complete Body of Practical and Doctrinal Divinity.[127]

The P.B.A. was concerned about investigating candidates for the ministry. Several ministers had drawn up a proposal for the examination of ministers, and the Association, in 1723, recommended that the proposal "be duly put into practice."[128] In 1728 the Association offered standards for choosing a ruling elder and, in 1753, advised that prospective preachers be tested by several congregations before ordination.[129]

Surprisingly, while many ministers of the P.B.A. had little outstanding formal education, they valued it for future ministers. Initially Philadelphia Baptists had sent to London to procure suitable, tested ministers. But American Baptists very early showed a bent towards education. During the eighteenth century, education became a major concern of increasing numbers within the P.B.A. As early as

---

Mr. Isaac Skilman, ordained in October, 1772 while the Association was in session, with ministers John Gano, Abel Morgan and Isaac Stelle presiding (p. 124); around 1762 the P.B.A. issued certificates of ordination and good standing, for Rev. David Stutton and Rev. David Thomas (p. 86).

[127]An abridged version of Gill's work was published by a minister of the P.B.A.: Gill's Complete Body of Practical and Doctrinal Divinity: being a System of Evangelical Truths, deduced from the Sacred Scriptures. Abridged by William Staughton, D.D. (Philadelphia: Printed for Delaplaine and Hellings, by B. Graves, 1810), p. 525, par. 5.

[128]Gillette, p. 27.

[129]Ibid., pp. 29, 70.

1716, the Association had set up a library for its ministers; many of the books for it had been a gift of Mr. Thomas Hollis of London.[130]

Interest in Promoting General Education

American Baptists included individuals who were staunch promoters not only for an educated ministry, but also for general education.[131] The desire for education in America had strong religious foundations. Puritans, who fostered a covenant, or federal, theology, hoped for an intelligent, voluntary response from individuals covenanting themselves as congregations and citizens. The very style

---

[130]Gillette, pp. 81-82. For initial correspondence between the P.B.A. and London Particular Baptist ministers for Aug. 12, 1714, July 20, 1715, Sept. 13 and 24, 1717, and related return correspondence, see Crosby, 4:162-64, 197-98; also 1:193-96; and Ivimey, 3:127-33.

The Association library was begun with donations from Thomas Hollis of London (Spencer, p. 56; also David A. MacQueen, "Thomas Hollis: Early Baptist Benefactor," Chronicle 6 [April 1943]:75-82). As late as 1760 the P.B.A. appointed members to investigate the whereabouts of these books. In 1761 Morgan Edwards and Isaac Horne became librarian in 1780 until 1794. A group was commissioned to report the status of the library in 1781; minutes from 1780 through 1814 show the Association's interest in its library. A list of books, if it ever existed, was lost or perhaps destroyed by fire.

[131]For an extensive study of the P.B.A. and education see the recent work by William Tolbert Vandever, Jr., "An Educational History of the English and American Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1974). University microfilm no. 75-14,6333.

On the P.B.A.'s affect on education see Clark, chap. 2, pp. 31-58; Jones, "A Century Sermon," p. 464-65, n.; Shurden, pp. 182-99; and Chapman, chap. 5; also Taylor, pp. 55-58; and Torbet, History, pp. 306-8, and Social History, pp. 65-76.

of church order promoted an intellectual tradition.[132] The prevailing attitude among Baptists was that education was advantageous, but certainly not essential, to the proclamation of the gospel.

> The Baptists, as a society, have never considered the higher branches of learning as essential to the gospel ministry, and there is no doubt but the sentiment is perfectly correct. They have, nevertheless, held education in high esteem, as a handmaid to grace, and have always had not a few among them, that ranked pretty high for literary improvement and extensive reading.[133]

There were generally two approaches to education in the P.B.A. Some worked actively for it; others, while not actively opposed to it, remained passive.[134] By contrast, New England Baptists often resisted the idea of education. This may have been because "invaders" from the P.B.A., like Manning, were the prime movers behind both a Baptist College and the highly suspect Warren Association. Perhaps the Separatist stance against the New England Congregationalists also contributed to such an attitude. Most Philadelphia Baptists, however, were open to formal education.

The P.B.A., besides maintaining its Association library, promoted general education in several additional ways. First of all it helped to promote the first Baptist College of Rhode Island, later Brown University. Suggested in 1762 by Morgan Edwards, the Moderator

---

[132] Ahlstrom, Religious History, pp. 130-32. On covenant (federal) theology, see pp. 69-72.

[133] Jones, "A Century Sermon," p. 464, note.

[134] Shurden, pp. 183-84. Among the most active promoters of education were Isaac Eaton, Morgan Edwards, Samuel Jones, James Manning, Hezekiah Smith, Richard Furman, Samuel Stillman, and Burgess Allison.

of the P.B.A., the college was granted its charter in 1764. In its early years it was supported mostly by voluntary contributions gathered with the help of the Philadelphia, Warren and Charleston Associations, with the P.B.A. taking the active lead. James Manning, the influential minister of the P.B.A., who also was instrumental in the establishment of the Warren Association, was the college's first president.[135]

The P.B.A. also fostered general education by establishing and disbursing various funds for education during the eighteenth century. Money gathered from legacies and by subscription helped to educate young men for the ministry and to support Baptist Schools.[136]

---

[135]On the establishment of Rhode Island College see Backus, History, 2:137, 173, esp. 347-49, 494: Whitley, British Baptists, p. 191; also Torbet, History, pp. 307-8; and study by Shurden, pp. 195-98.

[136]P.B.A. educational funds included: (1) The legacy from Mrs. Hubbs; disbursed from 1767 to 1779, with trustees appointed in 1771 (Gillette, p. 119); in 1779 the P.B.A. agreed to turn over the principle to the "Continental Fund" (Ibid., p. 163). (2) A fund suggested for R.I. College in 1764 (Ibid., p. 91) was set up in 1769 (Ibid., p. 109); collections recorded for the years 1774, 1775, and 1782 (Ibid., pp. 142, 149, 181). The interest from this fund was to pay for the salary of Pres. Manning of R.I. College. Morgan Edwards was authorized to solicit funds for the college in 1771; in 1784, William Van Horne solicited funds in the middle states, and William Rogers collected from southern states. (See Manning letters to Van Horne [Jan. 4, 1784], to Rogers [Jan. 9, 1784], and to Edwards [Dec. 31, 1771], James Manning Collection.) (3) A fund for a Grammar School existed in 1792 (Gillette, p. 283) that helped support Samuel Jones's boarding school in Lower Dublin. In 1797 the fund was given over to the trustees of the P.B.A. treasury (Ibid., p. 332). (4) An education fund for candidates for the ministry was set up in 1789, with receipts recorded for 1790 (Ibid., pp. 246, 255). P.B.A. minutes mention loans given in 1789, 1790, 1791 and 1800 (Ibid., pp. 246, 254-55, 271, 350). In 1800 the P.B.A. recommended an annual sermon and collection for this purpose (Ibid., p. 350).

On the use of education funds for individuals see above, p. 158, n. 121.

A third way the P.B.A. promoted education was through the printed word. For the present study it is useful to note some of these. Works published by direction of the Association included catechisms, appearing in 1738, with later editions in 1747, 1761 and 1779.[137] In 1743, by order of the Philadelphia body, Benjamin Franklin published both the Philadelphia Confession and A Short Treatise of Church-Discipline. The first edition of the P.B.A. hymnal appeared in 1788; the third edition, in 1807. In 1746 the Association published a treatise on the vindication of believer's baptism. Abridged versions of Dr. John Gill's exposition of the Old and New Testaments appeared around 1787 and 1807, and his work on the Church was published in 1792. The later Church Discipline of the Association, written by Samuel Jones, was published in 1798.[138] Among the above publications the Confession and Church Disciplines are of paramount importance to this study. To a lesser extent the Catechisms are useful.

Promotion of Missions and Evangelism

Like other American Protestants, Baptists of the P.B.A. did not, for some time, promote an extensive program of

---

[137]The P.B.A. made extensive use of a Keach Catechism, probably published by Benjamin Keach and William Collins as joint authors in 1693 (see WHITLEY: 1-127). On catechisms see Gillette: 38:39, 47:57, 61:83 and 79:163; also bibl. entries below, pp. 779-80.

[138]On confessions see Gillette, 42:46; also 24:27, 27:29, and 35:37; on disciplines, 41:44; also 27:29 and 35:37, on hymnals, 88:239.25 and 1807:440.25; on treatise on baptism, 46:54; on Gill's works on bible and Church, 87:228, 1807:439.24 and 92:282.15; on Jones's discipline, 97:325.14 and 98:334.17.

evangelism.[139] From 1707 to 1799 the Association exercised only periodic, and unorganized efforts to convert heathens. The main aim for most of the eighteenth century had been to sustain churches already established. Only after the full effect of the Great Awakening, and with the appearance of great Baptist foreign missioners of the caliber of the Englishman William Carey and the Americans Adoniram and Ann Judson and Luther Rice, did the P.B.A. begin to respond to the call to evangelize the heathen at home and abroad.[140]

While the organized efforts at missions came late in the century, there were some missionary concerns manifested earlier. These were usually linked to other efforts, like raising funds in the Association, the travels of itinerant preachers, and church extension through the efforts of P.B.A. ministers. A few direct efforts to convert the American Indian did take place, but these were individual efforts.

In 1755, as noted above, Peter Peterson Vanhorn and Benjamin Miller were sent to North Carolina. Their mission was primarily to

---

[139]On the P.B.A. and evangelism see Shurden, pp. 161-81; Torbet, History, pp. 225-27; Jones, "A Century Sermon," p. 463; and Albert L. Vail, The Morning Hour of American Baptist Missions (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907).

[140]Shurden, pp. 163, 170. William Carey (1761-1834), an associate of Andrew Fuller in England, was the first Baptist missioner who helped establish the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. He was an Anglican but became a Baptist convert enroute to India.

Adoniram and Ann Judson, American Congregationalists, converted to Baptist beliefs enroute to Burma, India. They greatly influenced the P.B.A. to become involved in foreign missionary work. Luther Rice, also a Congregationalist convert to Baptist views, promoted missions among Baptist groups and labored in Burma.

correct the views of some General Baptists, and to ordain John Garrard of Virginia; they were not sent out as missioners.[141] The Association established a fund in 1766. It lasted only ten years. Like the fund established in 1778, it was primarily for work among Baptists.[142]

The work of church extension, promoted by spokesmen of the P.B.A., centered upon Baptist converts, not heathens.[143] The evangelists officially assigned by the Association also spent most of their energies among Baptists. According to Shurden, their efforts for evangelism are much overrated by other scholars.[144] Early evangelism

---

[141]Shurden, (pp. 164-65) claims that Torbet (Social History, p. 19) and Baker (p. 10), both following Vail (p. 67), have placed too great an emphasis upon the evangelistic purpose of this 1755 commission from the P.B.A. This writer agrees with Shurden's view.

[142]See Gillette, pp. 97, 159, 283; and Shurden, pp. 167-69.

[143]In 1757 the P.B.A. sent two men to help Bateman's Precincts in Duchess Co., N.Y. constitute a church; in 1765 representatives went with Rev. Noah Hammond to constitute a church at Coram on November 1 (Gillette, pp. 75, 94-95). Oliver Hart travelled to Georgia in 1773 to help Francis Pelot constitute a church (Oliver Hart to James Manning, 5 November 1773, James Manning Collection).

[144]Compare Shurden, pp. 168-69 to Vail, p. 73. See Gillette, pp. 119, 124, 130, 135. Morgan Edwards was assigned evangelist of the P.B.A. in 1771; John Gano replaced in 1773, and was the last appointed by the P.B.A. William Rogers of Phila. mentions the ordination of Mr. Richard Jones "as an Evangelist" in 1802 (William Rogers to John Rippon, 28 February 1802, Philadelphia, in Rippon, 4:1110). The P.B.A. referred a request from Marcus Hook Church for appointed evangelists to the Mission Society:

"Query from the church at Marcus Hook, viz. Could not some plan be adopted by the Association to send one or more evangelical teachers to the many places destitute of a preached gospel. Answer. The Association, for particular reasons, think it proper to refer the subject to the Mission Society." (Printed minutes, 1812, p. 7.18).

in the P.B.A. was virtually all ad intra. A few ad extra missionary efforts, by individuals, did take place before 1799. The best example was Brother David Jones. He asked for the Association's help in 1772 to support a translator for his work among Indians on the western frontier.[145] Examples of such external missionary effort, however, are very few.

The concerted effort for evangelism outside the P.B.A.'s own churches came around 1799. It was the result of two factors: the influence of the Great Awakening, and the effectiveness of foreign missioners.[146] The openness to foreign and domestic missions was further aided by the theory supplied in the teachings of Andrew Fuller.[147] The evangelism among Baptists, however, moved them towards a different style of affiliation, the society. In so doing, their work for missions eventually contributed towards the undermining of a theoretical basis for ecclesial representation in associations.

A consideration of the transitional states from associational to societal methods of connectionalism will take the study temporarily beyond its limit of 1814. This is necessary in order to appreciate more fully the impact of missionary cooperative efforts among Baptists of the P.B.A. Two areas for consideration are the rise of the missionary societies and the shift from associations to societies.

---

[145]Gillette, p. 124.

[146]Shurden, p. 170.

[147]On Fuller see above, pp. 117-18.

Rise of Missionary Societies

From 1798 to 1820, sometimes called the Second Awakening in America, a large number of Protestant voluntary mission societies appeared, both state and local.[148] American Baptists were inspired by the example of other Protestants, and by the example of British Baptists supporting William Carey's work in India. The latter had established the English Particular Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. Dr. William Staughton, a prominent Baptist minister of Philadelphia, was present on the occasion of its formation. An Englishman by birth and education, he maintained contact with missionary efforts of his countrymen abroad.[149]

The news of the great missionary work of the Judsons, and the travels of Luther Rice among Baptists in America, helped to promote Baptist mission societies that eventually competed with the associations for membership. The societies began in New England with the establishment of the Massachusetts Domestic Missionary Society in 1802. From the outset this was an organization relying solely upon voluntary financial contributions. It had no direct relationship to churches. It was, moreover, interdenominational in character; anyone paying membership dues could support its work. Its main purpose was to evangelize the Indians and frontiersmen.[150]

---

[148]Dillenberger-Welch, pp. 169, 177; also Torbet, History, p. 245.

[149]Torbet, History, pp. 247-48.

[150]Torbet, History, pp. 246-47; also his Social History, pp. 24-27.

In 1804 the Maine Baptist Missionary Society appeared. By that time the P.B.A. had also succeeded in efforts for its own home mission society. The plan for such an organization had been proposed as early as 1800. Collections for missionary work were endorsed two years later. In 1803, the Association approved the plan for the society:

> 21. The plan of a missionary society was read, and with some alteration approved and recommended. It is also recommended that sermons be preached for the education and mission funds.[151]

In 1812, because of the news of the effective work of the Judsons, and through the personal presence of Luther Rice in America, the P.B.A. recommended the formation of its own foreign mission society, to be called Philadelphia Baptist Society for Foreign Missions.[152]

Two years later, the consolidation of all Baptist missionary efforts took place on a national scale. The first convention gathered by mutual consent of Baptist associations in May of 1814. It met in Philadelphia, probably out of deference to that city's place in Baptist history. Officially called The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for the Foreign Missions, the group held its meetings every three years. Thus it became known popularly as The Triennial Convention.[153]

---

[151] Gillette, p. 381.21; also 350.18, 370.17. See Spencer, pp. 155-56.

[152] Printed Minutes, 1812, p. 6, n. 18.

[153] Torbet, History, pp. 249-50.

At first the Triennial Convention retained membership on a representational basis, with no more than two delegates from each local and state mission society, or from any group contributing one hundred dollars a year to the missionary fund of the convention. Eventually the basis of membership shifted, particularly in the North. What had been largely a membership representative of churches became by degrees primarily a membership based upon subscriptions.[154]

Society Method Overtakes Association Method

With the rise of such missionary societies, American Baptists witnessed the emergence of a new style of connectionalism, the society method. Two views of church polity were evident within the Triennial Convention, the convention (or association) model and the society model. Some sought to establish a convention leadership for all phases of denominational life and activities thus continuing the pattern of eighteenth century associations among a larger membership. Others hoped to prevent such a centralized polity that might endanger the autonomy of local churches. They preferred that the society be established for one purpose only, to promote missions.

From 1814 until 1820, those favoring unity for action according to an associational pattern sought to include within the convention the development of home missions and educational activities. But gradually a very significant shift took place. The Separatist inclination towards an individualism, the organizational ambivalence

---

[154]Ibid., p. 250.

of a revivalistic piety and the workable experience of the voluntary society method all contributed to a shift toward a societal model in American Baptist polity.[155]

Compared to the associational church order, societies like the Triennial Convention differed in two ways, in the basis of membership, and in the purpose.

Associations had established a viable link among churches, and an ecclesiastical bond between churches and the associations. The association had representatives duly sent as messengers from each Baptist church. Societies, by contrast, enlisted constituents on the basis of paid membership. Any person, or group, contributing funds to the missionary effort was included. According to the original constitution each local and state mission society, and each association, could send no more than two delegates. A decisive shift had taken place in church affiliation. Churches were not necessarily represented directly at the Triennial Convention. In effect, the convention was no longer a representative forum enabling churches to deal with important issues. The base of influence shifted to voluntary mission societies.

The second great difference between associations and societies was their respective purposes. Societies existed for the one goal that brought them into existence. Thus the Triennial Convention was initiated at first to promote foreign missions. The concerns were not as inclusive as those of the association, nor as provincial. The

---

[155]Ibid., p. 252-53.

associations, therefore, continued to function and meet the needs of member churches. But gradually they became less energetic than the P.B.A. of the previous century. Some of their major concerns about ministry came under the umbrella of general funding of missionary works. Associations became less important areas for Baptists settling their differences among themselves. They became occasions for meeting to inspire one another, and tended to be little else.

By the time the Southern Baptist Convention formed around 1845, the bases for membership in the Triennial Convention in the North had shifted away from churches as such. This was less true in the South. The Southern Baptist Convention included church membership. Its northern counterpart, however, evolved into various societies that were eventually combined to form the Northern Baptist Convention in 1910.[156] Meanwhile the associations, including the P.B.A., continued to exist. However, their original vigor to affect the conditions in their churches was considerably curtailed.

---

[156]Robert A. Baker, Relations between Northern and Southern Baptists (Fort Worth, Texas: Seminary Hill Press, 1948), chaps. 1, 2, 5 and 10; and William W. Barnes, The Southern Baptist Convention: A Study in the Development of Ecclesiology (Fort Worth, Texas: Seminary Hill Press, 1934), pp. 12ff, 33ff, both works cited by Taylor, p. 160.

". . . The desire to solve these problems [of efficient operation among three societies: Home and Foreign Mission Societies, and Publication Society] led to the formation of the [Triennial] Convention."

". . . It failed because of the division over the issue of slavery. But it laid the foundation for later separate organizations both in the South and the North. . ." (Robert L. Carlberg, "The Development of Centralizing Tendencies in the Northern Baptist Convention. 1970-1946" [M.Th. thesis, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947], p. 76).

By stages the associational pattern for national affiliation was superceded by the societal pattern.[157] This happened without any "appeal to biblical precept, theological doctrine or historic Baptist principle."[158] Combined with other factors of the early nineteenth century, the emergence of voluntary societies contributed to the spirit of exaggerated individualism among Baptist churches. Especially in the North, the principle of representation of churches in associations was undermined when the organized approach to evangelism became dependent upon voluntary societies.

The value of associations for a genuine Baptist polity is a basic issue in this study. An important question that arises is: are associations, by their nature, essential to the fullest expression of Baptist life today? Or can the fundamental principle of interdependence and representative mutual edification which associations embodied in the eighteenth century become manifest in a different way today? Granted that the society method emerged without a conscious theology to support it, can one still interpret the development of Baptist polity in such a way that the shift from associational to societal models remains valid within an authentic Philadelphia tradition of church authority and associations?

The discussion of evangelism and of the emergence of missionary societies of necessity extended beyond the chronological limits of this study (eighteenth century P.B.A.). However, the context provided

---

[157]See Hudson, "Stumbling into Disorder," pp. 45-71.

[158]Ibid., p. 59.

in the above is important to this dissertation. It indicates, together with other factors contributing to the erosion of a theological basis for associations, significant reasons for the gradual decline of the connectionalism epitomized by the eighteenth century P.B.A.

What remains to be discussed in the immediate context of the eighteenth century P.B.A. are the several attempts at national unity, the P.B.A.'s role in promoting denominational solidarity, and its development of the theory of associations. It is particularly the last two sections that will provide an orientation to the study of P.B.A. sources on church authority and associations.

Unsuccessful Plans for National Unity

In effect the P.B.A. functioned as a "national body" in its early life.[159] Despite the differing approaches to methods of church polity, Baptists of the P.B.A. developed a national consciousness. This was in keeping with the secular, political spirit of republican democracy emerging in the United States. Later on, during the early decades of the nineteenth century, many Protestant denominations organized themselves along national lines.[160] Baptists, however, despite various plans proposed, never developed a similar type of ecclesiastical national organization.[161]

---

[159]Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," p. 31.

[160]Torbet, History, pp. 250-51.

[161]On plans for national organizations see Torbet, Social History, pp. 21-22; Clark, pp. 107-124; Taylor, pp. 18-26; and Shurden, pp. 221-23.

The Philadelphia Plan

The earliest hint that the P.B.A. inclined toward a union among Baptists appeared in its minutes for 1765. When the Association granted permission to three member churches to join the Ketockton Association, it set down conditions:

> 6. Agreed, that the churches in Virginia have our leave to form themselves into an Association, provided they go on the same plan, and hold union with us.[162]

The new Association, the fifth in the nation, did maintain continued correspondence with the P.B.A. The following year, the Philadelphia group again expressed its wishes, this time much more directly. In its letter of best wishes to the group forming the Warren Association in 1767, the P.B.A. wrote:

> . . . For, as particular members are collected together and united in one body, which we call a particular church to answer those ends and purposes which could not be accomplished by any single member, so a collection and union of churches into one associational body may easily be conceived capable of answering those still greater purposes which any particular church could not be equal to. And by the same reason, a union of associations will still increase the body in weight and strength and make it good that a threefold cord is not easily broken.[163]

Apparently nothing came of this suggestion. The P.B.A. was to try again some thirty years later.

---

[162] Gillette, p. 95. (Italics mine.) The churches dismissed were Ketockton (founded 1751), Opekon (founded 1752) and Smith's Creek (founded 1756); a fourth church was also a charter member (see Starbird, p. 11; and Benedict, p. 669). The Ketockton Association was involved in the merger between Regulars and Separates of Virginia in 1787 (see Gillette, pp. 233, 227.3).

[163] P.B.A. to Warren (see A1638-1705). (Italics mine.)

The Plan of Morgan Edwards

Around 1770, Morgan Edwards offered a suggestion for a national organization of Baptists, centered in Philadelphia.[164] Seemingly he had an inclination towards centralized polity from his background as a devout Anglican. Nevertheless, as an energetic leader in the P.B.A., he remained faithful to Baptist convictions. Actually his plan was not novel; it really repeated the wishes of the P.B.A., except Edwards stressed that Philadelphia should be the center of the national group. He also suggested a national fund to support the work of a Baptist "Evangelist."[165]

The plan met with very little support, even from the P.B.A. or from Edwards's own church. There were several reasons for this. Edwards was not the best spokesman; he lost a great following because of his siding with the crown during the War of Revolution. His plan, moreover, received limited circulation; only a few copies of his Materials were printed. The felt need was also not sufficiently great because (1) Edwards's plan was essentially that of the P.B.A. and Baptist associations already maintained an informal affiliation through their exchange of messengers and correspondence, (2) Baptists were already cooperating in their fight for religious liberty in New England, and (3) they were united in their support of the Baptist College in Rhode Island. For all the above reasons, from actual

---

[164]Morgan Edwards, Materials Towards a History of the American Baptists, vol. 1, on Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: 1770, advertisement, pp. iv-v. (Hereafter: Materials on Pennsylvania.)

[165]Ibid., 1:ii, nos. 1-2.

experiences of Baptists joined together, the plan probably seemed largely superfluous. Finally, attention was diverted and communications temporarily disrupted during the War of Revolution. In the interim Edwards's plan could scarcely have been implemented even if approved.

The Virginia General Committee

Associations in Virginia managed to form a general committee that eventually incorporated groups from the Carolina and Kentucky. Though this committee never became a national body it was the only successful, formally organized Baptist body of the eighteenth century that involved several associations.[166]

Initially composed of Separate Baptists only, the Committee included four delegates from four different associations in eastern Virginia gathered to keep one another informed. Once Virginia's Plan of Union was developed, Regular Baptists cooperated.[167] The general committee functioned as an effective organization from 1783 until 1799.

The Warren Proposal

Once New Englanders had recognized the value of associations in the fight for religious liberty, they proposed a Continental Association in 1775. Its purpose, as Warren suggested, was to deal with

---

[166]Starbird, pp. 61-62.

[167]Gillette, p. 233; see discussion above, pp. 122-23.

the struggle for religious freedom. The plan never materialized.[168] Perhaps its purpose, namely, the mutual support for Baptists in the fight for religious toleration, was misunderstood by former New Englanders who had moved to southern colonies to flee from the oppression of ecclesiastical organizations.

The Second Philadelphia Plan

When the Baptists became increasingly interested in missions, the P.B.A. again called for denominational unity. In 1799, it asked other associations for reactions to its proposal:

> 21. Apprehensive that many advantages may result from a general conference, composed of one or more members from each Association, to be held every one, two, or three years, as may seem most subservient to the general interests of our Lord's kingdom; this Association respectfully invites the different Associations in the United States to favor them with their views on the subject.[169]

Within the year, only three associations had responded to the P.B.A.'s proposal for a general conference. The Association, nevertheless, went ahead with plans and set up a committee.[170] That same year, 1800, the P.B.A. began plans to form a missionary society of its own.[171]

By 1802 it became clear that the proposal was "not likely to be accomplished."[172] The Philadelphia plan for a general conference

---

[168]Taylor, pp. 19-20; Printed Minutes for Warren, 1775, p. 6.8.

[169]Gillette, p. 343.21.

[170]Ibid., p. 349.13.

[171]Ibid., p. 350.18.

[172]Ibid., p. 370.15.

had failed. Perhaps the failure was due mostly to vagueness about its purpose and about its authority. The times for meeting were also not firm. The plan, moreover, did not include the use of messengers to explain correspondence. Much of the energies at that time had to be devoted to political union, with little time left to grapple with religious connectionalism. Many, in any event, were still suspicious of ecclesiastical organizations that could threaten local church rights.[173]

Another reason why the P.B.A. plan failed was the political situation. The latter had provided an experience of Christians surviving on their own. During the war years Baptists had become accustomed to proceeding independently of other groups. As the political debate over the United States Constitution made clear, many Americans had become fearful of any centralized power, even in civil government. Most Baptists voted against the adoption of the Constitution.[174]

In place of its aborted plan for a general conference, the P.B.A. set up its own home mission society and its Committee of Correspondence. An extended plan of the latter Committee was included in the minutes of proceedings.[175] General committees of correspondence were already in existence. The Virginia committee was such a group.

---

[173]Shurden, p. 223; Clark, p. 118.

[174]Roman Catholics were also infected by this spirit of individualism and began to insist upon the rights of local parishes, e.g. in Norfolk (see discussion of Roman Catholics and the new nation in Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 126-28). On the debate about the U.S. Constitution see above, p. 133.

[175]Gillette, pp. 370.19, 371.

Committees of this type, even if only organized by an individual association, seemed to be all that Baptists needed.

Despite various suggestions for a national organization, no eighteenth century plan had any lasting effect. Most were not even begun. The only exception was the Virginia General Committee which was not really national. The Committee of Correspondence of the P.B.A. was a local effort to remain informed through correspondence.

In the absence of any effective plan for Baptist national unity the associational method of affiliation eventually gave way to the society method (noted above). As Winthrop Hudson has shown, conflicting points of view in the Trienniel Convention eventually led to the adoption of a connectionalism that lost contact with Baptist churches especially in the North.[176]

The P.B.A. failed in its efforts at national unity. Nonetheless, the Association in the eighteenth century was responsible for the development of a theory that could have justified the associational method applied to a national organization of Baptists. It will be helpful for this study of the P.B.A.'s view of church authority and associations to indicate below the chronological developments of that theory. First, however, the P.B.A.'s promotion of denominational solidarity is discussed, a role that has implications for this study of church authority among Philadelphia Baptists.

---

[176]Hudson, "Stumbling into Disorder," p. 71 and passim.

The Promotion of Denominational Solidarity

Besides its concern for the ministry, for education, and for evangelism, and besides dealing with various political and social issues, the P.B.A. annually took decisive action. In so doing, the Association virtually sustained a denominational unity.[177] It functioned in ways that touched upon the organization of the Association, legislation for the churches, judicial decisions about complaints and problems, and administrative details needed to promote cooperative efforts.[178]

In a fluid polity, the P.B.A. combined aspects of previous British associations with adaptations to its environment. Among its proceedings of a legislative nature were decisions about church polity, church worship, and the proper church discipline of members.[179] At times the Association's advice took on the character of judicial pronouncements. It decided doctrinal questions and set up ordination procedures.[180]

The P.B.A. exercised a real impact upon the denomination as a whole. It set definite trends, like the orientation in theology, and the customs in church order. To some extent, even a great extent, the

---

[177]On the P.B.A.'s role in fostering denominational unity see Shurden, pp. 216-28; also Clark, chap. 4, pp. 95-125.

[178]These four categories (organizational, legislative, judicial, and administrative functions) were developed by Starbird, chap. 3, pp. 19-45. Starbird's analysis was employed by G. P. Albaugh, "The Function of the Canadian Baptist Association," address to the Baptist Convention, June 1956, pp. 5-13 (Mimeographed).

[179]Starbird, pp. 36-41.

[180]Ibid., pp. 28-36.

Association created public opinion. Its collective, greater wisdom, and its relative freedom from local interests and prejudices, increased the probability for accuracy and justice in its decisions. The P.B.A.'s decisions thus had a real, moral impact upon member churches and individuals in the Association.

Apparently none of the decisions were thought to have the stamp of divine approval upon them. The Association was considered simply a better means collectively to arrive at the best way for Baptists to act as a group. Responses were usually given to specific queries from churches; these were always seen as advisory. But when the advice was accepted, as usually happened, the P.B.A. in effect took on a decisive role as lawmaker and judge. Lacking coercive power to force its decisions upon members, the Association nonetheless exercised in practice a decisive moral persuasion over individuals and churches.

Whether such moral influence over churches can in any sense be understood as church-power is one of the questions of this work. Hudson makes a distinction between those associational activities "external," and those "internal," to the life of the individual churches.[181] The functions that touched the internal life of a church revolved about issues of ordination, church membership, or church censure. As Hudson suggests, some of the key notions to be investigated are "church-power," and "censure," and the meaning of

---

[181]Hudson, "Associational Principle," p. 15.

the association's right to "impose" its decisions on its members.[182]

What precisely was the nature of the P.B.A.'s actions influencing the internal life of the churches? Was such power and advice properly assumed? Did it mean, in any sense at all, an authority from Christ over the churches? This study, in probing the fundamental question of the authority of an association, takes up the issue of "church-power" and its relationship to the association.

Bases for Advice of the Association

Searching for ways to uncover the beliefs of Baptists within the P.B.A., one can look to the actual decisions given by the Association, and investigate the bases for such decisions. The Association grounded its responses to various questions fundamentally in the Scriptures; it also appealed to the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, to Church Disciplines, to previous precedents, and to arguments that would appeal to reasonable men.

By exploring these bases used for advice, especially the place of Scripture in the Philadelphia tradition, it is possible to uncover from the sources certain principles operative in the P.B.A.'s understanding of church authority. The role of Scripture is especially significant as the discussion in chapter 6 shows. Basic questions that touch upon church authority include the following: How do the Scriptures fit into the Philadelphia tradition as a whole? What function did the appeal of the P.B.A. to scriptural evidence play

---

[182]Ibid., pp. 18-20.

among Philadelphia Baptists. How did scriptural authority relate to church authority? What power, or authority, for example, did decisions of the association based on Scripture have over member churches?

Having discussed some of the major concerns of the eighteenth century P.B.A., this study considers the Association's role in the development of the theory of Baptist associationalism in America. A review of the Philadelphia Baptist concern for associational theory points to the basic sources for this study.

THE SOURCES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ASSOCIATIONAL THEORY AMONG PHILADELPHIA BAPTISTS

One of the major contributions of the P.B.A. to American Baptist life was its developing and strengthening of associational theory. That theory came to be expressed in various sources of the Association during the eighteenth century, which sources are basic to this study.[183]

The Plan of the Association of 1707

Each Baptist association's constitutions expressed an underlying theory of association. The original rules of procedure for the P.B.A., if they were ever formulated in 1707, were lost. The Association must have followed the practice of Particular Baptists in England. The General Assembly of Particular Baptists, in 1689, formulated its

---

[183]See Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," chap. 2, pp. 45-52; Hudson, "Associational Principle," pp. 10-23.

rule of procedure, and the historian, Joseph Ivimey, at the turn of the eighteenth century, recorded those rules.[184]

Around 1768, Morgan Edwards cited the actual practice of the P.B.A. He used a narrative of its proceedings recorded in the Association book.[185] Around the same time, James Manning formulated his Sentiments Touching an Association, discussed below. His statements helped other associations adopt plans similar to the P.B.A.[186] The plans of all these associations reveal aspects of associational theory.

The Decisions of 1742

The basic pattern of church life had to be further delineated around the period of the Great Awakening. At that time conditions in America called for renewed attention. Many individuals were unchurched, there was widespread religious pluralism, and Baptists had added churches to their numbers from the initial Separatist converts and the first impact of a new evangelicalism.[187] The P.B.A. responded to the situation in its formal adoption of the Second London Confession and the formulation of its first Discipline.

---

[184] Ivimey, 4:489-90; see 1689 plan in app. B (B120-69).

[185] E, pp. 108-109 (B259-376); also Gillette, 7:25; 27:28, 39:40; and 76:97.

[186] On Manning's Sentiments see below, pp. 195-97. Among the more significant associations mentioned by Hudson were Charleston (founded in 1751) and Warren (1767). See also New Jersey Baptist Association, Printed Minutes for 1812, pp. 4-7.

[187] Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," p. 46; also discussion above on converts from the Awakening, pp. 113-16, 119.

In 1742, as indicated earlier, the P.B.A. officially adopted the Second London Confession of 1677/89.[188] That same year the Association authorized a new Church Discipline:

> A motion was made in the Association for reprinting the Confession of faith, set forth by the elders of baptized congregations, met in London, A.D. 1689, with a short treatise of church discipline, to be annexed to the Confession of faith. Agreed, that the thing was needful and likely to be very useful; . . . . . ; and if it be carried on, that then an addition of two articles be therein inserted: that is to say, concerning singing of psalms in the worship of God, and laying on of hands upon baptized believers. Ordered, also, that the said Mr. Jones and Benjamin Griffith do prepare a short treatise of discipline, to be annexed to the said Confession of faith.[189]

The Philadelphia Confession of 1742

In America the Baptists of the middle colonies, from the beginning, made use of the Second London Confession. The shorter version, in the Keach Confession, was perhaps the first generally used Baptist confession in America. At any rate it provided the basis for deciding a dispute in the church at Middletown, New Jersey, in 1712.[190]

In 1716, Abel Morgan, a Philadelphia Baptist minister, translated the Second London Confession of 1689 into Welsh for his countrymen at Welsh Tract, Jersey. Like Keach before him, Morgan added "An Article relative to Laying on of Hands; Singing Psalms; and Church

---

[188] P (see intro, n. 26); see discussion in chap. 1, pp. 93, 101-2, esp. n. 144, and 107.

[189] Gillette, p. 46.

[190] Gillette, pp. 13-14; also Lumpkin, p. 349.

Covenants." While records of the Welsh Tract Church claim that the Confession was signed at a quarterly meeting of the churches it apparently was never published.[191]

The earliest known reference made by an American Baptist association to a confession occurred in 1724. To a query about the observation of the fourth commandment, keeping holy the Sabbath, the P.B.A. responded:

> We refer to the Confession of faith set forth by the elders and brethren met in London, 1689, and owned by us, chap. 22, sect. 7 and 8.[192]

The wording of this reference to the Confession makes it clear that the P.B.A. had referred to the Second London Confession. Whether this was the Welsh translation by Morgan, or the original English copy (many editions already existed: 1689, 1693, 1699, 1719 and 1920), remains open to question.

The minutes for 1727 and 1735 also make reference to such a Confession used by the P.B.A.[193] Thus the Association, as early as 1724, had "owned" the Second London Confession of 1689. In 1742 the Association ordered its Confession published with the addition of the two articles from the Keach Confession on hymn singing and the laying on of hands. A comparison of these articles with the Keach Confession

---

[191]Lumpkin, p. 349.

[192]Gillette, 24:27. (Italics mine.)

[193]Ibid., 27:29 and 35:39.

shows clearly that they were taken verbatim from the Keach text.[194]

In the following year the Association's order was executed. Benjamin Franklin published the Philadelphia Confession and the treatise on Church Discipline.[195] This was the sixth edition in the British series, but the first American edition. Edward C. Starr's Baptist bibliography mentions the following editions: 1773 (2nd American), 1781 (3rd American), 1798 (4th American, and others published in 1810, 1813, 1818, 1825, and 1827. An edition was also printed in Philadelphia by Ant. Armbruster in 1765.[196]

The Philadelphia Confession was adopted by other American associations, notably in 1767 by the Charleston Association. The first Charleston edition, published in 1774 by David Bruce, omitted the P.B.A. article on the laying on of hands, but retained the one on singing. The Charleston version was bound with other items in a

---

[194]Chap. 31, Of Singing of Psalms, is taken from K,27 (A387-404) and chap. 31, Of Laying on of Hands, is taken from K,31 (A662-92). On Keach Confession see above, pp. 102-4.

[195]For excerpts of P and 2L see A1-783.

[196]See Edward C. Starr, ed., A Baptist Bibliography, being a register of printed materials by and about Baptists including works written against the Baptists (section A, Published by the Judson Press, Philadelphia, Pa., for the Samuel Colgate Baptist historical collection, Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y., 1947; additional volumes were mimeographed by the editor [Edward C. Starr, A master catalogue of Baptist historical materials. Preliminary checking edition, mimeographed not published (Hamilton, New York: Samuel Colgate Baptist historical collection, 1947-1976), 25 vols.]). B972-83. (Hereafter: STARR.)

second edition in 1813, and again in 1831. A fourth Charleston edition appeared in 1850.[197]

Other American associations adopted the same Philadelphia (Second London) Confession as the expression of their belief and unity.[198] Thus the theological ideas of Particular Baptists of 1677 made their way, virtually unchanged, into the mainstream of American Baptist life. In later times the London Confession, through its American editions, would take the strongest hold in the South. Though his claim may not be totally valid today, in 1923 Whitley could with justification assert:

> . . . In the Motherland [England] only the unimportant Strict and Particular Baptists adhere to it [the Second London Confession], or are even aware of it; in America nearly all the South regards it as standard.[199]

Horatio G. Jones, in his preface to Gillette's edition of minutes, expressed the reason for the P.B.A.'s decisions of 1742:

> . . . To let the world know how we understand the teachings of the Holy Ghost in these inspired books [New Testament], the Association published, in 1742, its Confession of Faith and discipline. . . . Throughout the United States it is generally considered as the standard of orthodoxy among Baptists. . .[200]

The expression "standard of orthodoxy" would no longer be used by Baptists today. The phrase expresses the fact nevertheless.

---

[197] See STARR: C2161 (1st ed.); B997 and C2162 (2nd ed.); and B982 (4th ed.).

[198] Clark lists the following in his study: Baltimore, Bowdoinham, Cahppawamsic District, Elkhorn, Georgia, Holsten, Kehukee, Meredith, New Hampshire, Redstone, Salem, Shaftsbury, Stonington, Vermont, and Woodstock.

[199] Whitley, British Baptists, p. 207.

[200] Gillette, preface, p. 4. (Italics mine.)

Baptist associations of the eighteenth century saw the Confession as an adequate statement of their Calvinistic beliefs. By 1814, many associations in addition to the P.B.A. had adopted the Philadelphia Confession as an expression of their beliefs.

The plan of the Warren Association, typical of others, included the Confession of the P.B.A. as its statement of faith. It also listed some of the Calvinistic elements expressed in the Philadelphia Confession:

> 6. The faith and order of this association are expressed in a confession put forth by upwards of a hundred congregations (in Great Britain) in the year 1689; and adopted by the association of Philadelphia in 1742. Some of the principles in said confession are--the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity--The inability of man to recover himself--Effectual calling by sovereign grace--Justification by imputed righteousness--Immersion for baptism, and that on profession of faith and repentence--Congregational churches, and their independency --Reception into them on evidence of sound conversion etc.[201]

How the Confession was to be understood by Baptists came to be expressed in 1787. As noted above, differences between Regular Baptists and Separate Baptists in Virginia led to a Plan of Union. The latter explained the role of a confession in associational connectionalism. The confession could not usurp a tyrannical power over individual consciences through a strict observance. Yet it "holds forth the essential truths of the gospel."[202]

More than any other single influence, the Philadelphia Confession established the theological orientation among American Baptists. It included a large chapter on the nature of the Church.

---

[201] Warren, Plan, p. 4 (B244-54).

[202] On the Plan of Union see above, pp. 122-23.

In abridged form, this twenty-seventh chapter incorporated the Platform of Church Polity developed by Congregationalists at Savoy in 1658. Articles 14 and 15 of that chapter expressed the nature of intercommunion among the churches.[203]

The Philadelphia Confession placed the theological roots of the P.B.A. in John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion.[204] Those roots were nourished by the Reformed tradition that culminated in the British religious revolution at Westminster. Except for a few additions or deletions (see fig. 3) the chapters of the Philadelphia Confession follow those of Westminster and Savoy and the Second London Confession of the Particular Baptists.

The Church Discipline of 1743

The Association's mandate of 1742 for a Church Discipline was carried out by Benjamin Griffith within the year. He read his work to the P.B.A. at its next meeting.[205] It was readily approved and Benjamin Franklin published it, together with the Confession, that same year.[206]

---

[203]This chap. 27 is given in app. A (A405-593) and provides much of the material for this study of the P.B.A. views on church authority and associations.

[204]The first English trans. from orig. Latin (Christianae Religionis Institutio, 1559), by T. Norton, appeared in 1561. Calvin published various editions: 1536 (Latin), 1539 (Latin, trans. into French, 1541), and 1559 (Latin, trans. into French, 1560). See "Institutes," in DCC, p. 707.

[205]Gillette, p. 48.

[206]1P (see intro., n. 26).

Confessions:	W[a]	1S[b]	2L[c]	P[d]
Identical:	1-19	1-19	1-19	1-19
		20[e]	20	20
1st Variation:	20-21	21-22	21-22	21-22
				23[f]
2nd Variation:	22-28	23-29	23-29	24-30
				31[g]
3rd Variation:	29	30	30	32
	30-31[h]	omitted	omitted	omitted
4th Variation:	32-33	31-32	31-32	33-34

Fig. 3. Comparison of Chapters in the Confessional Family of the Philadelphia Confession of 1742

---

[a]Westminster Confession of 1646, 33 chaps.

[b]Savoy Declaration of the Faith of 1658, 32 chaps. Deletes W, 30 and 31; adds 1S,20.

[c]Second London Confession of 1677, reissued 1689, 32 chaps. Follows 1S, includes 1S,20, deletes W,30 and 31 (alterations of W also ordered by Parliament).

[d]Philadelphia Confession of 1742, 34 chaps. Follows 1S and 2L, with addition of chaps. 23 and 31 taken from K,27 and 23 respectively.

[e]Addition of 1S retained by subsequent versions: "XX. Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace thereof."

[f]From K,27 added to P: "XXIII. Of Singing of Psalms, etc.," included in Confession adopted by Charleston Association in 1767.

[g]From K,23 added to P: "XXXI. Of Laying on of Hands," deleted from Confession of the Charleston Association.

[h]Chaps. of W deleted from all subsequent confessions: "XXXI. Of Church Censures." and "XXXI. Of Synods and Councils." (chaps. of W deleted by Parliament).

Griffith made use of Elias Keach's work, The glory and ornament of a true gospel-constituted church. The latter, as indicated above, was really the work of Elias's father Benjamin. Griffith also referred to an unpublished manuscript on discipline written by his half-brother Abel Morgan. The work of the Congregationalists Dr. Owen and Dr. Goodwin also proved useful. For some questions, especially on the admission and dismission of members, Griffith used precedents established by the P.B.A.[207]

The Church Discipline included sections about the nature of the Church, its ministers, the admission and duties of members, church censures, and the communion of churches. In discussing the church council, Griffith claimed it was "according to the mind of Christ"; in this he simply followed the Confession.[208] But he went on to insist that such groups of churches, voluntarily gathered, "may declare and determine of the Mind of the Holy Ghost, revealed in Scripture, concerning Things in Difference; and may decree the Observation of Things that are true and necessary, because revealed and appointed in the Scripture."[209]

---

[207] 1P, preface, pp. iv-v, wherein Griffith mentions the sources he used. These included 1K (cited in chap. 1, n. 154; this is simply the work of Benjamin Keach used by his son [see above, p. 104, n. 154]); and John Owen and Thomas Goodwin (see above, pp. 81-83).

[208] Compare P,27.15 (reference to chap. 27, art. 15) and 1P, p. 61 (compare A580 to A1465).

[209] 1P, p. 62 (A1475-80).

The Essay on Associations of 1749

An area of ambiguity still persisted. Forces within the P.B.A. inclined to minimize the role of the Association in its service of the churches brought the group to affirm its authority. In 1749 the Association approved and had printed in its proceedings Benjamin Griffith's "Essay on the Power and Duty of an Association of Churches."

> At our annual Association, met September the 19th, 1749, an essay [by B. Griffith] on the power and duty of an Association of churches, was proposed, as above hinted, to the consideration of the Association; and the same, upon mature deliberation, was approved and subscribed by the whole house; and the contents of the same was ordered to be transcribed as the judgment of the Association, in order to be inserted in the Association book, to the end and purpose that it may appear what power an Association of churches hath, and what duty is incumbent on an association; and prevent the contempt with which some are ready to treat such an assembly, and also to prevent any future generation from claiming more power than they ought--lording over the churches.[210]

While taking care to stress that full church-power resided only in the local churches, Griffith affirmed more clearly than ever the competency of the Association. He based his argument on Scripture, 2 Cor 6:16, 17, and especially Acts 15. He also referred to the Association's Discipline and appealed to precedents from church history recorded in the works of Joseph Bingham and Thomas Crosby.[211]

---

[210] Gillette, p. 60. The text of G (cited in intro., n. 26) appears in Gillette, pp. 60-63, and is given below, app. A (A1498-1637). (Italics mine.)

[211] G, pp. 62-63 (A1596-98); Joseph Bingham, Origines ecclesiasticae: or, the Antiquities of the Christian Church (London: Printed for Robert Knaplock, 1708), bk, 2, p. 101.
Crosby, 4:407-20.

Griffith's essay accomplished its intended purpose. It strengthened the P.B.A.'s position among the churches and, at the same time, asserted the local churches' prerogatives of full church-power.[212]

The Warren Documents on Associations of 1766-1769

On September 8, 1767, under the partial leadership of ministers from the P.B.A., Baptists of New England met to discuss the establishment of their own association. Present as moderator was James Manning, first president of the newly established Rhode Island College. The P.B.A. had marked the occasion by sending a letter of greeting to Warren. Written by Samuel Jones, it attested to the proven advantage of forming an association. The letter also employed an analogy to describe church relations which envisioned the eventual union of all Baptist associations in America.[213] That plan for a national organization, as noted above, was one of several eighteenth century plans. It was never really adopted.[214]

Isaac Backus, the Separate Baptist from Massachusetts, had functioned as recording secretary at the organizational meeting of the Warren Association. His handwritten notes provide a good summary of the proposed plan of association. It followed closely the practice of

---

[212]Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," pp. 47-49.

[213]P.B.A. to Warren (text appears below, app. A (A1638-1705). See citation above, p. 125.

[214]For a discussion of other abortive plans see above, pp. 174-80.

the P.B.A. as evidenced by a comparison to Morgan Edwards's description.[215]

Resistance to any organization beyond the local congregations was strong in New England. Separate Baptists were generally suspicious of such associations, especially Baptists from Massachusetts. Even the older Baptist congregations distrusted any plan which gave the appearance of Congregational synods that had oppressed them. The Coventry Church sent a negative response to the Warren plan that was typical of widespread misunderstanding of associations. Writing to the Association in 1768, the church declared:

> . . . we have considered the plan on which the Association aforesaid [i.e., Warren] have formed themselves the year last, and have searched for the authority referred to in Acts 15, to support such Association; and we are not convinced that that chapter, or any other sentence in the Bible, supports a classical government over the Church or churches of Christ . . . .[216]

The Coventry Church had quite obviously misunderstood the intent of Manning and others who proposed the Warren Association. President Manning, therefore, found it necessary to rework his

---

[215]Isaac Backus, "A History of the Baptist Warren Association in New England from the year 1767, to the year 1792, showing the times and places of their meeting; their principles and practice, with their labours to obtain equal Religious Liberty in America" [Handwritten by Isaac Backus]. Appears in Minutes of the Warren Association, 1767-1779, compiled from Isaac Backus papers by Reuben A. Gould (1863). Orig. in Brown University Library, Providence, R.I.: zerox copy in A.B.H.S. See excerpts below, app. B (parallel text to B170-258), compared to E (B259-356).

Backus himself admitted at that stage (1767), "I did not see my way clear to join now, if ever I do" (Backus diary cited by Backus, History, 2:409, note).

[216]Coventry Church to Warren Association, Coventry, 13 Spetember 1768, in Minutes of the Warren Association, 1767-1779, n.p. [Signed by Peter Werden Scribe in behalf of the church].

original presentation about the plan for association. The revision deleted the argument from Acts 15. In three paragraphs Manning expressed the Sentiments Touching an Associaiton.[217] These he delivered to the Assembly of 1768. When the plan of the association was approved for printing, Manning's sentiments were included as the introductory statement.[218]

Manning's formulation helped to win the day. Backus and others, their fears about ecclesiastical tyranny allayed, now saw that the Warren Association was a legitimate body within a congregational polity. Of course, the fact that the Association provided lobbying power for the struggle for religious freedom also helped to win over people from Massachusetts. One of the insights expressed by Manning was the need for representatives to the association who were "knowing and judicious, particulary [sic] in the Scriptures.[219] These sentiments continued to help others in their formation of associations, as, for example, the Danbury Association in 1790.[220]

Morgan Edwards's Treatise of 1768

While Morgan Edwards still commanded respect in his leadership role within the P.B.A., he formulated his own church

---

[217]Text appears in Guild, Life of Manning, p. 78; also Backus, History, 2:409, n. This deletion of the scriptural argument from Acts 15 is the best indication of the pragmatism reflected by P.B.A. Baptists (see below, pp. 205-6).

[218]The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association, copy given below, app. B (B170-258).

[219]Ibid., p. 3, par. 3 (B185-86).

[220]See "Minutes of the Danbury Association . . . Sept. 29, 1790," in Rippon, 1:110-11.

discipline.[221] He looked upon it as a first draft which he wanted the ministers of the Association to review before putting it forth as the P.B.A.'s own statement.[222] Only a few copies, therefore, were printed at the author's expense. They were circulated around the year 1768.

The work reflects an unfinished quality. Like Edwards's Materials Towards a History of the American Baptists, it includes much historical information of great value. The work, however, must be used with caution. It was never approved by the Association. In fact, the P.B.A. issued a disclaimer when it became known that London Baptists viewed it as officially sanctioned.[223]

There are several reasons why Edwards's work on church order met a rather cool, or at least indifferent, reception. To begin with, he was suspected of General Baptist and Universalist thinking. His origins and education in Episcopalian circles could have proved a disadvantage on occasions when he promoted ecclesiastical organizations. As the War of Revolution approached, Edwards was one of the few Baptists in America who sided with King George, a most unpopular stand.

Despite such opposition to his views, Edwards held some respect among colleagues of the P.B.A. In 1771 he resigned his post as pastor of First Baptist Church of Philadelphia in order to become the P.B.A.'s evangelist, a position he held for two years. The

---

[221] E (cited in n. 52 above).

[222] E, advertisement, p. [2].

[223] Gillette, p. 141.10. See caution voiced by Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," p. 33, n. 6 (n. given on p. 226). The negative reaction of the P.B.A. to E is another sign of the Associations's pragmatism.

Association's disclaimer came in 1774 in which they denied official approval of his treatise. Edwards dropped the idea of publishing his work.

While his church discipline never was officially published, the copies available from preliminary ones sent to P.B.A. ministers are very valuable for any study of the American Baptists. They provide a rich record of the actual practices within the P.B.A. Hence the work has some value for this study.

Edwards made use of the work of Thomas Grantham, a General Baptist of England.[224] He also used Congregationalist works by Owen and Goodwin, the same ones consulted for the P.B.A. Church Discipline in 1743 and 1798.[225] Among other authors, he cited Cotton, Dr. Watts, Mr. Hooker, Dr. Turner, and Dr. Wall.[226] In fifty-four propositions, substantiated by scriptural argumentation and exemplified by practices among Baptists, Edwards discussed many more topics than the official P.B.A. Disciplines. He added extensive materials on the ordinances, including many practices besides baptism, the Lord's Supper, the laying on of hands, and singing hymns at worship services. His treatment of associations draws from Manning's sentiments; by way of example, it includes the "original rules" of the P.B.A. which Edwards gleaned from proceedings in the Association book.[227]

---

[224]Thomas Grantham, Christianismus Primitivus, esp. bk. 2, chap. 10, pp. 136-43. See E, p. 45.

[225]E, pp. 4, 38.

[226]Ibid., pp. 5, 10, 24, 46, 67, 81, 103.

[227]Ibid., pp. 108-109 (rules of the P.B.A. cited in B259-356).

The Church Discipline of 1798

A half century after Griffith had formulated its first Discipline, the P.B.A. judged it "to be materially defective." In 1795, therefore, they asked Samuel Jones to undertake a revision.[228] Jones was well suited for such a commission. The Association had experience of his capable leadership as pastor in Lower Dublin. He had represented the Association many times and had composed letters to other associations. Among those letters was the renowned one addressed to the Warren Association in 1766 (discussed above).

Jones had authored several of the Association's circular letters, including some that explained articles of the Philadelphia Confession.[229] He also preached keynote sermons at associational meetings; the most important of these was the Century Sermon in 1807.[230] In 1797, the same year he presented his work to the P.B.A., he was chosen the first president of the newly incorporated body. He had functioned many times as moderator, clerk, and treasurer to the P.B.A.[231]

---

[228] Gillette, p. 306.21.

[229] Gillette includes the following: 1774: The Trinity (p. 143-46); 1778: A General Exhortation (pp. 160-62); 1779: On Divine Providence (pp. 164-67); 1781: God's Covenant (pp. 175-78); 1783: The Freedom of Man's Will (pp. 194-97); 1790: Universal Salvation (pp. 257-60); and 1795: The Gospel (pp. 309-313).

[230] The minutes in Gillette mention sermons in 1765: Effectual Calling (p. 92); 1774: on Mt 5:6 (p. 135); 1780: on Mt 16:18 (p. 169); 1785: on Jn 16:8, as a substitute preacher (p. 205); 1790: on Jn 7:17 (p. 254); 1800: on Acts 20:23 (p. 348); and 1807: on Isa 54:2,3, the "Century Sermon" (pp. 437, 453-68).

[231] See Gillette, p. 325.16. Jones was Moderator in 1770, 1774, 1781, 1786, 1788, 1791, 1796, 1800, 1803. He was clerk in 1766, 1767, 1778, 1779. He functioned as treasurer ca. 1782 and was responsible for procuring the charter in 1797.

The work on the text of the Church Discipline had taken two years. After the P.B.A. received it in 1797, the Association formed a committee of all the churches to review the work. After making changes it thought necessary the committee ordered the text published. Within the year, the work was published by S. P. Ustick of Philadelphia; another edition appeared in 1805.[232] Other editions followed in the nineteenth century, each of them incorporating material changes. The 1831 edition of the Charleston Association Confession and Discipline incorporated Jones's work as an appendix.[233]

In developing his Discipline, Jones relied upon the precedents set by Griffith in the essay of 1749. He also followed the subjects treated in the 1743 work.[234] The revised work, however, was more nuanced in its language and more thorough in the discussion about Church than the earlier Discipline. Section 2 of the first chapter discussed the universal Church. The work also dealt with the council. Other changes were incorporated to bring the Association Church

---

[232] 2P (cited in intro., n. 26). Another edition in 1805 (Lexington: Printed by T. Andersen). (Hereafter: 2P is from the 1805 ed.) See Gillette, pp. 317.14, 325.14. 2P

[233] Charleston (S.C.) Association, Baptist Confession of Faith and a Summary of Church Discipline [by Oliver Hart and Francis Pelot, with the aid of Morgan Edwards and David Williams]. To which is added an Appendix containing 1. The Discipline of the Primitive Churches (Fuller). 2. A Treatise of Church Discipline, with a Variety of Forms (S. Jones). 3. Power and Duty of an Association (Griffith). 4. Form of Rules for an Incorporated Baptist Church or Society. 5. Terms of Communion. 6. The Marriage Ceremony. 7. Duties of Church Members towards each other (Charleston: Printed by W. Riley for Daniel Sheppard, 1831). The Charleston Church Discipline was adopted in 1772. Excerpts of the Charleston Discipline appear in app. B (B1007-1326). (Hereafter: for Charleston Discipline, CD.) CD

[234] 2P, pp. 29, 32.

Discipline in line with shifts in P.B.A. practice, for example, on dismission of members, and the policy concerning laying on hands at baptism.

Some few were disappointed in the alterations. In 1806, for example, the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia petitioned the Association for a committee to review apparent discrepancies between the old and new Disciplines. The P.B.A. postponed action on the request until the following year. At that time it decided against a review and maintained the approved Jones version.[235]

As all Baptists before him, Jones based his positions fundamentally in the Scriptures. He also cited the Congregationalists Owen and Goodwin, as well as the Keach Discipline.[236] A comparison between the ideas in his work and Edwards's Customs suggests that Jones had on hand a copy of the unofficial church discipline; perhaps wisely so, Jones did not cite Edwards directly.

Association Sermons and Letters

In addition to the sources described above, various Association sermons and circular letters provide information about the thinking of Baptists on the theory of associations. The circular of 1807 and 1808 discuss the qualifications of a gospel minister, and the nature of the Church.[237]

---

[235] Gillette, pp. 422.14, 438.11.

[236] 2P, pp. 20, 28, 29, 32.

[237] Gillette, pp. 440-46; and Printed Minutes for 1808, pp. 6-9. See also discussion above, pp. 146-49, esp. nn. 95 and 96.

The sermons of Oliver Hart have special merit. They deal with the duties of officers and private members, and with the nature of a gospel church. An associational sermon by Richard Furman (known and respected by the P.B.A.) though it was preached at Charleston, offers additional insights into P.B.A. views about church authority in the late eighteenth century.[238]

In these various sources, then, one can discover the Philadelphia Baptist views of associationalism. The most important P.B.A. sources remain the Philadelphia Confession, the Disciplines of 1743 and 1798, and Griffith's essay of 1749.

REFLECTIONS BASED UPON A CONSIDERATION OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN CONTEXTS OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION AND ITS SOURCES

In order to interpret the sources of the P.B.A. it was necessary first to consider the contexts within which those documents were written. The above discussion dealt with influences both in Britain and in America. Baptists of the P.B.A. had inherited ideas from Particular Baptists in England (with continuing influences from General Baptist ideas) and the evangelistic piety and individualism of Separate Baptists that emerged from the Great Awakening in America. Moreover, the Philadelphia tradition about church authority and associationalism came to be expressed in its own context, specific to the eighteenth century life of the P.B.A.

---

[238] On Hart, see p. 146, esp. n. 87; on Jones, see Gillette, p. 169; for a list of Jones's sermons see above, p. 200, n. 230. An additional sermon by a former minister of the P.B.A. is Furman (cited in intro., n. 27). Excerpts appear in app. B (B756-1006).

The dynamic context of the P.B.A. raises a number of issues vital for this study of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority. It is therefore helpful at this point to summarize these findings so that they might serve as a point of departure for the interpretive chapters that follow. Thus, before proceeding to a review of the P.B.A. sources, the following summary observations are gathered here: (1) important axioms for interpreting the P.B.A. sources; (2) conflicting attitudes towards church life among eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists; and (3) the themes and questions emerging from the functions and concerns of the P.B.A. which are crucial for this study of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority and associations.

Important Axioms for an Interpretation of the Sources in the Philadelphia Tradition

An understanding of the background and contexts of the P.B.A. brings one to the conviction that P.B.A. Baptists had a particular spirit. It was undoubtedly shared by other groups of Protestants in America. For the purposes of this study, however, only the P.B.A. group need be considered. Certain axioms about eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists can help this study of their views of church and church authority. They have been suggested by the discussion above, especially about the erosion of a theological basis for associationalism.[239]

---

[239]On erosion of theological bases see above, pp. 127-35.

First Axiom: An Unsystematic and Pragmatic Theology

When spokesmen of the Philadelphia Association articulated views about church authority, they did so with a practical eye to the needs and demands of the moment. They addressed the various, and sometimes conflicting, viewpoints in the Association about the nature of the Church and the character of associational bodies.

In claiming P.B.A. Baptists were pragmatists, one does not thereby exclude a theological dimension in their writings. That theology, however, remains unsystematized. At times it is even dialectical, sustaining the tension between the polarities of local church "autonomy" and the interdependence of the churches.[240] The theology of church authority borrows ideas and expressions from others, sometimes uncritically. Aspects of a theology of authority remain implicit. While some theological principles present in the sources are more basic and foundational than others they are not organized within P.B.A. sources in an explicit way.

In setting out to achieve its aims this study, in the process of interpreting P.B.A. sources to uncover implicit and explicit principles of church authority in the Philadelphia tradition, will further confirm its axiom about the pragmatic and unsystematic nature of P.B.A. theology. That first axiom is nevertheless sufficiently

---

[240]The expression "local church autonomy" is nowhere found in eighteenth century P.B.A. sources. It is nineteenth century terminology that both incorporates an earlier Particular Baptist view about the prerogatives of a local church and the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century prejudices against valid forms of interchurch connectionalism.

established at this point to permit it, at least in a general way, to direct this interpretation of the sources.

While doing so, however, the controlling factor in interpretation must continue to remain the sources themselves. The principles deduced from the P.B.A. sources must be in some form or other directly stated in the documents.

Second Axiom: Expect Cautious Statements and Lacunae

Given the polarities and conflicting forces (enumerated below) at work within the P.B.A., one can expect to find that the sources on church authority will be very cautious in their assertion about the role of the association. The reasons for such caution, and sometimes for changes and omissions, are more than adequately explained in the framework of the P.B.A.'s varied viewpoints and contrasting orientations.

Omissions might be due sometimes to an effort to develop statements acceptable to opposing ideologies. An excellent example was the second draft of the sentiments and plan of the Warren Association which dropped the scriptural argument from Acts 15 that had previously justified the organization.[241]

At other times lacunae might be the result of a limited vision on the part of the writers themselves. For example, they had a

---

[241] On Warren and James Manning of the P.B.A. see above, pp. 125-26, esp. n. 40; on Manning's Sentiments see parallel versions for 1767 and 1769 (B170-95).

concept of full church-power limited only to the local congregation. All else had to fall into place behind that cardinal ideal.[242]

Nevertheless, any argument from silence cannot be manufactured simply because of axiom two! The documents themselves must remain the reference point for deriving the theological principles uncovered by this study. If this work is to rest upon fact the latter principles cannot simply be manufactured to fill in gaps.

Third Axiom: Look to the Positive Assertions

While they contain lacunae and cautious statements, the P.B.A. sources spell out positive teachings about church, its authority, and the nature of the associaiton.

Given the great need to be cautious in the safeguarding of the local congregation's rights, and given the practical need to mediate opposing viewpoints, whenever positive statements are made about the authority of the association such statements carry great weight.

They speak eloquently of the convictions among Philadelphia Baptists that church order involves more than local churches in isolation from each other. Those convictions must necessarily be expressed with great caution, with great deference to the prerogatives of the local churches. When statements about the role of the

---

[242]In the opinion of this author, all Baptists of the eighteenth century were hampered by their restricted definition of church-power (see discussion below, pp. 386-87; also p. 211). Like other Baptists, those in the P.B.A. thought of the sufficiency of the local church as the basic principle of church polity. In the opinion of the author, there are other more fundamental theological principles of church authority in the Philadelphia tradition (see chap. 6, pp. 550-62, esp. fig. 4, p. 560).

association meet with the approval of the P.B.A. they have had to survive a church polity not easily given to allowing any organization beyond the local churches. The end result is always significant!

The positive theological principles uncovered in this study of the Philadelphia tradition are all derived from statements in the official sources of the P.B.A. Each statement has withstood the test of the eighteenth century dynamic struggles within the Philadelphia Association.

Conflicting Attitudes about Church Life among Baptists of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

The cosmopolitan beginnings and the disparate groups emerging to form the latter eighteenth century P.B.A. brought about tensions and opposing forces that had to coexist with each other. It is to the credit of the P.B.A. that it served so well to consolidate denominational interests among such varying groups. Though the latter factions have already been indicated in various discussions above, it is useful here to summarize them again.

1. A General versus a Particular View of Salvation

Within the P.B.A., General Baptists (Arminian Calvinists) caused friction, especially in the late eighteenth century when Universalism threatened the orthodoxy of member churches. Given to a stronger type of connectionalism, General Baptists should have been an asset to the P.B.A. Their influence, however, was minimized by the cautious attitudes of others towards their Arminian views.

By contrast, the stricter Calvinism of the Particular (Regular) Baptists, at least in extreme forms among Baptists like John Gill, militated against cooperative efforts to evangelize. Particular Baptists, moreover, manifested less of an inclination than General Baptists to allow associations real power vis-à-vis churches. The Particulars accepted connectionalism, but it was based upon voluntary confederation, a mark of a Puritan covenant theology. Particular Baptists were less inclined than General Baptists to think of associations as having any real power at all.

2. Individualism versus Connectionalism

The spirit of an exaggerated individualism that emerged in the early nineteenth century had many roots.[243] The strongest forces within the P.B.A. that inclined towards individualism were the Separate Baptists from the New England awakening experience. The newer evangelicalism was largely a neutral factor. Among Baptists it tended to follow an individualistic direction. Political factors also aided individualism, notably the War of Revolution. It gave Baptist churches an experience of running their own affairs independent of each other. In the emerging cooperative missionary movements at the turn of the century the shift to a new model of connectionalism, the society (point 3 below), further isolated churches as such from each other.

Those who favored a stronger type of connectionalism hoped for a convention model of missionary organization at the Triennial

---

[243] On the sources of individualism see above, pp. 127-35.

Convention. They saw the place of associations that had real power within the limits of a congregational church polity. Men like Benjamin Griffith and Samuel Jones who wrote the P.B.A. Church Disciplines had a vision of an association with real credentials to serve member churches. Morgan Edwards, a staunt connectionalist, even dreamed of a national Baptist body. His treatise on church discipline was most probably too pro-connectionalist to suit other P.B.A. members. As noted above, it was officially disowned by supporters of the P.B.A. The men favoring an interdependence of the churches appealed not only to expediency but to biblical and theological arguments to support their views.[244]

3. Association versus Society Model of Connectionalism

At the turn of the century, as indicated above, the development of missionary cooperative efforts led to a shift in Baptist church polity.[245] Voluntary mission societies sprang up among Baptist groups. The P.B.A. had its own home mission society by 1803 and its foreign mission society in 1812.

The Triennial Convention of 1814 was an attempt to consolidate Baptist missionary efforts. From its beginning there was evident a conflicting attitude about the nature of this connectionalism.

The covenant model would group all denominational interests under one organization, specifically the missionary and educational activities. Its members, moreover, were churches.

---

[244]On the bases of connectionalism see above, pp. 61-64.

[245]See discussion on evangelism above, pp. 164-74.

The society model had only a specific purpose, and its members were not necessarily churches, but any one who paid the dues.

In the North the society model outdistanced the convention model. In the process the P.B.A., along with other associations, lost its privileged position. The hard decisions about missions and education, as well as ministry generally, were made by the societies.[246]

It is the opinion of this author that the absence of any formulated theology of church organizations was a contributing factor to this development. Moreover, the main reasons why the P.B.A. lacked such a theology were two fold. First, the Baptists of the P.B.A. were pragmatists, and they saw no reason to develop any theological views about organizations. Second, it was their limited view of the authority of the Church that restricted their horizons.[247] Church-power (as indicated below) was very narrowly defined and limited to local congregations. Moreover, the church's essential and great commission to evangelize the world surfaced only late in the eighteenth century when the erosion of theological foundations for associations was already well underway, and exaggerated individualism rampant among member churches of the P.B.A.

Themes for a Study of the Philadelphia Tradition and Basic Questions

The above considerations of the influences on the P.B.A. and especially the review of the concerns and functions of the Association,

---

[246]See above, pp. 170 and 172.

[247]See discussion in chap. 4, pp. 386-87.

offer directions for this study of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority. The following preliminary themes and questions emerge to provide the framework and development of the study of the P.B.A. sources in subsequent chapters. There are six themes, and each raises questions touching upon the P.B.A.'s concept of church authority.

1. The Role of Scripture

How did the P.B.A. Baptists view the authority of Scripture? More specifically, who interprets the meaning of the Scripture? How does Scripture relate to the ultimate authority of God and Christ? Or to the authority of the church and the association?

2. The Nature of the Church

What is the Philadelphia tradition about Church? What is the precise sense of church-power which the sources deny to associations? Is there any sense of the universal Church operative in the Philadelphia Baptists' faith and practice? Can church-power be delegated?

3. The Nature of the Ministry

Who are gospel ministers in the view of P.B.A. Baptists? How does the Association's view of ministry relate to the biblical idea of ministry? What is office-power and how does it relate to church power? Can any office power be delegated?

4. The Nature of Christian Authority

What is the Philadelphia tradition about the nature of gospel authority? In what ways does it differ from civil power and the exercise of civil authority?

5. The Nature of Gospel Ordinances and Church Discipline

What are the ordinances commanded by Christ in the New Testament? How do these relate to the exercise of church authority? What is the meaning of church censure? Who has the power to censure?

6. The Nature of Associations

How does the P.B.A. tradition view associations? Do they have any real power? How does the power of an association relate to the internal life of the churches, especially functions related to church-power, namely, ordination of officers, reception of members, and church censure? What function does the association serve in mediating the authentic sense of Scripture?

What, finally, in this historical manifestation of connectionalism among Baptists remains perennially valid and what is historically conditioned? Or, posed in another way, was the shift from the associational to the societal model of church polity ecclesiologically decisive as a turning point among Baptists of the P.B.A.? Could the reality embodied by associations in the eighteenth century be expressed in other ways or do Baptists need associations today to express fully their eighteenth century church polity?

In the course of searching through the P.B.A. documents to uncover theological principles for a theology of church authority and associations the above questions are discussed. In the process other insights about the Philadelphia tradition emerge. In the remaining chapters, understanding more fully the contexts that shaped the Philadelphia tradition, the author allows the sources to speak for themselves.

CHAPTER III

THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF UNIVERSAL CHURCH

In this chapter and succeeding ones the author focuses directly upon the primary sources within the Philadelphia Association, those officially recognized by the P.B.A.: (1) the Philadelphia Confession of 1742; (2) A Short Treatise of Church-Discipline, composed by Benjamin Griffith in 1743; (3) the essay of 1749 on the power and duty of an association of churches, also composed by Griffith; (4) the P.B.A. letter to the Warren Association in September of 1767; and (5) A treatise of church discipline and a directory, composed by Samuel Jones in 1798.

Having reviewed the backgrounds in England and America, the contexts that provide for a hermeneutical approach to these sources,

---

[1] Excerpts from all five sources, those most relevant for this study, appear in app. A below. References are to lines, e.g. A100 means app. A, line 100.

For a discussion of the contexts of the documents see above, pp. 185-202; on the Particular Baptist genealogy to P, pp. 92-106; on P (Philadelphia Confession of 1742), pp. 186-91; on 1P (Discipline of 1743), pp. 191-93; on G (essay of 1749), pp. 194-95; on 2P (Discipline of 1798), pp. 200-202; on the letter of 1767 to Warren, pp. 195-97; also pp. 124-25.

Additional materials shedding light on the P.B.A. tradition are the following: (1) Sermons by Oliver Hart and Richard Furman (intro., p. 17, n. 27; p. 146); (2) circular letters of the P.B.A. for 1807 and 1808 (p. 148); (3) the Warren Documents (pp. 195-97); and (4) E (unofficial treatise by Morgan Edwards), (pp. 197-98). See excerpts in app. B.

one is better able intelligently to interpret the official P.B.A. documents. From a consideration of the concerns and functions of the Philadelphia Association certain themes emerged as the most promising ones for a study of church authority among P.B.A. Baptists.[2] Those themes, each with general questions, concerned the role of Scripture, the nature of the Church, her authority, her ministry, gospel ordinances and church discipline, and the nature of an association

In successive chapters these themes will be discussed whenever the relevant questions arise during a consideration of the Philadelphia tradition about the Church (universal and local), the association, and the concept of church authority. The aim, as indicated in the introduction, is threefold: (1) to uncover new insights into the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church and church authority; (2) to reveal the strengths and weaknesses in the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of church and church authority; and (3) to uncover the principles, implicit and explicit, that constitute the eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church and church authority.

The ultimate purpose in considering the Philadelphia tradition is to arrive at new knowledge about the P.B.A. theory and praxis of church authority. The present chapter considers the Particular Baptist tradition expressed in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession. From a comparison of this P.B.A. source with the seventeenth century materials which lie behind it, the chapter moves on to consider the Philadelphia tradition of universal Church as reflected in all the official associational sources of the eighteenth century.

---

[2]See themes and questions above, pp. 212-13.

Since the Philadelphia Baptists inherited the views and the Confession of Particular Baptists, the exposition of the P.B.A. ecclesiology begins with a close look at their confessional statements about Church.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SOURCES BEHIND THE PHILADELPHIA CONFESSION OF 1742

The Philadelphia tradition about the Church is expressed in two kinds of sources, namely the earlier Confession accepted from London Particular Baptists of the late seventeenth century and those sources formulated by P.B.A. writers in the eighteenth century. The later sources include the P.B.A.'s Church Disciplines and the Association's essay and circular letter on the Church. Because these sources reflect virtually the same view of Church as the Confession, they need not be employed in a comparative study. However, the earlier source, the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession, when it is compared to the sources upon which it depends, manifests distinctive views of Particular Baptists who formulated the officially endorsed P.B.A. Confession. The focus in this comparative section, then, is upon the Particular Baptist Confession eventually adopted by the Association. The views described therein are proper to Particular Baptists of London. However, as the discussion of the British context indicated in previous chapters, Philadelphia Baptists accepted the same views. Thus, to grasp the meaning of church authority in the P.B.A. one must confront the distinctive view of Church as understood by Particular Baptists.

Behind the P.B.A.'s officially approved Confession first formulated by London Particular Baptists lie its immediate Savoy (Congregational) and Westminster (Presbyterian) counterparts.[3] Earlier sources behind the Confession included the Separatist A True Confession of 1596 and distinctively Baptist materials, especially the First London Confession of 1644. The Second London Confession except for a few additions that do not affect the teachings on Church, is identical to the Philadelphia Confession.

In developing their statements about Church the London Particular Baptists followed the Savoy Declaration closely in formulating the Second London Confession of 1677/89. They incorporated large sections of Savoy's Platform of Church Polity. The original context of the Savoy Confession became largely obscured in the process. Moreover, Particular Baptists altered the Declaration of Savoy in several ways.

A comparison of the Presbyterian and Congregational Confessions with the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession uncovers significant differences involving the following: alterations of the Savoy and Westminster version; Particular Baptist additions, mostly short phrases; and significant omissions by Particular Baptists who did not use all the materials in the Congregational Platform of Church Polity. The minor additions did not substantially alter the meaning of the

---

[3] On W, 1S, and 2L see above, chap. 1, pp. 65-69, 75-79, 87; also pp. 98-101. On P see chap. 2, pp. 186-91.

Savoy and Westminster Confession. Therefore, these need not be considered in this comparative study.[4]

There are, however, two significant alterations that appear from a close comparison of the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession with the Savoy and Westminster views of Church. These involve (1) the nature of the universal Church and (2) the nature of synods and councils.

A consideration of distinctive views of Particular Baptists in these two areas brings to light several important conclusions that have application to this study of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority and associations.

The Nature of the Universal Church

In order to appreciate more fully the alterations made by Particular Baptists in their view of the universal Church, it is necessary to mention changes made by the Congregational Declaration or

---

[4]The following additions were made: (1) an entire sec. 10 on support of ministers (P,27.10 [A507-26]), a favorite theme among Particular Baptists who had to encourage voluntary support of their ministers (see also 1L,38; K,29; Somerset Confession of 1656, 32; and the P.B.A. Disciplines, 1P, p. 35.6 [A1184-1207] and 2P,7.9). (2) the insertion in sec. 1, "The Catholick or Universal Church, which with respect to the internal Work of the Spirit and Truth of Grace may be called invisible." W and 1S read, "which is invisible." The addition is merely explanatory of invisible and does not affect the meaning of W and 1S (see P,27.1 and parallel [A405-14]; [Italics mine]). (3) the addition of "in an orderly way" in P,28.1; and the additions of "according to the Rule of the Gospel," and "all the Household of Faith, even," both added to W and 1S in P,28.2. The first two provide instances of the great concern of Particular Baptists for scriptural order (see P,28.1-2 and parallels [A602-25]).

Confession in comparison to Westminster's version. The original Westminster Confession, in its twenty-fifth chapter on the Church, had delineated in six sections a Presbyterian conception of Church. In harmony with orthodox Reformed theology, it allowed room for a universal visible Church.[5]

The Westminster context begins with a statement about the "catholic or universal Church, which is invisible." It includes all the elect from the past, the present, and the future, gathered together by Christ, its Head. It is Christ's spouse, his body, his fullness (Section 1).

This universal Church is visible in this world, composed of all who profess the true religion, including baptized infants. Outside its fold "there is no ordinary possibility of salvation" (Section 2). Moreover, it possesses, from Christ, the ministry and ordinances of the gospel to gather together "the saints." The Westminster version reads:

> III. Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gather- and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto. (1)
>
> (1) 1 Cor. xii.23; Eph. iv.11-13; Matt. xxviii.19,20; Isa. lix.21.[6]

It is precisely at this point that the Congregationalists deviate from their Presbyterian counterparts. While the Savoy

[5]Text of W is given by Schaff, 3:659-60. On orthodox Calvinism's view of church see app. C, pp. 751-52; also Matzerath, p. 1092.

[6]W,25.3, in Schaff, 3:658. (Italics mine.)

Confession still retains a "visible Catholique Church of Christ," the Declaration denies that it has any authority to administer ordinances. Savoy's text reads:

> II. The whole body of men throughout the world professing the faith of the Gospel and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any Errors, everting the foundations, or unholiness of conversation, are, and may be called the visible Catholique Church of Christ, although as such it is not intrusted with the administration of any Ordinances, or have any officers to rule or govern in, or over the whole Body.[7]

The confessional section cited above is a reworking of sections 2 and 3 of Westminster. Besides denying any church-power to the universal Church, Savoy has deleted the Presbyterian reference in section 2 to the children of professed Christians. The Congregational views on church membership, therefore, are closer to the views of Baptists than to those of Presbyterians.[8]

---

[7] 1S,26.2; see parallels to P,27.2 (A415-23). (Italics mine.) In its Platform of Church Order Savoy repeats the same idea about a universal visible Church in the context of its treatment of local churches (PS,6; see parallel to P,28.6 [A470]).

[8] W,25.2 reads: "II. The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law) consists of all those, throughout the world, that profess the true religion, (4) and of (5) their children; (6) and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, (7) the house and family of God, (8) out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. (9)."

---

(4) 1 Cor. i.2; xii.12,13; Psa. ii.8; Rev. vii.9; Rom. xv.9-12. (5) [Am. ed. together with, instead of and of.] (6) 1 Cor. vii.14; Acts ii.39; Ezech. xvi.20.21; Rom. xi.16; Gen. iii.15; xvii.7; [Am. ed. Gal. iii.7,9,14; Rom. iv. throughout]. (7) Matt. xiii.47; Isa. ix.7. (8) Eph. ii.19; iii.15; [Am. ed. Prov. xxix.18]. (9) Acts ii.47." (Schaff, 3:657). (Italics mine.)

Compare this section of W to 1S and P cited in text.

Particular Baptists in their Second London (Philadelphia) Confession followed Savoy's rendering, with the significant alteration of the opening phrase and the substantial recasting of the final lines.

> 2. All Persons, throughout the World, . . . are and may be called visible Saints; (c) and of such ought all particular Congregations to be constituted.
>
> (c) Rom. 1.7. Eph. 1.20,21,22.[9]

By such changes the Particular Baptists have begun to move into a treatment of particular churches sooner than the Westminster or Savoy versions. Thus, the focus for Baptists shifts from the "whole body of men" to "all persons," "visible Saints," who are gathered into particular congregations. The "visible Catholique Church of Christ" becomes "visible Saints." The alteration of the Savoy statement is significant. The concept of universal Church is suppressed entirely. The visibility of those professing Christ is limited to visible "Saints" that make up all particular congregations.[10]

The Westminster Confession, having affirmed the power of the universal Church, goes on to make a distinction between it and particular churches. The classic marks of a true gospel church in a Calvinistic sense are indicated:

> IV. This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. (2) And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine

[9] P,27.2 (A415-22).

[10] As noted in the exposition of local church below, such visible saints are the only suitable "matter" for Particular Baptist churches (see chap. 4, pp. 285-301).

of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them. (3)

(2) Rom. xi.3,4; Rev. xii,6,14; [Am. ed. Acts ix.31]. (3) Rev. chaps. ii. and iii.; 1 Cor. v.6,7.[11]

Savoy omits the whole section. It is unnecessary because local churches are discussed not in its Confession but in its Platform of Church Polity.[12] The Baptists followed the Savoy version. In so doing, Particular Baptists have deleted the statement about the purification of the Church of England: "and public worship performed more or less purely in them."

Having denied any church-power to the visible catholic Church, and having deleted the Westminster transitional section wherein particular churches are first mentioned, the Savoy's third section abruptly refers to "Churches" for the first time. The section is drawn from the fifth section of the Westminster text. Some ideas, however, have been altered, notably "Church on earth" is changed to read "visible Kingdom in this world." Savoy's text reads:

III. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan: Nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a visible

[11] W,25.4 (Schaff, 3:658). (Italics mine.) Compare The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, art. 19: "Of the Church. The visible Church of Christe, is a congregation of faythful men in which the pure worde of God is preached, and the Sacramentes be duely ministred, accordyng to Christes ordinaunce in all those thyngs that of necessitie are requisite to the same." (Schaff, 3:499). (Italics mine.)

[12] See PS, passim (parallel to A434-38, 446-593; and B1-119).

Kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.[13]

The Second London (Philadelphia) Confession has the Savoy rendering, with the simple change that "visible" is deleted before "Kingdom." Thus, for a second time, Particular Baptists have suppressed any suggestion of a visible catholic Church, even as a "visible Kingdom." One is left with the clear impression that Particular Baptists consistently assumed the universal Church, as affirmed in the opening section of their Confession, is an invisible kingdom of Christ over the hearts of the "visible Saints" who professed his Lordship. In sections 2 and 3 Particular Baptists have twice deleted the Savoy expressions which associated visibility with universal Church and Christ's kingdom on earth.

The expression "The purest Churches" may have slightly different senses for the three Confessions. To the Presbyterians, the phrase refers to the "particular churches" of the previous section. These could be local congregations, although the sense is not clear. Most probably the Churches referred to are visible denominations. For the Congregationalists "the purest Churches" can hardly mean local congregations. The whole context deals with universal Church. The best way to make sense of the phrase is to see it in a denominational way. This would help to explain why Congregationalists found no need to introduce the notion of churches previous to this section.

---

[13] 1S,26.3; see parallel to P,27.3 (A424-32). (Italics mine.) W,25.5 reads similarly, with the following change: ". . . Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to his will." 1S changed or omitted W,25.2-4.

Whatever Westminster and Savoy meant by the phrase, Particular Baptists must have used it to apply in a general way to groups of Christians in a denominational sense. That would explain why they found it necessary to delete the Savoy adjective "visible." If the phrase had applied to local congregations, there would have been no problem accepting the notion "visible Kingdom."

All three Confessions use the universal sense once more in their chapters on Church. For Presbyterians this presumably still has a dimension of visibility. So too for Savoy, with the restrictions already indicated. For Particular Baptists, however, if one assumes a consistency of thought, the term can be understood only in the sense used in section 1, namely, the invisible universal Church of which Christ is the Head. The Baptist text reads:

> 4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, [in whom by the Appointment of the Father, (g) all Power for the Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church, is invested in a supream and sovereign Manner,] neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof, but is (h) that Antichrist, that Man of Sin, and Son of Perdition, that exhalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the Brightness of his Coming.
>
> (g) Col. 1.18. Matth. 28.19,12,20. Eph. 4.11,12. (h) 2 Thes. 2.2,---9.[14]

The bracketed section in the text indicates the ideas borrowed by Baptists from the first section of Savoy's Platform of Church Polity. Having introduced gathered congregations in its second section,

[14] P,27.4 (A433-44); compare to 1S,26.4 and W,25.6. (Italics mine, showing the 1S addition to W adopted by P.) Bracketed section is taken from PS,1.

the Baptist Confession starting with section 4 now incorporates materials about local congregations from the Congregational Platform. The effect is definitely one of transposing the original contexts of Savoy and Westminster from a treatment of universal Church, to a treatment of visible churches in a Congregational and Baptist sense. Without bothering to incorporate Savoy's fifth section that deals with universal Church in the "later day," Particular Baptists proceed to develop, in their London Confession, an extended chapter on the nature of a particular gospel church.[15]

The above discussion of Particular Baptist changes in the Westminster and Savoy Confession is important for an understanding of the Particular Baptist views of Church which crystallized in the P.B.A.'s officially recognized Confession of 1742. Philadelphia Baptists, whose confessional statements on Church are identical to the Second London Confession, appropriated Particular Baptist views into their eighteenth century church life. Thus, from the above comparative study of Particular Baptist views one can conclude: (1) that the Philadelphia Confession, accepting the London Particular Baptist views, leaves room for a belief in universal Church; (2) that this universal Church is not visible, but an invisible communion among visible saints; any suggestion in the Presbyterian and Congregational sources that Christ's Church has visibility beyond the local congregation is deliberately suppressed; and (3) that Particular Baptists and

---

[15]For a complete comparison of P and parallel sections taken from PS see app. A (A433-593). 1S,26.5, omitted by 2L, dealt with "later days" when the kingdom will be established on earth (see parallel to P,27.4 [A444]).

the later descendants of the P.B.A. were primarily concerned in their Confession to develop an adequate statement about the local congregation as a gospel church. In their confessional statement Philadelphia Baptists as descendants of British Particular Baptists did not focus primarily upon universal Church. The idea of gathered churches of visible saints is introduced very early, in section 2. Moreover, beginning with section 4 the P.B.A. Confession draws heavily upon the Savoy treatment of congregational polity for its fifteen sections on the local churches.[16]

Any interpretation that claims P.B.A. Baptists believed in a visible universal Church must take into account the above evidence. Particular Baptists deliberately expunged any reference to a visible Church from the Savoy and Westminster versions, and P.B.A. Baptists appropriated their Confession.

Any argument that Philadelphia Baptists accepted a visible Church at a level beyond the local congregation must proceed in one, or both, of the following directions: (1) one must offer plausible historical reasons why Particular Baptists deleted any references to a visible universal Church in their Confession of 1677/89; and (2) one must show from other P.B.A. materials that some evidence in the sources in fact points to a belief in a visible Church beyond local churches.[17]

---

[16]For a comparison of P and PS see app. A (A433-593).

[17]Both lines of argumentation are pursued in the critical discussion below, pp. 243-71.

The Nature of Church Synods and Councils

Besides suppressing the visibility of the universal Church Particular Baptists made another significant alteration in the Savoy version--a change involving church synods and councils.[18]

The Savoy Congregationalists and Particular Baptists extended to both individual Christians and separate churches the call to pray for one another and to hold communion with each other. The Baptist version, virtually identical to Savoy's Platform, section 25, reads:

> 14. As each-Church, and all the Members of it, are bound to (d) pray continually, for the Good and Prosperity of all the Churches of Christ, in all Places, and upon all Occasions to further [it], (every one within the Bounds of their Gifts and Graces) so the Churches (when planted by the Providence of God, so as they may enjoy Opportunity and Advantage for it) ought to hold (e) Communion amongst themselves, for their Peace, Increase of Love and mutual Edification.
>
> (d) Eph. 6.18. Psalm 122.6. (e) Rom. 16.1,2. 3 John 8.9, 10.[19]

---

[18] Besides significant changes concerning the ministry (considered below) there were other minor changes that do not affect the meaning: (1) Holy Spirit for Holy Ghost (P,27.9 and 27.11); (2) that for the (P,27.9); (3) wording to express obligations to abide by the government of the local church (P,27.12); (4) discussion about church censure (P,27.13); and (5) each church for all churches, and for or, enjoy for have (P,27.14).

Compare parallel texts to P,27.9ff (A493-593). In some instances 2L and P follow W instead of 1S: (1) Saints by Profession (P,28.2); and (2) the concluding section to P,28.2.

[19] P,27.14 (A555-70). Italics show differences from PS,25. PS reads all Churches for each Church; them for it; or for and; and have for enjoy; PS also adds "So the Churches themselves (when planted . . .)"

2L and PS both include the bracketed [it] which is lacking in the P text.

Beyond this general call to communion, when differences arose, churches were asked to convene through their messengers to settle any disputes. Except for a few crucial word deletions, the Particular Baptist's section 15 is identical to the Savoy Platform's section 26. The Second London (Philadelphia) Confession reads:

> 15. In Cases of Difficulties or Differences, either in Point of Doctrine or Administration; wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or, any one Church, in their Peace, Union, and Edification; or any Member, or Members of any Church are injured, in or by any Proceedings in Censures not agreeable to Truth and Order: It is according to the Mind of Christ, that many Churches holding Communion together, do by their Messengers meet[20] to consider, (f) and give their Advice in or about that Matter in Difference, to be reported to all the Churches concerned; howbeit these Messengers assembled,[21] are not intrusted with any Church-power properly so called; or with any Jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any Censures either over any Churches, or Persons; or (g) to impose their Determination on the Churches or Officer.
>
> ---
>
> (f) Acts 15.2,4,6. and 22,23,25. (g) 2 Cor. 1.24. 1 John 4.1.[22]

A comparison to Savoy's article shows that London Particular Baptists have suppressed the terminology synod or council in favor of the term messengers. At first glance, such omissions might appear to indicate that Baptists were opposed to synods or councils. Their own history, however, shows they had a very good experience of both special church councils and regular associations of churches. Why, then, did they suppress the Congregational idea of synods?

---

[20] PS,26 reads, "meet in a Synod or Councel, to consider . . ."

[21] PS,26 reads, "these Synods so assembled . . ."

[22] P,27.15 (A571-93); compare PS,26, parallel to ibid.

Four plausible reasons can be given to explain the omission. First, Savoy conceived of its synods or councils as occasional only. This is evident from section 27 of Savoy's Platform which, interestingly enough, is also omitted by London Baptists. Savoy states:

> XXVII. Besides these occasional Synods or Councels, there are not instituted by Christ any stated Synods in a fixed Combination of Churches, or their Officers in lesser or greater Assemblies; nor are there any Synods appointed by Christ in a way of Subordination to one another.[23]

Baptists, by comparison, accepted an ongoing connectionalism or fixed combination of churches. Very early during the Commonwealth era, the interdependence of General Baptist churches found expression in associations and even developed into a general assembly of all associations. Although less inclined to centralization, Particular Baptists also endorsed this polity which was a higher churchmanship than that of the Congregationalists of Savoy. The Particular Baptists' communion of churches was manifested in a church order that extended beyond separate and independent churches. While Baptists preferred not to call their interchurch communion synods, they believed in a regular and fixed fellowship among churches.[24]

Second, Particular Baptists may have frowned upon the term synod because of its association with Presbyterian and Episcopal polities in established Churches in England. Their own term for church interrelations was messengers, those sent by churches to associational meetings. Messengers was a term also used by Savoy

---

[23] PS,27 (B86-89). (Italics mine.)

[24] On Baptist connectionalism see chap. 1 above, pp. 57-64.

in section 26 of its Platform. It is the term Baptists preferred to synods or councils.

Third, the Congregational concept of synod may have had the connotation of ministerial associations such as Episcopal synods. Taken historically, moreover, the term may have carried a connotation of only ordained membership and, therefore, opposed to lay messengers. Baptists, from the beginning, included unordained laymen as messengers to their associations. In fact, as noted in chapter 1, that characteristic made their associations distinctive in comparison to those among Presbyterians and Quakers.[25]

Fourth, Baptists, as their history indicates, accepted special councils whenever these were necessary to settle problems between churches. Thus, they were not opposed to Savoy's notion of councils, but needed to allow for more than councils. While eliminating Savoy's "occasional Synods or Councels," Particular Baptists left room for occasional councils and regular associations.

These four reasons drawn from the historical background of connectionalism among Particular Baptists allow one to draw the following conclusions about the position of London Baptists: (1) Particular Baptists believed that their churches should associate with one another; (2) In their confessional formulation of 1677 they apparently preferred their term messengers of churches to the Congregational terms synod or council; and (3) Particular Baptist associations were

---

[25]On the uniqueness of Baptist associations compared to Presbyterian and Quaker ones see chap. 1, p. 59.

a fixed and higher form of church order than merely the "occasional Synods or Councels" of Savoy.[26]

The above considerations show beyond a doubt that the deletions of the terms synods and councils by Particular Baptists in themselves do not prejudice the case against Baptists having a true connectionalism. Just how Particular Baptists and P.B.A. Baptists viewed their associations is discussed in chapter 5.

Several significant issues surface from a consideration of those sections of the Platform of Savoy which were not used by Particular Baptists in their confessional statement. The issues also appear in the later developments within the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century. Therefore, in the following discussion occasional references to places within P.B.A. documents indicate the resemblance between P.B.A. views and those of the Particular Baptists in seventeenth century England.

The topics that emerge from a consideration of omissions by Particular Baptists include the following: (1) the administration of the ordinances to churches lacking their own church officers; (2) conditions for an essential church; (3) churches distinguished from congregations; and (4) ministerial care of non-members of the church.[27]

---

[26]The expression "higher form of church order" is here used only in a relative sense, i.e., Particular Baptists accepted a regular fellowship of churches which made their church polity more developed than one that accepted only "occasional synods or councils."

[27]Much of the Savoy material omitted by Particular Baptists was agreeable to their views. Only the differences are considered in the text.

Among omitted material agreeable to Baptists is sec. 5 of the Savoy Platform on congregational power received directly from Christ

The Administration of Ordinances to Churches Lacking Officers

Savoy, in section 16 of its Platform of Church Polity, speaks about the administration of ordinances (seals) in the local church:

> XVI. A Church furnished with Officers (according to the minde of Christ) hath full power to administer all his Ordinances, and where there is want of any one or more Officers required, that Officer, or those which are in the Church, may administer all the Ordinances proper to their particular Duty and Offices; but where there are no teach-[60]ing Officers, none may administer the Seals, nor can the Church authorize any so to do.[28]

If the italicized phrase means a church can authorize only a teaching elder (pastor) then it agrees with the Particular Baptist tradition. However, if the phrase is intended absolutely, meaning a church cannot authorize even a teaching officer of another church to administer its ordinances, then at least some London (and Philadelphia) Baptists would not agree.

---

and sec. 17 dealing with admission of church members by consent of the whole church (see PS,5 parallel to P,27.6 [A461]; PS,17 [B30-34]; compare 1P, pp. 18-19 [A1047-62]).

Other examples are: (1) the essence of the call to be pastor, not in ordination as such (PS,12 [see parallel to P,27.10 (A507)]; compare 2P,26 [A1846ff]); (2) ordination related to office-power (PS,15 [B15-20]); (3) the nature and the process of church censures (PS,18,19,22 [B35-66]; compare 1P, pp. 40-49 [A1208-1357] and 2P,20 [A2161-2216]); (4) on congregations formed in the same general locale (PS,24 [B77-85]; compare 1P, pp. 30-32 [A1110-45]; also 2P,9.16); (5) procedure for changing church membership (PS,28 [B92-107]; compare 2P,9.17 [A2143-55]); (6) open communion among gospel churches (PS,29 [B108-13]; compare 1P, pp. 59-60 [A1398-1437]); and (7) occasional communion with members of "less pure" churches (PS,30 [B114-19]; compare 2P,9.19 [A2158-60]).

[28] PS,16 (B21-29). (Italics mine.) The exclusive relationship of a pastor and his congregation's reception of ordinances is also mentioned in PS,14 (B1-7).

The matter is not clear from the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession itself, but eighteenth century P.B.A. sources discuss the question. The later Discipline of the Association in 1798 underscores the official and mature thinking of the P.B.A. in the late eighteenth century. Samuel Jones supplied the following footnote on the minister's duty regarding the ordinances.

> * It has been thought by some,[29] that a minister cannot warrantably administer the ordinance of the Lord's supper in or to a church, where he is not a member and settled. But why he may not do it occasionally, as persons are admitted to occasional communion, where they are not members, it is hard to say, when he has the call of the church to do it. It should seem that the call of the church to an occasional act, must be equivalent to its call to stated acts.[30]

Jones's view expressed what had been the earliest and the continuing eighteenth century practice of the P.B.A. The Association assigned ministers to help congregations destitute of their own minister. The basic reason, among others, was to preach and administer the ordinances in such places.[31]

Thus, the question raised by the Particular Baptist deletion of Savoy's section 16 is one that is echoed in the life of the P.B.A., notably in its 1798 Discipline and its associational practice

---

[29]One of these was Benjamin Keach, along with his son Elias. They did not allow for ordinances administered by ministers who were not members of the church: "Quest. May an Elder of one Church if called, warrantably administer all Ordinances to another? Answ. No surely; for we find no warrant for any such Practice, he being only ordained Pastor or Elder of that particular Church that chose him, etc. and hath no Right or Authority to administer as an Elder in any other where he is not so much as a Member." (1K, p. 16).

[30]2P,5.10, n. (A2014-22). (Italics mine.)

[31]See discussion about P.B.A. in chap. 2, pp. 156-57.

throughout the eighteenth century. A related question to the administration of ordinances in a church lacking teaching officers is the question of what constitutes an essential gospel church.

Conditions for Establishing an Essential Church

The Savoy Platform in its twenty-third section mentions that not every society assembling for the celebration of the ordinances is constituted as a church.[32] If the statement merely alludes to the requirements for any church, namely the voluntary gathering of visible saints who have been baptized upon the profession of their faith and have manifested publicly a willingness to covenant themselves into a gospel church, then Particular Baptists could have agreed wholeheartedly. The second section of their confessional view of Church asserted the same in so many words.

Congregationalists of Savoy, however, did not permit ordinances in a society without its own teaching elder (pastor). One can argue that implicit in such a view is a restrictive criterion for an essential gospel church, namely, the requirement of the church's own teaching officer to administer ordinances in a church. Such a view Particular Baptists would not accept. Their history indicates a higher view of the ministry. As the British historical background has shown ministers were sent to help churches destitute of their own officers. The office of messenger (evangelist-at-large) was a development of this ministry.

---

[32] See PS,23 (B67-76).

In effect the Congregational church order in Savoy's Platform discounts Particular Baptist practice. The latter allowed for a society to be constituted an essential church and to have the ordinances administered by an officer of another church even though it lacked its own pastor.

Thus, Savoy Congregationalists required a church to have its own pastor before it allowed ordinances to be administered. Particular Baptists had a different practice. They agreed that members and officers were both required for a particular congregation to be "completely organized," but they also permitted, and even encouraged, ministers of other churches to provide the ordinances for congregations essentially established as churches but lacking their own pastors.

Resonant in Particular Baptist views, then, was a higher sense of the ministry than among Congregationalists in the late seventeenth century. For Baptists, an ordained minister had office-power that could be exercised on behalf of any church calling upon his services. While that office-power did not include ruling (unless the pastor was also a member of the church) it did include essential office-powers to preach and to administer ordinances in any church asking for his help.[33]

As indicated in the footnote from Jones cited in the previous section, and from the practice of the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century,

---

[33]See the following: 1P, pp. 12 and 60 (A912-19, 1432-37); and G, p. 61 (A1502-3). For a fuller discussion of the Philadelphia tradition of church ministry see the following section, pp. 237-38; also chap. 4, pp. 332-48.

one can see that the American Baptists inheriting Particular Baptist views followed the practice of London Baptists. Therefore, P.B.A. Baptists agreed with the omissions by London Particular Baptists of Savoy materials dealing with administration of ordinances in churches without pastors.

Churches Contrasted to Congregations

Savoy Congregationalists described local congregations as "Church or Publique Assemblies." Particular Baptists, at least in their confessional statement, avoided such terminology. They omitted even the word public in the thirteenth section of the chapter on Church. Moreover, the whole section 10 of the Savoy Platform was omitted by Particular Baptists. That section reads:

> X. Churches thus gathered and assembling for the Worship of God, are thereby visible and publique, and their As-[58]semblies (in what place soever they are, according as they have liberty or opportunity) are therefore Church or Publique Assemblies.[34]

What seems to be at work in the minds of Particular Baptists is a subtle distinction between a congregation constituted and publicly gathered into a gospel church and a church as such. That distinction is reflected in section 2 of the chapter on the Church: "and of such visible Saints ought all particular Congregations to be constituted." The distinction becomes quite explicit in the much later P.B.A. Church Discipline of 1798:

> 14. Under the law, every member of the congregation was a member of the church. The church and congregation were then

---

[34] PS,10; see parallel to P,27 (A492). (Italics mine.) See also PS,21 and P,27.13 (A549-50).

> commensurate, but under the Gospel they are distinct from one another. For though the church be in some sense congregational, yet the church and congregation are two distinct things, so that the one word should not be used for the other, as if they were synonimous [sic].[35]

Thus, one finds a slight nuance in the thinking of Particular Baptists which is still present in the late eighteenth century P.B.A. Church Discipline. Baptists of the P.B.A. at times showed a reluctance to call even their gathered local congregations churches in the univocal sense. Classical Congregationalists had no such problem. At least the Savoy did not. It applied the term church to the public assemblies of congregations. Baptists within the Philadelphia tradition, however, in agreement with their ancestors, the Particular Baptists, maintained a real distinction between a visible congregation and the spiritual reality, church. That real distinction has relevance for this study. It points to a spiritualized notion of Church, even on the local level of the congregation.

Ministerial Care of Non-members in the Same Territory

Savoy, in the fourteenth section of its Platform of Polity, calls upon pastors to care for "others living within their Parochial Bounds" who are not members of their congregations. While such care explicitly excludes the administration of the ordinances, it involves both public preaching and personal instruction in the doctrines of the gospel.[36]

---

[35] 2P,1.14 (A1809-15). 2L and P, sec. 2 on the Church, reads: "and of such visible Saints ought all particular Congregations to be constituted." (P,27.2 [A423-24]). (Italics mine.)

[36] PS,14 (B1-14).

Such a spirit undoubtedly existed among some Particular Baptists, as well as among some P.B.A. Baptists who inherited their Confession. However, among the P.B.A. documents in this study there is no clear affirmation about the duty of a pastor (or of a church) to care for persons within the same territory who are not members of the congregation. As indicated in the chapter on American influences, virtually all "missionary" efforts of the P.B.A. were really activities among Baptists themselves, evangelization ad intra, and not preaching to heathens.[37]

The lack of clarity in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession about the missionary nature of the church and her ministry may help to account for the reluctance of some in the Philadelphia tradition to promote preaching the gospel to all peoples. The total absence of any clear statement about the same missionary aspect could help to explain why cooperative missionary efforts were late in coming among P.B.A. Baptists of the eighteenth century.

This question of the ministerial care of non-members is related to this study of the Philadelphia view of church authority. It suggests a possible lack of an explicit awareness of the essential missionary character in the Church, and it helps to explain why Philadelphia Baptists did not make greater use of their Association to help Christians carry out their call to evangelize.

---

[37] See above, pp. 164-67.

Conclusions from a Comparison of Confessional Views on the Nature of the Church

The minor additions by Particular Baptists to the Savoy and Westminster confessional chapters on the Church are of little consequence to this study. However, a look at the alterations and omissions of related materials has surfaced some important insights. A comparative view of the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession with those of Savoy and Westminster yields the following conclusions important to this study.

First, Particular Baptists, in developing their chapter on the Church, were less concerned about the general notion of the universal Church than they were about a gospel church patterned according to the New Testament. In fact, their use of the Savoy materials from its Platform of Polity resulted in a transposition. The original chapters of Savoy and Westminster had developed the notion of universal Church. For Baptists, the chapter in their Confession deals predominantly with congregational churches.

Second, in their Confession, Particular Baptists manifest a higher view of church order than did the Congregationalists of Savoy. Baptists left room for regular associations as well as occasional councils of churches. In the view of this author, these associations have a role that extends beyond that fellowship of churches espoused by Savoy. Baptist associations (discussed below) involve more than a

"communion among themselves for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification."[38]

Third, Particular Baptists also had a more exhalted view of the ministry than Congregationalists. For Baptists the ordained minister possessed an office-power that could be put to the service of any church calling upon his help. This is especially the case for the administration of the ordinances and for preaching.

Fourth, Particular Baptists were inclined to see church affiliation in a spiritualized sense. Even the local congregation could not be totally equated with church. The universal Church is seen as invisible--spiritual. In some sense the congregation and the visible church are also distinct.

Fifth, nevertheless, the term church is applied to various groups in the Particular Baptist chapter on the Church. One finds three levels of meaning for the church: (1) the universal (invisible) Church, (2) several denominational (in a sense visible) Churches, and (3) particular or societal (visible) churches.[39]

Sixth, the essential missionary function of the Church apparently was lacking in the confessional statement about Church in the

---

[38] PS,25, utilized in P,27.14 (A568-70). On associations, see chap. 5, passim.

[39] The universal sense appears at least five times in P,27.1; 27.4; and 29.1 (on Ordinances); the denominational sense appears at least twice in P,27.3; and the particular societal sense appears throughout P,27.5-15; 28.2; also 32.1 (Lord's Supper). (See A406; 434, 437 and 443; and 634. For denominational sense: A424 and 427. For particular sense: A433-593, passim; A620; and A693). The universal sense also appears very frequently in the chap. 1 on the Scriptures (see A1-138, passim).

Second London (Philadelphia) Confession. While some Particular Baptists were mission-minded, their articulation about the nature of Church did not readily include as an essential component the idea of the Church's ad extra mission to the world.[40]

Seventh, Particular Baptists totally suppressed the notion of a visible catholic or universal Church which had been acceptable to both Westminster and Savoy. This deletion of the notion of visibility raises the question of the P.B.A.'s understanding of universal Church expressed in official sources other than the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession. Therefore, the view of the universal Church must be considered more fully in the positive exposition of the Philadelphia tradition on the nature of the Church.

These Particular Baptist distinctive views of Church that were incorporated into the confessional statement of 1677/89 continued to influence Philadelphia Baptists who used the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession. Throughout the eighteenth century this Confession remained the fixed point of reference. For better or worse the Philadelphia tradition was influenced by a statement that in practice crystallized their views of Church. What theoretically, in the minds of its authors, should have been a momentary expression of seventeenth century Particular Baptist faith, in practice came to be a guiding star for eighteenth century P.B.A. theology.

---

[40]In the view of this author, their limited "essential view" of the Church (lacking the missionary dimension) helps to explain why P.B.A. Baptists failed to integrate into their theology of Church a view of the visible Church beyond particular congregations (see below, pp. 386-88).

THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION ABOUT UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Having considered the Philadelphia Confession that reflects some differences between a Particular Baptist and a Congregational or Presbyterian view of Church, this study proceeds to a positive exposition of the P.B.A. eighteenth century tradition of universal Church. The following remarks are drawn from the official associational sources.[41] Whenever necessary, the general background and origin of ideas are also discussed.

The above comparison of the Philadelphia Confession with previous confessions indicated a basic problem for this study--the omission of any reference to the visibility of the universal Church. If this study of the Philadelphia tradition is to establish, at any point, the existence of an ecclesial authority operative beyond the local congregations within the P.B.A., it must grapple with the evidence that the official Confession is silent about a visible universal Church. Since the Particular Baptists who formulated the Confession used by the P.B.A. suppressed the Presbyterian and Congregational references to a visible Church, a basic question arises: is there any room in the thinking of P.B.A. Baptists for a sense of Church operating in some tangible way at levels beyond the local congregations?

Two approaches, either singly or together, were already suggested to deal with this question of visible Church in the Philadelphia tradition: offering historical reasons why the notion of visibility

---

[41] For a list of sources see above, p. 214; or intro., pp. 16-17, esp. nn. 26-27.

was in fact deleted by Particular Baptists; and showing from the positive data in P.B.A. sources that the universal Church (or dimensions of it) functioned in tangible ways in the life of the Associaiton.[42] Both these lines of argumentation are pursued in the following exposition.

This question about the Philadelphia tradition of the universal Church is considered under three main headings: (1) the explicit teaching about the universal Church and the probable roots of that tradition; (2) historical explanations for the explicit teaching; and (3) some indications that in practice the P.B.A. implicitly accepted a visible Church beyond the local congregations.

The Explicit Teachings and Historical Roots of the Philadelphia Tradition about the Invisible Universal Church

The Philadelphia tradition views the universal Church as invisible only. The teaching in the Philadelphia Confession discussed in the previous section makes this clear. The same explicit teaching occurs in the other P.B.A. sources. In both his Church Discipline and his essay on the power of an association, Benjamin Griffith echoes the confessional description of the invisible universal Church. Soo too does Samuel Jones in the Church Discipline of 1798.

Griffith, in his Discipline accepted by the P.B.A. in 1743, makes a passing reference to universal Church, both to indicate the importance of "Persons to give themselves Members of such regular

---

[42]See above, p. 226.

congregational Churches" and to argue against unreasonable requests for dismissal from church membership. Such unreasonable requests:

> . . . hath a Tendency to alter the Constitution of particular Churches, from being congregational Corporations, into the national or universal Notion of the Church; which universal Church we believe to be the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, which as such not the Seat of instituted Worship and Ordinances. . . .[43]

In his essay of 1749, also officially accepted by the P.B.A., Griffith argues for the power of an association from the biblical precedent in Acts 15, and from examples of councils in church history. The latter are described "as one church."

> . . . Consistent therewith, the practice of after ages is found to be; when, because they had no council, in order to make head against any error or disorders, when in any particular church, such things grew too big for a particular church peaceably to determine, as the case about circumcision was at Antioch. In such cases all the churches were looked upon as one church, and all the bishops as universal, because of the unity of the faith and conformity of practice which ought to be in the churches of Christ; though in all other cases, the several distinct churches acted independent of each other, . . .[44]

It is interesting to note that this officially endorsed statement in effect makes the claim for some visibility, however temporary, for Church beyond particular congregations. Church is used in an analogous way. It applies to a council of local churches which, for Baptists, cannot have the univocal sense of visible church as applied to the congregation. As noted earlier, an analogous use of church appeared in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession's chapter on Church, but the usage there does not connote visibility beyond local

---

[43] 1P, p. 32 (A1133-45); also p. 30 (A1111-13). (Italics mine.)

[44] G, p. 62 (A1582-96). (Italics mine.)

congregations. Neither is the expression visible church used by Griffith, although he obviously implies a visible council.

While the context in Griffith's essay indicates that he is speaking about occasional events, in the sense employed by Savoy's "Synods and Councels," he is nevertheless using councils as historical arguments for justifying the power of associations among P.B.A. Baptists.

The other Philadelphia associational source, the 1798 Discipline of Samuel Jones, explicitly refers to universal Church. From the context, what Jones says about universal Church can be interpreted as invisible catholic Church, although he does not use that adjective:

> 2. The word church sometimes means the whole body of the elect, and commonly called the catholic, or universal church. Eph. i. 22, 23. v. 23. Col. i. 18, 24. This comprehends those in Heaven, called the church triumphant. Heb. xii. 23. Those on earth, called the church militant. 1 Cor. xii. 28. and those yet to be born.[45]

Thus, this latter discipline of the P.B.A. reflects a continuity with Particular Baptist views expressed as early as 1677 in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession. Consistently, then, throughout the eighteenth century, P.B.A. sources subscribe to a universal Church, but one that is invisible. Only Griffith's essay employs the term church in reference to a visible body, the special council. As noted above, he uses the term analogously--"looked upon as one church." Nowhere else does Church appear as the word to characterize some visible, tangible P.B.A. group beyond the local

---

[45] 2P,1.2 (A1715-21). (Italics mine.)

congregations. When the Philadelphia Association describes such groups it uses other expressions indicated below.[46]

The Philadelphia Tradition Contrasted to General Baptist Views

The failure of the P.B.A. to apply the term Church to any groups beyond the local congregation is all the more striking when one compares the Philadelphia tradition to General Baptist views of Church. Some General Baptists (perhaps some also in the P.B.A. who subscribed to General Baptist views?) expressed a clear belief in a visible universal Church. The best and most forceful example is An Orthodox Creed of 1678.

As noted above (chapter 1) this General Baptist Confession is the only Baptist statement ever to exalt the assembly or council above the local congregations. The text cited above views such assemblies as "but one Church." The same Confession, after devoting a whole chapter to the "invisible catholick Church," adds chapter 30 on the "catholick Church as visible." In the latter the General Baptists in 1678 relate distinct congregations to the visible Church of Christ:

> Nevertheless, we believe the visible church of Christ on earth, is made up of several distinct congregations, which make up that one catholick church, or mystical body of Christ. . . . And altho' there may be many errors in such a visible church, or congregations, they being not infallible, yet those errors being not fundamental, and the church in the major, or governing part, being not guilty, she is not thereby unchurched; nevertheless she ought to detect those errors, and to reform, according to God's

---

[46] As indicated below, the terminology used in the P.B.A. to describe ecclesial bodies is communion and fellowship; the action used was extending the right hand of fellowship; and the biblical call was from Eph. 4:3, to maintain the "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace."

holy word, and from such visible church, or congregations, no man ought, by any pretence whatever, schismatically to separate.[47]

While this Confession never received the formal approval of the whole General Assembly of General Baptists, it was adopted by several member churches. The views expressed in the Confession, in the opinion of this author, are an authentic extension of earlier General Baptist views, for example, like the ones held by Helwys's congregation in A Short Confession of 1610. The latter General Baptist Confession did not in fact distinguish between local and universal Church; the two levels of Church simply coalesce:

> 22. Such faithful, righteous people, scattered in several parts of the world, being the true congregations of God, or the Church of Christ, whom he saved, . . .
>
> 23. In this holy church hath God ordained the ministers of the Gospel, the doctrines of the holy Word, the use of the holy sacraments, the oversight of the poor, and the ministers of the same offices; . . .
>
> 24. And like as a body consisteth of divers parts, and every part hath its own proper work, seeing every part is not a hand, eye, or foot; so is it also the church of God; . . .[48]

---

[47] OC,30 (Lumpkin, pp. 318-19; italics mine); also OC,29 Lumpkin, p. 318). For the text of OC,39 see chap. 1, pp. 51-52.

[48] Helwys's A Short Confession, secs. 22-24 (Lumpkin, p. 108; italics mine). The General Baptist Standard Confession of 1660 also fails to distinguish clearly between universal and particular church:

> "V. That such who first orderly comes into, and are brought up in the School of Christs Church, and waiting there, comes to degrees of Christianity, rightly qualified and considerably gifted by Gods Spirit; ought to exercise their gifts not only in the Church, but also (as occasion serves) to preach to the World (they being approved of by the Church so to do) Acts 11. 22, 23, 24. Acts 11. 19, 20. . . .
>
> "XI. That the right and only way, of gathering Churches (according to Christs appointment, Mat. 28.19, 20) is first to teach, or preach the Gospel, Mark 16.16. . . ." (Standard Confession, 5; 11 [see Lumpkin, pp. 226 and 228]; italics mine).

Thus, resonant in this very early General Baptist statement is substantially the same view expressed by An Orthodox Creed of 1678. The latter, however, has elaborated upon the functions and authority of church assemblies and councils. General Baptists who formulated the 1678 Confession had no difficulty seeing the universal Church and the local churches in visible terms. Church was applied very comfortably to groups beyond local congregations; congregations were understood as the visible manifestation of the universal invisible and visible Church of Christ.

Here is a General Baptist understanding of Church that easily harmonizes with Griffith's application of Church to councils. Visible and invisible coalesce wherever Christ's Church is experienced. The various levels, however, are not all church in the same sense. General Baptists recognized this. Particular Baptists did too, although the latter preferred not to denominate their associations as church assemblies. Nevertheless, in practice, they accepted ecclesial functions for their associations, as this author shows in chapter 5. Norman H. Maring and Winthrop S. Hudson, in their recent manual of Baptist polity express the same opinion:

> In asserting that the church becomes most visible in local congregations, Baptists did not deny that it is also visible in larger bodies. The General Baptists specifically affirmed that the assembly of representatives of local churches should also be regarded as a church. The Particular Baptists made much the same point in their Discipline of 1798, by implication treating the association as another visible representation of the church. . . .[49]

---

[49]Norman H. Maring and Winthrop S. Hudson, A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1963), pp. 41-42.

Unfortunately Particular Baptists were not in close contact with General Baptists and hence lost the opportunity to profit from the latter's explicit statements about Church. Particular Baptists continued to shy away from applying the term Church to any visible group other than local congregations. For them, universal Church was generally understood as invisible only. The roots of such a spiritualized understanding of Christ's Church differed from those of General Baptists. The latter were influenced by a strong connectionalism among Dutch Anabaptist Mennonites.[50] Particular Baptists, on the other hand, participated directly in the English Separatist movement which assumed a strong independency of churches.[51]

The Roots of the Philadelphia Tradition of the Invisible Universal Church

The idea of the spiritual reality of the universal Church is, of course, common to all Protestantism. Indeed, spiritual unity in Christ through the work of the Spirit is a basic dimension to a Catholic understanding of Church. However, viewing Christ's catholic Church exclusively as a spiritual kingdom is a distinctive development within the Protestant Reformation exemplified in Puritan England.

A good example was the Puritan divine William Ames (1576-1633). John D. Eusden, in his recent introduction to Ames's work, indicates

---

[50]The Helwys Confession of 1610 is practically a reproduction of the Anabaptist Confession of Hans de Ries and Lubbert Gerrits, the Waterlander Confession of 1580 (Lumpkin, p. 102). Compare views of Church in Waterlander Confession, 24-26 to A Short Confession, 22-24 (Lumpkin, pp. 57-58 compared to pp. 108-9).

[51]On the origins of the General and the Particular Baptists see chap. 1, pp. 43-46.

that this early Puritan theologian followed the traditional Augustinian distinction between the visible and invisible Church:

> In book one, chapter thirty-two [of Marrow of Theology] Ames offers a traditional Augustinian distinction between the invisible and the visible church. The former is unseen, pure, essentially unknowable, including all people living, dead, or yet unborn whom God has chosen for salvation; the latter is visible, not entirely pure, and consists of only the living. In this and later sections on the church, he is most concerned with the visible body of Christ, or the local, instituted congregation.[52]

Ames exercised great influence among early English Puritans. He also had an impact upon Particular Baptists, especially through the Discipline of Benjamin Keach. The latter influenced P.B.A. authors of the Association's Disciplines of 1743 and 1798.

Though an Independent, Ames was not a strict Separatist. Yet his views of Church were close to that of Separatists. The latters' views were a manifestation of one of the two basic Protestant doctrines of the Church.

The first Protestant doctrine of Church was the more conservative. It saw the universal Church ideally as a visible body. By Christ's intention there was to be one visible Church throughout the world. Nevertheless, nations had a right to reform the Church even at the expense of visible unity throughout the world. Thus national Churches evolved, especially in places like Germany and England.

The second Protestant doctrine of the Church was more radical. Drawing upon the Augustinian distinction of visible-invisible Church

---

[52]John D. Eusden, ed., The Marrow of Theology, tr. from the 3rd. Latin ed. of William Ames [Medula Theologica (Amsterdam: 1629)] (Boston/Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1968), intro., p. 59.

it viewed the universal Church fundamentally as invisible. The actual membership of the Church is known only to Christ who elected the saints. Thus, no one can be sure who are the real members of the Church. Nevertheless, most who held this second view also insisted upon some outward and visible organization to congregations even though true membership was known only by Christ. They held one of three positions about the visibility of this invisible Church.

Among those maintaining the more radical view of Church some still thought that visible communion should be worldwide. Others felt it was only national, as an established Church, or territorial. These might be established Churches based on Episcopal or Presbyterian patterns, as happened in England; or they could be set up on a Congregational pattern as happened in New England. A third group holding the more radical view of Church were Independents. These were Free Church advocates, namely, they believed the Church should be free of civil authorities. Therefore they disagreed with the established Church concept. Moreover, independence for some meant that the only essential outward unity was each local congregation. In this view, therefore, the congregation is independent not only from civil power but also from any other ecclesiastical bodies.

The last group, the Independents, claimed the only essential outward or visible unity of Christ's Church was each distinct local congregation. National Churches or diocesan Churches were deemed undesirable because they had proven themselves threats against the divinely established rights of the local congregations.[53]

[53]See "Church," in DCC, p. 287.

Particular Baptists reflected the more radical thinking about Church. The roots of such radical views lay in the English Independency within Separatist movements. The Separatist A True Confession of 1596 influenced London Particular Baptists in their formulation of the Confessions of 1644 and 1677/89. A True Confession juxtaposed Christ's Church and the spiritual kingdom:

> 17 That in the meane tyme, bisides his absolute rule in the world, Christ hath here in earth a (y) spirituall Kingdome and ae canonicall regiment in his Church ouer his servants, which Church hee hath (z) purchased and redeemed to himself, . . . , (d) gathering and vniting thē together as members of one body in his faith, loue and holy order, vnto all generall and mutuall dutyes, (e) instructing & governing thē by such officers and lawes as hee hath prescribed in his word; by which Officers and lawes hee governeth his Church, and by (f) none other.
>
> ---
>
> y Joh. 18.36. Heb. 3,6. and 10.21 1 Tim. 3,15. Zach. 4,17. z Act. 20,28. Tit. 2,14. d Esa. 60,4.8. Psal. 110,3. Act. 2 41. Eph. 4,16. Col. 2,5.6. e Esa. 62,6. Jer. 3,15, Ezek. 34. Zech. 11,8. Heb. 12,28.29. Mat. 28,20. f Mat. 7,15. and 24.23.24. 2.Tim. 4,3.4. Jer. 7,30.31. and 23.21. Deu. 12,32. Reu. 2,2. & 22.18.19.[54]

This early Separatist A True Confession seems to place Christ's Church in apposition to the spiritual kingdom. At the same time, in later sections, it consistently uses "Christian congregation" to describe particular churches. The subtle distinction between Christian congregation and church appears in section 25, recalling the nuance in the Second London Confession (noted above.).[55]

---

[54] TC,17 (Lumpkin, p. 87; italics mine).

[55] See TC,19-21 compared to TC,22-25 (Lumpkin, pp. 88-89 compared to 89-90). It is also interesting that the ministry is discussed in the context of the Church in general (TC,19-21). On the distinction between congregation and church see above, pp. 236-37.

The First London Confession of Particular Baptists reflects Separatist ideas of the "spirituall Kingdome." The visibility of that kingdom is "a company of visible Saints." Chapter 33 of the 1644 Confession states:

> That Christ hath here on earth a spirituall Kingdome, which is the Church, which he hath purchased and redeemed to himselfe, as a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints, called & separated from the world, . . .[56]

The similarity between the London Confession of 1644 and the earlier A True Confession is clear. At the same time, the Particular Baptists made more explicit the spiritual kingdom's identity with the Church. As Lumpkin states the Confession of 1644 places a novel stress upon the invisible Church.[57] Particular Baptists also made explicit what accounts for the visibility of the invisible Church of Christ, namely, "a company of visible Saints." The same terms visible saints, as noted above, appeared in the Second London Confession of 1677/89 as an alteration of the Savoy statement.[58]

In expressing their ideas, therefore, Particular Baptists who formulated the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession drew upon the heritage of ideas and terminology within Separatism in England. Particular Baptists, however, did not accept all the ideas of the Separatists. They retained, for example, a place for a fellowship of

---

[56] 1L,33 (see Lumpkin, p. 165; italics mine).

[57] Lumpkin, pp. 144-46.

[58] See "visible saints" in P,27.2 (A421-22) and the discussion above, p. 221.

churches that found expression in a permanent church polity, the association. Nevertheless, the fact that Particular Baptists truly shared Independent views of the invisible Church cannot be doubted.

The Particular (and P.B.A.) Baptist views in the confessional statements have their origins in earlier Separatist confessions. Moreover, the only explicit references in P.B.A. sources to a visible Church (with the exception of Griffith's essay) are those that deal with particular congregations. Thus, within P.B.A. sources, the universal Church is virtually always, explicitly or implicitly, treated as the invisible kingdom of Christ.

Some additional historical explanations for this phenomenon can be given to explain further why Particular Baptists, and the P.B.A., accepted the Separatist, Independent view of universal Church as invisible.

The Historical Reasons for the Explicit Philadelphia Tradition about the Invisible Universal Church

One can point to several historical reasons why Particular Baptists and the later P.B.A. Baptists make no explicit reference to a visible universal Church.

First, as noted in the previous section, the roots of Particular Baptists lay in English Independency. Particular Baptist ideas have an affinity to the radical Independent view of Church within British Separatism. The focus in such a doctrine of the Church was primarily upon the spiritual reality of Christ's Church and upon the rights of the independent congregations. For the Independents, the

visible universal Church exists only on the local level; the visible catholic Church is thus bypassed without, however, being explicitly denied!

Second, Particular Baptists, unlike some Separatists, were not interested in purifying the existing established Church of England. As Independents they sought to return to a biblical pattern which they understood as the Congregational model of church, one that left no room for a visible established Church on a national level. Hence the focus was almost exclusively upon Christ's Church as made visible in gathered congregations of visible saints.

Third, Particular Baptists were not interested in a comprehensive theology of Church. Being pragmatists, their theology was mainly at the service of immediate needs, namely, to vindicate the congregational pattern and to assert its church-power as independent of any ecclesiastical organization beyond the local church. Thus, Particular Baptists came to view the visible Church exclusively in terms of local congregations and formulated their ecclesiological statements exclusively in reference to that local seat of church authority and power.

Fourth, the very definition of church-power (discussed in chapter 4) was an ecclesiological statement that restricted the horizons of Particular Baptists. In the opinion of this author there was no more limiting factor in the Philadelphia tradition of the Church than its absolutizing of an incomplete understanding of the essential powers of the Church. Thus, paradoxically, the very Christians given to a pragmatic approach in theology found themselves unwittingly

locked into a theological statement about church-power that was more restrictive than the biblical evidence which they professed to be their only infallible rule.[59]

Fifth, among P.B.A. Baptists throughout the eighteenth century the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 functioned as the sustaining focal point to direct P.B.A. theological views. That Confession had crystallized a Particular Baptist spiritualized view of universal Church inherited from the First London Confession and the English Separatists. The Philadelphia Confession remained in possession during the whole period under study, and no one thought to question its expression about the Church of Christ.

Some of the above historical facts are discussed in greater detail below under the consideration of the local congregation and church-power. For the moment the above comments indicate in a general way why Particular Baptists, and their descendants the P.B.A. Baptists, lost conscious contact with a sense of the visible Catholic Church.

A very significant fact for this study needs to be underlined clearly for re-emphasis: Particular Baptists in their Second London (Philadelphia) Confession, and the P.B.A. Baptists in their official statements, nowhere explicitly deny that the universal Church is visible. What they explicitly disown is that any combination of churches beyond the local congregations has power over the latter in matters of calling officers, ordaining them, admitting and dismissing

---

[59]See discussion on essential church-power below, chap. 4, pp. 328-63, and 351. The P.B.A. definition does not include the authority to evangelize.

members, and disciplining church members. Whether other real functions of the association can be properly viewed as activities essential to Church life remains a basic question of this study.

Having considered the evidence of the Philadelphia tradition about the universal Church and the historical reasons why the Church's visibility has been limited to the local congregation, the author now considers various elements pointing to a paradox--that the P.B.A. Baptists in practice accepted a visible "Church" operative on levels beyond the congregation.

Some Paradoxical Indications that Philadelphia Baptists in Practice Accepted the Visible Church beyond the Local Congregation

It is clear that the Baptists of the P.B.A. in their official associational statements never applied the term Church to any visible groups other than local congregations (with the exception of Griffith's analogous use in his essay noted above). Nevertheless, there are other expressions and actions of the Association which reveal a sense of a broader visible ecclesial fellowship than the local churches.

Within the eighteenth century life of the P.B.A. the following evidences of a belief in a visible universal Church can be noted: (1) the broader fellowship epitomized by the very existence and the functions of church councils and of the P.B.A. itself (especially functions touching upon aspects of the internal life of the member churches, namely, censure of ministers, care for the ministry, maintenance of doctrinal purity, hearing complaints against churches, concerted efforts to help churches lacking officers, and so forth, all

discussed in greater detail below);[60] (2) the use of the terms fellowship and communion contrasted to excommunication; (3) the practice of extending the right hand of fellowship; (4) the call to "unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace"; and (5) the use of the terms Church and Body of Christ in the minutes of proceedings of the P.B.A.

The Use of the Terms Fellowship, Communion and Excommunication

The P.B.A. uses the idea of fellowship to characterize various levels of church life. The term describes relationships (1) between individual Christians when they are constituted a distinct church, (2) between the Christian and Christ, (3) between churches as such in associations, and (4) between associations as such.[61]

Similarly, the term communion is often used in apposition to fellowship. Communion is applied to (1) Christians (saints) related to Christ, especially in the Lord's Supper, (2) Christians related to

---

[60] Other contrary indications involve activities of the association discussed below, especially touching upon the role of messengers and the P.B.A.'s functions concerned with internal affairs of members church, i.e., calling of officers and ordinations, admission and dismissal of members, and church censures (see below, chap. 5, pp. 478-90). Shurden in his study (pp. 151-54) has established that eighteenth century Baptist associations (mostly other than P.B.A.) had assumed powers in areas that encroached upon the rights of local independent churches.

[61] For (1) see P,28.1: "have fellowship in His Grace" (A598) and P,28.2: "maintain an holy Fellowship" with each other (A609). For (2) see P,30.1: baptism as "a sign of his Fellowship with him [Christ]" (A642-43). For (3) see 2P,11, title: "Of the Fellowship and Communion of Churches" (A2262A). For (4) see P.B.A. to Warren: "first opportunity of commencing Christian fellowship and acquaintance with you" (A1655-56).

each other in a local congregation, and (3) churches related in associations.[62]

When one considers the use of the opposite notion, excommunication, he discovers it is restricted to one level only, that of communion with the local congregation:

> Excommunication is a judicial Act or Censure of the Church, upon an Offender, by the Authority of Jesus Christ, . . .
>
> . . . The said Pastor, Minister, or Elder in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Presence of the Congregation, and by and with the Consent and according to the Judicial Sentence of the Church, cuts off, and secludes such an Offender by Name, from the Union & Communion of the Church, because of his Offences: . . .
>
> Which Exclusion carries in it the full Sense of our Lord's Words, Mat. 18. 17. . . . ; which is an authoritative putting of such a Person out of the Communion of the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven; into the World, the Kingdom of Satan, . . .[63]

---

[62]For (1) see P,32.1: Supper as "Pledge of their Communion with him and with each other: (A705-6); P,32.8: "unfit to enjoy Communion with Christ" (A774-75). For (2) see P,27.14: "hold Communion amongst themselves [individuals and churches]" (A568); P,28, title: "Of the Communion of Saints: and P,28.1: "Communion in each other's Gifts and Graces" (A601-2); P,28.2: "which Communion" and "Communion one with another as Saints" (A616; 625); 1P, p. 25: "do receive such an one into the communion and fellowship of the Church in particular" (A1096-98); 1P, p. 29: "neglect not his Duty of Care over, and constant communion with his fellow Members"; 1P, p. 30: "the most intimate Fellowship and Communion in all the Parts of Religion" (A1114-15); 1P, pp. 43-44; re. suspension: "Communion at the Lord's Table" and "debar a Member from Communion" and "Brother in Union tho' not in Communion." For (3) see P,27.14: "hold Communion amongst themselves [individuals and churches]" (A568); P,27.15: "many Churches holding Communion together" (A581); 1P, p. 57, title: "Of the Communion of Churches" (A1357A); 1P, p. 59: "ought to maintain Communion together in many Duties" (A1412-13); 1P, p. 62: "many Churches holding Communion together, should meet by their Messengers and Delegates" (A1465-68); G, p. 61: "in order that every church in confederation may withdraw from such in all acts of church communion" (A1534-35); 2P,11, title: "Of the Fellowship and Communion of Churches" (A2263A).

[63]1P, pp. 44-48 (A1243-45; A1329-36; A1342-50). (Italics mine.) Also 2P,10.14 (A2170-76); 2P,10.20: "20. This exclusion is an authoritative putting of such a person out of the church, to keep

The term excommunication therefore has a technical meaning in the P.B.A. sources. It applies only to the severing of that relationship which exists between a church member and the local congregation. Moreover, as discussed below, according to gospel order, only the congregation as a whole has the power and the right to pass such a dire sentence.

The terminology used to describe the severing of an association's affiliation with a delinquent member church is similar to that employed in excommunication, namely, to exclude, withdraw, or disown, but the severing of church affiliation with the association is never called excommunication. Griffith, in his essay on the positive power of an association over member churches, uses the terms exclude, withdraw and disown in reference to the severing of relations with a disorderly church of the association. Besides the duty of all godly men to withdraw from a "defective and disorderly church," the association must also exercise a positive act of dismissal. The reason is because the association had a positive link through voluntary confederation with the irregular church. The association's action for dismissal, however, is not one of excommunication. Griffith states:

> . . . But if there be a confederation and incorporation, by mutual and voluntary consent, as the Association of churches must and ought to be, then something positive may and ought to be done; and, though an Association ought not to assume a power to excommunicate or deliver a defective or disorderly church to Satan, as some do claim, yet it is a power sufficient to exclude the delegates of a defective and disorderly church from an Association, and to refuse their presence at their consultations,

---

it pure, . . ." (A2206-7). (Italics mine; Jones questions the biblical basis from Matt. 18:17 for church excommunication [see A2180-81]).

> and to advise all the churches in confederation to do so too. . . . But in the capacity of a congregational church, dealing with her own members, an Association, then, of the delegates of associate churches, may exclude and withdraw from defective and unsound or disorderly churches or persons, in manner aforesaid; and this will appear regular and justifiable by the light and law of nature, . . .[64]

It is interesting to note that Griffith justifies his view "by the light and law of nature" and not directly from the gospels. He therefore stops short of a truly theological basis for the power of an association. He does, however, argue from precedents in church history to justify the P.B.A. He mentions specifically the practice of London Particular Baptists:

> . . . And the same author [Bingham] observes, that they [bishops in council] disowned the faulty, and advertised all the churches of the same. And Mr. Crosby relates, that an Association in London did disown a certain disorderly church in London, and did caution all the churches they were related to, not to countenance their meetings and thus an Association may disown and withdraw from a defective or disorderly church, and advise the churches related to them to withdraw from, and to discountenance such as aforesaid, without exceeding the bounds of their power.[65]

For Baptists, of course, such arguments from tradition are not, strictly speaking, theological (biblical).[66]

Samuel Jones favored the term exclude to describe the association's withdrawing from a delinquent member church. Associations should "exclude from the connection" such disorderly churches. "If

---

[64] G, p. 62 (A1552-70). (Italics mine.)

[65] G, p. 63 (A1597-1605). (Italics mine.)

[66] For Baptists, esp. in the eighteenth century, theological connotes biblical (see intro. definition, ecclesiology, p. 35).

satisfactory reasons are not given therefore, nor reformation of delinquent churches, then to exclude them."[67]

What appears from a consideration of the evidence is that in their use of the positive terms fellowship and communion Philadelphia Baptists acknowledged several levels to the visible bond between Christians: interpersonal between Christians, ecclesial in the church, and interchurch in the association. The negative concept of excommunication, however, was specifically limited to the one level of the local congregation dealing with its members. The severing of visible ties between churches in an association was never described as excommunication, nor was it technically called schism. As Griffith notes in the 1743 Discipline:

> . . . Such a Separation or Departure [of a member] is very sinful, for these and like Reasons. . . . (7) It is Schism: If there is such a Thing in the World, it is of particular Churches, 1 Cor. 11.18. ch. 12.25. . . .[68]

The above evidence of a disparity between the positive and negative descriptions of church affiliation raises a basic question. How is it possible for P.B.A. Baptists to see visible communion and fellowship at many levels, and yet restrict the notions schism and excommunication to only one, the local congregation?

The simplest explanation is that Philadelphia Baptists viewed ecclesial communion fundamentally in spiritual terms, and, according to the Philadelphia tradition, the only visible expression of that spiritual communion in the Body of Christ is the visible gathered

---

[67] 2P,12.6 (A2327) and 2P,12.10 (A2365-67).

[68] 1P, p. 51.7.

church, the local congregation. Therefore, excommunication, as a severing of the relationship with the Church, applies only to one's relationship to the local church.[69]

Moreover, in the minds of Philadelphia Baptists there were different types of covenants between Christians. The church covenant was one clearly seen as the voluntary and mutual bond among professed and baptized Christians, a bond required in obedience to Christ's commands in Scripture. The association covenant, however, was seen as a voluntary confederation among independent churches, not clearly commanded in Scripture (though exemplified in Acts 15). Particular Baptists based their voluntary associations (discussed below) not upon Christ's command but upon simple bonds dependent upon the will of the member churches. Thus associations were viewed ostensibly as human organizations, useful to church life, but nevertheless much like any other human organization. To be dismissed from an association did not mean to be excommunicated from the church.[70]

Thus, excommunication and gospel covenant were notions limited only to the local congregation. The severing of ties of Christian fellowship on the associational level was of a different order. Excommunication, according to church discipline required by Christ in the gospel, applied only to church membership. It was sometimes described as the excluding of members, disowning members, and

---

[69]On the gathered church see chap. 4; on excommunication, pp. 352-57.

[70]On the association see chap. 5; on the association and church covenants, pp. 441-47.

withdrawing from fellowship. The latter terms, when applied to local churches, were synonymous with excommunication, but the same was not the case when the terms were applied to associations. Disowning, excluding, and withdrawing from member churches in an association was not excommunication because by gospel standards in the view of Philadelphia Baptists associations were qualitatively different from local churches.

Of course this was on the explicit and conscious level. Implicitly, the P.B.A. reflected a different belief in the nature of the association as Church.[71]

The above explanation of the apparent discrepancy between the positive and negative descriptions of church fellowship in the P.B.A. points to the need to examine further the practice of the association in relationship to its expressed theory. It will be shown that like the terms church and excommunication, the notions of covenant and of church-power suffer from a limited P.B.A. application to one level only, that of the local congregation. The fact is that as a visible organization the P.B.A. and church councils functioned in such ways that the Church of Christ was present visibly at the service of

---

[71] From a Catholic point of view one might suggest that the P.B.A. Baptists had a more complete orthopraxis than orthodoxy. In saying this, the author also believes that a limited orthodoxy (in terms of explicit theology) does not mean heterodoxy. A good example of limited orthodoxy was pre-Vatican II; an adequate statement about ecclesiology in Catholic tradition has appeared late on the scene, i.e., around 1965 in Vatican II. Moreover, some aspects of Catholic ecclesiology are still open to lively debate, e.g., the nature of papal infallibility, papal primacy related to the college of bishops, and sensus fidelium related to defined church teaching.

independent churches. This will become more evident in further discussions of the local church, the council and the association.

It is true that an explicit and systematic theology to justify associational church polity is lacking in the P.B.A. sources. Yet it is a contention of this study that the basic theological principles needed to formulate such a theology are implicitly present in the positive statements in the sources. Those principles remain fundamental to any serious attempt to reconstruct the P.B.A.'s eighteenth century theology of church authority. One of the main reasons for the present study is to uncover the principles behind the Philadelphia Baptist tradition.

The Symbolic Act of Extending the Right Hand of Fellowship

The fellowship and communion that existed at several levels in the P.B.A. was celebrated in public acts. Representatives of the church or of the association extended the "right hand of Fellowship" to the parties publicly received into fellowship. That act was used in at least three different kinds of situations to recognize the beginning of fellowship.

First, to receive a new member in an established church. The first Discipline of 1743 describes the reception of a newly baptized member who has publicly acknowledged his willingness to walk in fellowship with the local church: "the Pastor, Minister, or Elders, as presiding in the Acts of the Church's Power, do receive such an one into Communion and fellowship of that Church in particular."

The later Discipline of 1798 specifies the minister's public act as extending the right hand of fellowship:

> 12. In doing this [receiving new members], the Minister, after a brief introduction, enquires whether they will watch and be watched over, give and receive admonition and reproof as occasion may require, . . . : which having promised, he gives them the right hand of fellowship, bids them a welcome among the disciples, prays, and gives out a suitable Hymn. . . .[72]

Second, to constitute professed Christians as a new church. The same public sign is used on the occasion of the constitution of a new church. Jones's Discipline indicates the established procedure for recognizing a newly constituted church as an essential gospel church:

> 9. After a suitable sermon has been preached, the acting minister, being furnished with a list of the names of the candidates, and they standing before him, is to interrogate them: . . . , and the minister pronounces them, in the name of the Lord Jesus, a regular gospel church, giving them, or their representative, the right hand of fellowship, and wishing them prosperity in the Lord. . .[73]

Third, to receive a new church into an association. In accepting a new member church into the Association the P.B.A. made use of the same public token of fellowship once it was convinced that the church seeking entrance believed and practiced all the essentials of the Philadelphia associated churches. In his account of the P.B.A. Morgan Edwards indicates the process of accepting new churches into the Association:

> 4. The way of admitting churches into this assocication is, by petitions from the churches proposing, showing forth

---

[72] 2P, 9.12 (A2119-31); also 1K, p. 7; for 1P, p. 24 (A1094-95).

[73] 2P, 1.9 (A1760-76).

> their desire of admission; their faith; order; and purpose to be comformable to the rules of the associated body. When a petition be read by the clerk, the moderator puts it to the vote, whether such a church shall, or shall not be received? Consent being had, the same moderator publishes, that the said church is a member of the association; in token whereof he, in behalf of the whole, gives the right hand of fellowship to the delegates of the received church; and orders them to take their places in the association.[74]

Thus, the positive and public act of church affiliation, at several levels, was the extending of the right hand of fellowship. Representatives of the churches involved, or of the association, acted in a public way to show the Church's communion with a new member, whether an individual or a church.

In this practice of extending the right hand of fellowship one finds a living symbol in the life of the P.B.A. Baptists that they believed and practiced a visible church fellowship beyond the local congregation. Apparently there was not a high level of awareness about Christ's visible Church active at the associational level. Yet the communion in Christ's Church was visibly celebrated in the simple but solemn act of Christians shaking hands. The practice of extending the right hand of fellowship was but another indication, paradoxical to explicit theory, that P.B.A. Baptists accepted a visible fellowship in Christ beyond the local congregation. It might be best to view the practice on the associational level in an analogous sense. Even then, however, one can suppose an implicit recognition of visible Church operating in some way in the P.B.A. itself.

---

[74]P.B.A. Plan, sec. 4 in E, p. 108 (B292-304); see also Warren, Plan, p. 4 (B218-27). (Italics mine.)

The Call to Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace

In addition to the terminology and public act that characterized Christian relationships among Philadelphia Baptists, another paradoxical indication that the P.B.A. accepted, in practice, a visible church is the call to live out the Pauline injunction: "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The call to follow St. Paul's advice is frequently addressed to member churches by the P.B.A. A good example is the letter of the Association to the church at Kingswood. In 1773 the church applied for help to the P.B.A. The latter commissioned Abel Morgan (the younger) to write to the troubled community. His response expands upon the Christian duty of church members to strive for unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:

> Beloved brethren,--Whereas you have, in your letter, informed the Association that you are not agreed among yourselves about the genuine sense of that place of Scripture, John xiii., relative to washing the saints' feet; and also request the Association to give you their opinion of it. The Association, taking the same into consideration, are not so happy as to be universally agreed themselves in the point, so as to give you the fixed determined sense of the words; and not choosing at present to enter into disputes upon the subject, they thought proper to choose I should write you a line upon the occasion desiring (which is also my earnest desire) to avoid all unbecoming heats, perverse disputings, contentions, hard thoughts, and evil speaking among yourselves on this account; but rather to forbear with one another in love, that though you cannot see alike in all things, yet you should follow the things that make for peace; for hereunto were ye called. Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. . .[75]

In the minds of members of the P.B.A., this primary responsibility of Christians is facilitated by the Association. Throughout

---

[75]Gillette, 73:130-31. (Italics mine.)

the eighteenth century the Association frequently pointed to the churches' duties to work towards unity in peace.[76] The Association viewed its own role as one of facilitating the attempt of the churches to achieve gospel unity in peace. In 1788 it reminded constituent churches of its purpose and of its plans for future circular letters:

> The messengers of the Baptist churches, belonging to the Philadelphia Association, met in the city of Philadelphia, October 7th, 1788.
>
> To the churches with whom they are connected, greeting.
>
> Beloved brethren,--The great design of our annual meeting is to promote the welfare of the church of Christ, by giving our advice in difficult cases, and by the use of every other means, to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. To accomplish this end, it has been thought expedient to select a chapter of our Confession of faith annually, to be the foundation of our circular letter. . . .[77]

The Charleston Association underscored the same function in its description of an association in the Church Discipline of 1831.

> These and other advantages arising from an association, must induce every godly church to desire an union with such a body: but should any stand off, it would argue much self-sufficiency, Rev. iii. 17, and little or no desire after the unity of the spirit, Eph. iv. 3, or mutual edification, 1 Cor. xii. 11-14.[78]

In his 1789 sermon before the Charleston Association, Richard Furman, active also within the P.B.A., applied the same fundamental Christian duty to the churches, to strive for unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace among each other.[79]

---

[76] For earlier references prior to 1773 see Gillette: 29:30; 34:35; 39:40; 53:69; 63:90; 67:102; 70:115; and 72:126.

[77] Gillette, 88:239. (Italics mine.)

[78] CD, p. 164 (B1320-25). (Italics mine.)

[79] "But however distinct, and independent of each other, the different congregational churches may be, respecting the support of

All of the references to St. Paul's exhortation assume a practical and concrete (visible) unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. What the P.B.A. is talking about is the Christian life as it is meant to be lived in church fellowship. Behind the Pauline challenge is the assumption that unity with Christ involves harmony among the churches as well as among the visible saints. To achieve this unity requires the care of the association in its ecclesial function of serving the member churches.

The Use of the Terms Church and the Body of Christ in the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

While the P.B.A. official sources in this study do not use the term Church to describe visible groups beyond the local congregation (except Griffith's essay) there are many examples of the casual use of the term Church in the proceedings of the P.B.A. At times the connotation in the use of the term is one of a visible Church encompassing all of Christ's disciples, at least those in association with the P.B.A.

The 1788 circular letter cited above indicates that the "great design of our annual meeting [in the P.B.A.] is to promote the welfare of the church of Christ." One could insist upon interpreting such a reference as invisible Church, but the context allows for another

---

worship, and exercise of discipline; a strict regard should be ever had to union and harmony among them: That the unity of the spirit, which pervades the whole, may be kept in the bond of peace. Nor is this simply a prudential matter; it is the will and express command of HIM, . . ." (Furman, p. 13 [B881-89]).

understanding. The P.B.A. is talking about the real life situation among constituent churches! Similar uses of Church in a universal sense appear in the latter part of the eighteenth century.[80]

The biblical image Body of Christ also appears, though rarely, in the Association minutes. In the opening sentence of the circular letter of 1756, for example, the Association announces, "We your messengers and fellow members of the same mystical body . . ." The following year the correspondence begins, "Dear brethren and fellow members of the mystical body of which Jesus is the head, we your delegates . . ."[81]

The biblical image of the Church, of course, also appears in the Philadelphia Confession, as well as in Jones's 1798 Church Discipline. Such uses, however, relate directly or implicitly to an invisible Body of Christ. The term, though, when employed by the P.B.A. in its proceedings, suggests more than that, namely, the actual fellowship among the P.B.A. churches,[82]

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA TRADITION OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The above discussion has unfolded both the explicit Philadelphia tradition of universal invisible Church and elements in the

---

[80]See the following places in Gillette: 83:194; 88:239; 89:250; and 93:293.

[81]See Gillette, 56:73 and 57:75. Furman uses the body of Christ in a spiritual sense: "The church, collectively considered, is called the body of Christ and is also represented, by a variety of other metaphors and similies, in the word of God: . . ." (p. 10 [B774-77]).

[82]Body of Christ occurs, for example, in P,27.1 (A413); and 2P,1.13 (A1800).

P.B.A.'s church life which paradoxically suggest a visible ecclesial fellowship beyond local congregations. A consideration of the P.B.A.'s theory and practice of universal Church leads to the following conclusions.

First, virtually all the explicit statements about the universal Church in the P.B.A. sources of this study stress the invisible nature of Christ's universal Church. The only allusion to a visible Church appears in Griffith's essay in which he mentions that occasional church councils "were looked upon as one Church."

Second, the roots for such a spiritualized view of universal Church among Philadelphia Baptists lie remotely in Protestantism's acceptance of the Augustinian distinction between invisible and visible Church. More proximately William Ames's views affected Particular Baptists, especially Benjamin Keach's Church Discipline. Moreover, the Separatist A True Confession and the First London Confession helped to shape Particular Baptist ideas about a spiritual Church (kingdom). Thus, Particular Baptists came to adopt the more radical theology of Church accepted by English Separatists who were Independents, and this theology of Church came to be expressed in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession.

Third, historical reasons help to explain why Philadelphia Baptists accepted a spiritualized view of universal Church. Among these reasons are the following: roots in British Independency; primary focus upon Congregational church polity; a pragmatic approach to theology; a restricted view of church-power; and the influence of the Philadelphia Confession upon the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century.

Fourth, the explicit statements about the spiritualized sense of universal Church in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession remained unchanged throughout the eighteenth century life of the P.B.A. This associational Confessional was a key factor that influenced eighteenth century P.B.A. theology about universal Church and helped that theology to remain relatively fixed. Moreover, the P.B.A. experienced no pressing need to adjust its understanding of Church. The authors within the Association concentrated upon the local congregation as the visible manifestation of Christ's Church, and upon a congregation's independence from every other distinct gospel church. Therefore, any valid forms of association among churches always had to be justified in terms that safeguarded the P.B.A.'s expressed independent church polity.

Fifth, the Philadelphia tradition of universal Church provides another convincing and supportative argument for the first principle of interpretation noted in chapter 2, namely, the unsystematic and pragmatic nature of P.B.A. theology.[83] Philadelphia Baptists explicitly and consciously sought to affirm the nature of a visible gospel church. The need for a fuller theology of universal Church apparently was not recognized, or those who recognized the need could not develop a fuller theology in an atmosphere that demanded the continual affirmation of the independent character of local congregations running their own church affairs. In the view of this author,

---

[83]On this first principle of interpretation see chap. 2, pp. 205-6.

therefore, an explicit and fully developed P.B.A. theology of Church is lacking in eighteenth century sources, even from the point of view of valid eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist praxis.

Sixth, within the practice of the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century one can see operative a praxis that implicitly accepts visible Church beyond the local congregations, namely, in such experiences as communion and fellowship, the public ceremony of extending the right hand of fellowship, the P.B.A.'s role in promoting the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and especially in the functions of the P.B.A. itself (discussed below). Another highly significant indication of a sense of visible universal Church is the practice of allowing ordained ministers to serve needy churches.[84] In practice, therefore, the Philadelphia Baptist sense of universal Church was not diametrically opposed to the explicit General Baptists affirmations about a visible universal Church.

Seventh, the evidence in the practice of the eighteenth century P.B.A. points to several levels of visible Church among Philadelphia Baptists. Those levels are suggested by the use of the terms mentioned in number 5, and especially by the functions of the Association. This evidence is important for this study of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority because it points to an implicit principle of analogy functionally at work in the life of the P.B.A.

---

[84]On the functions of the P.B.A. see chap. 5, pp. 465-96. on the P.B.A.'s high regard for ministry see above, pp. 235, 240, 275, and esp. discussion in chap. 4, pp. 332-48.

Eighth, the Philadelphia theory of Church recognized only one level of visible-invisible church, the local congregation. At least to this extent P.B.A. Baptists acknowledged that the two aspects of Christ's Church are present in the same reality. However, in their formulation of the nature of Church, Philadelphia Baptists have not retained an explicit awareness of the interplay of visible and invisible aspects at other levels. Their vision was limited to the local congregation and they defined visible church solely in terms of the distinct local congregation.

At least at the level of local congregation there is an explicit principle at work, namely the invisible-visible nature of the church of Christ. That principle is basic to any attempts at a valid reconstruction of the P.B.A. theology of church authority.

It is interesting, though tangential to this study, to point out that the P.B.A. eighteenth century understanding of Church is not as explicit as some modern Baptist statements about levels of visibility of the Church of Christ. British Baptists especially, impelled by ecumenical contacts with the Church of England, have been more alert to manifestations of Church beyond the local congregation than have Americans. In recent years, however, especially in the 1950s, American Baptists have also recognized different levels of visible Church. A good example of the contemporary British Baptist view is that of Arthur Dakin:

> . . . As we see it, then, for Baptists, the Church of God is the whole complete company of the people of God; and this is the one true Church, holy and catholic. Of this, one manifestation is the local church where sincere Christians are met

> together in the name of the Lord; another such manifestation is each denomination in its corporate witness; and yet another is the great body of Christians throughout the world realizing in any degree their unity and acting upon it. But apart from visible unity altogether, the church militant is rightly regarded as being composed of all true Christians living in any part of the earth. This is the visible manifestation of the invisible Church of God.[85]

Ninth and finally, it bears emphasizing, that in its official statements the P.B.A. nowhere denies that visible Church exists on levels other than local congregations. What is explicitly denied is the existence of any authority beyond the local church to interfere in the internal affairs of the churches. Beyond the local congregation there is no seat of authority that has the church-power which is explicitly defined in the sources. Are there, however, dimensions of church life that have ecclesiological significance beyond the elements of church-power? Moreover, in its activities that involve the internal exercise of church-power, does the P.B.A. have some ecclesial significance in its role as servant of the churches?[86] These questions are treated below.

---

[85]Dakin, p. 10; another British Baptist, Ernest A. Payne, writes that ekklesia in the New Testament "was one Church in many manifestations; it was not many Churches in one convention" (Fellowship of Believers, p. 121), citing P. T. Forsyth, The Church and the Sacraments (1917), p. 62 and chaps. 2 and 3 passim. On American Baptist discussions about Church in the 1950s, both north and south, see sources cited in intro., p. 13, n. 23.

[86]This precise usage of ecclesiological (and ecclesial) in this study connotes a theological level which, by Baptist explicit standards, must also be biblically based. Ecclesiology in this work relates to doctrinal truths expressed in Scripture (see definitions in intro., p. 35).

In summary, the P.B.A. explicitly proclaims in its official statements a universal Church that is invisible only. Historical reasons, and not just theological ones, explain why Particular Baptists expressed such a view. There are, moreover, several indications in the life of the eighteenth century P.B.A. that in practice its members accepted a visible fellowship beyond the local congregation. While official sources do not express such broader fellowship and communion in ecclesiological terms, it is the contention of this author that, in practice, the P.B.A. lived a broader ecclesial fellowship.[87]

From a Catholic point of view, therefore, the praxis of the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century reveals a more complete though implicit theology of Church than its explicit Independent church polity. Moreover, as this study indicates, the practice of the P.B.A. can be expressed in ecclesiological terms by simply making more explicit those principles implicit in the Philadelphia tradition--principles based upon actual theological statements.

The present chapter considered the complex questions of the Philadelphia tradition about universal Church and the historical factors that help to explain the apparent discrepancy between the theory and the practice of the P.B.A. The interpretation of paradoxical associational practices does not provide conclusive proof that the Association believed in a visible Church at levels beyond the

---

[87]This contention about a broader ecclesial fellowship is supported by the observations of Maring and Husdon re. visible Churches (see citation above, p. 248) and by the the discussion on councils and associations (see below, chap. 5, passim; esp. pp. 447-55).

local congregation. The study must proceed to a positive exposition of P.B.A. views about the local church and the association as these are explicitly expressed in the Association's sources. From such positive evidence the author gathers more of the basic principles behind the Philadelphia tradition of church and church authority. The next chapter considers at length the official P.B.A. view of the local congregation as the gathered church of visible saints.

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION AS GATHERED CHURCH OF VISIBLE SAINTS

The positive teaching of the Philadelphia tradition about the visible Church, as suggested in the previous section, centers upon the local congregation. Both the comparative analysis of the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession and the extended discussion of the views of universal Church in the P.B.A. documents have touched upon aspects of the Association's understanding of visible churches. These aspects must be considered in greater detail to uncover the explicit teaching of the Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century.

Comparative viewpoints or critical comments appear only in those instances when they facilitate the exposition. Otherwise the section presents the positive understanding of visible churches as expressed in official Philadelphia Baptist sources.[1]

The exposition considers first the distinction between an essential and a complete church, a distinction grounded in a Congregational view of the Church.

---

[1]For a listing of these official sources see above, chap. 3, p. 214.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN AN ESSENTIAL AND A COMPLETE CHURCH

Nowhere do the P.B.A. sources provide a succinct definition of local church. Yet all the sources reflect a remarkable consistency about the elements involved in the constitution of a local church.[2]

First of all the P.B.A. sources all reflect a distinction between an essential and a complete (Owen uses organical) church. The later Discipline of 1798 gives the typical understanding of an essential church contrasted to a complete church:

> 15. A particular church, constituted as above [outlined in sections three through fourteen], is said to be a church essential, but not complete, while destitute of officers. . . .[3]

Very simply, an essential church is a group of baptized believers gathered in obedience to Christ and committed by mutual covenant to living according to His ordinances in the Scriptures. As such, the church still lacks its own officers, but it is already the "subject of the Keys" with power to govern itself and to call its own officers. Any group that qualifies can be constituted into an essential church even though it still be lacking candidates for the teaching ministry.

---

[2]The best short description of church in a Particular Baptist confession is 1L,33 (cited on p. 284; taken from Lumpkin, p. 165). This Confession lies behind the 2L and P versions.

[3]2P,1.15 (A1816-18). (Italics mine.) See also 1P, p. 9.6 (A876); 1P, p. 8.3 (A842); and Furman, p. 11 (B800). John Owen was among the first to use the essential-complete distinction: "This therefore is the Church Essential and Homogeneal, unto which the Lord Christ hath granted all that Church Power which we enquire after, . . .

"4. But yet this Church State is not compleat; nor are the ends of its institution attainable in this State. . ." (Owen, p. 36). Benjamin Keach ambiguously uses the term organical to characterize the complete church: "And so the Pastor [constituting a church] to give them the right Hand of Fellowship of a Church, or Church Organical." (1K,

A completed church (Keach ambiguously uses organical) is one that has its own officers and is therefore empowered to execute, through a gospel ministry, all that is needed for its own church life. The Philadelphia Confession gives a typical description of the church "compleatly organized" according to the Philadelphia tradition:

> 8. A particular Church gathered, and compleatly organized according to the Mind of Christ, consists of Officers and Members: And the Officers appointed by Christ to be chosen . . . are (p) Bishops or Elders and Deacons.
>
> (p) Acts 20.17, with verse 28. Phil. 1.1.[4]

As noted above, while an essentially constituted church of the P.B.A. lacks its own officers it could have the gospel preached and the ordinances administered through the services of a minister called from another congregation. Griffith, as well as Jones in the 1798 Discipline, asserts that the ordinances can be supplied by officers from other churches. Griffith's essay states:

> . . . ; but that each particular church hath a complete power and authority from Jesus Christ, to administer all gospel ordinances, provided they have a sufficiency of officers duly qualified, or that they be supplied by the officers of another sister church or churches, . . .[5]

---

p. 7). Morgan Edwards makes reference to essential-complete (E, p. 4.3, n. 1).

[4] P,27.8 (A481-92). (Italics mine.) PS,7 reads: "completed according to;" PS,9 (inserted as part of P,27.8) reads: "Pastors, Teachers, Elders and Deacons." See also 1P, p. 10 (A883); 2P,1.15 (A1817); Furman, p. 10 (B802); and Charleston Discipline, p. 130.3 (B1111-16).

[5] G, p. 61 (A1500-3). (Italics mine.) This essay provides another indication that P.B.A. Baptists agree with the Particular Baptist deletion of Savoy's restricted notion of ministry (see above, pp. 232-35); see also 2P,11.3 (A2277-79); and 2P,5.10 (A2014-22).

In the Philadelphia tradition this office-power at the service of a church lacking its own ministers is ordinarily limited to preaching and to administration of the ordinances. A minister cannot exercise other church rule unless he is also called as a member of the church.[6]

Such a view of the ministry provides another basic principle expressed in the P.B.A. sources--the explicit principle of a universal ministry. At least to some extent the official ministry of the Church is understood in relationship to the needs of visible congregations as a whole. Thus, a recognized minister of one church can exercise at least some office-power in relationship to other churches of Christ within the same fellowship (association). In the view of the present author, the P.B.A.'s acceptance of a universal ministry is one of the most significant indications that the Philadelphia Baptists, in practice, accepted a visible ecclesial fellowship beyond the local congregation.

More will be said about this principle of a universal ministry and about the ministry in its relationship to church authority. For the present, a working definition of visible church needs to be formulated. In the process other explicit theological principles emerge which apply to the question of church and church authority in the P.B.A. tradition.

---

[6]See 1P, p. 60 (A1427-37) and G, p. 61 (A1502-3); also discussion in chap. 3. pp. 252-57.

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF VISIBLE CHURCH IN THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION

When the Particular Baptists first came to formulate their Second London Confession in 1677, they incorporated ideas from the First London Confession of 1644. The spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom (noted in chapter 3) was one of the ideas inherited from their Particular Baptist ancestors. The ideas about visible church in the earlier London Confession were also accepted from their Particular Baptist predecessors.

In developing the later 1677 Confession, however, London Particular Baptists followed very closely the order of the much larger and more comprehensive Westminster Confession (or the expressions in its Savoy counterpart, A Declaration of the Faith). Thus, the ideas particular to the First London Confession of 1644, while incorporated into the 1677 Confession, are interspersed throughout a more developed chapter on the Church. Indeed, because Particular Baptists in 1677 also added extensive materials from Savoy's Platform of Church Polity, their confessional statement about Church is even more extensive than the Westminster (Savoy) version. It adds materials on the visible local church and thus alters the original context about universal Church.

Therefore, the Philadelphia Baptists, in adopting the Second London Confession as their own, do not have a short definition of visible church in their Confession. Moreover, none of the other P.B.A. official sources provide a succinct definition. One must search through all the sources to extract the elements for a working definition.

The most encompassing and yet brief description of a visible church, from a Particular Baptist point of view, appeared in the earlier

First London Confession of 1644. This statement, as already indicated, lies behind the Philadelphia (Second London) Confession. Chapter 33 of the 1644 Confession defines the visible local church in contrast to the invisible Church of Christ:

> That Christ hath here on earth a spirituall Kingdome, which is the Church, which he hath purchased and redeemed to himselfe, as a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible (1) Saints (2) called & separated from the world, by the word and (3) Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joyned to the Lord, and each other, by mutuall agreement, in the practical injoyment of the (4) Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King.
>
> (1) 1 Cor. 1.1. Eph. 1.1. (2) Rom. 1.7. Act. 26.18. 1 Thes. 1.9. 2 Cor. 6.17. Rev. 18.18. (3) Acts 2.37 with Acts 10.37. (4) Rom. 10.10. Act. 20.21. Mat. 18.19,20. Act. 2.42. 1 Pet. 2.5.[7]

In order to provide for purposes of a critique a composite and complete working definition of visible church in the Philadelphia tradition, the author first considers the various elements indicated in the First London Confession's definition. However, these elements are verified directly from the P.B.A. sources themselves. The essential elements of a gospel church are grouped under four headings: (1) The matter for visible churches: visible saints; (2) the formal cause for visible churches: mutual covenant; (3) the purpose of visible churches: obedience to Christ's ordinances; and (4) the authority and power of visible churches: church-power.

[7] 1L,33 (See Lumpkin, p. 165). (Italics mine.)

The Matter of Visible Churches: Visible Saints

The idea of visible saints (as mentioned above) is highlighted in the Philadelphia Confession: "of such ought all particular Congregations to be constituted." This Independent view of a visible church shifts from Westminster's (and Savoy's) "visible Catholique Church of Christ" to focus upon "visible saints" as the mainfestation of Christ's Body in the world. Oliver Hart, in his 1791 sermon before the P.B.A., calls these saints "the materials with which this house [the gospel church] of the Lord is built."[8] The Philadelphia Confession further describes these visible saints in section 6 of its chapter on the Church:

> 6. The Members of these Churches are (m) Saints by Calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing in and by their Profession and Walking, their Obedience unto that Call of Christ;[9] and do willingly consent to walk together according to the Appointment of Christ, giving themselves to the Lord and one to another, by the Will of God, (n) in professed Subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel.
>
> ---
>
> (m) Rom. 1.7. 1 Cor. 1.2. (n) Acts 2.41,42. chap. 5.13,14. 2 Cor. 9.13.[10]

This confessional statement of the Philadelphia tradition is taken verbatim from section 8 of the Savoy Platform of Polity. The latter, however, also incorporates the statement: "obedience unto that Call of Christ, who being further known to each other by their

---

[8] Hart, pp. 9-10 (A421-33).

[9] PS,8, from which 2L/P is taken, includes here the ideas indicated in the text above (see parallels to A461-71).

[10] P,27.6 (A461-71). (Italics mine.) On the comparison of P,27.2 to W and TS see above, pp. 220-21.

confession of the Faith wrought in them by the power of God, declared by themselves or otherwise manifested, do willingly consent. . . ." The Particular Baptists who first formulated the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession in 1677 dropped the Savoy statement. The reason may have been either (1) because it was already contained in substance in the expression "by their Profession and Walking" or (2) because it may have suggested to Particular Baptists the acceptance of a human confessional statement as a prerequisite to church membership. The latter was unacceptable to virtually all Baptists. Probably, however, the first reason explains the deletion. At any rate, the Philadelphia tradition, in line with the Particular Baptist views of the late seventeenth century, sees visible saints as the only legitimate matter for a visible church.[11] The visible saints can be considered (1) as saints, and (2) as visible.

The Visible Saints as Saints

What constituted visible saints as saints in the Philadelphia tradition? Since all of Adam's descendants are sinners, the reality of the biblical saints must be brought about by the direct action of God through calling and election. These ideas, also included in the

---

[11]The focus upon visible saints in contrast to Christ's invisible Church arose from Independent views of Church (see discussion on the roots of Particular Baptist views of invisible Church in chap. 3, pp. 252-57; also the teaching about the visibility of the Church in P and 2L compared to earlier sources W and 1S in chap. 3, pp. 220-21, 226, 241). The notion, visible saints, appears in the following sources in the genealogy of 2L and P: TC,18 uses the phrase, "to haue communion heere with the Saints" (Lumpkin, p. 88); 1L,33 states that the Church "as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints" (Lumpkin, p. 165).

First London Confession's definition of a church (cited previously), involve the Calvinistic understanding of God's predestinating will to elect some sinners to salvation. God's call and election, however, must become effectual for the individual.

Effectual Calling

Chapter 10 of the Philadelphia Confession is devoted to "Effectual Calling." While section 3 recognizes that elect infants who die before baptism and other elect persons who have not been "outwardly called by the Ministry of the Word" are still "regenerated and saved by Christ thru the Spirit," those predestined to life ordinarily are effectually called from the world of Satan by the preaching of the Word and the work of the Spirit. In section 1 of the same chapter 10 the Philadelphia Confession reads:

> 1. Those whom God hath predestinated unto Life, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time (a) effectually to call by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of Sin and Death, in which they are by Nature, to Grace and Salvation (b) by Jesus Christ; enlightening their Minds, spiritually and savingly, to (c) understand the Things of God; taking away their (d) Heart of Stone, and giving unto them an Heart of Flesh; renewing their Wills, and by his Almighty Power determining them (e) to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ yet so, as they come (f) most freely, being made willingly by his Grace.
>
> (a) Rom. 8.30. Rom. 11.7. Eph. 1.10.11. 2 Thess. 3.13,14. (b) Eph. 2,1.--6. (c) Acts 26.18. Eph. 1,7,18. (d) Ezek. 36.26. (e) Deut. 30.6. Ezek. 36.27. Eph. 1.19. (f) Psalm 110.3. Cant. 1.4.[12]

One can see in this confessional section ideas that are fundamental to the Philadelphia tradition about Scripture--the functions of the Word, the Spirit, and Christ (discussed in chapter 6). The

[12] P,10.1 (Italics mine; see Lumpkin for 2L text, pp. 264-65).

explicit principles outlined in the discussion about Scripture regarding the role of Christ (christic), the Spirit (pneumatic) and the Word (scriptural) are also indicated here within the context of the visible church.[13] Other principles operative in this same section concern the interplay between man's freedom and God's sovereign power (grace).

In the terms of the First London Confession noted above, the Philadelphia tradition looks upon the essential church as "a company of visible Saints called and separated from the world, by the word and the Spirit of God."[14] Calling is a fundamental aspect of the Philadelphia tradition's understanding of visible church. Jones in the Discipline of 1798 expands upon the etymology of the Greek New Testament term ekklēsía as to be called out of.[15]

Saving Faith

Effectual calling of the saints involves not only God's free call or election but the sinner's free acceptance of election through saving faith. In the Philadelphia tradition, however, this faith is itself God's gift freely offered as grace. Chapter 14 of the Philadelphia Confession, "Of Saving Faith," affirms this and states the means appointed by God to increase and strengthen faith:

---

[13] See discussion on Scripture below, esp. principles in chap. 6, pp. 542-43. The same idea of Christ's call through the ministry of the Word by the Spirit appears in P,27.5 (A446-50).

[14] See 1L,33, cited above. Other P.B.A. sources discussing calling and election are 1P, pp. 7-8.1 (A824-32); 1P, p. 8.2-3 (A34-41); and esp. 2P,1.1 (A1706-13).

[15] 2P,1.1 (A1706-13).

1. The Grace of Faith, whereby the Elect are enabled to believe to the Saving of their Souls, is the Work of the Spirit of Christ (a) in their Hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the (b) Word; by which also, and by the Administration of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper,[16] Prayer and other Means appointed of God, it is increased, (c) and strengthened.

(a) 2 Cor. 4.13. Eph. 2.8. (b) Rom. 10.14,17. (c) Luke 17.5. 1 Pet. 2.2. Acts 20.32.[17]

This section affirms not only the principles indicated above--christic, pneumatic, and scriptural--but the specific "means appointed of God" to increase and strengthen faith. Among these means are the ordinances (sacraments) of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and preaching of the Word, as well as prayer and other means. For Philadelphia Baptists these were neither arbitrary nor casual means used by Christians. They are the means "appointed of God" by which the grace of faith is continually "increased and strengthened." Thus, the P.B.A. Confession points to an explicit principle of dynamic faith. Faith is not only the beginning of justification but also increases and gains strength through the use of the means prescribed by Christ in Scripture.[18]

There may be here the slightest suggestion of an implicit principle of mediation of grace at work in the ordinances of Christ--

---

[16] 1S,14.1 reads, "administration of the Seals, Prayer, and other means;" W,14.1 reads, "administration of the sacraments and prayer."

[17] P,14.1 (A234-42). (Italics mine.)

[18] The Philadelphia tradition of the grace of Faith therefore has some affinity to Trent's teaching about faith and living faith. The comparison cannot be fully developed here. It involves, among other things, a recognition of the place of good works in God's grace, which works increase and strengthen faith, and grace as first justification and santification.

to some extent, namely, as means of increase of faith, ordinances mediate grace itself. This last principle, of course, is not at all consciously expressed in the Philadelphia tradition, nor is the P.B.A. view of "the grace of faith" exactly the equivalent of the Catholic notion of sanctifying grace. Yet the statement of an increase of the grace of faith suggests some kind of mediatorial role for the ordinances, and it offers a slight indication that Philadelphia Baptists had some sense of a sacramental model of church.

This same effectual faith opens the believer to the divine authority and excellency of Scripture. Thus, the function of a freely given and freely accepted faith in relationship to the recognition of the divinely established rule of Scripture is again affirmed, in terms similar to those used in the Philadelphia tradition concerning Scripture (see discussion below).[19] For Particular Baptists and those in the P.B.A. this faith resides fundamentally in the individual Christian, which view historically has come to be known as soul competency.

Soul Competency or Individual Liberty

In its twenty-first chapter the Philadelphia Confession speaks about the relationship of the individual to God in this way:

> 2. God alone is (m) Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrine and Commandments of Men (n) which are in any Thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it.[20] So that to

---

[19] See P,14.2 (A244-68); also discussion on Scripture below, chap. 6, pp. 528-31.

[20] W,20.2 reads, "or besides it in matters of faith and worship." Thus, 1S and P do not allow praeter Scriptura while W does, at least for matters not touching upon faith and worship (e.g. elements of church polity). All three confessions deny contra Scriptura.

believe such Doctrines, or Obey such Commands out of Conscience, (o) is to betray true Liberty of Conscience; and the Requiring of an (p) implicit Faith, and absolute and blind Obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience and Reason also.

(m) Jam. 4.12. Rom. 14.4. (n) Acts 4.19. and 5.29. 1 Cor. 7.23. Matt. 15.9. (o) Col. 2.20,22,23. (p) 1 Cor. 3.5. 2 Cor. 1.24.[21]

In this confessional statement one finds the basis for the explicit principle of soul competency or individual liberty (later Baptist expressions) already affirmed in the eighteenth century Philadelphia tradition. The ultimate forum for discerning the demands of the gospel remains the individual's own conscience, the Christian's own obedience in gospel freedom under Christ. While such soul competency is affirmed in so many words within the P.B.A. the individual's liberty must be seen in relationship to the demands of the gospel. In the Philadelphia tradition the individual Christian is not absolutely free. One must enter into a church-covenant to enjoy the blessings of membership with Christ's Body. Within that church, one must exercise a watchful care over others and submit to gospel discipline according to Scripture.[22]

---

[21] P,21.2 (A323-34). (Italics mine.)

[22] Concerning the more recent inclination to absolutize soul competency as a principle of Baptist life, the contemporary American Baptist, Norman H. Maring writes: "One of the most common opinions held about Baptists is that individual freedom was their chief interest and their insistence; therefore, that the individual soul is competent in religious matters and must be left to interpret the Scriptures and determine doctrine for himself. But the rights of individuals were a secondary concern. The early Baptists would scarcely recognize the modern stress on individual rights in religious matters as the basic Baptist conviction . . . Therefore, it is misleading to locate the chief Baptist witness in soul liberty or individual freedom" (American Baptists, p. 16).

Section 1 on Christian liberty characterizes liberty under the gospel as a "free Access to God, and their yielding Obedience unto him, not out of slavish Fear, but a Child-like Love, and willing Mind." Christian freedom is held in tension with child-like love and obedience. Thus, the dual principles of freedom and responsibility on the individual level are affirmed clearly in the Philadelphia tradition.[23]

This consideration of visible saints as saints has touched upon basic themes within the Philadelphia Confession which are essential elements for a definition of visible church: calling, election, effectual calling, and saving faith. In the course of describing each aspect involved in the establishing of saints, certain principles emerged which relate to a theology of church and church authority among P.B.A. Baptists. Most of these are explicit: (1) the christic principle; (2) the pneumatic principle; (3) the scriptural principle; (4) the principle of freedom; (5) the principle of God's sovereignty; (6) the principle of dynamic faith; (7) the principle of soul competency (soul liberty); and (8) the dual principles of freedom and responsibility, liberty and obedience. An implicit principle uncovered was the principle of mediation of increased faith through means ordained by Christ. This last principle is far from being a conscious principle within the

---

[23]"1. THE Liberty which Christ hath purchased for Believers under the Gospel, consists in their Freedom from the Guilt of Sin, the condemning Wrath of God, the Rigour and (a) Curse of the Law, and in their being delivered from this present Evil (b) World, . . . ; as also in their (h) free Access to God, and their yielding Obedience unto him, not out of a slavish Fear, (i) but a Childlike Love, and willing Mind.

"(a) Gal. 3.13. (b) Gal. 1.4. (h) Rom. 8.15." (P,21.1 [see 2L, 21.1 in Lumpkin, p. 279]. [Italics mine.]).

Philadelphia tradition. It is one that appears to operate at an unconscious level among P.B.A. Baptists. As such, it appears only in the light of a very different vantage point for interpretation, one provided by a Catholic exegete viewing the sources.[24]

The Visible Saints as Visible

What makes the living saints visible to one another so that they can gather into a visible fellowship in a church? If the fundamental nature of the saints is the interior conversion and work of the Spirit accomplished through faith in Christ, how can this be recognized by others?

While God alone truly knows whom he has predestined to life and who has responded in effectual calling, there _are_ visible signs of such election. These, in P.B.A. confessional terms, are "Profession and Walking," namely, public profession of faith in Christ and exemplary Christian life according to the demands of the gospel. Those whom Christ has already interiorly gathered into his invisible Body--through the ministry of his word by the Spirit that prompts true faith--can be recognized through their public profession of faith. Only such professed believers, therefore, can be baptized and received into the church.[25] Recognized as saints, in so far as the church can humanly

---

[24]Part of the advantage of a contemporary approach to hermeneutics is the acceptance of the impact of subjectivity upon an understanding of the historical materials (see comments in intro., pp. 22-23, 27).

[25]On the need for profession of faith for baptism see _P_,30.2 (A649-53); for reception into a church, _P_,27.6 (A461-64).

recognize God's election and the effectual calling of the individual, professed believers are baptized and accepted as full church members.

Believers' Baptism

One finds in this P.B.A. view the distinctively Baptist insistence upon personal profession of faith prior to baptism. All Baptists restrict baptism to those only who have made a profession of following Christ; infant baptism is rejected as unbiblical. Baptists, therefore, place an explicit condition upon church membership--believers' baptism. Only adults, namely those personally and publicly professing repentance and salvation in Christ, can be baptized. Jones describes a local church as "a number of disciplies, saints or believers, that have been baptized, and united in gospel fellowship . . ."[26] Thus, believers' baptism, for the Philadelphia tradition as well as for all Baptists, becomes a condition for membership in an essential church.

Nevertheless, the ordinance of Baptism as such does not constitute church membership in a visible congregation. The formal cause is rather the free and mutual consent or church covenant among the visible saints (discussed below). Behind such a mentality, then, is an understanding of church membership which places priority on personal faith and one's spiritual relationship to Christ. Baptism is more the vehicle to manifest faith than it is a sacramental sign of entrance into the Body of Christ.

Part of the obedient following of Christ in faith is the voluntary (but necessary) entering into visible fellowship with other

---

[26] 2P,1.3 (A1722-25). (Italics mine.)

professed Christians. Membership in Christ's visible congregation is necessary, but it follows upon acceptance of Christ in faith. As noted above, the priority is personal faith rather than entrance into a visible church of Christ, important as the latter is. Membership in Christ's mystical Body is already accomplished through faith; membership in a local visible congregation requires conditions--professed faith and Baptism--but such church membership is accomplished formally through mutual covenant.[27]

This attitude of Philadelphia Baptists, following the London Particular Baptists, reflects a view of Baptism that is distinct not only from a Catholic point of view, but also from some Protestant approaches to the Sacrament. A comparative glance at the confessional statements about Baptism manifests to what an extent Particular Baptists have altered the views of Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Chapter 30 of the Philadelphia (Second London) Confession states the Particular Baptist viewpoint:

---

[27] In the view of this author, the Catholic and Baptist views about Baptism and church membership can be harmonized. Such a harmonization would need to deal with, among other things, a grasp of the respective models of Church (institutional-sacramental as contrasted to spiritual covenant-communion model), and how each model carried forward the essential New Testament elements: recognition of God's election of infants saved even in death, adult baptism as the scriptural paradigm, the salvation of those who cannot hear the Word, faith as the beginning of justification (Trent's teaching too), the fundamentally spiritual relationship to Christ's Body, Christ's Church as visible-invisible on various levels, the Christian duty to join a particular (visible) church, the relativity of Church and sacraments as means of grace. It may be possible to explain the real differences between Catholic and Baptist views as historical-theological rather than theological-doctrinal.

1. Baptism is an Ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ,[28] to be unto the Party baptized, a Sign [of his Fellowship with him in his Death (a) and Resurrection;] of his being engrafted into him; of (b) Remission of Sins; and of his (c) giving up unto God, thro' Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of Life.[29]

(a) Rom. 6.3,4,5. Col. 2.12. Gal. 3,27. (b) Mark 1.4. Acts 26.16. (c) Rom. 6.24.[30]

A comparison to Savoy and Westminster versions reveals the following points about the Particular Baptist section: (1) the bracketed section is an addition, found neither in Westminster nor in Savoy (it recalls the First London Confession); (2) the italicized section lists aspects signified by Baptism; all the signs involve an individual relationship to Christ; (3) an important idea from Westminster is omitted by Savoy Congregationalists and Particular Baptists: "ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be . . .;" (4) the Baptist version omits the concluding section in Westminster and Savoy: "which Ordinance (Westminster: Sacrament) is by Christ's own appointment to be continued in his Church until the end of the world."

The overall impact is a Particular Baptist transformation of attitudes towards Baptism. The latter is no longer tied directly to the visible universal Church of Christ, nor is it a sacrament ordained

---

[28] See W,28.1, and the W addition given later in the text.

[29] See W and 1S additions given later in the text.

[30] P,30.1 (A640-48). (Italics mine.) The bracketed section indicates addition to W and 1S, probably reflecting the earlier 1L idea: "that interest the Saints have in the death, buriall, and resurrection" (see 1L,40 in Lumpkin, p. 167).

by Christ for solemn admission into the visible universal Church. The social dimension to Christian fellowship remains. Yet the social dimension of a visible universal Church is minimized by regarding Baptism in non-traditional sacramental terms, as a sign of personal faith and salvation.

Savoy Congregationalists allowed the baptism of "the Infants of one or both believing parents."[31] At the same time they agreed with Particular Baptists (and the later P.B.A. Baptists) that such infants were not yet properly speaking full members of a church. All Baptists, of course, insisted upon the requirement of professed faith prior to any baptism. Unlike Congregationalists they disallowed even the ritual baptism of infants which was permitted by the Savoy Confession.[32]

The mode of baptism in the Philadelphia tradition is by immersion only. This Baptist distinctive attitude initially appeared in the First London Confession of 1644. Prior to that time both General and Particular Baptists apparently baptized by pouring water. The latter practice, however, soon died out and Baptists universally came to insist not only upon believers' baptism, but also upon the mode of baptism by immersion.[33]

---

[31] See 1S,29.4 (parallel to A661).

[32] The ambivalence of Congregationalists toward baptism of infants caused problems in New England; for some the Half-Way Covenant offered the best solution, i.e., baptism of the children of professed believers. Baptists, by contrast, were consistent in their theory and practice of profession of faith as the requirement for baptism and church membership.

[33] On mode of baptism compare 1L,40 (Lumpkin, p. 167) to 2L/P, 30.4 (A659-61); see also Maring's comment about the distinctive mark of

In the P.B.A. understanding of the ordinance of Baptism the implicit assumption is that communion with Christ is fundamentally spiritual and individual (personal), an entering of the Christian into a personal faith relationship with Christ.[34]

Personal Spirituality

The previous discussion about the P.B.A. understanding of Baptism suggests an implicit principle of personal spirituality in the Philadelphia tradition. The bottom line in the spiritual life for P.B.A. Baptists is always the individual's personal relationship to Christ through a living faith.

This personal spirituality within the Philadelphia tradition pervades its understanding of the ordinances--not only of Baptism (noted in the previous section) but also of the Lord's Supper. In the case of the latter, Christ's presence is real though spiritual, but it is a presence that depends upon the faith of the recipient.

After disowning both the Catholic theology of transsubstantiation and the Lutheran theology of consubstantiation (section 6) the Philadelphia Confession's chapter 32 describes the P.B.A. theology of the Supper:

---

of Baptists "not the mode . . . but rather the conviction of Baptists about believers' baptism" (American Baptists, p. 17).

[34]By placing membership in Christ's Body fundamentally in the person's faith Particular Baptists have a workable basis for accepting a view of salvation such as Karl Rahner's "anonymous Christianity." On faith as the form of salvation and corporate faith as the form of the church see citation from William Ames below, n. 46, p. 306.

7. Worthy Receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible Elements in this Ordinance[35] do then also inwardly, by Faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, (1) and all the Benefits of his Death; the Body and Blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally,[36] but spiritually present to the Faith of Believers in that Ordinance, as the Elements themselves, are to their outward Senses.

---

(1) 1 Cor. 10.16. ch. 11.23.[37]

The Particular Baptist ideas expressed are taken from the Westminster and Savoy versions which are identical. The Baptist version, however, has softened the language about Real Presence by omitting a section from the Presbyterian and Congregational statement: "being not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually present to the Faith of Believers." The London Baptists, and the Philadelphia Baptists after them, nevertheless included the idea of Real Presence in the earlier phrase "really and indeed."

The main point, however, is the direct relationship of the faith of the recipient to the Real Presence! In terms of a Roman Catholic theology of Eucharist, therefore, Philadelphia Baptists placed all the stress upon the ex opere operantis aspect of the Ordinance. Subjective faith is crucial to effect Christ's ordinances. The

---

[35] W and 1S read "Sacrament." The term "Ordinance" is used in all three (W, 1S, and 2L/P): W,29.3; 29.7; 1S,29.2; 30.3; 30.7; and 2L/P as indicated below. The term Sacrament is never used by 2L/P; changes of the W or 1S appear in the following places: P,29.1 (A631); 30.1 (A640); 31 (A664, 668, and 691); 32.[2] (A708); 32.4 (A736); 32.5 (A739); and 32.7 (A763).

[36] W and 1S insert: "carnally in, with, or under the Bread and [1S: or] Wine; yet as really, but spiritually . . ."

[37] P,32.7 (A761-72). (Italics mine.)

dimension of ex opere operato, of course, lies beyond the purview of the P.B.A. Baptist understanding of sacraments (ordinances).

Thus, one finds in the Philadelphia Baptist view of both Baptism and the Lord's Supper an acceptance of Christ's ordinances (sacraments) as necessary in church life, but the focus is centered upon the individual's faith. Philadelphia Baptists had a high regard for the importance of Baptism and a sense of the Real Presence that included more than a Zwinglian symbolic sense. Yet the crucial dynamic for church membership and for a Real (though spiritual) Presence is the believer's personal faith in Christ. The concept of sacrament as a visible means of salvation is therefore bypassed. The means is faith itself, a faith that increases and is strengthened by the use of Christ's means, including the Lord's Supper.[38]

The above discussion about visible saints as visible brought up two basic notions that are part of an essential working definition of visible church in the Philadelphia tradition. These notions are the public profession of faith and believers' baptism. The latter also led to discussions about individual spiritual membership in Christ's Body through faith and about the nature of ordinances (sacraments) in the P.B.A. tradition.

---

[38]In the opinion of this author it is possible to show that the Baptist understanding of ordinance can be harmonized with a Catholic view of sacrament. Among other things one must unfold the preunderstanding and focal principles in the respective theologies: for Catholics, a sacramental-institutional model of Church and seeing Church preceding Christians born into new life; for Baptists, priority on interior relationship to Christ, membership in his Body through faith, and covenant-communion model.

Some important insights for a later critique of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority also emerged. These are: (1) the explicit conditions for church membership, namely, public profession of faith and believers' baptism; and (2) the implicit principle of personal spirituality operative in Philadelphia Baptist thinking. The latter principle is exemplified in the P.B.A.'s theology of the ordinances and in the Philadelphia Baptists' attitudes towards membership in Christ's Body.

What is apparent from the brief discussion about ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is that Philadelphia Baptists have transformed the Presbyterian theology of sacraments and their relationship to universal Church. Any explicit sacramental model of Church (in the traditional sense) is totally absent from P.B.A. sources. At the same time a possible residual sense of ordinances as means of "grace" may be present in the treatment of means to increase and strengthen the grace of faith (discussed in the previous section).

Having considered the <u>matter</u> necessary for constituting an essential visible church--visible saints, effectually called through saving faith, publicly visible through their profession of faith, and baptized as believers--in order to move towards a working definition of gospel church in the Philadelphia tradition, the <u>formal cause</u> of this church must now be considered in greater detail, namely, the church covenant.

The Formal Cause of Visible Churches: Church Covenant

That which constitutes a group of gathered visible saints a gospel church, as noted in the previous section, is not their baptism as such, but their mutual commitment to walk together according to Christ's commandments in Scripture. That mutual commitment is expressed through the church covenant which in the Philadelphia tradition is seen as the formal cause of the gospel church. In the definition of church cited above from the First London Confession this is characterized as "joyned to the Lord, and each other, by mutuall agreement."

Church covenant is discussed under the following headings: (1) the roots of the Philadelphia tradition of church covenant; (2) the dimensions of church covenant; and (3) the Philadelphia Association's practice of establishing churches through covenants. Under each heading the insights that relate to the question of church authority in the P.B.A. will also be highlighted.

The Roots of the Philadelphia Baptist Understanding of Church Covenant

In discussing the British origins of Baptists (chapter 1) the significance of a covenant (federal) theology for Particular Baptists was indicated. The roots of a covenant theology lay in the Scriptures. Puritans adopted the idea of covenant from the Old Testament and developed it into a distinctive aspect of their theology. This was true, for example, of William Ames who greatly influenced Particular Baptists, especially through Benjamin Keach's Church Discipline.[39]

---

[39]See discussion on covenant (federal) theology in chap. 1, pp. 69-72. On Ames's views John D. Eusden writes that "Ames sees the

Compared to General Baptists, Particular Baptists were more fundamentally in touch with the Separatist thinking which helped to generate a Puritan theology of covenant.

The nature of the covenant theology was indicated in chapter 1. In this present section the aspects of covenant are discussed that shed light upon the nature of the visible church in the Philadelphia tradition.

The Triple-Covenant of Grace

When the ancestors of Philadelphia Baptists formulated their Confession in 1677 they adopted the views of covenant from Puritan divines of Westminster and Savoy. The Westminster group expressed a double-covenant of grace in its Confession: the Old Testament promise and the New Testament fulfillment. Savoy Congregationalists, and the Particular Baptists who followed, understood the covenant of grace as a triple-covenant: Old Testament promise; New Testament establishment; and the gospel Congregational church as the embodiment of the covenant of grace in a visible form.

The differences between a double and a triple covenant are reflected in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession, chapters 7 (God's Covenant), 20 (The Gospel and the Extent of the Grace thereof), and 27 (Of the Church). The entire twentieth chapter is a Congregational addition to the Westminster Confession appropriated by Particular Baptists. Chapter 27 on the Church, as discussed at length above,

---

unconditional covenant of grace as perhaps the single most important biblical teaching" (p. 54). See Ames's treatment of covenant in his Marrow, bk. 1, chaps. 10, 24, 32, 38, and 39.

incorporated sections of Savoy's Platform on Congregational Polity. Chapter 7 involved distinctive expressions drawn from Particular Baptist sources. In the latter case, the most noticeable Baptist change is the stress upon the "Eternal Covenant" between Christ and the Father. This eternal covenant is the foundation of the covenant of grace promised to Adam, unfolded in the Old Testament and fully revealed in the New Testament.[40]

The idea of covenant is central to the Particular Baptist, and to the P.B.A., understanding of visible church. The 1644 expression, "joyned to the Lord, and each other, by mutuall agreement," is sounded in later sources. Benjamin and Elias Keach see the gospel church as a group of believers who have "in a Holy Covenant given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another." The same authors in their Discipline of 1697 describe those who "by mutual agreement and consent give themselves up to the Lord, and to one another." The P.B.A. Confession and early Discipline have similar expressions: "do willingly consent to walk

---

[40] P,7.3 reads: "This Covenant is revealed in the Gospel first of all to Adam in the promise of Salvation by the (e) Seed of the Woman, and afterwards by farther steps untill the full (f) discovery thereof was compleated in the New Testament; and it is founded in that (*) Eternal Covenant transaction, that was between the Father and the Son about the Redemption of the Elect; and it is alone by the Grace of this Covenant, that all of the Posterity of fallen Adam, that ever were (g) saved, did obtain Life and blessed Immortality; Man being now utterly uncapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of Innocency.

"(e) Gen 3.15. (f) Heb. 1.1. (*) 2 Tim. 1.9. Tit. 1.2. (g) Heb. 11.6,13. Rom. 4.1,2 &c. Acts 4.12. John 8.56." (see 2L,7.3 in Lumpkin, p. 260).

together"; and "by their mutual Consent, to propose to be constituted a Church."[41]

In his Discipline of 1798 Jones writes:

> 5. A Number of believers are united together into a particular church, by an act of mutual confederation. "Gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." 2 Cor. viii. 5.[42]

In discussing the ceremony for the constitution of a new church, the 1798 Church Discipline of the P.B.A. indicates the use of an actual covenant which is read and signed by church members. The Charleston Baptist Association Discipline mentions covenant explicitly in its description of a particular gospel church: "company of saints incorporated by a special covenant."[43]

Thus, if visible saints are the material from which a church is constituted, the formal cause is the mutual and free covenant established among visible saints. This is explicitly expressed by John Owen, the Congregationalist theorist who exercised a great influence among Independent churchmen generally, and specifically among Particular Baptists like the later authors of the official P.B.A. documents in the eighteenth century. Owen, writing about the formal cause of a particular church, says:

> . . . This could originally be no otherwise done, but by their own actual, express, voluntary consent. There are sundry things which concurr as remote causes, or prerequisite conditions unto this conjunction of Believers in a Particular Church, and without which it

---

[41]The quotations, in order of appearance, are 1L,33 (Lumpkin, p. 165); K,22; 1K, p. 6; P,27.6 (A465-66); and 1P, p. 8.3 (A846-47).

[42]2P,1.5 (A1742-45). (Italics mine.)

[43]See 1P, p. 9 (A866); esp. 2P,1.9 (A1771-72); also CD,1.1 (A1033-34).

> cannot be. Such are Baptism, Profession of the Christian Faith, convenient Cohabitation, resorting to the Preaching of the Word in the same place. But neither any of these distinctly or separately, nor all of them in Conjunction, are or can be the constitutive Form of a Particular Church. . . .
>
> 16. Wherefore, the Formal Cause of a Church consisteth in an Obediential Act of Believers, in such numbers as may be useful unto the ends of Church Edification, jointly giving up themselves unto the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . ; and in mutual Agreement among themselves, . . .[44]

The Dimensions of Church Covenant

The aspects of a church covenant appear in actual covenants within the P.B.A. tradition as recorded by Jones in the 1798 Discipline and corroborated by Morgan Edwards in his Customs.[45] Six elements can be found.

First, the church covenant is freely entered into. Just as individual faith is freely accepted with God's help, so too the relationship of a corporate faith must be freely accepted in a visible church: "in the name of the Lord Jesus, voluntarily and freely."[46] Yet this freedom coincides with responsibility in the Philadelphia tradition. Personal freedom to enter church covenant does not mean

---

[44]Owen, pp. 21, 25. (Italics mine.) On P.B.A. authors see chap. 1, pp. 81-82; on Griffith, chap. 2, p. 193; on Jones, p. 202.

[45]See actual covenants in 2P, pp. 6-7; and E, pp. 9-10. Direct quotes that follow are from 2P. Morgan Edwards gives a complete description of an actual ceremony of constitution of a church that took place in 1732 (see E, pp. 7-11).

[46]On the contrast between individual and corporate faith Ames writes: "12. Inasmuch as faith is in each believer individually it is the form of those that are called. But seen collectively in all, faith is the form of the company of those that are called, or the church" (Marrow, bk. 1, chap. 31, sec. 12. Italics mine.)

Christians can refuse to enter into church covenants. Church fellowship is one of the demands of the gospel.

Second, the church covenant is mandatory. It is itself one of the ordinances of Christ in the New Testament. Thus it has a character that sets it apart from other human contracts that effect confederations, for example, in civil society, or even in ecclesiastical circles in such groups as missionary societies or associations. The church covenant, in the minds of the Philadelphia Baptists, was distinct from the associational covenants (discussed in chapter 5).

Third, church covenants for P.B.A. Baptists are mutual agreements among professed Christians, a pact to give "ourselves to one another" and to follow Christ. The eternal covenant of grace, by comparison, is not mutual. It is entered into by the individual sinner only by God's sovereignly free election. God must call the sinner to enter into the covenant of grace established by Christ the only mediator. The church covenant, however, once grace has done its work and united the sinner to Christ, is mutual. While it is achieved through the action of God's grace there is, nevertheless, a dimension of mutuality among the professed Christians, an equality of relationships from the point of view of the visible saints themselves. At least to that extent the church covenant is a mutual pact between equals.

Fourth, the church covenant expresses a vertical relationship between God and Christians. It is a mutual agreement among church members to give themselves "up to the Lord." Involved in church covenant is an obedience to all the commands of Christ revealed in Scripture. Sometimes these demands are spelled out in the church covenant, but

they need not be. Anything commanded in the gospels comes under the church covenant and is freely accepted in principle. Among these demands one might assume are things never explicitly indicated, not even in the official documents of the P.B.A.[47]

Fifth, the mutual covenant expresses an horizontal relationship among Christians. It is an agreement among Christians to give themselves "to each other." Besides indicating the mutuality described above, this aspect of the church covenant points to the concreteness of the commitment. Some of the terms are expressed explicitly in covenants, for example, mutual edification, the assembling for worship, the support of each other spiritually and materially.

Sixth, the church covenant is one of dual obedience. It includes a commitment of obedience not only to Christ's rule in Scripture but also to those duly called to rule over the church. The covenant is a commitment "to honor, obey and maintain them [church officers] that have rule over us in the Lord."

These six basic aspects of a church covenant point to the following general principles which relate to church authority in the Philadelphia tradition: (1) the principle of freedom (or voluntaryism), for a covenant is freely and voluntarily undertaken by a group of professed and baptized Christians; (2) the principle of mutuality in church life, for the covenant is fundamentally among equals in the minds of Philadelphia Baptists; (3) the dual principles of freedom and responsibility,

---

[47]This fact that some essential demands are missing in P.B.A. sources is important to this study, for within Scripture are elements of church life overlooked in official statements, notably the missionary nature of the church (see below, pp. 375-76; also 386).

with the church covenant both freely undertaken and yet accepted in obedience to the command of Christ in Scripture; (4) the principle of analogy, in the application of Christian obedience to different persons: (a) to God's rule expressed in Scripture; (b) to the minister's rule under the gospel; and (c) to each other as Christians accepting gospel discipline; and most importantly (5) a covenant model of church.

What remains implicit in the church covenant is the specifics of the ordinances demanded by Christ in the gospel. Many of these appear in P.B.A. sources, for example, administration of the ordinances, preaching of the Word, praying and caring for each other, and so forth. In the view of this author, however, there are other demands of the gospel which are not explicitly expressed in the P.B.A. sources, and some touch upon the very nature of the gospel church. These are indicated in the later critique of the working definition of visible church.[48]

An important fact to be underscored for the later critique of the Philadelphia Baptist view of church is that the P.B.A. tradition sees the gathered church brought about fundamentally through the mutual consent of visible professed and baptized saints. Thus, no more basic model of visible church exists among the Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century than that of covenant!

The Philadelphia Practice of Constituting Essential Churches

In order that a group of Christians be formed into a gospel church all that is necessary is a mutual agreement among a number of

---

[48]See critique of definition below, pp. 365-88, esp. 385-87.

visible saints. In the P.B.A. some thought that theoretically the number could be as few as three, based upon the text: "Where two or three are gathered together" (Matt. 18:2). Others thought the number should be equal to the dominical church at the Last Supper, namely, twelve or thirteen, that is, the Lord gathered with his twelve disciples.

In practice any number sufficiently suited to carrying out the demands of the church covenant sufficed. Of course, if the church lacked its own officers, it had to rely upon the generosity of another church that would permit its own minister to serve the needy congregation.[49]

The ceremony for constituting a church is described in the P.B.A. Disciplines.[50] It involves the presence of ministers to examine candidates and to declare the constituted group a distinct congregation. Thus, once again the function of the ordained minister in the Philadelphia tradition can be seen to involve more than the pastor's congregation. His ministry is at the service of Christ's Church wherever it emerges in a distinctly constituted church. Moreover, an ordained minister is required as the officiant; at the commitment ceremony establishing a new church he is the one to extend the right hand of fellowship to the newly constituted church on behalf of the P.B.A.

---

[49] On the number 3 see 1P, p. 8.3 (A843-44), and 2P,1.6 (A1749-50); on 12 or 13 see 2P,1.6 (A1746-49).

[50] On the procedure for constituting a church see 1P, pp. 8-9.4-5 (A852-73); and 2P, 1.8-10 (A1756-81).

Operative in the Philadelphia practice of establishing new churches, then, is a high view of the ministry. This recalls the principle of a universal ministry mentioned above. Such an understanding of ordained leadership is one of the greatest indications in the eighteenth century life of the P.B.A. that Philadelphia Baptists, in practice, accepted a broader visible fellowship than the congregation.

A Partial Working Definition of Gathered Church in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

The major elements for a working definition of visible church in the P.B.A. official sources include the matter (visible saints) and the formal cause (mutual church covenant). From a review of these eighteenth century sources the author begins to construct a working definition of visible church in the Philadelphia tradition. It is the author's own reconstruction based upon explicit statements and remains only a partial definition:

> The visible church is a gathering of visible saints (divinely elected and effectually called in saving faith by Christ through the ministry of the Word and the influence of the Spirit) who, having publicly professed their faith and having received Baptism, are solemnly joined together by a mutual covenant to walk together in obedience to Christ in all the demands of the gospel and to give themselves to one another . . .[51]

The definition remains incomplete. It needs to include the essential purpose and the authority of a visible church. The consideration of both of these aspects of a gathered church will uncover additional principles for a treatment of church authority in the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century.

---

[51]This partial definition is substantially contained in the section from 1L,33 cited above, p. 284.

The Purpose of Visible Churches: Christ's Visible Reign

At this point, in order to pursue a complete definition of local church in the P.B.A., an important question can be asked: why should Christians gather in a visible congregation? The question is not as inconsequential as one might at first suppose because the answers to the question about the church's purpose will indicate what visible churches explicitly mean in the Philadelphia tradition. Moreover, the answers will further shape the working definition of visible church needed for a critique of the P.B.A. view of local church.

The fundamental purpose of a visible church, as stated by the contemporary British Baptist Arthur Dakin, is the glory of God.[52] Philadelphia Baptists would agree wholeheartedly with this modern affirmation. The way that a visible congregation manifests glory to God is prescribed in the Scriptures. When P.B.A. Baptists searched the Scriptures they came to agree basically with a Calvinistic understanding of the functions of a church, expressed in John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion. In book 4, Calvin stated:

> Wherever we see the word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the intention of Christ, there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence, . . .[53]

---

[52]Dakin, pp. 12-13.

[53]John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), 4.1.9 (citations are to bk., chap., sec., i.e. bk. 4, chap. 1, sec. 9). Compare this to the evangelical tradition in Lutheranism: "This [one holy Christian church] is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel . . ." (Augsburg Confession, 7; see Hardon, Source Book, p. 16).

This view was also fundamentally that of the Augsburg Confession, chapter 7. Actually a fuller description appears in the Belgic Confession. The latter added the idea of church discipline, and therefore comes closer to the explicit Philadelphia tradition. The Belgic Confession states:

> The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself.[54]

The essential functions of a visible church as characterized throughout the P.B.A. official sources touch upon the threefold office of Christ as the only Mediator: (1) the prophetic function, to preach the Word; (2) the priestly function, to administer the ordinances; and (3) the kingly (ruling) function, to maintain right order in gospel fellowship.[55]

In considering these functions the discussion touches upon the nature of preaching in the Association and upon the nature of public worship and gospel ordinances in the P.B.A. The discussion also points to further principles which involve the question of church authority in the P.B.A.

---

[54]Belgic Confession, 29 (see Hardon, Source Book, p. 101). (Italics mine.)

[55]This classification of essential church functions according to the threefold offices of Christ is an adaptation of P.B.A. thought by the author. The P.B.A. does not explicitly apply the terms priest, prophet, and king (ruler) either to the church or to the individual

The Prophetic Function: to Preach the Word

In the Philadelphia tradition preaching of the Word and teaching of the gospel truths have high priority in the life of visible churches. Scripture itself provides for the individual believer its own confirmation as God's Word. Moreover, the gathering of the saints, as already indicated, ordinarily takes place in the ministry of Christ's Word through the Spirit. For this to happen the Word must be preached. This is Christ's explicit commission to his disciples. Philadelphia Baptists wholeheartedly agreed with Lutherans and Calvinists about preaching and hearing of the Word as a sign of a gospel church.

For P.B.A. Baptists, however, as the discussion has shown in chapter 2, evangelism during virtually all of the eighteenth century was primarily a matter of preaching within Baptist congregations (evangelism ad intra). The push for an evangelism ad extra came much later, at the turn of the nineteenth century. It has likewise been noted that the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession in particular, and the other P.B.A. sources in general, nowhere underscore the essentially missionary (ad extra) nature of the church and its ministry. It does not, for example, make mention in its confessional statement of Savoy's encouragement to pastors to preach the Word to non-church members.[56]

Christian (see P,8.1 and P,8.9-10 [A168-70; 212-33] where the P.B.A. Confession explicitly applies the terms only to Christ).

[56]See historical comments above, pp. 165-67; also 237-38.

The place where the gospel is preached in the Philadelphia tradition is the visible congregation and assemblies of the P.B.A. Baptists themselves, when they gathered for public worship. There does not, therefore, seem to be an adequate recognition of the complete object of the kerygma--the pagan nations, and the unbelieving Jews.

This limited approach to evangelism in the eighteenth century, in the view of this author, suggests that the basic model of visible church for Philadelphia Baptists is not that of herald of the gospel.[57]

The responsibility for preaching the Word belongs by right of office to the ordained minister of the local church. Yet Particular Baptists of the seventeenth century and their successors in the P.B.A. recognized that gifted laymen could also be called on occasion to perform the church's duty to preach. The Philadelphia Confession, in its chapter on the Church, states:

> 11. Although it be incumbent on the Bishops or Pastors of the Churches, to be Instant in Preaching the Word, by Way of Office, yet the Work of Preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also (a) gifted, and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved, and called by the Church, may, and ought to perform it.
>
> (a) Acts 11.19,20,21. 1 Pet. 4.10,11.[58]

The Savoy version describes at length this right of laymen to preach: "(being by lawful ways and means in the Providence of God called thereunto) may publiquely, ordinarily and constantly perform it; so that

---

[57] See critique below, pp. 375-76.

[58] P,27.11 (A527-35). (Italics mine.) On the duty of ministers to preach see also 1P, pp. 13-14 (A939-64) and 2P,5.10 (A2007-8).

they give themselves up thereunto."[59] This description apparently was too much for Particular Baptists to accept. What is significant, however, is that lay preachers for both Particular Baptists and for Savoy Congregationalists must be called by the church.

Operative in the P.B.A.'s understanding of the church's essential function to preach are certain principles that relate to church authority in practice: (1) the principle of universal priesthood of all believers, any gifted Christian being permitted to proclaim the Word publicly when called by the church; and (2) the reality of an office-power attached to ministry, namely the right to preach the Word within the local congregation.

The Priestly Function: to Administer the Ordinances of Christ in Public Worship

The role of the local church in gathering its members for public worship and for the administration of the ordinances is an essential function that is part of an adequate description of church. The P.B.A. sources affirm the place of worship. The Philadelphia Confession, for example, devotes an entire chapter to the matter. Section 5 of chapter 22 lists the parts of church worship:

> 5. The (q) Reading of the Scriptures, Preaching and (r) Hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Singing with Grace in our Hearts to (s) the Lord; as also the Administration (t) of Baptism, and (u) the Lord's Supper, are all Parts of Religious Worship of God, to be performed in Obedience to him, with Understanding, Faith, Reverence, and Godly Fear; moreover, Solemn Humiliation, (x) with

---

[59] PS,13 (see parallel to P,27.11 [A2007-8]).

Fastings, and Thanksgiving, upon (y) special Occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious Manner.

(q) 1 Tim. 4.13. (r) 2 Tim. 4.2. Luke 8.18. (s) Col. 3.16. Eph. 5.19. (t) Mat. 28.19,70. (u) 1 Cor. 15.26. (x) Esth. 4.16. Joel 2.12. (y) [Exod.] 15.1. etc. Psalm 107.[60]

In this text Particular Baptists in 1677 omitted Westminster's acceptance of religious oaths and vows, and they have also added the following to Savoy's version: "teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Singing with Grace in our Hearts to the Lord." The latter additions reflect a Particular Baptist acceptance of hymn singing as a divine ordinance. This viewpoint had been argued by the Particular Baptist Benjamin Keach in the late seventeenth century. His views were eventually incorporated into the Philadelphia Confession in 1742.[61]

The Ordinances

Baptism and the Lord's Supper in relationship to personal faith were discussed above. Here the subject of the church's role in worship provides an occasion to look again at the ordinances.

Philadelphia Baptists, following the London Particular Baptists of the late seventeenth century, employed the term ordinance in place of the Presbyterian (and occasionally the Congregational) idea of sacrament. This nominal change betrays a fundamentally different attitude among Philadelphia Baptists about sacraments (ordinances). As noted

---

[60] P,22.5 (A352-67). (Italics mine.) W,21.5 adds "religious oaths and vows"; 1S,22.5 reads as indicated later in the text.

[61] See discussion above on Keach, pp. 102-3; also p. 186.

above, for P.B.A. Baptists ordinances were not sacramental signs of an increase of grace or of an entrance into the Church but rather commands of Christ to be followed in obedience to his expressed will in Scripture--basically signs of personal faith.[62] Ordinance etymologically means that which is ordained, decreed, established by God (from Latin: ordinare, to set in order). By contrast sacrament comes from the Latin sacramentum meaning oath or pledge, with its root meaning in the verb sacrare, to consecrate. The latter notion was foreign to many Protestants, but particularly to Philadelphia Baptists because of their origins in British Independency as expressed among Particular Baptists.

In the Philadelphia tradition the main ordinances are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The term ordinance, however, has a much broader application. Like Particular Baptists before them the P.B.A. Baptists accepted the laying on of hands and hymn singing as divinely ordained church functions.[63]

Other commands of Christ, described as ordinances, include the duties of Christians and ministers, among them the following: preaching, prayer, reading and hearing of Scripture, sharing of goods with the needy, and so forth. What is apparent from such a broad application of the term to different kinds of gospel demands is the analogous usage of ordinance among Philadelphia Baptists. Ordinance described in general the duties of Christian fellowship ordained by Christ, but had also the specific meaning applied to Baptism and the Lord's Supper,

---

[62] See discussion under visible saints as visible, pp. 295-300.

[63] See P,23 (A387-404) which is K,27; and P,31 (A662-92) which is K,23; also above, pp. 102-3; and 186.

as well as to the laying on of hands and hymn singing in worship services.

For the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper the Philadelphia tradition required duly appointed officers--ordained ministers. Chapter 29 of the Philadelphia Confession reads:

> 2. These holy Appointments are to be administered by those only, who are qualified, and thereunto called according (b) to the Commission of Christ.
>
> (b) Matt. 28.19. 1 Cor. 4.1.[64]

While the confessional statement does not explicitly refer to ordained ministers for baptism, it does mention ministers in relationship to the Lord's Supper. Moreover, the duties of ministers outlined in the P.B.A. Disciplines of 1743 and 1798 include the administration of the Ordinances as part of the pastor's responsibility.[65]

As discussed above under the comparative analysis of the confessional views of Church, Jones underscored the right of a minister to administer ordinances to a congregation other than his own. He likewise indicated the later eighteenth century practice of the P.B.A. when he mentioned the authorization of a minister to baptize a convert on behalf of the church:

> 6. There is no doubt, but that every gospel minister has a right, in virtue of the commission, to baptize all such meet subjects, as apply to him for baptism, and afterward the church may

---

[64] P,29.2 (A636-39). (Italics mine). W and 1S read: "neither of which may be dispensed by any but a Minister of the Word lawfully called [Westminster: ordained]."

[65] See P,32.3 (A722) on Lord's Supper; also 1P, p. 15.4 (A970-76); and 2P,5.10 (A2009-10).

receive them on the testimony of said minister, or on their giving in their religious experience.[66]

Once again, the principle of a universal ministry, already indicated, is exemplified in the minister's power to administer ordinances to another church. Moreover, the principle of representation is indicated in the right of the minister to act on behalf of the congregation in fulfilling Christ's commission to baptize.

The Ruling Function: to Maintain Gospel Discipline

In the Philadelphia tradition the church exists also for a third basic reason, to allow for a fellowship among members who can thereby exercise a true gospel discipline. Part of this discipline according to the rule of Christ involves the church's exclusive power to censure (discussed below). For the present the idea of gospel discipline is used as a general notion to describe the duties of church members towards one another and of churches towards other congregations in the same fellowship.

The Philadelphia Confession devotes an entire chapter to the duty of individual members towards one another in the "Communion of Saints." They have, as chapter 28 indicates:

> . . . Communion in each others Gifts and Graces, and are obliged to the Performance of such Duties, publick and private, in an orderly Way (c) as do conduce to their mutual Good, both in the inward and outward Man.
>
> 2. Saints by Profession, are bound to maintain an holy Fellowship and Communion in the Worship of God, and in Performing such other Spiritual Services, (d) as tend to their mutual Edification; as also in relieving each other in (e) outward Things, according to

---

[66] 2P,9.6 (A2075-80). (Italics mine.)

> their several Abilities, and Necessities; which Communion, according to the Rule of the Gospel, . . . is to be extended to all the Household of Faith, . . .
>
> ---
>
> (c) 1 Thess. 5.11,14. Rom. 1.12. 1 John 3.17,18. Gal. 6.10. (d) Heb. 10.24,25 with Chap. 3.12,13. (e) Acts 12.29,30.[67]

Both P.B.A. Church Disciplines spell out in greater detail the duties of church members towards each other and towards their pastors.[68]

Besides the individuals' duties, the Philadelphia tradition also declares the duties of churches to one another, including the duty to maintain "Communion amongst themselves, for their Peace, Increase of Love, and mutual Edification." An essential aspect to church fellowship on the local level is the call to a broader communion among the churches themselves, especially through associations (discussed below). Thus, for the moment, it is apparent that a real function of the visible congregation in the P.B.A. tradition is its responsibility to care for the communio among the churches in fellowship with it. Moreover, "in Cases of Difficulties or Differences" the church should call upon the help of other churches in the same communion.[69]

Both the duties of church members and those of churches towards each other point to a basic model of Church operative among P.B.A. Baptists, church as communion. Herein lies an important horizon in the mind-set of the Philadelphia Baptists, one explicitly indicated in the

---

[67] P,28.1-2 (A601-22). 2L/P has added "Saints by Profession," "in an orderly way," and "according to the Rule of the Gospel."

[68] See 1P, pp. 33-39 (excerpts, A1146-1206) and 2P,7-8.

[69] See P,27.14-15 (A568-72); and on associations see chap. 5, passim.

sources themselves. The idea of communion among churches helped to sustain a lived experience of a universal visible fellowship. Communion carries with it more than the simple suggestion of a visible Church beyond local congregations, which view was indicated above.[70] In the opinion of this author, communion is the very model of Church which helped Particular Baptists and their successors in the P.B.A. to remain open-minded about the basic and real interdependence among their independent churches.

An Addition to the Working Definition of Gathered Church in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

Having considered the functions of the visible church the author can expand upon his definition of church in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition:

> The visible church is a gathering of visible saints . . . to give themselves to one another in the practical and public enjoyment of the preaching and the hearing of the Word, the partaking of the Ordinances in public worship, and the professed subjection to gospel rule among themselves within the church and in communion with other churches.[71]

Critical comments about this working definition will be reserved until it can be further refined after considering the essential power of a gospel church. In the meantime, a consideration of the three essential functions of a visible church has uncovered the following principles which apply to a study of church authority in the P.B.A.: (1) the universal priesthood of all believers, so that the Spirit can

---

[70] On communion and fellowship see above, pp. 258-62.

[71] For the first part of this definition see above, p. 311.

qualify any Christian for preaching; (2) the reality of office-power for preaching; (3) the principle of analogy exemplified in the application of the term ordinance to different kinds of gospel directives; (4) the principle of universal ministry with respect to administration of ordinances; (5) the principle of representation in the church officer baptizing on behalf of the church; and (6) the model of church as communion.

The discussion about the functions of a visible church has also highlighted once again the lack of any missionary thrust outward. The full kerygma is proclaimed, but the evangelizing seems limited to Baptist churches. Lacking in the P.B.A. official views is an appreciation of the full model of Church as Herald of the kerygma to the world.

Having considered the matter, the formal cause, and the essential functions of a visible church, this study now reviews the power of the local church as described in official P.B.A. sources. This too affects one's understanding of the Philadelphia tradition of the gathered church.

The Authority and Power of Visible Churches: Church-Power

In this study the term authority indicates the right to exercise power; the term power, the ability of a person or group to influence effectively the actions of others. Church-power, moreover, has a specific meaning. It is used to connote that power, as described in P.B.A. sources, which resides in a sufficient and exclusive manner in the congregation. Power can be either authorized or unauthorized. In

the case of church-power, Philadelphia Baptitst clearly see the local church's power as authorized by Christ in the New Testament.

Even before a church has called its pastor, as an essential church it already possesses "that Power and Authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that Order in Worship and Discipline" commanded by Christ in Scripture. The full authority for "the Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign Manner" in Christ alone. He is the only legislator of gospel rule and discipline. Thus, all church authority belongs to Christ.[72]

However, in order to execute his authority and sovereign power Christ gathers visible saints into churches. To these he hands over all the authority and power needed to execute his will. Each church, then, has the ability to rule itself because all the necessary authority is given to each distinct church directly from Christ.[73]

The seat of Christ's authority is not in a universal visible Church, nor in a patriarchal or national body (as it was in the Old Testament), nor in a diocesan church. The seat of authority, moreover, is not simply in a parish in the traditional sense (all persons within a neighborhood). The only pattern of church authority since Christ's revelation of the covenant of grace in the New Testament is the gathered church of professed believers--the congregation. For Philadelphia

---

[72]See P,27.4; and 27.7 (A433-38; and 471-80).

[73]See P,27.5; and 27.7 (A446-60; and 477-80).

Baptists, the seat and exercise of church authority must be congregational.[74]

The Nature of Church Authority

One of the clearest descriptions of the church's authority in relationship to Christ's supreme authority appears in the 1789 sermon of Richard Furman. Though this work is not an official statement of the P.B.A., it nevertheless captures the spirit of the Philadelphia tradition. Furman, who was also active in the P.B.A., addressed the Charleston Baptist Association in these words:

> The authority of the church is not original, but derived. It has not the power of legislation; but of enforcing the laws of Christ: And this not in the execution of wrath; but for the regulation of the saints, and reclaiming of transgressors. The power of the church, besides what of course belongs to it as a society for regulating its circumstantial concerns, forms to be comprehended in the following particulars: The admission of persons to membership and office; watching over and admonishing those, who are its members; and excluding such as become scandalously wicked and obstinately impenitent. In these various acts, the public officers take the lead; but the consent and authority of the church, united to their office-power, seem necessary for perfecting any act of public concernment. That the officers have a power from Christ, for which they are personally accountable to him, is very apparent: The charge, to "lay hands suddenly on no man," is a text in point. But though they may be justifiable in objecting to such acts, in which they cannot accord with the church, with respect to either expedience or propriety; yet it does not appear, that they may perform them independent of the church's approbation.[75]

From a P.B.A. perspective this short homiletic paragraph of Furman has adequately distinguished the nature of authority or power in the

---

[74] Keach contrasts congregational to national and parochial (K, p. 22); Griffith, to national or universal (1P, p. 32.4 [A1133-41]); Jones, to parochial, diocesan or provincial (2P,1.4 [A1732-41]); Hart, to patriarchal or national (p. 12 [B444-58]); and CD, to family or nation (CD,1.1 [B1019-26]).

[75] Furman, pp. 11-12 (B816-42). (Italics mine.)

church. Contained in his sermon are important aspects of church authority and power.

First, all church authority is derived, not original. The church's authority is given by Christ who alone possesses sovereignty. The church is not the ultimate authority. It must exercise its powers in relationship to Christ's will in Scripture. That Scripture, as noted below, is the only infallible rule for Christian life.

Second, all church-power is executive. It enforces the laws of Christ. Church-power cannot be legislative because Christ alone possesses authority to order his Church.

Third, church-power differs from civil-power. The latter could be in "the execution of wrath" but not church-power. Church-power exists only to regulate the life of church members or to reclaim transgressors through the exercise of the awesome penalties of admonition or excommunication (discussed below). Thus, no church-power as such is coercive, whether in the local congregation or elsewhere.

Fourth, church-power must operate simultaneously through the leadership possessing office-power and with the consent of the whole church. There is a mutuality between the officers who hold real office-power and the seat of church authority and power, the congregation as a whole.

Fifth, church-officers (discussed more fully below) have power directly from Christ and they are personally accountable to him. This office-power includes taking the lead in the church's exercise of its authority and power over its membership.

These characteristics of church authority and church-power in the local congregation suggest the following principles which are operative in the P.B.A. view of church authority: (1) the principle of mutuality (complementarity), church-power and office-power coalescing for the exercise of Christ's authority over the church; (2) the moral character of church-power, exercised not as a coercive, but as a moral force--a compelling direction over church members exercised fundamentally as service in love; (3) the derivative character of all church authority, all based upon Christ's rule in Scripture, all ministering in his name; (4) the Congregational principle, church authority and power resident in the whole gathered church (together with officers); and (5) the immediate character of church-power and of office-power, both given over directly by Christ, the former to the gathered church and the latter to the church officer.

All congregations of gathered saints are "equal in Power and Dignity, and we read of no Disparity between them, or Subordination among them." At the same time, no visible church can claim to be infallible in itself. Only the Scriptures are infallible, and even they must be interpreted in the Spirit. The Philadelphia Confession expresses the fallibility of the churches:

> 3. The purest Churches under Heaven are subject (d) to Mixture, and Error; and some have so degenerated as to become (e) no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan; . . .
>
> ---
>
> (d) 1 Cor. 14. Rev. 2. and chap. 3. (e) Rev. 18.2. 2 Thess. 2.11,12.[76]

[76] P,27.3 (A424-27); parallels in 1S,26.3 and W,25.2. On equality among churches see 1P, p. 59 (A1401-3).

In the view of Philadelphia Baptists, then, one sees two other fundamental principles at work: (1) the principle of equality among churches; and (2) the principle of fallibility of all churches of Christ. The contrasting principle to the latter one is that of the infallibility of Scripture (discussed in chapter 6).

The Definition of Church-Power

In the Philadelphia tradition the visible gathered church is "the first and proper Subject of the Keyes." Jones succinctly points to the specific actions of church-power in the 1798 Discipline. They are the same mentioned in Furman's sermon to the Charleston Association cited above. Jones writes:

> 12. Such particular churches have full power and authority to transact all their own affairs, independent of any church or churches: such as, to chuse their own officers, receive members, exercise discipline among themselves, exclude members, if need be, and in general, do every thing that concerns them as a distinct religious corporation. Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v.--- 2 Thes. iii. 6,14. Acts i. 5, 23. vi. 3. xv. 4. xxi. 22.[77]

Thus, the basic functions of church-power can be grouped under three headings: (1) the admitting and dismissing of church members; (2) the calling and ordination of church officers; and (3) the disciplining of church members including, if necessary, admonition or excommunication.

Involved in these activities of the internal life of P.B.A. churches are dimensions of ministry and church authority that point to

---

[77] 2P, 1.12 (A1790-98). (Italics mine.) On the power of the keys related to church-power see 1P, p. 9 (A877-78); also 1P, p. 19 (A1053-54).

further principles for a critique of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority.

First Church-Power: Admitting and Dismissing Members

The Church Disciplines of the P.B.A. both devote major sections to the question of church membership.[78] As Jones indicates "Admission is either out of the world or from other churches." When it involves other churches, the churches might be either members of the P.B.A. or those not in communion with the Philadelphia group.

When admission is from another P.B.A. church it might be either "transient and occasional" or a permanent admission into membership. For occasional communion no letter of recommendation is necessary when the individual is known.[79]

If the transfer is to be permanent then the P.B.A. Discipline of 1798 suggests a "letter recommendatory and dismissive to the church." Both Disciplines assert in clear terms the obligation of the Christian to join a visible church near one's own residence. The later Discipline, however, allows for exceptions when a person's spiritual welfare is at stake: "for edification is the first object of church relation."[80]

While a church can never legitimately dismiss one of its members "to the world," it could cooperate in a person's transfer to "another church with which it can hold no communion." A P.B.A. church

---

[78] 1P, pp. 18-32 (excerpts, A1047-1145); and 2P,9 (excerpts, A2047-2160).

[79] 2P,9.3; and 9.14 (A2059-60; and 2137-42).

[80] On exceptions see 2P,9.17 (A2147-52); on obligation to join a church see 1P, pp. 29-32; and 2P,9.15-16.

cannot according to regular associational order dismiss a person to such a church. Nevertheless it may send notice of the person's character to the other church even though the latter is not in communion with the Association. In order to receive a person into a P.B.A. church from outside the associational fellowship all that is necessary is satisfaction "touching the point of difference."[81]

When persons are admitted "out of the World" the P.B.A. utilizes a careful process for introducing the candidate into full church membership. This initiation process essentially establishes that the person is in fact qualified for membership in a gathered church--a visible saint or true believer.

Jones in his ninth chapter describes the process for initiating a new member, basically the same steps described by Griffith in the 1743 Discipline: (1) voluntary presentation of the candidate for baptism and admission, after being convinced of personal salvation (sections 3 and 4); (2) interview with the pastor or minister beforehand (section 5), after which the candidate is (3a) either baptized by the pastor and presented by him for membership (section 6), or (3b) brought before the whole congregation for baptism (section 7); (4) public profession of the qualifications demanded for baptism and membership, namely, "godly experience, soundness in the faith, and a regular life" (sections 8 and 9); and (5) "after being baptized, the candidate is received as a member" (section 11).[82]

---

[81] 2P,9.18-19 (A2152-60).

[82] 2P,9.4-11 (A2061-2118); also 1P, pp. 20-25 (excerpts, A1072-1108).

The actual ceremony of admission includes an interrogation by the minister of the candidate's willingness to follow the gospel rule of the particular congregation. The 1798 Discipline describes the questions put to candidates:

> . . . whether they will watch and be watched over, give and receive admonition and reproof as occasion may require, keep their places in the church, contribute according to their abilities towards all necessary uses, and in all things walk in a professed and willing subjection to the commands and institutions of Christ in the gospel: . . .[83]

When the promises have been made the minister declares publicly the church's willingness to admit the candidate for membership. The action is formally sealed by the minister publicly extending the right hand of fellowship.

From the above description one sees that the minister exercises a decisive leadership role in the church's power to admit members. Not only is he permitted in virtue of his office to baptize a candidate (even before the whole church has witnessed a public profession of faith) but he is likewise the officiant in the ceremony of admission. Thus, the pastor (minister) has a truly representative function. He acts in the name of the whole church in baptizing candidates (sometimes prior to a public profession) and in extending the church's right hand of fellowship.

Whenever a candidate was baptized prior to a public profession of faith apparently the minister was the one to exercise discretion about the person's sincerity. The whole church, however, approved the person's membership.

---

[83] 2P, 9.12 (A2120-26).

A consideration of the first activity of church-power--to admit and dismiss members--has uncovered principles already mentioned: (1) the representative nature of the ministry, and (2) the principle of mutuality between the whole church's right to admit members and the office-power of the minister to lead and to represent the church in admitting members.

Second Church-Power: Calling and Ordaining of Church Officers

The second church-power of an independent and distinct gospel church is the right to call and to ordain its own officers. As indicated above, when an essential church chooses one of its members for the office of minister it becomes a complete church with the ability to carry on all the activities essential to the life of a church.

A discussion of this second church-power within the Philadelphia tradition uncovers further principles related to church authority. The aspects discussed are (1) the number of church officers according to the P.B.A. official documents, (2) the ceremonies of ordination and settling of a pastor, and (3) the nature of office-power.

The Number of Church Officers

The Philadelphia tradition about the number of church officers reflects some development during the eighteenth century. The Particular Baptists who first formulated the Philadelphia Confession in 1677 claimed there are only two scripturally valid church officers: elders (or bishops) and deacons. The Second London (Philadelphia) Confession reads:

> . . . And the Officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church (so called and gathered) for the peculiar Administration of Ordinances, and Execution of Power, or Duty, which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the End of the World, are (p) Bishops, or Elders and Deacons.
>
> (p) Acts 20.17, with verse 28. Phil. 1.1.[84]

The Savoy Platform, section 9, upon which the above text is based, lists the fourfold ministry typical for many Calvinists: "Pastors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons." Why did Particular Baptists, then, insist upon a twofold ministry?

The difference is based upon the Particular Baptist interpretation of scriptural evidence. The basic texts used in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession describe Paul's address to presbyters of Miletus and Ephesus (Acts 20:17 and 28) and his opening address to the Philippian Church: "all the holy ones at Philippi with their bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).[85]

Compared to such a Particular Baptist view, the General Baptists were more inclined to see the ministry as threefold, and even to see church office beyond the local congregation. In 1610, for example, Helwys's General Baptist congregation accepted "teacher, elder, or

---

[84] P,27.8 (A484-92). (Italics mine.) PS,9 reads: "Pastors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons."

[85] "Paul sent word from Miletus to Ephesus, summoning the presbyters of that church. . . . 'Keep watch over yourselves, and over the whole flock the Holy Spirit has given you to guard. Shepherd the church of God, which he has acquired at the price of his own blood." Acts 20:17 and 28.

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones at Philippi, with their bishops and deacons in Christ Jesus." Phil. 1:1 (New American Bible). (Italics mine.)

deacon." In 1678, around the time the Second London Confession was formulated, An Orthodox Creed of General Baptists listed "Bishops, or Messengers; and Elders, or Pastors; and Deacons, or Overseers of the Poor." In the case of church messengers (bishops) General Baptists had actually accepted an office which later P.B.A. Baptists in the late eighteenth century viewed as extraordinary. These the 1798 Discipline describes as "apostles, prophets, and evangelists." The latter evangelists, in P.B.A. terms, were the equivalent of messengers in An Orthodox Creed.[86]

The sources behind the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession had also accepted church officers besides pastors and deacons. The 1596 Separatist A True Confession maintained "only the publick ordinarie Ministerie of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons." Closer to home for Particular Baptists was the First London Confession of 1644. It also affirmed a fourfold ministry: "Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons." However, as Lumpkin mentions in a footnote in this section, pastors and teachers are omitted in later editions of the Particular Baptists' 1644 Confession.[87]

Probably, therefore, the London Particular Baptists in 1677 drew upon a later edition of the 1644 Confession when they chose to deviate from the Savoy Platform's use of a fourfold ministry. Benjamin Keach, in his short version of the Second London Confession, also

---

[86]See A Short Confession, 24 (Lumpkin, p. 109); OC,31 (Lumpkin, p. 319); and 2P,1.15 (A1819-20).

[87]TC,19 (Lumpkin, p. 88); and 1L,36 (Lumpkin, p. 166, esp. n. a).

retained the twofold ministry.[88] Through the Keach Confession and the larger Second London (Philadelphia) Confession a view of a twofold ministry came into eighteenth century P.B.A. life. Nevertheless the confessional statement is not the only official Philadelphia source. The others reflect the earlier view of ministry, accepting a place for ruling elder.[89]

The 1743 P.B.A. Discipline accepts the office of ruling elder, and in so doing reflects the acceptance of this office within P.B.A. churches. Drawing upon biblical texts, Griffith in this Discipline justifies the office of ruling elder. While the "Works of Teaching and Ruling belong both to the Pastor," Providence provides helpers for him. The Discipline describes the office of ruling elders:

> . . . Their Office only relateth to Rule and Order, in the Church of God, and doth not include Teaching; yet if the Church findeth they have Gifts and Abilities to be useful in Teaching, they may be put upon Tryal, and if approved, they may be called and solemnly set apart by Ordination, it being wholly a distinct Office from the former, which was only to rule well, and not to labour in Word and Doctrine.[90]

Thus, while accepting a place for ruling elders according to Scripture, the early Discipline of the P.B.A. also saw it as a distinct office from teaching or preaching (pastor or bishop). A special call and setting apart is needed for the latter if a ruling elder has the

---

[88] K,25; also 1K, p. 7. Keach was quite strict about eliminating ruling elders except the pastor. Moreover, as mentioned above, he did not allow a pastor of one church to administer Ordinances in another (See 1K, pp. 15-16). Thus, Keach's practice was more restrictive than that of the P.B.A. re. the office of pastor and the role of ruling elders.

[89] 1P, pp. 16-17 (A988-1023); and 2P,4 (A1876-1944).

[90] 1P, p. 17 (A1013-23).

talent for preaching, and if the church desires to call the ruling elder to the ministry of teaching.

In the later Discipline of 1798, Jones reflects an ongoing theoretical discussion about the office of ruling elders in the late eighteenth century. His statements, almost verbatim, are drawn from Morgan Edwards's Customs, although Jones does not acknowledge his source.[91] The 1798 Discipline provides a list of the Scriptural pros and cons for the office of ruling elders, after which Jones makes eight observations of his own in favor of the office. He argues that even if the office is not clearly of divine origin it "would stand on a footing with some other things left to human prudence" (number 2). Establishing such an office in P.B.A. churches calls forth members gifted in leadership abilities, "gives them more particular right, and enable them to do more good, by cloathing [sic] them with a measure of authority" (number 8).[92]

Thus, in the P.B.A. the question of ruling elders as a legitimate church office provides an instance of the Association's organizing the affairs of its churches beyond its clear understanding of the authentic sense of Scripture. One might question today the P.B.A.'s late eighteenth century interpretation of biblical evidence (arguing, for example, that ruling elders are clearly a distinct office in Scripture). The fact remains, however, that while the P.B.A. Baptists had

---

[91] Compare 2P,4 (A1876-1944) to E, p. 33, n. 3. Edwards's work was disowned by the P.B.A. in 1774. Jones probably thought it best not to cite the work by name (see discussion above, pp. 197-99; and 202).

[92] 2P,4 (A1922-23; and 1942-44).

reason to question ruling elders as divinely appointed church officers they still authorized the same office. Grasping the practical utility of ruling elders as helpers to the pastor, the Association adopted the church office.

Operative in such an attitude is the P.B.A.'s pragmatic approach to church life indicated above. From the late eighteenth century P.B.A. point of view, ruling elders were not "expressly set down" or "necessarily contained in the Holy Scriptures." Yet the acceptance of ruling elders was justified according to P.B.A. theory as an instance of a necessary decision in keeping with Scripture. As the confessional view of Scripture states:

> . . . that there are some Circumstances concerning . . . Government of the Church, common to Humane Actions and Societies; which are to be (1) ordered by the Light of Nature, and Christian Prudence, according to the General Rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.
>
> (1) 1 Cor. 11.13,14. & Ch. 14.26, & 40.[93]

In the view of this author the theory and practice of the P.B.A. agree. The role of the pastor as primary ruling elder is sufficiently safeguarded by the Association's practice of enstating ruling elders. In practice, the latter always functioned together with the minister.

The office of deacons is discussed in both Disciplines. The views of 1743 are substantially the same as those expressed in 1798. The process of ordaining the deacon is similar to that of a pastor (and ruling elder).[94]

---

[93] P,1.6 (A83-88). (Italics mine.) Also P,1.6 (A72-73); see also discussion on Scripture, chap. 6, pp. 528-31.

[94] See 1P, pp. 17-18 (A1024-46); and 2P,3.

The Ceremonies of Ordination and Settling of Pastors

The second aspect of church officers to be considered is the ceremonies of ordination and the settling of a pastor in his church. The general process of calling and ordination is indicated in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession:

> 9. The Way appointed by Christ for the Calling of any Person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the Office of Bishop, or Elder [teaching elder or pastor],[95] in a Church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common (q) Suffrage of the Church it self; and solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, with Imposition of Hands of the (r) Eldership of the Church, if there be any before constituted therein: And of a Deacon (s) that he be chosen by Prayer, and the like Imposition of Hands.
>
> (q) Acts 14.23. See the Original. (r) 1 Tim. 4.14. (s) Acts. 6.3,5,6.[96]

Prior to ordination the church calls a candidate. The process of testing his qualifications undergoes refinement in the course of the eighteenth century. By 1743 P.B.A. churches were issuing a formal call, a "solemn Invitation to the Work of the Ministry upon Tryal [sic]." If the church calls someone from another church he must "in the first Place give himself a Member with the Church so calling him, that so they may chuse him among themselves, as Acts 6.3."[97]

By 1798 the P.B.A. encouraged churches to issue a "letter of licence [sic], for the exercise of his gifts abroad, his encouragement

---

[95] PS,11 (parallel to A506) reads: "Pastor, Teacher, or Elder"; also "Eldership of that Church."

[96] P,27.9 (A493-506).

[97] 1P, pp. 11-12 (A899-900; 916-19).

and further improvement, and to obtain the opinion of others concerning his gifts." Jones gives a sample letter of license.[98]

After a suitable time of trial the church proceeds to the ceremony of ordination. Ordination is described in both P.B.A. Disciplines. The rite includes:

> . . . a solemn Setting-apart of such a Person for the sacred Function (in this wise) By setting apart a Day of Fasting and Prayer, Acts 13. 2, 3. the whole Church being present, he is to have the Hands of the Presbytery of that Church (or of neighbouring Elders called and authorized by that Church) whereof such a Person is a Member, solemnly laid upon him, 1 Tim. 5. 22. Tit. 1. 5. Acts 14. 23. 1 Tim. 4.14. and thus such a Person is to be recommended into the Work of the Lord, and to take particular Care of the Flock of whom he is thus chosen, Acts 20. 28.[99]

Once again the complementarity of office-power and congregational power is symbolized in the rite of ordination. The "Presbytery" lays hands upon the candidate for ministry, but with "the whole Church being present." The rights of the independent church are respected by presbyters from another church responding to its call for ordination.

By 1798 P.B.A. churches issued certificates of ordination which were presented by the presiding presbytery. Jones gives a sample certificate. He also points out the essence of ordination in the Philadelphia tradition:

> 6. The essence of ordination consists in the call of the church, in their voting in his favour, and designating him by said vote to the ministerial work, which power it was necessary should be lodged somewhere, with a view to maintain order; that no person who deems himself called and qualified for the office, might enter

---

[98] 2P,2.4 (A1837-39); for letter of license see 2P, p. 11.

[99] 1P, pp. 12-13 (A920-39); for the ordination ceremony see also 2P,2.7.

> upon it without the approbation of others, and this power was lodged in the church. But nevertheless, it is expedient and necessary, in order to give the designation weight and solemnity; that there should be a public and formal procedure, when we instate a person in the ministerial office, Luke x. 1. Acts xiv, 23. Mark iii. 14.[100]

Jones here touches upon the seat of church-power. The power to choose officers resides in the church as a whole, but a distinct office-power resides in the person called and set apart by ordination. As noted below, moreover, the office-power is directly from Christ, not given to the minister through the church. Though not essential for ordination, the laying on of hands was the consistent practice of the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century in the formal ceremony of the presbytery recognizing a new minister.[101]

In the quote given above Jones points to the need to solemnize in a "public and formal procedure" the installation of a minister into his office. The 1798 Discipline devotes an entire chapter to "Settling a Minister." Thus, the calling and setting apart (ordination) is seen as distinct from the installation (settling a pastor). The latter is a separate "mutual agreement between him and the church, whereby he becomes theirs, and they his. Col. i. 7."[102]

For such an installation of a pastor the church invites neighboring churches of the P.B.A. to assist:

---

[100] 2P,2.6 (A1846-58). (Italics mine.)

[101] In the P.B.A., laying on of hands was used (1) on the occasion of believers' baptism; (2) as a separate gospel ordinance (described in P,31); and (3) on the occasion of ordination to the presbytery.

[102] 2P,5.2 (A1954-56; and passim).

> 5. In settling a minister, having appointed a time and place, and invited a council from one or two of the neighboring churches to assist, and to witness the transaction, one of the ministers, after prayer and singing, should preach a suitable sermon. Then he, or another of the council, is to put such questions to the minister to be settled, and to the representative of the church appointed for that purpose, as will draw from each of them promises to fulfill their respective parts of the covenant and agreement between them, upon which he pronounces him, in the presence of God and of the whole assembly, to be the pastor and overseer of that church, and said church to be his flock and charge. Then the settled minister and representative of the church gives each other the right hand of fellowship, with expressions of mutual joy and congratulations.[103]

Thus, the council of P.B.A. churches in the late eighteenth century, exercised an ecclesial function in relationship to the internal exercise of church-power, the installation of church officers. Such a presence of outside churches, however, was always at the invitation of the independent church which alone has the right to call and ordain its own officers.

The practices of issuing licenses to preach and certificates of ordination, of the presbytery gathering for ordinations, and the associational council becoming involved in settling a pastor are all indications that in practice the P.B.A. implicitly held to both a high view of ministry and a belief in a visible communion among local congregations.

The Nature of Office-Power

The third and final aspect to be considered under the church-power to call and ordain officers is the nature of office-power. In this study office-power is used in the same sense employed by Furman when speaking to the Charleston Association in 1789; it applies

---

[103] 2P,5.5 (A1970-84). (Italics mine.)

exclusively to the power attached to the office of a minister.[104] The term connotes both authority (right) and power (capacity) of the minister to act according to his role in Scripture.

The Philadelphia tradition describes office-power in terms of various pastoral functions listed in both official Church Disciplines. Some of these functions involve the minister's own congregation; some, other congregations.

Among the minister's pastoral duties to his own people are the following: (1) to preach the Word of God in virtue of his office; (2) to watch over his congregation in the work of governing which belongs to him as pastor, presiding in the official acts of the church in admitting members and censuring members; (3) to visit his people, especially the sick; (4) to administer the Ordinances as the only ordained minister of the Lord's Supper and the officiant at Baptism; (5) to pray for and with his people; and (6) to provide good example to them without showing favoritism.[105]

These pastoral duties towards his own church indicate that office-power touches directly upon the church's power to admit and

---

[104] See Furman, p. 12 (B831).

[105] See the following for (1): P,27.10-11 (A509-10; 529-30); 1P, pp. 13.4 (A941-64); 1P, p. 16 (A993); for (2): P,27.10 (A510-13); 1P, p. 14 (A964-69); 1P, p. 16 (A993-94); 1P, p. 25 (A1095-96); 1P, p. 47 (A1239-40); 1P, p. 48 (A1329-36); for (3): 1P, p. 14 (A968); for (4): P,29.2 (A636-39); P,32.3 (A721-22); 1P, p. 15 (A970-76); for (5): P, 27.10 (A510); 1P, p. 15 (A976-78); and for (6): 1P, p. 15 (A979-86).
For references to the 1798 Discipline see 2P,5.10 (A2003-25) where Jones includes the above functions plus (7) attending funerals; (8) catechizing the young and defending the faith; and (9) "duties of the closet, of the study, and his frequent calls abroad."

dismiss members and to censure them when necessary (discussed below). In such instances the minister functions as leader and representative of the congregation, enabling the whole church to exercise its power. The minister, nevertheless, receives his office-power not simply from the church, but directly from Christ.

Other ministerial functions involve the officer exercising duties towards other churches. These have an even greater significance for the question of church authority among P.B.A. Baptists. Among such functions are the following: (1) preaching in churches needing a minister; (2) administering the Ordinances in essential churches lacking their own officers; (3) attending an ordination in another church as part of the presbytery; (4) participating in a church council involved in settling pastor in a P.B.A. church; (5) officiating at the constitution of a new church in the P.B.A; and (6) attending association meetings.[106]

While such functions point to a high view of ministry among P.B.A. Baptists they also assume that the church always calls upon the minister's services. Thus, the principle of complementarity of office-power and church-power applies in every case: for ceremonies constituting a church, for the administration of ordinances in another church, for the ordination of new members of the presbytery, for the admission

---

[106]See the following for (1): 2P,5.10 (A2023), and the constant practice of the eighteenth century P.B.A to supply churches with preachers; (2): 1P, p. 60 (A1427-37); and 2P,5.10, note (A2014-22); (3): 2P,1.9 (A1760-77); (4) 1P, p. 13.3 (A920-39); and 2P, 2.7; (5): 2P,5.5 (A1970-72); and (6): 2P,5.10 (A2025).

of church members, and for the solemn declaration of censure in the name of the church.

The origin of the minister's office-power, as mentioned above, is not from the congregation, but directly from Christ. As the Philadelphia Confession indicates in its section on church officers, they are "appointed by Christ" for the exercise of "Power or Duty, which he intrusts them with or calls them to." In discussing the Lord's Supper in chapter 32 the same Confession mentions Christ's appointment of his ministers:

> 3. The Lord Jesus hath in this Ordinance [Lord's Supper], appointed his Ministers[107] to Pray, and Bless the Elements of Bread and Wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy Use, and to take the Cup (e) and (they communcating [sic] also themselves) to give both to the Communicants.
>
> ---
>
> (e) 1 Cor. 11.23,24,25,26,etc.[108]

The minister acts "in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ" as one who must "give an account directly to Christ."[109]

Moreover, the obedience expected from church members also points to the real authority of office-power. Christians are reminded "to obey them [officers] in the Lord, in whatsoever they admonish them, according to the Word of God, Heb. 13. 7, 22," and in the church covenant (noted above) the church members pledge "to honor, obey and

---

[107] W,29.3 adds: "to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray . . ." This is also deleted by 1S, but replaced in 2S and 3S (although 3S, perhaps erroneously, reads "instruction").

[108] P,32.3 (A721-29). (Italics mine; also earlier citation from P,7.8 [A484-85; and 489-90].)

[109] P,27.10 (A511-12); 1P, p. 14.2 (A964-66); also 1P, p. 48 (A1329-31).

maintain them [minister and ruling elders] that may have the rule over us in the Lord."[110]

Thus, in the view of this author, enough evidence exists in P.B.A. sources to justify a distinction between the church-power to call and to ordain a candidate and Christ's immediate conferral of office-power upon the ordained person. The church does not per se pass on office-power to ministers.

A consideration of the second church-power--to call and ordain church officers--has led to a discussion of ministry itself within the P.B.A. tradition, and to a description of office-power. An essential aspect of the Philadelphia tradition of the visible gathered church is church office including the minister (pastor) as well as ruling elders and deacons.

The following conclusions can be made about a P.B.A. view of ordained ministry, and most relate to the question of church authority in an association.

First, Philadelphia Baptists accept a threefold ministry: pastor (teacher, minister, or bishop), ruling elder, and deacon. The ruling elder's role is to help the pastor in his office as ruler of the community. A separate office was accepted because it proved practical and harmonized with the New Testament evidence that the pastor's teaching office was distinct from his ruling office.

Second, office-power exists for the effective execution of church-power through the leadership of duly appointed church officers. Among the functions of office-power of the minister are those touching

---

[110] 2P, p. 7; also 1P, p. 35 (A1173-76).

upon the internal governing of a church--admission of members, administration of the ordinances, and exercise of all discipline including church censure.

Third, church-power depends upon office-power for its actualization, and office-power operates in conjunction with the consent of the congregation. Both are necessary. The minister cannot exercise his office-power to admit new members, to ordain to the presbytery, or to excommunicate disorderly members without the concurrent assent or call of the church. Nor can the church be constituted as a church, receive new members, administer the ordinances, ordain its own officers, or censure its members apart from the ministry itself, whether it has its own presbyters or calls ministers from other churches of the P.B.A.

Fourth, office-power comes neither from the church nor through it; all authority of the ministry comes directly from Christ to whom the officer is personally responsible for the exercise of office-power. The church's power in relationship to ministry is simply to choose the candidate--to call, to try, and to set apart (ordain). It is Christ who confers authority and power directly to the minister duly called and ordained.

Fifth, the essence of ordination is the call and consent of the church that elects a man for its officer. Laying on of hands of the presbytery is not the essence of ordination. Nevertheless, the ceremony of ordination in the Philadelphia tradition includes the laying on of hands by ministers of the Association.

Sixth, the exercise of office-power embraces not only the minister's own congregation but also other churches of the P.B.A. An ordained preacher (even a licensed preacher on trial) has authority to preach in other places. The P.B.A. consistently assigned preachers on an annual basis to minister to churches lacking their own officers. Moreover, any church can call upon an ordained minister to provide the ordinances. All that is required is a call from a church that needs help. Finally, the presbytery serves the churches of the Association at ordinations and at services installing ministers of the P.B.A. into pastoral office.

Seventh, the exercise of ministry through a presbytery of the P.B.A. provides another indication that Philadelphia Baptists accepted in practice an ecclesial visible fellowship among their churches. This is apparent from the examples just mentioned of ministers serving congregations other than their own. To some extent P.B.A. practice suggests an implicit acceptance of ministry as part of Christ's universal Church.

Involved in the Philadelphia view of the ministry and of office-power are principles already indicated: (1) the principle of complementarity or mutuality between church and ordained ministry, between church-power and office-power; and at the same time (2) the principle of independence of authority, the church and the minister each receiving authority directly from Christ; (3) the universal nature of the presbytery serving churches of the association; (4) the quality

of church authority as derivative, immediate, and ministerial in relationship to Christ; and (5) the moral nature of ecclesial authority and power.

Moreover, the acceptance of ruling elders reflects a principle of development of church order among P.B.A. Baptists. Such development of Philadelphia Baptist views of ministry, while based upon expediency, is at the same time harmonized with scriptural evidence about the role of the minister as both teacher and ruler. Thus, the P.B.A. approach to church order reflects the pragmatic character of its eighteenth century life as well as an implicit acceptance of a developing ecclesial tradition.

Third Church-Power: Disciplining of Church Members

Besides the power to admit new members and the power to call and ordain its officers the independent churches of the P.B.A. had a third church-power--to exercise discipline over their own members according to gospel rule, even to excommunicate when necessary. A consideration of this power includes a discussion of the types of church censures, their respective effects, and the process of church censure. The Philadelphia tradition about church discipline in the internal affairs of its churches indicates important concepts for an understanding of church authority in the eighteenth century P.B.A.

As the Philadelphia Confession points out an effect of the privileges of membership in a gospel church is the correlative responsibility to submit to a gospel rule within the congregation:

12. As all Believers are bound to join themselves to particular Churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the Privileges of a Church, are also (b) under the Censures and Government thereof, according to the Rule of Christ.

(b) 1 Thess. 5.14. 2 Thess. 3.6,14,15.[111]

The nature of "Censures and Government" according to gospel rule is explained at length in both P.B.A. Church Disciplines.[112] In general the same understanding of church censure is indicated in the earlier 1743 and the later 1798 official documents. The latter, however, reflects a more restricted interpretation of the disorders which can justify an eventual excommunication.

The Nature and Kinds of Church Censure and Their Effects

Depending upon the gravity of the fault, and upon whether it is a private or a public offense, the church proceeds according to gospel order against scandalous members. The P.B.A. of the eighteenth century recognizes two main types of church censure, admonition (rebuke) and excommunication (exclusion). A middle stage between the two is suspension, exercised temporarily when matters do not admit of excommunication.

---

[111] P,27.12 (A536-43). PS,20 reads, "so none are to be admitted unto the Priviledges of the Churches, who do not submit themselves to the Rule of Christ in the Censures for the Government of them."

[112] 1P, pp. 40-57 (excerpts, A1208-1356); and 2P,10 (excerpts, A2161-2262); also 2P,6 (excerpts, A2028-46).

Admonition or Rebuke

The first type of censure is called either admonition or rebuke. Jones sees these two ideas as synonymous. Admonition is "of the nature of advice, entreaty, warning"; rebuke "carries in it more of reprehension, severity, and authority."[113] Griffith and Jones both distinguish between private and public admonition. When the offense is private the person offended should strive to attain fraternal correction according to the gospel rule outlined in Mt. 18:15-17. The 1743 Discipline states:

> . . . Admonition is private by one or more of the Brethren, or more publick by the whole Church. (1) When one Brother trespass against another, the offended Brother is not to divulge the Offence, but to go in a gospel Way to the Offender, and to use his Endeavour to reclaim his Brother; and if he repents, the offended Brother ought to forgive him, Math. 18.15. Luke 17. 3. but if the offending Brother will not hear, then the offended Brother ought to take two or three other Brethren, and them such as may be most likely to gain upon the Offender; but if this Admonition also takes no effect, it is to be brought before the Church, Math. 18. 16, 17.[114]

Once the matter is brought before the church the public admonition takes on a greater force which Jones calls rebuke. In Griffith's view, if the person still refuses to listen, then in virtue of the same Matthean text "the Church is directed to exclude him by excommunication." Jones, however, does not agree that all such unrepented disorders are worthy of the censure of excommunication.[115]

---

[113] 2P,10.2.

[114] 1P, p. 41 (A1218-35). On admonition see 1P, p. 41 (A1218-42); 2P,10.1-9; also 1K, pp. 22, 23-27.

[115] See Griffith's views, 1P, p. 41 (A1241-42); and 1P, p. 44 (A1251-54); for Jones see discussion below, p. 353.

The effect of admonition is the church's rebuke of the person guilty of some disorder in the church. Admonition, even as a public rebuke by the church, does not affect the person's relationship to the church. Membership remains intact, and the person is allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Suspension from Communion but not from Union

The midpoint between simple admonition and total exclusion, in the Philadelphia tradition, is suspension. Jones describes this penalty in terms similar to statements in the 1743 Discipline. He writes:

> 12. Suspension is also used, when the offence is not sufficiently great, or is not yet ripe for the great sentence of excommunication. Such is not to be accounted as an enemy, but to be exhorted as a brother; in union, though not in communion. 2 Thes. iii. 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15.[116]

This section from the 1798 Discipline mentions examples of disorders subject to suspension and also describes the effect of the censure. According to both Jones and Griffith suspension can be applied for the following reasons: (1) when the charges against an offender are not clearly substantiated and the church needs time to evaluate the question of guilt; and (2) when the offense is not so great that it warrants excommunication. To these two reasons Jones adds two more: (a) when a person already publicly admonished proves incorrigible; and (b) when a person deserving of excommunication shows genuine signs of repentence, and the church instead of applying

---

[116] 2P,10.12. (Italics mine.) On suspension see 1P, pp. 43-44; and 1K, p. 22.

the sentence of excommunication suspends the person for a period of time.[117]

The effect of the penalty is "suspension from the Lord's table" or, in the case of a minister who is suspended, from the exercise of office. Although the suspended member cannot actively participate in church privileges, the person remains "in union, though not in communion."[118]

Excommunication or Exclusion from Union and from Communion

Excommunication is the "last and highest act of church censure." Griffith describes this censure and lists the three reasons justifying its use:

> Excommunication is a judicial Act or Censure of the Church, upon an Offender, by the Authority of Jesus Christ, and by his Direction, delivered to his Church by himself or his Apostles, in the New Testament, which a gospel-Church ought to put in Practice, when Matters of Fact require, according to gospel Rule: as first, when a Member (after all due Admonition) continues obstinate, and will hear no Reproof, Mat. 18. 17.[119] Secondly, When a Member hath committed a gross Sin, which is directly against the moral Law, and being notorious and scandalous, and proved beyond Dispute, 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. 1 Tim. 5. 24. 2 Cor. 10. 6. then a Church is immediately to proceed into Censure (notwithstanding any present Signs of Conviction or Remorse) for the necessary Vindication of the Glory of God, the Vindication of the Church also, and their holy

---

[117] See the following for (1): 1P, p. 43.1; 2P,10.11; also 1K, p. 22; for (2) 1P, p. 43.2; and 2P,10.12; for (a) 2P,10.10; and for (b) 2P,10.13.

Griffith claims that (2) can proceed on to excommunication, but Jones disagrees with his interpretation of Mt. 18:17 and 1 Cor. 5:5. Jones claims the texts do not apply to excommunication (see discussion below, p. 353).

[118] See 1P, p. 44; 2P,10.10-12; also 1K, p. 22.

[119] Jones, as noted below, disagrees with Griffith on this first example of excommunication (see pp. 356-57).

> Profession; And to manifest their just Indignation and Abhorrence against such Wickedness, 1 Cor. 5. 1--13. Thirdly, When a Member is found to be erroneous, defective, or heretical in some fundamental Point, or to swerve from the right Faith, in the Principles of the Christian Religion, 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20.[120]

As mentioned already, Jones in 1798 claims that previous appeals to Mt. 18:17 and to 1 Cor. 5:3,5, as arguments for excommunication of persons who will not listen to the church's rebuke, are questionable: "It is thought that Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 3, 5. refer not to excommunication." For Jones the censure of excommunication deals only with manifest "immorality or heresy."[121]

Both Disciplines list examples of disorders subject to church censure. The actions which Jones considers offenses worthy of excommunication include those against the decalogue, as well as "the commands, appointments, institutions and ordinances contained in the New Testament." He warns against a too hasty assumption of immorality. Nevertheless gross acts of immorality which are "notorious and scandalous" as well as those "heretical in their principles, denying some essential doctrine" come under the notice of the censure of excommunication.[122]

Griffith gives many examples of disorders, all of which he considers might lead to excommunication if a person, even after public admonition, remains obstinate in continuing them. Among these is the situation "when a Member removes himself from the Church."

---

[120] 1P, pp. 44-45 (A1243-73); on excommunication see 1P, pp. 44-57 (excerpts, A1243-1357); 2P,10.14-22 (excerpts, A2170-2229).

[121] 2P,10.14, note (A2180-81; also A2176).

[122] 2P,10.14-18 (A2177-2205).

Griffith also mentions the real possibility that a church might be heretical, in which case the members must depart. As Griffith states:

> . . . But if any Church becomes heretical in Principles, or idolatrous in Worship, or immoral in Life, it is lawful for Persons, after they have discharged their Conscience and Duty in Reproving and bearing Witness against such gross Defections, to depart, 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.[123]

Thus, the exercise of church discipline in the Philadelphia tradition is not an absolute authority of the church over individual members. The church members have a personal responsibility to lead Christian lives in fidelity to the rule of Scripture. This responsibility may mean at times witnessing publicly against an unruly church. In the case of an heretical church, or when a person's justified grievances against its church are not redressed, the person may at times apply for membership to another church in the P.B.A. with the blessing of the Association. These and other limitations on the church-power to discipline members are discussed again below. Operative in the P.B.A. view of church order, therefore, is a principle of checks and balances or of relativity.

Moreover, all church members, officers included, are subject to church discipline. While office-power carries with it a right to teach and to rule in obedience to Christ, it does not carry an absolute right

---

[123] 1P, p. 52. Additional disorders involve the violation of the correct procedure for church discipline, for example: (1) when private offenses are voiced publicly prior to seeking private correction; (2) when private offenses are concealed from the offender out of a false sense of keeping the peace; (3) when elders do not admonish members leading scandalously immoral lives; and (4) when the church receives a public charge against a member prior to the rule of Mt. 18:15-16 (see 1P, pp. 52-57).

over the church itself. Each member has a responsibility to watch over the church's moral and doctrinal integrity. When, however, a minister is brought under censure, the P.B.A. practice is to follow the rule of Tim. 5:19 which requires that two or three witnesses attest to the "Matter of Fact." By 1798 the Association had developed the practice that a church council of several member churches, ideally the same group that installed a pastor, be required for dissolving the connection between a minister and his church. Jones writes:

> 6. For this purpose [of dissolving the connection between pastor and church], it will be necessary to call a council from a neighbouring church or churches, the very same, if they can be had, as were witnesses of the settlement.[124]

Morgan Edwards in his Customs gives an example of a church censure of its minister. The case involves the church's invitation to two neighbouring ministers to assist. In the declaration of guilt the presiding minister maintained both the rights of the church to pronounce public censure on its officer and the high dignity of the minister's office. The admonition, out of deference to the minister's position in the presbytery, is given as an entreaty from a fellow elder and not as a rebuke; yet the extra gravity of the fault is underscored: "Your character and office make your transgression heavy."[125]

---

[124] 2P,6.6 (A2028-31); on 1 Tim. 5:19 see 1P, p. 56.9: "(9) When Accusations are received against an Elder, contrary to the Rule, 1 Tim. 5.16 [19] which requires two or three Witnesses as to Matter of Fact." The text is from 1 Tim. 5:19: "Pay no attention to an accusation against a presbyter unless it is supported by two or three witnesses" (New American Bible).

[125] Morgan Edwards gives an example of the censuring of a minister: "The church had invited two neighbouring ministers to their assistance. The matter being heard, and the censure awarded, one of the helping

The effect of excommunication is exclusion from the church. Both bonds of union and communion (contrasted to suspension affecting communion only) are declared broken. The excommunicant is "outside the church." Griffith describes the effect of excommunication in stark terms, drawing out the meaning of Mt. 18:17 and 1 Cor. 5:5:

> Which Exclusion [excommunication] carries in it the full Sense of our Lord's Words, Mat. 18. 17. Let him be unto thee as a Heathen Man and a Publican; or of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 5. to deliver such an one to Satan; which is an authoritative putting of such a Person out of the Communion of the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven; into the World, the Kingdom of Satan, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience, in order to his being humbled and broken under a Sight and Sense of his Sins, which is meant by the Destruction of the Flesh, and to the End that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.[126]

In the 1798 Discipline, as indicated above, Jones did not accept the 1743 interpretations of Matthew's text and Paul's teaching to the Corinthians. Moreover, he made allowances for excommunicants to be restored to communion upon adequate signs of repentance. Indeed, if there are signs of repentance the church might choose to withhold the

---

ministers was prevailed on to administer it, which he did in words to this effect.

> "26. 'Brother---[calling him by his name]! hard indeed is the task laid on us to address you as a man worthy of censure! Were any of our Lords commandments grievous it would be that, which requires one brother minister to admonish another in a public way; even the sin of --- [naming the offence]. Glad are we that he directs us to intreat, and not to rebuke an elder! We wish we could make our intreaty to you in a way which does not infer that you are to blame. But we cannot. Therefore, in the name and with the authority of the Lord Jesus, we pray you, our dear brother, to repent of the offence you have given; . . . your character and office make your transgression [sic] heavy! . . ." (E, p. 55, prop. 19, n. 25).

[126] IP, pp. 48-49 (A1342-57).

severest censure and simply suspend a person who really deserves total exclusion from communion.[127]

While the later Discipline has somewhat relaxed the earlier practice reflected in the 1743 statement, Jones nevertheless describes the effect of excommunication as a real putting of the person "out of the church." Yet both Disciplines acknowledge the real possibility of genuine repentance and restoration to full communion.[128]

The reason for excommunication, as the quotation from Griffith mentions, is to lead the sinner to repent in the last Day of the Lord. Thus, even in its use of the power to put members out of its communion the P.B.A. churches saw church-power in terms of encouragement of the sinner for the sake of his salvation. By 1798 the limiting of the cases for excommunication coupled with the encouraging of the restoration of penitent persons reflects an even more compassionate view of the way church-power should be used.

The Process of Church Censure

Having discussed the Philadelphia tradition about the kinds of church censure and their effects, the next point to consider is the process of church censure. The following comments about this process have application to the more general question of church authority in the Philadelphia tradition.

---

[127] Morgan Edwards sees restoration of those suspended or excommunicated as one way of the church exercising its power to admit members "by the restoration of such as had been put out of its communion" (E, p. 65, prop. 22); he gives examples of restoration from suspension (E, pp. 74-77, prop. 25); and from excommunication (E, pp. 77-79, prop. 26).

[128] 2P, 10.20 (A2206-10); also 1P, p. 50.

First, for private offenses the three steps in fraternal correction outlined in Matthew's gospel must be followed. In chapter 18 Matthew provides the gospel rule to be applied in cases of injuries between Christians:

> 15 "If your brother should commit some wrong against you, go and point out his fault, but keep it between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 If he does not listen, summon another, so that every case may stand on the word of two or three witnesses. 17 If he ignores them, refer it to the church. If he ignores even the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. 18 I assure you, whatever you declare bound on earth shall be held bound in heaven, and whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be held loosed in heaven.[129]

Second, only the most public and heinous crimes are objects of excommunication. Around 1743 this could involve a person's continued disregard for the church's admonitions. By 1798, however, such crimes deserving exclusion were only those involving "immorality or heresy."

Third, notorious and scandalous public acts require the church's immediate censure of excommunication. If a pastor ignores such scandalous acts he is himself subject to the church's censure. The church proceeds immediately in such cases "in order to vindicate the credit of their church's holy profession, and to manifest their obhorrence of such abomination."[130]

Fourth, in the exercise of public censure both the consent of the church and the leadership of the minister are required. When an offense is first publicly brought to the church the minister, as representative of the community, "is to admonish and endeavour in the spirit

---

[129] New American Bible, Mt. 18:15-18.

[130] 2P, 10.17 (A2198-99).

of meekness to reclaim the offender, 1 Tim. v. 20. Tit. i. 13." If the offender is the minister himself, then the church must call upon neighboring ministers to provide assistance in the proceedings against him.[131]

Fifth, before the church proceeds to formal excommunication, the charge must be serious enough (the eighteenth century P.B.A. practice in this regard underwent some real changes), and the church must satisfy itself about the evidence of guilt before proceeding to excommunication. If there is some question about the accused's guilt, the church temporarily suspends the defendant until the doubt can be resolved.

Sixth, suspension of a member does not sever his union with the church but only his right to communion. Similarly, a minister under suspension is still a member, but he cannot exercise his office.

Seventh, at the ceremony of excommunication church-office is exercised through the leadership of the minister or through the presbytery that presides when the minister is the one being censured. Jones describes the procedure:

> 19. The charge being sufficiently proved in the opinion of the church, and they having determined on the person's exclusion, and set the time for that purpose, the minister is to lay open the heinousness of the crime, with the aggravating circumstances thereof, and the scandal such an one is become to religion; he is to apply the particular places of scripture, that may be pertinent to the case, in order to charge the offence home on the conscience of the offender, if present, and that others also may fear; he is to open the nature and end of the censure, expressing the solemn sense of himself and church on this awful occasion; and then he is, in the presence of the church, to cut off and seclude such an offender by name from the union and communion of the church, so that he is not, henceforth to be looked upon, deemed or accounted

---

[131] See 2P,10.7 (A2162-64); also 1P, p. 41 (A1235-38). On the censuring of ministers see E, p. 55 (cited in n. 125 above, p. 356); also 2P,6 (excerpts, A2028-46).

> a brother, or a member of such a church, until God shall restore him again by repentance, for which they pray.[132]

Eighth, as the above quotation indicates, the consent of the whole church is needed for the office-power to "cut off and seclude" "from the union and communion of the church." Moreover, the minister in the name of the church must "apply the particular places of Scripture, that may be pertinent to the case." Thus, all three factors of church-power, office-power, and submission to the infallible rule of Scripture must coalesce for the valid exercise of the church's act of excommunication.

Ninth, the church's authority to censure is not absolute but only relative, for the following reasons: (1) the minister is himself subject to church discipline; (2) the church can itself be heretical, in which case the individual members must remove themselves after having tried to reform the church; (3) the church is bound to scriptural norms of church discipline, for example, the threestep process of fraternal correction outlined in Mt. 18:15-17, the requirement of public and scandalous sins of "immorality or heresy" as conditions for valid excommunication, the due process of public admonition prior to excommunication, and the church's duty to restore the repentant to membership.

Tenth, the second Church Discipline insists upon the individual's right of appeal against a church's improper exercise of church discipline. Jones asserts:

> 21. When a person is about to be excommunicated, judges himself aggrieved by party influence or otherwise, he has a right to

---

[132] 2P, 10.19; also 1P, pp. 45-49 (A1274-1341). (Italics mine.)

> insist on a council being called from a neighbouring church or churches, and the church ought to agree to it, and allow him the choice of one half of the council.[133]

Thus, the first "court of appeal" against an irregular church censure or proceeding is the council. The second "court of appeal," according to Jones, is the association itself.

> 22. If the church should refuse to call in a council and cut the person off, or should they do it contrary to the advice of the council, the person aggrieved may lay a statement of his case before the Association, who may appoint a council, and if the church should refuse to admit of a rehearing before said council, or should refuse to abide by the decision of the council, the Association may bring said church under dealing, and, if the church continues obstinate, a neighbouring church may receive the aggrieved person into their communion.*
>
> ---
>
> * See the Confession of Faith, Chap. XXVII, Sec. 15. Also Keach's Glory of a true Church, p. 18.[134]

In order to assure a fair hearing in the process of an individual's censure by a church, P.B.A. Baptists in the course of the eighteenth century developed a role for the Association itself. The latter made use of church councils as the traditional form for dealing with church disputes (the form used by Congregationalists). In addition to the council, however, the Baptists of the P.B.A. made use of the Association itself, for example, in annual meetings they sometimes advised members about who was worthy of censure in the churches. The Association also disowned some of its own ministers.[135]

---

[133] See 2P,10.21 (A2211-17).

[134] 2P,10.22 (A2219-29) and references cited by Jones from P, 27.15 (A576-80); and 1K, p. 18 (parallel to A2219).

[135] See discussion below, chap. 5, pp. 484-89; also chap. 2, p. 156, esp. n. 114.

Eleventh, individual members suffering because of their minority viewpoints are told to remain active within their churches "except in the case of material defection from the faith." This later view of the 1798 Discipline was also mentioned by Griffith in the quotation cited above concerning churches "heretical in Principles, or idolatrous in Worship, or immoral in Life."[136]

Twelfth and finally, although a church can demand exemplary Christian life prior to admitting a person to full membership (communion), it cannot make the same demands once the person is already received. As the later Discipline states:

> . . . Excommunication is only for immorality or heresy. As for their [the members'] dying away, or seeming to die away in religion, the rules is [sic] "Let them grow together until the harvest," Matt. xiii. 30.[137]

The above treatment of the third church-power--to discipline members--led to a discussion about the three kinds of church censure: admonition (or rebuke), excommunication, and the halfway censure of suspension. The overview of the Philadelphia early and later Church Disciplines uncovered a development in the practice of the Philadelphia Baptists' execution of church censure. Thus, the power to censure provides a vivid example of the Association's role in the development of church life among its members. In the opinion of this author, although the later Discipline in some respects is more relaxed and more developed, it still reflects the essentials contained in Benjamin Keach's views and those that Griffith incorporated into the 1743 official P.B.A. Discipline.

---

[136] 2P, 10.23 (A2230-41); and 1P, p. 52 cited above, p. 354.

[137] P, 10.24 (A2242-51).

In summary, the process of church discipline includes the following principles for the exercise of church authority which have already been mentioned: (1) principle of complementarity, church-power mutually dependent upon office-power to exercise censure, and privileges of church membership balanced by the responsibilities of church membership; (2) scriptural principle, the process of church discipline clearly indicated in Mt. 18:15-17, and the power of the keys revealed in Mt. 18:18; (3) principle of relativity, church-power conditioned by adherence to the truth of Scripture, and churches subject to scrutinies of a council or the association; (4) principle of equality of membership, both ministers and other members subject to discipline; (5) principle of responsibility, all called to a committed Christian life, from the individual member to the association of churches; (6) principle of corresponsibility, all members responsible for church discipline, and all churches responsible for protecting the rights of members and churches through the council or the association; and (7) principle of subsidiarity, the local church exercising primary right to discipline members, but council and association functioning at the service of members and churches to protect their rights.

Implicit in the working of the council and the association, as courts of "appeal" against unjust disciplinary actions, is the principle of collegiality. The P.B.A. does not provide an explicit theology that includes collegiality, yet, in the view of this author, collegiality lies behind the functions of the Assocition exercised in service of member churches (see chapter 5).

Having considered all the elements that go into a descriptive definition of local church in the Philadelphia tradition--the matter, formal cause, functions, and authority--one is in a better position to look critically at the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of local church.

The Complete Working Definition of Gathered Church in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

From a thorough review of the official P.B.A. documents of the eighteenth century the author has developed the following complete working definition of the Philadelphia Baptist view of a visible church:

> The visible church is a gathering of visible saints (divinely elected and effectually called in saving faith by Christ through the ministry of the Word and the influence of the Spirit) who, having publicly professed their faith and having received Baptism, are solemnly joined together by a mutual covenant to walk together in obedience to Christ in all the demands of the gospel and to give themselves to one another in the practical and public enjoyment of the preaching and the hearing of the Word, the partaking of the Ordinances in public worship, and the professed subjection to gospel rule among themselves within the church and in communion with other churches.
>
> Each essential gathered church has full power from Christ to admit and dismiss members, to call and ordain church officers (ministers, ruling elders, and deacons) and to exercise church discipline over all her members, even to admonish, suspend, or excommunicate disorderly members according to gospel rule, all with complete independence from outside interference of any kind.

This definition, of course, is a reconstruction by the author based upon the explicit statements in eighteenth century P.B.A. sources. The significance behind each element of the definition has already been indicated in the extended discussion of gathered churches in the P.B.A.

Having reviewed the Philadelphia tradition of visible local church, the author proceeds to critical comments about this eighteenth century P.B.A. view of gathered church.

A CRITIQUE OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST DEFINITION OF A GATHERED CHURCH

A consideration of the Philadelphia tradition of local church led to an extended consideration of many other dimensions of church life in the eighteenth century P.B.A. Among these are: (1) the difference between an essential and a complete church; (2) the nature and conditions for church membership (individual saving faith, effectual calling, divine election, publicly professed faith, and baptism); (3) the meaning of soul competency (individual liberty); (4) the individual (personal) character of P.B.A. spirituality; (5) the nature of ordinances; (6) believers' baptism; (7) the nature of church covenant; (8) the nature of church authority; (9) the definitions of church-power and office-power; (10) the nature and functions of ordained ministry and its relationship to church-power.

These themes touched upon many of the questions posed in the concluding section of chapter 2.[138] In discussing them, the author has resolved virtually all the questions concerning Church, ministry, ordinances and church discipline. Others, concerning the Philadelphia tradition of church authority and its exercise, and the nature of the association itself, must be considered at greater length. Before proceeding to this task, however, the present author provides a fuller critique of the Philadelphia tradition of local church. The critical remarks involve the following three aspects: (1) the basic models of Church operative in the Philadelphia view of gathered church; (2) the

---

[138] See above, pp. 212-13.

positive advantages of such a view; and (3) some negative aspects of such an understanding of visible church.

The Models of Church Operative in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Gathered Churches

Initial directions for understanding the basic models of Church underlying the P.B.A. official statements were already suggested in previous discussions. The basic model of Church is not that of sacrament or herald. It is rather Church as covenant or as communion.[139]

Considering the P.B.A. teaching about Church as universal (chapter 3) and local (chapter 4), one must respect the fact that the only level of visible church recognized by Philadelphia Baptists is that of the gathered church. While there are many indications that in practice the P.B.A. accepted a visible ecclesial fellowship beyong the local congregation (for example, a universal ministry, the call to communion and fellowship among churches, church councils, the association, etc.), the explicit teaching about Church allows only for visible gathered churches.

Therefore, it is clear that the underlying model of visible church for Philadelphia Baptists is the covenant model. Covenant best characterizes the local church as a voluntary gathering together of visible saints who profess their free acceptance of Christ and their mutual agreement (in a church covenant) to live by the rule of the gospel.

---

[139] On church as sacrament see pp. 296-97, 300-301; also 317; as herald, pp. 314-15; as communion, pp. 321-23; also chap. 3, pp. 258-62; and as covenant, pp. 302-9, esp. 309.

Since the formal cause of a gathered church is not Baptism, nor any other institutional or hierarchical bond, but only the church covenant, it is obvious that the most basic or primary model of church in the minds of the Philadelphia Baptists is one that does justice to the voluntary character of church affiliation. Thus, this author concludes that the primary model of visible church among P.B.A. Baptists of the eighteenth century is the covenant model.

The roots of such a covenant approach to theology and church life among Philadelphia Baptists, as discussed earlier, came from their Particular Baptist background within the Independency of the radical Puritanism of England.[140] Robert T. Handy, in his contribution to the essays honoring James Luther Adams, discusses the sources of the voluntary principle in American religious life. Among these are the following: (1) the left wing of the Reformation, especially the Mennonites; (2) the left wing of the Puritans, especially Baptists and Quakers; (3) the Puritan theory of religious freedom based upon broadly orthodox, classical Christian premises (mentioned below); (4) the experience of religious freedom among churches of the establishment; (5) the spread of evangelicalism and pietism in the eighteenth century; and (6) influences from the Enlightenment, especially Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.[141]

---

[140] On the roots of a covenant theology among Philadelphia Baptists see chap. 1, pp. 69-72; also pp. 302-6.

[141] Robert T. Handy, "VI/The Voluntary Principle in Religion and Religious Freedom in America," in Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies, Essays in Honor of James Luther Adams, ed. by D. B. Robertson (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1966), pp. 130-32.

Philadelphia Baptists experienced the impact of virtually all of these sources of the voluntary principle. More importantly, they were among those Puritan Christians who first patterned their churches along associational lines.

No more basic conviction about the independent local church emerges from the sources of the P.B.A. than the Philadelphia Baptist conviction that the congregational church comes about from the voluntary covenant of its members.

Among the Christian theological premises which supported the trend towards a voluntary principle in church affiliation are the sovereignty of God and the human bondage of sin. Both of these premises were part of the P.B.A. Calvinistic tradition. From these two truths Calvinistic Baptists, and others, derived their three central convictions. These have been discussed by Hudson and are mentioned by Handy. The latter writes:

> They [radical Puritans] believed [firstly] that the visible church must be dependent upon God alone, and hence independent of the state. They affirmed [secondly] that the church must be made up of the convinced, that is, it must be voluntary in membership. Thirdly, they concluded that inasmuch as unchecked human power leads to rebellion against God it should be limited in both church and state; the tendency of human power to absolutize itself made restrictions upon it necessary.[142]

Besides this fundamental covenant model, there are others operative in the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists, especially when

---

[142] Ibid., p. 131. Handy refers to the following: Winthrop S. Hudson, The Great Tradition of the American Churches (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), pp. 49-55; Ralph Barton Perry, Puritanism and Democracy (New York: Vanguard Press, 1944); and A. S. P. Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

one considers the larger dimensions of a universal, invisible Church and church as a spiritual reality. For purposes of a further analysis of the Philadelphia tradition of Church, universal and particular, the author looks to the comparative study in ecclesiology by Avery Dulles, Models of the Church.[143]

As a study in models, Dulles's work has real limitations for the present one. He does not, for example, develop any model of Church which adequately incorporates insights of the radical wing of the Reformation.

It is helpful to distinguish two basic approaches to Church which the present author designates Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.[144] Gemeinschaft focuses upon community or communion of members. It

---

[143]Dulles's work was well received, as indicated by the numerous reviews, among them: K. Baker, Homiletic and Pastoral Review 75 (October 1974):74; R. McBrien, National Catholic Reporter 10 (March 1974):10; C. Peter, Review for Religious 33 (September 1974):1209; P. Burns, Theological Studies 35 (September 1974):563; M. Christopher, U.S. Catholic 39 (October 1974):48; J. Theisen, Worship 48 (October 1974): 500; J. Pelikan, Commonweal 102 (April 1975):90; G. P. Leonard, Cross Currents 25 (Spring 1975):93; A. Mongoven, Living Light 12 (Summer 1975):305; M. Winter, Tablet 230 (October 1976):954; J. Mackey, Furrow 28 (February 1977):118; and R. Schreiter, New Blackfriars 58 (February 1977):101.

[144]See definitions in The New Cassell's German Dictionary (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1958):

"Gemeinschaft, f. community; mutual participation, common possession or interest; communion; partnership, association; intercourse" (p. 186).

"Gesellschaft, f. society, association; fellowship, club; (C.L.) company, partnership; party, social gathering; high society" (p. 193). Church is "christliche Gemeinschaft" (p. 82).

For the distinction between community and association (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft) see the work of Werner Stark, The Sociology of Religion: a Study of Christendom, 5 vols. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966-72), vol. 5: Types of Religious Culture, pp. 1-6; also 72-73. He draws upon a study by Arnold Rademacher, Die Kirche als Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Augsburg, 1931).

suggests a larger corporate reality that takes precedence over the individuals who participate in the community. By contrast, Gesellschaft means society, association, fellowship, or club. It focuses upon the individuals who voluntarily gather to create a society. While both approaches involve membership in a society, the first sets priority upon the whole; the second, upon the individual.

In the view of this author, Dulles deals mostly with Church as Gemeinschaft, whether his materials are drawn from Catholic or Orthodox or Protestant sources. None of the models he discusses are adequate as the basic model of the P.B.A. view of visible church. Speaking from a Catholic context, he apparently has incorporated into his study only those Protestant traditions that accept Church as Gemeinschaft. Moreover, Dulles does not sufficiently acknowledge the denominational approach to church life which developed in America as a result of the associational principle in religion.

Despite such limitations in Dulles's work, it can nevertheless provide real help for this study. It offers a way of further analyzing the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of Church. Dulles discusses five models of Church: as institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald and servant. In the course of his analysis, he employs three basic questions that can help to uncover additional models of Church within official P.B.A. sources of the eighteenth century.

Three questions, then, can be asked about the P.B.A.'s explicit statements concerning Church as universal and church as spiritual: (1) what are the unifying bonds of church or Church? (2) who are the beneficiaries served by the church? and (3) what are the benefits bestowed

by church affiliation? By addressing these three themes the present critique will uncover and characterize other major models at work in the Philadelphia definition of church besides the primary one of covenant.[145]

The Bonds Unifying Members of Gathered Churches

When one asks Dulles's first question about the bonds unifying the P.B.A. churches, he can immediately acknowledge that these are not primarily institutional and external bonds as they would be if the basic model of Church were institutional. Dulles indicates that compliance to professed doctrines and to legitimate sacraments, as well as obedience to duly appointed hierarchic leaders, are the distinguishing marks of the institutional model.[146] These dimensions are not lacking in the Philadelphia tradition, but the primary bonds in church life are not such external juridic ones.

Nor are the bonds sacramental ones so that, in Dulles's terms, the church's acts would be "social, visible signs of the grace of Christ operative in believing Christians."[147] Grace <u>is</u> central to the views of P.B.A. Baptists, but the visible offering of that grace in ecclesial actions is not the focus in their theology of Church.

---

[145]On Dulles's use of the three questions for each model see the following: for institutional model (pp. 37-38); for mystical community model (pp. 53-54); for sacramental model (pp. 66-68); for herald model (pp. 77-78); and for servant model (pp. 90-91).

[146]Dulles, p. 37.

[147]Ibid., p. 66.

The bonds among Philadelphia Baptists are seen fundamentally as spiritual and interior, invisible bonds of faith and grace. Faith becomes manifest through public profession and a good Christian life, and Christ's spiritual Body is made visible in the mutual covenant among professed believers. Faith is more basic as a bond than even the church covenant if one focuses upon the deeper spiritual union among Christians.

From the human side, saving faith brings the Christian into a fundamental relationship with Christ's covenant of grace and makes one a member of his Body. From the divine side, God's effectual calling of the person accounts for real membership in the Body of Christ, even prior to membership in a local church. Thus, saving faith alone accounts for the spiritual bond among Christ's followers.

This is not to deny the place of visible organizational elements in Philadelphia Baptist church life. These elements, however, follow upon the primary bond of faith which establishes among believers a pre-existent communion in the invisible Body of Christ, even prior to their public profession and baptism as adult believers.

When the church is viewed as a spiritual reality, the basic model operative in the Philadelphia tradition must be one that stresses the bond of faith and reconciling grace. In Dulles's terms, this must mean either Church as herald or Church as communion.

On Church as herald, Dulles writes:

> The primary bond of communion in this [herald] approach is unquestionably faith; and faith is seen as a response to the gospel, that is to say, the proclamation of the Christ-event.[148]

On Church as communion, Dulles has this to say about the bond of union among Christians:

> The bonds of union in these [communitarian] theories would be primarily the interior graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, though the external bonds are recognized as important in a subsidiary way. . . . The primary factor that binds the members of the Church to each other is the reconciling grace of Christ.[149]

Since the Philadelphia Baptists placed a high priority upon faith and grace as the bonds among Christians, it appears that they accepted as a basic model of Church either that of herald or that of communion. The herald model operates to a great extent among P.B.A. Baptists of the eighteenth century. Philadelphia Baptists saw personal faith as a response to the kerygma, and such personal faith is for them the basic bond among Christians.

In the minds of Philadelphia Baptists, as expressed in the official P.B.A. documents, that which binds them together in church life is the inner life of saving faith and grace. All else follows upon the believer's acceptance of Christ in faith: salvation (effectual or saving faith), seeking fellowship with other believers, public profession, baptism, church covenant, the use of ordinances, the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper, obedience to Christ's ordinances and to his ruling ministers, and acceptance of the responsibilities for each other and for other churches.

---

[148] Ibid., p. 77. (Italics mine.)

[149] Ibid., p. 53. (Italics mine.)

Yet, as will become evident in discussing the second question, the more basic of the two models of Church for Philadelphia Baptists is that of communion.

Thus, when one asks what is the bond of union among Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century, the answer points clearly to models of Church as herald or Church as communion. Priority lies with the inner mystical communion and not with the need for church organization, or adherence to external doctrines, or obedience to decisions of authority. The bottom line is always the individual's fidelity to Christ. The quality of Christian fellowship is correspondingly personalized. Individual fiath is more decisive than corporate doctrine or correct worship, although both of the latter have significant, if secondary, places in the Philadelphia tradition.

Seeing the bond among Christians in spiritual and individual terms gave Philadelphia Baptists advantages in their style of church fellowship, but the same viewpoint, as will be noted below, also restricted the vision of a visible Church beyond the local congregation.

Looking at the first question proposed by Dulles, and applying it to the Philadelphia tradition, one discovers that the predominant model of Church as a spiritual reality is either the communion or the herald model. Looking to Dulles's second question further limits the choice of a model of Church.

The Beneficiaries Served by Gathered Churches

The second question proposed by Dulles is: "Who are the beneficiaries served by the church?" In the Philadelphia Baptist tradition

the decided beneficiaries of church life were Baptists themselves. Unlike those who accept an institutional model, P.B.A. Baptists were not primarily interested in bringing sinners into the Church to be saved. They hoped rather that the sinner, confronted with the preached Word, would be touched by God's mercy through repentance from sin and conversion in faith.

Philadelphia Baptists treasured the Word. They saw the Church as herald. The usual way to saving faith for them was through the experience of Christ's Word under the influence of the Spirit. Yet the missionary aspect of preaching the kerygma was directed primarily to the inner life among Baptists. The vision of church as gathered believers left conversion up to God's influence upon the individual. A covenanted commitment was primarily for the Baptists' mutual edification and, therefore, intended to benefit believers themselves.

Thus, Philadelphia Baptists who had a great respect for the Word also restricted the extent of the great commission to preach to the whole world. They did not deny Christ's commission to preach to the world, but neither did their explicit statements about Church or about gathered churches encourage missionary efforts beyond their own ranks.

Baptists of the P.B.A. made their own members the primary beneficiaries of church life. If one applies Dulles's analysis of ecclesial models to Philadelphia Baptist views, then the basic model of church in the P.B.A. is neither herald nor servant. Both of these

models assume a thrust outward, directed to the world.[150] Church life in the P.B.A. enriched the privileged membership who bore a responsibility first to God and then to each other. In the minds of Philadelphia Baptists church exists to make Christ's covenant and rule visible for the church members, for their mutual edification: to hear the Word, to gather for public worship, and to exercise watchful discipline over one another according to gospel rule.[151]

In the view of this author, therefore, the communion model is more basic than the herald model in the Philadelphia tradition's definition of visible church. Moreover, the model of Church as communion is even more pervasive than that of covenant. The model of communio operates at every level of church fellowship: the gathered church, the church council, the association, and the society. By contrast, the model of covenant, while it applies somewhat to different levels, uniquely characterizes the visible church which, for Philadelphia Baptists, exists only on the congregational level.

Philadelphia Baptists, of course, were very convinced of the church's essentially kerygmatic (preaching of the gospel) role. But in terms of a mission outward, the explicit statements about Church

---

[150]On Church as herald Dulles writes: "The goal of the Church, in this [Herald] style of theology, is simply to herald the message . . . to evangelize all the nations in accordance with the 'great commision' of Mt. 28:18-20" (p. 78). On Church as servant he says: "The beneficiaries of the Church's action, in this [Servant] type of ecclesiology, are not exclusively, or even primarily, the members of the Church itself. Rather they are all those brothers and sisters the world over, who hear from the Church a word of comfort or encouragement, . . ." (p. 91). (Italics mine.)

[151]On the purpose of the church see above, pp. 312-22.

manifest a most awkward silence, quite uncharacteristic of more recent Baptist views.[152]

Thus, when one considers gathered churches as visible expressions of Church, the covenant model best characterizes the Philadelphia Baptist tradition. However, considering Church as invisible and local church in its spiritual reality, the communion model best characterizes the Philadelphia tradition. These two models of Church, as communion and as covenant, best characterize the Philadelphia Baptist view of Church and gathered church in the eighteenth century.

The Benefits Bestowed by the Gathered Churches

Considering Dulles's third question about the benefits bestowed through church membership, one sees again that the benefits in Philadelphia Baptist church affiliation redounded mostly to Baptists themselves. The covenant in a gathered church provides the benefits of mutual edification for church members: communion with other visible saints; a living faith sustained through mutual covenant relationships both to God and to each other; and a mutual support in walking obediently in faith.

---

[152]Compare, for example, the 1963 Southern Baptist Convention description of Church to the one developed from the eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist statements (above, p. 364). The 1963 Confession reads in part: "VI. THE CHURCH. A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. . . ." (Lumpkin, p. 396). (Italics mine.) Sec. 11 of the same Confession reads: "It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all the nations. . . ." (Lumpkin, p. 397). (Italics mine.)

For Philadelphia Baptists, church is not a means of grace for the person outside the fold but an end in itself. A gathered church is the third level of the covenant of grace, an experience of the Old Testament promised covenant revealed by Christ in the New Testament.[153]

In such a view of gathered church the notion of symbol as a sign of grace and a sign of repentance appears superfluous--the model of church as sacrament is therefore unnecessary in the Philadelphia tradition. Contact with Christ needs no further intermediary body or sacramental activity. Faith has already brought the individual into Christ's eternal covenant with the Father. The benefit of church fellowship is not that it offers a means of reaching Christ, but that the fellowship sustains faith which already binds Christians together in Christ's mystical Body.

Moreover, the purpose of the church is not so much for evangelism of the world as for the continued confrontation between the Word and the believing Christian. Word <u>is</u> more basic than sacrament in the Philadelphia tradition. Yet within the life of the church even the Word is primarily for believers, not for the world. At least one is led to conclude this is a search through the explicit official statements about Church and gathered church in the eighteenth century documents of the P.B.A.!

Once again, therefore, the primary model that emerges from a question about the church's benefits in the Philadelphia tradition is that of communion among the believers themselves. They are not only

---

[153] On the triple-covenant in the Philadelphia tradition see above, pp. 303-6.

the primary beneficiaries (as noted in the previous question), but correlatively the benefits bestowed by church affiliation are tailored to their needs for mutual edification.

Thus, in the opinion of this author, the operative model of Church and gathered church among Philadelphia Baptists, from among the five discussed by Dulles, is the model of Church as communion. That model is more basic than the one which characterizes the Church as herald of the gospel to the world and more pervasive than the primary model of gathered church (considered in its visible dimensions) as covenant. Applying Dulles's three questions to the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of Church has helped to pinpoint the predominant model of Church among Baptists of the P.B.A. during the period under study.

In putting priority on the communitarian model, this author does not mean to minimize other aspects of church life evident in the Philadelphia tradition, aspects which Dulles would attach to other models. The questions asked above helped to uncover the basic models of Church within the eighteenth century P.B.A. tradition. In fact, the Philadelphia Baptists possessed a remarkably holistic approach to church life. Other aspects besides those of the covenant and communion models were evident both in P.B.A. statements and in the eighteenth century praxis within the Association.

First of all, Philadelphia Baptists, inheriting Particular Baptist views, had a healthy respect for church order. Institutionalization, however, did not take precedence over other aspects of church life. The primacy was not given to doctrinal statements, or to an

ordered ministry, although both were important within eighteenth century P.B.A. life. The primacy was given to the covenanted fellowship which existed for the sake of mutual edification.

Second, like those favoring a model of Church as herald, P.B.A. Baptists placed an emphasis upon Scripture and upon the need to preach the gospel. They were heralds of the good news, but, as already noted in chapter 2, the extent of their preaching mission was limited to their own ranks through most of the eighteenth century. Evangelism was ad intra and missionary efforts beyond their own ranks came only late in the eighteenth century. The fact that the statements about church did not clearly proclaim the Christian mission to preach to the world must have had some influence upon the thinking of the P.B.A. membership.

It should be noted that the author's choice of the communion model is based upon the evidence in the official sources of the P.B.A. analyzed in this study. He does not mean to claim unreservedly that a missionary concern to preach the gospel to the nations was totally lacking among P.B.A. Baptists of the period. Nevertheless, the language and statements in the Association's documents, and the activities of the P.B.A. reflected in its official minutes of proceedings, all show a surprising lack of a missionary spirit directed outward. This eighteenth century evidence stands in stark contrast to the evangelistic enthusiasm among Baptists today, especially in the southern United States.[154]

---

[154]The question of the origins of the foreign and home missionary spirit among American Baptists could make a worthwile doctoral study in itself. Some British Baptists expressed the evangelistic character of church explicitly. Among the areas to be investigated are the

Third, Philadelphia Baptists were in touch with Christ through their experience in public worship. They valued the ordinances, the preached Word, and especially Christ's Real Presence in the Supper. Yet priority was always given to personal faith and not to sacramental signs of Christ's presence and activity among his people.

Conclusions about Church Models in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

The Philadelphia tradition of Church, as evidenced in this study of the official sources of the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century, reveals the underlying models of Church as communion and gathered church as covenant. From the above critique of various models the author draws the following four conclusions.

First, no single model of Church is adequate to characterize the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the eighteenth century. In addition to the basic models of Church as communion and gathered church as covenant, elements of other models are present in the P.B.A. view of gathered church. The herald model operates to a great extent, although it lacks a missionary thrust ad extra. Institutional elements abound, although none of these have priority over the spiritual bonds of faith and grace. Only the sacramental model of church seems lacking in the explicit views of Church among eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists. This sacramental model, however, is basically surpassed by a personalized approach to Christian life and the ordinances, and the latter,

---

following: the influence from John Gill and Andrew Fuller (see chap. 2, pp. 116-18); the P.B.A. practice of evangelism in the eighteenth century (see chap. 2, pp. 165-67); and the rise of the missionary societies among American Baptists and Protestants in general (see chap. 2, pp. 168-74).

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, retain their due place in the churches of the P.B.A.

Second, considering the gathered church as a visible manifestation of Church, the best model is that of covenant. It is the primary model of church among Philadelphia Baptists.

Third, the most pervasive or controlling model of Church (and gathered church as a spiritual reality) is that of communion. It is the view of this author that the communio model best characterizes the attitude of P.B.A. Baptists of the eighteenth century towards their church affiliations at various levels: gathered church, councils, associations, societies, and universal invisible Church.

Fourth, this basic model of Church as communion provides an horizon that integrates both the explicit Philadelphia tradition of universal invisible Church and the local congregation as the visible gathering of the saints for their mutual edification. The same church model accounts for the P.B.A.'s ability to maintain, in the eighteenth century, a praxis which paradoxically involved member churches in a real visible fellowship tantamount to a visible Church beyond the local congregations. A sense of ecclesial communion may very well have been the fundamental attitude among Philadelphia Baptists which allowed them to see the need for a permanent interdependence among their independent churches.

At any rate, in the view of the present author, the P.B.A.'s sense of communion throughout the eighteenth century helped it historically to retain fellowship and communion among Baptist churches of the Association. Thus, the very model of Church which suffered a handicap

in seeing the universal Church as visible was paradoxically the same model that allowed Philadelphia Baptists to continue their interchurch fellowship. The eighteenth century Philadelphia tradition, therefore, had both its advantages and its limitations which are now listed as part of the author's critique.

The Positive Value of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Gathered Churches

Harkening back to the author's working definition of local church in the Philadelphia tradition and drawing upon the basic P.B.A. models of Church as communion and covenant, one can see the advantages of such an eighteenth century view of church.

First, Philadelphia Baptists held a view of church which has strong biblical roots. Dulles, in his work, sees this as one of the necessary validating qualities for any current model of Church.[155] All Christians feel more comfortable when their pattern for church life has biblical foundations.

Second, the P.B.A. view of church also has a firm tradition in the history of Christianity, from the Pauline churches in New Testament times to the Reformation. Even within Roman Catholicism some of the more vibrant Christian experiences followed the pattern of gathered "churches" in religious communities.

---

[155]Dulles offers the following criteria for validating contemporary ecclesiologies: (1) basis in Scripture; (2) basis in Christian tradition; (3) capacity to give Church members a sense of their corporate identity and mission; (4) tendency to foster the virtues and values generally admired by Christians; (5) correspondence with the religious experience of persons today; (6) theological fruitfulness; and (7) fruitfulness in enabling Church members to relate successfully to those outside their own group (pp. 180-81).

Third, the focus upon a communion among members, with shared responsibility for each other, in a democratic process of admitting members, calling officers, and exercising discipline, had a particular appeal to the emerging modern democratic spirit. The same model had a potential openness to other Christian denominations because the basis for fellowship is an interior bond in the Spirit.

Fourth, the Philadelphia tradition of Church puts stress upon the individual's spiritual relationship with Christ and upon the individual's responsibility to use his talents for the good of the fellowship in the local church. No one can fail to recognize the direct challenge from an explicit and freely accepted church covenant that binds one to all other members of the church as well as to Christ.

Fifth, the value of the local congregation as a full expression of the Church of Christ is highlighted in the Philadelphia vision of gathered church. Each independent church has full power and responsibility to follow Christ's rule in Scripture. No outside authority or power is needed to fulfill the essential internal functions of a Church of Christ. Herein lies the great ability of eighteenth century P.B.A. Baptists to provide, at least in theory, a vibrant church life for all their members. The only limitations placed upon Philadelphia Baptist church life are the ones that individual members place upon their own fidelity to covenant relationships.

Sixth, fidelity to scripturally authentic forms of church life helped Philadelphia Baptists retain practices like an officially ordained ministry, the ordinances, and a defined church order. None of these are institutionalized to the extent they were in the Roman

Catholic tradition or in some Protestant traditions. Yet the major lines of traditional ecclesial life continued to exist among eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists. The external forms, however, were relativized, and this in itself was at times an advantage.

Seventh, the correct Christian priorities were maintained, namely, one's fundamental relationship to God was viewed as an interior life in Christ through faith. One can readily grant that the kingdom is, finally, within the individual. This conviction, present in all valid ecclesial experiences, has, as it were, become institutionalized in the Philadelphia Baptist understanding of Christian fellowship.

Eighth, the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of Church remains open to continuing development. While the mission of the Church ad extra is not explicitly proclaimed, the communion with other Christians (potentially with all persons living in faith) keeps Philadelphia Baptists open to fellowship with others and even to cooperative efforts with them.

While the Philadelphia tradition of gathered church has many advantages, it also limits the vision of P.B.A. Baptists. The tradition itself sets limits beyond which Philadelphia Baptists in the eighteenth century could not proceed.

The Limitations of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Gathered Churches

In the view of this author, there are several significant limitations in the attitudes among P.B.A. Baptists. Their view of Church and of gathered churches conditioned their ability to articulate in explicit terms the possibility of a broader visible fellowship beyond

the local congregations. The main limitations are the following:

First, the very definition of church as gathered church of visible saints is limited in its horizons. It lacks the full potential for describing the responsibility of the Christian fellowship to preach to the world. The ad extra missionary dimension of Church is absent in the official statements of Church. Consequently, the role of the ministry to preach the gospel at large is minimized. The P.B.A. only very late in the eighteenth century established its official evangelists Morgan Edwards and John Gano. Their function, moreover, affected mostly Baptist churches of the Association. The concerted missionary activities of Philadelphia Baptists emerged only at the turn of the century, in conjunction with the foreign missionary movements in England and America and the rise of voluntary missionary societies among American Protestants.

Second, the definition of church-power in terms of the internal life of an independent church limited the attitude of Philadelphia Baptists towards other church authority and power in Christ. Functions like the P.B.A.'s service of the churches--advising, interpreting the meaning of Scripture, setting standards for the ministry, specifying requirements for the celebration of the ordinances, clarifying the doctrine of Philadelphia Baptists--are functions mostly relegated to a non-church status. They do not fit the narrowly defined understanding among Philadelphia Baptists of church-powers to admit and dismiss members, to call and ordain officers, and to exercise church discipline over all members. At most the Association's functions are characterized

as merely advisory to member churches, as though each church were totally free to accept or to refuse the P.B.A.'s considered advice.

Third, visible church is limited to the local congregation. The model of Church as communion in itself fosters a spiritualized understanding of Church. The inclination among Philadelphia Baptists was to minimize the reality of Church visibly operative on levels beyond the congregations. The need for visible fellowship is dutifully followed as a biblically authentic way of Christian life. There is, however, little recognition of the Spirit's continued development of church life in history. The need at the turn of the nineteenth century for churches to organize themselves for effective preaching of the word to the modern world became simply a matter of expedience rather than a recognition of divinely authorized church structures and ministries. Voluntary societies, freely established by individual Christians, replaced an ecclesially estabished communion among churches. What one church found itself incapable of doing it accomplished by free association with other churches. Such cooperation tended to exist among Philadelphia Baptists without any clear theology to demonstrate the inner necessity of churches to associate.

Fourth, church covenant in the Philadelphia tradition was in a category distinct from other covenant relationships among Christians such as the association covenant, or the covenant between a pastor and a given congregation. The difference for Philadelphia Baptists was qualitative. Church covenants are demanded by the gospel, association covenants are not. By defining church covenant in limited terms that applied only to the local congregation the P.B.A. Baptists failed to

recognize clear ecclesial dimensions to other covenants in their own tradition.

All in all, when one weighs the balance, the positive advantages of the Philadelphia tradition of Church far outweigh the limitations. While it remains easy today to criticize the P.B.A.'s limited vision of ecclesiology, one must stand in admiration of a Christian denomination that maintained an integral experience of church despite its limited theological statements about ecclesial structures. Moreover, the Catholic interpreter should remember that only in recent years, with the advent of the Second Vatican Council, has the Catholic communion arrived at an adequate view of Church and of collegial authority in the Church.[156]

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA TRADITION OF LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AS GATHERED CHURCHES OF VISIBLE SAINTS

Before proceeding to a consideration of the Philadelphia tradition of the association, it is useful to summarize here the main conclusions about the P.B.A. official statements of the local church.

First, the major models of church operative within the P.B.A. during the eighteenth century are those of covenant and communion. Viewed as a visible manifestation of Church, the gathered church reflects the model of church as covenant; viewed in its spiritual dimension, the gathered church reflects the model of communion. While the covenant model is primary, the communion model is more pervasive. It characterizes church fellowship at various levels of P.B.A. life: the

---

[156]See this author's comment in chap. 3, n. 71, p. 264.

gathered church, the occasional council, the association, the voluntary society, and even the universal invisible Church.

Second, the communion model of Church integrates the explicit statements about the universal Church and those about the independent gathered churches. The same model enables Philadelphia Baptists to remain open to a broader ecclesial fellowship through the Association. A fundamental characteristic of this model of Church is the individual and personal basis of membership in Christ's Body--a direct individual bond through faith with all Christ's members.

Second, the Philadelphia tradition of gathered church incorporates all the major elements of church life present in other Protestant traditions. These elements, retained by a fidelity to scriptural norms, include an ordained ministry, gospel ordinances, and church discipline. Walking in obedience to Christ's commands in Scripture, Philadelphia Baptists retain a respect for the role of ordained ministry and for the importance of church fellowship.

Third, Philadelphia Baptists see the visible church as congregational in form, totally independent from every other distinct church, with full power to conduct its own internal affairs. While the execution of its church-power requires the presence of ordained officers, and while the church council and association at times assist needy churches, the call and the consent of the local congregation is always necessary for admission of members, ordination of officers, and censure of disorderly members.

Fourth, Philadelphia Baptists insist upon gathered churches as essential visible expressions of the Church of Christ. Church

fellowship, however, comes from faith and not the other way around. The Church is not a means of encountering Christ, nor is Baptism a means of entering the Church. Church is rather the full expression of the individual's relationship with Christ's Body through faith.

Fifth, Philadelphia Baptists have retained a high regard for the ministry. Though called and ordained by consent of the church, ministers receive their office-power directly from Christ. The church's exercise of the office-power is contingent upon the existence of the ordained ministry. By right of his office the minister preaches and teaches the Word, administers the ordinances, and exercises rule over church members. His office-power can be used for any church calling upon his help. Implicitly, therefore, the P.B.A. view of ministry points to the existence of Church on a functional level beyond the local congregation.

Sixth, the explicit statements about the gathered church in the Philadelphia tradition describe ecclesial realities in specific and narrowly defined terms. Church-power, for example, focuses upon the independent local church and is limited only to those internal activities necessary to the independent life of the church--admitting members, calling and ordaining ministers, and disciplining members. Other ecclesial activities are not included, for example, the church's mission to preach is not seen as church-power. Another narrowly conceived reality is the covenant. Philadelphia Baptists considered the church covenant to be qualitatively distinct from other covenants. A third limited concept is that of a gospel church. Church is conceived in individualist terms. Membership is based on personal faith. The

definition of church lacks an explicit affirmation about the church's essentially missionary character vis-à-vis the world. The same definition totally bypasses any traditional sacramental dimension. For Philadelphia Baptists church is not a menas of grace but an end in itself.

Seventh, while the churches are each independent of outside influence, the Philadelphia tradition provides a role of service for the council and the association in relationship to local churches. If a church member or a church has suffered from some irregular procedure courts of "appeal" do exist in the P.B.A. tradition. A church council can be called, or the offended party can apply to the association itself. These larger groups, however, exercise advisory functions only. Nevertheless, an individual has the right even to withdraw from an unorthodox church for conscience sake.

Having considered the Philadelphia tradition of universal Church and its view of the local congregation as a gathered church, this study directs its attention to the official P.B.A. teaching about the association. In the process, one uncovers additional explicit attitudes about church authority within the Philadelphia Association.

CONFEDERATE AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

by

Rev. Francis W. Sacks, C.M.

VOLUME II

(beginning with Chapter 5)

Université d'Ottawa
BIBLIOTHÈQUES
LIBRARIES
University of Ottawa

OTTAWA

1978

CHAPTER V

THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF THE ASSOCIATION AS A VOLUNTARY FELLOWSHIP OF INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

The preceding chapter indicated that Philadelphia Baptists view the visible Church of Christ almost exclusively in terms of the local congregation, the gathered church of visible saints. Each of these churches, in the P.B.A. view, possessed all the church-power needed to run its own affairs. Yet the independent churches maintained a fellowship with each other through occasional councils and through the permanent association, the P.B.A.

This study, in pursuing its threefold aim, now focuses directly upon the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the association as a voluntary fellowship of independent churches.[1] Many aspects of associationalism have already been noted in previous discussions.[2]

---

[1]The threefold aim: (1) to uncover new insights into the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church and church authority; (2) to reveal the strengths and weaknesses in the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of church and church authority; and (3) to uncover the principles, implicit and explicit, that constitute the eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church and church authority (see intro., pp. 7-8).

[2]See the following: origins and roots of the P.B.A. (chap. 1, pp. 57-64, esp. nn. 46 and 56); forces eroding theological basis for connectionalism and conflicting views of church polity (chap. 2, pp. 127-34 and summary, pp. 208-11); development of P.B.A. associational

What remains to be treated is the explicit teaching of the P.B.A. about associations. Certain questions, many already indicated above, need further probing.[3] Did the association, as a fellowship among Baptist churches, have any ecclesiological significance for eighteenth century Baptists?[4] Was its advice to the member churches, especially when rooted in the Scriptures, binding upon member churches? Did associations exercise any real power over churches, and if so, how was that power related to church-power? What was the nature of the association covenant, and how did it differ from the church covenant? What was the difference between the occasional council and the association? Are associations a necessary form of Baptist connectionalism today, or were they historically conditioned?

The answers to these and to other questions unfold in a consideration of the P.B.A. sources on associations.[5] In the process, additional principles relating to the authority of the church will emerge, which principles remain basic to any attempt to reconstruct an eighteenth century P.B.A. theology of church authority. One must, however, first understand which sources definitely deal with the association as such.

---

theory (chap. 2, pp. 184-202); P.B.A. tradition of universal Church and contrary indications of visible fellowship beyond congregations (chap. 3, pp. 218-26, 242-49, and 258-71); and the function of ordained ministry, church councils, and associations in the life of the gathered church (chap. 4, pp. 311, 339, 341-48, 354-55, 358-59, 361, 363, and 391).

[3]See questions posed above, pp. 173, 182, 213, and 276.

[4]For the precise connotation of ecclesiological in this study, see intro., p. 35.

[5]For a list of official sources see above, chap. 3, p. 214.

THE OFFICIAL PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST SOURCES DEALING WITH CONNECTIONALISM

A review of the official P.B.A. sources of this study uncovers some ambiguity in earlier texts about the precise type of connectionalism discussed. It is important to distinguish as adequately as possible the materials dealing with the general Christian obligation to fellowship from the materials treating specifically of councils and associations.

In the Philadelphia Confession, while the adaptation made by London Particular Baptists remained open to such permanent groups as the association, the text itself quite obviously deals with occasional church councils. They are the groups "according to the Mind of Christ" that gather messengers from churches holding the same communion. The councils meet to settle "Cases of Difficulties or Differences, either in Point of Doctrine or Administration."[6]

In the Church Discipline of 1743, Griffith expands upon the confessional statement. In his section on the communion of churches, Griffith first describes the nature of an independent church. Next he outlines the general duty of such churches to "maintain Communion together in many Duties." After drawing out the implications of such a communion, he describes, in a single paragraph, the association itself. This paragraph clearly deals with associations. Finally,

---

[6]P,27.15 (A571-86). On the adaptation by London Particular Baptists see chap. 3, pp. 227-31.

however, the Church Discipline goes on to develop themes from the confessional statement which originally dealt with church councils.[7]

Did Griffith, in this last section, mean to continue his discussion of associations, or is he dealing with the occasional council as the original section in the Philadelphia Confession had?

In the opinion of this author, the 1743 text, of itself, does not provide a conclusive answer. One might logically assume that Griffith continues to deal with the association because he has already introduced the subject. It is, however, quite plausible that Griffith drops the theme of associations as such and chooses to focus upon the confessional theme of councils. From the textual wording, the latter is most probably the case.

If this be so, then the alterations of the confessional statement enumerated below do not directly concern the association as such.[8] Griffith, then, is really dealing with occasional church councils in his discussion of fellowship "according to the Mind of Christ." And the official P.B.A. sources nowhere state explicitly that the association is according to the mind of Christ in Scripture.

The essay of 1749 does not shed any further light upon the above ambiguity. Griffith does, however, justify an association's action by an appeal to Acts 15. He states:

---

[7]Sectional divisions in 1P, pp. 57-62, are as follows: on independent churches, A1358-1409; on the general duty of communion, A1410-37; on the association, A1438-52; and on the confessional section about councils, A1454-96.

[8]See Griffith's changes discussed below, pp. 418-26.

> We judge those things in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles to be imitable by an Association.[9]

It seems clear, therefore, that Griffith is appropriating to the association itself activities originally applied to church councils by the Philadelphia Confession. He is claiming, in effect, that the association can imitate the church council in some respects. Nevertheless, the association is not described as a fellowship according to the mind of Christ.

It is interesting to note that when Manning, in his Sentiments Touching an Association, tried to use arguments similar to Griffith's essay, he failed to convince the Warren assembly. Specifically, the role of the association as an interpreter of the mind of the Spirit in Scripture was deleted from the approved version.[10] Jones's 1798 Church Discipline retains all the major developments in associational theory introduced by Griffith. This later work, however, omits any direct reference to the association's role as interpreter of the Spirit in Scripture, and it nowhere makes use of the expression "according to the Mind of Christ." Jones nevertheless appeals to Scripture to justify the association.[11]

What does all of the above mean in terms of this study of the Philadelphia tradition of association? In the view of this author, the following can be said.

---

[9] 1P, p. 62 (A1574-75). (Italics mine.)

[10] See below, p. 432.

[11] Jones states the association is a "practice recommended by . . . apostolic practice, Acts xv," and he argues for the general obligation of fellowship among churches from the Scriptures. (See 2P, 11.1 and 12.2 [A2273 and 2297-99].)

First, there is a distinction in the official sources between a general Christian obligation to the mutual fellowship demanded of the individual and of the churches, and the specific instances of such fellowship in the council or the association.

Second, the expression, "according to the Mind of Christ," relates originally to the church council in the Philadelphia Confession. Griffith's use of the expression in 1743 most probably applies to the same reality, to the council, and not to the association as such. Nevertheless, both the confessional statement and Griffith's expanded treatment of the same section remain open to other types of connectionalism than the occasional council.

Third, in discussing the evidence from the Confession and from the first Church Discipline, it is important to keep in mind the ambiguity about the exact subject addressed in Griffith's Discipline of 1743. This is particularly important when attempting to clarify the differences between an association covenant and a church covenant and between the council and the association.[12]

Fourth, while the above ambiguity about Griffith's text raises some questions, the same ambiguity does not seriously affect an understanding of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations. The latter is clearly indicated in other official sources of the P.B.A. and in other sections of Griffith's Church Discipline.[13]

---

[12] On covenants see below, pp. 439-47; on councils, pp. 447-56.

[13] See discussion below based upon analysis of the following P.B.A. sources: 1P, p. 60 (A1438-52); G, pp. 61-63 (A1498-1621); 2P,12 (A2292-2376); also P.B.A. to Warren (A1638-73).

This section noted the problem of specifying the precise nature of some of the evidence from the sources. The remaining divisions in the present chapter discuss the Philadelphia tradition of the association under the following major headings: (1) the developments in eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist associational theory; (2) the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations; and (3) some critical reflections about the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONAL THEORY

The major milestones in the development of P.B.A. sources treating of associational theory were noted in chapter 2.[14] A closer look at the official sources indicates on the one hand some significant developments and on the other hand some remarkable consistencies in P.B.A. views of associations. Both need to be highlighted in order to appreciate the Philadelphia tradition of associations in the eighteenth century.

Consistencies in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia Baptist Views of Associations

Some of the consistent ideas about associations among P.B.A. Baptists are the following: (1) the advisory character of associations; (2) the grounds for justifying associations; and (3) the general purpose of an association.

---

[14] See above, pp. 184-203.

The Advisory Nature of Associations

All of the official P.B.A. sources underline the advisory character of associations among Baptists and the independence of each member church from any superior authority beyond itself. Even when the real power of the association is most strongly affirmed in Griffith's essay of 1749, the independence of each member church of the association is likewise stressed. As Griffith states:

> That an Association is not a superior judicature, having such superior powers over the churches concerned; but that each particular [61] church hath a complete power and authority from Jesus Christ, . . .
> . . . ; and thus the several independent churches being the constituents, the association, council or assembly of delegates, when assembled, is not to be deemed a superior judicature, as having a superintendency over the churches, but subservient to the churches, in what may concern all the churches in general, or any one church in particular; . . .[15]

Such sentiments echoed Griffith's Discipline of 1743, although the latter, as noted below, also made significant changes in the Philadelphia Confession. Griffith most probably, as suggested earlier, speaks about church councils. After affirming the role of such assemblies in determining the "Mind of the Holy Ghost, revealed in Scripture," Griffith, in the early Discipline, goes on to state:

> . . . Yet such Delegates thus assembled, are not entrusted or armed with any coercive Power, or any superior Jurisdiction over the Churches concerned, so as to impose their Determinations on them or their Officers, under the Penalty of Excommunication, or the like.[16]

Even if Griffith is speaking only of the occasional council, his views underscore the P.B.A. conviction that assemblies beyond the

---

[15] G, pp. 60-61 (A1498-1501 and 1518-26).

[16] 1P, p. 62 (A1475-77 and 1485-90).

local congregation do not possess jurisdiction over the member churches. The advisory character of the association was again affirmed in Jones's later Discipline of 1798. The same idea had appeared, in substance, in the Philadelphia Confession's statement on the Church and in the second sentiment of James Manning on the nature of an association. The last was a statement clarified in 1768 during the troublesome years of the formation of the Warren Association.[17]

The conclusion is clear. From the beginning, and throughout the eighteenth century, Philadelphia Baptists, as evidenced in official statements of the P.B.A., affirmed the prerogatives of the local churches over their joint assemblies, whether these were church councils or associations. P.B.A. Baptists placed their association in an advisory capacity subservient to their churches.

Therefore, the force of the P.B.A.'s pronouncements about matters of dispute among the churches must come from some source other than the association's undisputed "superior" authority for decision making. The association quite simply did not possess such credentials on its own. The questions remain, what is the force of the association's decisions and the basis of the authority of its decisions? Such questions involve association-power in the Philadelphia tradition and are discussed below.[18]

---

[17] 2P,12.5 (A2317-22); P,27.15 (A586-93); and Manning's Sentiments, 2 (B180-84). On Manning's role at Warren see above, pp. 125-26 and 195-97.

[18] See below, pp. 420-23, 426-29, and 457-96; also chap. 6, pp. 584-88.

The Grounds for Justifying Associations

A second consistent attitude among Philadelphia Baptists towards associations is their arguments justifying church affiliations. Walter B. Shurden, in his study of eighteenth century Baptist associations, points to three bases for connectionalism among American Baptists: practical, biblical, and theological. He discovered that practical needs dictated an affiliation among Baptist churches, but that theological and biblical grounds for such associating followed soon after.[19]

A close review of P.B.A. sources on associations reveals that Shurden's findings about associational development are verified in the specific instance of the Philadelphia Baptist experience of the eighteenth century. Within official P.B.A. sources all three bases for associating are indicated: (1) the practical utility of associations; (2) the biblical justifications for associations; and (3) the theological justifications for associations.

The Practical Utility of Associations

On the occasion of the organizational meeting of the Warren Association in 1767, the P.B.A. addressed a letter of congratulations to their New England brethren. In it, the Philadelphia Baptists noted the practical value they had known in their own P.B.A.

> A long course of experience and observation has taught us to have the highest sense of the advantages which accrue

---

[19]See above, chap. 1, pp. 61-64.

> from associations; nor indeed does the nature or thing speak any other language.[20]

From the "nature or thing," such mutual help seemed sensible and practical. It is interesting to compare the first draft of James Manning's Sentiments Touching an Association with the version finally adopted in 1769. While the revised form deleted an argument from Acts 15, it stressed the practical utility of the association:

> That such a combination of churches is not only prudent but useful, as has appeared even in America by the experience of upwards of 60 years.[21]

Both P.B.A. Church Disciplines stress the expedience of associations. In 1743, Griffith, in a clear statement about associations, states:

> It is expedient that particular Churches, constituted in the Way and Manner, and for the Ends declared in the former Part of this Narrative . . . should by their mutual Agreement, appoint proper Times and Places, to meet by their representative Messengers or Delegates, . . .[22]

In 1798, Jones, in his characteristically abbreviated style, states simply: "This practice [of associations] is recommended by the reason of things," to which he immediately adds: "the spirit of religion, and apostolic practice, Acts xv."[23]

Jones is not the only one to move immediately from the practical base to the theological and biblical bases for associations.

---

[20] P.B.A. to Warren (A1660-63).

[21] Manning, Sentiments, 1 (B170-72).

[22] 1P, p. 60 (A1438-46).

[23] 2P, 12.2 (A2297-99).

Shurden's findings are further confirmed by a close look at the biblical justifications for Philadelphia Baptists' associating.

The Biblical Justifications for Associations

Among the biblical texts used by P.B.A. Baptists to justify their fellowship of churches are the following: Acts 15 (throughout); Rom. 16:1-2; 3 Jn. 8:9-10; Eph. 5:5 and 6:18; Ps. 122:6; Cant. 8:8; 1 Cor. 12:13; Jn. 17:20-26; and Phil. 3:16 and 4:15. Some of these are merely cited, most apply to the general duty of Christians and churches to maintain some fellowship and communion among themselves, but one in particular (Acts 15) applies directly to the association itself. Acts 15 is the most consistently used text to justify associations. The experience of the divided Antiochean community and the resolution of that division by the church assembly in Jerusalem gave Baptists a biblical precedent for their own associations.[24]

The Philadelphia Confession, following the Particular Baptists of London, appeals to Acts 15 to justify the gathering of messengers from the churches to settle "Cases of Difficulties or Differences." In his Church Discipline of 1743, the first one approved by the P.B.A., Griffith expands upon the confessional statement. He appeals to the example of "the Church of Antioch of old" and cites Acts 15:29 as an example of an assembly decision that came from the Holy Spirit.[25]

---

[24] On the use of Acts 15 see the following: P,27.15 (A583); 1P, p. 61 (A1458-85); G, p. 62 (A1574-82); and 2P,12.2 (A2298-99). Other sources are the sermons of Hart (see B717) and Furman (see B1207-9).

[25] P,27.15 (A583) cites Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, and 25; 1P, pp. 61-62 (A1454-85).

The contexts of both the Confession's and Griffith's texts, as indicated above, suggest that the references given apply primarily to church councils.

When the P.B.A. finds it necessary to clarify its power in the essay of 1749, the author, Griffith, expands further upon the application of Acts to Baptist practice in the mid eighteenth century. He argues that the association while not a superior judicature, nevertheless possesses real power:

> We judge those things in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles to be imitable by an Association, viz.: 1st, their disowning of the erroneous and judaising teachers, saying, to whom we gave no such commandment, verse 24; 2ndly, the sending delegated persons of their own number, with Paul and Barnabas, to support their sentence in the place where the debate sprung up, verse 25; and a third thing followed in consequence thereof, viz., a delivering of the decrees to the other churches, to be observed, as well as the church of Antioch, chap. xvi.4.[26]

The later Discipline of 1798, as already noted, simply states: "This practice [of associations] is recommended by . . . apostolic practice, Acts xv." In the same source, Jones implicitly accepts the same biblical basis by his appeal to the Philadelphia Confession and "our late discipline."[27]

An interesting development in eighteenth century associational theory was the deletion of the reference to Acts 15 by James Manning when he revised his Sentiments for the Warren Association. That deletion, in the view of this author, reflects the tensions at work among New England Baptists. It does not negate the consistent

---

[26] G, p. 62 (A1574-82).

[27] 2P, 12.2 (A2298), and 12.6 (A2330-31).

witness within eighteenth century P.B.A. sources that Baptist councils and associations, so practical in themselves, also had a biblical justification in Acts 15.[28]

In addition to the appeal to the Acts of the Apostles, official P.B.A. sources cited other biblical texts. None of these, however, carries the consistent appeal of Acts 15, nor are they used to support associations as such. The Philadelphia Confession appeals to examples in the early church to support the general duty of churches to fellowship. These examples include the deaconess Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2), the problem that church leadership had with Diotrephes (3 Jn. 8:9-10), and Paul's entreaty to the Ephesians to pray for all the churches (Eph. 6:18; also Ps. 122:6).[29]

Both Church Disciplines appeal to Cant. 8:8 to justify supplying gifts to needy churches. As Jones puts it:

> 3. Such as have ministerial gifts to spare, should be ready and willing to supply such as may be destitute. Cant. viii.8.[30]

To verify the duty of mutual giving and receiving, Griffith, in the 1743 Discipline, cites Phil. 4:15. To preserve uniformity in faith and practice Jones cites Phil. 3:16. Other texts used in the 1798 Discipline support theological reasons for the churches' fellowship and communion: 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:5; and Jn. 17:20-26.[31] The

---

[28] On Manning's Sentiments see below, pp. 430-31.

[29] P,27.14 (A568 and 556).

[30] 2P,11.3 (A2277-79); also 1P, p. 59 (A1415-17).

[31] 1P, p. 59 (A1418-19); 2P,12.3 (A2302-3); 2P,11.1 (A2273-74).

Warren documents of 1769 omit any explicit references to Scripture. These, however, were not official P.B.A. sources. Moreover, the suppression of any appeal to the Bible can be explained in the historical context from which the documents emerged.[32] Another biblical text used by the P.B.A., by way of allusion, is Qo. 4:14, on the three-ply cord not easily broken.[33]

It is clear, therefore, that Philadelphia Baptists justified the practical usefulness of their associations by a direct appeal to biblical precedents, notably the Jerusalem assembly that resolved the disputes over circumcision in the Church at Antioch. Griffith, moreover, appealed to other historical precedents during the time of St. Cyprian and during his own century among Particular Baptists of London.[34]

The difficulties that the Warren assembly had with Manning's use of Acts 15 do not undercut the evidence. From the beginning and throughout the eighteenth century the P.B.A. was accustomed to refer to Acts 15 as a justification for associations.

By basing their beliefs in Scripture, however, the Philadelphia Baptists had not thereby exalted the association above the independent member churches. Far from it! As indicated above, the association retains a role subservient to independent churches.

---

[32]See discussion below, pp. 430-34.

[33]See P.B.A. to Warren (A1672-73).

[34]See G, p. 62 (A1583-1600). Griffith cites St. Cyprian from a work by Bingham, and he mentions Crosby's history which gives an example of a London Particular Baptist church disowned by the Association.

Nevertheless, Baptist connectionalism rests upon biblical precedent and apostolic practice. In the words of the Philadelphia Confession and the first P.B.A. Church Discipline, church councils convened to settle disputes, are "according to the Mind of Christ." In the words of Jones in the 1798 Discipline, associations are "recommended" by the same "apostolic practice, Acts xv."[35]

The Charleston Baptist Association, in its own Church Discipline of 1772, provides a description of the eighteenth century attitude towards associations which harmonizes with the evidence in P.B.A. official documents. The Charleston Discipline reads:

> Although such a conjunction of churches is not expressly commanded in scripture; yet it receives sufficient countenance and authority from the light of nature and the general laws of society. But more especially from a precedent established by apostolical authority; recorded Acts xv. chap.[36]

What made practical sense for the proper, orderly conduct of an ecclesial society also received sanction from apostolic (and other historical) precedents. Philadelphia Baptists, moreover, had definite theological reasons for their associations.

The Theological Justifications for Association

As noted in the introduction, among Baptists the strictly theological argument in some way must rest upon Christian truths verified in the Scriptures themselves.[37] In their approval of

---

[35] See P,27.15 (A579-80); 1P, p. 61 (A1464-65); and 2P,12.2 (A2297-98).

[36] CD,6 (B1203-9).

[37] See ecclesiology in intro., p. 35.

associations, Philadelphia Baptists drew upon their understanding of the Church herself, as they knew and experienced it. Their view of a gospel church pointed clearly to an independent church of the congregational type. The crux of the matter, the formal cause of the local church, is the mutual agreement or church covenant among the members. While the local church has full church-power to run its own affairs (admitting members, ordaining officers, and disciplining members), not all churches have the same gifts and usefulness. Churches need one another. For example, an essential church without a pastor of its own needs the ministry of an ordained officer of the P.B.A. Churches need to help each other without undermining the independence of each church.

One can see in the eighteenth century sources a developing theological argument about the necessity of a communion among churches which is similar to the communion among church members in the local congregation. This theological argument is called by the present writer the argument from the analogy between churches and associations.

The theological argument proceeds like this. As the church member is related to the local church so are member churches related to the association. The first suggestion of this argument by analogy appears in Griffith's essay justifying the power of an association. Before he proceeds to Acts 15 and to the historical precedents from the patristic and modern eras, Griffith stresses that the real power of the association arises from the voluntary confederation among the independent churches. This, the point of similarity between a church and the association is the mutual pact among members, the voluntary covenant. While the church covenant and the association covenant are

not identical, they are similar.[38] After mentioning the voluntary nature of confederation, Griffith draws out the comparison between a congregational church and the association:

> Such withdrawing from a defective or disorderly church, or that ought to be towards a delinquent church, is such as ariseth from their voluntary confederation aforesaid, and not only from the general duty that is incumbent on all orthodox persons, and churches to do, where no confederation is entered into, . . . But in the capacity of a congregational church, dealing with her own members, an Association, then, of the delegates of associate churches, may exclude and withdraw from defective and unsound or disorderly churches or persons, in manner aforesaid; . . .[39]

The same theological argument from an analogy between church and association was employed by the P.B.A. in its 1767 letter to New England Baptists forming the Warren Association. In fact, this letter from Philadelphia Baptists extends the analogy to include a national body of Baptist associations. The P.B.A. writes:

> . . . For, as particular members are collected together and united in one body, which we call a particular church, to answer those ends and purposes which could not be accomplished by any single member, so a collection and union of churches into one associational body may easily be conceived capable of answering those still greater purposes which any particular church could not be equal to. And by the same reason, a union of associations will still increase the body in weight and strength, and make it good that a threefold cord is not easily broken.[40]

Although the recommendation about a national union of associations never materialized, the basic theological argument of an

---

[38] On the difference between a church and an association covenant see above, chap. 3, p. 263; and below, pp. 441-47. On the type of analogy between church and association see below, p. 446.

[39] G, pp. 61-62 (A1538-43 and 1566-73).

[40] P.B.A. to Warren (see A1663-72). The "threefold cord" is apparently an allusion to Qo. 4:12.

analogy between churches and associations survived. It appears again in the later Discipline of 1798:

> 8. From what we have said, as well as from considering, that the union of churches in an association, is a voluntary act, a voluntary union or confederation, like the voluntary confederation of members into a church, it follows that every church stands in the same relation to its association, as a member does to his church, and therefore is examined in the same manner on admission.[41]

Basing his argument upon this analogous relationship between churches and associations, Jones goes on to state the association's rights and functions in terms that are reminiscent of Griffith's essay of 1749.[42]

In addition to the above theological argument from the analogy between churches and associations, an analogy based upon the voluntary character of all Christian fellowship, Jones also focuses upon other theological reasons why Christians should maintain fellowship. In chapter 11 of the Church Discipline, he states the following reasons for communion among Christians and churches: (1) they have all "drunk unto and of one and the same spirit"; (2) they are branches of one and the same Body and have Christ the Lord as their one Head; and (3) they have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. In support of these reasons for fellowship Jones cites 1 Cor. 12:13, Eph. 4:5, and Jn. 17:20-26.[43]

---

[41] 2P,12.8 (A2348-55).

[42] Compare 2P,12.9-10 to G, pp. 61-63 (A2356-67 compared to A1524-1604). For a further refinement in the type of analogy used see below, pp. 446.

[43] 2P,11.1 (A2263-74).

It is difficult to say how widespread was the acceptance of these biblical bases for associations. Clearly, however, within the official documents of the P.B.A., one finds theological justifications for Baptist connectionalism. The major justifications are the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ, the universal Christian communion in His Spirit, the fellowship in one Lord, one faith and one baptism, and, especially, the obligations undertaken voluntarily in Christian covenants.[44]

Thus, a look at the P.B.A. sources on associations shows a marvelous consistency throughout the eighteenth century in the grounds offered to justify associations among Philadelphia Baptists. The most consistent attitudes were those about the practicality of the association. Associations are expedient for Baptist church life. That expediency, however, is invariably justified by an appeal to biblical and apostolic precedent in Acts 15. In the course of the century the strongest theological argument evolves, an argument from the analogy between churches and associations. Additional scriptural texts in all the sources, and Jones's theological arguments about the Church universal, reinforce the conclusion that P.B.A. Baptists had firm grounds for their associational theory, grounds that were biblical and theological, as well as practical.

---

[44]These theological reasons can be reduced to Shurden's two basic theological justifications for connectionalism among eighteenth century American Baptists: (1) the concept of the Church as universal and (2) the concept of the local congregation as a mutual covenant (see Shurden, pp. 85-91; also above, chap. 1, p. 63). The second idea about mutual covenant Philadelphia Baptists applied analogously to their association.

The General Purpose of an Association

A third theme recurring throughout eighteenth century P.B.A. sources is the general purpose of an association. The specific functions of an association are listed below.[45] Here, the general purpose of an association is indicated to verify the constancy of views among Philadelphia Baptists.

Eighteenth century Baptists believed associations existed for the mutual benefit of the member churches.

The Philadelphia Confession states that churches ought to hold communion among themselves "for their Peace, Increase of Love and mutual Edification." The same Confession treats assembled messengers who must deal with "Cases of Difficulties or Differences, either in Point of Doctrine or Administration," involving either the churches in general or a specific church. Again the notes of "Peace, Union, and Edification" are sounded.[46]

Griffith, in the 1743 Church Discipline, sounds similar themes about the churches' duty to foster union, mutual benefit, peace, prosperity, and mutual edification. The same Discipline echoes the confessional theme of "Peace, Union or Edification."[47]

As suggested above, both the Confession and the early Church Discipline are speaking about the general obligation of churches to support each other, or about church councils to meet as occasions

---

[45] See below, pp. 465-96.

[46] P,27.14 (A569-70) and P,27.15 (A571-76).

[47] 1P, pp. 59-61 (A1410-15, 1438-52, and 1454-61).

demand. Griffith's statements about associations, however, expand upon the themes of the Confession.

The essay of 1749 on the nature of associational power states:

> And that several such independent churches, where Providence gives them their situation convenient, may, and ought, for their mutual strength, counsel, and other valuable advantages, by their voluntary and free consent, to enter into an agreement and confederation, as is hinted in our printed Narrative or discipline, page 59, 60, 61.[48]

In the later Discipline of 1798, Jones indicates similar ideas:

> . . . ; they therefore may, and ought to have and enjoy fellowship and friendly intercourse together, as occasion may require and opportunity serve, in the discharge of those relative duties, which may tend to the mutual benefit and edification of the whole.
>
> 7. And lastly, they have fellowship and communion together, for their mutual benefit, in the social duties of an association.[49]

As the above overview shows, the general purpose for Baptist connectionalism is clearly and consistently set forth in the official P.B.A. documents. In summary, the association exists to provide member churches a means for their peace, increase of love, and union, through mutual benefits, strength and counsel, prosperity, edification, and other valuable advantages.

Such was the experience of the Philadelphia Baptists who attested to the usefulness of their Association throughout the eighteenth century.

---

[48] G, p. 61 (A1508-13). (Italics mine.)

[49] 2P,11.1 (A2268-73) and 2P,11.7 (A2289-91). (Italics mine.)

Significant Developments in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia Baptist Views of the Association

A study of P.B.A. materials uncovers not only consistencies but also notable developments in eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist associational theory. While the latter do not directly affect the general picture of the P.B.A. view of associations, these developments nevertheless remain important because of their impact upon the Philadelphia tradition of church authority discussed in chapter 6. They should, moreover, be understood by anyone discussing the Philadelphia Baptist view of associations.

The Baptist Philadelphia Confession, as noted in chapter 3, incorporated the London Particular Baptist changes of the Savoy Declaration of Faith. While these Baptists deleted Savoy's words, "Synods or Councels," they nevertheless retained a true connectionalism which accepted both occasional church councils and a more permanent affiliation, the association.[50]

A comparison of all the official P.B.A. sources dealing with associations shows the following major developments in associational theory: (1) the introduction of the term delegate in 1743; (2) the development of confessional statements by Griffith in 1743; and (3) the clarification of the real power of the association in 1749. To these should be added the significant developments brought about, at least in part, by members of the P.B.A. during the emergence of the Warren documents of 1769.

---

[50]See above, chap. 3, pp. 227-31.

Each of these developments needs to be considered in some detail to appreciate their significance for this study of the Philadelphia tradition of church and church authority.

The Introduction of the Term Delegate by Benjamin Griffith in 1743

The Philadelphia Confession, following the Second London Confession of 1677/89, employs the term messenger for church representatives gathered in assemblies.[51] When Griffith composed the early P.B.A. Church Discipline in 1743, he expanded upon the confessional term to include "Messengers or Delegates." The same phrase appears four times in his discussion of Baptist connectionalism. Thereafter, the essay of 1749, and the Church Discipline of 1798, continue to employ the term introduced by Griffith.[52]

What is the significance of the term delegates as used in P.B.A. sources? In the opinion of this author, the term delegates is used to characterize persons sent by their churches in some representative capacity with authorization to act on behalf of their churches. The term does not connote a delegation of those church-powers understood in a technical sense, namely, to admit or dismiss members, to call and ordain church officers, or to discipline members.[53] Messengers from the churches were delegated by their

---

[51] P, 27.15 (A582 and 586).

[52] See 1P, pp. 60-62 (A1446, 1467-68, 1471-72, and 1485); G, p. 61 (A1519 and 1567); and 2P: "delegates or Messengers" (12.1 [A2292]); and "delegates thus assembled" (12.5 [A2317]).

[53] On church-power see above, chap. 4, pp. 328-63.

congregations, and carried letters of introduction examined by the Association, which letters authorized them to sit as members of the Association.[54] Edwards, in his account of the proceedings of the P.B.A., records: "None but the delegates of the churches have a right to be present the second day [of the association meetings]."[55]

This representative role of delegates or messengers has been established by Shurden's study, and by Compton. The latter, in his research, has shown that early Baptist church manuals allowed churches to delegate authority to messengers.[56] The role of delegates is emphasized in this work to underline the fact that Philadelphia Baptists viewed the Association as an assembly of their churches. The latter are somehow present through their representatives whom they have authorized. The obvious deduction, then, is that the associational connectionalism among eighteenth century P.B.A. Baptists had an ecclesial shape. Associational membership comprised not merely individual Baptists, but local churches represented through their delegates.

While accepting the ecclesial complexion of associational membership, one cannot argue that churches delegated to their

---

[54]The London Particular Baptist General Assembly rules of 1689, pt. 7, stated that messengers "be recommended by a letter from churches" (see B165-69); see also the P.B.A. rules of procedure in E, p. 108.1-2 (B266-74), and the Warren Association Plan, pts. 1 and 2 (B196-200 and 202-204).

[55]E, p. 109.8 (B331-32).

[56]See Shurden, pp. 51-58; also above, chap. 1, p. 64, and Compton, p. 260. Compton claims that the later manuals of church discipline denied such delegation, but the twentieth century ones again allowed for it (ibid.).

authorized representatives any of their own church-power that required the consent of the whole church. Messengers represented churches, but only in those duties which were proper to associations in the first place, duties that could not impinge upon the sovereign independence of each congregational church. Thus, the findings of Ehren, about each church remaining in total control of its own affairs, are valid in the case of the Philadelphia Baptists.[57] Nevertheless, associational delegates exercised true power within the context of the association's own authority (discussed below). They possessed, moreover, some type of "delegation" from their churches.

In this regard, it is interesting that Griffith, in his essay affirming associational power, stops short of applying the term delegate to the P.B.A.'s emissaries to troubled churches. This is all the more surprising when one compares Griffith's phraseology elsewhere within the same essay. Appealing to Acts 15, he states:

> We judge those things in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles to be imitable by an Association viz.: . . . 2ndly, the sending delegated persons of their own number, with Paul and Barnabas, to support their sentence in the place where the debate sprung up, verse 25; . . .[58]

Later on, in the same essay, Griffith states that "the Association of delegates of Confederate Churches" is able to declare a person censurable, to advise the churches concerned,

---

[57]Ehren, p. 229. Nevertheless, in the view of this author, Ehren (pp. 163ff.) has minimized the truly representative character of members of the association (see comments above, chap. 1, p. 64, n. 62.

[58]G, p. 62 (A1574-79). (Italics mine.)

> and also to strengthen such a church, and assist her, if need be, by sending able men of their own number to help the church in executing the power vested in her by the ordinance of Jesus Christ, and to stand by her, and to defend her against the insults of such offending persons or parties.[59]

Why did Griffith hesitate to make the obvious parallel between apostolic and P.B.A. practice? Why not call the association's representative a delegate? Perhaps Griffith was reluctant to use the term in the face of opposition to the legitimate authority of the association. Having affirmed real power for the association, maybe he wanted to let sleeping dogs lie. Or perhaps Griffith himself could not describe an associational emissary as a delegate because, in Philadelphia Baptist terms, the association was not, strictly speaking, a visible manifestation of Church. Whatever the reason, it is clear that representatives from the P.B.A. to member churches were not called delegates, at least not in the official P.B.A. documents. By contrast, messengers to the association were truly delegated by their churches. Such delegation, however, involved only the areas of competency of the association itself. It did not imply delegation of church-power strictly so called.[60]

The Development of the Confessional Statements by Benjamin Griffith in 1743

The Philadelphia Confession, without using the word association, left place for the Baptist practice of an established

---

[59] G, p. 63 (A1611-15). (Italics mine.)

[60] The question of delegation in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition is discussed in chap. 6, pp. 573-75, 579-81, 583-84, 586-88; also 595-97.

connectionalism. As the author showed in chapter 3, the very deletions of the Congregational terms synod and council may have been the Particular Baptists' way of remaining open in their Second London Confession to their practice of associations.[61] The Philadelphia Confession, of course, adopted the text of the London Baptists.

A comparison of Griffith's 1743 Church Discipline with parallels in the Confession reveals some interesting changes. First, in the discussion about Christians injured by irregular procedures of their churches, "Truth and Order" has become "Gospel-Rule and Order."[62] Second, Griffith adds an extensive section to the Confession, one that emphasizes the Baptist churches' role in determining the mind of the Holy Spirit revealed in Scripture. In this section, the author is most probably speaking about occasional church councils needed to settle disputes. Griffith states:

> And such Messengers and Delegates, convened in the Name of Christ, by the voluntary Consent of the several Churches in such mutual Communion, may declare & determine of the Mind of the Holy Ghost, revealed in Scripture, concerning Things in Difference; and may decree the Observation of Things that are true and necessary, because revealed and appointed in the Scripture.[63]

Third, Griffith reminds member churches of their duty to receive joint conciliar decisions based on Scripture "on the Evidence and Authority of the Mind of the Holy Ghost in them, as in Acts

---

[61] See above, chap. 3, pp. 229-30.

[62] 1P, p. 61 (A1464). (Italics mine.)

[63] 1P, pp. 61-62 (A1471-80). (Italics mine.)

15:29."[64] Fourth, he changes the confessional expression "church-power properly so called" to "coercive Power," and adds the adjective "superior" to jurisdiction. Moreover, he alters the concluding section of the confessional statement. Griffith's version reads:

> Yet such Delegates thus assembled, are not intrusted or or armed with any coercive Power, or any superior jurisdiction over the Churches concerned, so as to impose their Determinations on them or their Officers, under Penalty of Excommunication, or the like.[65]

Considering these alterations by Griffith, one can ask about the consequences of such adjustments in P.B.A. associational theory. What importance do such changes have for eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist views of the association?

First of all, Griffith has focused more directly upon biblical truth as primary in the Baptist churches' joing deliberations. Truth has become Gospel-rule, and the assembly's function as interpreter of Scripture is more fully developed.

Secondly, the churches' combined decisions have a considerable power in relationship to member churches by virtue of the church council's function to interpret their only infallible rule, the Scriptures. Thus, in Griffith's terms, a church council can both declare the mind

---

[64] 1P, p. 62 (A1483-85).

[65] 1P, p. 62 (A1485-91). (Italics mine.) P,27.15 (A586-93) reads:

> "howbeit these Messengers assembled, are not intrusted with any Church-power properly so called; or with any Jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any Censures either over any Churches, or Persons; or (g) to impose their Determination on the Churches or Officers.
>
> (g) 2 Cor. 1.24. 1 John 4.1."

of the Holy Ghost as well as decree the observation of things that are true and necessary because revealed in Scripture.

One finds here a most important development in the explicit and official associational theory among Philadelphia Baptists! While Baptist assemblies possess no superior jurisdiction over member churches (as Griffith and the P.B.A. are forced to clarify further in the essay of 1749), they nevertheless exercise a crucial servant role for the churches, that of interpreting the mind of the Spirit in Holy Scripture. Griffith's description applies primarily to church councils. The same role, however, was quite naturally transferred to associations among Philadelphia Baptists.

A local congregation, choosing to ignore a Baptist assembly's considered judgment based on Scripture, runs the risk of going against the infallible rule of God's Word. Yet, the force of associational decrees based upon Scripture comes not from the association's superior authority, but from the force of the Scriptural Word itself. For Philadelphia Baptists, as their Confession states, the Scriptures are the "only sufficient, certain, and infallible Rule of all Saving Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience."[66]

Conscious of the force of what he has made explicit, Griffith reminds the churches:

> And the Churches will do well to receive, own and observe such Determinations, on the Evidence and Authority of the Mind of the Holy Ghost in them, as in Acts 15.29.[67]

---

[66] P,1.1 (A1-5).

[67] 1P, p. 62 (A1480-85).

The question arises, is Griffith's teaching about the church council's function to interpret the Word a complete innovation, or is it simply a matter of making explicit in an official statement what Philadelphia Baptists believed and practiced? In the opinion of this author, the latter is the case. Baptists had always insisted upon biblical justifications for their Christian way of life. In 1689, the Particular Baptists of London, the forebears of the Philadelphia Baptists, in their formal rules of procedure for the General Assembly, insisted:

> 1. That we disclaim all manner of superiority and superintendency over the churches, . . . Our whole intendment is to be helpers together of one another, by way of counsel and advice, in the right understanding of that perfect rule which our Lord Jesus, the Bishop of our souls, hath already prescribed, and given to his churches in his word, . . .
>
> 5. That all things we offer by way of counsel and advice, be proved out of the word of God, and the scriptures annexed.[68]

Those who established the P.B.A. in 1707 knew and imitated the practice of associationalism among Particular Baptists of London and Wales. Around 1770, Morgan Edwards summarized the "Narratives of the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Baptist Association." His description closely resembles the Warren Plan of Association. Edwards writes:

> 3. All matters are determined in this association [the P.B.A.] by the suffrage of the messengers or deputies which constitute it; except what matters are determined or determinable by scripture. Such things are never put to the vote.[69]

---

[68]"The Narratives of Proceedings," in Ivimey, 1:489-90 (see B131-40 and 159-61). (Italics mine.)

[69]E, p. 108 (B287-91). (Italics mine.) Compare Warren, Plan, pp. 3-4 (B212-14).

Another indication of Philadelphia Baptist concern for the place of Scripture at associational gatherings is the introductory statement composed for New England Baptists at Warren. James Manning, who composed the Sentiments Touching an Association, had been a minister of the P.B.A. Although his Sentiments underwent some revision (discussed below), the approved version of 1769 emphasizes the place of Scripture among Baptist churches planning associations. The third sentiment reads:

> 3. That an association should consist of men knowing and judicious, particulary [sic] in the Scripture. The reasons are obvious; such men are the fittest to represent communities who profess the Scriptures to be the only rule of faith and practice in religious matters, and who expect that every advice, opinion, or direction they receive from an association be scriptural.[70]

The P.B.A.'s teaching about the place of Scripture is discussed further in chapter 6.[71] Probably Griffith's explicit statements in 1743 about Baptist practice proved too strong for some members of the Association. At any rate, the P.B.A. found it necessary to clarify the nature of the association's real power. In so doing, it moved the Philadelphia Baptist associational theory to a new level of clarity.

A third consequence of Griffith's changes, also highly significant for this study, is his transposition of the expression "church-power properly so called" to that of "coercive power." Thus, the focus has shifted away from the technical and limited understanding of church-power that had appeared in the Philadelphia Confession.

---

[70]Manning, Sentiments, 3 (B184-91). The earlier version supplied an argument from Acts 15 (see below, pp. 430-31).

[71]See below, pp. 523-31.

In the view of this author, Griffith's change reflects his conviction that the Baptist assemblies had considerable powers, but that these were neither church-powers, nor coercive powers, nor were they powers of a superior jurisdiction. Even his adjectival use of superior, however, may suggest that Griffith believed Baptist councils have real jurisdiction, but not one superior to member churches. Whatever Griffith consciously believed in 1743, six years later he made explicit the very real and positive powers of the association in the essay officially authorized by the P.B.A.

Despite such real power, however, the association's decisions, even those based upon Scripture, ultimately cannot interfere with a church's independence, or with its final choice whether or not to follow the advice of the association. What, then, is the real value of the associational advice or decrees? Do such decisions have any value at all? Very definitely! They help member churches in their discernment of the mind of the Spirit in Scripture. The association has, therefore, an important function--to serve member churches through its interpretation of the mind of Christ in the Word.

Suppose, however, a church, or an individual, cannot agree with the association's scriptural arguments? Such a church remains an integral and independent gospel church. However, by going against the considered judgment of the association, the church may be viewed as heterodox. Nevertheless, it remains a gospel church, though heretical, and the associated churches have a right and a responsibility to separate themselves from it. This becomes part of the

explicit teaching of the later Church Discipline of 1798. There Jones states clearly:

> 7. Let it not be thought, that this power of the association over the churches in connection with it disannuls or destroys the independence of those churches: for if any church of the associated body should become unsound in their principles, or act irregularly and disorderly, and will not do, what may be just and right; such a church will still remain an independent church, though an heterodox and irregular one; but it would be inconsistent and wrong in the association, to suffer such a church to continue among them, since, besides other considerations, they would hereby become partakers of their evil deeds. The association can take nothing from them, but what it gave them. This, in such circumstances, it certainly may and ought to do.[72]

The fourth and final implication of Griffith's alteration of the Philadelphia Confession involves the nature of the association's power. The confessional statement seems stronger than Griffith's in its denial of any jurisdiction to associations. Griffith, by contrast, changes the thought to "any superior jurisdiction." He omits, moreover, any reference to "Censures either over any Churches, or Persons." Furthermore, he specifies the meaning of impose by adding "under the penalty of Excommunication or the like."

What do these differences suggest? Did Griffith mean to imply that the Baptist councils can censure churches and persons? Did he mean to suggest conciliar decisions can somehow be enforced or imposed, though not under penalties like excommunication? The answers to such questions remain uncertain. Yet, the essay of 1749 clarifies Griffith's views to some extent. As subsequent discussion shows, the association can declare an unruly person or party censurable. It can also exclude disorderly churches from the association. Therefore, if

---

[72] 2P, 12.7 (A2333-47).

Griffith can be said to imply anything in the Discipline of 1743, it is simply that Baptist churches, through their assembled delegates, can declare who is subject to censure, and that associations have a right to exclude disorderly churches from their own membership.

The actual application of true censure is reserved to the church herself, the one dealing with the unruly person or faction. In applying such a censure, however, the church might choose to call upon the support of the association. Such associational support touches upon the nature of association-power which Griffith clarifies in the essay of 1749. The latter statement represents the next great development in P.B.A. eighteenth century associational theory.

The Clarification about the Positive Power of the Association by Benjamin Griffith in 1743

The spelling out of the association's functions in determining the sense of Scripture, plus the forces at work in the American Awakening, undoubtedly caused some anxiety among Philadelphia Baptists about the potential threat from their Association.[73] It became necessary, therefore, for the P.B.A. to clarify more precisely its own authority. Once again, it was Griffith who formulated the statement, this time on the power and duty of an association of churches.

After stressing the independence of each church, and denying any superior jurisdiction to the association, Griffith mentions that the several churches may and ought "by their voluntary and free

---

[73] See above, chap. 2, on conflicting forces and viewpoints among eighteenth century Baptists (pp. 208-11), and on the erosion of a theological basis for associations (pp. 127-35).

consent, to enter into an agreement and confederation."[74] That voluntary confederation is the basis for all the "very considerable power" of the association. The mutual agreement of the independent churches permits the association to act positively against "defective and unsound or disorderly churches." The essay states:

> But if there be a confederation and incorporation, by mutual and voluntary consent, as the Association of churches must and ought to be, then something positive may and ought to be done; and, though an Association ought not to assume a power to excommunicate or deliver a defective or disorderly church to Satan, as some do claim, yet it is a power sufficient to exclude the delegates of a defective or disorderly church from an Association and to advise all the churches in confederation to do so too.[75]

The basis for such positive power is fundamentally the voluntary and mutual consent of the member churches to confederation. The association's real power for positive action against its own members arises from such a mutual consent. The P.B.A. saw this mutual consent as the real basis for associational power, but it also justified associational actions in the following ways: (1) from the theological necessity of a special duty incumbent upon a Christian voluntary society regarding its own affairs; (2) from the law of the nature of a confederation; (3) from the example set by the Apostles in Acts 15; and (4) from historical precedents of the patristic and modern eras.[76]

Griffith enumerates at least five functions of the association's positive power. Some of these involve the internal life and

---

[74] G, p. 61 (A1511-12).

[75] G, p. 62 (A1552-60). (Italics mine.) The expression, "a very considerable power," appears on p. 61 (A1525).

[76] See G, p. 62, for the following: (1) A1538-60; (2) A1569-70; (3) A1574-82; and (4) A1583-1602.

membership within the association; others, the internal affairs within independent churches. All of them are grounded in the previous approval, assumed or expressed, of the member churches.

First, the association can withdraw from defective and unsound or disorderly churches or persons. Second, it can advise the churches related to the association to withdraw from and to discountenance such individuals or churches. Both of these functions relate to the internal membership of churches in the association. Third, the association can help its members by declaring a person or party in a church as doctrinally or morally unsound. The essay states:

> And further, that an Association of the delegates of confederate churches may doctrinally declare any person or party in a church, who are defective in principles or disorderly in practice, to be censurable, when the affair comes under their cognizance.[77]

Fourth, without exceeding its bounds, the association can "advise the church that such belong unto, how to deal with such, according to the rule of gospel discipline." Finally, if it be necessary, the association can help a church to apply the proper censure:

> . . . and also to strengthen such a church, and assist her, if need be, by sending able men of their own number to help the church in executing the power vested in her by the ordinance of Jesus Christ, and to stand by her, and to defend her against the insults of such offending persons or parties.[78]

---

[77] G, p. 63 (A1605-9); for the first, see G, pp. 61-62 (A1531-33, 1556-58, 1567-69, and 1602); for the second, see G, pp. 61-62 (A1533-37, 1558-60, and 1602-3).

[78] G, p. 63 (A1611-15); for the fourth, see G, p. 63 (A1609-11).

What is important to remember about these functions of real associational power is the fact that all of them arise from the churches' voluntary and mutual consent. In the case of the first two functions, the churches grant their consent by the very fact of their confederation; for the last three, it is assumed that the churches approach the association voluntarily for advice and assistance. In the former instances, the intention to be of mutual help is a habitual intention; in the latter instances, help is sought on an ad hoc basis, and in each case, requires an explicit intention on the part of the church seeking help. Thus, in order for the power of an association to become operative, it is necessary first that the member churches voluntarily seek its help. The association, by its legitimate authority, legitimated through a voluntary confederation, can take positive steps towards its own membership. It cannot, however, function at the service of churches unless the latter willingly seek help from the association.

In the view of this author, therefore, one can distinguish two basic types of associational functions, those related to the inner life of the association (association-power ad intra) and those related to the internal life of member churches (association-power ad extra). The exercise of ad extra functions requires explicit approval from the churches involved. While the association can and should express concern even though unsolicited, the true effectiveness of all associational advice depends totally upon the good will and pleasure of the churches themselves.

Besides these developments in associational theory, all found within the official P.B.A. sources of this study, the developments in the Warren documents from 1767 to 1769 are also significant.[79] The latter documents were formulated with the help of men from the P.B.A., especially James Manning. Moreover, they reflect the existing tensions within the P.B.A. itself over the power of an association.

The Emergence of the Warren Association Documents from 1767 to 1769

The significant stages of development of the Warren Association in New England have been noted in chapter 2.[80] The individualistic tendencies of New England Separate Baptists, especially from Massachusetts, had a definite impact upon the eventual formulation of the Warren plan of association.

James Manning, then president of Rhode Island College, prepared a statement for the organizational meeting of 1767. His Sentiments Touching an Association incorporated P.B.A. views about an association. The original version proved too much for Baptists like Isaac Backus and the congregation at Coventry. The text had to be adapted before it could meet with the acceptance of all the churches.

---

[79]The later Discipline of 1798 did not develop associational theory to any significant degree. In general, Jones incorporated all of Griffith's advances in eighteenth century P.B.A. views of associations. The later Discipline, however, was more direct in its expression. Jones, as noted previously, added more theological arguments for the fellowship of churches. Moreover, he dealt explicitly with the situation of a member church that is irregular and heterodox (see 2P,11.1 and 12.7 [A2263-73, and 2333-46]; also discussions above, pp. 410 and 425).

[80]See above, chap. 2, pp. 125-26.

A comparison of the original statement, recorded by Isaac Backus in 1767, with the approved text, printed in 1769, shows some significant changes which are relevant for the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations.

First of all, the original argument from Acts 15 (used twice in Manning's Sentiments) has been deleted, and the treatment of associational decisions based on Scripture is considerably softened. The earlier version of 1767 read:

> . . . for the grand business of an Association is to find out texts appropriate to the cases brought before them, and decisive thereof; else they cannot say in any case, It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us; neither will their proceedings affect the consciences of men while they come unstamped with Scripture authority. . . . The real ground of appeals to Associations is, that they consist of men of superior skilfulness in the Word of God; . . . The first Association proceeded not on the foot of power, or infallibility, but of an acquaintance with the will of the Holy Ghost in the written Word, who had long before forbid fornication, eating of blood, etc. . . Acts 15.[81]

Virtually all of this original material has been lost in the final version. Another significant change is the suppression of the word appeal. The original version, given above, reads: "The real ground of appeals to Associations is that they consist of men of superior skilfulness in the Word of God." The approved text reads simply: "That an Association should consist of men knowing and judicious, particulary [sic] in the Scripture."[82]

---

[81]See parallel places to B178 and 188; the references to Acts 15 appear at the beginning and at the end of the original sentiments (see parallel places to B170 and B195).

[82]Compare B184-86 with parallel places.

It is the opinion of this author that such adjustments as the ones mentioned above should be understood as practical accomodations to differing viewpoints among New England Baptists. In themselves, the deletions and changes do not have any substantial theological importance for associational theory among Baptists of the P.B.A. The Warren documents are simply examples of the second axiom for interpretation given in chapter 2.[83] Considering the context from which the Warren documents arose, one can expect to find certain lacunae and cautious statements. Because of the ongoing dialog between New Englanders with different attitudes towards associations, cautious statements were inevitable.

Some of the changes brought about in New England must have been felt in the middle colonies. The Warren deletion of the biblical argument from Acts 15, as mentioned above, was not such a change.[84] The later Church Discipline of 1798 mentions Acts 15 as a Scriptural warrant for the association. However, the association's role as interpreter of the mind of the Spirit in Scripture came to be softened in P.B.A. sources. Jones, in 1798, never mentions this function directly. Although he cites Acts 15, he makes no mention of the association's role as interpreter of Scripture. The latter, however, can be assumed in the various associational functions enumerated by Jones, especially the preserving of orthodoxy and the assisting of churches in difficult cases.[85]

---

[83]See above, chap. 2, pp. 206-7.

[84]See above, pp. 404-5.

[85]See 2P,12.3 (A2300-2306).

Perhaps the most significant issue to carry over into the life of the P.B.A. from the New England struggles is the problem of how to describe the churches' appeals to their association. The term appeal never appears in any of the official P.B.A. sources basic to this study. It was used, however, in the minutes of the proceedings of the P.B.A. The very first entry of 1707 states:

> It was also concluded, that if any difference shall happen between any member and the church he belongs unto, and they cannot agree, then the person so grieved may, at the general meeting, appeal to the brethren of the several congregations.[86]

Around the time that Manning formulated his first version of the Sentiments, the P.B.A. was dealing with a query which the Association shelved until its next meeting in 1767. The original question used the terms: "Whether a complaint . . . might be received into the Association?" The response used the term appeal:

> The following query was left on the book last year for consideration: Whether an appeal from any member of the associated churches, or from one excommunicated from any of said churches, may be made to the Association?
>
> Resolved: That in some cases they may, as every church may sometimes suspend their prerogatives, of which every church is to judge for itself.[87]

The minutes for the following year reflect a difficulty over the use of the word appeal. The 1768 minutes read:

> . . . it was agreed that the word appeal was not quite proper, as the Association claims no jurisdiction, nor power to repeal any thing settled by any church; but if, before

---

[86]Gillette, 7:25. (Italics mine.)

[87]Gillette, 65:101-2; also 66:99. (Italics mine.)

> settlement, parties agree to refer matters to the Association, then to give their advice.[88]

The later P.B.A. Church Discipline, describing an individual's right to refer matters to the association in order to address grievances against unjust procedures in one's church, states: "the person aggrieved may lay a statement of his case before the Association." Other official P.B.A. sources also avoid the term appeal. Griffith, in the essay of 1749, uses the phrase: "when the affair comes under their cognizance."[89]

Thus, Philadelphia Baptists made use of the term appeal, but not in the official sources of this study. When they used it, however, like Manning's original usage, the term had no connotation of an appeal to a higher court. Wherever the term appears, in light of the consistent tradition about the advisory character of associations, appeal means simply looking to the association for help in settling some difficult problem or dispute.

Conclusions about Eighteenth Century Philadelphia Baptist Associational Theory

The above discussion indicates several things about eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist associational theory. First, most of the real developments in that theory took place around the time of the Great Awakening, namely, from 1740 to 1750. It was during this period that Griffith reshaped the confessional statements about Baptist

---

[88] Gillette, 68:105. (Italics mine.)

[89] 2P, 10.22 (A2221-22); and G, p. 63 (A1608-9).

connectionalism and formulated the essay that clarified the nature of association-power.

Second, what came to consciousness at mid century was substantially retained in the later Discipline of 1798. Some of Griffith's views, however, lost their original strength. The most notable example of this was the view about the association's role in determining the mind of the Spirit in Scripture. Even that development, however, is not totally lacking in the 1798 statement. The nature of association-power which was clarified by Griffith's essay remains in Jones's work. The latter simply reorganized the material and made further additions.

Third, the meanings of delegate and of appeal in the P.B.A. sources have been clarified. Delegates truly represented their churches at associational meetings. The emissaries from the association, however, were not called delegates. Although churches did not delegate any of their own church-powers to their representatives, the delegates nevertheless acted in the name of the churches they represented in all their activities at associational meetings.

Appeal, as used by P.B.A. Baptists, has no special connotation of an appeal to a higher authority. It was used, but merely as a convenient term to describe the churches' voluntary requests for advice from the association.

Fourth, the place of Scripture in Baptist connectionalism in church councils and associations has been somewhat clarified through Griffith's Discipline and essay. The appeal to Scripture adds an indirect force to associational decisions and decrees. Churches are

called upon to respect the church council's and the association's considered opinions when these are founded in Scripture.

Fifth, the real basis for association-power is the voluntary confederation of the churches, or the freely addressed requests to the association. Because of the de facto association, the confederation which arose from the consent of the churches has real power over its members. That power comes from the churches' mutual and free affiliation, and it is supported by the very nature of a confederate society and by biblical and historical precedents.

Sixth, associational advice and decrees that interpret the sense of Scripture receive indirect force from scriptural authority. The only certain and infallible rule of Christian life for Philadelphia Baptists remains Scripture itself.

Seventh, association-power includes at least five functions.[90] These can be distinguished into two types, those concerned with the association's inner life (association-power ad intra) and those touching upon the internal life of the churches (association-power ad extra). All association-power depends upon the consent of the member churches. The exercise of ad extra power requires the explicit consent of the churches seeking advice; otherwise consent can be assumed by virtue of the confederation itself.

Eighth, Philadelphia Baptist associational theory remains constant throughout the eighteenth century in its teachings about (1) the advisory character of the association and its relationship to

---

[90]See enumeration given above, pp. 427-28.

independent churches; (2) the justifications for associations, namely, practical utility, biblical and historical precedents (especially Acts 15), and theological arguments; and (3) the general purpose of an association. The most notable theological argument justifying an association of churches is one from analogy, the comparison between voluntary churches and voluntary associations.

Finally, Griffith's change of the confessional terms "church-power properly so called" helps this study to advance towards a resolution of the important question about the relationship between church-power and association-power. Just because the association has no church-power in the technical sense understood by Philadelphia Baptists does not mean it has no power at all. Moreover, the power of the association can affect the exercise of church-power whenever a given church chooses to call upon the association for help.

The above overview of consistent and changing patterns in P.B.A. associational theory suggests principles basic to a study of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority. These include the following: (1) the ecclesial principle, implied in the associational membership comprised of delegates from the churches; (2) the voluntary principle, operative in the association as a mutual confederation of independent member churches and basic to the legitimate authority of all associational power; (3) the covenant model of "Church," implied in the voluntary nature of associations; (4) the scriptural principle, underlying associational decisions and giving them indirect force, as well as justifying associations by the biblical precedent in Acts 15; (5) the communion model of Church, implied in the P.B.A.'s encouragement

of churches to share their gifts and to reflect their spiritual unity in Christ; (6) the explicit principle of analogy, present in the theological argument comparing churches and associations; and (7) the principle of complementarity or mutuality, evident in the exercise of association-power along side of the consent of the churches.

The present section considered the major developments in eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist associational theory. The next one deals with the second major heading, the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations.

THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF THE ASSOCIATION

Many of the important elements in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations have already surfaced in a consideration of the changing and consistent patterns in eighteenth century P.B.A. associational theory. This section presents the same tradition as a systematic theology of associations. In discussing the Philadelphia tradition of the association, the section deals with the following: (1) the nature of the association covenant, its contents and its differences in comparison to the church covenant; (2) the association compared to the church council; (3) the nature of association-power, its basis and functions; and (4) the author's descriptive and summary definition of the association.

The ideas are drawn principally from the official P.B.A. sources on associations, although additional information, useful to the presentation, is taken from other P.B.A. materials and related sources in the eighteenth century.

The Nature of the Association Covenant

An association is a voluntary confederation of independent churches. Its existence depends solely upon the voluntary gathering together of churches located in the same area. Implicit in such a confederation is an "association covenant."[91] The official P.B.A. sources never use this precise term, covenant, in connection with the association. However, both the P.B.A. and the Warren plans of association exemplify pacts voluntarily entered into by Baptist groups. Such plans were drawn up at the organizational meetings. Jones, in the later Discipline of 1798, specifies:

> 11. At the first formation of an association, or afterwards, there should be a set of rules, conditions and regulations drawn up, as the ground on which the churches agree to associate together.[92]

Such plans were truly association covenants. In its Church Discipline of 1772, the Charleston Baptist Association uses the term covenant in reference to associations:

> It appears advisable that these delegates at their first meeting, should in a formal manner, enter into covenant with each other, as the representatives of the churches, . . .[93]

This study appropriates the Charleston usage of covenant for associations. Thus, the association covenant means simply the mutual agreement drawn up at the organizational meeting of an association.

---

[91] This term, association covenant, does not appear in P.B.A. sources of this study. It is the author's adaptation of the expression in the Charleston Baptist Association Church Discipline cited in the text.

[92] 2P,12.11 (A2368-71).

[93] 1C,6 (B1191-94). (Italics mine.)

The following discussion considers the main elements in an association covenant and how that covenant compares with a church covenant.

Contents of an Association Covenant

The association covenant, as exemplified in the P.B.A. and the Warren plans, includes statements about the following: (1) the membership of the association, including both ordained ministers and lay delegates; (2) the advisory character of the association and the independence of each member church to run its own internal affairs; (3) the nature of church letters to the association; (4) the method of voting or coming to decisions; (5) the process of admitting new members; (6) the specifications about the time, place, and number of associational meetings; (7) the associational officers to be chosen; and (8) how the associational meetings should be run.[94]

The association covenant might specify further the group's relationship to other bodies, and its faith and order (usually the Philadelphia Confession).

Acceptance of a new member church involves a process of examining the group for its regularity and orthodoxy. As Jones states in 1798:

> 4. Other churches, besides those that enter at the original constitution, may be admitted on making application, and giving

---

[94] See Warren, Plan, B196-254, and the P.B.A. Plan in E, pp. 108-9 (B266-356). Similar plans were formulated at the foundation of other Baptist associations.

> satisfactory evidence in regard to their faith and practice, regular order and good standing.[95]

The ability to join the association rests upon clear principles of orthodox teachings and regular church practice. To determine these, the P.B.A. made use of both its Confession and its Church Disciplines as points of reference. Member churches, admitted on the evidence of such faith and practice, were subject to dismissal by the association if they did not maintain the same standards.[96]

The Association Covenant Compared to the Church Covenant

The church covenant has already been analyzed in detail. Moreover, the distinction between the church and the association covenants has already been presented.[97] The precise difference between the two needs to be explored in greater detail to appreciate the Philadelphia tradition of the association.

A church covenant, as noted above, has six distinguishable characteristics. It is a free covenant, but at the same time a mandatory one because it is willed by Christ in the Scriptures. It is a mutual covenant between visible saints who enter into both a vertical relationship with God and a horizontal relationship with each other.

---

[95] 2P, 12.4 (A2312-16). For a more complete description of the procedure for admitting new members see E, pp. 108-9.4 (B292-304); compare with Warren, Plan, pt. 4 (B218-27).

[96] On the association's power to dismiss irregular and disorderly churches see above, pp. 428-29, and below, pp. 471-74.

[97] On church covenant see chap. 4, pp. 302-9; on the comparison between church and association covenants, chap. 3, p. 263.

The covenant implies a dual obedience to Christ and to the authorized church officers ruling under Christ. In what way, then, does the association covenant differ from such a church covenant? There are at least three ways in which it differs.

First of all, the association pact is a completely mutual covenant. It deals primarily, and only, with churches in their relationship to each other, as helpers to one another. The church covenant likewise involves some mutuality, but it involves much more. In the gathering of visible saints, God is directly involved in the covenant relationship. Thus, a church covenant establishes a deeper Christian relationship with God. By contrast, in the view of Philadelphia Baptists, the association covenant does not add any new relationship to God or Christ. The association involves merely the relationship of complete and independent churches with each other. Nothing new is added to the Christian reality of God's covenant with man when churches enter into associational fellowship.

Thus, by itself, an association covenant does not introudce any significantly new vertical relationship with God. The church covenant, however, is both a vertical and a horizontal bond, a pact of visible saints both with God and with each other.

Secondly, the church covenant is mandated by Scripture; the association covenant is not. Both are freely entered into, but the one is commanded by Christ, while the other is not required by Scripture, although there is a biblical precedent for an association in Acts 15. The associational confederation is justified solely from

the free assent of the member churches voluntarily undertaking a covenant which is not, strictly speaking, required by Scripture.

Although they pointed to biblical and historical data, and to the nature of a Christian society, in support of associations, Philadelphia Baptists did not see such indications as commands from Christ to associate. Even the scriptural precedent does not, of itself, make associations mandatory for all of time, at least not in the same sense as gathered churches and occasional church councils are mandatory.

The Charleston Church Discipline expresses P.B.A. views aptly, in a way that harmonizes with Philadelphia Baptist thinking. It states:

> Although such a conjunction of churches is not expressly commanded in scripture; yet it receives sufficient countenance and authority from the light of nature, and the general laws of society. But more especially from a precedent established by apostolical authority; recorded Acts xv. chap.[98]

In the opinion of this author, therefore, P.B.A. Baptists placed the association in a category different from the gathered visible church. The association is a humanly organized Christian fellowship. The critical question arises, what becomes of the Christian obligation of churches to fellowship with each other? Is that general obligation part of the essence of Church, or is it of the bene esse of Church?

It is helpful, in trying to resolve this question about the obligation of Christian fellowship, to distinguish between the general obligation according to Scripture (and the Philadelphia tradition) and

---

[98] CD,6 (B1203-9). (Italics mine.)

the particular form that the fellowship of churches can take. Clearly, Philadelphia Baptists accepted the obligation of churches to maintain fellowship and communion. They saw this as a command of Christ in Scripture. This has already been indicated. The individual church's responsibility for the communion of churches is firmly established in the official P.B.A. sources. Among these is the confessional statement about church councils, a statement further expanded upon in the early Church Discipline of 1743. The gathering of churches to help one another settle disputes is "according to the Mind of Christ."[99]

Moreover, part of the very definition of a visible gathered church includes its obligation to have communion with other churches. The present author's composite definition reads in part:

> The visible church is a gathering . . . to give themselves to one another in the practical and public enjoyment of . . . professed subjection to gospel rule among themselves within the church and in communion with other churches.[100]

Thus, Philadelphia Baptists accepted as a rule from Christ the general obligation to maintain fellowship among their churches. The general communion among the churches is of the esse of the Church! Moreover, the occasional council, necessary to settle disputes, was accepted as a fellowship according to the mind of Christ. As for the habitual fellowship, and the form it should take, Philadelphia Baptists considered this an open matter. The association was a valid form of

---

[99] P,27.14-15 (A555-92); also 1P, pp. 60-62 (A1438-84), and 2P,11 (A2263-91).

[100] See above, chap. 4, p. 364; and the basic argumentation, pp. 320-22.

fellowship, "recommended" by Acts 15, but it was not the only form commanded in Scripture. In the view of this author, therefore, the P.B.A. saw its association as a practical means to serve the churches' needs and to carry out the general Christian obligation of communion and fellowship among the churches. The association was not seen as the only valid form of permanent church fellowship, nor was it accepted as a form fixed for all of time by Christ's intention. Therefore, in the view of Philadelphia Baptists, the association is not of the esse of the Church.

The implication of the above discursus, in terms of the relationship of the covenants involved, is that the association covenant has no obligatory force beyond that required of any confederation. While the general duty to Christian fellowship is mandatory, the specific form of the association is not. Furthermore, the precise form depends upon the mutual consent of the churches.

A third difference between the church and the association covenants is the kind of allegiance which follows upon each. The church covenant calls forth a dual obedience to Christ's commands and to the leadership of church officers who rule under Christ. No such "religious" obedience to the leadership of the association or its officers is implied in an association covenant.

The conclusions flowing from the above comparison between the church and the association covenants are five. First, there are similarities between the two, namely, both covenants involve a voluntary gathering and a mutual relationship among their members.

Second, there are vast differences between the two covenants. The church covenant affects the members' relationship to God, calls forth obedience not only to Christ but also to church officers, and implies a certain command of Christ that Christians enter freely into a gathered church covenant. By contrast, the association covenant does not carry such connotations.

Third, as a result of the above similarities and differences, one must keep in mind the consequences. The theological argument for an association, based upon the analogy between a church and an association, does not justify one in asserting any real power given over by Christ to the association. The analogy is not a direct, but rather a proportionate one. The church is not like the association. Rather, the members of the church stand in relationship to the gathered church as the member churches stand in relationship to the association. While there is some analogy, there is also a qualitative difference. The church is compulsory, the association is merely recommended.

Fourth, the only real basis for the authority of the association, according to Philadelphia Baptists, is the mutual and free pact accepted by the churches entering confederation. The advice and decisions that emerge from an association can never, of themselves, call forth obedience from the membership. This does not mean, however, that the associational advice, when based upon a true understanding of Scripture, does not carry a very considerable weight of authority. According to Baptist belief, any advice correctly grounded in biblical truth demands obedience as the Word of God. Thus, the real binding force of associational advice comes ultimately from the Scriptures

themselves. The real challenge, then, is to discern the truth contained in Scripture. How does the individual, or the church, know when an associational decision is truly from the Word? The problem of discernment is considered further in the following chapter on authority.[101]

Fifth, the association is one historical form of connectionalism developed by Baptists to manifest their communion and fellowship. Other forms may be possible. The association, as such, carried on functions which served the churches well, but it need not be the only form to enable Christians and churches to carry out their duty to each other. One is justified, then, in asserting that the association, as a form of church fellowship, is historically conditioned. It is not of itself a church structure commanded by Christ. Yet it remains a valid historical expression of church life, embodying the general Christian duty of fellowship and communion among churches.

Having differentiated the association covenant from that of the church herself, this study of the Philadelphia tradition of associations proceeds to a discussion of the difference between the church council and the association.

The Association Compared to the Church Council

The previous section brought to light a significant fact. Philadelphia Baptists apparently differentiated their associations from other forms of church fellowship, namely the gathered church and

---

[101] See below, chap. 6, pp. 598-606.

the occasional church council. A reading of the official sources, as noted above, reflects an ambiguity about which of the two bodies is being discussed, the church council or the association.

Both the Philadelphia Confession and the first Church Discipline of 1743 mention assemblies "according to the Mind of Christ." The Discipline, moreover, expands upon the confessional theme. Most probably, as the author has already pointed out, Griffith is dealing with occasional church councils and not directly with the association. Nevertheless, he avoids the term church council as such.[102]

The origins and principles of Baptist councils in America have been investigated by William H. Allison. In his study of 1906, Allison states that a Baptist church council is

> an organized body, convened at the call of some local church and composed of representatives of the churches to which the call is issued, for the purpose of advising the convening church in regard to such matters as are stated in the call.[103]

In this definition, one can see the differences between an association and a church council. The latter is temporary and meant to deal with ad hoc problems between churches. Its membership includes delegates from the churches concerned. The association, by contrast, is a permanent organization, composed of delegates of all the affiliated churches. It has a continuing existence apart from the churches, with periodic meetings, officers, and definite membership and rules of procedure.

---

[102] See above, pp. 394-97.

[103] Allison, p. 9.

Allison discusses the following functions of church councils: (1) the constitution and recognition of churches; (2) the dissolution and disfellowship of churches; (3) the ordination of church officers; (4) the installation and dismission of church officers; (5) the deposition and restoration of churches; (6) the establishment of peace among disputing churches; and (7) the promotion of local and general denominational activities and welfare.[104]

While many of the association's functions touch upon similar concerns, the church council exercises a more decisive impact upon the final outcome of ordinations, establishment and dissolution of churches, installation and dismissal of officers, and so forth.

The nature and function of the church council appears from a review of that ecclesial reality as it emerged alongside Baptist associations in America. To a great extent, as Allison insists, when their churches increased after the Great Awakening,

> the American Baptists found the problems of interchurch fellowship more pressing and in the meetings of their Associations, as these problems were discussed, the place of the council became more definitely recognized. While the Associations themselves were advisory bodies, it was probably the fear that they might become too powerful, thus threatening the independence of the local churches, which led them to foster the council and to preserve it and even to develop it as an institution, rather than to have assumed its functions, thus virtually destroying it by making it superfluous.[105]

The history of the church council and that of the association, then, are closely intertwined. This was the case among Philadelphia

---

[104]Ibid., pp. 58-80.

[105]Ibid., p. 110.

Baptists of the eighteenth century. While these Baptists sometimes failed to make clear when they were speaking about church councils, at other times their official statements mentioned such councils. For example, Jones describes how a minister should be settled in his church:

> 5. In settling a minister, having appointed a time and place, and invited a council from one or two of the neighbouring churches to assist, and to witness the transaction, one of the ministers, after praying and singing, should preach a suitable sermon. Then he, or another of the council, is to put such questions to the minister to be settled, . . .[106]

If it becomes necessary to dissolve the connection between a pastor and his congregation, the same discipline states: "For this purpose, it will be necessary to call a council from a neighbouring church or churches."[107] In the regular procedure of the late eighteenth century, when a person believes the church acted unjustly in applying its excommunication, such a member has the right to insist upon a council and to choose half of its membership.[108]

Such explicit references to councils, however, appear only in the later Discipline of 1798. Earlier sources did not employ the term council. Nevertheless, the practice of the P.B.A. from its earliest history shows that Philadelphia Baptists accepted and used church councils.

Perhaps the earliest American Baptist council was the one at Middletown, Jersey. Located in the territory of the P.B.A., it met

---

[106] 2P,5.5 (A1970-76).

[107] 2P,6.6 (A2028-29).

[108] 2P,10.21 (A2211-16).

on May 35, 1712. This council silenced two gifted preachers, John Bray and John Okison. Apparently the matter never came before the P.B.A. even though the Association had already existed for some five years. Robert A. Chapman, in his study, says of this council:

> It is unfortunate that we do not possess a more detailed account of this, probably the first Baptist Council, strictly so called, to be held in America.[109]

The next indication of a council within the territory of the P.B.A. is the one recommended by the Association in 1712. The results of this meeting are recorded in the minutes of proceedings of the P.B.A. It reprimanded Mr. Thomas Selby and his followers for disrupting the peace of the church at Philadelphia and Pennepek. The Association, in 1734, advised the church at Great Valley to divide but, if necessary, to "call for help from neighboring churches." Such help, in effect, was to call a church council. In 1772, the P.B.A. advised the churches in New York to settle their differences and "to call the aid of some sister churches to assist in settling them."[110]

In the late eighteenth century, P.B.A. practice had developed to the point where the Association used the term council when adivsing churches to seek help. In 1795, responding to petitions from Cape May and West Creek churches, the Association stated: "we recommended to said churches mutually to call a council." Other councils were advised in 1797, 1803, and 1805. Thus, Jones's use of the term

---

[109]Chapman, 1920, chap. 4, p. 2, citing Edwards, Materials . . . in New Jersey, p. 14.

[110]Gillette, 12:26; 34:36; 72:124, also 73:129.

council in the later Discipline received support in the P.B.A.'s practice.[111]

Besides the P.B.A.'s direct suggestions for the establishment of church councils, the Association sometimes sent its own messengers to troubled churches seeking its help. This always took place at the invitation of the churches concerned. These messengers, however, apparently lacked the authorization to establish church councils as such. Messengers were sent to help the churches in Montgomery (1736 and 1744), Kingswood (1760), Oyster Bay (1773) and Goshen (1782).[112]

This author has found no clear evidence that the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century ever assumed the role of a church council to itself.[113] Apparently, even without a definite use of the term council, Philadelphia Baptists had no trouble differentiating between church councils and associations. Besides the obvious differences between the two, differences noted above, the following conclusions can be drawn about the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations and church councils.

---

[111]See Gillette, 95:306.20; 97:324.7, also 98:334.13 and 99:342.13; 1803:380.12; and 1805:410.11 and .14, also 1806:422.11-12.

[112]See Gillette for the following: Montgomery, 36:38 and 44:49; Kingswood, 60:81; Oyster Bay, 73:120; and Goshen, 82:180.

[113]Allison (p. 82) makes the claim that the P.B.A. twice acted as a council for ordination. He does not give the explicit proof. Perhaps his findings come from a period later than 1814, the limit of this study. Other associations, however, did take on the functions of the church council during the eighteenth century (for examples, see Allison, pp. 81-95; also Shurden, pp. 154-57).

First, both the association and the church council are advisory only. Neither interchurch fellowship can interfere with the independence of each local church.

Second, as indicated above, there is a great difference between the association and the council. The latter is mandatory from Scripture whenever troubles arise in the churches; the association is merely "recommended" by the precedent in Acts 15. When Griffith, in his essay, argues for the positive power of an association, he never arrives at a clear and decisive theological justification for associations. He simply claims "those things in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles to be imitable by an Association."[114]

Third, the P.B.A. respected the function of the church council and made use of it. Moreover, the Philadelphia Baptists' Association, at least in the eighteenth century, never usurped the function of the council. On occasion, when churches asked for its help, the P.B.A. sent its messengers to troubled churches, but these were not understood to have authority to set up church councils in the technical sense.

Fourth, the church council continued alongside the association. As Allison discovered in his study, the nature of a council comes to light alongside the developing association.

Fifth, while the P.B.A. official sources do not generally employ the term council until 1798, acceptance of church councils by

---

[114] G, p. 62 (A1574-75); also 2P,12.2 (A2297-99). On the difference between associations and councils see above, pp. 443-45; also P,27.15 (A579-80) compared to 1P, p. 62 (A1475-85); and 1P, p. 61 (A1464-65).

Philadelphia Baptists can be assumed from the ambiguous statements in the Philadelphia Confession and the first Church Discipline and from the clear practice of the P.B.A. as evidenced in its minutes of proceedings throughout the eighteenth century.

Sixth, in the view of this author, Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century retained a conscious belief in a visible ecclesial fellowship beyond their local churches. This is proven by their theoretical acceptance of and practical use of church councils.

Seventh, one is not justified, from the evidence, in appealing to the P.B.A. theory and practice of associations to support the same claim that Philadelphia Baptists accepted a visible "Church" beyond the local churches. The sources remain silent about associations as ecclesial interchurch fellowships. At best, one can appeal to historical conditions to explain the lacunae in the sources. Perhaps Philadelphia Baptist authors were forced to remain cautious in their statements about the nature of associations, and this might help to explain why the sources nowhere appeal to Scripture to justify associations as commanded by Christ.

A more plausible explanation, according to this author, is that Philadelphia Baptist views of visible Church limited their vision so that the authors themselves were unable to deduce from Scripture a clear justification for the obligatory nature of associations as a permanent style of Church fellowship. Thus, for example, the missionary nature of the Church, based upon the great commission

in Mt. 28:19 was overlooked. It could have pointed to the need for Philadelphia Baptists to establish a visible ecclesial fellowship beyond their local churches.[115]

Whatever the explanation, the evidence is clear. Philadelphia Baptists accepted church councils as willed by Christ in Scripture. They did not give the same force to the association. In the minds of Philadelphia Baptists, therefore, the association remains a human confederation, subject to changes according to historical needs. This is apparently what happened in the North at the turn of the nineteenth century. As discussed in chapter 2, without any conscious theological basis or historical precedent, Philadelphia Baptists developed a new form of connectionalism. The association model gave way to the society model.[116]

One could still raise a fundamental question. Is it possible, while remaining true to all the eighteenth century evidence, to reconstruct the Philadelphia Baptist tradition, to recast its explicit statements, so that both the church council and the association can be accepted as willed by Christ in Scripture. In other words, can the association ever be fundamentally understood as essential to (of the *esse* of) the life of the Church as willed by Christ?[117]

---

[115]The P.B.A. view of gathered church that lacks a missionary thrust *ad extra* was noted in chap. 4, pp. 314-15, 375-78, and 386; see also chap. 2, pp. 165-67 and chap. 3, p. 256.

[116]See above, chap. 2, pp. 170-73.

[117]This question lies beyond the purpose of the present study. If one could achieve such a retrieval of eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist views of the association, then the Free Church, Particular Baptist church polity could be seen to converge towards a more

Having considered the nature of the association covenant and of the church council, the discussion about the Philadelphia tradition of associations moves to its third focus, the nature of association-power.

The Nature of Association-Power

As already indicated, Griffith's essay of 1749 outlines the positive and real power of the association. This essay indicates the basis, as well as five different functions, of association-power. This author proposed that associational functions can be distinguished into two general types, touching either association-power ad intra or association-power ad extra.[118]

The present section takes a closer look at association-power as it is discussed in all the official sources of the P.B.A., and it likewise includes examples of the exercise of such power by the P.B.A. itself. Two headings are considered: the basis and nature of association-power, with its comparison to church-power; and the functions and exercise of association-power in the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century.

"Catholic" attitude about a permanent and visible interchurch fellowship. On the other side, a fundamental retrieval might be possible in the Roman Catholic tradition of the local congregation as the seat of full church-power. Such reconstructions of theologies cannot be undertaken in the present study.

[118] See above, pp. 426-29, esp. 429.

The Basis and Nature of Association-Power

The only source to speak explicitly of the basis for association-power is the essay of Griffith in 1749. None of the other official P.B.A. sources, however, disagrees with Griffith's views. In fact, other Baptist associations, notably the Charleston Baptist Association, used Griffith's essay on the power and duty of an Association.[119]

The Basis of Association-Power

Griffith, as noted earlier, clarifies the basis of association-power. It arises solely from the mutual consent of the independent member churches that form the association. No higher authority is intended for the association than that given by mutual consent of the churches setting up the confederation. Nevertheless, the association does possess considerable power. As Griffith states:

> . . . though no power can regularly arise above its fountain from where it rises, yet we are of opinion, that an Association of the delegates of associate churches have a very considerable power in their hands, respecting those churches in their confederation; . . .[120]

The essay goes on to spell out the positive and real power of the association that flows from the very nature of the confederation. Griffith states again the basis of association-power when he discusses

---

[119]Charleston Baptist Association, Power and Duty of an Association, in Baptist Confession of Faith: and a Summary of Church Discipline. To which is added an appendix containing [7 different sources touching on church life] (Charleston: Printed by W. Riley for Daniel Sheppard, 1831), app. 3. For the full title see bibliograpy, p. 769.

[120]G, p. 61 (A1523-26).

the right to withdraw from a defective church. The power "ariseth from their voluntary confederation aforesaid."[121] He affirms the positive power of the association in these terms:

> But if there be a confederation and incorporation, by mutual and voluntary consent, as the Association of churches must and ought to be, then something positive may and ought to be done; . . .[122]

In these ways, the essay returns to a theme originally announced when Griffith says earlier in the essay:

> And that several such independent churches, where Providence gives them their situation convenient, may, and ought, for their mutual strength, counsel, and other valuable advantages, by their voluntary and free consent, to enter into an agreement and confederation, as is hinted in our printed Narrative or discipline, page 59, 60, 61.[123]

Thus, the basis of the positive and real association-power is the mutual covenant between the member churches. This association covenant establishes the group of member churches, as such, with a recognized authority, or right, as well as a power, or capacity, to function within the guidelines decided upon by the member churches acting through their delegates.

In the minds of Philadelphia Baptists, although associations are justified by historical and biblical precedents, especially in Acts 15, they are not demanded by Christ. Unlike gathered churches, or even unlike church councils, associations are merely "recommended"

---

[121] G, p. 61 (A1540).

[122] G, p. 62 (A1552-54).

[123] G, p. 61 (A1508-13). (Italics mine.)

by Scripture. In effect, therefore, P.B.A. Baptists accepted their associations as human confederations.

As a human confederation, however, the association is more than just another human society. Philadelphia Baptists could agree with the statement by the Charleston Baptist Association:

> The association thus formed, is a respectable body, as it represents, not a city, country or nation, but the churches of Jesus Christ.[124]

While the association involves churches, and is therefore special compared to other human societies, it nevertheless participates in the nature of a human confederacy. The real basis of association-power lies in the mutual consent of the churches, not in any divinely revealed command to associate. As understood by Philadelphia Baptists, an association, by its very nature, is a totally voluntary confederation of independent gathered churches.

Thus, the association fits very well into the category of a civil confederate government. Confederate church authority at various levels, including those of church and association, participates in the type of authority and power peculiar to a confederacy. The point of comparison in the analogy is the mutual and free consent of the governed. Both the church and the association involve such a mutual and free consent. To some extent, independent persons or churches agree to join forces, and they jointly decide upon the terms of their confederacy. When applied to the gathered church, of course, the analogy is weaker than it is for the association. In the case of the

---

[124] CD,6 (B1210-12).

church, there is also a monarchy involved, namely, Christ, the only legislator, who has already clearly set forth his law in Scripture. Christians freely covenant together in gathered churches, but they are not free to refuse such fellowship.

By comparison, the association is more truly a confederation of independent churches, each possessing the full power from Christ to be church. While called upon, by Christ, to have an active concern for fellowship and communion with all Christians, the churches are finally free to join, or not to join, an association. It is worthwhile to elaborate further upon the differences between church-power and association-power.

Association-Power Contrasted to Church-Power

In some respects, as already suggested, association-power and church-power are similar, but they are also quite different. One of the significant findings of this study is the real difference, in the minds of Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century, between gathered churches and associations. Philadelphia Baptists, in their official statements, do not clearly discuss the difference, but the latter can be deduced from a close analysis of the sources, such as the author has given above.[125] In the minds of P.B.A. Baptists, if not in their explicit statements, churches and church councils differed from associations. Accepting this real difference, one can gain further insight into the nature of association-power itself.

---

[125]See above, pp. 441-47.

There are definite similarities between associational and church powers. Both are concerned with similar issues of church life, and both deal with the same realities, the call to mutual love, fellowship, and communion among Christians. Both participate in the qualities of church authority as a whole.[126] For example, both powers employ only a moral force, not a physical one. Christian authority and the exercise of power are always undertaken in imitation of the biblical servant. Church authority functions to exhort the Christian to live out one's commitment to follow Christ's law in Scripture. Neither the church's will, nor the association's advice, is absolute. In the first instance, the individual must follow the lead of the Spirit. Not even the church's excommunication is decisive if the church is heterodox and irregular. In the case of the association, the member churches are always free to reject its advice. Moreover, they always remain independent to determine their own destinies. Nevertheless the immoral or heretical person, or the irregular and heterodox church, can be rejected from the church or the association. Church-power includes the right to excommunicate a person when necessary, and association-power, based on the nature of a confederation, grants the group the right to deny membership to a church that does not live up to her agreement whether in faith or in practice.

---

[126]The general characteristics of church authority, as indicated in Richard Furman's sermon, were listed above. Church authority is derived, not original; executive, not legislative; possessing moral not physical force; and involving a mutuality between church officers and the whole church (see above, chap. 4, pp. 325-27; and Furman, pp. 11-12 [B816-42]).

Despite such similarities between church-power and association-power, there are also some marked differences. First of all, the two differ in their bases. Church-power comes directly from Christ, the only legislator of church life. Association-power comes from the will and consent of the churches gathered in association. While the general duty to maintain fellowship and communion is a command of Christ in Scripture, the specific gathering together in an association is entirely up to an individual church. The basis of association-power is the confederation itself, not the command of Christ, nor his express will in Scripture.

A second difference between the association and the church powers lies in the very nature of each power. In the case of gathered churches, the power is derivative, from Christ. The church executes Christ's mandates. He alone is legislator for the church. His laws are already clearly set forth in Scripture, and the nature of church-power is already determined: to admit and dismiss members, to call and ordain officers, and to discipline members.

In the case of associations, the power derives from the will of the churches. The specifics of association-power are legislated by the group. The functioning of such power can change and develop according to needs. In many instances, when the Scriptures remain unclear on a specific point, the association, operating in a legislative capacity, sets policies about church life. What is determined is often beyond the requirements of Scripture.

Thus, the association deals with an area of church life that is often not specified in Scripture. It functions beyond the demands

of Scripture and, therefore, provides for necessary adaptations. Such adaptation is anticipated by the Philadelphia Confession in its chapter on Scripture. The Confession reads:

> Nevertheless we acknowledge the (k) inward illumination of the Spirit of God, to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some Circumstances concerning the Worship of God, and Government of the Church, common to Humane Actions and Societies; which are to be (l) ordered by the Light of Nature, and Christian Prudence, according to the General Rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.
>
> (k) John 6.45. 1 Cor. 2.9,10,11,12. (l) 1 Cor. 11.13,14. & Ch. 14,26. & 40.[127]

The author does not mean to imply that the differences between the church and the association, in their roles as agents for adaptation, are absolute. It is rather a matter of degree. The association, by its nature, deals much more than the church with matters that are unspecified by Scripture. On the other hand, the church too must deal with adaptation to needs.

A third way in which the association and the church differ in their powers is the relationship of those powers to church officials. The gathered church, by Christ's legislation in Scripture, has definite church officers, namely, deacons, ruling elders, and pastors.[128] These are chosen and ordained (set apart) by the whole church, but they receive their authority directly from Christ. Church officers are

---

[127] P,1.6 (A77-88). (Italics mine.)

[128] On church officers see above, chap. 4, pp. 332-37. Philadelphia Baptists accepted both the General and the Particular Baptist traditions about the number of officers. The General Baptists accepted ruling elders as well as deacons and pastors (bishops).

directly accountable to Christ, as well as to the church's discipline of them as members.

Associational officers are set up by the mutual consent of the churches, for example, the moderator, the clerk, or the treasurer, the messengers or the evangelists of the association. These roles are not specified in Scripture. Moreover, each associational officer is accountable to the churches for his or her actions. In some sense, all Christians are responsible to Christ, but in terms of official responsibilities, association officials, such as the evangelists and the messengers of the P.B.A., are directly accountable to the association itself. The accountability for church officers, by contrast, is not exactly the same. The latter need not answer to the church for their work unless they are obviously immoral or heretical.

Conclusions about Association-Power

The above discussion of association-power, as contrasted to church-power, justifies one in drawing the following conclusions. First of all, association-power rests upon human consent to a much greater extent than church-power. Secondly, there are similarities between association-power and church-power, both being based in Christian love and service, both advisory in nature, and both possessing only a moral force typical of all church authority and power. Thirdly, there is a great difference between the two powers. Church-power relates directly to Christ's will clearly set forth in Scripture; association-power, to the churches' will in setting up a confederation to carry out their responsibility for fellowship and communion.

Church officers and church-power are revealed directly by Christ the legislator. Association officials and association-power can, and must, be determined by the mutual consent of the churches.

The next section considers the second aspect of the Philadelphia Baptist view of power in the association, namely, the functions and exercise of association-power.

The Functions and Exercise of Association-Power

The general purpose of an association has already been indicated in the discussion of consistencies in eighteenth century P.B.A. views of associations.[129] Moreover, in chapter 2, the author discussed the P.B.A. concerns about ministry, general education, evangelism (ad intra), and the promotion of denominational solidarity. The Association's role in the development of associational theory has also been discussed in full.[130]

In this section, the author lists the specific functions of association-power. These are grouped under the two general headings of association-power ad intra and ad extra, headings uncovered in an analysis of Griffith's essay on association-power.[131] The specific functions listed are those expressly mentioned in the official sources

---

[129] See above, pp. 412-13.

[130] See the following: on ministry, pp. 155-61; on general education, pp. 161-64; on evangelism, pp. 164-67; on promotion of denominational solidarity, pp. 181-83; and on the development of associational theory, pp. 184-202 and 399-438.

[131] See above, p. 429.

of the P.B.A. Wherever appropriate, the functions are exemplified from the actual practice of association-power in the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century.[132]

Association-Power Ad Intra

Some of the functions of the association, and the exercise of its legitimate power, touch upon the inner life of the association itself, its membership and its organization. These functions are essential to the continued existence and the well-being of the association as such. The churches, by their voluntary and mutual confederation, approve of this type of association-power. In terms of this study, these are characterized as ad intra powers and functions, of which there are at least six distinguishable associational functions mentioned in the official P.B.A. sources of the eighteenth century.

First, the association of churches has real ad intra power to determine the requirements of its membership. Griffith's essay of 1749 stresses that the "first motive, ground, and foundation or basis of their confederation" is the churches' agreement in sound faith and practice. The later Church Discipline indicates under what conditions new churches may be received into the association. As Jones states:

> 4. Other churches, besides those that enter at the original constitution, may be admitted on making application, and giving

---

[132] See the following official P.B.A. sources: G, pp. 61-63 (A1529-1615), and 2P,10.22, 11.2-7, 12.3, 12.6, and 12.9-10 (A2219-29, 2263-91, 2300-11, 2323-32, and 2356-67).

Other sources mentioning associational functions are the following: Manning, Sentiments, 1 (B172-80); E, pp. 109-10 (B359-76); CD,6 (B1240-50 and 1284-1319); and the sermon of O. Hart, pp. 32-33 (B726-52).

> satisfactory evidence in regard to their faith and practice, regular order and good standing.[133]

Thus, to be accepted into the association, a church must give evidence of regular faith and practice. The minutes of proceedings of the P.B.A. reflect the Association's care in examining churches seeking membership. In 1746, the P.B.A. responded to the following question about the reception of churches into the Association.

> 5. Query: Whether it is regular for an Association to receive in and admit as members of the Association, such as at the same time they would not admit to church communion, if opportunity offered?[134]

The response of the P.B.A. was a simple and direct, "We answer, no."

Reception of a new church as a member was not automatic. In several cases, the Association postponed admission until satisfaction was given to questions raised. Such instances, however, are recorded only in the later period under study, when the Philadelphia Baptists were experiencing their rapid expansion after the Great Awakening. For example, the Northern Liberties Church was temporarily denied membership. It had been constituted a distinct church from that of Philadelphia. Objections to its admission were posed at the associational meeting in 1770:

> 5. The church in the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia proposed to join the Association; but objections to it being made, the matter was referred to a committee, who brought in their report, and the junction was deferred.[135]

---

[133] 2P,12.4 (A2312-16), and G, p. 61 (A1527-28); see also CD,6 (B1240-42).

[134] Gillette, 46:54.5.

[135] Ibid., 70:113.5.

Apparently the difficulties were resolved because, at the next session, the church was brought into the Association.[136] Other examples of delayed reception into the P.B.A. were the Second Church of New York, received in 1774 after three years of postponed membership; the Sideling Hill Church, received in 1792; and the Buffalo Valley Church. The last church apparently never was received into the Association because it does not appear on subsequent lists of member churches.[137]

The question of admission of a new church was sometimes referred to an ad hoc committee of the Association at the actual meeting of the P.B.A., as in the case of the Northern Liberties Church. At other times, a more serious situation moved the P.B.A. to advise a church council, as in the case of the Second Church of New York. Occasionally, the matter was resolved by a committee acting on behalf of the association between its meetings, as finally happened for the same church in New York. Apparently the latter group, meeting in New York on November 8, 1773, received the church into membership before the next session of the P.B.A.

Thus, in its developed stages, the P.B.A. authorized groups to continue its work between plenary sessions, and, on occasion, even allowed them to make final decisions for the Association. The P.B.A., therefore, functioned in real ways between annual meetings of the whole

---

[136] Ibid., 71:118.1.

[137] See Gillette for the following: 2nd New York, 72:123, 73:129.7, and 74 (N.Y.):135.9; Sideling Hill, 91:270.2, and 92:281.4; and Buffalo Valley, 94:296.7.

body, at least in the late eighteenth century. The more serious problems were referred to church councils to be called by the parties involved with the aid of messengers from the Association.

A second function of associatio-power ad intra is organizing the confederation to manage its own affairs. As the century unfolded, the churches of the P.B.A. saw the need to assign definite officers, such as a moderator, clerk, scribe, trustees, frequent messengers, and, even for a few years, evangelists of the Association. Eventually, a charter of incorporation was set up. Read at the 1796 session, it was finally adopted the following year. Various funds, with necessary trustees, were authorized to carry on works of education, preaching, or other activities.[138]

Ad hoc committees of the Association began to appear in 1770, and they continued throughout the rest of the century. Prior to that time, the usual method of providing associational advice to churches was by the appointment of messengers. The latter continued to be used even when many of them were officially constituted as committees of the Association in the late eighteenth century. Some of these committees, like the one mentioned earlier, made decisions according to mandates received from the Association.

---

[138] On the general pattern of associations see chap. 2, pp. 144-49. The moderator is first mentioned in 1749 (Gillette, 49:63; also Spencer, p. 73); moderator and clerk are first mentioned together in 1761 (61:81); scribe appears as early as 1743, with an earlier, abortive request in 1735 (35:37 and 43:48); evangelists were approved in 1771 and 1773 (71:119.6 and 73:130.14); the charter was read at 1796 meeting, effective in 1796 (76:316.9 and 97:325.16); on funds see chap. 2, pp. 158-59, esp. n. 121 and 163, esp. n. 136.

Thus, to some extent, the Association "delegated" its authority to its working committees. Among the types of responsibilities given over to such groups were the following: (1) to investigate churches wishing to join the Association; (2) to give advice about matters which should be considered by the Association; (3) to help churches settle their disputes when they apply to the Association for assistance; (4) to review claims to property rights; (5) to settle estates left to the P.B.A.; (6) to revise circular letters during sessions of the Association; (7) to prepare works for publication; and (8) to establish the charter of incorporation for the P.B.A.[139]

Besides such temporary groups, the Philadelphia Association eventually set up permanent committees. By the end of the period under study there were at least three such committees. The earliest was one dealing with the New England struggle for full religious toleration. This Committee of Grievances, formed in 1774, maintained contact with similar groups from the Warren and the Virginia Associations.[140] In 1802, a permanent Committee of Correspondence was established, and its reports begin to appear in the minutes for the following year. In 1806, William Staughton was appointed the first recording secretary of the group. A Library Committee was formed in 1805.[141]

---

[139]See Gillette for the following: (1) 70:113 and 97:324; (2) 73:129 and 95:306; (3) 90:254, 92:283, 97:324, and 98:334; (5) 84: 204-5; (5) 87:227 and 92:283; (6) 87:227 and 90:225; (7) 88:239, 89: 248, 90:255, 94:297, and 95:307; and (8) 91:271 and 92:284; also 76:316 and 97:325.

[140]Spencer, pp. 109-10; also Gillette, 74:141-42.

[141]Gillette, 1802:371.19, 1803:381-82.23, 1805:411-12.18, 1806: 425.32; for the Library Committee, 1805:413.24 and 1806:423.30.

Setting up committees vital to its effective work for the churches was a function of the Association's power to direct its own affairs. Such committees gave Philadelphia Baptists an experience of ordering their interchurch life without having those groups tied directly to the churches. Associational groups functioned without direct representation. Committee members acted on mandate from the Association, and, in some instances, were answerable to the P.B.A. alone. Such developments were wholly in accord with the P.B.A. Baptists' willingness to allow developments within their human organization of churches. No one questioned the right of the Association, once established by mutual consent, to conduct its affairs in this manner, as long as the independence of each church was assured. All such developments were natural developments within an expanding organization. Problems arose only later when associations, mostly other than the P.B.A., permitted their committees to encroach upon church-powers, for example, through permanent ordination councils.[142]

A third function of ad intra association-power was to call delinquent churches to task for their misconduct. Griffith's essay of 1749 had clearly affirmed this positive and real power of the association.[143] In 1766, the P.B.A. affirmed that a church's neglect of attendance was cause for reprimand, and, in 1797, the Association passed a resolution to drop any church that does not send "a messenger,

---

[142]Such problems never arose within the P.B.A. during the eighteenth century; other associations, however, did assume too much power (see Shurden, pp. 151-57; also Allison, pp. 81-95).

[143]See above, p. 428.

or letter, to this Association for three years successively."[144] The later Church Discipline of 1798 reflects the fullest view of this association-power. Jones states:

> 10. The association has a right to call any delinquent church to account, whether for a wanton abuse of its power towards or over any of its members, neglect of attendance at the association, disregard of those things recommended to them, or any material defect in principle or practice; . . .[145]

It is curious that, while in theory the P.B.A. had authority and power to call churches to task for all of the above reasons, in practice, as reflected in the minutes of the P.B.A. during the eighteenth century, the Association apparently did not use this power, except to issue a mild reprimand to churches delinquent in attendance.

Perhaps respect for confidentiality prevented the P.B.A. from keeping complete records of all its proceedings. Causes of disputes and specific recommendations to churches appear but rarely in the minutes. Thus, one might argue, with some justification, that the P.B.A. did not record its direct confrontations with member churches. Quite possibly, such confrontations took place. More probably, however, as suggested below, the Association worked through its ministers and messengers to settle difficulties with members.

Whatever happened in fact, Philadelphia Baptists were clear about the theory. The Association had full authority to deal with its own membership and, whenever necessary, could exclude members. There

---

[144] Gillette, 66:97 and 97:325.9.

[145] 2P, 12.10 (A2360-65).

is no evidence whatsoever that the member churches in the eighteenth century denied this right to the Association.

A fourth theoretical function of ad intra association-power, already indicated above, is to exclude delinquent member churches from the association as a last resort. This function was discussed in Griffith's essay and appears in the Discipline of Jones. The latter states: "and if satisfactory reasons are not given therefore, nor reformation, then to exclude them." In another place, Jones states:

> 6. Nevertheless [despite independence of churches], the associated body may exclude from their connection any church that may act an unworthy part. This our association did some years ago, as also, virtually, last association. Indeed, it would be absurd to examine churches at their admission, if afterward they are to be continued in the connection, let their principles and practice be what they may, see Chap. X, ver. 22. vide also Confession of Faith, Chap. XXVII. Sec. 15. Our late discipline, p. 61. Dr. Owen on the nature of a gospel church, p. 254.[146]

Jones's reference to the P.B.A.'s practice of excluding member churches could not be verified by this author. Even a close reading of the minutes of the Association failed to reveal such instances of the use of the P.B.A.'s power to exclude unworthy members. This fact supports the opinion, expressed previously, that the Association did not always record confidential transactions in its minutes. Members of the P.B.A. presumably were familiar with Jones's examples.

Jones also referred to John Owen, the Congregational writer who influenced Particular and Philadelphia Baptists.[147] The citation

---

[146] 2P,12.6 (A2323-32); also 2P,12.10 (A2365-66); on Griffith's essay see above, p. 428.

[147] On Owen's influence see chap. 1, pp. 81-82; also chap. 2, for the following: influence on 1P (p. 193); on E (p. 199); and 2P (p. 202).

deals with the manner of confronting erroneous churches. What Owen outlines was probably the usual approach used by P.B.A. Baptists if and when they had to deal with a problem church. Owen writes:

> If it be reported or known by Credible Testimony that any Church hath admitted into the exercise of Divine Worship any thing superstitious or vain, or if the Members of it walk like those described by the Apostle, Phil. 3. 18, 19. unto the Dishonour of the Gospel and of the Ways of Christ, the Church it self not endeavouring its own Reformation and Repentance; other Churches walking in the Glory of Christ, and Honour of the Gospel, after more private ways for its Reduction, as Opportunity and Duty may suggest unto their Elders, ought to Assemble in a Synod for Advice, either as to the use of farther means for the Recovery of such a Church, or to with hold Communion from it in case of Obstinacy in all its evil ways.[148]

Very possibly, Philadelphia Baptists managed to resolve any difficulties with member churches through informal contacts by ministers of the P.B.A., or through messengers appointed by the Association. It may never have been necessary for the whole assembly to deal with the dismissal of a church from the Association.

In any event, the dismissal from an association was not viewed as excommunication. Nevertheless, Owen characterized such dismissal as "to with hold Communion." Philadelphia Baptists, by contrast, refrained from such an expression, perhaps because of its possible confusion with excommunication. The latter, in P.B.A. terms, connoted the severing of the bonds of both union and communion, and it applied only to the relationship between the individual Christian and the gathered church.[149]

---

[148] Owen, p. 254. (Italics in the original.)

[149] On excommunication see chap. 4, pp. 352-57; contrasted to exclusion, pp. 259-64.

A fifth function of association-power ad intra, following upon the previous one, is to inform members that a church is delinquent. This too may have happened in the eighteenth century P.B.A., although there is no evidence of it in the minutes of the Association. By contrast, the Association on several occasions advised the churches to beware of persons who were subject to censure or already censured by their churches.[150] There is no indication that the P.B.A. gave similar advice about churches as such, although, according to Jones, as mentioned previously, the Association apparently dismissed some churches.

A sixth function of ad intra association-power was to grant dismissal to churches wishing to join other associations. The transfer of membership for individuals took place between the churches involved.[151] However, when a whole congregation wished to transfer to another association, the P.B.A.'s consent was sought. In each case, the Association acquiesced. This first occurred in 1765 when the P.B.A. insisted that the member churches follow the Philadelphia plan and keep in touch with their former associates:

> 6. Agreed that the churches in Virginia have our leave to form themselves into an Association, provided they go on the same plan, and hold union with us.[152]

This new group, formed in 1766, was the Ketockton Regular Baptist Association, the first one in Virginia and the fifth American

---

[150]For a list of persons censured by the P.B.A. see chap. 2, p. 156, nn. 114 and 115.

[151]For example, 45 persons were dismissed to other associations in 1770 (see Gillette, 70:117, n.).

[152]Gillette, 65:95.6.

Baptist association. Three of the four charter members were from the P.B.A.: the churches at Ketockton, Opekon, and Smith's Creek.

There is evidence that in 1794 the P.B.A. asked members desiring dismissal from the Philadelphia group to continue their bonds with the Association. Nevertheless, it granted the churches of Cow Marsh, Welsh Tract, Duck Creek, and Wilmington the right to join another association:

> It is considered and decided that the churches have an undoubted right to depart from this Association, and to join any other they may see fit; but this Association, having been happy in their connection, wish them to continue in union with them as long as (consistently with their own interests) they can; but if they choose to withdraw and join any other, we consent.[153]

Such a reluctant consent is understandable because the churches involved were longstanding and active members of the Philadelphia group. Welsh Tract, in fact, had been a charter member of the P.B.A. in 1707.

Other churches dismissed to associations closer to them, as recorded in the minutes of the P.B.A., were the following: (1) Pawling's Precinct (also called Bateman's Precinct) and North-East Town (formerly Cortland's Manor), dismissed to Shaftesbury in 1788 and 1789 respectively; (2) Mispilion, to Salisbury in 1789; (3) Scotch Plains, Canoe Brook, Piscataqua, Morristown, Mount Bethel, and Lyon's Farms, to New York in 1791 and 1792; (4) Baltimore and Hartford, to Baltimore in 1794; (5) Sideling Hill, "to a nearer Association" in 1799; (6) London Tract, to Delaware and Conolaway, to Baltimore in 1803;

---

[153]Ibid., 94:297.11.

and (7) twenty churches of the P.B.A., to New Jersey in 1811. Some of the churches going to New Jersey had previously been members of the New York Association.[154]

Such were the six basic functions of the P.B.A.'s exercise of association-power that touch upon the inner life of the group. The next section considers associational functions which more directly affected the inner life of the member churches.. In terms of this study, the latter functions are designated as ad extra association-powers and functions.

Association-Power Ad Extra

As voluntary confederations of independent churches, associations had no superior jurisdiction over their members. Nevertheless, in practice, the activities of the association greatly affected the churches. John Owen, the Congregationalist theorist who inspired P.B.A. writers, differentiated two basic functions of the synod or council in its relationship to the churches:

> The outward acts of communion among churches, proceeding from this love, and the obligation that is on them to promote their mutual edification, may be referred unto the two heads of advice and assistance.
> Churches have communion unto their mutual edification by advice in synods or councils; . . .[155]

While Philadelphia Baptists, following the tradition of British Particular Baptists in the Second London (Philadelphia)

---

[154]See Gillette for the Following: (1) 88:237.8 and 89:246-47.3; (2) 89:247.1; (3) 91:271.1 and 92:283.18; (4) 94:297-98.19; (5) 99:342.18; (6) 1803:380.101 and (7) Printed Minutes for 1811, p. 7, nos. 19-20.

[155]Owen, 1947 ed., p. 126; orig. ed., p. 249.

Confession, did not use the terms synods and councils, Owen's congregational church polity was most agreeable to them. All ad extra associational activities come under the two headings of advice and assistance. Authentic associational decisions can never exceed the bounds of advice or assistance; they are never authoritative judgments or commands that, of themselves, rightfully demand compliance by the churches.

Nevertheless, both advice and assistance touched upon the inner life of the churches and upon the very exercise of church-power. For this Catholic student, it is enlightening to discover how a truly congregational church polity, accepting the total and sovereign independence of each church, also allowed for the mutual help and enrichment of Philadelphia Baptist churches through an active and permanent Association in the eighteenth century.

Ad extra association-powers and functions can be of two types: some relate to the exercise of church-powers; others, to the common good of all the churches and to their shared responsibility as churches to maintain fellowship and communion and to promote the common cause.

Association-Powers Relating to the Exercise of Church-Powers

Church-power, as technically understood and defined in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition, meant three things: to admit and dismiss members; to call and ordain church officers; and to discipline all members.[156] Some of the P.B.A.'s advice and assistance, the

---

[156] On church-power in the P.B.A. see chap. 4, pp. 328-64.

result of ad extra associational power, definitely related to these functions of church-power.

Church Membership. The Association provided an interchurch fellowship that permitted members to admit and dismiss their constituents within the same communion. It provided the framework for mutual support in developing church practices and policies on membership, the constitution of churches, intercommunion, and other issues related to admission of members.

On the question of church membership, the Philadelphia Association periodically offered its opinion and advice. For example, the P.B.A. supported the Montgomery Church in 1728 on the question of refusing to grant a letter of dismission to a member still living in the territory of the congregation. The importance of fellowship with the church in one's neighborhood received emphasis again in 1735. On that occasion substantial reasons were given:

> Such practice of receiving a person from a great distance when another church is closer is contrary to the intendment, in instituting particular churches.--See Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. See also our Treatise of Discipline, 28, 29.[157]

The same advice appeared in the official Church Disciplines of the P.B.A. The later Discipline of 1798 allowed for exceptions "particularly when persons plead greater benefit to themselves, in a church more remote."[158]

---

[157]Gillette, 35:37.2; also 28:29.2.

[158]See 1P, pp. 27-29, and 2P,9.15-17 (partial text, A2143-51).

Both Church Disciplines also stressed the responsibility of Christians for "mutual Translation, Recommendation or Dismission of Members from one Church to another as Ocassion may require."[159]

As late as 1806 the P.B.A. expressed its opinion about "the smallest number of members necessary for forming a gospel church." Responding to the First Church of Philadelphia, the Association advised:

> Answer: On this head different sentiments are entertained. Some have supposed two or three are sufficient, others have imagined five, some ten, and others twelve, because it would seem that the church at Ephesus was formed of twelve men, Acts xix.7. The Association is of the opinion, however, that much depends on the probability of the persons living permanently together who may be about to be constituted. It appears desireable that there be in a new settlement, where removals are frequent, at least seven, and that of these two or three be males.[160]

This same issue had been treated in the Church Discipline of 1798. That official P.B.A. source left the question open and merely specified: "but there ought to be so many, as to answer the end of that holy institution."[161]

Sometimes the P.B.A.'s advice about membership and the constitution of a church appeared as a side remark. For example, when it accepted the Sideling Hill Church as a member in 1792, the Association took the occasion to comment upon the undue multiplication of churches:

> Nevertheless, the Association disapproves of multiplying churches by dividing those already established, without evident

---

[159] 1P, p. 59 (A1419-22), and 2P,11.5 (A2282-83).

[160] Gillette, 1806:423-24.23.

[161] 2P,1.6 (A1750-51). On P.B.A. practice of constituting an essential church see chap. 4, pp. 309-11.

necessity; and also, of any one minister by himself undertaking to constitute a church.[162]

The Association offered advice on intercommunion. Those forbidding communion with sister churches of the Association were chided in 1746. That same year the P.B.A. responded negatively to the question whether the Association could accept into its membership a congregation with which the churches could not communicate. By 1783 the laying on of hands upon baptized persons was thought by some to be a condition for reception into communion. The Association advised that, while this ordinance was in general practice among Philadelphia Baptists, the laying on of hands is not required for communion. The following year, the P.B.A. told a church how to deal with "a sister church who holds and actually admits unbaptized persons to the Lord's supper." As late as 1787, the Association advised the Lower Dublin Church to exclude a person who declines communion in that church.[163]

These and other instances of advice from the P.B.A. support the conclusion that association-power ad extra functioned in ways that affected the church-power to admit and dismiss members. Such associational decisions were, of course, merely advisory. They nevertheless must have exercised a great influence over the members of the P.B.A. Not only were the decisions advertised to all the churches by means of the minutes of proceedings, but many of them also helped to shape ideas recorded in the official Church Disciplines of 1743 and 1798.

---

[162]Gillette, 92:281.4.

[163]Ibid., 46:54.4 and .5; 83:194.7; 84:200.10; and 87:228.8.

The latter sources, in themselves, served to guide the churches in their exercise of power to admit and dismiss members.

The Ministry. One of the more remarkable contributions of the eighteenth century P.B.A. is its care for an ordered ministry among Philadelphia Baptists. This basic concern, discussed in chapter 2, touches upon another prerogative of the local church, its right to call and to ordain its own church leaders.[164] There are at least four distinct functions of association-power that affected the church's power to choose its officers.

First, the Association, through its presbyterate, served the churches at the ordination of their officers. Theoretically, any church was free to call upon neighboring churches to provide ministers to preside at the ordination of its officers. Practically, fellowship with other Baptist churches in the P.B.A. afforded ministerial resources for such purposes.[165]

Although the Association participated in ordinations by sending messengers to oblige the churches, the latter's call was always required. The P.B.A. found it necessary to affirm this in 1771. The Newtown Church requested the Association "to appoint time and ministers to ordain Mr. Nicholas Cox," to which the Association replied, "that the appointment of both properly belongs to his church.[166]

---

[164]On P.B.A. concern for ministry see chap. 2, pp. 155-61.

[165]On P.B.A.'s role in ordinations see chap. 2, pp. 157 and 159.

[166]Gillette, 71:119.3.

Second, the Association advised churches about the trial and training of candidates for the ministry. Churches remained free to ignore such advice and to interpret the Scriptures for themselves, thus developing their own means of calling and ordaining officers. In practice, however, the P.B.A. provided the prudent advice for solving specific questions about the ordination of ruling elders, the trial of candidates for preaching, and the training of men for ministry.[167] Such advice was eventually incorporated into the associational Church Disciplines. As already noted, the latter, together with the associational advice to the churches, no doubt had a continuing impact upon the exercise of church-power to call and to ordain ministers and ruling elders.

Third, the P.B.A. advised churches about ministers who were suspect in their teachings or censured by their churches. In this way, the Association kept churches informed about the quality of candidates for the ministry and kept the general ministry sound. While a church might choose to ordain anyone it wished, it was highly unlikely that a member of the Association would counter its advice about suspect individuals. The force of the counsel from the P.B.A., in fact if not in theory, suspended any censured minister's chances to remain active among Philadelphia Baptist churches. Moreover, the correspondence between associations of the late eighteenth century made church censures of ministers even more effective.[168]

---

[167]See discussion about P.B.A. and ministry in chap. 2, pp. 155-61.

[168]On censure of ministers see chap. 2, p. 156, esp. n. 114.

Fourth, the Association deployed ministers within its ranks as messengers to assist churches in their difficulties. Among the services rendered were the following: to supply ministries to churches without officers, to establish new churches, to install church officers, to assist at the ordination of officers, to participate in church councils to disfellowship churches or to dissolve a pastor's relationship with his congregation, and to investigate a newly constituted church's faith and practice with a view to being received into the Association. Such activities of the associational messengers were accepted. They caused no difficulties for Philadelphia Baptists as long as the independence and full church-power of the local congregation was assured. Whenever the Association participated in the exercise of church-power, it was always at the invitation of the local church.

By providing for a sound ministry and by gathering together concerned and authorized ministers to function as messengers of the Association, the P.B.A. engaged in activities that touched upon the exercise of church-power to call and to ordain church officers. Such functions the P.B.A. always fulfilled in its role as promoter of the common good of all the churches of the Association.

Church Discipline. Administering gospel discipline over its members is the third church-power. The association, in its advice and assistance to member churches, exercised no more decisive impact upon areas of church-power than when it provided support for the disciplining and censuring of ministers and other members of congregations.

There are at least five ways in which an association could provide support for church discipline.

First, the association, as mentioned above, notified the churches about ministers and others who were under censure and who were suspect for their views.[169] The essay of 1749 asserted:

> And further, that an Association of the delegates of confederate churches may doctrinally declare any person or party in a church, who are defective in principles or disorderly in practice, to be censurable when the affair comes under their cognizance, . . .[170]

For the association to function in this capacity, however, required that the "affair come under their cognizance." This ordinarily materialized when a church applied to the association for help. Once Baptist connectionalism became more developed in the late eighteenth century, the P.B.A. and other associations shared information about persons who were censured through correspondence and the exchange of messengers.

Second, the association at times advised churches how to deal with people subject to censure. This function was also affirmed in the essay of 1749.[171]

Third, if any church needed support in applying its censure, the association could send messengers to help. Once again, Griffith's essay affirmed this right of the association.[172]

---

[169] See chap. 2, p. 156, esp. n. 114.

[170] G, p. 63 (A1605-9).

[171] G, p. 63 (A1609-11); also above, p. 428.

[172] G, p. 63 (A1611-15); also above, p. 428.

Fourth, the association could hear the complaint of any individual or group against the unjust proceedings of their own churches. The right of the association to receive questions from individuals was affirmed on several occasions. In the 1707 entry of P.B.A. proceedings, one finds the statement:

> It was also concluded, that if any difference shall happen between any member and the church he belongs unto, and they cannot agree, then the person so grieved may, at the general meeting, appeal to the brethren of the several congregations, and with such as they shall nominate, to decide the difference; that the church and the person so grieved do fully acquiesce in their determination.[173]

The later Church Discipline protected the rights of individuals against improper church proceedings. A person aggrieved by the actions of the church could insist upon a council, and had the right to designate half of its membership.[174] If the church refused to hear the council's advice, an individual could apply to the association itself for a hearing. As Jones's Discipline states:

> 22. If the church should refuse to call in a council and cut the person off, or should they do it contrary to the advice of the council, the person aggrieved may lay a statement of his case before the Association, who may appoint a council, and if the church should refuse to admit of a rehearing before said council, or should refuse to abide by the decision of the council, the Association may bring said church under dealing, and, if the church continue obstinate, a neighboring church may receive the aggrieved person into their communion.*
>
> ---
>
> *See the Confession of Faith, Chap. XXVII. Sec. 15. Also Keach's Glory of a true Church, p. 18.[175]

---

[173] Gillette, 7:25; also 66:99, 67:101-2, and 68:105. On the meaning of appeal see discussion above, pp. 433-34 and 435.

[174] 2P, 10.21 (A2211-16).

[175] Ibid., 10.22 (A2219-28 and 2257-58).

A person exonerated by the association's council could be received into another church notwithstanding the previous church's censure or excommunication. The P.B.A. implied in its footnote to the text quoted above that the procedure for receiving such a person into another church should be the one described in Keach's Glory of a true Church. The latter states:

> Quest. What is to be done when a Person offers himself for Communion from a Church that is corrupt, or erroneous in Principles?
> Answ. 1. The Church ought to take an account of his Faith in all Fundamental Points, and of the Work of Grace upon his Heart.
> 2. And if satisfied, then to send also to that corrupt People, to know whether they have any thing or not against his Life and Conversation: if satisfied in both these respects, the Church may receive him.[176]

As for the delinquent church, the Discipline of 1798 also provides that "the association may bring said church under dealing." In its section on associations, the same P.B.A. official source affirms that the association can call a delinquent church to task "for the wanton abuse of its power towards or over any of its members," and "if satisfactory reasons are not given therefore, nor reformation, then to exclude them." Such authority over a member church has already been discussed as the third and fourth ad intra functions of association-power.[177]

The effect of such a calling to task is not to deny the church's independence to rule its own affairs. As noted previously,

---

[176] 1K, p. 18 (parallel to A2219). (Italics in the original.)

[177] 2P,12.10 (A2360-62 and 2365-66); also 2P,10.22 (A2225-26). On ad intra functions see above, pp. 471-75.

a church, even if irregular and heterodox, remains an independent church.[178] Thus, the rights of individual Christians against the abuse of church-power are protected by the association without the latter encroaching upon the rights and independence of the local church. One finds here a marvelously balanced church polity, and a theory of congregational authority that allows a place for effective power in an association.

Fifth, the association might offer advice to settle disputes arising within churches. Such advice was required by the general duty of Christians to maintain fellowship and communion as affirmed by the Philadelphia Confession and the official Discipline of 1743. The same sources delineated the churches' responsibility, when disputes arise in them, to call together a council of their messengers.[179]

The later Discipline of 1798 reminded Philadelphia Baptists that they "be ready to assist one another, when required, in difficult cases." The same source describes one of the association's functions in similar terms, to "afford assistance and advice in all difficult cases."[180]

The practice of the latter eighteenth century was to refer more difficult cases to church councils. As noted earlier, the P.B.A. made use of councils to settle disputes. Allison, in his study, claims that one of the reasons for this is that the association wished

---

[178] See above, pp. 424-25; also 2P,12.7 (A2333-41).

[179] See P,27.14 (A555-70) and P,27.15 (A571-86); also 1P, pp. 59-61 and 61-62 (A1410-52 and 1454-71).

[180] 2P,11.2 and 12.3 (A2275-76 and 2305-6).

to make clear it was not taking upon itself a power superior to the churches.[181]

At other times the Philadelphia Association sent messengers to assist in settling disputes. Eventually these designated representatives of the P.B.A. were assigned as ad hoc committees of the Association.[182]

All five of the above functions of ad extra association power, touching upon the local church-power to discipline members, exemplify the P.B.A.'s ability to function at the service of the churches without violating their acknowledged independence. In exercising such functions, the Association had a direct and moral influence upon the exercise of church-power on the local level. The authority to exercise such influence came, not from any superior status of the Association above the churches, but from the P.B.A.'s call to serve the needs of the member churches.

Conclusions about ad extra association-power related to church-power. Three general conclusions are justified from the above discussion of ad extra association-power related to church-power. First, association-power is related to church-power. The former serves the latter. When churches need any help to exercise their own powers, they freely turn to the association for help.

Second, association-power, in practice, acts as a check against the wanton abuse of church-power. It also protects the rights

---

[181]Allison, p. 110. See his opinion quoted above, p. 449.

[182]On committees see above, pp. 469-71.

of individual Christians in relationship to their own churches. The association has real and positive power to sanction an irregular and heterodox church by excluding it from the association and advertising the same to the other members.

Third, the exercise of the association's right to exclude a member church does not violate the latter's independent status. Each church is still independent, although it may be recognized by the associated churches as unorthodox and irregular. The association's discipline of a church is not that of excommunication in its precise and technical sense. Nevertheless, in practice, the association's dismissal of a member church amounts to much the same thing. A disciplined church is outside the full communion of the rest of the association and ostracized from affiliation with other Baptist churches in that union.[183]

Association-Powers Relating to the Common Good of the Member Churches

Besides those ad extra functions and powers of an association that touch upon the inner life of the churches, there are others that promote the general welfare of all the churches and help them to pursue the common cause. In the ongoing life of the Philadelphia Baptists in the eighteenth century, these functions brought about a denominational solidarity, a unity of faith and practice, and many

---

[183]As noted above, this power to dismiss a church from fellowship in the Association may never have been applied by the P.B.A. in the eighteenth century. Very likely the Association dealt with problem churches in other ways short of formal dismissal from the confederation, although Jones apparently witnesses to several instances not recorded in associational proceedings (see pp. 473-74).

other valuable advantages for independent churches that lacked the resources, on their own, to realize their calling to be the Church of Christ. As in the case of all other association-powers and functions, these come under the heading either of advice or of assistance to the churches as a whole.

Association-power ad extra, serving all the churches of the confederation and promoting their common good, include at least nine different functions.

First of all, a major service afforded by the P.B.A. was to safeguard orthodox faith and regular church practice among Philadelphia Baptists. Jones states this important role to "detest and discountenance heresies" and to "preserve uniformity of faith and practice." Similar concepts are expressed in Manning's first Sentiment and in the sermon by Oliver Hart.[184]

The minutes of proceedings of the P.B.A. are replete with evidence that the Association shaped the belief of Philadelphia Baptists. In responding to questions about orthodox teaching, the Association occasionally turned to its Confession and Church Disciplines, but more often, to the Scriptures themselves. The P.B.A. dealt with threatening new ideas, such as the "error" of universalism, which made inroads among Philadelphia Baptist ministers around 1781. The latter ministers were censured by the Association for their views. Circular letters, many of them extended commentaries on chapters of

---

[184] 2P,12.3 (A2302-4); also Manning, Sentiments, 1 (B174-75) and Hart, p. 32 (B742-43).

the Philadelphia Confession, incorporated theological ideas current among P.B.A. churches.[185]

Church order among Philadelphia Baptists was also regularized through the influence of the Association. Among the P.B.A.'s responses to inquiries from the churches were those dealing with the ministry, the ordinances, church worship, church discipline, and other issues of church polity. The P.B.A.'s opinion, although advisory only, nevertheless had a great impact upon member churches. Opinions that were incorporated into the Church Disciplines likewise oriented Philadelphia Baptists in their church polity and practice. Thus, the Association helped to establish a denominational solidarity among its constituent churches in their faith and practice during the eighteenth century. This influence came from the Philadelphia Confession, the official Church Disciplines, and the Association's circular letters and decisions.[186]

A second function of the association, of advantage to all the members in a confederation, was to advance the Baptist cause in the eyes of civil authority. One occasion for this was the struggle for religious toleration in New England, promoted in part by the P.B.A.'s Committee on Grievances working in conjunction with other associations. The associations' collaborative effectiveness in this struggle helped

---

[185]On universalism see p. 156, n. 115; on censured ministers, ibid., and n. 114; on circular letters, pp. 147-49; and on the bases of associational advice, pp. 183-84.

[186]On ministry, see pp. 155-61; on calling and ordaining officers, pp. 332-41; on office-power, pp. 341-48; on ordinances, pp. 316-20; on discipline, pp. 320-22 and 348-63; and on denominational solidarity, pp. 181-83.

to change Massachusetts Baptists' opposition to the formation of the Warren Association. Manning's first Sentiment about an association listed one of the uses of such bodies as "becoming important in the eye of the civil powers, as has already appeared in many instances on this continent."[187]

Around 1770 Morgan Edwards, in his Customs recounted the effectiveness of the P.B.A.:

> By it the baptists are become a respectable body of people, not only among other religious societies, but in the eye of the civil powers, as might be shown by several instances in Maryland, Virginia, etc. [110] for which reason we could wish that all baptist churches in America, whether english or german, were to form themselves into such associated bodies in their respective provinces.[188]

A third function of ad extra power serving the affiliated churches was to supply needy congregations with ministers and gifts. This purpose of an association was expressed in both P.B.A. Church Disciplines. The later one by Jones describes one of the uses of the association, "to make appointments of supplies for destitute churches."[189]

Philadelphia Baptists supported the general duty of mutual help among churches by an appeal to Cant. 8:8, "Our sister is little

---

[187] Manning, Sentiments, 1 (B178-80); on the New England struggle see chap. 2, pp. 125-26, 177-78, and 196-97.

[188] E, pp. 109-10 (B364-71).

[189] 2P, 12.3 (A2307-8); also 1P, p. 59 (A1415-17); see also E, p. 109 (B360-61), CD, 6 (B1292-93), and Hart, pp. 32-33 (B746-47).

and she has no breasts yet. What shall we do for our sister when her courtship begins."[190]

The eighteenth century practice of the P.B.A., as summarized in chapter 2, shows how consistently the Association provided needy churches with supplies and ministers.[191]

A fourth ad extra function serving all churches was to afford them the opportunity to "gain acquaintance with each other." The second Church Discipline mentions this as one of the main values of an association.[192] The association, through annual church messengers and letters, informed the membership about the general status of the confederation. The plan of the P.B.A., as recorded by Morgan Edwards, describes the contents of late eighteenth century church letters presented at annual meetings. In part, Edwards states:

> 2. With their messengers, the churches sent letters addressed to the association. In these letters they mention the messengers names, and their authority to act for them. Show the status of the churches since the last association, viz. how many added to them by baptism; by letters commendatory from other churches. How many restored by repentance. How many died. How many excommunicated; or dismissed to other churches. And what the number of members in each church is, etc. . . .[193]

Eventually such statistics were collated and, beginning in 1761, included in the annual associational reports to the churches.

---

[190] Text taken from New American Bible; see 1P, p. 59 (A1415-17) and 2P,11.3 (A2277-79).

[191] See chap. 2, p. 156.

[192] 2P,12.3 (A2301-2).

[193] E, p. 108, sec. 2 (B271-80).

A fifth function of the association, one that helped member churches generally, was the financial assistance provided through various funds established by the association. Jones, in his Discipline, mentions this as a general duty of the churches, as well as a specific function of the association. As mentioned previously, the P.B.A. established various funds for the education of ministers, for preaching, and for the support of educational institutions.[194]

A sixth ad extra function serving the churches, one related to an earlier function, was to promote a regular ministry. The P.B.A.'s advice about the practice of ordination, the censure of ministers, and other matters touching upon the ministry within the Association, all provided assistance to the members. Without such help, many smaller churches, lacking their own resources, could not have sustained a regular ministry.[195]

The promotion of education, described in chapter 2, was a seventh function of ad extra association-power serving the churches as a whole. Through the publication of useful works, the establishment of educational funds, the promotion of an associational library for ministers, and the establishment of schools, Philadelphia Baptists fostered educational trends. This came about through the enabling leadership of a few who received a favorable hearing and strong support from the P.B.A.[196]

---

[194] 2P, 11.6 and 12.3 (A2284-85 and 2306-7); also Hart, p. 33 (B747-49); on funds see chap. 2, pp. 158 and 163.

[195] See chap. 2, pp. 155-61; also pp. 482-84.

[196] See chap. 2, pp. 161-64.

Helping the churches carry out their mission to preach and to evangelize was an eighth service rendered by the Association. At first, as noted above, the P.B.A.'s concern for evangelism centered upon Baptists themselves; eventually, by the turn of the nineteenth century, Philadelphia Baptists, like many other American Protestants, formed their own missionary societies.[197]

Besides the above specific functions, the Association exercised a ninth one. It tended to promote the general cause among Philadelphia Baptists and in many other ways helped to build up communion and fellowship among Philadelphia Baptists. Not least of these ways was the shared experience of a lived faith embodied in associational sermons and fellowship.[198]

The Definition of an Association in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

Previous sections of this study examined in detail the official P.B.A. view of the association covenant, compared the association to a church council, and described association-power in its many aspects. The author now provides his own working definition of association in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition. The latter is a reconstruction of the P.B.A. view as expressed in official statements and in the practice of the Association during the eighteenth century.

> The association is a voluntary and mutual confederation of representative delegates from independent member churches. It is a permanent organization embodying the general duty of churches

---

[197] See chap. 2, pp. 164-70.

[198] For a statement of the general purpose of an association see above, pp. 412-13.

> to maintain fellowship and communion. It functions in an advisory capacity to foster mutual peace, union, the increase of love, strength, counsel, prosperity, edification, and other advantages among its member churches.
>
> The association, not by divine authorization, but by virtue of the mutual confederation that brought it into being, possesses real and positive power ad intra to conduct its own affairs. Moreover, it possesses power ad extra, whenever called upon by any church or individual, to assist in the proper exercise of church-powers. It also possesses power ad extra to promote the common good of all the churches in the confederation.

Keeping this working definition in mind, and considering the nature of an association as discussed above, the author presents some critical reflections about the Philadelphia Baptist view of an association.

CONCLUSIONS AND CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF ASSOCIATIONS

Before considering church authority, this study draws together some of the major findings about the Philadelphia Baptist view of associations. These are grouped under three headings: (1) the author's main conclusions, with some critical comments, about the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations; (2) the positive value of that tradition; and (3) some limitations of the same tradition.[199]

Virtually all of the questions posed at the outset of this chapter have been resolved.[200] Only one remains to be considered, the role of the association as an interpreter of the Scriptures. This function, never explicitly described in official P.B.A. sources of

---

[199]The basic principles at work in the Philadelphia Baptist associational theory were indicated above, pp. 437-38.

[200]See questions, p. 393.

this study, except in relationship to church councils, is considered in the following chapter on church authority.[201]

Conclusions and Critical Reflections on the Philadelphia Baptist View of the Association

The extended consideration of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations leads to the following fifteen conclusions. First, the official P.B.A. sources reflect a consistent attitude among eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists about the advisory character of associations, their bases, and their general purpose. Associations are justified, in the minds of Philadelphia Baptists, because they are functionally necessary to the full life of the churches, permitted by apostolic practice in Acts 15 (as well as historical precedents), and supported among other ways by the theological argument from an analogy of proportionality: as members are to their churches, so churches are to their associations.[202]

Second, changes among Philadelphia Baptist churches, especially the rapid increase in their numbers after mid century, required a development in the organization of the P.B.A. For example, the place of the church council came into prominence as more and more churches needed help to settle their differences. The minutes of the later eighteenth century show that the P.B.A. made increasing use of its powers to discipline members and ministers, to examine more closely

---

[201] See chap. 6, pp. 529, 540-42, esp. 548-49, 583-84.

[202] On advisory nature, pp. 399-400; on bases, pp. 401-11; on general purpose, pp. 412-13; on analogy of proportionality, pp. 446-47.

churches applying for membership, and to develop the inner organizational structure of the P.B.A. by assigning ad hoc committees and, at the close of the century, by establishing several permanent committees.[203]

Third, the really significant developments in associational theory took place, for the most part, around 1743. At that time, Benjamin Griffith formulated the official P.B.A. Church Discipline of 1743 and the essay of 1749. Apparently no significant changes in official P.B.A. views emerged in later decades. Griffith's contributions included the introduction of the term delegate to describe persons attending associational meetings, the description of the church council's function to interpret the mind of the Holy Spirit in Scripture, and the clear statement about the positive and real power of an association.[204]

Some twenty-five years after Griffith's essay, the Warren documents of 1767-69 reflected misgivings about the association's role as interpreter of Scripture and about the use of the term appeal in reference to churches applying for advice. Both issues posed problems to Philadelphia Baptists of that period. Nevertheless, all of the advances in P.B.A. associational theory remained in the later Discipline of 1798. The only element lacking was the association's role

---

[203] On ad intra power for organization, pp. 469-71; on councils, pp. 448-51; on discipline, pp. 483, 485, also p. 156, n. 114; on review of churches for membership, pp. 466-69; on committees, pp. 469-71.

[204] On Discipline of 1743, pp. 418-26; on essay of 1749, pp. 426-30; on delegates, pp. 415-18; on functions of councils, pp. 419-22; on positive and real power, pp. 423-26 and 426-29.

in interpreting Scripture. That role Griffith probably intended to apply to the church council, and not to the association as such.[205]

Developments in associational theory were the result of adaptation to demands of the moment. The P.B.A., through the writings of men like Griffith and Jones, gradually clarified what the association was in relationship to the churches. The whole eighteenth century process of associational theory and practice was a good instance of the first axiom cited in chapter 2, the unsystematic and pragmatic theology among Philadelphia Baptists.[206]

Fourth, developments in P.B.A. associational theory and practice were a matter of making more explicit the early implicit thinking among Philadelphia Baptists. For example, Griffith's description of the function of a council to determine the mind of the Holy Spirit in Scripture articulated what Baptists had always experienced when churches called upon others for help. The eventual use of the term council denominated P.B.A. practices dating as far back as 1712. Associational committees were likewise formal structures that developed from previous experiences of the P.B.A. sending out its messengers to help member churches.[207]

---

[205]See conclusions, pp. 434-37; on Warren documents, pp. 430-34 ; on interpretation of Scripture, pp. 431-32, 435; on use of appeal, pp. 433-35; on Discipline of 1798, p. 435.

[206]See first axiom, chap. 2, pp. 204-6.

[207]On Griffith's view of council, pp. 420-24; on P.B.A.'s use of term, pp. 450-51, 453; on committees and messengers, p. 452.

However, some areas of P.B.A. thinking about associations continued to remain unclear throughout the eighteenth century. The precise differences between councils and associations, and between churches and associations, were never adequately expressed in the official P.B.A. sources. Nevertheless, such differences can be deduced from clear evidence in the earliest documents (the Confession and Griffith's sources) and from the functional impact of the association upon the churches.[208]

Fifth, the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century, in its essay of 1749, clarified its own real and positive power. That power was based upon the mutual consent of the confederated churches. Always advisory, association-power was basically of two types, ad intra and ad extra. The former touched upon the inner life of the association; the latter, upon the inner life of the churches.[209]

Sixth, the association had power ad intra to direct its own organizational affairs, to examine churches applying for membership, and to dismiss members to other associations. If necessary, the association had power to call a member church to task for improper conduct. Theoretically, it could even exclude churches that were irregular and unorthodox if they refused to reform, and it could advise the churches in the confederation about such exclusions.[210]

---

[208]These differences are a major discovery of this study of official P.B.A. sources (see above, pp. 460-6); also analysis, pp. 441-47.

[209]On positive and real power, pp. 426-30; on functions, pp. 428-29; on distinction ad intra-ad extra, pp. 429, 465; on nature and basis of power, pp. 457-60.

[210]On ad intra powers, pp. 466-77.

Seventh, the association also possessed ad extra powers that affected the exercise of church-powers. The association could advise churches how they should exercise their independent church-powers. Explicit associational teaching permitted the P.B.A. to declare a person or church censurable, to give advice to a church on how to proceed against such a person, and even to help apply the censure. The association also had power to protect an individual's right against the wanton abuse of church-power. Associational advice about church membership, the ministry, and church discipline had a great impact upon the exercise of church-power.[211]

Eighth, other functions of association-power ad extra concerned the general good of all the churches. Most of the P.B.A.'s concerns and advisory decisions helped to influence the theological views and church polity of Philadelphia Baptist churches. Some of these associational functions were explicitly mentioned in the official sources, namely safeguarding orthodox faith and practice, supplying ministers to needy churches, sharing gifts, raising funds, and offering opportunities for mutual acquaintance. The general purpose of an association was also clearly expressed in all the P.B.A. sources.[212]

Ninth, while they expressed the positive power of an association, Philadelphia Baptist sources never came to articulate the nature of the association itself in ecclesial terms. Neither the

---

[211] On ad extra powers and church-power, pp. 478-90, esp. conclusions, pp. 489-90; on powers related to membership, pp. 479-82, to ministry, pp. 482-84, and to discipline, pp. 484-89.

[212] On ad extra powers and the common good, pp. 490-96; on general purpose, pp. 412-13.

scriptural basis of the association, nor the foundation for association-power, pointed to an interchurch fellowship demanded by Christ's command in the New Testament. Associations were merely recommended by apostolic practice. The authority of the association came solely from the mutual and free consent of the churches in the confederation, a consent expressed in the association covenant. Therefore, in the view of this writer, official statements about the association, and about its power, fell short of a truly theological (in Baptist terms, biblical) justification for such a form of connectionalism.[213]

Tenth, the relationship between association-power and church-power among eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists has been clarified. The former served the latter. Association-power functioned at the service of the independent churches and depended upon the consent, expressed or presumed, of the churches seeking advice or assistance. This was clearly set forth in the explicit theory about the advisory nature of the association and about the basis of association-power. While the two powers differed, there was a real relationship between them. Association-power, especially ad extra power to help churches discipline members, affected church-power in definite ways recognized by explicit associational theory and eighteenth century practice.[214]

Eleventh, in the minds of Philadelphia Baptists, the association was a form of connectionalism different from gathered churches or

---

[213] On meaning of ecclesial, see intro., p. 35; on basis of authority, p. 446; on foundation of power, pp. 427, 457-60.

[214] On similarities and differences between association and church powers, pp. 460-65; on their relationship, pp. 489-90.

from church councils. Between the church and the association, differences existed in the nature of their covenants and of their powers. The council and the association differed in the nature of their authority and of their basis for power. Another difference was in the role of each in determining the mind of the Spirit in Scripture, a role clearly assigned to the church council but not explicitly expressed for the association.[215]

Twelfth, Baptists, therefore, accepted different levels of the Christian duty of churches to maintain fellowship and communion: (1) the general duty, commanded by God in His Word (Ps. 122:6; Cant. 8:8; Jn. 17:20-26; Rom. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:5, 6:18; Phil. 3:16, 4:15; and 3 Jn. 8:9-10) and part of the very essence of a gathered church; (2) occasional councils, "according to the Mind of Christ" (Acts 15); and (3) permanent associations, practically necessary and humanly organized, not commanded but recommended by biblical and historical precedents, supported by theological arguments, part of the bene esse of the Church. The working definition of an essential gathered church (see chapter 4), included the general obligation to maintain fellowship and communion as churches. Apparently, in the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists, occasional councils, called to settle disputes

---

[215] On covenants, pp. 439-45, esp. conclusions, pp. 445-47; on powers, pp. 460-64; on council and association, pp. 447-57; on role of association in determining sense of Scripture, pp. 420-21, also chap. 6, pp. 585-90, 596-98, 604-5.

in belief and practice, were the only form of interchurch connectionalism "revealed" in Scripture.[216]

Thirteenth, in Philadelphia Baptist terms, the association was a humanly organized form of church fellowship. It embodied the general scriptural duty of churches to maintain fellowship and communion, but it was historically conditioned. The associational form or pattern, even though it existed from the earliest stages of Baptist evolution in England, was ultimately an ecclesiastical or human convention. It could be changed if the complexities of an expanding affiliation required changes. Thus, one of the basic questions of this study has been answered: the association is historically conditioned!

While the association was historically conditioned, it had, during the eighteenth century, an ecclesiological significance for Philadelphia Baptist church life. Its advice and assistance to member churches and its exercise of association-power ad extra had real impact upon the exercise of church-power itself and upon the faith and order of all Philadelphia Baptists in the confederation. Thus, a second basic question of this study has been answered: the association has ecclesiological significance, at least it did during the eighteenth century in the life of the P.B.A. While the Association, according to Philadelphia Baptists, was a humanly devised

---

[216] On different levels of connectionalism, pp. 397, 444-45, 447-48, 453; for (1) see pp. 405-6; for (2), pp. 397, 448-56; for (3), pp. 403-6, 446-47, 459-60; on theological argument for associations, pp. 407-10, 446; on essential definition of gathered church, chap. 4. p. 364.

church group, its life and activities affected the churches' inner life.[217]

Fourteenth, church councils, as employed by the P.B.A., and as characterized in the Philadelphia Confession and early Church Discipline of 1743, are "according to the Mind of Christ." Thus, they are the best instance in eighteenth century P.B.A. faith and practice of a visible ecclesial fellowship beyond the local congregation, a fellowship willed by Christ. In addition to the universal ministry discussed in chapter 4 and the paradoxical practices enumerated in chapter 3, church councils offer the best indications that Philadelphia Baptists, in practice if not in theory, accepted a visible Church beyond the gathered church on the congregational level.

By contrast to councils, associations are not examples of divinely mandated visible interchurch fellowship among Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century. In fact, by making continued use of the church council to settle disputes, the P.B.A. avoided all appearances that it assumed for itself any power over the churches.[218]

---

[217] On association historically conditioned, p. 447; on ecclesial structure, p. 416-17.

While Philadelphia Baptists saw the association fundamentally as a humanly devised structure of church polity, from a Catholic point of view one could develop theological arguments supporting the ecclesial nature of such a humanly (ecclesiastically) established church structure. Such a reconstruction cannot be undertaken here. It would include the basic Catholic assumption of the role of tradition in the ongoing development of the Church, and, to be faithful to Baptist views, would safeguard the independent rights of the churches that voluntarily authorize an associational ecclesiological structure acting in Christ's name in service to the churches, safeguarding unity of faith and communion among the members.

[218] See conclusions, pp. 454-55; on practices paradoxical to explicit teaching on invisible catholic Church, chap. 3, pp. 257-71.

Fifteenth, the eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists, in their theory and practice of associationalism, provided a congregational church polity that had built in checks and balances against the abuse of church-power. The rights of all concerned, individuals, churches and associations, were respected in such a way that the exercise of ecclesiastical power, either by the church or by the association or council, did not encroach upon the rights of persons, churches, or associations.[219]

The Positive Value of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Associations

The Philadelphia Baptist view of the confederation of churches in an association had definite advantages. First, it safeguarded the independence of each local church. Each gathered church was free of outside interference from the association in the exercise of its own church-power in matters of admitting and dismissing members, calling and ordaining officers, and disciplining members. Churches were free to seek advice from the association, but, generally speaking, the association could not interfere in the internal affairs of a church unless the latter asked for assistance. Association-power ad extra could not function effectively until some person or church approached the association for help.

Second, while safeguarding the independence of each church, the Philadelphia Baptist view of associations provided a way for the churches to help each other, to express in practical terms their

---

[219]See pp. 425, 487-88, 490. On the meaning of ecclesiastical see chap. 6, pp. 567-69.

interdependence. Those with greater gifts could help needy churches by supplying ministerial services or money. The responses to questions submitted by one church in the confederation could help other churches with similar problems. The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace could be expressed at associational gatherings of delegates from all the Philadelphia Baptist churches. Mutual support, edification, fellowship and communion, happened in the experience of associational contacts. Association-power ad intra enhanced the status of the organization so that the P.B.A. could become an even more effective agent for assistance and advice to the churches. The record shows that the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century helped Baptists to cope with changing ideas and expanding numbers in their ranks.

Third, even though associational decisions were merely advisory, they nevertheless had a stabilizing effect upon Philadelphia Baptist faith and practice. The P.B.A. helped churches to gain a denominational solidarity and to achieve recognition as a respectable Christian society, not only among their own constituents, but also among other Christian groups and in their relationship to civil powers.

Fourth, the associational pattern among Philadelphia Baptists provided checks and balances for the exercise of church authority. The exercise of church-power, for example, could have amounted to tyranny over individual members without the help from other churches in the association. Any party affected by unjust proceedings of the church had the right to bring grievances to a council, and, if necessary, to the association itself. The association's right to exclude a member church could act as a deterent, and whenever an irregular

church did not reform, the injured parties could find support from the association and a place in one of the other churches in the confederation.

Fifth, the P.B.A. view of the association reflected a realistic view of human societies. Power accrues to collective interest groups, and such power could corrupt in high places. It was a virtue of the Philadelphia Baptist vision of associational fellowship that it prevented the association from becoming too powerful. The P.B.A., deliberately it seems, employed smaller church councils as agencies to settle disputes and thereby managed to remain an advisory body to avoid even the appearance of directly influencing decisions of the churches. At least during the eighteenth century, the P.B.A. maintained its advisory status vis-à-vis the churches.

Sixth, the confederate pattern of associationalism among Philadelphia Baptists was in tune with the emerging American spirit which gave birth to a new nation. It embodied two American ideals, the freedom of the individual and the value of voluntary cooperation.

Seventh, the associational theory and practice of Philadelphia Baptists permitted churches to function on their own without undue dependence upon each other or upon upper eschalons in the church establishment. Thus, Baptists were free to form essential and complete churches in every settlement of the colonies. The constitution of an independent church required only that number of committed Christians needed to function as a gathered church--as few as seven members. No approval was needed from anyone else. The only help

required from others was the aid of neighboring churches, through ordained ministers, to constitute the new one.

While the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations had all these advantages, the same tradition also manifested some limitations.

Some Limitations of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Associations

Among the limitations in the P.B.A. attitude towards associations are the following. First, Philadelphia Baptists lacked an adequate theory to express the ecclesial nature of their association.[220] Official sources in this study come close to characterizing associations as biblically required, but they fall short of such a doctrinal affirmation. For example, they use Acts 15 as a support for associations. Yet this is only by way of recommendation, not by way of ordinance. Furthermore, the P.B.A. sources nowhere apply the expression, "according to the Mind of Christ," to the association as such.

Despite such a lacuna in their associational theory, Philadelphia Baptists accepted an ecclesial pattern to their Association. Messengers of the churches were called delegates. The Association was composed of church representatives, not just of individuals. Moreover, the functions of the P.B.A., although they operated always in an advisory capacity in relationship to the churches, had ecclesiological

---

[220] In terms of this study, ecclesial connotes the strictly theological, which, in Baptist terms, means based in the Scriptures (see intro., p. 35).

significance in their impact upon faith and practice and upon the exercise of church-power. Such associational functions would seem to justify some indication in theory that the association, in some respect, is an expression of the Church of Christ. No such theory, however, is expressed in official P.B.A. sources. The sole exception, Griffith's casual reference to an interchurch group "looked upon as one Church," applies to the church council and not to the association.[221]

The question, therefore, arises, why did Philadelphia Baptists stop short of describing the association in ecclesial terms? Why not carry over to the association what they willingly affirmed of church councils? Three reasons, already suggested above, can be offered. First, the context prevented P.B.A. theorists from describing associations in clear ecclesial terms. Like all Independents, Philadelphia Baptists feared any structure that smacked of Rome or Canterbury. Those anxious about the association's power over the churches could have caused others amenable to describing an association in ecclesial terms to rest satisfied with a clear affirmation about the positive and real power of the confederation of churches. Second, P.B.A. ecclesiological concern centered upon the local congregation and its rights to conduct church affairs without outside interference. Eighteenth century Particular Baptist and Philadelphia Baptist sources consistently supported that concern. They were not interested in articulating a full ecclesiology as such. Philadelphia Baptists were

---

[221] On Griffith's use of Church, chap. 3, pp. 244 and 272. See also this author's comments about recasting P.B.A. views (n. 117, p. 455; also n. 217, p. 506).

pragmatic and unsystematic in their theologizing. Third, the theorists themselves could not see beyond the limits of their own vision of visible church and church-power.[222]

Whichever reason or reasons one chooses to explain the data, the conclusion is inevitable. Philadelphia Baptists understood their association as a Christian fellowship of churches which was not mandated by Scripture. Highly useful, not opposed to but recommended by Scripture, the association is a merely human confederation of Christian churches. It could therefore be changed to meet new situations.

While the evidence clearly shows that Philadelphia Baptists did not develop a theology of visible universal Church, there is no direct statement denying the reality of a visible Church beyond the local congregation. On the contrary, their practice of church councils (and other practices) shows P.B.A. Baptists accepted the visible Church.

A second limitation in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of associations is a failure to describe the association's function to interpret the Scriptures. Griffith mentioned the task to "declare & determine of the Mind of the Holy Ghost, revealed in Scripture," but this applies, most probably, to occasional councils. Manning tried to apply the same function to the association, but his Sentiment was altered by New England Baptists. Yet, functionally, the P.B.A.'s task of rendering advice to the churches often involved an interpretation of the sense of Scripture.

---

[222]See reasons expressed above, chap. 3, pp. 255, 273; also pp. 454-55.

Did such interpretations by the Philadelphia Association have any binding force on the churches? If so, what was the origin of the binding force? Did it arise from the rightful authority of the Association to determine the sense of Scripture or did it come merely from the Scriptures themselves? Who, in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition, had the ultimate responsibility to discern the sense of Scripture? Was it the individual, or the assembly of the local church, or the church council dealing with a dispute, or the permanent association? Was there, moreover, any discernible hierarchy among these agents of interpretation of Scripture?[223]

The explicit theory of associations in the eighteenth century P.B.A. did not express the function of the association to interpret Scripture. Again, one is faced with the question, why not? Perhaps the process of searching the Scriptures was so habitual among Philadelphia Baptists that it never occurred to them to specify it as a function of their Association. More probably, however, in light of the problems Manning experienced, Philadelphia Baptists, like their New England correligionists, shied away from assigning such an awesome task to their Association. They may have feared Romanizing or Anglicanizing trends that could make the Association become too powerful if it was given the right to interpret Scripture.

The fact remains that what other Churches see as a basic function of synods and assemblies, the Philadelphia Baptists did not affirm of their Association. Did the latter, then, lack authority to

---

[223]These questions are probed further in chap. 6, passim, esp. pp. 598-606.

interpret Scripture? That could hardly be said of any Christian from a Baptist point of view! Yet the consensus of an association deciding upon the sense of Scripture apparently had no greater weight than the consensus in a local congregation or, for that matter, than the discernment of the informed individual Christian moved by the Spirit to understand the meaning of Scripture. One is faced here with the recurring dilemma of private interpretation without any authoritative guidance from the Church or authoritative decisions violating religious freedom of the individual. It would seem, as discussed below in further detail, that Philadelphia Baptists chose to run the risk of trusting in the Spirit's lead, wherever it surfaced, rather than to run the risk of trusting fallible ecclesiastical structures shown to have been tyrannical in history.

Third, like its vision of the church, the Philadelphia Baptist vision of the association lacked a strong sense of the evangelistic mission of the Church. For most of the eighteenth century, the association's help to the churches in works of evangelism and preaching centered upon Baptist churches themselves, not upon the unregenerate pagans. If the evangelistic purpose of Christian fellowship had been more explicitly recognized during the eighteenth century, perhaps the purpose of the association as an agent of evangelism would have been more fully affirmed. Messengers of the association then might have taken on the true character of evangelists, with power to ordain and with their commissioning coming through the association.

All of this, of course, is mere speculation. The fact is that evangelists of the P.B.A. were not exactly comparable to their British

counterparts. The latter were sometimes commissioned by the association. As evangelists-at-large, they were empowered to establish churches and to ordain. P.B.A. evangelists, by contrast, were preachers sent to Baptist churches, and very little more. General Baptists in England, like Thomas Grantham, even argued that the office of evangelist was of divine origin. Philadelphia Baptists, from what their documents reveal, did not agree with such an exalted view of associational agents.[224]

Fourth, the Philadelphia Baptist theory of associationalism manifested ambiguities that handicapped the P.B.A.'s adaptation to nineteenth century needs. P.B.A. official sources did not clearly differentiate association-power from church-power, nor church councils from associations. There seemed to be little concern to evolve ecclesiological forms beyond the strong and clear structure of an independent gathered church. The Philadelphia Confession focused upon the gathered church. The Church Disciplines dealt mostly with practical questions of church polity and order. A theology of universal Church was virtually nonexistent in the official P.B.A. sources of this study.[225]

When the times called for a shift in thinking about the mission of the Church to pagan nations and to foreign lands, Philadelphia

---

[224]On British Baptist views of messengers-evangelists, chap. 1, pp. 59-60. There probably was a correlation in the thinking of some General Baptists between the association (assembly) as a manifestation of Church and the evangelists as officers of divine origin.

[225]For historical reasons explaining P.B.A. explicit teachings on the universal invisible Church see chap. 3, pp. 254-57.

Baptists had no theoretical framework from which to move forward. Forces contrary to connectionalism further isolated churches that had once known ecclesial interdependence. The local church's right to independence became transposed to a right to autonomy. The latter autonomy was more the result of a nineteenth century exaggerated individualism than a development in continuity with eighteenth century Baptist practice.[226]

Had there been a clearer theology of Church and churches, Philadelphia Baptists might have better survived the transition into a period of exaggerated individualism. Perhaps such a fuller ecclesiology could have helped Philadelphia Baptists adapt their associational model with a greater sense of control over their corporate destiny. As it was, Northern Baptists stumbled into a new order, the society. Some today, as noted above, view this as stumbling into disorder. The change took place apparently without any conscious theological vision at work or any explicit awareness of an eighteenth century Baptist "tradition" of ecclesial fellowship through councils and associations.

Thus far, this study has probed the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the Church (chapter 3), of the gathered local church (chapter 4), and of the council and association (chapter 5). The author is finally in a position to investigate the major concern of this work, the view of church authority, in theory and in practice, among Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century.

---

[226]On forces influencing the trend towards exaggerated individualism see chap. 2, pp. 127-35.

CHAPTER VI

THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

This final chapter focuses upon church authority in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition. It gathers together in a systematic way some of the major findings from previous chapters. Moreover, the present chapter fills out the Philadelphia tradition of church authority in three ways: by discussing the P.B.A. view of Scripture as the only rule of faith; by indicating the fundamental underlying principles and assumptions which must be respected for any reconstruction of eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist views of church authority; and by resolving questions already posed in previous chapters.

Some of the basic questions considered are the following: What is the view of church authority in the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century? What are the underlying assumptions or principles in this view of Philadelphia Baptists and which of these are more basic than others? How does the Philadelphia Association view Scripture? Who has the ultimate responsibility authentically to mediate the sense of Scripture in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition? the individual believer? the local church? the council of churches assembled to settle a dispute? or the association? What function does an association have in discerning the sense of Scripture for the member

churches? Did Philadelphia Baptists allow any power of the church to be delegated? What are the various kinds of authority and power in the P.B.A. and how is each authorized? The answers to these and to other questions are considered in the present chapter on church authority.[1]

The chapter includes two major headings: the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church authority; and the author's critique of that tradition.

THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

This systematic presentation deals with the following aspects of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church authority: (1) an overview of church authority and power in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition; (2) underlying principles in that view; (3) a clarification of the types of authority and power in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition; and (4) a reconstruction of the process of discernment in the P.B.A. tradition.

An Overview of Church Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

The Philadelphia Baptists, in their understanding of church authority, reflected the theological views of their Calvinistic forebears, the London Particular Baptists. The Philadelphia (Second London) Confession indicates that the Reformed theological views about God and man were accepted by members of the P.B.A. Moreover, the views

---

[1]See questions posed in chap. 2, pp. 183-84, 213; also chap. 5, p. 513.

of church authority that historically distinguished Baptists from other radical Puritans are also manifested in the same Confession.

First of all, the sovereignty of God is clearly affirmed. Philadelphia Baptists, like the London Particular Baptists and the spokesmen of the Calvinistic theology of Westminster and Savoy, believed that God remains the only sovereign of the Church. The Philadelphia Confession states:

> 2. God, having all (r) Life, (s) glory (t) goodness blessedness, in and of himself, is alone in, and unto himself all-sufficient, not (u) standing in need of any Creature which he hath made, nor deriving any Glory from them, but only manifesting his own Glory in, by, unto, and upon them, he is the alone Fountain[2] of all Being, (x) of whom, through whom and to whom are all things, and he hath most soveraign (y) Dominion over all Creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth; . . .
>
> (r) John 5.26. (s) Psal. 148.13. (t) Psal. 119.68. (u) Job 22.2,3. (x) Rom. 11.34,35,36. (y) Dan. 4.25. & v.34,35.[3]

Second, Philadelphia Baptists believed that man, created in the state of innocence, has fallen from his original condition of uprightness. Thus, Calvinism's attitude about the total depravity of sinful man and the reality of original sin is reflected in P.B.A. thinking. For example, in chapter 6 the Philadelphia Confession states:

> 1. Although God created Man upright, and perfect, and gave him a righteous Law, which had been unto Life had he kept it, (a) and threatned [sic] Death upon the breach thereof; yet he did not long abide in this Honour; (b) Satan using the subtilty of the Serpent to seduce Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who without any compulsion, did wilfully transgress the Law of

[2] W reads "foundation."

[3] P,2.2 (A139-52). (Italics mine.)

their Creation, and the Command given unto them, in eating the forbidden Fruit; . . .

2. Our first Parents by this Sin, fell from their (c) original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby Death came upon all; (d) all becoming dead in Sin, and wholly defiled, (e) in all the faculties, and parts of Soul and Body. . . . . .

5. This Corruption of Nature, during this Life, doth (n) remain in those that are regenerated: And although it be through Christ pardoned, and mortified, yet both itself, and the first Motions thereof, are truly and properly (o) Sin.

(a) Gen. 2.16,17. (b) Gen. 3.12,13. 2 Cor. 11.3. (c) Rom. 3.23. (d) Rom. 5.12.etc. (e) Tit. 1.15. Gen. 6.5. Jer. 17.9. Rom. 3.10---19. (n) Rom. 7.18,23. Eccles. 7.20. 1 John 1.8. (o) Rom. 7.24,25. Gal. 5.17.[4]

Third, in order for sinful man to be restored to God's friendship, God had to freely and unilaterally establish a new covenant of Grace. It was established primarily with his own Son, although the covenant of grace had been revealed to Adam by way of promise and was fully realized in the New Testament. The Philadelphia Confession teaches:

1. The distance between God and the Creature is so great that although reasonable Creatures do owe Obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have attained the Reward of Life, but by some (a) voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express, by way of Covenant. . . .

3. This Covenant is revealed in the Gospel first of all to Adam in the promise of Salvation by the (e) Seed of the Woman, and afterwards by farther steps, untill the full (f) discovery thereof was compleated in the New Testament; and it is founded in that (*) Eternal Covenant transaction, that was between

---

[4]P,6.1, 6.2, 6.5 (see text of 2L in Lumpkin, pp. 258-59). (Italics in the original.)

the Father and the Son about the Redemption of the Elect;
. . .

(a) Luke 17.10. Job. 35.7,8. (e) Gen. 3.15. (f) Heb. 1.1. (*) 2 Tim. 1.9. Tit. 1.2.[5]

Fourth, if Philadelphia Baptists saw God as the supreme authority in the Church, they accepted Christ as the supreme revelation of the Father. God's eternal covenant was fundamentally with the Lord Jesus. He alone has full authority from the Father, and as Head of the Church, possesses supreme and sovereign power to call, invest, order and govern the Church. Speaking of Christ the Mediator, the Philadelphia Confession teaches:

> 1. It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to chuse and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, (a) to be the Mediator between God and Man; the (b) Prophet, (c) Priest and (d) King; Head and Saviour of his Church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the World; Unto whom he did from all eternity (e) give a People to be his Seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

(a) Isai. 42.1. Pet. 1.9,10. [(b) Acts 3.22.] (c) Heb. 5.5,6. (d) Psal. 2.6. Luke 1.33. Eph. 1.23. Heb. 1.2. Acts 17.31. (e) Isai. 53.10. John 17.6. Rom. 8.30.[6]

The same idea of Christ's role as mediator and his headship over the Church appears in chapter 27. The Second London (Philadelphia) Confession, borrowing from Savoy's Platform of Polity, affirms Christ is head of the Church, "in whom by the Appointment of the

[5] P,7.1, 7.3 (see text of 2L in Lumpkin, pp. 259-60). (Italics in the original.)

[6] P,8.1 (A164-69). (Italics in the original.) W lacks "according to the covenant made between them both." The expression comes from 1S,8.1. The scriptural reference (b) is missing in P, here supplied from 2L in Lumpkin, p. 260.

Father, (g) all Power for Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign Manner."[7]

Fifth, Christ's role as mediator between God and man is proper to him. He alone bridges the gap between the divine and the human, and no one else can participate in this role. The confessional statement about Christ the mediator reads:

> 9. The Office of Mediator between God and Man, is proper (g) only to Christ, who is the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof transferr'd from him to any other.
>
> (g) 1 Tim. 2.5.[8]

It is interesting to note that this section of the Philadelphia Confession is not present in either the Savoy or the Westminster version. The ideas are substantially those expressed by British Particular Baptists in their First London Confession of 1644.[9] While in the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists the functions of prophet, priest and king are peculiar to Christ, the present writer applied these ideas to the gathered church in his discussion in chapter 4.[10]

Sixth, beyond Christ, the only rule of salvation for Philadelphia Baptists is the Word of God revealed in the Scriptures. If the Baptists of the P.B.A. accept God as the supreme authority and Christ

---

[7] P,27.4 (A433-38). P borrows from PS,1. Reference (g) is to "Col. 1.18. Matth. 28.19,12,20." (Compare to 2L,26.4: Matth. 28.18,19,20 [see Lumpkin, p. 286].)

[8] P,8.9 (A212-18). (Italics mine.)

[9] See 1L,13 (parallel to A212).

[10] See chap. 4, pp. 312-22.

as the supreme revelation, they characterize the Scriptures as the document of revelation. Thus, to understand fully the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church authority, one must appreciate the P.B.A. attitude towards Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith. Therefore, this overview of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority includes an expanded treatment of Scripture within the P.B.A. The author considers the following aspects in the P.B.A. understanding of Scripture: (1) a comparative study of the view of Scripture in the Philadelphia Confession; (2) a statement about the Philadelphia tradition of Scripture; and (3) some discussion about the Association's use of Scripture.

A Comparative Study of the View of Scripture in the Philadelphia Baptist Confession

In order to understand the Philadelphia tradition about Scripture one must look to the P.B.A.'s confessional statement. In the ten sections of the first chapter the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession develops the full teaching about the role of Scripture in the P.B.A. Because some of these ideas are proper to Particular Baptists who first formulated the Confession in 1677, it is helpful for this study to compare the Philadelphia Confession with the other sources in its long genealogy, especially with the Westminster and Savoy Confessions.[11]

---

[11] On the genealogy of P and 2L see chap. 1, pp. 92-107; on P, chap. 2, pp. 186-93.

The Second London (Philadelphia) Confession, with two notable exceptions, follows the Savoy version exactly. The first exception is the opening sentence which keynotes the P.B.A.'s attitude towards Scripture:

> The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible (a) Rule of all Saving Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience; . . . Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare That his Will unto his Church; and afterward for the better preserving, and propagating of the Truth, . . . to commit the same wholly unto (d) Writing, which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his Will unto his People being now ceased.
>
> (a) 2 Tim. 3.15,16,17. Isa. 8.20. Luke. 16.29,31. Eph. 2.20. (d) Prov. 22.19,20,21. Rom. 15.4. 2 Pet. 1.19,20.[12]

The italics indicate a bold statement that is unique to the Particular Baptist confessional family. Both the Savoy and the Westminster versions, which lie behind the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession, say substantially the same thing in later sections. A comparison of the three Confessions reveals an interesting fact. While the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession also includes these later sections, it has used the proof texts from the Westminster version for the opening Baptist statement.[13] Very likely the expressions

---

[12] P,1.1 (A1-26). (Italics mine.)

[13] Compare P,1.1 (cited in the text) to W: "I. Although . . .; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; (3) . . . , to commit the same wholly unto writing; (1) which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; (2) those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased. (3)
"II. Under the name of holy Scripture, . . .
"All which books are given by inspiration of God, to be the

used came from the Westminster Larger Catechism, probably used by London Particular Baptists in 1677. The same phraseology also appears in the Keach Catechism of 1693.[14] Another source for some of the terminology is undoubtedly the First London Confession of 1644.[15]

Whatever the source of the opening statement, its impact cannot go unnoticed. The opening theme of the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession underscores the Baptists' conviction about the centrality of the Scriptures in church life. Protestantism's teaching about the sufficiency of Scripture thus finds a prominent place in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition.

The other difference between the Particular Baptist and Savoy versions appears in section 6. The Baptist text reads:

---

rule of faith and life. (1)"

"(3) Heb. i.1. (1) Prov. xxii.19-21; Luke i.3,4; Rom. xv.4; Matt. iv.4,7,10; Isa. viii.19,20. (2) 2 Tim. iii.15; 2 Pet. i.19. (3) Heb. i.1,2.

"(1) Luke xvi.29,31; Eph. ii.20; Rev. xxii.18,19; 2 Tim. iii.16" (see Schaff, 3:600-602). (Italics mine, to show the relationship to P,1.1.)

[14]Schaff's collection includes the facsimile of the opening page of Westminster's Larger Catechism:

"Q. What is the Word of God?

"A. The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only Rule of Faith and Obedience" (Schaff, 3:675). (Italics in A are mine.)

The Keach Catechism reads:

"A. The Scriptures . . . , being given by divine inspiration, are the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice" (Keach Catechism, q. 4). (Italics mine.)

[15]1L,7 reads: "The Rule of this Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience, concerning the worship and service of God, and all other Christian duties, is not mans [sic] inventions, opinions, devices, lawes [sic], constitutions, or traditions unwritten whatsoever, but onely the word

> 6. The whole Counsel of God concerning all things (i) necessary for his own Glory, Man's Salvation, Faith and Life, is either expresly set down, or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new Revelation of the Spirit, or Traditions of Men.
>
> (i) 2 Tim. 3.15,16,17. Gal. 1.8,9.[16]

In place of the above italics the Presbyterian and Savoy versions read: "set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which . . ." Apparently London Particular Baptists were not comfortable with the phraseology used by the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Whatever their reason for doing so, they recast the ideas so that the turn of phrase places emphasis upon Scripture as such and, at least in this place, omits the emphasis on a deductive theology that might draw out the meaning of Scripture beyond the obvious literal meaning.

The Particular Baptist version, with just two other word additions, follows the Savoy Congregational Confession exactly.[17] The Savoy Congregationalists, however, in one important place, chose to recast the Westminster version. Savoy states:

> 10. The supream Judge by which all Controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, Opinions of ancient Writers, Doctrines of Man, and private Spirits, are to be examined, and in whose Sentence we are to rest, can be no other

---

of God contained in the Canonicall Scriptures" (see Lumpkin, p. 158). (Italics mine.)

[16] P,1.6 (A69-76). (Italics mine.)

[17] P,1.3 adds "(or Rule)" and P,1.5 adds "of God" (A37 and A50).

but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which (x) Scripture so delivered, our Faith is finally resolved.

(x) Mat. 22.29,32. Eph. 2.20. Acts 28.23.[18]

Why was the Westminster phrase reworked? Perhaps Congregationalists shared the Baptists' concern about more radical sects like Quakers, many of whom stressed an "inner light" at the expense of the biblical Word. Earlier struggles with Quakers in the London and Midlands areas had occasioned the Baptist formation of associations and the reformulation of confessional statements. The Savoy rendering may simply have been more to the London Baptists' liking, considering their opposition to Quakerism.[19]

Thus, on the whole, British Particular Baptists and their successors the Philadelphia Baptists endorsed Congregational and Presbyterian views about Scripture. None of the alterations involved substantial differences. There was, however, a definite bias towards emphasizing the written Scriptures as the only norm of faith and practice. This preference is evident throughout the Second London

---

[18] P and 1S,1.10 (A129-32). (Italics mine.) W,1.10 reads: "can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" (see Schaff, 3:604). (Italics mine.)

[19] On Baptist concern about Quakers see chap. 1, pp. 55-56, and esp. n. 42; also app. C, p. 763. In 1654 General Baptists published The True Gospel-Faith Declared According to the Scriptures. Particular Baptists in the Midlands, partly because of the rise of Quakers, formed an association and, in 1655, selected 16 articles of faith, The Midland Confession, to offset Quaker ideas.

(Philadelphia) Confession, notably in its affirmation about the laying on of hands and hymn singing as ordinances of Christ.[20]

Having compared the Philadelphia Confession to its earlier sources, the author next presents the full Philadelphia Baptist teaching about scriptural authority.

The Complete Philadelphia Baptist Teaching about Scriptural Authority.

The full picture of the Philadelphia tradition of Scripture, as already indicated, appears in chapter 1 of the P.B.A. Confession. From this single chapter of the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession it is possible to gather the fundamental principles behind the P.B.A. view of Scripture, which principles related to a theology of church authority among Baptists in Philadelphia during the eighteenth century.

As mentioned in the previous section, Philadelphia Baptists accepted Scripture as the "only sufficient, certain, and infallible Rule" of faith, most necessary to provide "knowledge of God and his Will, which is necessary unto Salvation" (section 1). The canon of Scripture includes all those books generally accepted by Protestants because immediately inspired by God in their original languages. Therefore, only the Hebrew works of the Old Testament are acceptable. The apocryphal works "not being of Divine Inspiration, are no part of

---

[20] P,23 and P,31 (A387-404 and A662-92). Both are taken verbatim from K,27 and K,31 respectively. See also P,14.2 (A244-49) which recasts 1S to place greater emphasis upon Scripture. However, in at least one instance, 1S and W seem to place greater emphasis upon Scripture than P (see P,20.2 [A280-81]).

the Canon (or Rule) of the Scripture," and are like any other human writings (section 3). Thus, the books of Tobith, Judith, first and second Maccabees, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) and Baruch are not included in the listing of books (section 2).[21]

The authority of Scripture, that demands faith of the believer, "dependeth not upon the testimony of any Man, or Church, but wholly upon God (who is Truth it self) the Author thereof; therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God" (section 4). Only the Holy Spirit stirring in the heart of the believer can provide "our full persuasion, and assurance of the infallible Truth, and Divine Authority thereof" (section 5). Thus, Philadelphia Baptists placed primacy upon the role of the Spirit working in the individual to authenticate Scripture as the Word of God. The Spirit is, as it were, the conveyer of revealed truth documented in Scripture. At the same time, Baptists of the P.B.A. granted that many other arguments existed to show the inspired nature of the Bible. For example, Christians can be "moved and induced by the testimony of the Church of God" to accept Scripture (section 5). Despite external evidences, the inward illumination by the spirit is "necessary for the saving understanding" of truth revealed in Scripture (section 6).[22]

---

[21] See P,1.1 and 1.3 (A1-5, 10-12 and A35-41); also P,1.8 (A99-107). A list of the canonical books appears in P,1.2 (see text of 2L,1.2 in Lumpkin, p. 249).

[22] See the following: P,1.4 (A42-48); P,1.5 (A62-68), also P,14.2 (A244-56); P,1.5 (A49-62); and P,1.6 (A77-81), also P,14.1 (A234-43).

All revealed truths necessary for "his own Glory, Man's Salvation, Faith and Life" are given in Scripture, "either expresly set down, or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture." To these nothing can be added "whether by new Revelation of the Spirit, or Tradition of Men" (section 6). There are some circumstances "concerning the Worship of God, and the Government of the Church" which are not explicitly revealed in Scripture. These are to be decided "by the Light of Nature, and Christian Prudence, according to the General Rules of the Word, which are always to be observed" (section 6).[23]

The truths that are necessary for salvation are "so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other" that anyone, educated or not, can arrive at a sufficient grasp of them (section 7). Because all Christians have a right to read the Bible, and a responsibility to live by it, vernacular translations must be made available, although the authentic Scripture is the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament (section 8).[24]

Any controversies about religion can be settled only by an appeal to the authentic Scripture in Hebrew and Greek (section 8). The "infallible Rule of Interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." Any doubt about the "true and full sense of any Scripture, (which is not manifold but one)," must be resolved by searching other places that are more clear (section 9). "The Supreme Judge by which all Controversies of Religion are to be determined" is "the Holy

---

[23]See P,1.6 (A69-76 and A81-88).

[24]See P,1.7 (A91-98) and P,1.8 (A109-21).

Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our Faith is finally resolved" (section 10).[25]

This full teaching of Philadelphia Baptists about the place of Scripture in their church life touches upon the solution to the basic question about the ultimate authentic interpreter of Scripture for the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century. It is the Spirit that conveys to the individual Christian, or to the church itself, the full revelation documented in the written Scriptures. If there are any controversies to be resolved, Christians must search the Scriptures. The only infallible "Rule of Interpretation" for Philadelphia Baptists is Scripture itself!

The previous section described the Philadelphia Baptist theory of the role of Scripture. The next section discusses some of the actual use Philadelphia Baptists made of Scripture during the eighteenth century.

The Use of Scripture among the Philadelphia Baptists

The Philadelphia Baptist tradition about Scripture was not simply a matter of theoretical principles. The theory was reduced to practice in the ecclesial experience of the P.B.A.

In 1689, when an Anglican congregation made overtures to a Philadelphia Baptist community, the latter replied with a clear

---

[25]See P,1.8 (A107-8), also P,1.10 (A129-38); P,1.9 (A122-28); and P,1.10 (A129-38).

statement of belief based upon Scripture alone.[26] Proof texts abound to support specifically Baptist teachings in the Philadelphia Confession. Hymn singing and the laying on of hands, examples noted previously, are both supported on biblical grounds as ordinances of Christ.[27] The biblical grounds Philadelphia Baptists offered for their Association came from an interpretation of the Jerusalem precedant in Acts 15, along with additional passages justifying the general Christian duty to fellowship with other churches. A major function of the Confession was to spell out the Baptist understanding of biblical truths. Horatio G. Jones, in the preface to Gillette's edition of the Philadelphia Association's minutes of proceedings, states in 1851:

> In every period of its existence the Association [the P.B.A.] has firmly maintained the soundest form of Scripture doctrine; nor could any church have been admitted, at any period, which denied or concealed any of the doctrines of grace. The New Testament has always been its only rule of faith and practice, as with all Baptists. To let the world know how we understand the teaching of the Holy Ghost in these inspired books, the Association published, in 1742, its Confession of faith and discipline. . . .[28]

Statements in the Association's Church Disciplines were always solidly supported by scriptural references. Philadelphia Baptists, moreover, made constant use of catechisms that provided extensive

---

[26]Spencer, pp. 35-38; see also Handy, "The Philadelphia Tradition," p. 34.

[27]See above, n. 20. The credit for effectively arguing the case for both ordinances belongs to Particular Baptists, especially the convert from General Baptist ranks, Benjamin Keach (see chap. 1, pp. 102-3).

[28]Horatio G. Jones, "Preface," in Gillette, p. 4. (Italics mine.)

proof texts, and the Association was concerned to provide catechisms.[29]

The actions of the P.B.A. reflected a profound respect for the Bible. A concern for a biblically aware ministry generated many of its educational enterprises.[30] As early as 1716 the Association maintained a library which included scriptural works.[31] It supported the republication of editions of the Bible, and the reprinting of Dr. John Gill's expositions of the Old and the New Testaments.[32] In 1806 a special collection was advocated to supply translations for the foreign mission field in India.[33]

The Association, on several occasions, reaffirmed its confessional teaching on Scripture in clear and unequivocal terms. In an exhortation, the P.B.A. wrote to its members churches:

> Be diligent in reading the holy Scriptures, which are our only rule of faith and obedience, without which we can

---

[29]Among these the Keach Catechism was popular. On the P.B.A.'s concern for catechisms see Gillette, 38:39, 47:57, 61:83, and 79:163; also chap. 2, p. 164 and bibliographical entries, sec. 1, P.B.A., Catechisms, pp. 779-80.

[30]On support for an educated ministry see chap. 2, pp. 157-58; for general education, pp. 161-64.

[31]On the P.B.A. library see chap. 2, p. 161, esp. n. 130; also pp. 163-64.

[32]See Gillette for references to the following editions of the Bible: Aitkin's ed. (82:180.9); Isaac Collin's ed. (89:247.1, 90:255, and 91:270.4); and Matthew Carey's ed. (1803:382.28). On Gill's works see Gillette, 87:228.3 and 1807:439.24.

[33]Gillette, 1806:423.17.

> have no saving knowledge of God, or of Jesus Christ our Redeemer and hope. . . .[34]

On another occasion, the Oyster Bay Church asked the Association in 1761 "Whether it be entirely proper to call the Scripture the rule, and the Spirit the Guide?" The P.B.A. response affirmed the teachings expressed in the Association's Confession. It stated in the minutes for that year:

> Resolved: The Holy Scriptures we profess to be our full, sufficient, and only rule of faith and obedience, and caution all to beware of every impulse, revelation, or any other imagination whatsoever, inconsistent with, or contrary to, the holy Scriptures, under the pretence of being guided by the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit, illuminates the understanding to know the mind of God, contained in the Scriptures, and may properly be called a guide.[35]

This associational response affirms the confessional distinction, noted in the previous section, between Scripture as the written rule or document of revelation and the Spirit as the conveyer of the sense of Scripture to the Christian believer or church. It is a crucial distinction for a proper understanding of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of authority. Moreover, the 1761 statement of the P.B.A. reflects once again the Philadelphia Baptists' bias for the written word over the influence of the Spirit upon the individual Christian.

The circular letter of May, 1774, the first of a series on the Philadelphia Confession, explained the Association's views of

---

[34]Ibid., 46:50. (Italics mine.)

[35]Ibid., 61:82. (Italics mine.)

Scripture. The circular letter of 1809 was a later associational affirmation that among Philadelphia Baptists there is "no government, but his word."[36]

Philadelphia Baptists, gathered in their Association, applied themselves to following their own advice about the use of Scripture. In the process they reflected exegetical approaches of their day. Two general types of exegesis can be distinguished in the proceedings of the Association.

In the first type of exegesis, texts were simply cited, without any additional comment. The P.B.A. listed relevant texts that were most crucial for the solution to a given problem. At times the Association would add some comment that the authentic interpretation is left to the churches. An instance of the latter is the 1774 P.B.A. response to the Dividing Creek Church:

> 5. To a query from Dividing Creek, relative to washing the saints' feet, the following reply was made:
> This query being founded on John xiii. 1-17, can no otherwise be determined than by fixing the genuine sense of that Scripture, which to do is earnestly recommended.[37]

The practice of allowing Scripture to be its own interpreter through the use of related passages "that speak more clearly" was employed in the first style of exegesis. The Association listed

---

[36]See Gillette, 74 (May):137 and Printed Minutes for 1809, p. 7.

[37]Gillette, 71:119.5.

several related texts and by so doing put into practice its confessional convictions.[38]

Whenever the minutes of proceedings of the P.B.A. lack scriptural texts, it seems highly probable that the messengers did not overlook these. They were men who habitually based their decisions upon the written Word. Some omissions, moreover, may have been a matter of incomplete notations by the secretary.

At times the proceedings of the Association reflect a second type of exegesis, a more developed one that proceeds beyond a mere reference to texts. One finds, for example, in a discussion about the role of women in the church, a logical deduction from Scripture of truths "necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture." In 1746 the P.B.A. asserted:

> 3. Query: Whether women may or ought to have their votes in the church, in such matters as the church shall agree to be decided by votes?
>
> Solution. As that in 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35, and other parallel texts, are urged against their votes, as a rule, and ought, therefore, to be maturely considered.
>
> If, then, the silence enjoined on women be taken so absolute, as that they must keep entire silence in all respects whatever; yet, notwithstanding, it is to be hoped that they may have, as members of the body of the church, liberty to give a mute voice, by standing or lifting up of the hands, or the contrary, to signify their assent or dissent to the thing proposed, and so augment the number on the one side or both sides of the question. But, with the consent of authors and casuists, such absolute silence

---

[38] See confessional statement in P,1.9 (A122-28). Examples of the first type of exegesis include the following P.B.A. responses: to Philadelphia, on accepting ministers who do not practice laying on of hands (Gillette, 29:30 and chap. 3, p. 159); to Cohansie, on open communion with paedobaptists (40:42-43); to Kingswood, on belief in unconditional election, original sin, and final perseverence as conditions for full communion (52:68-69); and to first church in New York, on valid baptism (88:238.15 and 87:229.2).

> in all respects cannot be intended; for if so, how shall a woman make a confession of her faith to the satisfaction of the whole church? or how shall the church judge whether a woman be in the faith or no? How shall a woman offended, after regular private proceeding with an offending member, tell the church, as she is bound to do, if the offender be obstinate, according to the rule, Matt. xviii. 17? How shall a woman do, if she be an evidence to a matter of fact? Shall the church grope in the dark for want of her evidence to clear the doubt? Surely not. Again, how shall a woman defend herself if wrongfully accused, if she must not speak? This is a privilege of all human creatures by the laws of nature, nor abrogated by the law of God.
>
> Therefore there must be times and ways in and by which women, as members of the body, may discharge their conscience and duty towards God and men, as in the cases above said and the like. And a woman may, at least, make a brother a mouth to ask leave to speak, if not ask it herself; and a time of hearing is to be allowed, for that is not inconsistent with the silence and subjection enjoined on them by the law of God and nature, yet ought not they to open the floodgate of speech in an imperious, tumultuous, masterly manner. Hence the silence, with subjection, enjoined on all women in the church of God, is such a silence as excludes all women whomsoever from all degrees of teaching, ruling, governing, dictating, and leading in the church of God; yet may their voice be taken as above said. But if a woman's vote be singular, her reasons ought to be called for, heard, and maturely considered, without contempt.[39]

In the above example a pragmatic approach to the interpretation of the Scripture is evident among Philadelphia Baptists.[40] The associational exegesis is quoted at length to indicate how the P.B.A. at times employed reasonable argumentation to explain scriptural teachings. Other examples of this second type of exegesis exist, but the instances on record appear infrequently in the extant sources of

---

[39]See Gillette, 46:53.3; also confessional statement in P,1.6 (A72-73).

[40]Pragmatic here is used in its ordinary meaning, to be practical. The term has basically the same significance as in the description of the first axiom for interpretation, "An Unsystematic and Pragmatic Theology" (see chap. 2, pp. 205-6).

the Association.[41] More often than not, Baptists of the P.B.A. just cited scriptural texts with some of their parallel places so that the churches and individuals could search out the meaning for themselves. However, when a need arose, such as the dilemma of women's rights and duties versus the command that they be silent, the P.B.A. searched the Scriptures and, in their pragmatic approach to church life, came to insights beyond the literal (fundamentalistic) sense of Scripture. Thus, the Association manifested the pragmatic approach that was its hallmark in its theologizing.[42]

Another instance of the P.B.A.'s second approach to exegesis, highly significant because it appears in the Association's later Discipline, is its rationale for the office of ruling elder. As discussed in chapter 4, the ongoing debate about the divine origin of ruling elders was reflected in Jones's Discipline of 1798. After listing the pros and cons that Philadelphia Baptists used in reference to Scripture, Jones goes on to argue the reasonableness of the office, in such a way that he extends the interpretation of the biblical evidence among Philadelphia Baptists so that the established divine right of the minister's ruling office is safeguarded.[43]

---

[41]Other instances of an extended exegesis are the following P.B.A. decisions: about paedobaptists (Gillette, 40:42-43); on preaching without ordination (46:50-51); and on the foreknowledge of God (48:58.1). Many circular letters reflect the same type of exegesis, notably those by Abel Morgan, on fasting and prayer (Gillette, 79:167-68) and by Samuel Jones on universal salvation (90:257-60).

[42]See the first axiom of interpretation in chap. 2, pp. 205-6.

[43]See 2P,4 (A1876-1944) and discussion in chap. 4, pp. 336-37.

In responding to practical questions like the role of women or the place of ruling elders in the church, the P.B.A., in its use of Scripture, may appear to have departed from a strict application of its theory about biblical teaching as the only rule of church life. As noted above, Philadelphia Baptists claimed to hold only those truths "either expressly set down, or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture." Has the Association, then, in its practice, occasionally moved beyond its theoretical position about Scripture by employing an exegesis that explains away direct evidence from the New Testament?

In the view of the present writer, in dealing with the questions of the role of women and the place of ruling elders, the P.B.A. has employed an exegetical method compatible with its theory. The arguments allowing women to speak in church assemblies are based upon implied scriptural truths concerning the duty of every Christian to profess the faith publicly and the responsibility of all to follow right order in the application of church discipline.[44] The arguments making room for ruling elders are put forth in such a way that the divine right of the minister to exercise rule in the church is acknowledged and safeguarded. Thus, these examples of exegetical method can be understood in a way that indicates Philadelphia Baptists fully respected the biblical word as the document of revelation.

---

[44]Obviously a modern approach to biblical exegisis of texts on women's role in the Church is not evident in the eighteenth century exegesis of the P.B.A.

All in all, the evidence is overwhelming. Baptists of the P.B.A. often used Scripture to support their associational decisions. They practiced what their Confession professed about Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It is no wonder that James Manning, in his Sentiments about an association, insisted upon a knowledge of Scripture as a qualification for messengers of the churches in an association. His views, as indicated in chapter 5, were finally incorporated into the Warren Association's plan in 1769.[45]

Calling upon men who, in Manning's terms, are "knowing and judicious, particulary [sic] in the Scripture" gave a great weight to ministers' views; they were preachers of the Word. However, this did not violate the place of the person who attended the P.B.A. Nor did it inhibit the rights of the churches and of individuals to strive on their own to arrive at the authentic sense of a passage in Scripture. If they disagreed with the Association's viewpoint it was their right. The P.B.A. was merely advisory to the churches. Such contrary viewpoints, however, had to be based upon an interpretation of the evidence from Scripture.

A good instance of an individual disapproving of the P.B.A.'s decisions is Ebenezer Kinnersley (1707-78). A layman and an inventer, a friend of the famous Benjamin Franklin, he was adept at the use of Scripture. In reactions to the 1746 decisions of the Association, he

---

[45]See Manning, Sentiments, 3 (B184-95) and Warren, Plan, 1 (B198); also discussion in chap. 5, pp. 430-31.

published a rebuttal at his own expense. Kinnersley, in his introduction, stated:

> Reverend Brethren,
> H A V I N G seen your Answers to some Queries laid before you, at your last ASSOCIATION, and duly consider'd them; I conceive that your Sentiments, in Relation to the Subjects therein treated of, are repugnant to the Word of God, which we profess to be the only Rule of Faith and Practice: And therefore I humbly offer to your serious Consideration the following Remarks; hoping they may prove the Means of discovering, to our mutual Satisfaction, on which Side the Mistake lies.[46]

An instance of a church objecting to an association's interpretation of Scripture is the reaction of the Coventry Church to the original proposal for the Warren Association, discussed in previous chapters.[47] On the whole such negative reactions to associational advice based upon scriptural interpretations were very rare. At least there is little extant evidence of them. Seemingly it is safe to conclude from the data analyzed that, for the most part, the Association's considered advice was taken to heart by member churches of the P.B.A.

Why did P.B.A. churches allow their Association such a directive function in interpreting Scripture, especially since none of the official sources clearly expresses this as a function of the Association? What precisely is the nature of an association's function to interpret the Scriptures? Did the P.B.A.'s interpretations carry any

---

[46]See Gillette, 46:50-54 and Ebernezer Kinnersley, Letter to the Reverend the Ministers of the Baptist Congregations, in Pennsylvania, and the New-Jerseys; Containing some Remarks, on the ANSWERS to certain QUERIES, proposed to them, at their Annual ASSOCIATION in PHILADELPHIA, September 24, 1746 (Philadelphia: Printed by W. Bradford, n.d.), p. 3. (Italics in the original.)

[47]See chap. 2, pp. 124-25 and 195-97, esp. quote from Coventry Church, p. 196; also chap. 5, pp. 430-32.

greater weight than other interpretations by individuals or churches? While Scripture is its own rule of interpretation, who is it that Philadelphia Baptists ultimately looked to for an authentic sense of Scripture? As suggested earlier, the response to these questions, discussed at greater length below, involves the Philadelphia tradition's conviction that only the Spirit can convey the sense of Scripture and that no human person or group can claim to be an infallible interpreter.

For the moment, one can see that Scripture held the center stage for Philadelphia Baptists in their view of church authority. The only clear, infallible rule of faith and practice is Christ's will documented in Scripture! To arrive at truth, to understand the nature of authority as given over by Christ, one must remain faithful to revelation in Scripture.

The Philadelphia tradition about Scripture, including its Calvinistic presuppositions about the authority of God and Christ and about the function of the Holy Spirit, points to several basic assumptions operative in the P.B.A. understanding of church authority. These assumptions concern the authority of God and the communication of that authority to the Church. They are important for this analysis of the P.B.A. teaching about church authority.

First, the supreme authority in the Church belongs to God and to his only Son. Christ is the Word of God, the supreme revelation of the Father, the only mediator in the new covenant of grace, the only truly full deposit of faith.

Second, ultimately it is the Holy Spirit that conveys revelation to the Christian and to the church. The Spirit inspires the sacred writers of Scripture, convinces the believer about the divinely inspired nature of Scripture, and leads all Christians to an understanding of what Christ wills in the Scriptures.

Third, for Philadelphia Baptists, the Scriptures are the document of revelation. Through the influence of the Spirit upon the sacred writers the Scriptures have truly become the Word of God, the only rule of faith that is written down, the only infallible norm to be followed by the Church. No further revelation by the Spirit is necessary for the church. Christians are led by the Spirit to understand the sense of Scripture which already contains all the truths necessary for salvation.

In these attitudes or assumptions of the Philadelphia Baptists one can discern three underlying principles mentioned in previous discussions about the gathered church: the christic principle, the pneumatic principle, and the scriptural principle.[48]

---

[48]See chap. 4, p. 288. The above assumptions about the christic, pneumatic and scriptural principles are indicated in a recent work by Bernard Ramm speaking about the "pattern of authority." He enumerates: "1. Christ, who is the living, personal Word of God, the supreme revelation of God, the supreme depository of the knowledge of God (Col. 2:3).

"2. The Holy Spirit, who conveys revelation, who delegates its authority, and who witnesses to its divinity.

"4. The Sacred Scriptures, which are inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore the document of revelation, which witness supremely to Jesus Christ, and which are the Spirit's instrument in effecting illumination" (Bernard Ramm, The Pattern of Authority [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1957], p. 36, cited by C. Brownlow Hastings, "A Baptist View of Authority," in A Pope for All Christians? ed. by Peter J. McCord, p. 72). The present author is indebted to Ramm for suggesting the three basic principles in the P.B.A. pattern of authority.

Thus, an authentic interpretation of Scripture, at whatever level of church life it takes place in the P.B.A. (the individual, the gathered church, the occasional church council, or the permanent association), requires both a faithful response to the inspiration of the Spirit and an acceptance of the Scriptures as the only valid and infallible rule of Christ in his Church. Therefore, for Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century, the really decisive principles operative in interpreting Scripture are the pneumatic and the scriptural principles. Both, however, must operate in the context of church life, through the instrumentality of fallible Christians and fallible church groups, all of them equally affected by sin and equally called to a responsible obedience to the law of Christ in Scripture.

In their use of the Bible, Philadelphia Baptists put into practice their underlying convictions about the role of the written Word. Their theory is consistent with their practice during the eighteenth century. In the view of this writer, a look at the Philadelphia tradition of Scripture has led to significant insights about church authority in general among Philadelphia Baptists. The Scriptures alone are the infallible guide for the Church, and only the Spirit can lead the Christian people, individually or corporately, to a correct understanding of the revelation of Christ in Scripture.

The place of Scripture was the sixth notion in this section discussing the overview of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church authority. The seventh notion is the P.B.A. conviction that the only visible seat of authority and power in Christ's universal

Church is the gathered congregation. The view of gathered church, discussed at length in chapter 4, reflects those ideas which historically distinguished all Baptists from other radical Puritans. Calvinistic tenets about the sovereignty of God and the falleness of man led London Particular Baptists, and Philadelphia Baptists after them, to logical deductions about the nature of church membership and church authority.

Among the distinctive Baptist beliefs accepted by the P.B.A. are the following: (1) the only suitable candidates for membership in the church are visible saints, convinced Christians who, upon their personal profession of faith, are baptized as adults (believers' baptism); (2) such regenerate Christians voluntarily enter into covenant with God and with each other to form the gathered church, the only complete visible expression of the Church of Christ (voluntary principle); (3) the only seat of Christ's authority, then, is the congregational church (congregational principle); (4) each church is equal in dignity and power to every other church; there is no hierarchy among them, although some might enjoy greater gifts and advantages than others; (5) church authority and power can be exercised only by the consent of the whole gathered church (democratic principle); (6) each congregation possesses full church-power from Christ to conduct its own affairs independent of outside interference from any other church or ecclesiastical organization (independent principle); (7) the church is likewise free from all outside interference by civil authority intruding in religious matters (separation of church and state); (8) each church is called to fellowship and communion with every other

church of Christ, to share its gifts with those less fortunate, and to help one another in cases of difficulty or need (interdependent principle).[49]

In such a view of church, the congregational church meeting takes on great significance in the life of Philadelphia Baptists. It is the arena within which the congregation as a whole democratically grapples with those issues facing the faith and life of the church. It is the only suitable forum for the congregation to express its consent as a whole church, the forum whereby the Christian people exercise those fundamental church-powers which require the assent of the whole body in order to admit or dismiss members, call and ordain officers, or exercise church discipline.

Eighth, the church's exercise of Christ's power over the individual member is not an absolute power. As already indicated, the church might be mistaken in its interpretation of God's commands. Moreover, the individual always retains the right and the duty to listen to the Lord (soul competency). The ultimate forum among Philadelphia Baptists for deciding what is true and good is the conscience of the person who is lead inwardly by the Spirit. That conscience,

---

[49]See chap. 4 for the following: (1) on visible saints and believers' baptism, pp. 285-301, esp. pp. 294-98; (2) on voluntary covenant, formal cause of church, pp. 294-300; (3) on congregational seat of church authority, pp. 323-24, 326; (4) on equality among churches, p. 327; (5) on democratic process involved in exercise of church-powers to receive members, pp. 331-32, to call and ordain, pp. 338-41, and to censure, pp. 358-60; (6) on church's full power and its independency in church-power, p. 328; (7) on church's freedom from the state, p. 326; and (8) on interdependence of churches, pp. 321-22; also chap. 5, passim, esp. on councils and association, pp. 447-56.

however, must itself be led by revelation in Scripture, and the individual also could be deluded.

No individual or church group can force a person to do or to believe anything opposed to God's revealed Word. As the Philadelphia Confession states:

> 2. God alone is (m) Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of Men (n) which are in any Thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it.[50] So that to believe such Doctrines, or Obey such Commands out of Conscience, (o) is to betray true Liberty of Conscience; and the Requiring of an (p) implicit Faith, and absolute and blind Obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience and Reason also.
>
> ---
>
> (m) Jam. 4.12. Rom. 14.4. (n) Acts 4.19. & 5.29. 1 Cor. 7.23. Mat. 15.9. (o) Col. 2.20,22,23. (p) 1 Cor. 3.5. 2 Cor. 1.24.[51]

Ninth, beyond the local church, Philadelphia Baptists accepted the occasional council as a forum for discerning the mind of Christ in Scripture. In cases of dispute, Philadelphia Baptists believed that it is "according to the Mind of Christ" that councils decide the matter. Nevertheless such councils are merely advisory and they are not infallible in their decisions. They too, like the gathered church in its congregational consensus, or like the individual under the inspiration of the Spirit, could err. Therefore, the rightness or wrongness of conciliar interpretations of Scripture must be verified from a source beyond the council itself and from a source other than the council's own privileged position as the only divinely revealed church structure among Philadelphia Baptists beyond the gathered church. That source,

---

[50] W reads "or besides it in matters of faith or worship."

[51] P,21.2 (A323-34). On soul competency see chap. 4, pp. 290-91; also on personal spirituality, pp. 298-301.

in the view of the present author, is the guiding presence of the Spirit itself, leading the church and the individual Christian to recognize the truth when it is proclaimed. The Spirit's direction of Philadelphia Baptist churches takes place in a continual process of discernment (discussed below).[52]

Tenth and finally, among Philadelphia Baptists, associations possess real power and authority to influence church life. Their advice and decisions, when based upon Scripture, carry considerable weight and authority. Such authority, however, comes from the force of the Word itself as the only infallible rule of faith and life, not from the authority of the association. The latter is only an advisory organization, not a superior forum for authentic interpretation of the meaning of Scripture. Indeed, in the minds of Philadelphia Baptists, the association lacks even that divinely authorized right to make decisions which is acknowledged for the occasional church council! Whether or not the decisions of the association are true must be validated by a source other than the association's recognized right to lead the churches. The evidence shows that Baptists of the P.B.A. believed the association possessed no power but that which it received from the churches' mutual consent. Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth

---

[52]On church council compared to association see chap. 5, pp. 447-56; also disucssion of P.B.A. evidence about connectionalism, pp. 393-96. On the process of discernment see discussion below, pp. 598-606.

century never explicitly authorized the association to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture.[53]

In conclusion, this overview of church authority in the Philadelphia tradition suggests that only God is sovereign in the Church, and it is his Spirit alone that directs individual Christians and the churches to discern the truth. The Spirit does so in reference to the scriptural Word, the written document which reveals what Christ, the only mediator, has legislated for his Church. The decisive factor that conveys infallible truth to the church in an authentic way is the Spirit itself, but the sinfulness of the human condition keeps every level of church life open to possible error, whether on the level of the individual's interpretation, or that of the church's consent, the council's decision, or the association's advice.

Thus, one is faced with the fact that, in the minds of the Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century, no ultimate interpreter of Scripture exists beyond the Scriptures themselves, understood under the influence of the Spirit. The only infallible interpreter of the written Word is the Word itself. In the process of trying to arrive at the truth which the Scriptures reveal, all Christians, still tainted by sin, could err.

This section provided an overview of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church authority. That overview already points out the direction for a deeper appreciation of the nature of church authority

---

[53]On associations see chap. 5, passim, esp. basis of association-power, pp. 457-60 and its contrast with church-power, pp. 460-64.

in the P.B.A. Both the pneumatic and the scriptural principles are basic to the exercise of church authority among eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists.

The following section discusses more fully the underlying principles uncovered in previous chapters, principles necessary for any valid reconstruction of the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of church authority.

Underlying Principles in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority

Throughout previous discussions about the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of Church (chapter 3), of gathered church (chapter 4), of church councils and associations (chapter 5), and of church authority (previous sections), the author has mentioned underlying principles. To use the jargon of transcendental Thomists, these principles are the conditions for the possibility of the eighteenth century P.B.A. view of church and church authority. If one wished today to mediate between that earlier tradition and a more contemporary theology of church authority, he would need to take into account the very same principles or assumptions. While the present author cannot attempt a complete reconstruction of the P.B.A. theology of church authority, he reviews those basic principles and indicates their relative importance to Philadelphia Baptists.

First, the sovereignty of God remains basic, as does the role of the Spirit and the place of Scripture. As indicated in the previous section, Philadelphia Baptists focused upon three principles: christic, pneumatic, and scriptural. There is the christic principle; Christ is

the only priest, prophet and king. His role cannot be delegated to any human being or ecclesiastical group. From the point of view of its Head, the Church is a monarchy; it is called upon to execute Christ's commands out of obedience to him.

There is, moreover, the pneumatic principle; the Spirit is the only active presence of God that leads to infallible truth. The Spirit, both in the individual and in groups of Christians, conveys revelation to the believer. The Spirit's active presence is decisive in the individual's conversion, the Christian's interpretation of the meaning of Scripture, the congregation's discernment at church meetings and the churches' deliberations in councils or in associations.

There is also the scriptural principle; the only infallible rule of faith and life in the church is the Scriptures themselves. The church therefore is also a republic: it has a written constitution which binds the consciences of individual Christians and the decisions of the church, the council, and the association.[54]

Second, Philadelphia Baptists took seriously the reality of original sin. Sin, even after Christ's victory, continues to permeate every human dimension of church life. Even the majority in a gathered church is fallible. Conciliar or associational decisions could be wrong. Personal interpretations of the Word could be mere self-delusion. Moreover, all church authority, whether exercised through church-power, office-power, or association-power, shares the same

---

[54]On these 3 principles see chap. 4, p. 288; also previous section, pp. 543-44 and 549-50. On scriptural principle involved in church censure see chap. 4, p. 363.

sinful inclination to assume tyrannical control. Therefore, Philadelphia Baptists accepted the principle of fallibility and recognized that all power in the church needs to be limited.

The Philadelphia Baptist tradition provided checks and balances in the exercise of power in their churches and the Association. Moreover, as the P.B.A. perceived matters, there is a mutuality or complementarity built into the very structures of church life as revealed by Christ. For example, church-power and office-power complement each other; the former is the seat of church authority; the latter executes church-power. The exercise of council-power or association-power requires the assent of the churches involved. Association-power ad extra (concerning affairs outside the association) influences church-power to discipline members. Even on the level of gathered church there is a mutuality among the members. They gather in a mutual covenant to be a support to one another. All members are equally subject to church discipline, even the church's officers. The individual's right to protection from the wanton abuse of church-power is protected by the association's real ad intra (concerning internal affairs) power to admonish its member churches.[55]

Third, Philadelphia Baptists were partial to a personalized spirituality. From the perspective of Baptists of the P.B.A., it is the individual who is confronted by the Word, who personally says yes to Christ and who, as a convinced Christian, appropriates Christ's

---

[55]On fallibility principle in the church see chap. 4, p. 328; on principles of mutuality and complementarity, pp. 327, 339, 343, 347, 463; also chap. 5, p. 438; on checks and balances, chap. 4, pp. 354-55, 363, also chap. 5, p. 487-88.

objective redemption through saving faith. It is the individual who publicly professes Christ as personal Savior, who thereby becomes a suitable candidate for believer's baptism, and who voluntarily (even if in obedience to Christ's command) covenants with other believers in a gathered church (voluntary principle). It is the individual's faith that is celebrated in Baptism and that makes Christ really, though spiritually, present in the Lord's Supper.[56]

From God's side, it is the individual who is freely chosen and addressed by God's call (albeit often within the context of preaching in the Christian community) and the individual who bears the responsibility ultimately to decide what is right or wrong according to God's Word.

Thus, focusing upon the person (personal spirituality), Philadelphia Baptists stress both the freedom of conscience (soul competency) and the obligations of the Christian to obey Christ (responsibility principle).[57]

Fourth, Philadelphia Baptists always stressed the importance of Christian obedience to the demands of Christ as revealed in Scripture. One of those commands is the obligation voluntarily to gather together in a particular church (gathered church). Other commands include the church's duty to preach the Word, to administer all

---

[56]See section on visible saints as matter of the gathered church, chap. 4, pp. 285-301, esp. on personal spirituality, pp. 298-301.

[57]On soul competency see chap. 4, p. 291 and previous section, p. 546; on freedom and responsibility principles, pp. 288, 290, 308-9, 363.

of Christ's ordinances, and to exercise gospel discipline over the members of the church. In principle, whatever Christians come to recognize as revealed in Scripture must be obeyed. While the mode of obedience is always free, the demands under obedience are necessary ones. A person choosing to be a Christian must obey Christ, the only legislator of the Church.[58]

Fifth, Philadelphia Baptists applied the voluntary principle to all levels of church life. Assuming Christians have become convinced that they are saved, they must voluntarily covenant together in the church out of obedience to God's Word in Scripture. The principle of voluntaryism, however, operates at other levels of church fellowship among Philadelphia Baptists: the mutual assent of a gathered church in the exercise of its powers; the mutual agreement between a church and its minister in the settling of a pastor; the churches' calling of a council; and the churches' voluntary confederation which establishes a permanent association.

Nevertheless, as noted in chapter 5, the voluntary commitment in a church covenant differs from the mutual assent in an association covenant. The church covenant (and the assent that a church council be convened) is essential to the life of the church; the association covenant, at least in the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists, is not.[59]

---

[58]On responsibility see chap. 4, pp. 308-9, 363.

[59]On voluntary principle related to covenant model of church see chap. 4, pp. 366-68; and to voluntary association, chap. 5, p. 437; on church's mutual assent to exercise church-powers see chap. 4, pp. 331-32, 338-41, and 358-60; on settling a pastor, pp. 340-41; on calling a council, p. 341 and 361; and on organizing an association, chap. 5, pp. 440-47.

Sixth, the Congregational principle among Philadelphia Baptists must be respected. From the point of view of the church, it is a democracy. The seat of church authority and power is the whole congregation. Only the convinced Christian qualifies for full membership in the church. And each particular, congregational church is totally independent to run its own affairs (although called to a larger fellowship and communion with other churches). There is no hierarchy among the churches, nor can any group, whether civil or ecclesiastical, tell a church how to conduct its own affairs (independent principle).[60]

Seventh, the universal principle underlying the ordained ministry must be maintained. Philadelphia Baptists apparently had a higher view of the ministry of its church officers than did others with a Congregational polity. The church's call and ordination establishes for the person a right to office-power. That power, in the view of this writer, comes not simply from the church but immediately from Christ. The minister has a representative role not only in the functions performed within his congregation, but also at councils, associations and other functions. He can, moreover, in virtue of his office, serve the churches at large whenever they call upon him for assistance in administering the ordinances or preaching. A most significant instance of the universal character of the ministry is the presbyterate's role in establishing a new church or its presence when ordaining, settling, or disciplining another minister.[61]

---

[60]On Congregational principle see chap. 4, pp. 324-25 and 327.

[61]On universal nature of ministry, see chap. 3, p. 235; chap. 4, pp. 282, 311, 320, 323, 343, and 347; also discussion on immediate nature of office-power, pp. 327, 344, 347, and esp. chap. 6, pp. 576-79.

Eighth, the universal priesthood of all believers was embodied in specific ways among Philadelphia Baptists. They authorized lay preachers even though preaching was, by divine right, part of the minister's office-power. Delegates of churches to the Association included not only ordained ministers but also qualified lay persons with equal voice in deliberations. The corresponsibility of all church members reflected a belief in the universal priesthood of all. There was no hierarchy of membership; even ministers were subject to church discipline. The differences between lay persons and the ordained were functional, not ontological. The equality of membership, both individual and corporate, called forth a corresponsibility from Christians at all levels of church life in the P.B.A.[62]

Ninth, Philadelphia Baptists valued interdependence among their churches. Theirs was a higher churchmanship than others accepting Congregational views (interdependent principle). Part of the essential definition of church among Baptists of the P.B.A. was the call to fellowship and communion with other churches. The council, moreover, was an interchurch fellowship which Philadelphia Baptists understood as willed by Christ in Scripture (conciliar principle). Finally, the Association, composed of lay and ordained delegates of the churches, was a mutually agreeable form of interchurch fellowship

---

[62]On lay preaching see chap. 4, pp. 316 and 322; on corresponsibility, p. 363.

for Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century (associational principle).[63]

Tenth, among Philadelphia Baptists certain principles were correlative. They related to each other. Among these were the personal freedom of the individual and the responsibility to be obedient to the Word of Christ in Scripture. Others were the independence of the churches offset by the call to interdependence through councils, associations, and other means of interchurch fellowship. The infallible rule of Scripture stood in contrast to the church's fallible decisions, whether in the individual's interpretations, in the church's democratic discernments, or in the deliberations of a council or an association.

There was, moreover, a complementarity or mutuality at different levels of church life in the P.B.A. which provided built in checks and balances. For example, the majority decision at a church meeting arose from the democratic exchange of the interpretations of individual Christians; association-power ad intra (concerning the inner life of the organization) sometimes protected the rights of individuals against the abuse of church-power by the associational reprimanding of an unruly member church; and the universal ordained ministry facilitated the constitution of new gathered church, the ordination of officers, and the settling of pastors.[64]

---

[63]On interdependence principle see chap. 5, passim, esp. concl. 12, p. 504; on essential definition of church, chap. 4, pp. 321-22; and on council compared to association, chap. 5, pp. 447-56.

[64]On mutuality and complementarity see chap. 4, pp. 327, 339, 343, 363; also chap. 5, p. 437; on checks and balances, pp. 355, 363; also chap. 5, pp. 487-88.

Eleventh, church authority and power in the Philadelphia view is always a moral force, one that does not carry any sanction besides the force of truth motivating consciences and churches. Church power at all levels is derivative and ministerial in relationship to Christ and demands fidelity to scriptural norms in obedience to the stirrings of the Spirit. It is an executive power that implements the authority of Christ over the Christian and over the church. Christian authority does not allow for any hierarchy among human instruments of Christ's power, nor for any superior power or jurisdiction over subsidiary levels in the church structure. The gathered church cannot lord its power over the individual members, and the council or association cannot make demands upon the churches that must be met under the threat of excommunication from Christ's Body.[65]

Twelfth, for Philadelphia Baptists the process of discerning the sense of Scripture, in order to settle difficulties or resolve questions about faith and order, is an ongoing process (discussed below). There is no humanly expressed, ultimate authority in church polity beyond that of Scripture, the meaning of which is delivered by the power of the Spirit. There are, however, several levels of church life which contribute towards an understanding of what God teaches in Scripture. There is the level of gathered church; the democratic majority sets the policies of worship and order for the local community and rules over its own members. There is the level of the occasional church council; in an emergency the churches can voluntarily

---

[65]On nature of authority and power in church see chap. 4, pp. 327, 348.

turn to neighboring churches for assistance in discerning their duties under Scripture (indeed, according to P.B.A. theory, churches must turn to others for such help). There is the level of the permanent association; as a voluntary confederation of P.B.A. churches, the Association offers its members the opportunity to gather the collective wisdom from among the larger fellowship. And finally, there is the level of the individual believer; in the privacy of one's own conscience a person discerns the meaning of what Christ wills in Scripture.

None of these levels is recognized by Philadelphia Baptists as their authoritative interpreter of the sense of the infallible Word in Scripture. Nevertheless, on a functional level, P.B.A. Baptists placed priority upon the gathered church as the seat of full church-power and upon the individual as the ultimate one responsible for living by the truth of the gospel.[66]

This section considered the principles underlying the Philadelphia tradition of church authority. It is the contention of this writer that some of these principles are more basic than others in the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century. They flow logically as the primary principles deduced from the fundamental Calvinistic tenets about the sovereignty of God and the sinfulness of man (see fig. 4).

The primary principles deduced from the Calvinistic teaching about the sovereignty of God are three: christic, pneumatic, and

---

[66]See discussion on the process of discernment below, pp. 598-606.

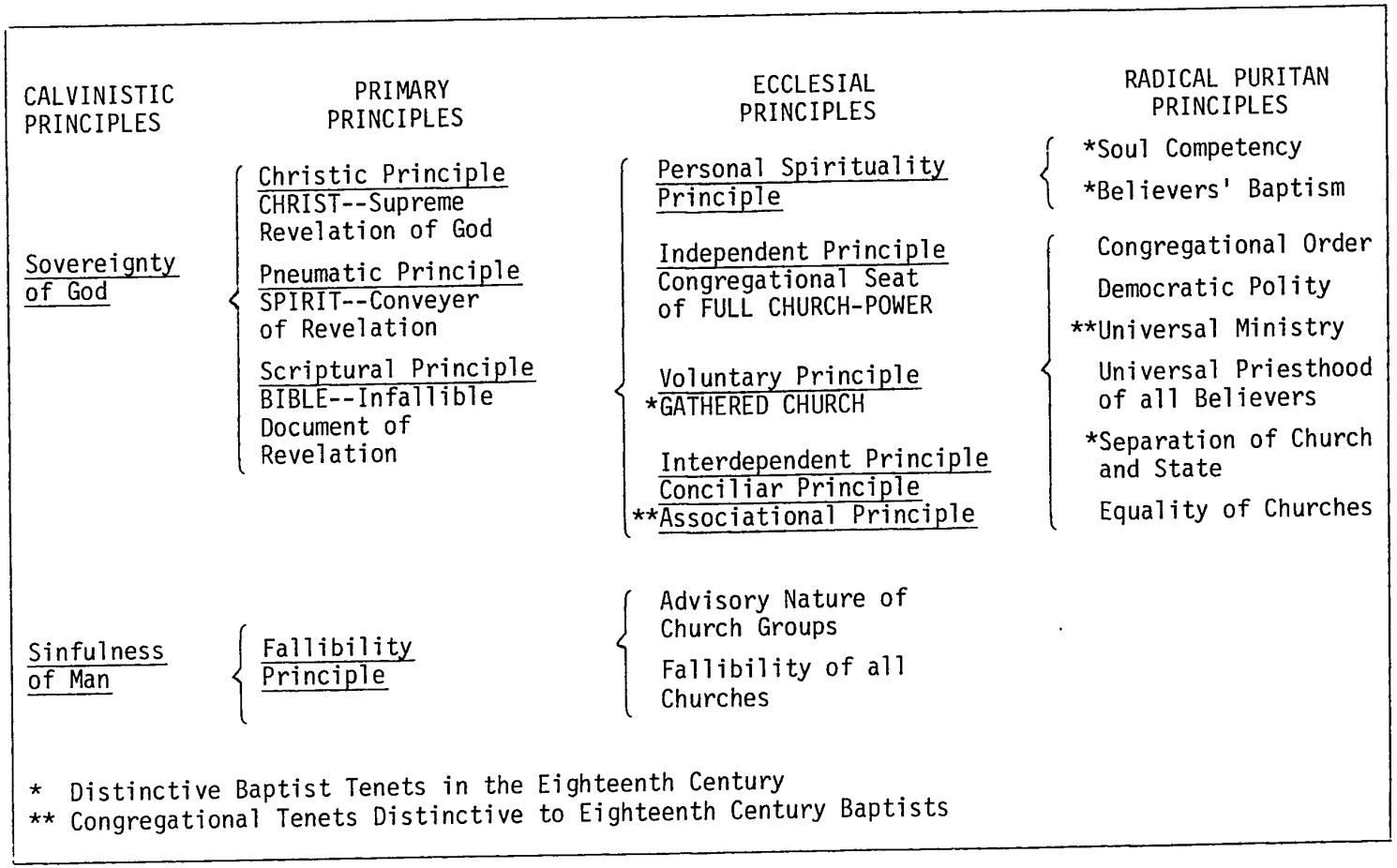

Fig. 4. Basic Principles Underlying the Philadelphia Baptist View of Church Authority

scriptural. The previous analysis of the Philadelphia tradition of Scripture and church authority suggested these as the most fundamental principles. All of them relate logically to God's authority over his People.

Following upon the scriptural principle, in the understanding of Philadelphia Baptists, is the gathered church which involves another basic ecclesial principle of personal spirituality, as well as the correlative principles of the independence and interdependence of visible churches. Beyond these basic Congregational principles are the logical consequences in a more radical Puritan tradition such as the Particular Baptist (Philadelphia Baptist) tradition: soul competency (religious freedom) and believers' baptism; and dimensions of the gathered church: a congregational order, democratic polity, and so forth.

One could further distinguish the interdependent principle into the dual principles characterizing the distinctive attitudes among Philadelphia Baptists towards an occasional council (conciliar principle) and towards the permanent association (associational principle). The former was an essential structure of church life and the latter, although historically conditioned, remained ecclesiologically significant for the eighteenth century life of P.B.A. churches.

The primary principle deduced from the Calvinistic teaching about sinful man is the fallibility principle. It lies behind the Philadelphia Baptist conviction that all church groups (even the gathered church vis-à-vis the individual Christian) are merely advisory, and that even the churches in council are fallible.

Some of these notions were distinctive to Baptists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, notably soul competency (religious liberty), believers' baptism (no infant baptism), gathered churches (voluntary covenant among convinced Christians), and the separation of church and state.[67] Moreover, Philadelphia Baptists, like their ancestors the British Particular Baptists, differed in some respects from others accepting a Congregational church order. Baptists apparently had a higher view of the universal ordained ministry than Congregationalists did, and they provided for a permanent interchurch fellowship through the establishment of associations.

It is the contention of this author that an integral view of eighteenth century P.B.A. thinking about the church and church authority must include all these principles and elements. They are the conditions for the possibility of a reconstruction of a Baptist theology today that remains faithful to the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the eighteenth century.

The following section deals with the present author's clarification of the types of authority and power in the Philadelphia tradition, and their justifications.

---

[67]On Baptist distinctives today see comments by Maring-Hudson, pp. 4-7. Among the historical beliefs which people claim are distinctively Baptist are the following: loyality to the Scriptures; the love of liberty (soul liberty and the right of private judgment); the "autonomy" of the local church (nineteenth century perversion of independency of church); separation of church and state; baptism by immersion; believers' baptism; and gathered church. Actually, many of these historical distinctives are now generally adopted by others, even within the Roman Catholic Church, notably religious liberty, separation of Church and state, the ideal scriptural paradigm for baptism being adults, and the apostolic authority of the local (in Catholic terms, diocesan) church.

Clarification of Terms and Categories of Church Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

Under this heading, the author considers the following: (1) a clarification of terms and categories for an analysis of the Philadelphis tradition of church authority; (2) the levels and sources of authority and power in the churches of the P.B.A.; and (3) conclusions about authority and power in the churches of the P.B.A.

Clarification of Terms and Categories of Authority and Power in the Church

As indicated previously, in this study, the term authority means the right to exercise power or the authorization to do so.[68] From a Christian perspective, such authorization could be one of three types: (1) divine authority, from God or Christ, which, for Baptists, is that authority infallibly revealed in Scripture; (2) ecclesiastical authority, from the Christian community voluntarily gathered either in the local church or in an occasional council or permanent association; and (3) civil authority, proper to any society of human beings constituted by the will of its members.

In contrast to authority which focuses upon the right to power or its authorization, power itself, in this study, means the ability to influence effectively the actions of others.[69]

Considered as a governing influence, power (and its authority) can be subdistinguished into three branches: the legislative power to

---

[68] See intro., p. 34 ; also chap. 4, p. 324.

[69] See intro., p. 36; also chap. 4, p. 324.

make laws, the judicial power to determine the proper conduct of those governed in accordance with established laws, and the executive power to enforce laws.

In some societies all three branches of government coalesce, for example, in totalitarian states, or in absolute monarchies. In the Church, however, the governing powers can be distinguished. Fundamentally, God alone establishes the unchanging laws for the Church. The Church acts in God's behalf and executes divinely established norms which she cannot alter. She is merely a functionary in reference to such laws, an executor in obedience to Christ's will manifested in Scripture. Thus, some legislative power in the Church is not original to the Christian community. Such church-power is therefore derived and involves only executive and judicial powers, not legislative ones.

The distinction between original and derived authority and power in the church was used by Richard Furman. His views, expressed in a sermon to the Charleston Baptist Association, captured the thinking of P.B.A. Baptists. Furman, as already indicated, stated:

> The authority of the church is <u>not original, but derived</u>. It has not the power of legislation; but of enforcing the laws of Christ: . . .[70]

Matters that are not clearly legislated in Scripture, the church may legislate for itself. Such laws, however, are not divinely authorized, but only ecclesiastically established. As church laws,

---

[70]Furman, pp. 11-12 (B816-18). (<u>Italics</u> mine.) See also chap. 4, pp. 325-26.

such established norms go beyond those specified in Scripture but they must always respect the revealed divine law of Christ.

Philadelphia Baptists acknowledged the need to establish laws beyond those authorized by Christ. In its Confession, the P.B.A. stated:

> Nevertheless we acknowledge the (k) inward Illumination of the Spirit of God, to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some Circumstances concerning the Worship of God, and Government of the Church, common to Human Actions and Societies; which are to be (l) ordered by the Light of Nature, and Christian Prudence, according to the General Rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.
>
> (k) John 6.45. 1 Cor. 2.9,10,11,12. (l) 1 Cor. 11.13,14. & Ch. 14.26, & 40.[71]

Besides the church's power to legislate some things, it has power to make judicial decisions. The latter could involve matters either of divine law or of ecclesiastical law. For example, when the local gathered church exercises its power to censure members according to gospel rule, it is practicing judicial authority based upon divine right. On the other hand, when the local churches, acting jointly in a council or an association, exercise their power to reprimand a church or to declare a person censurable by the church, they are exercising power based upon the ecclesiastical authorization of all the churches involved. In the former instance the church's judicial power is authorized by divine right; in the latter, by ecclesiastical right only. Ecclesiastical authority, however, is indirectly authorized by

[71] P,1.6 (A77-88). (Italics mine.) See also discussion in earlier section on Scripture, pp. 536-39 and chap. 4, pp. 336-37 on office of ruling elders in 2P.

Christ who established the basic law of congregational church order, with its requirements that independent churches maintain mutual fellowship.

Similar distinctions could be made for the church's executive power over its members. This might be of divine right and therefore derivative, based immediately upon the divine legislator in Scripture. Or it could be immediately of ecclesiastical right (indirectly of divine right) and therefore based upon a recognized power and authority to execute those norms mutually established by Christians in the church or by the churches in their voluntary fellowship in some confederation.

In the view of the present author, when the church exercises its ecclesiastical powers to legislate or to pronounce judgments according to established church polity, more is at stake than a style of government proper to a civil confederation. Ecclesiastical activities are related to God's rule revealed in Scripture. They are indirectly willed by Christ who has authorized the church to set its own standards for worship and government, standards that extend beyond those clearly mandated in Scripture. Moreover, ecclesiastical activities strive to achieve the best way of providing mutual edification among fellow Christians. Ecclesiastical powers to legislate, to execute decisions, and to pronounce judgments according to accepted standards, all remain subservient to Christ's power over the Church.

The exercise of church-power, whether of divine or ecclesiastical origin, can never be tyrannical. In the view of Philadelphia Baptists, it is always advisory to Christians. Nevertheless,

ecclesiastical powers are real and legitimate as long as they are in accord with injunctions from Christ, the original legislator. And church-powers given to gathered churches directly by Christ have a true binding force upon the members in a given church, provided, of course, that the exercise of such powers harmonizes with the demands of the gospel.

It should be noted that nowhere in the official sources analyzed in this study do Philadelphia Baptists characterize the power of their church, council, or association as ecclesiastical power, nor could they be expected to do so. The terms ecclesiastical authority or ecclesiastical power carried too much of a connotation of tyrannical control by organizations interfering in the affairs of independent local congregations. It is the contention of this author, however, that the terms ecclesiastical authority and ecclesiastical power aptly describe the eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist tradition of connectionalism.

There are the following three indications in the sources that Baptists of the Association implicitly accepted a distinction between divine and ecclesiastical authority and power, and between ecclesiastical and merely civil authority and power. First, as noted in chapter 5, associations are respectable bodies for Philadelphia Baptists because "they represent not a city, country, or nation, but the churches of Jesus Christ."[72] Second, some of the association-powers

---

[72]See CD,6 (B1210-12) which reflects P.B.A. views; also chap. 5, p. 459.

described in chapter 5 directly serve the use of church-power in local congregations. Thus, the Association's activities at times have ecclesiological significance; while the basis for an association is not strictly speaking ecclesiological, its powers, so clearly affecting Christian life in the churches, should be described by a term that connotes the association's real relationship to the churches' powers. Third, the Philadelphia Confession, in the section cited in the present text, mentions that legislation about worship and church government involves not only the light of nature but "Christian Prudence." Thus, more is involved in setting church policies than what is common to civil governments.

These indications provide a basis for distinguishing some midpoint between ecclesial and civil authority and power in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition. Some term which adequately characterizes that midpoint needs to be adopted for purposes of analyzing the Philadelphia tradition of church authority. Therefore, while it is foreign to the sources themselves, in this study, the author employs the term ecclesiastical, a term which should be carefully distinguished from similar ones like ecclesial and ecclesiological.[73]

In order for ecclesiastical power to remain authentic within the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the eighteenth century, the following four conditions must be verified simultaneously. First,

---

[73]In terms of this study, association-power cannot be characterized as ecclesiological because P.B.A. theory never manages to show a biblical mandate that Christians form permanent associations (see chap. 5, comparison of council and association, pp. 447-56; also intro., def. of ecclesiology, p. 35).

the full independence of the local church must be respected. The gathered church, by immediate and divine right, is the only seat of full church-power (as defined in the sources). No ecclesiastical authority and no use of ecclesiastical power can ever interfere in the inner life of an independent congregational church. Second, all exercise of ecclesiastical authority and power must remain subservient to the biblical Word and therefore must stand under the rule of Christ revealed in Scripture. Third, as a consequence of the previous condition, no decisions based upon ecclesiastical rights can ever bind consciences unless they clearly express the mind of Christ in Scripture as this is understood by Christians in a gathered church. Fourth, all ecclesiastical authority and power must derive immediately from the churches' mutual and free assent, whether explicit or implied, whether this is the assent of Christians covenanted in a gathered church, or the call of churches to meet in an occasional council or the mutual agreement of independent churches to form an association.

Whenever these four conditions are verified, then, in the view of the present author, ecclesiastical authority and power is legitimate within the purview of the eighteenth century P.B.A. Not opposed to divinely established church-power, ecclesiastical power derives immediately from the consent of the Christian people and through them is directly authorized by Christ, the only legislator of a congregational church order.

All government, whether civil or ecclesiastical or divine, can be of various types, for example, a monarchy, a republic, a confederation, or a pure democracy. In its circular letter to the

churches, the P.B.A. in 1808 described the kinds of authority in the church. It distinguished three types of church government:

> The Church, as related to Christ, is under an absolute monarch. Her wishes have not been consulted in the formation of her government, nor her counsel asked in the enacting any law for her observation. And gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Eph. i.22. Col. i.17.18. But in her visible form, she is a pure republic, inviolably attached to the infallible word of God as her sacred constitution; which is suited to all periods of the world, and the state of the Church among all the nations of the earth. , . . Confederation is the formal cause that we, though many, are but one body. . .[74]

For Philadelphia Baptists the way to exercise church-power is through a democratic Congregational polity. The first and proper subject of the keys is the visible gathered church. The consent of the whole church, expressed through a majority vote or ideally through total consensus, is necessary for receiving new members, for calling and ordaining church officers, and for exercising church discipline. A similar democratic polity presumably was necessary for the gathered church's exercise of its ecclesiastical power to legislate details of worship and government.[75]

In summary, the present author has proposed various categories and distinctions based upon evidence in the official sources of the P.B.A. These categories are useful for characterizing the various levels of authority and power in P.B.A. church life. Among these, the most significant distinction is that between divine and ecclesiastical authority and power, a distinction warranted by the evidence in

---

[74]See Printed Minutes for 1808, p. 8. (Italics mine, except for scriptural quote.)

[75]See circular letter in Printed Minutes for 1808, pp. 9-10; also discussion on church-power, chap. 4, pp. 323-29.

official P.B.A. sources, and one that is most useful for classifying types of authority in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the eighteenth century.

The Levels and Sources of Church Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

Previous chapters have discussed at length church life among Philadelphia Baptists. In the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century, authority and power existed at several levels: the gathered church, the church officers in a local church, the church council, and the association. The following comments gather together previous findings in a systematic way. The focus in this section is on a description of each level of power in the church. The descriptions touch upon the following aspects: the nature of the authority validating the power, the various branches of government involved in each power, and whether or not the power can be delegated. Throughout the discussion, the author provides his own analysis of levels of power that harmonizes with the evidence from his study of the official sources of Philadelphia Baptists in the eighteenth century.

Church-Power

Church-power is that power given directly to the gathered church by Christ. It can be understood either in a precise, technical sense or in a broader sense.

The official sources of the P.B.A. describe the technical meaning of church-power as a threefold power to admit and dismiss members, to call and ordain church officers, and to exercise church

discipline over all members of the gathered church. As such, this power cannot be alienated or even delegated. It resides truly and properly only in the whole congregation.

Church-power, as a precise concept, applies to that power which cannot be exercised apart from the full consent of the whole body, a consent expressed in a democratic process at church meetings or at other functions like public worship. While the exercise of church-power demands the presence and the assistance of church officers, the latter cannot act apart from the gathered church's consent.

Church-power, as defined above, does not include the power to legislate but only the power to execute the will of Christ and to pass judgment upon church members according to Christ's laws in Scripture. This power is authorized by Christ, the only legislator of the church. Hence it is of immediate divine right. The church, moreover, is powerless to change what Christ established for his Body. Technically speaking, church-power is derivative; it derives immediately from Christ alone and depends upon him as head of the Church.

The church properly exercises church-power immediately and directly over its own members and only over them. Mutual subjection to God and to each other is a quality of the church covenant.[76] The local church's impact on Christians beyond its own membership is merely a moral influence by way of example and encouragement. No church can exercise direct church-power over another church or over the latter's members.

---

[76]See qualities of church covenant in chap. 4, pp. 306-8.

This eighteenth century understanding of church-power finds expression in a recent edition of Hiscox's guide to church polity. The 1964 edition states:

> This authority [received directly from Christ] a church can exercise on none but its own members. It can bring the moral force of persuasion, of consistent living, and of Christian character, to bear on all around, as indeed it should; but as to authoritative administration, it can claim no right of interference with any except those with whom it holds covenant relationship in the fellowship of the body.[77]

The church, as mentioned already, cannot delegate its own power. Full church-power resides in the congregation alone. However, the later Discipline of the P.B.A. allowed the minister to act as representative of the church in baptizing a person prior to public profession before the whole community. This he did on behalf of the community and with the clear presumption of the church's prerogatives. The same Discipline goes on to encourage:

> 7. But since the church has a right to obtain full knowledge of the experience, religious principles, and moral conduct of those, that offer themselve [sic] for membership; . . . it will be better for persons to be examined in the first instance before the church, either on the day of preparation before communion, or at any other time, and then baptised.[78]

---

[77] See Edward T. Hiscox, The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1964), p. 27. (Italics mine.) Hiscox was an influential nineteenth century writer. His work, The Baptist Church Directory: a Guide to the Doctrines and Disciplines, Officers, and Ordinances, Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), underwent many additional printings and was translated into seven different languages. A new edition appeared in 1893 (The New Directory for Baptist Churches [Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1893]) which was reissued several times, notably in 1928; it also underwent several translations. In 1953 Judson Press published the 26th printing. The 1964 edition includes sections that update Hiscox's original work, especially concerning interchurch relationships.

[78] 2P, 9.7 (A2082-84 and 2089-92).

Apparently accommodations were made for the sake of individuals being received, but even though a person might be privately baptized by the minister, a public profession before the church was still encouraged.

As noted in chapter 5, the delegates sent by the churches to an association were not given any authority to act on behalf of their churches in matters of church membership, ordinations, or church discipline. While the messengers truly represented churches and while the association therefore had an ecclesial shape in its organization, the member churches never alienated any of their own church-powers understood as technical authority and power to conduct their own affairs.[79]

It appears, therefore, that church-power, as a precise concept in the Philadelphia tradition, described that power which cannot in any way be alienated from the local church. Nevertheless, the church needed the assistance of others to exercise church-power. A church required the assistance of the minister in a local church for the reception and disciplining of members; of the presbytery of the Association in the ordination of officers and the disciplining, settling, or removing of a minister; and of the council in advising churches in settling disputes.

Besides its technical meaning, church-power encompasses the broader sense of ecclesiastical power to conduct all the church's internal affairs. The gathered church, through the voice of the

---

[79]On ecclesial shape of the association see chap. 5, pp. 415-18, esp. 416.

majority membership, can legislate specifics about church worship and government which are according to the "light of Nature and Christian Prudence." Unlike church-power in the precise sense of the term, ecclesiastical power includes all three branches of government: legislative, judicial, and executive. For such decisions to be authentic, however, they must meet the criteria enumerated in the previous section. Ecclesiastical decisions must be in keeping with the scriptural Word, result from a consensus of the church, and remain merely advisory. They cannot bind consciences under religious obedience to the same degree as the church decisions based upon Christ's law in the gospel.[80] Moreover, the church's ecclesiastical powers can be delegated to other bodies in the P.B.A.

Office-Power

The nature of office-power was described in chapter 4. It is that power proper to church officers which is given directly by Christ to those duly called and ordained to office in the church: deacons, ruling elders, or pastors.[81] Office-power exists for the effective exercise of church-power in obedience to Christ's commands. It makes the exercise of church-power possible through officers validly authorized by the consent of the whole church and divinely called to minister and rule.

All office-power is based upon Christ's authority and direct command in Scripture. The functions are specified in God's Word.

---

[80] See criteria above, pp. 568-69.

[81] See chap. 4, pp. 341-48.

However, anyone exercising such power must also be duly called by the church. While the choice of the candidate is from the church, the conferral of power is from God who calls the candidate inwardly and gives him the gifts for ministry and ruling which are eventually recognized by the church. Thus, office-power is not simply based upon a direct, divine authorization nor simply based upon the church's call to be its representative. It rests upon divine authority, and, at the same time, it depends for its authorization upon the exercise of the congregation's right to call and ordain ministers.

In chapter 4, the present author made the claim that office-power is of divine and immediate origin, namely directly from Christ. This contention is based upon seven indications in official P.B.A. sources of the eighteenth century. First, the Philadelphia Confession, in its section on church officers, states that they are "appointed by Christ" for the exercise of "Power or Duty, which he intrusts them with or calls them to." Second, the same source states in its teachings about the Lord's Supper that Christ "in this Ordinance, appointed his Ministers to Pray, and Bless the Elements of Bread and Wine." Third, in its chapter on the Church the Confession describes the minister as one who must "give an Account" to Christ. Fourth, the early Discipline of 1743 mentions that the minister acts "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Presence of the Congregation," when declaring a person censured. Fifth, the same Discipline, describing the duties of a minister, states "he must watch over them as one that must give an Account to God, Heb. 13. 17." Sixth, the Discipline of 1743 also reminds Christians of their obligation "to obey them

[officers] in the Lord, in whatsoever they admonish them, according to the Word of God, Heb. 13. 7, 22." Seventh, the later Discipline of 1798 describes the church covenant as a pledge made by church members "to honor, obey and maintain them [minister and ruling elders] that have rule over us in the Lord."[82]

Besides these indications, the P.B.A.'s circular letter on the ministry underscores the essential qualifications for a gospel minister. One of these qualifications is a direct, divine call. The letter of 1807 states in part:

> 4. There must be a divine call. No man must take to himself the honor, unless called of God as was Aaron. How can they preach except they be sent? Christ displays his sovereignty in calling to office whomsoever he pleases. His call is delivered not by visiting angels: it is not heard from the flame of a bush, or from the lightning and clouds of a trembling mountain; nor is it an audible address from our Lord Jesus Christ. To be so called in this last sense was one of the signs of an apostle, but is not to be applied to the vocation of ministers now. It is the still voice of God in the soul, saying, "Occupy till I come." The subject feels a necessity laid upon him: a dispensation of the gospel committed unto him. . . . This secret fire begins in the end to break forth. In his countenance, in his converse, in his prayer, in his exhortations, his exercises discover themselves. At length they engage the attention of the church of God.[83]

Thus, the church's role is one of merely recognizing the direct and immediate influence upon one of its members, a candidate for the ministry. The church's power is one of calling and publicly setting

---

[82]See chap. 4, pp. 340 and 345; also the following: for (1) P, 7.8 (A484-85 and 489-90); for (2) P,32.3 (A722-24); for (3) P,27.10 (A511-12) appealing to Heb. 13:17; for (4) 1P, p. 48 (A1330-31); for (5) 1P, p. 14 (A964-66); for (6) 1P, p. 35 (A1173-76); and for (7) 2P, p. 7 and discussion on covenant in chap. 4, p. 308).

[83]See Gillette, 1807:444-45.5. (Italics mine.) This circular letter was composed by William Staughton, a renowned P.B.A. minister interested in forming a foreign missionary society.

apart, to authenticate for the individual and for the church, the inner call which he feels. By the exercise of its own power the church takes to itself one of its members and sets him apart for the preaching of the gospel. However, the authority to preach and to rule comes directly from Christ to whom the minister must render an account of his service.

Another significant indication comes from Richard Furman in his sermon to the Charleston Baptist Association. Furman's ideals very probably reflected the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists. In 1789, in the context of remarks about the constitution and order of the church, he stated:

> . . . That the officers have a power from Christ, for which they are personally accountable to him, is very apparent: The charge, to "lay hands suddenly on no man," is a text in point.[84]

Morgan Edwards, moreover, in his Customs, lists several ceremonies used by P.B.A. churches to ordain ministers. They reflect the Philadelphia Baptist attitude about God's direct call to the minister:

> . . . Hast thou not now raised one of our ownselves to minister to thee in sacred things? Have not our eyes this day seen one labourer more brought to the harvest? Are not we the men whom thou hast made instruments in thine hand to bring to pass this thy good pleasure? . . . Good Lord! receive him whom we have now separated to thee! Fit him more and more for the work whereunto he is called; and grant him abundant success therein! . . .[85]

While none of these indications in official P.B.A. sources in itself provides a conclusive argument for the author's contention that office-power comes directly from Christ, taken collectively they

---

[84] Furman, p. 12 (B833-42). (Italics in original.) The allusion is to 1 Tim. 5:22.

[85] See ceremony of the church's call in E, p. 23; also pp. 26-27. (Italics mine.)

communicate a definite spirit behind the language used by eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists. Those Baptists were accustomed to viewing their church officers as empowered by Christ and answerable for their conduct only to him. The main biblical texts substantiating this view were drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews.[86]

In the Philadelphia Baptist tradition apparently some office-powers could be "delegated," namely, the power to preach and the power to rule. The Philadelphia Confession, for example, allows any gifted lay person to preach:

> 11. Although it be incumbent on the Bishops or Pastors of the Churches, to be Instant in Preaching the Word, by Way of Office, yet the Work of Preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also (a) gifted, and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved, and called by the Church, may and ought to perform it.
>
> (a) Acts 11.19,20,21.[87]

The Philadelphia Baptists, following London Particular Baptists, had changed the Savoy Platform of Church Polity. The latter allowed gifted laymen to preach "publiquely, ordinarily and constantly" so that they were permanent preachers. Baptists of the P.B.A.

---

[86] "7. Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you; consider how their lives ended, and imitate their faith. . . . 17. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over you as men who must render an account. . . . 22. My brothers, I beg you to bear with this word of encouragement, . . ." (New American Bible, Heb. 13:7, 17a, and 22a).

[87] P,27.11 (A527-35). (Italics mine.) PS,13 reads "fitted by the holy Ghost for it, and approved (being by lawful ways and means in the Providence of God called thereunto) may publiquely, ordinarily and constantly perform it; so that they give themselves up thereunto" (see parallel to P,27.11).

accepted lay preachers as legitimate, but they had a higher view of the office of the ordained preacher than many Congregationalists. Whenever a lay person stepped into a pulpit, he was assuming a role that properly belonged to an ordained minister, and he did so only when called by the whole church.

Another example of shared office-power is the power to rule in the church. Philadelphia Baptists, as noted in chapter 4, distinguished the preaching and the ruling functions of their ministers and made room for ruling elders to help the pastor. By 1798, the Church Discipline of the Association argued that, while ruling elders may not clearly be warranted by Scripture, they are nevertheless justified because of the church's need (analogous to the need that permitted the establishment of deacons in the early church). Samuel Jones, in this later Discipline, lists the arguments pro and con for the divine right of the office of ruling elder. Then he adds personal comments which, in his mind, justify such rulers in church order, even though they are not specifically authorized by Christ.[88]

Implicit in the P.B.A.'s acceptance of ruling elders in its Discipline of 1798 is the acknowledgment that the minister's official duty (power to rule) can be shared by others.

It should be noted, however, that in both instances of "delegation" for preaching and for ruling, Philadelphia Baptists never employed the term delegation. In the view of the present writer, however, one is justified in characterizing both as a type of official

---

[88]See discussion in chap. 4, pp. 336-37; also 2P,4 (A1920-44).

delegation. Both examples of transferred power nevertheless require the full consent of the church. The person gifted in preaching must be called by the church, and the ruling elder is actually called to his office and ordained by the church. It is also important to remember that office-power is not, of itself, the same as the church's own power which resides in the whole gathered church, and which can never be alienated.

Council-Power

The discussion in chapter 5 differentiated the council and the association and pointed out the real and positive power possessed by the occasional council in the minds of Philadelphia Baptists. A council was called together at the invitation of churches in order to decide some dispute or to meet some other specific need of the moment. It lasted only as long as necessary to resolve the problem.[89]

Council-power is that power, either of divine or of ecclesiastical origin, belonging to the assembled representatives from independent churches freely calling upon others for help. The council must be convened at the request of some independent church or of an individual seeking to address the abuse of church-power used against himself. Once convened, the delegates of the churches possess divinely appointed authority to settle disputes by interpreting the mind of the Spirit in Scripture. Such power is immediate; it rests upon Christ's commands in Scripture as understood by Philadelphia Baptists. Nevertheless, the council is not a permanent church structure. It must be

---

[89]On councils in the P.B.A. see chap. 5, pp. 447-56.

called into being by the full consent of the churches represented in the council. It might include others if the churches so desired, for example, representatives from the Philadelphia Association. Once assembled, the council has no superior jurisdiction over the separate churches, not even by virtue of its limited power given directly by Christ. It simply has the divine guarantee that, if the group faithfully attends to the Spirit's presence, the truth of the gospel will come to light to help settle disputes in the churches.

Like church-power, council-power is basically a juridical and executive power to apply the law of Christ in Scripture to church life. Its functions are primarily related to the exercise of church-powers to ordain and to censure.[90]

When the council exercises its divinely given right to determine the sense of Scripture, it could err. The council cannot expect its findings to be infallible, no more than the full gathered church can expect its consensus to be infallible. Nevertheless, in cases of dispute, the council is the divinely authorized forum by which Philadelphia Baptists expected to discern the meaning of Scripture.

The council's authorized place in settling disputes does not negate the gathered church's independency and responsibility. The council cannot force a church to comply. A particular church might refuse to accept conciliar advice. The ultimate responsibility to discern the truth of Scripture lies with the congregation, the only

---

[90]See chap. 5, p. 449 for a list of conciliar functions taken from Allison, pp. 58-80.

seat of full church-power, and with the individual, the only one who can determine in conscience what must be done.

At times councils will deal with matters not specified clearly in Scripture. Whenever this happens, council-power takes on the character of a purely ecclesiastical authority established by the mutual will of the churches involved. Such authority is conditioned much the same way as church-power when the latter is exercised merely as ecclesiastical power to decide what must be done in the gathered church.

Therefore, the council could possibly legislate matters of church worship and government which are not clearly set forth in Scripture. Such decisions, however, are merely advisory. No church is obliged under obedience to Christ's authority to follow them. It may, however, freely choose to abide by such regulations for the sake of interchurch fellowship provided that the conditions necessary for a legitimate use of ecclesiastical power are verified.[91] The council's decisions are advisory not only because of the religious freedom of the individual Christian (a condition which applies in the case of church-power that is merely ecclesiastical) but also because of the independence of the local congregation, the only seat of full church-power.

The question of immediate delegation of council-power is really a non-question because a council, by its very nature, is a temporary group. In the eighteenth century councils had not yet evolved into permanent groups among Philadelphia Baptists.

---

[91] See four conditions enumerated above, pp. 568-69.

Nevertheless, the very function divinely assigned to councils, namely, to settle disputes by interpreting the sense of Scripture, was also, in practice at least, transferred to the Philadelphia Association in the eighteenth century.

While P.B.A. associational theory never clearly indicated that such a transfer of conciliar power to the association was legitimate according to the rule of Christ, Philadelphia Baptist churches nevertheless allow the P.B.A. to function in this capacity. Thus, some of the power proper to the council by divine right, a power dependent upon the voluntary call of the churches, was "delegated" to another interchurch group, the Association.

Of course, the P.B.A. never acknowledged this transfer of conciliar power as a true delegation, but the practice of the Association suggests that such a delegation took place. Thus, from the eighteenth century evidence of P.B.A. practice one discovers another instance of a divinely authorized power being transferred by the church to a group other than the one legislated by Christ.

Association-Power

The details of association-power, both involving the inner life of the confederation (ad intra powers) and involving the association's impact on member churches (ad extra powers) were discussed in chapter 5. Such association-power is based purely and simply upon the will of the churches joining a confederation. The associational

confederation differs qualitatively from the gathered church's covenant and from the council's structure.[92]

Thus, the association's power, in the view of Philadelphia Baptists, is not divinely authorized, except indirectly through the will and assent of the churches. Despite the biblical precedent in Acts 15, the Scriptures merely "recommend" associations, they do not require them. All association-power, therefore, is purely of ecclesiastical origin, not divinely authorized.

The Philadelphia Baptists did not spell out such distinctions clearly in their associational theory, but the basis for such distinctions, in the view of the present author, is clearly found in the evidence from the official P.B.A. sources.

While it is the churches that immediately authorize association-power, the latter rests indirectly upon the divinely authorized call to the churches to establish forms of interchurch fellowship and communion. Directly associations are of ecclesiastical origin; indirectly, of divine origin, through Christ's establishment of the general duty of gathered churches to mutual fellowship and his legislation of the local church as the seat of church authority.

Like all ecclesiastical groups, the association is bound by the laws legislated in Scripture. At times, as indicated in the previous section, the P.B.A. functioned in the capacity of a church council in its discernment of the meaning of Scripture. If such associational decisions have any binding force over the churches, in

---

[92]See chap. 5, pp. 441-47 for a comparison of covenants in the church and the association.

the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists, this arises from the power of the scriptural Word as understood by the influence of the Spirit in the local congregation. Whatever an association might advise as the rule of Scripture must strike an accord in the living faith of Christians in covenanted relationships in gathered churches.

The association's ecclesiastical authority includes areas of legislative, judicial, and executive or administrative decision making which have been authorized by the churches that established the confederation. The association, as noted in chapter 5, has very real and positive power in its own right. That power, however, is merely of ecclesiastical origin, not divinely authorized (except indirectly through the consent of the churches called to fellowship and communion). The exercise of ecclesiastical power of the Philadelphia Association, in the eighteenth century, managed to affect the exercise of technical church-powers to admit and dismiss members, to call and ordain officers, and to exercise discipline. But such influence always was contingent upon the consent of each independent church, whether presumed from the nature of the confederation or explicitly stated when a church sought help from the Association or freely chose to accept its decisions.

Since the P.B.A. had permanence, it was inevitable that it would develop permanent committees and associational messengers to conduct the affairs of the Association between plenary sessions. In effect, therefore, the Association of the Philadelphia Baptists "delegated" some of its discretionary powers to subgroups that acted in its

name.[93] These functions, however, did not involve the church's technical powers rooted in the local congregation, unless one understands church-power in its extended meaning, to include ecclesiastical power. The evidence is overwhelming that the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century participated in the local churches' purely ecclesiastical powers through their delegates to the Association. The messengers and committees of the Association in turn participated in the churches' same powers in a limited way, but indirectly, through the Association.

Nevertheless, as indicated in the previous chapter, the P.B.A. never called its own representatives delegates. Nor does the term, as used in the official sources, connote a delegation of church-powers to the representatives sent to the Association. Philadelphia Baptists, even when they used the term, apparently did not acknowledge any transfer of ecclesiastical authority to its delegates to act in its name. Yet, in practice, the Association had an ecclesial shape. The messengers were delegates <u>of the churches</u> that formed the confederation!

It is the opinion of this writer that the willing referral of discretionary powers from the churches to their delegates and from the Association to its representatives was a true delegation of power. Such referral meant a willing, if subconscious, alienation of some of the churches' own rights. Those rights, however, were not the ones concerning church-powers in their precise sense. Those divinely given powers could not admit of any kind of alienation without destroying the

---

[93] On P.B.A. messengers and committees see chap. 5, pp. 468-71.

Philadelphia Baptist belief in the independent congregational structure of Christ's Church. Thus, the powers delegated were merely of an ecclesiastical nature, touching upon matters that must always stand under the rule of the gospel itself. As ecclesiastical power, the delegated authority of the Association was always dependent upon the will of the churches, whether assumed or expressed, and at no point could associational decisions by delegates of the churches determine the course of action in a given church or bind the conscience of the individual Christian. All associational decisions were merely advisory, although they had ecclesiological significance in their assisting the exercise of church-powers.

This section considered the various types of power in the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century. The major categories of church authority and power, whether of divine or ecclesiastical origin, are indicated schematically in fig. 5. Church-power comes immediately from God, the only legislator. It includes, therefore, only the executive and judicial authority to live in fidelity to the gospels, but it also includes, in a broader sense, ecclesiastical power fundamentally present in the gathered church. The only power the church can delegate to another ecclesiastical group is its ecclesiastical power, which includes three levels: legislative, judicial, and executive. Delegated power, while immediately dependent upon the consent of the church(es), indirectly arises from the divine authority establishing an independent congregational church order. By divine right the church officers possess powers directly from Christ, but these powers are relative to the gathered church's powers. Therefore, the divine

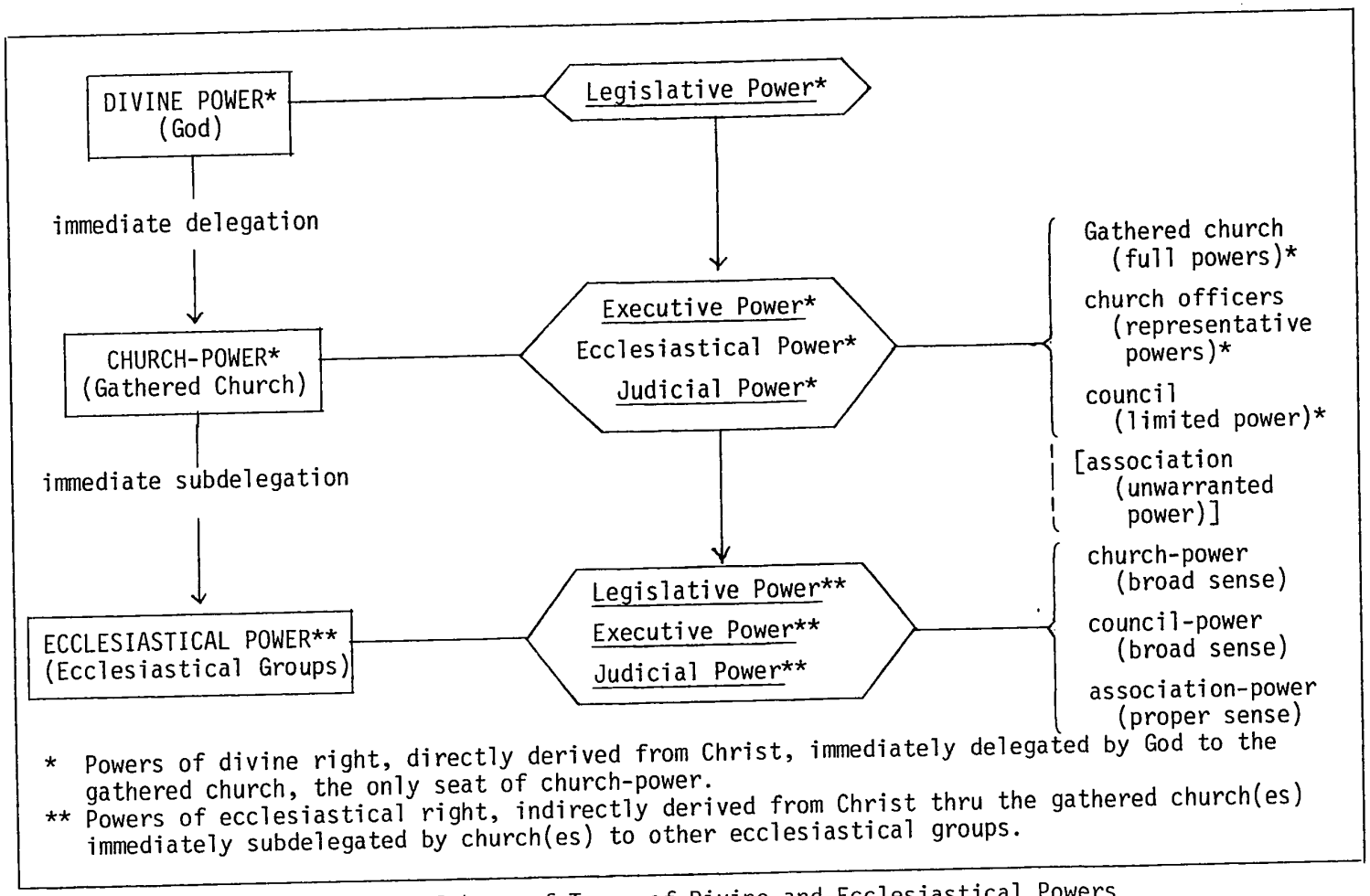

Fig. 5. Schema of Types of Divine and Ecclesiastical Powers

power of the officer is reductively a representative power. To help settle disputes among the churches, the church council possesses powers directly from Christ, but these powers are limited: to discern the sense of Scripture for the churches voluntarily calling upon the counsel of other churches. The association, at least in the view of Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century, possesses no authorized power by immediate divine right. There is, finally, a "hierarchy" of order in the relationship of the powers. Church officers must be called and set aside (ordained) by the gathered church and the council must be called by the churches. The churches must authorize the council to exercise delegated ecclesiastical power and they must freely consent to the establishment of their association.

Conclusions about Levels of Authority and Power in the Philadelphia Baptist Association

The following conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the powers in P.B.A. churches, their types of functions, and how they might be delegated.

First, there are at least four types of authority and power in the church as understood by eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists: (1) church-power; (2) office-power; (3) council-power; and (4) association-power (see fig. 6).

Second, each power depends ultimately upon the divine authorization of Christ in Scripture, although in different ways. The local church, as the only seat of church-power (in its technical meaning), receives authority immediately from Christ on the occasion of the

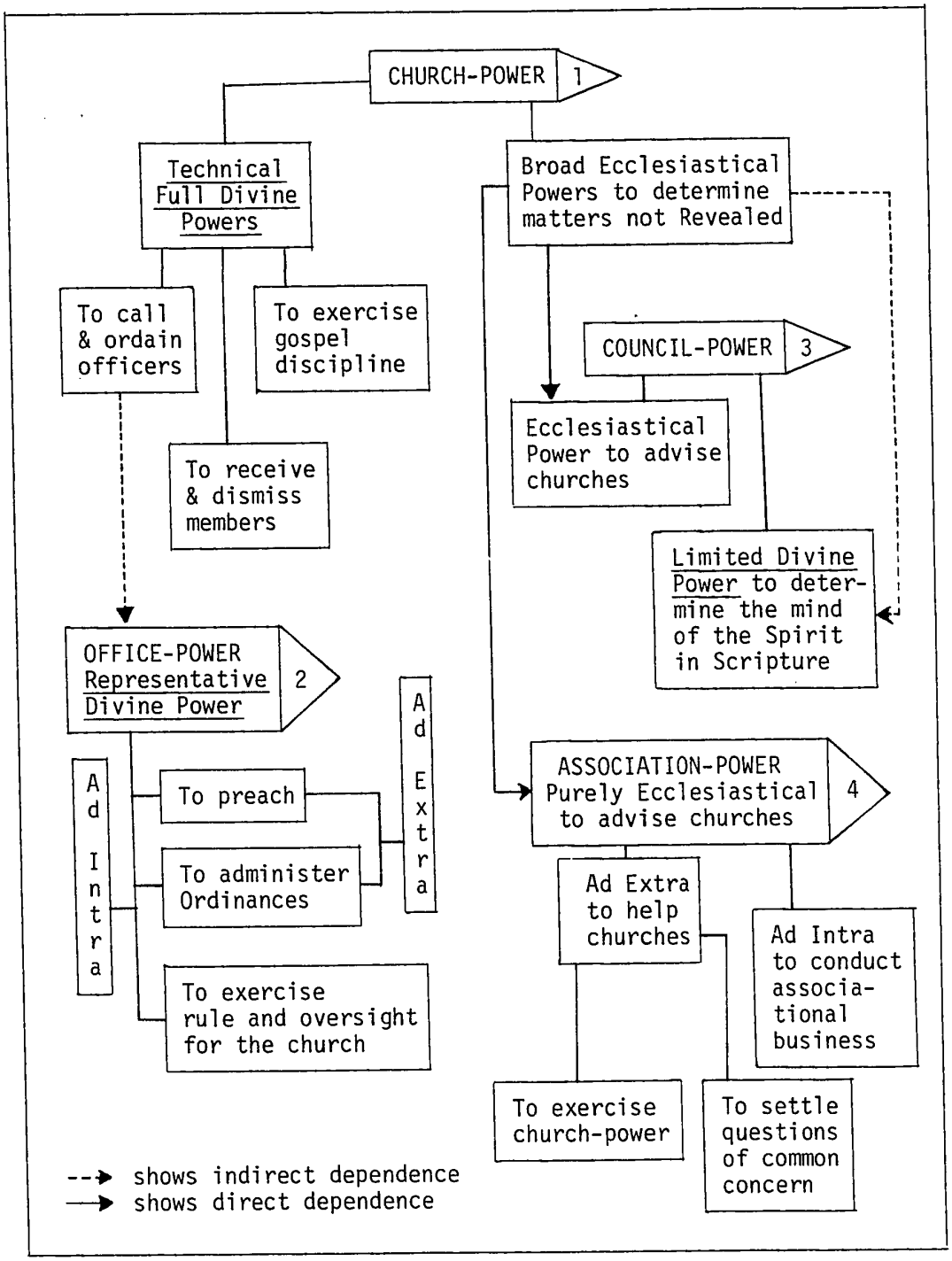

Fig. 6. Outline of Church Powers in the Philadelphia Baptist Association of the Eighteenth Century

covenant established among professed believers. In the case of office-power, Christ confers it immediately upon the person he calls inwardly and equips with gifts eventually recognized by the church, and this power becomes public on the occasion of the church's formal ordination (setting apart) of the minister. In the case of council-power, Philadelphia Baptists believed Christ wills that, in cases of dispute, the representatives of churches gathered by their mutual consent have, as a council, the immediate power from Christ to discern the mind of the Spirit in Scripture. In the case of association-power, divine authorization is not immediate but only indirect, through the churches that alone provide the immediate justification for the association's real and positive power through their mutual consent to establish the permanent confederation. Christ's authorization for the association is indirectly legislated in the gathered church's duty to fellowship and communion with other Christians. In a generic way, therefore, the association is of divine authority, but the specific form and the precise association-powers are merely ecclesiastical in origin.

Third, while all levels of power in the churches are linked to Christ (directly or indirectly, immediately or through the church), they all depend upon the church, but in different ways. Church-power itself is recognized by the other churches on the occasion of its institution when the convenanted group is declared a particular church of Jesus Christ and, through the universal presbyterium, given the right hand of fellowship. Office-power cannot be exercised in the church until the congregation, the only seat of the church-power to call and to ordain its officers, tries the candidate and separates him

to the work of the ministry. Moreover, the ordination itself, at the invitation of the local church, involves the presbyterium of neighboring churches. Council-power cannot become a reality until independent churches agree to meet through their representatives. Association-power, like the association itself, depends upon the mutual consent of the churches to become a fact.

Fourth, each level of authority and power involves dimensions of both divine and ecclesiastical power of the church, and each level has its characteristic type of power. The gathered church's proper power is Christ's executive and judicial authority, church-power in the technical sense. While other levels of church life can challenge and assist the local church, only the latter, gathered as a whole congregation in a democratic polity, can decide matters about its own membership, church officers and discipline. The gathered church also exercises an ecclesiastical power by determining matters of worship and government that are not specified in Scripture. Both levels of divine and ecclesiastical powers are proper activities of the gathered church which alone has full executive and judicial authority to decide what Christ legislated for his church, and full legislative, executive, and judicial power to determine other church matters.

The officer's proper authority is to preach the Word, administer the ordinances, and execute the decisions of the whole church. Even though his power comes immediately from Christ, his office-power relates always to church-power, and as such is a representative power sharing in the church's own dimensions of divine and ecclesiastical authority. Thus, office-powers are correlative to the church's own

powers, and the minister functions as representative on behalf of the whole church. Besides his relationship to his own church, however, the minister also possesses a relationship to other churches. His office-powers can serve other independent churches through preaching and administration of the ordinances. The minister also represents the church at functions of the association and other church activities.[94]

Council-power properly involves a divinely established function to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture in order to settle disputes between churches. In an extended role, the council can also exercise whatever ecclesiastical power is delegated to it by the churches that called the council into being.

Association-power properly speaking involves only ecclesiastical authority delegated by the churches in the confederation. The association's activities, however, can have ecclesiological significance, especially those ad extra functions which influence the exercise of church-powers and help to maintain a unity of faith and practice among the fellowship of independent churches.

Fifth, divine power to legislate for the churches resides only in Christ. Therefore, the church is a monarchy from the point of view of its Head. All levels of power in the churches are dependent upon the law of Christ revealed in Scripture and delivered by the Spirit to the individual and to church groups.

---

[94]On functions of office-power see chap. 4, pp. 342-43; on universal nature of the ministry, p. 347; also above, n. 61, p. 555.

Sixth, the divine right to executive and judicial power is always derived, never original with the church. It depends upon Christ and resides fundamentally in the local church, the only seat of full church-power. The church cannot alienate this power in any way, nor delegate it to any other group. Divine law, however, has already legislated a church order which involves other divinely authorized powers in the church. In cases of dispute between independent churches, the church council possesses the divine right to a limited executive-judicial power. It is the only interchurch group that Philadelphia Baptists believe is divinely authorized and immediately empowered by Christ to assist the churches. The divine right of the officers to lead the church, although dependent upon the call and consent of the whole people and, therefore, a representative power, is nevertheless immediately conferred by Christ. Associations, in the view of eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists, possessed no divine authority or power to rule or make decisions binding upon the churches.

Seventh, the ecclesiastical authority and power to legislate or to exercise judicial and executive authority also resides fundamentally in the whole church. While it can operate at levels beyond the local congregation, ecclesiastical power always requires the consent of the church, whether presumed or explicit.

Eighth, the church's divinely given power cannot be alienated from anyone for whom Christ intended the power, namely, the gathered church in the case of church-power (understood in its precise sense), the minister in the case of office-power, and the council in the case of council-power to discern the mind of the Spirit in Scripture.

Nevertheless, the church can authorize others to participate in these activities, as the P.B.A. did in the case of preaching and ruling, and in the case of the Association deciding disputes. The instances of "delegation" noted previously were not so much a question of transferring power from one person to another, or from one level to another, as they were examples of the Association's willingness to allow others to participate in office-power and council-power. It is the gathered church that is fundamentally the seat of Christ's power in his Church. The church can authorize preaching and teaching in its midst whenever God's gifts are apparent in a person. The only condition is to remain faithful to the law of the Church revealed in Scripture. This the P.B.A. churches did. In fact, the right to preach remains proper to the church officer, but allowing lay persons to be called to preach reflects the additional scriptural teaching about the universal priesthood of all believers. So too, the minister's right to rule is retained although the church allows others to assist him as ruling elders. As for conciliar power transferred to the P.B.A., on a conscious level, the Association never articulated that it participated in the divinely assigned conciliar function to discern the mind of Christ in Scripture. In practice, however, the P.B.A. assumed such a role, without denying the divine right of the council to decide disputes between churches. The Association, in fact, maintained councils as the proper forum for churches to work out their differences.[95]

---

[95]On P.B.A.'s use of councils see chap. 5, pp. 449-52.

Ninth, the church's ecclesiastical power can be properly delegated. This requires the consent of the church or churches, and the power passed on by the local congregations never dominates church-powers. Nor are the delegated powers ever of a nature superior to those of the gathered church. All delegated authority is purely and simply authority to act in an advisory capacity to assist the churches. Delegated authority can be used to subdelegate powers to lesser groups successively representative of the group authorizing them. Thus, the Association can subdelegate some of its powers to its own representatives or to permanent committees. The latter become accountable to the Association directly, and through it, to the churches themselves.

Tenth, the force of authoritative decisions at various levels of P.B.A. church life differs. The gathered church's decisions carry the greatest weight, but only in relationship to its own members. By their mutual church covenant Christians are committed to Christ and to one another and they have a right to require gospel rule of each other. The congregation's decisions are binding upon Christian consciences whenever they are in keeping with Christ's law in Scripture. This is true, however, only for those matters which are legislated by Christ for his Church; in all other matters, the individual conscience is free. Philadelphia Baptists, to use Catholic terminology, did not allow for any religious obedience to ecclesiastical decisions of the Church's ordinary magisterium. Nevertheless, a church member is encouraged to submit freely to the will of the majority even in ecclesiastical decisions unless these clearly go against the rule of

Scripture. Ecclesiastical decisions, however, lack the authority to bind Christian consciences.[96]

The decisions of a council, even though the group is divinely authorized to settle disputes between churches, do not automatically bind the churches. Only when they reflect the rule in Scripture are they binding upon churches and consciences. They could, moreover, be wrong because not even a council is infallible in its listening to the Spirit delivering the sense of Scripture.

The decisions of an association (or ecclesiastical decisions of councils) are proposed to the churches merely as advice and assistance, to be received or not, according to the will of the particular church, unless, of course, the advice happens also to express Christ's law in Scripture. In the latter instance, associational decisions are comparable to the decisions of councils or of the gathered church hearing the Word of God. Just how Philadelphia Baptists came to recognize when conciliar or associational advice reflected the rule of Scripture is discussed in the following section.

A Reconstruction of the Process of Discernment in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition

In this section, the present writer presents a hypothetical description of the ongoing process of discernment of gospel truth in the P.B.A. The description, while contrived, fits the evidence uncovered about the eighteenth century view of church authority in the Philadelphia tradition.

---

[96]See discussion on liberty of conscience above, pp. 546-47 and 553.

Previous discussions have indicated the fundamental principles operative in the Philadelphia Baptist view of church authority in the eighteenth century. The pneumatic and scriptural principles are basic; so too is the reality of sin and the fallibility principle.[97]

The only sure indication of the will of Christ for the Church, the only infallible document of revelation, is the Scriptures. The meaning of the Bible, however, is delivered to the Church by the Spirit itself, stirring in the hearts of believers and operating at all levels of church life: the gathered church, the council, and the association. Yet Christians at all levels of church life are affected by sin and could be erroneous in their judgments about the truth of Scripture.

In such an understanding of Christian authority, how does the P.B.A. and its churches ever come to know whether decisions are actually based upon infallible truth in Scripture? For Philadelphia Baptists to arrive at the revelation documented in the Bible they must proceed through a process of discernment that engages all levels of their church life.

No one level, in the view of the P.B.A., has an absolute claim on the truth. None is infallible, not even the gathered church, the only seat of Christ's authority and power. Among Philadelphia Baptists a certain primacy is accorded the democratic decisions of the gathered church, arrived at in church meetings. But such decisions, whether a simple majority or full consensus, are not infallible. In its stress upon personal spirituality the P.B.A. also asserts that the individual

---

[97]See above, pp. 559-62 and fig. 4, p. 560.

remains ultimately responsible for living according to one's conscience. The ultimate forum for deciding right and wrong is the individual's conscience stirred and lead by the Spirit. But the individual too could be deluded.

Spiritual truth, therefore, comes to light in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition through a continual process of searching. The Spirit stirs among Christians in their fellowship: in the hearts of believers, in the democratic deliberations of the gathered church, in the conciliar exercise of a divinely appointed authority to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture, and in the associational efforts of delegates from the churches trying to resolve questions on the basis of the only rule of church life, Scripture.

When a decision is put forth as God's own law, whether originating from a decision of the gathered church, the council, or the association, it must be tested by the Spirit inwardly teaching the individual believer the truth. In the view of this author, the decisive factors at work in an authentic interpretation of Scripture, if one fully respects the views of Philadelphia Baptists, remain the Spirit itself and the individual knowing the truth under the influence of the Spirit. Whenever the truth is de facto proclaimed it comes to be recognized by true believers under the influence of God's own Spirit.

The author presents the following scenario of the factors at work in the Philadelphia Baptists' discernment of scriptural truth. While the description is a hypothetical construction, it serves to

exemplify how Baptists of the P.B.A. theoretically should have arrived at scriptural truth.

A council, validly called together by two churches, helps to settle their dispute over the validity of baptism by a minister not himself submerged at his baptism. The churches also request the assistance of representatives from the Association. The delegates come to a decision which they claim is clearly based upon Scripture: the baptisms are not valid! Is the decision correct? How can its truth be verified?

Philadelphia Baptists acknowledge the council's right and duty from Christ to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture and thereby to settle disputes between churches. Yet the conciliar decision is not infallible, nor can the council demand that the churches follow its decision because churches are independent to run their own affairs. How can the council's decision be tested for its validity?

The truth is verified not simply by the authority of the council over the churches (it has no such authority), nor simply by the council's divine right to determine the sense of Scripture (for the decision is not infallible), nor simply by the consent of the churches or of the individuals who freely receive the council's advice and make it their own (for they too could be wrong). The truth is conveyed only by the power of the Spirit delivering the sense of Scripture to the believer who listens in openness to the truth.

The same basic dynamics are involved when the decisions originate from other levels of church life. For example, associational decisions, if they are according to the truth in Scripture, will be

recognized as true under the influence of the Spirit working in the hearts of the faithful. Thus, a decision is validated as an authentic one when two fundamental conditions are met: (1) the Christians reviewing the decision are truly open to the presence of the Spirit bringing them to the truth; and (2) the decision itself is a correct one.

In the practical order, any particular level of church life could be the decisive one. The Spirit might speak through an individual, male or female, or through the deliberations in the church meeting, even through the minority voice. Or the Spirit might lead the churches to new insights about the Word through conciliar or associational discussions.

Moreover, in practice, no church or individual can relinquish the responsibility to listen to the Spirit. None can allow the decisions of others to rule their lives as God's Word unless the Spirit within authenticates such decisions. All must probe the Scriptures for themselves. Nevertheless, the authentic Word for the churches comes neither from the decisions of ecclesiastical bodies, nor from the simple consent of the people whether this is expressed in their democratic voice in a gathered church or in the heart of the individual believer. The truth comes to light from the activities of the Spirit moving among the Christian people, here raising a prophetic voice, here acting through the deliberations of a council.

Philadelphia Baptists preferred not to set limits upon the activities of the Spirit by defining in their theology the forum for authentic interpretation of Scripture. Apparently they were content to affirm the primacy of Scripture as the infallible rule of Christian

life and to look to the Spirit in the lives of convinced Christians to assure a continuity of faith and order in the church.

While the Philadelphia Baptists refused to declare any level of church as the authentic interpreter of Scripture, they nevertheless opted for the congregational gathered church as the only visible seat of Christ's executive and judicial authority and power. While doing so, they also acknowledged that churches might be in error, and that abuses are inevitable whenever sinful human beings are involved. For that reason, in its practice, the P.B.A. of the eighteenth century developed functions for the Association to protect the individual from the abuse of church-power on the local level. Of all the possible forms of church polity, the congregational one was most to the liking of Philadelphia Baptists. Accepting the view of Church among radical Puritan Separatists, they believed Christ established the gathered church as the only seat of his full power in this world.

Philadelphia Baptists also insisted upon the priority of the Lord's reign over the individual believer. The rights of Christ over his own must always be respected, even in the setting of the covenant community to which the individual is bound, and even at the risk of secessions from the church.

It seems that, instead of entrusting authentic scriptural interpretation to any ecclesiastical body, or even to themselves as individual Christians, Philadelphia Baptists were content to leave maximum room in their church life for the Spirit to influence all Christians, and they preferred to entrust ultimate leadership of the Church to divine Providence. The marvel is that, despite such an

apparently relativistic attitude towards levels of church authority, Philadelphia Baptists retained a very high view of the Church and its ordained ministry. The record of the Philadelphia Baptists' associational practice, moreover, reveals that the exercise of ecclesiastical authority in the churches helped them to survive the difficult changes and "heretical" ideas that arose during the eighteenth century. In the absence of any authoritative magisterium, Baptists of the P.B.A. looked to Scripture, and their reading of this infallible rule of the church kept them in touch with essential dimensions of the Church and its ministry.[98]

At the outset of the present chapter, the author posed the question: who has the ultimate responsibility authentically to mediate the sense of Scripture in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition? the individual believer? the local church? the council? or the association? The discussion in previous sections suggests that this question does not really apply to the situation among eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists. No specific structure among the churches of the Association has the ultimate responsibility to discern <u>authentically</u> the meaning of Scripture for <u>all</u> the churches. Nevertheless, each has its place. In a sense, it is the individual believer who must ultimately decide what the Spirit's inward call requires of the Christian. The

---

[98]To a Catholic viewing the Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century the positive results, of an exercise of decentralized authority dependent upon the consent of individuals, come as a surprise, almost unimaginable to one who assumes Church unity must be organic with a college of bishops, in communion with the Bishop of Rome, essential for unity of faith and order in the universal communion of churches.

gathered church, likewise, in the exercise of its church-powers, has a key role in the lives of convinced Christians who are solemnly bound together by a church covenant. But no one in the P.B.A. has the ultimate responsibility to mediate the sense of Scripture for all Christians or for all the churches. Thus, there is no priority among various levels of church structure in the Philadelphia Association. Each church and every individual must seek to be led by the Spirit. Any one level could be the vehicle for arriving at the truth contained in the infallible rule of Scripture, but all must cooperate with the Spirit's lead to arrive at that truth. None has the right to interpret Scripture in a way that binds all the churches.

In the ongoing life of the churches, it is Christ in his Spirit who keeps his people faithful. While the Church is not infallible, neither is it an orphan. Philadelphia Baptists believed that the Spirit will continue to lead convinced Christians to the truth of the Word documented in Scripture. As the Philadelphia Confession asserts, Christ will always have a Kingdom in this world, even though churches are subject to error:

> 3. The purest Churches under Heaven are subject (d) to Mixture, and Error; and some have so degenerated as to become (e) no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a (f) Kingdom in this World, to the End thereof, of such as believe in him, and make Profession of his Name.
>
> (d) 1 Cor. 15. Rev. 2. and chap. 3. (e) Rev. 18.2. 2 Thess. 2. 11,12. (f) Mat. 16.18. Psal. 72.17. & Psal. 102.28, Rev. 12.17.[99]

[99] P,27.3 (A424-32); see also discussion on the P.B.A. (Particular Baptist) change from visible kingdom in 1S to invisible kingdom, chap. 3, pp. 222-24.

While Philadelphia Baptists have spiritualized the original sense of the visible Kingdom in the Savoy version, they nevertheless believed that Christ's rule over human beings would never be frustrated. Thus, one can find in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the eighteenth century grounds for claiming that Baptists of the P.B.A. believed in the indefectibility of Christ's rule over Christians. Not even the imperfections of human beings in churches can completely negate that rule.

In this section, the present writer presented a hypothetical scenario of the Philadelphia Baptists' process of discerning the truth in Scripture. While the characterization was somewhat of a fabrication, the process described, in the opinion of this author, is totally in keeping with the official P.B.A. view of church authority reflected in the official sources of this study. It is based upon the underlying principles present in the explicit statements of Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century.

Having analyzed the Philadelphia tradition of church authority, the author proceeds to further critical reflections about that tradition.

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

The previous section discussed the P.B.A. view of church authority. The present one provides the author's critique of that view. Comments are grouped under three headings: (1) major conclusions of this author about the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of

church authority; (2) advantages of that tradition; and (3) some limitations in the same tradition.

Conclusions and Critical Reflections about the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority

Certain conclusions about aspects of the P.B.A. tradition of church authority have already been indicated.[100] The following basic insights have emerged from an analysis of that tradition.

First of all, Philadelphia Baptists, while they technically referred church-power only to a gathered church as the seat of Christ's power, also accepted divinely authorized powers at other levels of church life, namely the very definite powers of church officers (especially in their role of universal ministry in the churches) and the limited power of the church council to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture in order to help churches settle their disputes with each other.

Second, Philadelphia Baptists delegated church powers. While they did not describe their actions as delegation, they nevertheless permitted the transfer of both divinely authorized and ecclesiastically authorized powers. P.B.A. churches delegated ecclesiastical powers to their councils and to the Association. Instances of divinely authorized powers transferred by the churches to persons other than those legislated by Christ include the following: (1) office-power to preach; (2) office-power to rule; and (3) council-power to settle disputes.

---

[100] On conclusions about P.B.A. concept of authority and power see p. 549; on underlying principles, pp. 559-62; and on different levels of power in the P.B.A., pp. 590-98, esp. fig. 6, p. 591.

Philadelphia Baptists assigned lay preachers. Through a church call and ordination, they designated persons for ruling functions even though P.B.A. Baptists had a theoretical doubt about the divine origin of the office of ruling elders. Moreover, P.B.A. churches, in practice, allowed the conciliar power, to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture, to become a function of their Association.

Third, Philadelphia Baptist theory of church authority was compatible with such delegation of divine and ecclesiastical power. The delegations were in keeping with the evidence from Scripture about the rights of the minister to preach and to rule and the rights of independent churches. However, explicit associational theory nowhere states that the Association can assume the conciliar function to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture. Nevertheless, in practice, associational decisions appealed to the force of the infallible rule of Scripture in resolving questions brought to the Association by the member churches.

Fourth, for Philadelphia Baptists, associational decisions, as well as conciliar and church decisions, could be binding upon particular churches or individuals. Such binding power, however, comes directly and only from the force of God's Word in Scripture, not from any authority intrinsic to church structures. Even divinely authorized conciliar power does not assure the council structure of a superior or authoritative function in interpreting Scripture. Nor do church decisions of themselves have binding force on consciences. Particular churches and individual believers remain responsible to examine all

ecclesiastical decisions in the light of the Spirit delivering Scripture to believers.

Fifth, the only test for validating whether or not decisions of councils and associations are binding is the Spirit itself. The truth is discovered in the hearts of believers and comes to light through the democratic deliberations of the gathered church. Ultimately, it is the individual believer who must decide in the forum of one's conscience where the truth lies.

Sixth, there is no guarantee that the decisions at any level of church life will be correct. None of them is infallible. Yet Philadelphia Baptists accepted a congregational church order and asserted the privilege of personal soul competency. They also believed that Christ, in his Spirit, would never abandon the Church.

Such a view of Christ's authority in the churches had definite advantages, but also limitations.

Advantages in the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority

Some advantages of the Philadelphia Baptist view of church authority are similar to those already enumerated in the discussion about the gathered church.[101] The concept of church authority in the P.B.A. had the following six advantages.

First, God's free and sovereign rule over his People and Christ's power over his Church are assured in the P.B.A. view of

---

[101] See chap. 4, pp. 383-85.

authority. It is Christ's Spirit in the hearts of convinced believers that alone delivers to the churches the revealed truth of Scripture.

Second, the P.B.A. views on church authority call forth a responsible obedience from every Christian, both personally and corporately through the various fellowships in the P.B.A. Convinced Christians, covenanted together in a gathered church, are ultimately the ones who verify, through the influence of the Spirit, what must be done in obedience to Christ. Christian delegates of the churches whether deliberating in the occasional council or in the permanent association, also bear a responsibility to be guided by the Spirit in relationship to the only infallible rule of church life, the Scriptures.

Third, the Philadelphia Baptist insistence upon Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith provided a secure basis for P.B.A. churches to remain in touch with apostolic tradition. By looking to Scripture as the only document of revelation, Philadelphia Baptists retained virtually all of the essential dimensions of Christ's apostolic churches, the primary tradition for all later ages.

Fourth, the P.B.A. view of church authority helped Philadelphia Baptists to maintain a respect for the various levels of church life. The role of the ordained minister, the function of the council, and the purpose of the association were all accepted, despite the insistence upon the complete independence of the local church.

Fifth, the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church authority safeguarded the independency of the gathered church. While divinely authorized powers were accepted at other levels than the congregation,

these were understood in such a way that they never negated the full power of the congregation to determine its own affairs, and ecclesiastical powers, of their nature, always depended upon the consent of the churches.

Sixth, the ambiguity on some points in the theory of church authority, although not intentionally so, facilitated the development of the Association's functions and of the minister's role of service in other churches of the P.B.A. Philadelphia Baptists were not accustomed to viewing powers outside the gathered church as divinely authorized powers, even though (as this study has shown) in theory they accepted such powers. The minister's right to preach and to administer the ordinances in the churches, and the association's practical right to make functional decisions based on Scripture, very likely appeared less of a threat to church members who seldom viewed such activities as power from Christ, whether divine or ecclesiastical.

While the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church authority had all these advantages, it also had limitations.

Some Limitations of the Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church Authority

Because associational theory and the view of church authority among Philadelphia Baptists only implicitly accepted some of the actual powers in P.B.A. churches, the Philadelphia tradition of authority and power had definite limitations. Moreover, some of its explicit affirmations restricted the P.B.A.'s horizons for understanding the nature of church authority at all levels. The following four limitations existed in the P.B.A. theory of church authority.

First, because their theory of church authority is partly undeveloped, Philadelphia Baptists did not appreciate fully the nuances in their positions about church powers. They actually accepted various levels of authority and power, both divinely authorized and ecclesiastically established, but these are not adequately distinguished in the sources. For example, P.B.A. associational theory stopped short of affirming in clear terms why the confederation of churches could and did function in the capacity of a council whenever it settled questions on the basis of Scripture, and Philadelphia Baptists failed to express the legitimate instances of their delegation of power.

Second, in the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists, paramount importance was given to the Scriptures as the only written source of revealed truth. In effect, therefore, Baptists of the P.B.A. absolutized the Scriptures. By doing so, it was very difficult for them to distinguish adequately between the Word of God itself and the humanly expressed tradition of that Word in the Scriptures. According to the ecclesiological principles of Philadelphia Baptists themselves, the latter human tradition should have been viewed as fallible. Of course, Philadelphia Baptists could hardly have benefited from contemporary biblical and historical scholarship, but their attitude towards Scriptures nevertheless revealed a built in contradiction. As E. Glenn Hinson, a Baptist speaking at a Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist dialog on church authority, states the issue:

> Where Protestants have conferred infallibility, they have done so only upon the scriptures. Even this, stands in direct opposition to the Protestant principle, viz. that no institution with

> which we as human beings have contact can claim to have the last word. That which is utterly reliable is the Word of God, God himself.[102]

Third, their tradition of church authority left Philadelphia Baptists open to further fragmentation of the Body of Christ. Insistence upon the ultimate responsibility of convinced believers gathered in voluntary church covenants, even if guided by the same document of Scripture, led inevitably to splinter groups. The present proliferation of Baptist churches within the same small town, each holding to various essential points based on Scripture, is a later historical verification of the risk undertaken by Philadelphia Baptists (and others) in accepting Christ's primary rule over any other rule.[103]

Fourth, the Philadelphia Baptist theory of church authority failed to acknowledge what was actually part of church life in the P.B.A., a true magisterium arising from within the churches, a teaching authority that had a great impact upon the consciences of individuals and upon the decisions of independent gathered churches. In the same dialog on church authority noted previously, Hinson comments upon the need for magisterium in the Church:

---

[102]See E. Glenn Hinson, "The Authority of Tradition: A Baptist View," in Seminar on Authority: the Proceedings of a Dialog Between Catholics and Baptists Sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute of Wake Forest University and Belmont College, April 29-May 1, 1974, edited by J. William Angell (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: The Ecumenical Institute of Wake Forest University, 1974), p. 69. The same author develops his own model of church authority which respects the unique character of God's Word and distinguishes between the primary and secondary Christian tradition in the Church.

[103]For a partial listing of various kinds of Baptists see app. C, pp. 763-64; also chap. 2, p. 109, n. 2.

> For Baptists, with their congregational polity, this office [of magisterium] is difficult to define. It probably exists in individual interpretation, in congregational worship and Sunday school instruction, in denominational agencies, especially the seminaries, and in various "leaders" within a democratic political body. . . . It is time, however, for us to admit that a teaching office has to exist somewhere, as the Constitution [Vatican II on divine revelation] says, in order to preserve the word of God faithfully, to explain it, and to make it widely known.[104]

Despite these limitations, the Philadelphia Baptist view of church authority provided an adequate vehicle for Christ's rule among Christians of the P.B.A. churches. It is the opinion of the present writer that the advantages of the Philadelphia tradition of church authority far outweighed its limitations. The P.B.A., as the historical record shows, served the churches well, not only on a functional level, but also in the development of a theory of church and church authority in the eighteenth century. However limited that theory was because of the need to assert the rights of the independent churches, it embodied all the principles needed for a complete denominational identity and a very full church life. The genius of the Philadelphia Baptist experience of church authority is that it retained an integral Congregational polity and at the same time incorporated divinely authorized powers at several levels of church life. Moreover, it retained a corporate witness beyond the independent churches.

---

[104]Hinson, p. 61.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken, not to prove a single thesis, but to interpret from a Catholic perspective the eighteenth century view of confederate church authority among Philadelphia Baptists. Its threefold aim has been achieved.[1] First of all, the author has uncovered new insights into the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of church and church authority.[2] Secondly, the significant strengths and weaknesses of that tradition have already been enumerated in critical reflections about the P.B.A.'s view of the gathered church (chapter 4), the council and association (chapter 5), and church authority (chapter 6).[3]

---

[1] On threefold aim see intro., pp. 7-8.

[2] New insights appear in various summaries on the following: (1) the universal invisible Church, chap. 3, pp. 271-77, including changes in P compared to 1S and W (pp. 239-41), and historical roots of ideas (pp. 254-57); (2) the visible gathered church, chap. 4, pp. 388-91, including dimensions of the church covenant (pp. 306-8), nature of church authority (pp. 325-27), the ordained ministry (pp. 345-48), and models of the church (pp. 381-83); (3) the council and the association, chap. 5, pp. 498-507, including P.B.A. sources on connectionalism (pp. 397-98), the developments in eighteenth century associational theory (pp. 434-38), association covenant compared to church covenant (pp. 445-47), councils compared to associations (pp. 448, 453-55), association-power (p. 464), and ad extra powers (pp. 489-90); and (4) church authority, chap. 6, pp. 607-9, including an overview of P.B.A. tradition (pp. 518-23 and 545-49), principles underlying teaching on Scripture (pp. 542-44), underlying principles in P.B.A. tradition (pp. 559-62), and powers in P.B.A. churches (pp. 590-98).

[3] See strengths of P.B.A. views on gathered church, chap. 4, pp. 383-85; the association, chap. 5, pp. 507-10; and church authority,

Thirdly, the underlying explicit and implicit principles of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition have been gathered and organized. These are the fundamental conditions which must be respected for any reconstruction today of the earlier view of confederate church authority.[4] All of the questions raised in this study have been resolved.[5] The present author's major conclusions, from his analysis of eighteenth century official P.B.A. sources on church and church authority, are the following.

First, the Philadelphia Baptist tradition, in its theory of church and church authority, reflected certain limitations. In the view of this author these were necessary consequences of the need to affirm in clear terms the independence of the particular gathered church. Moreover, Philadelphia Baptists were not systematic but rather pragmatic in their ecclesiology. Despite these limitations, however, it is the contention of this writer that the P.B.A. served the churches of the Association well both in its development of a viable associational theory and in its practice. The confederation proved itself more than adequate to the demands of the eighteenth century. It possessed an acknowledged power in relationship to the independent

---

chap. 6, pp. 609-11. See limitations of the views of gathered church, chap. 4, pp. 385-88; the association, chap. 5, pp. 510-16; and church authority, chap. 6, pp. 611-14.

[4]On underlying principles in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition see chap. 6, pp. 559-62, esp. fig. 4, p. 560.

[5]See questions posed in chap. 2, pp. 211-13; also chap. 5, p. 393 and chap. 6, pp. 541-42.

churches, exercised functions of ecclesiological significance, and provided Philadelphia Baptist churches with a Confession and Church Disciplines.

Second, in their theory, Philadelphia Baptists never directly affirmed the visibility of the universal Church, but neither did they deny it. The lacunae in official sources, especially in the light of the practice of the P.B.A. (see next conclusion), are sufficiently explained by historical factors operating in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[6]

Third, despite its explicit teachings about the invisible Church, Philadelphia Baptists accepted dimensions of a visible ecclesial fellowship beyond their local congregations. The best examples are the church council, a forum accepted as divinely authorized to settle disputes among churches, and the universal character of the ordained ministry, a ministry placed at the service of all the churches of the Association. Another example is the Association's ad extra powers that affected the exercise of independent church-powers. The P.B.A. had great ecclesiological significance for its members, especially in its assumed role of determining the meaning of Scripture. Other indications that Philadelphia Baptists accepted a broad ecclesial fellowship include the following: the ceremonial practice at several levels of extending the right hand of fellowship; the application of concepts like fellowship and communion to various levels in the church structure; the

---

[6]On confessional teaching see chap. 3, pp. 225-26; on roots of teachings about invisible Church, pp. 249-54; on historical reasons for explicit teaching, pp. 254-57.

P.B.A.'s call to the churches to maintain a unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and the use of terms like Church and Body of Christ in associational proceedings.[7]

Fourth, Philadelphia Baptists limited their theoretical views of church and church authority, not only by failing to express the visibility of the universal Church, but also by defining concepts in very limited terms in their official sources. Examples include the following: the description of the gathered church and the association, both lacking the essential missionary nature of the church; the precise concept of church-power, restricted to the local church; and the notions of covenant and excommunication, applied in a special way only to the level of the local church.[8]

Fifth, the major models of church operative in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition were the covenant and the communion models. The covenant was the formal cause of the gathered church and, as such, an essential aspect of Christian life. The term covenant analogously characterized other relationships, but none with the same binding force that existed between Christians committed to each other in the gathered church. The model of church as communion was more pervasive than the model of covenant. The communitarian model probably was a major factor

---

[7]On divine origin of church councils see chap. 5, pp. 394-95, 448, 453; on universal character of ordained ministry, chap. 4, pp. 343, 347; also chap. 3, pp. 232-35; on associational powers with ecclesiological significance, chap. 5, pp. 489, 505; on other indications, chap. 3, pp. 257-71.

[8]On lack of missionary sense see chap. 2, pp. 166-67, chap. 3, pp. 237-38, chap. 4, pp. 390-91, and chap. 5, p. 514; on church-powers, chap. 4, p. 390; on excommunication, chap. 3, pp. 259-63; on covenant, chap. 3, p. 263 and chap. 4, p. 390; on comparison of church and association covenants, chap. 5, pp. 441-47.

integrating the P.B.A.'s conviction about independent churches and the Association's practical acceptance of a broader ecclesial fellowship.[9]

Sixth, a significant finding of this study of Philadelphia Baptist views is the real distinction between the church council and the association. The former is divinely authorized; the latter, merely ecclesiastically organized. Another distinction uncovered is that between the church covenant and the association covenant. These differences are not specifically stated in the official sources. Nevertheless, the sources provide the positive data from which the distinctions can be deduced.[10]

Seventh, Philadelphia Baptists accepted, both in theory and in practice, various types of authority and power in their church life. Evidence in official sources justifies the author's classification of four types of power among churches of the P.B.A.: church-power, office-power, council-power, and association-power. The evidence also justifies the present author's distinction between ecclesiastical and divine powers. Each of the four types of power had some relationship to Christ's authorization of the gathered church as the only seat of church-power. Most significantly, Philadelphia Baptists accepted divinely authorized powers besides those of the local church, namely; the office-powers to preach, to administer the ordinances, and to exercise the church's discipline; and the council-power to determine

---

[9]On models of church see chap. 4, pp. 366-81, esp. conclusions, pp. 381-82; also pp. 388-89.

[10]On council compared to association see chap. 5, p. 453; on covenants, p. 445.

the mind of the Spirit in Scripture in order to settle differences between the churches.[11]

Eighth, this analysis of the Philadelphia tradition of church has resulted in working definitions of the gathered church and the association. These definitions are composed of data which the author gathered from his analysis of the official sources of the P.B.A.[12]

Ninth, this interpretation of the Philadelphia Baptist view of church and church authority in the eighteenth century has proven to the satisfaction of this author that the P.B.A. exercised functions that had ecclesiological significance for the churches. Yet, according to the explicit theory of the same Association, the confederation of churches was never clearly characterized as a divinely appointed church structure, essential to the Church. Thus, while it was ecclesiologically significant, the Association nevertheless remained historically conditioned.[13]

Tenth, in the view of the present author, this study reveals that the P.B.A. exercised a holistic approach to church life. Although the models of church were basically those of covenant and communion, elements of other models were also accepted, notably those touching upon institutional structures of worship and government (institution model) and upon the church's function to preach the Word (herald model).

---

[11]On clarification of terms see chap. 6, pp. 563-71; on categories of power, pp. 571-98, esp. fig. 6, p. 591.

[12]See definition of gathered church, chap. 4, p. 364 and definition of association, chap. 5, pp. 496-97.

[13]On ecclesiological significance and historical relativity of associations see chap. 5, p. 505.

The view of church as sacrament, while it was apparently lacking in the eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist tradition, was understandably bypassed by a different approach to Christian spirituality, one that did not need to postulate sacraments as means of grace. Philadelphia Baptists, moreover, held a higher view of the church and its ministry than others with a Congregational polity. Their ministers exercised some universal functions, and their essential concept of church included the general duty to maintain fellowship and communion and the duty to call upon occasional councils to settle disputes between the churches. According to this author, the stabilizing factors that helped Philadelphia Baptists maintain such a complete vision of church were the following: the Scriptures, accepted as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Philadelphia Confession, a statement of theological views that purdured throughout the eighteenth century (and beyond); associational Church Disciplines, influential among churches of the Association; the leadership from Philadelphia Baptist ministers; and the activities of the P.B.A. itself.[14]

Eleventh, despite its holistic approach, the P.B.A. manifested some ambiguity and lack of clarity in its theory of church and authority. The essential missionary nature of the church and of the association went largely unnoticed. Ecclesiastical powers beyond the church's own powers were not explicitly defined. The specific functions of the Association and the council were not clearly differentiated, despite the theoretical justification in the sources for such powers. Official

---

[14]On holistic models see chap. 4, pp. 379-80, 381; on view of church and ministry, pp. 343 and 347.

statements failed to distinguish adequately between the real powers of the church and the powers beyond the churches, between powers of divine origin and those of merely ecclesiastical origin. P.B.A. associational theory overlooked the ecclesial significance of its own decisions, especially those based upon the correct interpretation of Scripture.

Twelfth, the Philadelphia Baptist tradition, like other Baptist traditions of that day, held distinctive views about the gathered church and the need for interchurch fellowship beyond occasional councils. The tradition also clearly viewed the council differently from the association. The former was of divine origin; the latter, ecclesiastical.

Thirteenth, Philadelphia Baptists practiced a delegation of church-power and council-power. The church-power to preach was given to gifted lay persons called by the church. The church-power to rule was given to persons called and ordained to the office of ruling elder, an office, in the thinking of Philadelphia Baptists, of ecclesiastical origin. The divine right of the council to determine the mind of the Spirit in Scripture, in practice if not in theory, was exercised by the Association when its decisions were based upon Scripture.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST TRADITION FOR ECCLESIOLOGY TODAY

At the conclusion of various chapters, the author indicated some advantages and limitations in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition of the church, the council and association, and church authority.[15]

---

[15]See above, n. 3, p. 615.

The Churches today could learn from this eighteenth century practice of a confederate church polity, both from its mistakes as well as from its positive teachings. By way of simple extrapolation, the following remarks suggest how an eighteenth century experience might have relevance for the twentieth century situation of the Churches.

On the positive side, the Churches today could learn from the following Philadelphia Baptist insights. First, the confederate pattern of interchurch fellowship offers a viable structure for interdenominational development and cooperation today. It is already employed by the National Council of Churches in the United States and by the World Council of Churches. Such a view of an ecclesiastical structure allows Churches simultaneously to maintain their sovereign independence and their mutual interdependence. Without encroaching upon the rights of individual churches (whether local congregations-parishes or worldwide communions), a voluntary confederation could offer cooperative Christian leadership at various levels, provide checks and balances in the use of independent church powers, exercise functions of ecclesiological significance for member Churches--all without the usurpation of individual Church rights. At least, the experience of the Philadelphia Baptist confederation of the eighteenth century indicates that all this is possible!

Second, Churches could benefit from the Philadelphia Baptist respect for the written revelation in Scripture. Especially in these times when modern biblical scholarship has unfolded layers of biblical tradition, respect for the primitive apostolic tradition must be maintained. Whatever remains divinely authorized in any ecclesiastical

structure today should relate to the primary tradition of the early Church as reflected in the New Testament.

Third, the P.B.A. stress upon the sovereignty of God and upon the direct rule of Christ over his Church could promote renewal in the Churches. Christians should expect the Spirit's stirrings beyond their own denominational affiliations. God brings his revealed truth to light in the hearts of committed Christians in all the longstanding traditions. Churches have a responsibility to listen to God speaking not only through Christians everywhere, but also through all Christian traditions.

Fourth, the fallibility principle of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition has much to recommend to all Churches, including those in the Catholic tradition. Without requiring an absolute denial of the infallible rule of Christ in his Church (whatever form the doctrine of infallibility takes: for Catholics, touching magisterium; for Protestants, applied to Scripture only), the affirmation of the fallibility of all human institutions could open the Churches, especially in the Catholic traditions, to a greater willingness to rethink their cherished traditions. In the ecumenical deadlocks which official theologies are experiencing today, an acceptance of possible fallibility in one's traditions could open Christians to more honest appraisal of points of disagreement.

Fifth, stress upon individual responsibility in the Christian life, upon the direct relationship between the Christian believer and one's Lord, and upon the voluntary character of church affiliation could offer renewed hope to all Churches. A true spiritual renewal is already

evident in various small Christian fellowships and in the charismatic renewal in some Churches. Moreover, Churches that have chosen to equip levels of authority with the task of authentically interpreting the Scriptures would do well to reflect upon the reality of the Spirit's presence in individuals. The only infallible rule of Christian life for Philadelphia Baptists was the Scriptures delivered by the Spirit to the convinced believer within the church. Is this not a basic truth to be respected, at least in some form, in any true manifestation of the Church of Christ?

Among the caveats that were bequeathed to contemporary Churches from a past eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptist experience of Church are the following:

First, Churches should expect that truths which they proclaim with conviction are the very same truths that probably limit their perception of truths possessed by others. What Christians accept as revealed truth could prevent them from seeing additional dimensions of Christ's revelation about the mystery of the Church. Moreover, Church practices, like those of the Philadelphia Baptists, probably outdistance expressed theologies. The things Christians do, although they sometimes lack explicit theoretical justification, reflect what they really believe. To some extent, this was the case for Philadelphia Baptists of the eighteenth century; very likely it is also true of the Churches today.

Second, the various primary models of Church which lie behind official ecclesiastical theologies today probably overlook some of the essential dimensions of Christ's Church. There needs to be a

combination of models; no one model is totally capable of embodying the full mystery of the Church. In recent years Catholics have discovered the need to adapt the restricted model of Church as the Body of Christ in Mystici Corporis into a more comprehensive, biblically based model of Church as the People of God in Lumen Gentium.

Third, the limited ecclesiologies of all the Churches run the risk of being self-serving, however well motivated Christians might claim to be. Each Church needs to search constantly for the limitations built into its own theology and teaching, and each must struggle, through personal and corporate conversion, to expose ambiguities and limitations in its traditions and to develop theologies that equip the Churches for their mission.

Fourth, Christian convictions inevitably lead to fragmentation of communities. All churches, in their serious struggle to discern the will of Christ, must follow the inspirations of the Spirit wherever these lead. The honest following of the Spirit, as it did for American Baptists, may result in apparent divisions. Some of these, no doubt, will be caused by human frailty; others, however, may be the work of the Spirit renewing Christ's Body, challenging the Churches to adapt to new circumstances. The lesson for today's Churches is that they need not live in fear of their differences, but only in obedience to the inspirations of the Spirit within them, leading everyone to the truth.

Besides these possible applications of the values and limitations of the Philadelphia Baptist tradition to the contemporary ecclesiastical scene, one could offer specific questions to the Churches in

the light of the findings of this study. Without trying to develop the full implications, the present author poses some basic questions for Catholics and for Baptists.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

The following theoretical questions can be raised for Catholic theology today in the light of the tradition and experience of eighteenth century Philadelphia Baptists.

First, seeing the evidence of the adequacy of a confederate view of church authority, with its assumption of the church as a mutual covenant among convinced Christians and a communion among independent churches, plus its seeming lack of a sense of the Church as sacrament, Catholic theology is challenged to wonder how essential is its own insistence on the basic model of Church as sacrament? The Catholic tradition, East and West (with "vestiges" among the major Protestant Churches, especially Lutheran and Anglican), values a sacramental theology of Real Presence, of Church and of the sacraments. Is such a view, however, the only adequate model of Church? Could other models capture all of the essential structures of church life and fundamentally incorporate all the truths of faith about Church without laying stress upon Christ's sacramental presence in the Church or upon his mediatorial function <u>in church authority</u>? Moreover, is the Catholic insistence upon belief in its sacramental theology and its view of historical episcopacy part of the essential faith necessary for full communion and for intercommunion?

Second, could the Philadelphia Baptist attitude about the establishment of ecclesiastical powers by mutual consent apply to the Catholic experience? Catholic theology and official magisterium tends to describe the seat of full teaching authority as the college of bishops, successors of the Apostles, in communion with the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter. Has such real authority which accrued to the upper eschelon in the church structure historically resulted more from the mutual consent of independent churches than from a divinely established structure for the Church?

Third, Catholic theology and its magisterium seems reluctant to accept papal prerogatives as fundamentally ecclesiastical in origin. Could the role of the papacy be retrieved from its present Catholic theological bases and be reinterpreted along the lines of the Philadelphia Baptists thinking about a voluntary assent of churches to establish a confederation. Could the hierarchic structure in the Catholic Church be understood as arising historically from the consent of the Churches mutually acknowledging the need for an organization to carry out the mission of the Church? This seems to be suggested in a joint statement of 1974 expressing Orthodox and Roman Catholic views of the Church. An Orthodox-Roman Catholic Bilateral Consultation in the United States declared:

> 6. The fundamental equality of all local churches is based on their historical and pneumatological continuity with the church of the apostles. However, a real hierarchy of churches was recognized in response to the demands of the mission of the church.

> Still this did not and cannot exclude the fundamental equality of all churches.[16]

The only point of disagreement between East and West on the nature of the Church seems to be how the hierarchy among the Churches is to be understood. The same consultation made the following declaration:

> 7. The Catholic and Orthodox Church explain differently the meaning of this hierarchy of churches.
>
> The Catholic Church recognizes that the position of Peter in the college of the apostles finds visible expression in the Bishop of Rome who exercises those prerogatives defined by Vatican Council I within the whole church of Christ in virtue of this primacy.
>
> The Orthodox Church finds this teaching at variance with its understanding of primacy within the whole church. It appears to destroy the tension between independence and collegiality. For interdependence, a basic condition of collegiality, appears to be removed as a consequence of the jurisdictional and teaching role attributed to the Patriarch of the West by Vatican Council I. The Orthodox believe that a necessary primacy in the church depends on the consent of the church and is at present exercised by the Patriarch of Constantinople.[17]

Fourth, in insisting that the decisions of the magisterium do not receive their authority from the consent of the faithful, is Catholic theology really expressing much the same conviction as Philadelphia Baptists? It would seem, from the present study, that the P.B.A. insisted ecclesiastical decisions are binding only when they actually express divinely revealed truth (in Scripture). And that fact is verified not simply from the authority of ecclesiastical groups, nor simply from a vote of the faithful. Christ's commands for his Church, after all, are not established by counting heads, whether bishops or

---

[16] "Orthodox Roman Catholic Agreed Statement on the Church," Ecumenical Trends 4 (February 1975):26. (Italics mine.) The consultations took place in New York on December 10, 1974.

[17] Ibid. (Italics mine.)

laity, whether Catholic or Baptist. It remains possible for Catholic bishops or the P.B.A. to express the sensus fidelium without reflecting the majority opinion in the Church. On the other hand, it is also possible that the faithful, in their response to the Spirit within them, could recognize that a certain tenet of the magisterium (Catholic or Baptist!) is no longer true in the historical circumstances of the Church. The crucial point, for Catholics and Baptists, is fidelity to the inspiration of the Spirit and the confirmation of that fidelity through the Spirit delivering the meaning of the Scripture (tradition) to individual believers in the Church.

Fifth, Philadelphia Baptists focused upon the individual congregation as the seat of full church authority from Christ. Apparently for Catholics it is the diocese that is the locus for such apostolic authority (understanding, of course, the collegiality of all bishops in communion with the bishop of Rome). Is it possible that the evolution of ministries in the Catholic tradition, especially the establishment of territorial bishops of dioceses, has really shifted the biblical norm of the primitive tradition from a congregational base to a territorial base? If this be so, can the process be reversed to awaken in the Catholic tradition a sense of the congregation, with its pastor as "bishop" in the biblical sense, as the seat of church-power? Or posed in another way, could a congregational church polity incorporate all of the elements in an episcopal polity if the communion of Churches were retained through some voluntary consent to organize a confederation of churches?

SOME QUESTIONS FOR BAPTIST THEOLOGY

Having raised some fundamental questions for theology in his own tradition, the present author concludes with a few questions addressed to Protestants, particularly to Baptists. Although the comments can have little authentic value for Baptists, they represent basic questions raised in this author's mind about the present life of Baptist churches in relationship to part of their own "tradition" in the American Philadelphia Baptist experience of the eighteenth century.

First, Philadelphia Baptists accepted a connectionalism that differentiated the role of the council from that of the association. Baptists today call for a realignment of denominational structures so that these might be more responsive to the churches just as the associations were historically representative of the churches. Is this concern to revitalize the associational principle sufficiently taking into account the conciliar principle present in past Philadelphia Baptist thinking? In what ways in the life of Baptist churches today is the conciliar principle still operative? Through ordination committees? Or other agencies? Has the divinely appointed role of the council to settle disputes between churches been historically bypassed by Baptists in the development of more complex denominational organizations?

Second, are denominational agencies realistically accountable to the churches? Do churches in practice functionally enjoy the independence guaranteed by traditional Baptist views of a Congregational church polity?

Third, in accepting Scripture as the norm for church life, do Baptists today sufficiently take into account (1) the findings from

contemporary biblical scholarship about the layers of church tradition in Scripture itself and (2) the logical inconsistency between accepting as infallible divine revelation in the written traditions of Scripture and insisting upon the fallibility of all human expressions of the Word.[18] Does the reality of sin and the fallibility of human (Christian) expressions of revealed truth not require that Baptist churches approach the scriptural word with an awareness of the need to adapt its message to changing times?

Fourth, can Baptists articulate today what remained unexpressed in the Philadelphia Baptist tradition about a teaching office or magisterium? For Baptists, where is the Church's magisterium? E. Glenn Hinson, whose discussion on church authority was noted in chapter 6, raises this question for Baptists in his dialog with Catholics.[19]

Fifth and finally, do Baptists today appreciate fully the unique contributions made by Philadelphia Baptists who provide them with their own "tradition" of a strong ecclesiastical connectionalism based upon the voluntary consent of the churches and a respect for power in the churches, not merely church-power, but office-power, council-power and association-power?

---

[18]See discussion in chap. 6, pp. 612-13.

[19]See chap. 6, pp. 613-14.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DOCUMENTS ON THE ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

This appendix includes those basic materials on church, and church order, that were officially accepted by the P.B.A. The texts are facsimiles from the originals. To facilitate reference to passages, each line has been numbered. This allows the reader easy access to the more important texts.[1]

In the case of the Philadelphia Confession, some parallel passages are provided on the facing pages; other variant readings are indicated by footnotes. *Italics* set off sections peculiar to a given confession. For the Philadelphia statement this indicates materials different from the Savoy version; for the Savoy statement this shows variances from the Westminster Confession, or differences in the Platform of Church Polity of Savoy in comparison to the Philadelphia text. In footnotes the following abbreviations appear:

E - Morgan Edwards's Customs, around 1670

K - Keach Confession of 1697

1L - First London Confession of 1644

2L - Second London Confession of 1677/1689

---

[1] E.g., A100 refers to appendix A, line 100.

P - Philadelphia Confession of 1742

1S - Savoy Declaration of Faith of 1658

2S - 1680 changes to Savoy by Massachusetts Synod

3S - Saybrook Confession of 1708

W - Westminster Confession of 1646

Marginal notes on the left hand side indicate pages from the original and parallel sources from which confessional paragraphs are taken. The same method of citing chapter and paragraph numbers is employed as that used in the body of the dissertation.[1] The excerpts are from the following documents of the P.B.A.:

A. The Phildelphia Confession of 1742

B. A Short Treatise of Church-Discipline of 1743

C. The Power and Duty of an Association of Churches of 1749

D. Letter from the P.B.A. to the Warren Association, September 8, 1767

E. A Treatise of Church Discipline of 1798

---

[1] E.g., 1S,1.3 refers to the Savoy Declaration of Faith, chap. 1, sec. 3. K,6 is Keach Confession, art. 6.

A. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith of 1742[1]

C H A P. I.

Of the Holy Scriptures[2]

[1S,1.1] *The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible* (a) *Rule of all Saving Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience;* altho the (b) light of Nature, and the works of Creation [10] and Providence do so far manifest the Goodness, Wisdom and Power of God, as to leave Men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his Will, which is necessary unto Salvation. (c) Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare That his Will unto his Church; and afterward for the better preserving, and propagating of the Truth, and for the more sure Establishment, and Comfort of the Church against the corruption of the Flesh, and the malice

---

(a) 2 Tim. 3.15,16,17. Isa. 8.20. Luke. 16,29,31. Eph. 2.20. (b) Rom. 1.19,20,21, etc. ch. 2.14,15. Psalm 19.1,2,3. (c) Heb. 1.1.

---

[1]The Philadelphia Confession is the Second London Confession of 1677, republished 1689. The text is from the sixth edition published by Benjamin Franklin in 1743, A Confession of faith, put forth by the elders and brothers of many congregations of christians (Baptized upon profession of their faith) in London and the country. Adopted by the Baptist Association met at Philadelphia Sept. 25, 1742, 6th ed. (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1743), pp. 89-100. Copy in A.B.H.S. (Hereafter: P. The *italics* indicate sections peculiar to P in comparison to 1S; in chap. 27, in comparison to 1S or PS.)

[2]1S, chap. 1; and W, chap. 1. Benjamin and Elias Keach, in their joint publication of a shorter version of the Second London Confession of 1689, placed their section on Scripture in the fifth place, after treating God (arts. 1-2), his decrees (art. 3), creation (art. 4), and God's providence (art. 5). Compare K,1-6 to P,1-6 (A783-89).

of Satan, and of the World, to commit the same wholly unto (d) Writing, which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his Will unto his People being now ceased.

[1S,1.2] [11] 2. Under the Name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament, which are these:

[Here follows a list of the Old and the New Testament books, excluding apocryphal Old Testament works.]

[12] . . . . . All which are given by the (e) Inspiration of God, to be the Rule of Faith and Life. (1)

[1S,1.3] 3. The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of (f) Divine Inspiration, are no part of the Canon (*or rule*) (2) of the Scripture, and therefore are of no Authority to the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of than other Humane Writings.

[1S,1.4] 4. The Authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any Man, or Church, but wholy upon (g) God, (who is Truth it self) the Author thereof; therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

(d) Prov. 22.19,20,21. Rom. 15.4. 2 Pet 1.19,20. (e) 2 Tim. 3.16. (f) Luke 24.27,44. Rom. 3.2. (g) 2 Pet. 1.19, 20,21. 2 Tim. 3.16,22. Thess. 2.13. 1 John 5.9.

---

[1] 1S added "the" to W: "given by the Inspiration of God, to be the Rule of Faith and Life."

[2] Simple addition to W and 1S.

[1S,1.5] 5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church *of God*, (1) to an high and reverent Esteem of the
[13] Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the Matter, the efficacy of the Doctrine, and the majesty of the Stile, the consent of all the Parts, the scope of the Whole, (which is to give all Glory to God) the full discovery it makes of the only Way of Man's Salvation, and many other incomparable Excellencies, and intire Perfections thereof, are Arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence it self to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our (h) full persuasion, and assurance of the infallible Truth, and Divine Authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our Hearts.

[1S,1.6] 6. The whole Counsel of God concerning all things (i) necessary for his own Glory, Man's Salvation, Faith and Life, is either expresly set down, *or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture;* (2) unto which nothing at any time is to be
[14] added, whether by new Revelation of the Spirit, or Traditions of Men.

Nevertheless we acknowledge the (k) inward Illumination of the Spirit of God, to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some Circumstances concerning the Worship of God, and Government of the Church, common to Humane Actions and Societies; which are to be (l) ordered by the Light

---

(h) John 16.13,14. 1 Cor. 2.10,11,12. 1 John 1.2,20,27. (i) 2 Tim. 3.15,16,17. Gal. 1.8,9. (k) John 6.45. 1 Cor. 2.9,10, 11,12. (l) 1 Cor. 11.13,14. & Ch. 14.26, & 40.

---

[1] Simple addition to W and 1S.

[2] 1S and W read "set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture;"

of Nature, and Christian Prudence, according to the General Rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

[1S,1.7] 7. All things in Scripture are not alike (m) plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for Salvation, are so (n) clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use [15] of ordinary Means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

[1S,1.8] 8. The Old Testament in (o) Hebrew, (which was the Native Language of the People of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek, which (at the time of writing of it) was most generally known to the Nations, being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular Care and Providence kept pure in all Ages, are therefore (p) authentical; so as in all Controversies of Religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them (q). But because these original Tongues are not known to all the People of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read (r) and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar Language of every Nation, unto which they (s) come, that the Word of God dwelling (t) plentifully in [16] all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may hope.

[1S, 1.9] 9. The infallible Rule of Interpretation of Scripture is the (u) Scripture itself: And therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any

---

(m) 2 Pet. 3.16. (n) Psalm 19.7. & 119. 130. (o) Rom. 3.2. (p) Isa. 8.20. (q) Acts 15.15. (r) John 5.39. (s) 1 Cor. 14. 6,9,11,12,24,28. (t) Col. 3.16. (u) 2 Pet. 1.20.21. Acts 15.15.16.

Scripture, (which is not manifold but one) it must be searched by other Places, that speak more clearly. 126 128

[1S,1.10] 10. The supream Judge by which all Controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, Opinions of ancient Writers, Doctrines of Men, and private Spirits, are to be examined, and in whose Sentence we are to rest, can be no other but [the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which (x) Scripture so delivered, our Faith is finally resolved.] (1) 130 132 134 136 138

[17] C H A P. II.

Of God and of the Holy Trinity.[2]

[18] [Sec. 1 is ommitted.]

[1S,2.2] 2. God, *having* (3) all (r) Life, (s) glory (t) goodness, blessedness, in and of himself, is alone in, and unto himself all-sufficient, not (u) standing in need of any Creature which he hath made, nor deriving any Glory from them, but only manifesting his own Glory in, by, unto, and upon them, he is the alone Fountain (4) of all Being, (x) of whom, through whom and to whom are all things, and 140 142 144 146 148

(x) Mat. 22.29,32. Eph. 2.20. Acts 28. 23.

(r) John 5.26. (s) Psal. 148.13. (t) Psal. 119.68. (u) Job 22.2,3. (x) Rom. 11.34,35,36.

---

[1]The bracketed section is from 1S. W reads "can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture."

[2]1S and W, chap. 2; K begins with this article (K, p. 3)

[3]W and 1S read "hath."

[4]W reads "foundation."

he hath most soveraign (y)Dominion over *all Creatures,* (1) to do by them, for
[19] them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth; in his sight (z) all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is (a) infinite, infallible, and independant upon the Creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain; he is most holy in all his Counsels, in (b) all his Works, and in all his Commands; to him is due (c) from Angels and Men, whatsoever Worship, Service, or Obedience, as Creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them. (2)

[20-34] [Sec. 3 and chaps. 3 thru 7 omitted.]

C H A P. VIII.

Of Christ the Mediator.[3]

[1S,8.1] 1. It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to chuse and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, (4) (a) to be the Mediator be-

(y) Dan. 4.25. & v.34,35. (z) Heb. 4.13.
(a) Ezech. 11.5. Acts 15.18. (b) Psalm 145.17.
(c) Rev. 5.12,13,14.

(a) Isai. 42.1. 1 Pet. 1.9.10.

[1] W and 1S read "them."

[2] P follows 1S; W reads "whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them."

[3] W and 1S, chap. 8.

[4] W lacks "according to the Covenant made between them both."

[35] tween God and Man; the (b) Prophet, (c) Priest and (d) King; Head and Saviour of his Church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the Word; Unto whom he did from all eternity (e) give a People to be his Seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

[36] [Sec. 2 is omitted.]

[1S,8.3] 3. The Lord Jesus in his Humane Nature thus united to the Divine, in the Person of the Son, (1) was sanctified, and anointed (k) with the Holy Spirit, above measure; having in him (l) all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father, that (m) all fullness should dwell; to the end, that being (n) holy, harmless, undefiled, and full (o) of Grace, and

[37] Truth, he might be throughly [sic] furnished to execute the Office of a Mediator, and (p) Surety; which Office he took not upon himself, but was thereunto (q) called by his Father; who also (2) put (r) all Power and Judgment in his Hand, and gave him Commandment to execute the same.

[(b) Act. 3.22.] (3) (c) Heb. 5.5,6. (d) Psal. 2.6. Luke 1.33. Eph. 1.23. Heb. 1.2. Acts 17.31. (e) Isai. 53.10. John 17.6. Rom. 8.30.

(k)Psalm 45.7. Acts 10.38. John 3.34. (l) Col. 2.3. (m) Col. 1.19. (n) Heb. 7.26. (o) John 1.14. (p) Heb. 7.22. (q) Heb. 5.5. (r) John 5.22,27. Matt. 28.18. Acts 2.36.

---

[1] W lacks "in the Person of the Son."

[2] W lacks "also."

[3] Footnote (b) is omitted in P, here supplied from 2L in William L. Lumpkin, ed., Baptist Confessions of Faith, rev. ed. (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1969), p. 260.

[1S,8.8] [W,8.8] VIII. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased Redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them, and revealing unto them in and by the Word, the mysteries of salva-[18]tion, effectually perswading them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit, overcoming all their enemies by his almighty Power and Wisdom, and in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation. (1)

[1L,13] [6] XIII. So that this Office to be Mediator, that is, to be Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church of God, is so proper to Christ, as neither in the whole, nor in any part thereof, it can be transferred from him to any other. (2)

[1L,14] XIV. This Office it self to which Christ was called, is threefold, of a Prophet, of Priest, & of a King: this number and order of Offices is shewed; first, by mens necessities grievously labouring under ignorance, by reason whereof they stand in infinit necessity of the Prophetical office of Christ to relieve them. Secondly, alienation from God, wherein they stand in need of the Priestly Office to reconcile them: Thirdly, our utter disability to return to him, by which they stand in need of the power of Christ in his Kingly Office to assist and govern them.

---

[1]The text of the Savoy Declaration is taken from Williston Walker, ed., The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893; reprint ed. Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1960), p. 377. Bracketed page numbers refer to the original, The Savoy Declaration: . . . (London: Printed by John Field, and are to be sold by John Allen at the Sun Rising in Pauls Churchyard, 1658). (Hereafter: 1S; italics indicate differences from P,8.8.)

1S

[2]The text of the London Confession of 1644 is taken from Lumpkin, pp. 153-71. Bracketed page numbers refer to the original: The Confession of Faith, . . . (London: Printed by Matthew Simmons in Aldersgate-street, 1644). (Hereafter: 1L.)

1L

[38-39] [Sections 4 thru 7 omitted.]

[1S,8.8] 8. To all those for whom Christ hath *obtained Eternal* Redemption, he doth certainly and effectually (l) apply, and communicate the same; making Intercession for them; *uniting them to himself by his Spirit;* (m) revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the *Mystery* of Salvation; perswading them to believe, and obey; (n) governing their Hearts by his Word and Spirit, *and* (o) overcoming all their Enemies by his Almighty Power, and Wisdom; in such manner, and ways, as are most consonant to his wonderful, and (p) unsearchable dispensation; *and all of free, and absolute Grace, without any Condition foreseen in them, to procure it.* (1)

[1L,13] 9. *This Office of Mediator between God and Man, is proper* (q) *only to Christ, who is the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof transferr'd from him to any other.* (2)

[1L,14] 10. *This number and order of Offices is necessary; for in respect of our* (r) *Ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetical Office; and in respect of our alienation from God,* (s) *and imperfection of the best of our Services, we need his Priestly Office, to reconcile us, and present us acceptable unto God:*

(l) John 6.37. Chap. 10,15,16 & Ch. 17.9. Rom. 5.10. (m) John 17.6. Eph. 1.9. 1 John 5.20. (n) Rom 8.9,14.[(o)] Psalm 110.1. 1 Cor. 5.25,26. (p) John 3.8. Eph. 1.8. (q) 1 Tim. 2.5. (r) John 1.18. (s) Col. 1.21. Gal. 5.17.

---

[1]Compare to text from the Savoy declaration on the facing page (1S,8.8).

[2]Compare to text from the London Confession of 1644 on the facing page (1L,13).

[24]
[1S,14.2]
[W,14.2]

II. By this Faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the Authority of God himself speaking therein, and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatnings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving Faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by vertue of the covenant of Grace.

And in respect of our averseness, and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue, and security from our spiritual Adversaries, we need his Kingly Office, (t) *to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his Heavenly Kingdom.* (1)

[41-52] [Chapters 9 thru 13 are omitted.]

C H A P. XIV.

Of Saving Faith.[2]

[1S,14.1] 1. The Grace of Faith, whereby the Elect are enabled to believe to the Saving of their Souls, is the Work of the Spirit of Christ (a) in their Hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the (b) Word; by which also, and by the Administration [53] of *Baptism, and the Lord's Supper,* Prayer and other Means *appointed of God,* it is increased, (c) and strengthened. (3)

[1S,14.2] 2. By this Faith, a Christian believeth to be true, * whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the Authority of God himself; *and also apprehendeth an Excellency therein* (d) *above all other Writings; and all Things in the World: As it bears forth the Glory of God in his Attributes, the Excellency of Christ in his Nature and Offices, and the Power and*

(t) John 16.8. Psalm 110.3. Luke [1]. 74,75.

(a) 2 Cor. 4.13. Eph. 2.8. (b) Rom. 10.14,17. (c) Luke 17.5. 1 Pet. 2.2. Acts 20.32. * Acts 24.14. (d) Psalm 19.7,8, 9,10. Psalm 119.72.

---

[1]Compare text from London Confession on the previous page (1L,14).

[2] W and 1S, chap. 14.

[3] 1S reads "administration of the Seals, Prayer and other means, . . ." W reads "administration of the sacraments and prayer. . . ."

Fulness of the Holy Spirit in his Workings and Operations; and so is enabled 254
to (e) *cast his Soul upon the Truth thus*
believed, and also acteth differently up- 256
on that which each particular Passage
thereof containeth; yielding Obedience 258
to the (f) Commands, trembling at
the (g) Threatnings, and embracing the 260
(h) Promises of God, for this Life, and
that which is to come: But the princi- 262
[54] pal Acts of Saving Faith, *hath immediate Relation to Christ,* accepting, re- 264
ceiving, and resting upon (i) *him* alone,
for Justification, Sanctification, and 266
Eternal Life, by vertue of the Covenant
of Grace. (1) 268

[55-72] [Sec. 3 and chaps. 15 thru 20 omitted.]

C H A P. XX.

Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace thereof. (2)

[1S,20.1] 1. The Covenant of Works be-
ing broken by Sin, and made 270
unprofitable unto Life, God was pleased
to give *forth* (3) the Promise of Christ, (a) 272
[73] the Seed of the Woman, as the Means
of calling *the Elect,* (4) and begetting in 274
them Faith and Repentance; in this

(e) 2 Tim. 1.12. (f) John 15.14. (g) Isa. 66.2. (h) Heb. 11.13. (i) John 1.12. Acts 16.31. Gal. 2.20. Acts 15.11.

(a) Gen. 3.15.

---

[1]Compare text from Savoy on facing pages (1S,14.2).

[2]This whole chapter is an addition of the Savoy to the Westminster which London Baptists use (1S, chap. 20).

[3]1S reads "to give unto the Elect the promise . . ."

[4]1S reads "of calling them, . . ."

Promise, the (b) Gospel, as to the Substance of it, was revealed, and therein effectual, for the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners.

[1S,20.2] 2. This Promise of Christ and Salvation by him, is revealed *only by* (c) the Word of God; (1) neither do the Works of Creation, or Providence, with the Light of Nature, (d) make Discovery of Christ, or of Grace by him, so much as in a general, or obscure Way; much less, that Men, destitute of the Revelation of him by the Promise, or Gospel, (e) should be enabled thereby, to attain saving Faith, or Repentance.

[1S,20.3] 3. The Revelation of the Gospel unto Sinners, made in divers Times, and by sundry Parts, with the Addition of [74] Promises, and Precepts, for the Obedience required therein, as to the Nations, and Persons, to whom it is granted, is meerly of the (f) Sovereign Will and good Pleasure of God, not being annexed by vertue of any Promise, to the due Improvement of Men's natural Abilities, by vertue of common Light received without it; which non ever did (g) make, or can so do: And therefore in all Ages the Preaching of the Gospel hath been granted unto Persons and Nations, as to the Extent, or Streightning of it, in great Variety, according to the Counsel of the Will of God.

(b) Rev. 13.8. (c) Rom. 1.17. (d) Rom. 10.14,15,17. [(e)] Prov. 29.18. Isa. 25.7. with Ch. 60.2,3. (f) Psalm 147.10. Acts 16.7. (g) Rom. 1.18, etc.

---

[1] 1S reads "only in and by the Word of God; . . ."

[1S,20.4] 4. Although the Gospel be the only outwards Means of revealing Christ, and saving Grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that Men, who are dead in Trespasses, may be Born again, Quickened or Regenerated, there is moreover necessary, an effectual *insuperable* (h) Work of [75] the Holy *Spirit*, (1) upon the whole Soul, for the Producing in them a new Spiritual Life; without which no other Means will effect (e) [sic] their Conversion unto God.

C H A P. XXI.

Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.(2)

[76] [Sec. 1 is omitted.]

[1S,21.2] 2. God alone is (m) Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of Men (n) which are in any Thing con- [77] trary to his Word, or not contained in it. (3) So that to believe such Doctrines, or Obey such Commands out of Conscience, (o) is to betray true Liberty of Conscience; and the Requiring of

---

(h) Psalm 110.3. 1 Cor. 2.14. Eph. 1.19, 20. (i) John 6.44. 2 Cor. 4.4,6.

(m) Jam. 4.12. Rom. 14.4. (n) Acts 4. 19. & 5.29. 1 Cor. 7.23. Matt. 15.9. (o) Col. 2.20,22,23.

---

[1] 1S reads "effectual, irresistable work of the holy Ghost upon . . ."

[2] W, chap. 20; 1S, chap. 21.

[3] W reads "or beside it in matters of faith or worship."

an (p) implicit Faith, and absolute and blind Obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience and Reason also.

[Sec. 3 is omitted.]

C H A P. XXII.

[78] ## Of Religious Worship, & the Sabbath Day.[1]

[1S,22.1] 1. The Light of Nature shews that there is a God, who hath Lordship and Sovereignty over all; is Just, (2) Good, and doth Good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the Heart, and all the Soul (a) and with all the Might. But the acceptable Way of Worshipping the true God, is (b) instituted by himself, and so limited by (3) his own revealed Will, that he may not be worshipped according to the Imaginations and Devices of Men, or the Suggestions of Satan, under any visible Representations, or (c) any other Way, not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

[79-80] [Secs. 2 thru 4 are omitted.]

[1S,22.5] 5. The (q) Reading of the Scriptures, Preaching, and (r) Hearing the Word of God, *teaching and admonishing one*

(p) 1 Cor. 3.5. 2 Cor. 1.24.

(a) Jer. 10.7. Mark 12.33. (b) Deut. 12.32. (c) Exod. 20.4,5,6.

(q) 1 Tim. 4.13. (r) 2 Tim. 4.2. Luke 8.18.

---

[1] W, chap. 21; 1S, chap. 22.

[2] 1S made a simple addition to W, "just."

[3] W reads "limited to . . ."

[1S,22.5]
[38]
[W,21.5]

V. The reading of the Scriptures, Preaching, and hearing the word *of God,* singing of Psalms, as also the Administration of *Baptism and the Lords Supper,* are all parts of religious Worship of God, *to be performed* in obedience unto God with Understanding, faith, reverence, *and godly fear;* Solemn *Humiliations, with* Fastings and Thanksgiving upon *special* occasions, are in their several times and seasons to be used in a holy and religious maner. (1)

---

[1] 1S rewrote this section (*Italics* highlight differences from W). W reads:

"V. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching; and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God with understanding faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths, vows, sol-[648]emn fastings, and thanksgivings upon several* occasions; which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.

---

*The American Presbyterians have adopted the Savoy emendation, special." (Philip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes, vol. 3: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with Translations [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1966], pp. 647-48.) Italics highlight differences from 1S. 2L and P also use "special."

another in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Singing with Grace in our Hearts to (s) *the Lord;* as also the Administration (t) of Baptism, and (u) the Lord's Supper, are all Parts of Religious Worship of God, to be performed in Obedience *to him,* with Understanding, Faith, Reverence, and Godly Fear; moreover, Solemn Humiliation, (x) with Fastings, and Thanksgiving, upon (y) special Occasions, *ought* to be used in an holy and religious Manner. (1)

[81] [Sec. 6 is omitted.]

[1S,22.7] 7. As it is of the Law of Nature, that, in general, a Proportion of Time, by God's Appointment (2) be set apart for the Worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive, moral, and perpetual Commandment, binding all Men, in all Ages, he hath particularly appointed one Day in Seven for a (e) Sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the Beginning of the World, to the Resurrection of Christ, was the last Day of [82] the Week; and from the Resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first Day of the Week, (f) which (3) is called the Lord's Day; and is to be

---

(s) Col. 3.16. Eph. 5.19. (t) Mat. 28.19,20. (u) 1 Cor. 15.26. (x) Esth. 4.16. Joel 2.12. (y) [Exod.] 15.1. etc. Psalm 107.

(e) Exod. 20.8. (f) 1 Cor. 16.1,2. Acts 20.7. Rev. 1.10.

---

[1] Compare the Savoy text (1S,22.5) and the alternate Westminster (W,21.5) on the facing page.

[2] 1S added "by God's Appointment" to W.

[3] W adds "in Scripture."

continued to the End of the World, as the Christian Sabbath; the Observation of the last Day of the Week being abolished. (1) 384 386

[Sec. 8 is omitted.]

C H A P. XXIII

[83] *Of Singing of Psalms, etc.*[2]

[K,27] *We believe that* (a) *singing the Praises of God, is a holy Ordinance of Christ, and not a Part of Natural Religion, or a moral Duty only; but that it is brought under Divine Institution, it being injoined on the Churches of Christ to sing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs; and that the whole Church in their Publick Assemblies (as well as private Christians) ought to* (b) *sing God's Praises according to the best Light they have received. Moreover, it was practised in the great Representative Church, by* (c) *our Lord Jesus Christ with his disciples, after he had instituted and celebrated the Sacred Ordinance of his Holy Supper, as a commemotive* [sic] *Token of Redeeming Love.* 388 390 392 394 396 398 400 402 404

(a) Acts 16.25. Eph. 5.19. Col. 3.16. (b) Heb. 2.12. Jam. 5.13. (c) Mat. 26. 30. Mar. 14.26.

[84-89] [Chaps. 24 thru 26 are omitted.]

[1] W ends sec. 7 "as the christian sabbath."

[2] This chapter was adopted by the P.B.A. and taken verbatim from the Keach Shorter Confession (K, art. 27). It has no counterpart in W or 1S.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Church.

[1S,26.1] [W,25.1] [44] The Catholique or Universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the Elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head thereof, and is (1) the Spouse, the Body, the fulness of him that filleth all (2) in all.

[1S,26.2] *II. The* (3) *whole body of men throughout the world, professing the faith of the Gospel and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any Errors everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation,* (4) *are, and may be called the visible Catholique Church of Christ, although as such it is not intrusted with the administration of any Ordinances, or have any officers to rule or govern in, or over the whole Body.* (5)

---

[1] 3S omits "is."

[2] 3S adds "and."

[3] The remaining sections of this chapter have been changed in the 1S.

[4] 2S and 3S add "they and their children with them," doubtless influenced by the Half-Way Covenant.

[5] 2S and 3S read "although as such it is not intrusted with any Officers to rule or govern over the whole body."

C H A P. XXVII.

Of the Church.[1]

[1S,26.1] 1. The Catholick or Universal Church, which *with respect to the internal Work of the Spirit and Truth of Grace may be called* Invisible (2) [90] consists of the whole (a) Number of the Elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the Head thereof; and is the Spouse, the Body, the Fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

[1S,26.2] 2. *All Persons,* (3) throughout the World, professing the Faith of the Gospel, and Obedience unto God by Christ, according unto it, not destroying their own Profession by any Errors everting the Foundation, or Unholiness of Conversation, (b) are and may be called *visible Saints;* (c) *and of such ought all particular Congregations to be constituted.* (4)

[1S,26.3] 3. The (1) purest Churches under Heaven are subject (d) to Mixture, and Error; and some have so degenerated as to become (e) no Churches of Christ,

---

(a) Heb. 12.23. Col. 1.18. Eph. 1.10 [20] (5),22,23. and chap. 5.23,27,32. (b) 1 Cor. 1.2. Acts 11.26. (c) Rom. 1.7. Eph. 1.20,21,22. (d) 1 Cor. 15. Rev. 2. and chap. 3. (e) Rev. 18.2. 2 Thess. 2.11,12.

---

[1] W, chap. 25; 1S, chap. 26 and PS.

[2] 1S simple reads "which is invisible."

[3] 1S reads "The whole body of men throughout the world . . ."

[4] Compare the language of 1S: "are, and may be called the visible Catholique Church of Christ, . . ."

[5] Underhill's text is 20, P and Lumpkin is 10. Bracketed references are from Underhill's text, pp. 220f.

[1S,26.3] [W,25.5] III. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan: Nevertheless *Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a visible Kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.* (1)

[1S,26.4] [W,25.6] [45] IV. There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof; but it is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God, *whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.* (2)

[55] [PS,1] [By the appointment of the Father all Power for the Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church, is invested in a Supreme and Soveraign maner in the Lord Jesus Christ, as *King and* Head thereof.] (3)

[45] [1S,26.5] V. *As* (4) *the Lord in his care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own Glory: so according to his promise, we expect that in the later days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of his dear Son broken, the Churches of Christ being inlarged, and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.*

[PS,2] II. In the execution of this Power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the World unto *Communion with* himself, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk be-

---

[1] W closes thus: "Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to his will."

[2] A simple addition, nothing omitted from W.

[3] The Savoy Platform of Church Polity is taken from "Of the Institution of Churches and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ," in Walker, pp. 403-408. Brackets indicate pages in the original. (Hereafter: PS. *Italics* in PS indicate differences compared to P.)

[4] This has no corresponding section in W, nor is 1S,26.5 employed by P.

but Synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall 428
[91] have a (f) Kingdom (1) in this World, to 430
the End thereof, of such as believe in
him, and make Profession of his Name. (2) 432

[1S,26.4] 4. The (3) Lord Jesus Christ is the Head
[PS,1] (4) of the Church, [in whom by the Ap- 434
pointment of the Father, (g) all Power
for the Calling, Institution, Order, or 436
Government of the Church, is invested
in a supreme and sovereign Manner,] (5) 438
neither can the Pope of Rome in any
sense be Head thereof, but is (h) that (6) 440
Antichrist, that Man of Sin, and Son
of Perdition, that exhalteth himself in 442
the Church against Christ, and all that is
called God; whom the Lord shall de- 444
stroy with the Brightness of his Coming.

[PS,2] 5. In (7) the Execution of this Power 446
wherewith he is so intrusted, the Lord
Jesus calleth, out of the World unto (8) 448
himself, through the Ministry of his

(f) Mat. 16.18 [8]. Psal. 72.17. & Psal. 102.28. Rev. 12.17. (g) Col. 1.18. Matth. 28. [18,--],19,12,20. Eph. 4.11,12[21,22]. (h) 2 Thes. 2.2,---9.

---

[1] 1S reads "visible Kingdom"; P suppresses "visible."

[2] W closes thus: "Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to his will."

[3] P, sec. 4 is a combination of 1S,4, plus an insert from PS, sec. 1.

[4] Compare opening phrase from 1S: "There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; . . ."

[5] Bracketed material taken from PS, sec. 1.

[6] Underhill's text reads "is no other than Antichrist."

[7] 1S,26.5 is omitted in P; hereafter P borrows from the Platform of Church Polity of Savoy (PS).

[8] PS adds "unto Communion with himself."

fore him in all the ways of Obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his Word. (1)

[PS,3] [56] III. Those thus called (through the Ministery of the Word by his Spirit) he commandeth to walk together in particular Societies or Churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that publique Worship, which he requireth of them in *this* world.

[IV.] [See below.]

[PS,5] *V. These particular Churches thus appointed by the Authority of Christ, and intrusted with power from him for the ends before expressed, are each of them as unto those ends, the seat of that Power which he is pleased to communicate to his Saints or Snbjects* (2) *in this world, so that as such they receive it immediately from himself.*

[PS,6] *VI. Besides these particular Churches, there is not instituted by Christ any Church more extensive or Catholique entrusted with power for the administration of his Ordinances, or the execution of any authority in his name.*

[VII.] [See below.]

[PS,8] [57] VIII. The Members of these Churches are Saints by Calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that Call of Christ, *who being further known to each other by their confession of the Faith wrought in them by the power of God, declared by themselves or otherwise manifested, do* willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God in professed subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel.

[PS,4] [56] IV. To each of these Churches thus gathered, according *unto* his minde declared in his Word, he hath given all that Power and Authority, which is any way

---

[1]The Platform of Church Polity, the most original work of the Savoy, was not adopted by American Congregationalists because they had just finished drafting and adopting their own New England statement, The Cambridge Platform.

[2]Typesetting misprint.

Word, by his Spirit, (i) those that are given unto him, by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the (k) ways of Obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his Word. [Those thus called, he commandeth to walk together in particular Societies, or (l) Churches, for their mutual Edification and the due Performance of that publick Worship, which he requireth of them in *the* World.] (1)

[92]

[PS,3]

6. The (2) Members of these Churches are (m) Saints by Calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing in and by their Profession and Walking, their Obedience unto that Call of Christ; (3) and do willingly consent to walk together according to the Appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord and one to another, by the Will of God. (n) in professed Subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel.

[PS,8]

7. To each of these Churches thus gathered according to his Mind, declared in his Word, he hath given all that (o) Power and Authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that Order in Worship and Discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe, with Commands and Rules. for the due and right exerting and executing of that Power.

[PS,4]
[93]

(i) John 10.16. & chap. 12,32. [j is omitted.] (k) Mat. 28.20. (l) Mat. 18.15,20 [15-20]. (m) Rom. 1.7. 1 Cor. 1.2. (n) Acts 2.41,42. chap. 5.13,14. 2 Cor. 9.13. (o) Matt. 18.17,18. 1 Cor. 5.4,5. with verse 13. 2 Cor. 2.6,7,8.

---

[1] PS reads "in this world." Bracketed section is taken from PS, sec. 3.

[2] PS, secs. 5 and 6 are not used by P (see facing page for PS,5-6).

[3] PS includes section about the confession of faith, omitted by P.

needfull for their carrying on that Order in Worship and Discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe with Commands and Rules, for the due and right exerting and executing of that Power.

[57] [*V.-VI.*] [See above.]

[PS,7] VII. A particular Church gathered and compleat*ed* according to the minde of Christ, consists of Officers and Members: *The Lord Christ having given to his called ones (united according to his appointment in Church-order) Liberty and Power to choose Persons fitted by the Holy Ghost for that purpose, to be over them, and to minister to them in the Lord.*

[PS,9] IX. The Officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church so called, and gathered for the peculiar administration of Ordinances, and execution of Power or Duty which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are *Pastors, Teachers,* Elders, and Deacons.

[PS,10] *X. Churches thus gathered and assembling for the Worship of God, are thereby visible and publique, and*
[58] *their As-[58]semblies (in what place soever they are, according as they have liberty or opportunity) are therefore Church or Publique Assemblies.*

[PS,11] XI. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the holy *Ghost,* unto the Office of *Pastor, Teacher* or Elder in a Church, is that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the Church it self, and solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, with Imposition of Hands of the Eldership of *that* Church, if there be any before constituted therein: And of a Deacon, that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by Prayer, and the like Imposition of Hands.

[PS,7] 8. A particular Church gathered, and compleat*ly organized* (1) according to the Mind of Christ, consists of Officers
[PS,9] and Members: And [the Officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church (so called and gathered) for the peculiar Administration of Ordinances, and Execution of Power, or Duty, which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the End of the World, are (p) *Bishops, or* Elders and Deacons.] (2)

[PS,11] [94] 9. The (3) Way appointed by Christ for the Calling of any Person, fitted and gifted by the Holy *Spirit*, (4) unto the Office of *Bishop*, or Elder, (5) in a Church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common (q) Suffrage of the Church it self; and solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, with Imposition of Hands of the (r) Eldership of *the* Church, (6) if there be any before constituted therein: And of a Deacon (s) that he be chosen by the like Suffrage, and set apart by Prayer, and the like Imposition of Hands.

(p) Acts 20.17, with verse 28. Phil. 1.1. (q) Acts 14.23. See the Original. (r) 1 Tim. 4.14. (s) Acts. 6.3,5,6.

---

[1] PS reads "compleated according to . . ."

[2] PS reads "Pastors, Teachers, Elders and Deacons." The bracketed section is taken from PS, sec. 9.

[3] PS, sec. 11 (sec. 10 not used in P).

[4] PS reads "Holy Ghost."

[5] PS reads "Pastor, Teacher, or Elder."

[6] PS reads "Eldership of that Church."

[PS,12] *XII. The Essence of this Call of a Pastor, Teacher or Elder unto Office, consists in the Election of the Church, together with his acceptation of it, and separation by Fasting and Prayer: And those who are so chosen, though not set apart by Imposition of Hands, are rightly constituted Ministers of Jesus Christ, in whose Name and Authority they exercise the Ministery to them so committed. The Calling of Deacons consisteth in the like Election and acceptation, with separation by Prayer.*

[PS,13] XIII. Although it be incumbent on the Pastors *and Teachers* of the Churches to be instant in Preaching the Word, by way of Office; yet the work of Preaching that Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also gifted and fitted by the holy *Ghost*
[59] for it, and approved *(being by* [59] *lawful ways and means in the Providence of God called thereunto) may publiquely, ordinarily and constantly perform it; so that they give themselves up thereunto.*

[*XIV.-XIX.*] [See below (B1-56).]

10. *The* (1) *Work of Pastors being constantly to attend the Service of Christ, in his Churches, in the Ministry of the Word, and Prayer,* (t) *with Watching for their Souls, as they that must give an Account to him; it is incumbent on the Churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due respect,* (u) *but also to communicate to them of all their good Things, according to their Ability, so as they may have a comfortable Supply, without being themselves* (x) *entangled in Secular Affairs; and may also be capable of exercising* (y) *Hospitality towards others; and this is required by the* (z) *Law of Nature, and by the express Order of Our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained, that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.* [95]

11. Although (2) it be incumbent on the *Bishops or* Pastors (3) of the Churches, to be Instant in Preaching the Word, by Way of Office, yet the Work of Preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also (a) gifted, and fitted by the Holy *Spirit* (4) for it, and approved, [*and called by the Church, may, and ought to perform it.*] (5) [PS,13]

(t) Acts 6.4. Heb. 13.17. (u) 1 Tim. 5.17,18. Gal. 6.6,7. [v is omitted; w is also omitted.] (x) 2 Tim. 2.4. (y) 1 Tim. 3.2. (z) 1 Cor. 9.6,14 [6-14]. (a) Acts 11.19, 20,21. 1 Pet. 4.10,11 [20-21].

---

[1]Sec. 10 is peculiar to P, not appearing anywhere in PS.

[2]PS, sec. 13, with some changes (q.v.).

[3]PS reads "Pastors and Teachers."

[4]PS reads "Holy Ghost."

[5]Bracketed section differs from PS.

[PS,20]
[61]

XX. As all Believers are bound to joyn themselves to particular Churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do, *so none are to be admitted unto the Priviledges of the Churches, who do not submit themselves to the Rule of Christ in the Censures for the Government of them.*

[PS,21]

XXI. *This being the way prescribed by Christ in case of offence,* no Church-members upon any offences taken by them, having performed their duty required of them *in this matter,* ought to disturb any Church-order, or absent themselves from the *publique* Assemblies, or the Administration of any Ordinances upon *that pretence,* but to wait upon Christ in the further proceeding of the Church.

[*XXII.-XXIV.*] [See Below (B57-85).]

[PS,25]
[62]

XXV. As *all Churches* and all the Members of them are bound to pray continually for the good *or* prosperity of all the Churches of Christ in all places, and upon all occasions to further *it;* (Every one within the bounds of their Places and Callings, in the exercise of their Gifts and Graces) So the Churches themselves (when planted by the providence of God, so as they may *have* oppertunity and advantage for it) ought to hold communion amongst themselves for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.

[PS,20] [96] 12. As (1) all Believers are bound to join themselves to particular Churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; [*so all that are admitted unto the Privileges of a Church, are also* (b) *under the Censures and Government thereof, according to the Rule of Christ.*] (2)

[PS,21] 13. No (3) Church-members upon any Offence taken by them, having performed their Duty required of them *towards the Person they are offended at,* (4) ought to disturb any Church Order, or absent themselves from the Assemblies of the Church, (5) or Administration of any Ordinances, *upon the Account of such Offence at any of their Fellow-members,* (6) but to wait upon Christ, (c) in further Proceeding of the Church.

[PS, 25] [97] 14. As (7) *each Church,* and all the Members of *it,* (8) are bound to (d) pray continually, for the Good *and* Prosperity of all the Churches of Christ, in all

---

(b) 1 Thess. 5.14. 2 Thess. 3.6,14,15. (c) Matt. 18.15,16,17. Eph. 4.2,3. (d) Eph. 6.18. Psalm 122.6.

---

[1] PS, sec. 20 (secs. 14 to 19 not used by P.)

[2] Bracketed section differs from PS (q.v.).

[3] PS, sec. 21, with some changes (q.v.).

[4] PS reads "required of them in this matter."

[5] PS reads "publique Assemblies."

[6] PS reads simply "upon that pretence."

[7] PS, sec. 25, with minor changes (secs. 22 to 24 not used by P).

[8] PS uses plural (q.v.).

26] XXVI. In Cases of Difficulties or Differences, either in point of Doctrine or *in* Administrations, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church in their Peace, Union, and Edification, or any Member or Members of any Church are injured in, or by any proceeding in Censures, not agreeable to Truth and Order: it is according to the minde of Christ, that many Churches holding communion together, do by their Messengers meet *in a Synod or Councel*, to consider and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the Churches concerned; Howbeit these *Synods so* assembled are not entrusted with any Church-Power, properly so called, or with any Jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any Censures, either over any Churches or Persons, or to impose their determinations on the Churches or Officers.

[*XXVII.-XXX.*] [See below.][1]

---

[1]The remaining sections of PS are included in app. B (B86-119).

Places, and upon all Occasions to further [it], (1) (every one within the Bounds of their Places and Callings, in the Exercise of their Gifts and Graces) so the Churches (2) (when planted by the Providence of God, so as they may *enjoy* Opportunity and Advantage for it) ought to hold (e) Communion amongst themselves, for their Peace, Increase of Love and mutual Edification.

[PS,26] 15. In (3) Cases of Difficulties or Differences, either in Point of Doctrine or Administration; wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church, in their Peace, Union, and Edification; or any Member, or Members of any Church are injured, in or by any Proceedings in Censures not agreeable to Truth and Order: It is according to the Mind of Christ, that many Churches holding Communion together, do by their Messengers meet (4)
[98] to consider, (f) and give their Advice in or about that Matter in Difference, to be reported to all the Churches concerned; howbeit these *Messengers* assembled, (5) are not intrusted with any Church-power properly so called; or with any Jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any Censures either over any Churches, or Persons; or (g) to impose their Determination on the Churches or Officers.

(e) Rom. 16.1,2. 3 John 8.9,10. (6)
(f) Acts 15.2,4,6. and 22.23,25. (g)
2 Cor. 1.24. 1 John 4.1.

---

[1] PS reads "further it"; P lacks "it."

[2] PS reads "Churches themselves."

[3] PS, sec. 26, with minor changes; compare 1P, p. 61 (A1454-96).

[4] PS reads "in a Synod or Councel."

[5] PS reads "Synods so assembled."

[6] Text in Underhill is misprinted: 3 John [8.]9,10.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of the Communion of Saints.[1]

[45] [1S,27.1] [W,26.1] All Saints that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit and (2) Faith, *although they are not made thereby one person with him,* (3) have fellowship (4) in his Graces, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection and Glory: and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, publique and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward Man.

[46] [1S,27.2] [W,26.2] II. *All* (5) Saints are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the Worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, *though especially to be exercised by them in the relations wherein they stand, whether in Families or Churches, yet* (6) as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus. (7)

---

[1] W, chap. 26.

[2] W adds "by."

[3] A simple addition to W.

[4] W adds "with him."

[5] W reads "Saints, by profession are bound."

[6] Simple addition, nothing omitted from W.

[7] At this point 1S rejected the following section of W: "III. This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in anywise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions." (Italics show section used by P, but omitted in 1S.)

C H A P. XXVIII.

Of the Communion of Saints.[1]

[1S,27.1] 1. All (2) Saints that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and Faith, although they are not made thereby one Person with him, have (a) fellowship in his Graces, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection and Glory; and being united to one another in Love, they (b) have Communion in each others Gifts and Graces, and are obliged to the Performance of such Duties, publick and private, *in an orderly way*, (3) (c) as do conduce to their mutual Good, both in the inward and outward Man. [99]

[1S,27.2] 2. *Saints* (4) *by Profession*, (5) are bound to maintain an holy Fellowship and Communion in the Worship of God, and in Performing such other Spiritual Services, (d) as tend to their mutual Edification; as also in relieving each other in (e) outward Things, according to their several Abilities, and Necessities; which Communion, *according to the Rule of the Gospel*, (6) tho especially

(a) 1 John 1.3. John 1.16. Phil. 3.10. Rom. 6.5,6. (b) Eph. 4.15,16. 1 Cor. 12.7, 1 Cor. 3.21,22,23. (c) 1 Thess. 5.11,14. Rom. 1.12. 1 John 3.17,18. Gal. 6.10. (d) Heb. 10.24,25. with Chap. 3.12,13. (e) Acts 12.29,30.

---

[1] 1S, chap. 27; W, chap. 26.

[2] 1S, sec. [1].

[3] Addition to 1S and W.

[4] 1S, sec. 2.

[5] Follows W (q.v.).

[6] Addition to 1S and W.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Sacraments.

[1S,28.1] [W,27.1] Sacraments are holy Signs and Seals of the Covenant of Grace immediately instituted by *Christ,* (1) to represent *him* (2) and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him, (3) and solemnly to engage *us* (4) to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.

[1S,28.2] [W,27.2] II. There is in every Sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union between the signe and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and (5) effects of the one are attributed to the other.

[1S,28.3] [W,27.3] [47] III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them, neither [47] doth the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of Institution, which contains together with a Precept authorizing the use thereof, a Promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

[1S,28.4] [W,27.4] IV. There be onely two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the *Lords* (6) Supper; neither of which may be dispensed by any but a Minister of the Word lawfully *called.* (7)

[1S,28.5] [W,27.5] V. The Sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the New.

---

[1] W reads "by God."

[2] W reads "represent Christ."

[3] W adds "as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world."

[4] W reads "them."

[5] W adds "the."

[6] W reads "Supper of the Lord."

[7] W reads "lawfully ordained."

to be exercised by them, in the Relations wherein they stand, whether in [100] (f) Families, or (g) Churches, yet as God offereth Opportunity, is to be extended to *all the Household of Faith, even* (1) all those who in every Place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus; [*nevertheless their Communion one with another as Saints, doth not take away, or* (h) *infringe the Title or Property* (2) *which each Man hath in his Goods and Possessions.*] (3)

C H A P. XXIX.

Of Baptism and the Lords Supper.[4]

1. *Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are Ordinances* (5) *of positive and sovereign Institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus the only Law-giver,* [to be continued in his Church (a) to the End of the World.] (6)

(f) Eph. 6.4. (g) 1 Cor. 12.14,27 [14-27]. (h) Acts 5.4. Eph. 4.28.

(a) Matth. 28.19,20. 1 Cor. 11.26.

---

[1]Addition to W and 1S.

[2]W reads "propriety"; the Second London Confession of 1677 also used "propriety" (see Lumpkin, p. 290).

[3]The bracketed section is an addition to 1S from W.

[4]W, chap. 27 and 1S, chap. 28. Both the Westminster and the Savoy confessions provide a much fuller description of sacraments (ordinances) in general (see 1S,28 on the facing page; for W, see Schaff, 3:660-61).

[5]W uses the term "sacrament"; 1S and P use "ordinance." On occasion 1S also uses "sacrament"; P never uses the term.

[6]The bracketed phrase is from W on baptism (W,28.1).

CHAP XXIX.

Of Baptism.[1]

[1S,29.1] [W,28.1] BAptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ (2) to be unto the party baptized (3) a signe and seal of the Covenant of Grace, of his ingraffing into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life; which *Ordinance* (4) is by Christs own appointment to be continued in his Church until the end of the world.

---

[1] W, chap. 28.

[2] W adds "not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be . . ."

[3] W reads "unto him a sign."

[4] W reads "sacrament."

[101] 2. *These holy Appointments are to be administered by those only, who are qualified, and thereunto called according* (b) *to the Commission of Christ.* (1) 636 638

C H A P. XXX.

Of Baptism.[2]

[1S,29.1] 1. Baptism is *an Ordinance* (3) of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, (4) to be unto the Party baptized, a Sign [*of his Fellowship with him in his Death* (a) *and Resurrection;*] (5) of his being engrafted into him; of (b) Remission of Sins; and of his (c) giving up unto God, thro' Jesus Christ, to *live and* walk in newness of Life. (6) 640 642 644 646 648

(b) Matt. 28.19. 1 Cor. 4.1.

(a) Rom. 6.3,4,5. Col. 2.12. Gal. 3.27.
(b) Mark 1.4. Acts 26.16. (c) Rom. 6.24.

---

[1]Compare 1S and W for the proper administrators of gospel ordinances: "Minister of the Word lawfully called" (1S,28.4); and one "lawfully ordained" (W,27.4).

[2]W, chap. 28; 1S, chap. 29, but with significant alterations in P (see facing page for 1S,29).

[3]1S and W read "Sacrament."

[4]W adds "not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be . . ."

[5]The bracketed phrase is lacking in W and 1S. They read "a signe and seal of the Covenant of Grace."

[6]P adds words "live and." Both 1S and W add to this section "which Ordinance [W: Sacrament] is by Christ's own appointment to be continued in his Church until the end of the world."

[1S,29.2] [48] [W,28,2] II. The outward Element to be used in this *Ordinance*, (1) is [48] Water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, by a Minister of the Gospel lawfully called. (2)

[1S,29.3] [W,28.3] III. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but Baptism is rightly administred by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

[1S,29.4] [W,28.4] IV. Not onely those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the Infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized, *and those onely*. (3)

[1S,29.5] [W,28.5] V. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this Ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it; or that all that are baptized, are undoubtedly regenerated.

[1S,29.6] [W,28.6] VI. The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administred, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this Ordinance, the grace promised is not onely offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of Gods own Will in his appointed time.

[1S,29.7] [W,28.7] VII. Baptism (4) is but once to be administered to any person.

---

[1] W reads "sacrament."

[2] W adds "thereunto"; and 2S and 3S have the addition.

[3] A simple addition, nothing omitted from W.

[4] W reads "The sacrament of baptism is . . ."

2. *Those who do actually profess* (d) *Repentance towards God, Faith in, and Obedience to our Lord Jesus,* [102] *are the only proper Subjects of this Ordination.* (1)

[1S,29.2] [W,28.2] 3. The outward Element, to be used in this Ordination, (2) (e) is Water, wherein the Party is to be baptized, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy *Spirit.* (3)

[1S,29.3] [W,28.3] 4. *Immersion, or Dipping of the Person* (f) *in Water, is necessary to the due Administration of this Ordinance.* (4)

C H A P. XXXI.

Of Laying on of Hands.[5]

[K,23] *We believe that* (a) *laying on of Hands (with Prayer) upon baptized Believers, as such, is an Ordinance*

(d) Mark 16.16. Acts 8.37,38. (e) Matt. 28.19,20. with Acts 8.38. (f) Matt. 3.16. John 3.23.

(a) Heb. 5.12. and 6.1,2. Acts. 8.17, 18, and 19.6.

---

[1]Reflected in P,30.2 is the tenet of Believers' Baptism which appears in British confessions (1L,40; 2L,30; see Lumpkin, pp. 167 and 291).

[2]W reads "sacrament."

[3]W and 1S conclude "holy Ghost, by a Minister of the Gospel lawfully called [W: thereunto]." (1S,29.2).

[4]Both W and 1S allow of "pouring and sprinkling water" as a legitimate mode of baptizing (1S,29.3; W,28.3).

[5]This chapter on laying on of hands is not found in W or 1S. Philadelphia Baptists in 1742 adopted the views in the Keach Confession (K, art. 23).

CHAP. XXX.

Of the Lords Supper.[1]

[1S,30.1] [W,29.1] OUr Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, called the Lords Supper, to be observed in his Churches (2) unto (3) the end of the world,/ for the perpetual remembrance, *and shewing forth* (4) of the Sacri-/fice of himself in his death, the sealing *of* (5) all benefits thereof unto/ true believers, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their/ further ingagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him,/ and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and/ with each other. (6)

[1S,30.2] [W,29.2] II. In this Sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real Sacrifice made at all for remission of sin (7) of the quick/ or dead, but onely a *memorial* (8) of that one offering up of himself/ by himself upon the Cross once for all, and a spiritual Oblation of/ all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the Popish Sac-/rifice of the Mass (as they call it) is most abominable, (9) injurious to/ Christs *own* (10) onely Sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins/ of the Elect.

[1S,30.3] [W,29.3] III. The Lord Jesus hath in this Ordinance appointed his Ministers (11) to pray and bless the Elements of Bread and Wine, and

---

[1] W, chap 29.

[2] W reads "church."

[3] 2S reads "to."

[4] A simple addition, nothing omitted from W.

[5] A simple addition, nothing omitted from W.

[6] W adds "as members of his mystical body."

[7] W reads "sins."

[8] W reads "commemoration."

[9] W reads "abominably."

[10] W reads "one."

[11] W adds "appointed his minister to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray . . ." This phrase, rejected in 1S, is restored in the Confession of 2S and 3S, the latter however reading (possibly erroneously) "instruction" instead of "institution."

of Christ, and ought to be submitted unto by all such Persons that are admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper; and that the End of this Ordinance is [103] *not for the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, but for* (b) *a farther Reception of the Holy Spirit of Promise, or for the Addition of the Graces of the Spirit, and the Influences thereof; to confirm, strengthen, and comfort them in Christ Jesus; it being ratified and established by the* (c) *extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit in the Primitive Times, to abide in the Church, as meeting together on the first Day of the Week, was* Acts *2.1. that being the Day of Worship, or Christian Sabbath, under Gospel; and as Preaching the Word was,* Acts *10.44. and as Baptism was,* Mat. *3.16. and Prayer was,* Acts *4.31. and singing Psalms, etc. was* Acts *16.25, 26. so this of laying on of Hands was,* Acts *8. &* ch. *19, For as the whole Gospel was confirmed by* (d) *Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost in general, so was every Ordinance in like manner confirmed in particular.*

C H A P. XXXII.

[104] Of the Lord's Supper.[1]

[1S,30.1] 1. *The Supper of the Lord Jesus,* (2) *was instituted by him, the same Night wherein he was betrayed,* to be observed in his Churches unto the

(b) Eph. 1.13,14. (c) Acts 8. and 19.6. (d) Heb. 2.3.

[1] W, chap. 29; 1S, chap. 3. The language in sec. 1 has been considerably altered in P (see 1S,29.1 on facing page).

[2] W and 1S use the expression "the Sacrament of his Body and Blood."

end of the World, for the perpetual Remembrance, and shewing forth the Sacrifice of himself in his Death, (a) *Confirmation of the Faith of Believers in all the Benefits thereof,* (1) their spiritual Nourishment, and Growth in him, their further Ingagement in and to all Duties which they owe unto him; (b) and to be a Bond and Pledge of their Communion with him and with each other. (2)

[1S,30.2] 2. In this *Ordinance* (3) Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real Sacrifice made at all for Remission of Sin, of the Quick or Dead, but only a Memorial (4) of that (c) one offering up [105] of himself, by himself, upon the Cross, once for all; and a Spiritual Oblation of all (d) possible Praise unto God for the same. So that the Popish Sacrifice of the Mass (as they call it) is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own (5) only Sacrifice, the alone Propitiation for all the Sins of the Elect.

[1S,30.3] 3. The Lord Jesus hath in this Ordinance, appointed his Ministers (6) to

---

(a) 1 Cor. 11.23,24,25,26. (b) 1 Cor. 10.16,17,21. (c) Heb. 9.25,26,28. (d) 1 Cor. 11.24. Matt. 26.26,27.

---

[1]W and 1S read "the sealing [1S: of] all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment, . . ."

[2]W adds "as members of his mystical body." 1S and P both delete these words.

[3]W and 1S read "Sacrament."

[4]W reads "commemoration."

[5]W reads "one."

[6]W adds "appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray . . ." Rejected by 1S, the italicized phrase was used by 2S and 3S. The latter reads, perhaps erroneously, "instruction."

thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use, and to take and break the Bread, to take the Cup, and (they communicating
[50] also themselves) to give [50] both to the Communicants, but to none who are not then present in the Congregation.

[1S,30.4] IV. Private Masses, or receiving the Sacrament by a Priest,
[W,29.4] or any other alone, as likewise the denial of the Cup to the people, worshiping the Elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are contrary to the nature of this Sacrament, and to the Institution of Christ.

[1S,30.5] V. The outward Elements in this Sacrament duely set apart
[W,29.5] to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him Crucified, as that truely, yet Sacramentally onely, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the Body and Blood of Christ; albeit in substance and nature they still remain truly and onely Bread and Wine as they were before.

Pray, and Bless the Elements of Bread and Wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy Use, and to take and break the Bread; to take the Cup (e) and (they communcating [sic] also themselves) to give both to the Communicants. (1)

[1S,30.4] 4. The (2) Denial of the Cup to the People, worshipping the Elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for Adoration, and reserving them for any pretended Religious Use, (f) [106] are *all* contrary to the Nature of this *Ordinance*, (3) and the Institution of Christ.

[1S,30.5] 5. The outward Elements in this *Ordinance*, (4) duly set apart to the Uses ordained by Christ, have such Relation to him crucified, as that truly, *although in Terms used figuratively*, (5) they are sometimes called by the Name of the Things they represent, to wit, the (g) Body and Blood of Christ, albeit in Substance and Nature, they still remain truly and only (h) Bread and Wine, as they were before.

(e) 1 Cor. 11.23,24,25,26,etc. (f) Matt. 26.26,27,28. Matt. 15,9. Exod. 20.4,5. (g) 1 Cor. 11.27. (h) 1 Cor. 11.26. & Ver. 28.

---

[1] W and 1S add "but to none who are not then present in the Congregation."

[2] P seems less polemical then W and 1S which read "Private Masses, or receiving the Scarament by a Priest, or any other alone, as likewise the denial . . ."

[3] W and 1S read "Sacrament." Earlier "all" is a simple addition to 1S.

[4] W and 1S read "Sacrament."

[5] W and 1S read "yet Sacramentally onely [sic], they are . . ."

[1S,30.6] [W,29.6] VI. That Doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of Bread and Wine into the substance of Christs Body and Blood (commonly called Transubstantiation) by consecration of a Priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament, and hath been, and is the cause of manifold Superstitions, yea of gross Idolatries.

[1S,30.7] [51] [W,29.7] VII. Worthy Receivers outwardly partaking of the visible [51] Elements in this Sacrament, do then also inwardly by Faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death; the Body and Blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the Bread *or* (1) Wine; yet as really, but spiritually present to the Faith of Believers in that Ordinance, as the Elements themselves are to their outward senses.

[1S,30.8] [W,29.8] VIII. All (2) ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lords Table, and cannot without great sin against him, whilest they remain such, partake of these holy Mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, eating and drinking *Judgement* (3) to themselves.

---

[1] W reads "and."

[2] Though this section is in substantial agreement with the corresponding section in W, it has been rewritten. W reads:

> "VIII. Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto."

[3] W reads "damnation."

[1S,30.6] 6. The Doctrine which maintains a Change of Substance of Bread and Wine, into the Substance of Christ's Body and Blood (commonly called Transubstantiation) by Consecration of a Priest, or by any other Way, is repugnant not to Scripture (i) alone, but even to common Sense and Reason, overthroweth the (k) Nature of the [107] *Ordinance*, (1) and hath been, and is the Cause of manifold Superstitions, yea, of gross Idolatries.

[1S,30.7] 7. Worthy Receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible Elements in this *Ordinance*, (2) do then also inwardly, by Faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, (l) and all *the* Benefits of his Death; the Body and Blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, (3) but spiritually present to the Faith of Believers in that Ordinance, (4) as the Elements themselves, are to their outward Senses.

[1S,30.8] 8. All (5) ignorant and ungodly Persons, as they are unfit to enjoy Communion (m) with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table, and cannot, without great Sin against him, while they

---

(i) Acts 3.21. Luke 24.6 & Ver. 39. (k) 1 Cor. 11.24,25. (l) 1 Cor. 10.16. ch. 11.23,----26. (m) 2 Cor. 6.14,15.

---

[1] W and 1S read "Sacrament."

[2] W and 1S read "Sacrament."

[3] W and 1S insert "carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually . . ."

[4] This is one instance where W, as well as 1S and P, uses the term "Ordinance."

[5] Sec. 8 is taken verbatim from 1S which, though different in expression, is substantially the same as W (see W,29.8 on the facing page).

[K]

The Articles of Faith of

the Church of Christ

meeting at Tallow-

Chandlers Hall.

[THE CONTENTS.][1]

		Page
art. 1-2.	Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.	3
3.	Of the Decrees of God.	4
4.	Of Creation.	
5.	Of God's Providence.	5
6.	Of the holy Scriptures.	
7.	Of Original Sin.	6
8.	Of Man's Free Will.	7
9.	Of Christ the Mediator.	8
10.	Of the Offices of Christ.	9
11.	Of Christ's Humiliation and Exhaltation	10
12.	Of Effectual Calling.	11
13.	Of Justification.	12
14.	Of Adoption.	13
15.	Of Sanctification.	14
16.	Of the Souls of Men at Death.	15
17-18.	Of the Law.	16
19.	Of Faith and Repentance.	18
20.	Of the Means of Grace.	19
21.	Of Baptism.	20
22.	Of a true Church.	22
23.	Of Laying on of Hands. (2)	23
24.	Of the Lord's Supper.	24
25.	Of Church-Officers.	25
26.	Of Prayer.	26
27.	Of Singing of Psalms, etc. (3)	27

---

[1]The original does not have a table of contents.

[2]This art. 23 on the laying on of hands was incorporated into the Philadelphia Confession by order of the P.B.A. (Gillette, 42:46).

[3]This art. 27 was also added to P by order of the P.B.A. (Gillette, 42:46).

remain such, partake of these Holy Mysteries (n) or be admitted thereunto: Yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, eating and drinking Judgment (1) to themselves.

[108]

[109-12] [Chaps. XXXIII and XXXIV are omitted.]

[113] THE CONTENTS.

[A1-138] CHAP. I Of the Holy Scriptures,[2] Page 9

[A139-163]
2. Of God and of the Holy Trinity. 17
3. Of God's Decrees. (3) 20
4. Of Creation. 24
5. Of Divine Providence. (4) 26
6. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof. 30
7. Of God's Covenant. (5) 32

[A164-233]
8. Of Christ the Mediator. 34
9. Of Free-Will. 41
10. Of Effectual Calling. 43
11. Of Justification. 46
12. Of Adoption. 49
13. Of Sanctification 50

[A234-268]
14. Of Saving Faith. 52
15. Of Repentance unto Life and Salvation. (6) 55

(n) 1 Cor. 11.29. Matt. 7.6.

[1] W reads "damnation."

[2] The Keach Confession places this chapter in fifth place: Of God, and the Holy Trinity. (K,1-2), Of the Decrees of God. (K,3), Of Creation. (K,4), Of God's Providence. (K,5), and Of the holy Scriptures. (K,6) (see facing page for K).

[3] 1S reads "Of Gods Eternal Decree."

[4] 1S reads "Of Providence."

[5] 1S reads "Of God's Covenant with Man."

[6] W reads "Of Repentance Unto Life." 1S adds "and salvation," and wholly rewrites and rearranges W. (Walker, pp. 381-82); P follows 1S (P,15).

28.	Of the Christian Sabbath.	27	(3)
29.	Of Ministers, and their Maintenance.	29	
30.	Of the first Covenant.	30	
31.	Of the New and Second Covenant.	31	
32.	Of Election.	32	
33.	Of Final Perseverance.	33	
34.	Of the Resurrection.	34	
35.	Of Eternal Judgment.		
36.	Of Marriages.	35	
37.	Of Civil Magistrates.		
38.	Of Lawful Oaths.	36	
39.	Of Personal Propriety. [sic]		
	POSTSCRIPT.	37	

[114]	16.	Of Good Works.	57	
	17.	Of Perseverance of the Saints.	61 (1)	800
	18.	Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.	64	
	19.	Of the Law of God. (2)	68	802
[A269-322]	20.	Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace thereof. (3)	72	
[A323-334]	21.	Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.	75	804
[A335-386]	22.	Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath-Day.	78	
[A387-404]	*23.*	*Of Singing of Psalms in publick Worship*. (4)	83	806
	24.	Of Lawful Oaths and Vows.	84	
	25.	Of the Civil Magistrates. (5)	86	808
	26.	Of Marriage.	88	
[A405-593]	27.	Of the Church. (6)	89	810
[A594-629]	28.	Of the Communion of Saints. (7)	98	
[A630-639]	29.	Of Baptism & the Lord's Supper.	100 (8)	812
[A640-661]	30.	Of Baptism. (9)	101	
[A662-692]	*31.*	*Of Laying-on of Hands*. (10)	102	814
[A693-783]	32.	Of the Lord's Supper.	104	
	33.	Of the State of Man (11) after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead.	108	816
	34.	Of the Last Judgment.	110	

---

[1] 1S and W read "Of the Perseverance . . ."

[2] P follows 1S which has expanded upon W.

[3] 1S,20 is an addition to W employed by P. Thus subsequent chapter numbers differ for W and 1S and P (see comparative chart above, p. 128; also A269-322).

[4] P,23 is an addition to 1S and W, taken from K,27 (see facing page; also A387-444).

[5] The discussion on civil magistrates differs in all three, W, 1S and P (see Walker, pp. 393-94 compared to Lumpkin, pp. 283-84 and Schaff, 3:652-55).

[6] 1S changed W considerably; P incorporates large sections of PS (A406-593).

[7] P uses sections unique to 1S and proper to W (A594-629).

[8] 1S and W read "Of the Sacraments." P has shortened 1S.

[9] P,30.2 adds idea of believers' baptism (A640-661).

[10] P,31 is an addition to 1S and W, taken from K,23 (see facing page; also A662-92).

[11] W reads "men."

B. A Short Treatise of Church-Discipline of 1743[1]

[1K,p.5] Concerning a true and orderly Gospel
C H U R C H.

[7] B E F O R E there can be any 818
orderly Discipline among a
christian Assembly, they must 820
be orderly constituted into a Church-
State, according to the Institution of 822
Christ in the Gospel.

1. A visible Gospel Church is made 824
by gathering divers select Persons unto
Jesus Christ, in a Spiritual Body, and 826
[8] Relation to him as their political Head,
Ezek. 34. 11. 2 Thess. 2. 1. himself 828
being the great Shepherd, that first
seeks them, and prepares them by the 830
Work of renewing Grace, for such
spiritual Building. 832

2. Christ as the Mediator of the
new Covenant, ordereth the everlasting 834
Gospel to be preached, and accompa-
nying it with his holy Spirit, blesseth 836
it to the turning of Men from Darkness
to Light, working Faith and Love in 838
them. Ephes. 2. 17. Acts 26. 18.

3. When Sinners are thus wrought 840
upon effectually, to such a suitable
Number, as may be an essential Church, 842
i.e. so many as may act properly and
orderly as a Church, Math. 18. 15,-- 844
17. that then it will be proper for them
by their mutual Consent, to propose to 846
be constituted a Church, or that others

---

[1]This Discipline, ordered by the P.B.A., Sept. 25, 1742, was composed by Benjamin Griffith, and formally adopted in 1743 (Gillette, 42:46, 43:48). The text is taken from A Short Treatise of Church Discipline (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1743). [Bound with A Confession of Faith . . .] (Hereafter: 1P.) 1P

seeing the Expediency thereof may encourage the same. Acts 11.

4. For the Accomplishment of so glorious a Work, it is necessary that a
[9] Day of Fasting and Prayer be appointed by and among such Believers, and that such procure such neighbouring Helps as they can, especially of the Ministry. Acts 8. 14. 1 Thess. 3. 2.

5. The Persons being first orderly Baptized, according to the Command of Christ in Matth. 28. 19. and being all satisfied of the Graces and Qualifications of each other, and being willing in the Fear of God to take the Laws of Christ upon them, and do by one mutual Consent give up themselves to the Lord, and to one another in the Lord, 2 Cor. 8. 5. solemnly submitting to the Government of Christ in his Church, and being united, they are to be declared a Gospel-Church of Jesus Christ, Phil. 2. 2, 3, 4. Rom. 15. 7. Chap. 12. 1. Acts. 2. 41, 42.

6. A Number of Believers thus united under Christ their mystical Head, are become a Church essential; and as such is the first and proper Subject of the Keys, and have Power and Privi-
[10] ledge to govern themselves, and to choose out their own ministerial Officers. Acts 14. 23. Chap. 6. 3.

****

[1K,p.8] Concerning Ministers, etc.

A C H U R C H thus constituted, is not yet compleated, while wanting such ministerial Helps, as Christ hath appointed for its Growth and well being; and wanting Elders and Deacons to officiate among them. Men, they must be, that are qualified for the Work; their Qualifications are plainly and fully set down in holy Scripture, 1 Tim. 3.

2--7. Tit. 4. 5--10. all which must be found in them, in some good Degree, and it is the Duty of the Church to try the Persons, by the Rule of the Word.

[11] [Objection and Answ. are omitted.]

2. A Church being destitute of ministerial Helps, may, after mature and often deliberate Consultation, and serious Prayers to God, pitch upon some Person or Persons in particular, giving him or them a solemn Invitation to the Work of the Ministry upon Tryal; and if such accept of the Church's Call, let such be upon Tryal, to see if such fear God, make Godliness their Business,
[12] and be addicted to the Work of the Ministry, seeking to further the Interest of Christ, and the Edification of his People in sound and wholesome Doctrine; and to see if any Vices or Immorality appear in their Advances, 1 Cor. 16. Phil. 2. 20, 21. Read the Qualifications in 1 Tim. 3. And in case a Church should call a Person to be their Minister, who is a Member of some Sister-Church, and he accept their Call to be their Minister, he must in the first Place give himself a Member with the Church so calling him, that so they may chuse him among themselves, as Acts 6. 3.

[3.] After having taken all due Care to chuse One for the Work of the Ministry, they are, by and with the unanimous Consent or Suffrage of the Church, to proceed to his Ordination, which is a solemn Setting-apart of such a Person for the sacred Function (in this wise) By setting apart a Day of Fasting and Prayer, Acts 13. 2, 3. the whole
[13] Church being present, he is to have the hands of the Presbytery of that Church (or of neighbouring Elders called and authorized by that Church) whereof such a Person is a Member, solemnly laid upon him. 1 Tim. 5. 22. Tit. 1. 5.

Acts 14. 23. 1 Tim. 4. 14. and thus such a Person is to be recommended into the Work of the Lord, and to take particular Care of the Flock of whom he is thus chosen, Acts 20. 28.

4. The Minister being thus put upon his Work, proceeds (1) to preach the Word of God unto them, thereby to feed the Flock, and therein ought to be faithful and laborious, studying to show himself a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, 2 Tim. 2. 15. as he is a Steward of God in the Mysteries of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. and therefore ought to be a Man of good Understanding and Experience, being found in the Faith, not a Novice, or a double-minded unstable Man, nor such as is light-spirited
[14] or of a shallow Understanding, but one that is Learned in the Mysteries of the Kingdom, because he is to feed the People with Knowledge and Understanding, Jer. 3. 15. he must be faithful in declaring the whole Counsel of God, Acts 20. 20. he is to instruct them in all practical Godliness, Laying before them their manifold Duties, and to urge them upon their Consciences, Tit. 2. 1--15. 1 Tim. 4. 6. (2) he must watch over them, as one that must give an Account to God, Heb. 13. 17. . . .
. . . . . .
(3) He is to visit his Flock, ...
. . . . . .
[15] . . (4) He is to administer all the Ordinances of Christ amongst them; as Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and herein he must be careful to follow the primitive Pattern, thereby to hold forth the great End, wherefore they were ordained. (5) He must be instant with God, in his Prayers for and with them, as Opportunity may serve. (6) He must show them a good Example in all Respects, in Conversation, Sobriety, Charity, Faith and Purity, 1 Tim. 4. 12. behaving himself impar-

tial unto all, not preferring the Rich
before the Poor, nor lording it over God's 984
Heritage, nor assume greater Power
than God hath given him, James 2. 4. 986
1 Tim. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 5. 3, 5.

[16] **********

Of Ruling Elders.

R U L I N G Elders are such Per- 988
sons as are endued with Gifts, to
assist the Pastor or Teacher in the Go- 990
vernment of the Church; it was as a
Statute in Israel, Exod. 18. Deut. 1. 992
9-13. The Works of Teaching and Ru-
ling belong both to the Pastor; but in 994
case he be unable, or the Work of Ru-
ling too great for him, God hath provi- 996
ded such for his Assistance, and they
are called Ruling Elders, 1 Tim. 5. 17. 998
Helps, 1 Cor. 12. 28. Governments,
or he that ruleth, Rom. 12. 8. They are 1000
qualified for, and called unto, one Part
of the Work: And Experience teacheth 1002
us the Use and Benefit of such Rulers
in the Church, in easing the Pastor or 1004
Teacher, and keeping up the Honour
of the Ministry. Their Qualifications 1006
are such as are requisite to Rule, as
[17] Knowledge, Judgment, Prudence, etc. 1008
and as to the Manner of their Ordina-
tion, it is like Ordination unto other 1010
Offices in the Church, with Fasting and
Prayer, with Imposition of Hands. 1012
Their Office only relateth to Rule
and Order, in the Church of God, and 1014
doth not include Teaching; yet if the
Church findeth they have Gifts and A- 1016
bilities to be useful in Teaching, they
may be put upon Tryal, and if approved, 1018
they may be called and solemnly set
apart by Ordination, it being wholly a 1020
distinct Office from the former, which
was only to rule well, and not to labour 1022
in Word and Doctrine.

****

[1K,p.10] Of Deacons.

D E A C O N S are Men called 1024
forth by the Church, to serve
the outward Concerns thereof; whose 1026
Office is to serve Tables. Acts 6. 2--7.
they are to be entrusted with the Stock 1028
[18] of the Church, out of which Stock
they are to assist the poor Members of 1030
the Church, and to provide Bread and
Wine for the Lord's Table, and also to 1032
have Regard to the Minister's Table;
and moreover they should see that all 1034
the Members of the Church do con-
tribute towards the proper Uses of the 1036
Church, (that therefrom all necessary
Occasions may be supplied,) as God 1038
hath given them, they to the Poor, so
that none be neglected, 1 Cor. 10. 2. 1040
by the faithful Discharge of which Office
they shall purchase to themselves a 1042
good Degree and great Boldness in the
Faith, 1 Tim. 3. 13. The Qualifications 1044
of these Officers are laid down 1 Tim.
3. 8--13. Acts 6. 2--8. 1046

****

[1K,p.17] Of the Admission of Church Members.

T H E Lord Jesus Christ hath commit-
ted the Use and Power of the Keys, 1048
[19] in Matters of Government, to every
visible congregational Church, to be 1050
used, according to the Rules and Di-
rections that he hath given in his Word, 1052
in his Name and to his Glory: The
Keys are the Power of Christ, which 1054
he hath given to every particular Con-
gregation, to open and shut itself by, 1056
and to do all Things in order to the
great Things proposed, vis. his Glory 1058
and his Peoples spiritual Benefit, in Peace
and Purity, Isa. 9. 7. Chap. 22. 22. 1060
Revel. 3. 7. Hebr. 3. 6. Eph. 2. 19--
22. Math. 16. 19. John 20. 23. 1062

By Virtue of the Charter and Power
aforesaid, which Christ hath given to his 1064
Church, his spiritual Corporation, they
are enabled to receive Members in, 1066
and to exclude unworthy Members as
Occasion may require, as may appear 1068
by divers Examples. Rom. 14. 1 Acts
2. 41. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. Mat. 18. 18 1070
2 Thess. 2. 6, 14.

[Here follows a discussion of procedures
[20-24] to deal with convert "Nonmembers" and "Members
of other Churches"; how the church, through
its minister at a general meeting, puts specif-
ic questions to converts.]

And after such Examination, the 1072
Question is to be put to the Church,
whether they are all satisfied with the 1074
Party's Confession and Conversation;
and if the Answer be in the Affirma- 1076
tive, then the Pastor or Minister is to
proceed, to ask the Party proposing, 1078
if he be willingly resolved (as God
shall give Ability) to walk in a professed 1080
Subjection to the Commands and In-
stitutions of Christ revealed in the Gos- 1082
pel, and to give himself a Member of
that Church in particular, Rom. 12. 1. 1084
Chap. 15. 7, 8, 9. 2 Cor. 8. 5 and to
continue in the Communion, Faith, 1086
and Order thereof, according to the Gos-
pel-Rules and Directions, and after the 1088
Person is baptised according to the In-
stitution and Command of Christ, and 1090
come under the Imposition of the Hands
of the Elders of the Church, according 1092
[25] to the Practice of the Apostles, Acts 8.
14--17. Hebr. 6. 2. the Pastor, Mi- 1094
nister or Elders, as presiding in the Acts
of the Church's Power, do receive such 1096
an one into the Communion and Fel-
lowship of that Church in particular. 1098
But if the Church is not satisfied with
the Person's Confession or Conversati- 1100
on, it is proper (if the Objections be of
any Weight) to defer the Party's Ad- 1102
mission untill [sic] a more ample Satisfaction

can be given, that all, if possible, may 1104
receive such with Freedom in Love,
and so as to discharge all Gospel Duties 1106
towards him, as may promote his Edi-
fication in the Faith and his Increase in 1108
Grace, 2 Cor. 1. 24. Chap. 10. 8.

[Here follows a discussion about accepting members of other churches, on a temporary or permanent basis. If the latter, either a testimonial letter or letter of dismissal from previous church is recommended. Then follows a statement of the obligation to join a particular church. Five arguments are given why it should be one "most conveniently situated." Despite difficulties, one is encouraged to retain membership in his church.] [26-29]

[30] And here it is further to be considered, 1110
that as it is expedient for Persons to give
themselves Members of such regular 1112
Churches, with which they may keep
the most intimate Fellowship and Com- 1114
munion in all the Parts of Religious
Worship. So it is highly reasonable 1116
that they, that are Members of such re-
gular Churches, where the Word is 1118
purely preached, the Ordinances of the
Gospel duly administred, [sic] and Gospel 1120
Discipline is impartially practised;
should continue their Membership with 1122
such Church; altho' there be Weakness,
Imperfection and Frailty, in the particu- 1124
lar practical Acts thereof; which while
the Affairs of the Church are managed 1126
by Men, even their holy Things will
have Iniquity as of old, Exod. 28. 38. 1128
it is thefore [sic] unreasonable to dismiss any
Member, from a Church that is near to 1130
any one's Residence, to a Church more
remote, . . . 1132

[Unreasonable requests for dismissal from church membership ought not to be granted. Four reasons are given; the fourth below.] [31-32]

. . . . (4) This hath a Tenden-
cy to alter the Constitution of particular 1134
Churches, from being congregational

Corporations, into the national or universal Notion of the Church; which universal Church we believe to be the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, which as such is not the Seat of Instituted Worship and Ordinances. Also it is not reasonable to dismiss to the World at large, nor to dismiss a Member to a Church, with which the Church dismissing, cannot hold Communion.

****

[33] Of the Duties of Church-Members.

[1K,p.12] T H E Members of Churches, owe all their Duties in a Way of Obedience to the Will of God revealed in his Word, and their Duties are to be performed, in Love to our Lord Jesus Christ, John 14. 15. who is the great Prophet, Priest and King of his Church, which he hath purchased with his own Blood, Acts 20. 28. Rev. 1. 5. 2 Cor. 5. 15. unto whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is given, Math. 28. 18. and is therefore our Lord and Lawgiver, Isai. 33. 22. who alone is Head of his Church, Ephes. 1. 22. his Person is to be honoured, and all his Commands are to be observed, Heb. 1. 2. John 5. 23. all Worship is to be ascribed unto him, as God blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5. all Church Members, therefore, are under the strictest Obligations to do and observe whatsoever Christ enjoyneth on them, as mutual Duties towards
[34] one another.

[Here follows an encouragement to respect deacons, ruling elders and ministers. Then a list of duties is given; among them (2) obedience and (6) maintenance of ministers.]

7. The Duties of Church Members, towards their Elders, Teachers, Ministers and Pastors, may be included in their
[35] (1) praying for them, ... (2) To obey them in the Lord, in whatsoever they admonish them,

according to the Word of God, Heb. 13. 17, 22. (3) In following their Example and Footsteps, as far as warranted by the Word, 1 Cor. 4. 16. Chap. 11. 1. Phil. 3. 17. Heb. 13. 7. (4) In standing by them, in all their Tryals and Afflictions, ... (5) In not exposing their Persons for their Infirmities, ...(6) In contributing towards their Maintenance, that they may attend wholly on Teaching and give themselves to the Ministry of the Word and to Prayer, [36] Acts 6. 4. the Reason thereof is evident, by a threefold Law. (i.) The Law of Nature, from whence the Apostle argues, 1 Cor. 9. 7--11. (2) The Levitical Law, 1 Cor. 9.13. (3) The Gospel enjoyneth and requireth the same, Gal. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 14. Let these above-cited Places of Scripture, be considered, with many other of like Importance; and the Nature and Tendency of the Work of the Ministry be well weighed, and it will be clear that it is a Duty required of God himself, and that not in a Way of Alms, as to the Poor, which is another standing Ordinance of Christ, but is to be performed in Love to Christ, and Obedience to his Laws, in order to support and carry the Interest of the Gospel. 1176 1178 1180 1182 1184 1186 1188 1190 1192 1194 1196 1198 1200 1202 1204 1206

[37-39] [The reciprocal duties of people and minister are mentioned. The next section deals with "manifold Duties of Christians, especially to the Household of Faith." Then a longer section on church censures.]

****

[40] Of Church Censures.

[1K,p.21] H A V I N G spoken of the gathering together of a particular gospel Church, and it's Officers, and the Rules whereby we are to be guided in choosing and ordaining of them, and of the Admission of Members, etc. it is 1208 1210 1212

meet to give a short View of a Church's Duties and Authority, in respect of Censures upon Offenders. 1214 1216

First, of Admonition.

[41] [The nature and kinds of "admonition" are discussed, according to the gospel demands in Math. 18. 18. 15, 16, 17.]

. . . . . (2) Admonition is private by one or more of the Brethren, or more Publick by the whole Church. 1218 1220
(1) When one Brother trespasses against another, the offended Brother is not to divulge the Offence, but to go in a gospel Way to the Offender, and to use his Endeavour to reclaim his Brother; and if he repents, the offended Brother ought to forgive him, Math. 18. 15. Luke 17. 3. but if the offending Brother will not hear, then the offended Brother ought to take two or three other Brethren, and them such as may be most likely to gain upon the Offender; but if this Admonition also takes no Effect, it is to be brought before the Church, Math. 18. 16, 17. (2) The Church when Matters come thus before them, shall admonish and endeavour to reclaim the Offender, in the Spirit of Meekness; and if the Brother that offended continues obstinate and impentitent, the Church is directed to exclude him, Math. 18. 17. 1222 1224 1226 1228 1230 1232 1234 1236 1238 1240 1242

[The section concludes with five more points about admonitions.]

[43-44] [Secondly, of Suspension, is omitted.]

Thirdly, of Excommunication.

Excommunication is a judicial Act or Censure of the Church, upon an Offender, by the Authority of Jesus Christ, and by his Direction, delivered to his Church by himself or his Apostles, in the New Testament, which a gospel-Church ought to put in Practice, when 1244 1246 1248

Matters of Fact require, according to gospel Rule: as first, when a Member (after all due Admonition) continues obstinate, and will hear no Reproof,
[45] Mat. 18. 17. Secondly, When a Member hath committed a gross Sin, which is directly against the moral Law, and being notorious and scandalous, and proved beyond Dispute, 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. 1 Tim. 5. 24. 2 Cor. 10. 6. then a Church is immediately to proceed unto Censure (notwithstanding any present Signs of Conviction or Remorse) for the necessary Vindication of the Glory of God, the Vindication of the Church also, and their holy Profession: And to manifest their just Indignation and Abhorrence against such Wickedness, 1 Cor. 5. 1--13. Thirdly, When a Member is found to be erroneous, defective, or heretical in some fundamental Point, or to swerve from the right Faith, in the Principles of the Christian Religion, 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20.

The Manner of Proceeding unto this great and awful instituted Ordinance, is: The Church being gathered together; the Offender also having Notice to come to make his Answer and
[46] Defence (if he comes not, he aggravates his Offence by despising the Authority of Christ in his Church) the Body of the Church is to have Knowledge of the Offender's Crime fully, and the full Proof thereof as of plain Matter of Fact; and after mature deliberate Consideration and consulting the Rules of Direction given in the Word of God (whether the Offender be present or absent) the Minister or Elder puts the Question to the whole Church, Whether they judge the Person guilty of such Crime now proved upon him, is worthy of the Censure of the Church for the same? to which the Members in general give their Judgment; which if it be in the Affirmative, then the Judgment of the Members in general being had, or the Majority of them, the Past-

or, Minister, or Elder sums up the Sentence of the Church, opens the Nature of the Crime, with the suitableness of the Censure, according to Gospel Rule; and having thus proceeded, a proper
[47] Time is fixed to put the Sentence in Execution, at which Time the Pastor, Minister or Elder of the Church (as his Place and Duty require) is to lay open the Heinousness of such a Sin, with all the Aggravating Circumstances thereof, and shewing what an abominable Scandal, such an Offender is become to Religion, what Dishonour it is to God, etc. applying the particular Places of Scripture that are proper to the Case, in order to charge the Offence home upon the Conscience of the Offender if present, that others also may fear; shewing also the awful Nature of this great Censure, and the main End thereof, for the Salvation and not the Destruction of the Soul, and with much Solemnity in the whole Society, calling upon God for his gracious Presence, and his Blessing upon this his Sacred Ordinance; that the great End thereof may be obtained. Still expressing the deep Sense the Church hath, of the Fall of this Brother, with the great Humiliation of the Church, and great Sorrow for, and Detestation of the Sin
[48] committed. The said Pastor, Minister, or Elder in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Presence of the Congregation, and by and with the Consent and according to the Judicial Sentence of the Church, cuts off, & secludes such an Offender by Name, from the Union & Communion of the Church, because of his Offences: So that such a Person is not thenceforth to be looked on, deemed or accounted as a Brother or Member of such a Church, until God shall restore him again by Repentance.

Which Exclusion carries in it the full Sense of our Lord's Words, Mat. 18. 17. Let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican; or of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 5. to deliver such an one to Satan; which

is an authoritative putting of such a Person out of the Communion of the Church, 1348
the Kingdom of Heaven; into the World, 1350
the Kingdom of Satan, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience, in 1352
order to his being humbled and broken
[49] under a Sight and Sense of his Sins, which 1354
is meant by the Destruction of the Flesh, and to the End that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord. 1356

[50-57] [Here follows a listing of disorders that call for the church's use of the power to censure. Among these a person's irregular and unilateral departure from church fellowship is singled out. Eleven other examples are listed.]

****

Of the Communion of Churches

Every particular congregational Church 1358
incorporated by and according to the
Institution of Christ in the Gospel, and duly organized according to the Pattern of 1360
the primitive Churches, hath sufficient 1362
Power from Christ to call and ordain its
own Officers; so that no Man or Set of Men 1364
have Authority to chuse Officers for them,
or impose any Officers on them, without 1366
their previous Knowledge and voluntary
Consent, Acts 6. 3. Deacons are to be chosen by the Multitude, Acts 14. 23. Elders 1368
were ordained in every Church by Election 1370
or Suffrage of the Church; and every particular Church, as such, assembled with her 1372
proper Elders, hath sufficient Power to re-
[58] ceive Members, Acts 2. 41. Rom. 14. 7. 1374
And in the Exercise of any Acts of Discipline, such a Church being convened with 1376
her own Officers or Elders in the Name of
Christ may act according to Gospel-Rule 1378
in any Case, even to excommunicate such
Members as are found to be obstinate in 1380
Disorders, or heretical in Principles, after
due Admonition; or such as are guilty of 1382
gross and scandalous Immoralities in Conversation, etc. independant on any other 1384

Church-Power superior to itself, or higher Judicatory lodged in any Man or any Set of Men, by any Institution of Christ: And therefore the Elders of a Church, meeting in the Absence of the Members, or convened with the Elders of other Churches, are not entrusted with a Power to act for a Church in Admission of Members, Ordination, or Censures, etc. and it is the Duty of such a Church to admonish any of her Members or Officers, their Teacher or Pastor, Col. 4.17. & exclude any too, when their Crimes require, according to the Rule of the Gospel.

[59] And such particular congregational Churches, constituted and organized according to the Mind of Christ revealed in the New Testament, are all equal in Power and Dignity, and we read of no Disparity between them, or Subordination among them, that should make a Difference between the Acts of their mutual Communion, so as the Acts of one Church should be Acts of Authority, and the Acts of others should be Acts of Obedience or Subjection, altho' they may vastly differ in Gifts, Abilities and Usefulness.

Such particular distinct Churches, agreing [sic] in Gospel-Doctrine and Practice, may and ought to maintain Communion together in many Duties, which may tend to the mutual Benefit and Edification of the Whole; and thereby one Church that hath Plenty of Gifts, may and ought, if possible, to supply another that lacketh, Cant. 8. 8. they may have mutual Giving & Receiving, Phil. 4. 15. and mutual Transalation, Recommendation or Dismission of Members from one Church to another as Occasion may require. It is to be noted, that Persons called to Office are not to be dis-
[60] missed as Officers, but as Members; tho' another Church may call such to the same Office again.

By Virtue also of such Communion, the Members of one such Church may, where they are known, occasionally partake at the Lord's Table with a Sister-Church, Yet notwithstanding such Communion of

Churches, by voluntary Consent and Confederation, the Officers of one particular Church may not act as Officers in another Church, in any Act of Government, without a particular Call thereunto from the other Church where they occasionally come.

It is expedient that particular Churches, constituted in the Way and Manner, and for the Ends declared in the former Part of this Narrative (when they are planted by the Providence of God, so as they may have Opportunity and Advantage so to do) should by their mutual Agreement, appoint proper Times and Places, to meet by their respective Messengers or Delegates, to consider of such Things as may be for the common Benefit of all such Churches, for [61] their Peace, Prosperity, and mutual Edification, and what may be for the Furtherance of the Gospel, and the Interest of Christ in the World.

[P,27.15] And (1) for as much as it falls out many times that particular Churches have to do with *doubtful* and difficult Matters, or Differences in Point of Doctrine or Administration (*like the Church of Antioch of old*) wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church, in their Peace, Union or Edification; or any Member or Members of a Church are injured, in or by any Proceeding in Censures not agreeable to *Gospel-Rule* (2) and Order; it is according to the Mind of Christ, that many Churches holding Communion together, should meet by their Messengers *and Delegates* (3) to consider of, and to give Advice in or about such Matters in Difference; *and their Sentiments* to be reported to all the Churches concerned: And such Messengers *and Delegates,* convened *in the Name of*

---

[1]Compare with P,27.15. Griffith, in 1P, adds force to the nature of the church council's functions. *Italics* indicate addition by Griffith to the ideas in P,27.15.

[2]P,27.15 reads "to Truth."

[3]P reads simply "Messengers."

Christ, by the voluntary Consent of the several Churches in such mutual Communion, 1474
[62] *may declare & determine of the Mind of* 1476
the Holy Ghost, revealed in Scripture,
concerning Things in Difference; and 1478
may decree the Observation of Things
that are true and necessary, because revea- 1480
led and appointed in the Scripture. And
the Churches will do well to receive, 1482
own and observe such Determinations,
on the Evidence and Authority of the 1484
Mind of the Holy Ghost in them, as
in Acts 15.29. (1) *Yet such Delegates* (2) *thus*
assembled, are not intrusted *or armed* with 1486
any *coercive Power,* (3) or any *superior* Juris-
diction (4) over the Churches concerned, so 1488
as to impose their Determinations on them
or their Officers, *under the Penalty of Ex-* 1490
communication, or the like. See the Confession, Chap. 26. §. 14, 15. See also Dr. 1492
Owen, On the Nature of the Gospel Church,
chap. 11. and Dr. Goodwin, Vol. 4. Bo. 1494
5. chap. 8, 9, 10, 11 etc. of the Government
of the Churches of Christ. 1496

THE END.

---

[1] This section in *italics* is not found in P.

[2] P reads "Messengers."

[3] P reads "Church-power."

[4] P reads "any Jurisdiction."

C. The Power and Duty of an Association of Churches.[1]

ESSAY.

That an Association is not a superior judicature, having such su-/ perior powers over the churches concerned; but
[61] that each particular [61] church hath a complete power and authority from Jesus Christ, to/ administer all gospel ordinances, provided they have a sufficiency of/ officers duly qualified, or that they be supplied by the officers of/ another sister church or churches, as baptism, and the Lord's sup-/ per, etc.; and to receive in and cast out, and also to try and ordain/ their own officers, and to exercise every part of gospel discipline and/ church government, independent of any other church or assembly/ whatever.

And that several such independent churches, where Providence/ gives them their situation convenient, may, and ought, for their/ mutual strength, counsel, and other valuable advantages, by their/ voluntary and free consent, to enter into an agreement and confede-/ ration, as is hinted in our printed Narrative or discipline, page 59,/ 60, 61.

Such churches there must be agreeing in doctrine and practice,/ and independent in their authority and church power, before they/ can enter into a confederation, as aforesaid, and choose delegates or/ representatives, to associate together; and thus the several indepen-/ dent churches being the constituents, the association, council or as-/ sembly of their delegates, when assembled, is not to be deemed a/ superior judicature, as having a superintendency over the churches,/ but subservient to the churches, in what may concern all the churches/ in general, or any one church in particular; and, though no power/ can regularly arise above its fountain from where it rises, yet we are of/ opinion, that an Association of the delegates of associate churches have/ a very considerable power in their hands, respecting those churches/ in their confederation; for if the agreement of several distinct/ churches, in sound doctrine and regular practice, be the first motive,/ ground, and foundation or basis of their confederation,

---

[1] The text is taken from Gillette, 49:60-63. It was written by Benjamin Griffith at the direction of the P.B.A. Copy appears also in Charleston Association, Baptist Confession . . . (1831), pp. 231-371. (Hereafter: G.) G

then it must/ naturally follow, that a defection in doctrine and practice in any church,/ in such confederation, or any party in any such church, is ground/ sufficient for an Association to withdraw from such a church or party/ so deviating or making defection, and to exclude such from them in/ some formal manner, and to advertise all the churches in confedera-/ tion thereof, in order that every church in confederation may with-/ draw from such in all acts of church communion, to the end they/ may be ashamed, and that all the churches may discountenance such,/ and bear testimony against the defection.

Such withdrawing from a defective or disorderly church, or that/ ought to be towards a delinquent church, is such as ariseth from their/ voluntary confederation aforesaid, and not only from the general duty/ that is incumbent on all orthodox persons, and churches to do, where/ no such confederation is entered into, as 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Now,/ from that general duty to withdraw from defective persons or churches,/ there can no more be done, than to desist from such acts of fellow-/ ship as subsisted before the with-drawing, which is merely negative,/ and in no wise any thing positive. 'Churches, as they are pillars of/ truth, may, and ought to endeavor to promote truth among others/ also; which endeavors, if they prove fruitless, as they are but mys-/ tico mode, they may be withdrawn; the withdrawing, [62] therefore, must/ [62] be accordingly; which is only to cease from future endeavors, leav-/ ing the objects as they were or are. But if there be a confederation/ and incorpo-ration, by mutual and voluntary consent, as the Associa-/ tion of churches must and ought to be, then something positive may/ and ought to be done; and, though an Association ought not to assume/ a power to excommunicate or deliver a defective or disorderly church/ to Satan, as some do claim, yet it is a power sufficient to exclude the/ dele-gates of a defective or disorderly church from an Associa-tion,/ and to refuse their presence at their consultations, and to advise all/ the churches in confederation to do so too. A godly man may, and/ ought to withdraw, not only from a heathen, but from such as have/ the form of godliness, if they appear to want the power of it, 2 Tim./ iii. 5, by the same parity of reason the saints, in what capacity soever/ they may be considered, may withdraw from defective or disorderly/ churches or persons; but excommunicate they cannot, there being/ no institution to authorize them so to do. But in the capacity of a/ congregational church, dealing with her own members, an Association,/ then, of the delegates of associate churches, may exclude and with-/ draw from defective and unsound or disorderly churches

or persons,/ in manner aforesaid; and this will appear
regular and justifiable by/ the light and law of nature, 1570
as is apparent in the conduct and prac-/ tice of all regular
civil and political corporations and confederations/ what- 1572
soever; who all of them have certain rules to exclude delin-/
quents from their societies, as well as for others to
accede thereunto.

We judge those things in the 15th chapter of the Acts 1574
of the/ Apostles to be imitable by an Association, viz.:
1st, their disowning/ of the erroneous and judaising teach- 1576
ers, saying, to whom we gave no/ such commandment, verse
24; 2ndly, the sending delegated persons/ of their own 1578
number, with Paul and Barnabas, to support their sen-/ tence
in the place where the debate sprung up, verse 25; and a
third/ thing followed in consequence thereof, viz., a 1580
delivering of the decrees/ to the other churches, to be
observed, as well as the church of Antioch,/ chap. xvi. 4. 1582
Consistent therewith, the practice of after ages is found/
to be; when, because they had no council, synod, or associ-
ation to/ convene, of course they called a council, in or- 1584
der to make head/ against any error or disorders, when in
any particular church, such/ things grew too big for a 1586
particular church peaceably to determine,/ as the case a-
about circumcision was at Antioch. In such cases all the/
churches were looked upon as one church, and all the bish- 1588
ops as/ universal, because of the unity of the faith and con-
formity of prac-/ tice which ought to be in the churches of 1590
Christ; though in all other/ cases, the several distinct
churches acted independent of each other,/ as Cyprian re- 1592
lates the practice of his time, viz.: That the bishops/
were so united in one body, that if any one of the body
broached any/ heresy, or began to waste and tear the flock 1594
of Christ, all the rest/ came immediately to its rescue.
Cyprian, cited by Bingham, book/ 2, page 101. And the 1596
same author observes, that they disowned/ the faulty, and
[63] advertised all the churches of the same. And Mr./ [63]
Crosby relates, that an Association in London did disown 1598
a certain dis-/ orderly church in London, and did caution
all the churches they/ were related to, not to countenance 1600
them in any way, nor to suffer/ their members to frequent
their meetings; and thus an Association may/ disown and 1602
withdraw from a defective or disorderly church, and advise/
the churches related to them to withdraw from, and to dis-
countenance/ such as aforesaid, without exceeding the 1604
bounds of their power.

And further, that an Association of the delegates of confederate/ churches may doctrinally declare any person or party in a church,/ who are defective in principles or disorderly in practice, to be cen-/ surable, when the affair comes under their cognizance, and without/ exceeding the bounds of their power and duty, to advise the church/ that such belong unto, how to deal with such, according to the rule/ of gospel discipline; and also to strengthen such a church, and assist/ her, if need be, by sending able men of their own number to help the/ church in executing the power vested in her by the ordinance of/ Jesus Christ, and to stand by her, and to defend her against the/ insults of such offending persons or parties.

The above is a transcript of the said essay, according to the order/ given by the said Association, which was ordered to be taken with-/ out the then introduction and singularity. Taking the substance and/ contents thereof as the judgment of the Association, respecting their/ power and duty.

Consented to and transcribed by me, Benjamin Griffith.

Signed by the whole Association, whose names are--

Nathaniel Jenkins, Moderator,
Jenkin Jones,
Owen Thomas,
David Davis,
John Davis,
James Carman,
Abel Morgan,
Benj. Miller,
Joshua Potts,
Isaac Eaton,
Malachiah Bonham,
Oliver Hart,
William Marshall,
Jno. Bartholomew,
William Smith,
} Ministers.

John Watson,
Thomas Smith
Augsbury Smith,
Samuel Ashmead,
Lewis Thomas
Thomas Coxs,
James Dorset,
John Davis,
Robert Chaffin,
John Williams,
James Davis,
Andrew Bray,
John Stout,
Crispin Collet.

D. Letter from the Philadelphia Baptist Association to the Warren Association, September 8, 1767. (1)

The Elders and Messengers of the several Baptist churches met in association at Philadelphia, the 14th, 15th and 16th days of October, 1766. To the Elders and Messengers of the several Baptist churches of the same faith and order, to meet in Association at Warren, in the Colony of Rhode Island, the 8th day of September, 1767, send greeting.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN: -- When we understood that you had concluded to meet at the time and place above mentioned, with a view to lay the foundationstone of an associational building, it gave us peculiar joy, in that it opened to our view a prospect of much good being done. You will perhaps judge this our address to you premature, because as yet you have only an ideal being, as a body by appointment. But if you should call this our forwardness blind zeal, we are still in hopes you will not forget that our embracing the first opportunity of commencing Chrisitan fellowship and acquaintance with you, affords the strongest evidence of our approbation of your present meeting, and how fond we should be of mutual correspondence between us in this way.

A long course of experience and observation has taught us to have the highest sense of the advantages which accrue from associations; nor indeed does the nature or thing speak ony other language. For, as particular members are collected together and united in one body, which we call a particular church, to answer those ends and purposes which could not be accomplished by any single member, so a collection and union of churches into one associational body may easily be conceived capable of answering those still greater purposes which any particular church could not be equal to. And by the same reason, a union of associations will still increase the body in weight and strength, and make it good that a threefold cord is not easily broken. (2)

---

[1]The text is taken from Reuben Aldridge Guild, Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning and the Early History of Brown University (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864), pp. 76-77. See also Gillette, 66:97.

[2]An allusion to Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth) 4:12.

Great, dear brethren, is the design of your meeting; great is the work which lies before you. You will need the guidance and influence of the Divine Spirit, as well as the exertion of all prudence and wisdom. It is therefore our most ardent prayer that you may meet in love, that peace and unanimity may subsist among you during your consultations, that you may be animated with zeal for the glory of God, and directed to advise and determine what may most conduce to promote the Redeemer's kingdom.

From considering the divided state of our Baptist churches in your quarter, we foresee that difficulties may arise, such as may call for the exercise of the greatest tenderness and moderation, that if haply, through the blessing of God on your endeavors, those lesser differences may subside, and a more general union commence.

As touching our consultations at this our meeting, the minutes of our proceedings (a printed copy whereof we shall herewith enclose) will inform you; and if in anything further you should be desireous of information with regard to us, we refer you to our reverend and beloved brethren Morgan Edwards, John Gano and Samuel Jones, who, as our representative delegates, will present you with this our letter, and whom we recommend to Christian fellowship with you.

And now, dear brethren, farewell, may the Lord bless and direct you in all things, and grant that we may all hereafter form one general assembly at his right hand, through infinite riches of free grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Signed by order and in behalf of the Association, by

BENJAMIN MILLER, Moderator
SAMUEL JONES, Clerk

E. A Treatise of Church Discipline of 1798.[1]

CHAPTER I.

[1P,pp.7-10] Of a Gospel Church.

[5] 1. T H E Greek word, in the original, for Church, signifies, to be called out of; that is, a gospel church consists of such persons, as have been called out of a state of nature into a state of grace, called with an effectual calling, called out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son, or are judged in charity to be so called. Rom. i. 6. 7. viii. 30. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. iv. 1. Heb. iii. 1. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

2. The word church sometimes means the whole body of the elect, and is commonly called the catholic, or universal church. Eph. i. 22, 23. v. 23. Col. i. 18, 24. This comprehends those in Heaven, called the church triumphant. Heb. xii. 23. Those on earth, called the church militant. 1 Cor. xii. 28. and those yet to be born.

3. But the church, of which we now treat, means a number of disciples, saints, or believers, that have been baptised, and united together in gospel fellowship, and is called a particular church. "Were baptised," Acts ii. 41. "Tell it unto the church," Matt. xviii. 17. "The church that is in their house," Rom. xvi. 5. "That the church may receive edifying," 1 Cor. xiv. 5. "Churches of the saints," 1 Cor. xiv. 33. "The churches of Asia," 1 Cor. xvi. 19. "The church that is at Babylon," 1 Pet. v. 13.

4. A particular church is not parochial, as comprehending all of the same parish; nor diocesan, as if one
[6] pastor might have several flocks * ; nor yet provincial,

* We learn from history, that a church never thrives unless the minister lives among them. The practice of pluralities may suit the minister's pride, and save the pockets of the churches, but starves their souls.

[1]Text is from Samuel Jones, A Treatise of Church Discipline, and a Directory. Done by Appointment of the Philadelphia Baptist Association (Lexington: Printed by T. Anderson, 1805). Copy in A.B.H.S. (Hereafter: 2P.) 2P

for there were many churches in Judea, Gal. i. 22. Galatia, 1 Cor. xxvi. 1. Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 1. much less national. 1740

5. A number of believers are united together into a particular church, by an act of mutual confederation. "Gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God," 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1742 1744

6. Whether the requisite number should be twelve or thirteen, because our blessed Lord and his disciples, at the first celebration of the Lord's supper, made that number, or whether three will be sufficient, because of the promise in Matt. xviii. 20. may be doubtful: but there ought to be so many, as to answer the end of that holy institution. 1746 1748 1750 1752

7. When such a number is found in any place, they ought to propose among themselves, or others may propose it to them, to be constituted a church. 1754

8. For this purpose it will be necessary to appoint a time and place, when they are to meet fasting. One minister or more should be present to assist, and to preach on the occasion. Acts viii. 14. xi. 22. 1756 1758

9. After a suitable sermon has been preached, the acting minister, being furnished with a list of the names of the candidates, and they standing before him, is to interrogate them: respecting their desire to be constituted a Gospel church, their knowledge of, and satisfaction with each other's qualifications, and their purpose and resolution to walk together in church relation, in love to one another, and in obedience to the requirements of Christ in the Gospel, together with such other questions as will involve the leading particulars of a church covenant; and after they have given their assent to the whole, the church covenant * is to be read [7] to them, which they are then, or afterwards, to sign, and the minister pronounces them, in the name of the Lord Jesus, a regular gospel church, giving them, or their representative, the right hand of fellowship, and wishing them prosperity in the Lord. Is. xliv. 5. Amos iii. Acts xi. 23. 2 Cor. vi. 14. ix. 13. 1760 1762 1764 1766 1768 1770 1772 1774 1776

---

* THE CHURCH COVENANT. [Here follows an example of a church covenant in full.] 1778

10. It will be understood, that prayers and singing ought to be introduced in their proper places through 1780

[8] [Insert listing The terms in the New Testament expressive of those, that labor in word and doctrine. A note on page 9 in the original provides a summary of the English usages, exclusive of Christ and the Apostles.]

[9] the whole, & then a suitable address to the constituted church, with a benediction, will close the solemnity. 1782

11. It is this mutual consent, confederation, and union of persons into one body, as a particular church 1784
that makes that church distinct from any other church, & that makes the members of it, members of that church 1786
more than of any other. "Onesimus, who is one of you; Epaphras, who is one of you." Col. iv. 9. 12. "So 1788
we, being many, are one body in Christ," Rom. xii. 5.

12. Such particular churches have full power and 1790
authority to transact all their own affairs, independent of any church or churches: such as, to chuse 1792
their own officers, receive members, exercise discipline among themselves, exclude members, if need be, and in 1794
general, do every thing that concerns them as a distinct religious corporation. Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v.--- 1796
2 Thes. iii. 6, 14. Acts i. 5, 23. vi. 3. xv. 4. xxi. 22. 1798

13. No church, however, can be independent of Christ, who is the Head of the body, and who while he 1800
has committed the executive power to his church, has retained the legislative in his own hands, or rather, has 1802
enacted, by himself or his apostles, all the laws that are necessary, and the church must take heed how they 1804
execute the same, as they will answer it to their Lord and Master. "One is your Master, even Christ. Hear 1806
ye him." Matt. xvii. 5. xxiii. 8. "There is one law giver." James iv. 12. 1808

14. Under the law, every member of the congregation was a member of the church. The church and 1810
congregation were then commensurate, but under the

[Notes, from preceding page, mentioned above, are placed here at the foot of page 9.]

[10] Gospel they are distinct from one another. For though 1812
the church be in some sense congregational, yet the church and congregation are two distinct things, so that 1814

the one word should not be used for the other, as if they were synonimous. 1814a

15. A particular church, constituted as above, is said to be a church essential, but not complete, while destitute of officers. These were either extraordinary or ordinary; the first comprehending apostles, prophets, and evangelists; and the other, bishops, * or ministers, or elders, and deacons; to which some add ruling elders. 1816 1818 1820 1822

---

* See page 8. [Insert in the original on New Testament terms.]

CHAPTER II.

[1P,pp.10-15] ## Of Ministers.

1. THE names or titles appropriated to those officers in the New Testament, are either such as seem to belong to them, in virtue of their office, as common names, while they have not taken the charge of any particular church, and then they are called teachers or preachers. Acts xiii. 1. Cor. xii. 28. Rom. x. 14.; or they are such as arise from their taking the charge of some church, and then they obtain relative titles, and are called pastors. Eph. iv. 11. Overseers or bishops, Acts xx. 17, 28. Elders, 1 Tim. v. 17. Stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1. Ministers, Col. iv. 7. [1] Tim. iv. 6. 1824 1826 1828 1830 1832 1834

[11] [Sections 2 and 3 are omitted.] (1)

4. If, after any one has been on trial some time, the appearances are promising, the church ought to give him a letter of licence [sic] * , for the exercise of his gifts abroad, his encouragement and further improvement, and to obtain the opinion of others concerning his gifts. "Lay hands suddenly on no man," 1 Tim. v. 22. 1836 1838 1840

---

*[A sample of a "letter of license" is omitted.]

---

[1]Sec. 2 deals with qualifications, and sec. 3, with the call and trial of candidates for ministry. Both are substantially in 1P, pp. 10.6; 11.2 (A889-94; A895-919).

5. After he has been on trial a longer or shorter time, according to circumstances, the church should proceed to invest him more fully with, and confirm him in, the ministerial office, by ordination.

6. The essence of ordination consists in the call of the church, in their voting in his favour, and designating him by said vote to the ministerial work, which power it was necessary should be lodged somewhere, with a view to maintain order; that no person who deems himself called and qualified for the office, might enter upon it without the approbation of others, and this power was lodged in the church. But nevertheless, it is expedient and necessary, in order to give the designation weight and solemnity; that there should be a public and formal procedure, when we instate a person in the ministerial office, Luke x. 1. Acts xiv, 23. Mark iii. 14.

[12] [Section 7 is omitted.] (1)

8. The ministers ought to give him a certificate of his ordination * .

[Section 9 is omitted.] (2)

---

* To all people, to whom these presents shall come the subscribers send Greeting.---Being convened as on the of 1789, at the instance of the Baptist church of aforesaid, for the purpose of setting
[13] apart, by solemn ordination, the bearer hereof to the sacred office of the ministry; and being, by sufficient testimonials, fully certified of moral character, real piety, and sound knowledge: WE DID THEREFORE, on the said day of in the presence of said church, and a full assembly met, solemnly ordain and set apart, to the said sacred office of the ministry, by imposition of hands, prayer, and other rituals among us in that case in use, the said bearer, our worthy and reverend brother whom we therefore recommend, as such, to favour and respect.

---

[1]Sec. 7 deals with the ceremony of ordination, substantially in 1P, p. 13.3 (A920-39).

[2]Sec. 9 mentions that the duties of a minister in pastoral office are considered later. See 2P,5.9 (A2000-2027).

[13-14] [Chapter 3 is omitted.] (1)

CHAPTER IV.

[1P,pp.16-17] ## Of Ruling Elders.[2]

1. CONCERNING the divine right of the office of ruling elders, there has been considerable doubt and much disputation. We, therefore, had a thought of passing it over in silence; but, on farther consideration, concluded to state briefly the arguments on both sides, then subjoin a few general observations, and so let the churches judge for themselves, and practise as they shall see fit.

2. The scriptures usually adduced to prove the right are the following: (3)

[1.] He that ruleth, let him do it with diligence, Rom. 12. 8.

[2.] God has set in the church governments, 1 Cor. xii. 28.

[3.] Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine; 1 Tim. v, 17.

[4.] Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

From the two first scriptures it is argued, that the ruler mentioned must be an officer, because he is mentioned with the other officers, and in contradistinction from them.

And from the last two it is observed, that there must be two kinds of elders, one that rules only, and another who, besides ruling, does also labour in word and doctrine.

---

[1]Chap. 3, Of Deacons, is substantially in 1P, pp. 17-18 (A1024-46).

[2]1P, pp. 16-17 (A988-1023).

[3]Compare Morgan Edwards's Customs . . . (E, p. 33, n. 3).

3. But it is objected. (1)

[1.] That there is nothing in the two first scriptures but may be accommodated to ministers. 1904

[15] [2.] That the two last may mean the same officer, i.e. a minister, who is said to be worthy of double honour, especially if he labours in his work. 1906

[3.] There is no description given of the qualifications of persons for the office of ruling elders, as there is of bishops and deacons. 1910

[4.] There are no directions how they are to be put in the office. 1912

[5.] It would seem there were no such officers in the church of Ephesus, Acts xx. 19, 28. and of Philippi, Phil. i. 1. nor in those of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. 1 Pet. i. 1. compared with Chap. v. i. ii. [sic] 1914 1916 1918

The observations we meant to make are these:

1. It must be confessed that there are some appearances in scripture favourable to the office. 1920
2. If there were none it would stand on a footing with some other things left to human prudence. 1922
3. There is the same necessity for the office, as for that of a deacon, namely, to ease the minister of part of his burden. 1924 1926
4. By means of the office, the minister may avoid some hard thoughts and ill-will, which is very desirable. 1928
5. It is of material advantage to a church, to have at least one among them, capable of bringing matters forward, stating them clearly for consideration, summing up the arguments on both sides in order for a vote, and presiding, and maintaining order through the whole. 1930 1932 1934
6. All ministers have not a turn or talents for it, in the degree that might be wished. 1936
7. Some that are not ministers have, in a good degree. 1938
8. Appointing such to this service, will not only invite them to come forward by making it their business, but will also give them more particular right, and enable them to do more good, by cloathing [sic] them with a measure of authority. 1940 1942 1944

---

[1] Compare E, p. 34, n. 3.

[16] CHAPTER V.

Of Settling a Minister.[1]

1. A PERSON having been regularly ordained a minister of the Gospel, as we have seen in Chap. II. he is qualified to become a pastor or minister of any destitute church. 1946 1948

2. This is done in consequence of a call and invitation of some church, and his accepting of the call on the terms proposed, or such as they may agree upon. Calling of him to preach, ordaining of him, and his being even a member of said church, is not sufficient: there ought to be a mutual agreement between him and the church, whereby he becomes theirs, and they his. Col. i. 7. 1950 1952 1954 1956

3. How unanimous the church ought to be in the choice and settlement of a minister, it may be hard to say. On the one hand, a bare, or even a large majority, will not be sufficient, while, on the other hand, an unanimous vote may not always be obtained, and, perhaps, in some cases, may not be absolutely necessary. The more unanimous, however, the better. 1958 1960 1962

4. The congregation also is not to be neglected in this business. For, as their good is to be kept in view, and as part of the support is expected to come from them, it ought to be known, that the person proposed to be settled gives pretty general satisfaction. 1 Tim. iii. 7. 3 John 12. 1964 1966 1968

5. In settling a minister, having appointed a time and place, and invited a council from one or two of the neighbouring churches to assist, and to witness the transaction, one of the ministers, after praying and singing, should preach a suitable sermon. Then he, or another of the council, is to put such questions to the minister to be settled, and to the representative of the church appointed for that purpose, as will draw from each of them promises to fulfil their respective parts of the covenant and agreement between them, upon which he pronounces him, in the presence of God and of the whole assembly, to be the pastor and overseer of 1970 1972 1974 1976 1978 1980 1980a

[1] No corresponding sections in 1K or 1P

that church, and said church to be his flock and charge. Then the settled minister and representative of the
[17] church gives each other the right hand of fellowship, with expressions of mutual joy and congratulation.

6. After this a charge should be delivered to the settled minister, Col. iv. 19. and his church; and then, prayer, singing, and a benediction, will close the service.

7. The transaction of the day, and particularly the terms of agreement between the settled minister and the church, should be entered at large on the records of the church.

8. Some may say, that so much formality in the business, with witnesses, is unnecessary, and that a private agreement between the parties is sufficient. But as a public form of marriage is indispensible: so the above is expedient and useful, as might be shewn were it necessary.

9. The duties incumbent on the pastor of a church, are many and great, and blessed is he who is found faithful therein.

10. He is to exercise love, care, tenderness, watchfulness, and diligence, in all the duties of going before, feeding and defending the flock, the sheep and the lambs, the strong, the weak and diseased, John xxi. 15, 17. Acts xx. 29. 1 Pet. v. 2. Jer. iii. 15. He is to preach in season and out of season---attend funerals---administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper *---take the lead in church government---visit the flock---particularly the sick---pray for and with them---catechise the young, and defend the faith: besides the duties of the closet, of the study, and his

---

* It has been thought by some, that a minister cannot warrantably administer the ordinance of the Lord's supper in or to a church, where he is not a member and settled. But why he may not do it occasionally, as persons are admitted to occasional communion, where they are not members, it is hard to say, when he has the call of the church to do it. It should seem that the call of the church to an occasional act, must be equivalent to its call to stated acts.

frequent calls abroad, to visit and supply the destitute, settle differences, attend at ordinations, associations, etc. etc. 2024

"And who is sufficient for these things," 2 Cor. ii. 16. 2026

CHAPTER VI.

Of dissolving the Connection between a Pastor and his Church. (1)

[18] [Sections 1 thru 5 are omitted.] (2)

6. For this purpose, it will be necessary to call a council from a neighbouring church or churches, the very same, if they can be had, as were witnesses of the settlement. 2028 2030

7. At this meeting, peace and an accommodation of all matters of variance should be laboured after, that the pastor may be dismissed and recommended in as respectful a manner as circumstances will admit, in order that his character may not suffer abroad more than need be, nor his usefulness elsewhere be prevented. 2032 2034 2036

7. [sic] Should the church prove refractory, and in their ill-humour, refuse to give the pastor such a character and dismission as he deserves, the council may and ought to give him, from under their hands, a brief statement of matters in variance, together with their opinion, and such a recommendation as they can answer for to God and their own consciences. 2038 2040 2042 2044

9. If convenient, public worship may close the meeting. 2046

[19-21] [Chapter 7 is omitted.] (3)
[1P,pp.34-36.7]

---

[1]No corresponding section in 1K or 1P.

[2]These sections discuss the causes for dissolving the connection between a pastor and his congregation.

[3]Chap. 7, Of the duties of Members to their Pastors, is substantially in 1P, pp. 34-36.7 (A1170-1207).

[22] [Chapter 8 is omitted.] (1)

CHAPTER IX.

[1P,pp.18-32] Of Admission of Members.[2]

1. WE have already observed, p. 10. that every particular church has full power and authority, to transact all its own affairs, for its well being, independent of any other church, or combination of churches. 2048 2050

2. The chief part of church power exercised under Christ, and according to the rule of the gospel, is versant about four things; the choice of their own officers, the admission of members, governing of them, and finally their exclusion, when they prove unworthy of a place in the house of God, Rom. xiv. 1. Acts ii. 41. 1 Cor. v. 13. 2052 [23] 2054 2056 2058

3. Admission is either out of the World, or from other churches. 2060

4. When persons are wrought upon and turned to the Lord, under a real work of conviction and conversion, it will be their duty to offer themselves for baptism, and give themselves members of some gospel church, that may be near them, with whom they may walk in fellowship, and enjoy the privileges of the house of God, appointed for their nourishment and growth in grace. Acts ii. 38. Isaiah xliv. 5. lvi. 6. 2 Cor. viii. 5. 2062 2064 2066 2068

5. To this end, it will be proper for the candidate to acquaint the minister or pastor beforehand of his design, which is commonly done, that the minister, after conversing freely with him, may either encourage or discourage. 2070 2072 2074

6. There is no doubt, but that every gospel minister has a right, in virtue of the commission, to baptize all such meet subjects, as apply to him for baptism, and 2076

---

[1] Chap. 8, The duties of Members towards each other, is substantially in 1P, pp. 38-39.

[2] See 1P, pp. 18-32 (excerpts: A1047-1145).

afterward the church may receive them on the testimony of said minister, or on their giving in their religious experience.

7. But, since the church has a right to obtain full knowledge of the experience, religious principles, and moral conduct of those, that offer themselve [sic] for membership; and for as much as it is edifying, and tends to excite and increase christian fellowship, to hear persons declare what the Lord has done for them, Psalm lxvi. 16. and also, as it may be of use to administer the holy ordinance of baptism in a more open and public way; it will be better for persons to be examined in the first instance before the church, either on the day of preparation before communion, or at any other time, and then baptised.

8. The prerequisites for baptism and admission into the church are, godly experience, soundness in the faith, and a regular life.

9. Knowledge of the first will be best obtained, by letting persons declare, in their own way, the gracious
[24] dealings of the Lord with them, such questions being put occasionally as will assist and lead them on. 1 Peter iii. 15. The second should be confined to the essentials of religion. Rom. xiv. 1. xv. 7. And we attend to the last, as the necessary fruit, without which, their pretension to religion must be vain. Titus ii. 12, 14. iii. 8.

10. In admitting persons to baptism and then into the church, all precaution should be attended to, and carefulness used, that we open not the doors too wide on the one hand, nor on the other keep them too close. Zech. iv. 10. Matt. xii. 20. Isaiah xxvi. 1---6. Particularly, when they give in their religious experience, see to discover, whether they have been convinced of righteousness, as well as of sin; whether they have only felt the power of the law, or have also discovered the glory of the gospel. John xvi. 8.

11. When the church is pretty generally satisfied with the parties' confession and conversation, they are, after being baptised, to be received into the church as members.

12. In doing this, the Minister, after a brief introduction, enquires whether they will watch and be watch-

ed over, give and receive admonition and reproof as occasion may require, keep their places in the church, contribute according to their abilities towards all necessary uses, and in all things walk in a professed and willing subjection to the commands and institutions of Christ in the gospel: which having promised, he gives them the right hand of fellowship, bids them a welcome among the disciples, prays, and gives out a suitable Hymn. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Acts ii. 41. 2 Cor. vi. 14. Those who practive laying on of hands will know when to introduce it.

13. If the case of the applicant be pretty doubtful, his baptism, and consequently admission, had better be deferred: but this should be done with much tenderness and suitable encouragement, when there are some hopeful appearances.

14. Persons are sometimes admitted from other churches to transient and occasional communion, without transfering their membership, and this may be done without letters of recommendation, when they are
[25] known, but not otherwise. Acts xviii. 27. Rom xvi. 1, 2. Col iv. 10.

[1P,pp.25-29] [Sections 15 and 16 are omitted.] (1)

17. There may be however cases, that will make against this rule, particularly when persons plead greater benefit to themselves, in a church more remote; and they ought to be attended to, provided the other church be not too remote; for edification is the first object of church relation, and their entering into the relation at first was a voluntary act; nor should a church be made a prison of, wherein to confine people against their will.

18. It is certain there can be no dismission to the world; and it is doubted whether it would be regular for a church to dismiss to another church, with which it can hold no communion: but in this case, it may give a few lines signifying the person's character and standing with them.

---

[1]Secs. 15 and 16 deal with the process of changing church membership. Sec. 16 states the general rule that one belong to nearest church. Both are substantially in 1P, pp. 25-29.

19. When a person offers, who is a member of a church differing in faith and order, then, satisfaction is to be required touching the point in difference. 2158 2160

CHAPTER X.

[1P,pp.40-57] Of Church Censures.[1]

[26] [Sections 1 thru 6 are omitted.] (2)

7. When it is brought before the church, after the charge is proved, should he deny it, the minister is to admonish, and endeavour in the spirit of meekness to reclaim the offender. 1 Tim. v. 20. Tit. i. 13. Should this prove ineffectual, and the offender continue obstinate and impenitent, the church is to proceed to higher acts of censure, and in some cases, if he is penitent, as we shall see in the 16th. verse, Matt. xviii. 17. 2162 2164 2166 2168

[27-28] [Section 8 thru 13 are omitted.] (3)

14. The last and highest act of a church censure is excommunication, to which recourse must be had, when previous censures have not their due effect, in bringing persons dealt with to repentance, provided the matters for which they are under dealing, with the circumstances of aggravation during the course of said dealing, manifestly involve immorality or heresy *. 2170 2172 2174 2176

15. Acts of immorality include not only the particulars of the decalogue, but also the commands appointments, institutions, and ordinances contained in 2178

---

* It is thought that Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 3, 5. refer not to excommunication. 2180

---

[1] 1P, pp. 40-57 (excerpts: A1208-1357); 1K, pp. 21-54.

[2] The ideas expressed in secs. 1-6 are substantially those in 1P, pp. 40-42 (excerpts: A1208-42).

[3] Secs. 8-13 discuss "suspension," and give four possible causes to impose this censure, substantially in 1P, pp. 43-44.

the New Testament: for a breach of any positive injunction, or requirement of divine authority, must involve in it a breach of morality. 2182 2184

16. There should be care taken, however, not to make forced constructions of implicit immorality, as for instance, to charge a person with transgressing the rule in Heb. x. 25. and breach of covenant, because he neglects his place, attends worship elsewhere, and perhaps with those of a different persuasion, but pleads greater edification, and perhaps, conscience †, least we should act the part of Diotrephes. 3 John x. 2186 2188 2190 2192

17. When a member is found guilty of some gross act of immorality, and which is notorious and scandalous, the church should proceed to this censure in the first place, without the previous steps of admonition and reproof, in order to vindicate the credit of their holy profession, and to manifest their abhorrence of such abomination, 1 Cor. v. 1, 2, 7, 13. 1 Tim. v. 24. 2194 2196 2198

18. Such as are heretical in their principles, denying some essential doctrine, or holding and teaching such as may be unsound and scandalous, come under the notice of this ordinance, Gal. i. 6, 7. compared with Chap. V. 12. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20 vi. 3---5. 2 Tim. ii. 16---18 Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. 2 Cor. ii. 6. 2200 2202 2204

[29] [Section 19 is omitted.] (1)

20. This exclusion is an authoritative putting of such a person out of the church, to keep it pure, and in order to his being humbled and broken under a sight and sense of his sins, and where there are signs of this he ought to be restored, 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8. 2206 2208 2210

21. When a person is about to be excommunicated, judges himself aggrieved by party influence or otherwise, he has a right to insist on a council being called from a neighbouring church or churches, and the church ought to agree to it, and allow him the choice of one half of the council. 2212 2214 2216

---

† See Dr. Owen on the nature of a Gospel Church, p. 109, 225. 2218

---

[1] Sec. 19 substantially in 1P, pp. 45-48 (A1274-1341).

[1K,p.18]

Quest. What is to be done when a Person offers himself for Communion from a Church that is corrupt, or erroneous in Principles?

Answ. 1. The Church ought to take an account of his Faith in all Fundamental Points, and of the Work of Grace upon his Heart.

2. And if satisfied, then to send also to that corrupt People, to know whether they have any thing or not against his Life and Conversation: if satisfied in both these respects, the Church may receive him. (1)

---

[1]Benjamin Keach, The Glory of a True Church, and its Discipline Display'd. Wherein a true Gospel-Church is described: together with the Power of the Keys, and who are to be let in, and who to be shut out (London: Printed in 1697), p. 18.

22. If the church should refuse to call in a council, and cut the person off, or should they do it contrary to the advice of the council, the person aggrieved may lay a statement of his case before the Association, who may appoint a council, and if the church should refuse to admit of a rehearing before said council, or should refuse to abide by the decision of the council, the Association may bring said church under dealing, and, if the church continues obstinate, a neighbouring church may receive the aggrieved person into their communion *.

[30] 23. In transacting church business, it is not to be expected that unanimity will always prevail: Some will, at times, be in the minority. These have sometimes taken offence, and declined keeping their places in the church for a while. This is very wrong and irregular. For suppose a church does ever so wrong, yet any individual, after bearing his testimony against it, has done his duty, and cleared his conscience, and ought therefore to keep his place, except in case of material defection from the faith. It has been thought by good men, that our Lord communed with Judas, though he knew at that time what he was.

24. Although a church may refuse a person when he offers for membership, if they have good cause to suspect, that he is not truly religious, yet they have no right to exclude him afterward, upon the like suspicion. They may at first judge in his favour, but cannot afterwards reverse the sentence. Excommunication is only for immorality or heresy. As for their dying away, or seeming to die away in religion, the rules is [sic], "Let them grow together until the harvest," Matt. xiii. 30.

25. There ought to be meetings of business every month, two months, or quarterly, and not do all their business on days of preparation, lest something should happen, that might discompose the minds of some, and so unfit them for the holy communion next day.

---

* See the Confession of Faith, Chap. XXVII. Sec. 15. Also Keach's Glory of a true Church, p. 18. (1)

---

[1] For P,27.15 see A571-93; for 1K, p. 18, facing page.

26. Every church should keep a book of records, and enter therein all their transactions, that it may at any time afterwards be known, what was done and how it was done. 2260 2262

CHAPTER XI.

[1P,pp.57-62]Of the Fellowship and Communion of Churches.[1]

1. CHURCHES of the same faith and gospel order, so far as is necessary to communion; as they have all drank unto and of one and the same spirit; as they are branches of one and the same body, and hold to one and the same head; and as they have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; they therefore may, and ought [31] to have and enjoy fellowship and friendly intercourse together, as occasion may require and opportunity serve, in the discharge of those relative duties, which may tend to mutual benefit and edification of the whole. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Eph. iv. 5. John xvii. 20---26. To mention a few. 2264 2266 2268 2270 2272 2274

2. They should be ready to assist one another, when required, in difficult cases. 2276

3. Such as have ministerial gifts to spare, should be ready and willing to supply such as may be destitute. Cant. viii. 8. 2278

4. Admit one another's Members of regular standing, to transient communion, when opportunity may serve. 2280

5. Dismiss and receive members to and from one another. 2282

6. They should assist one another with money, as well/ as advice, if need be, and in general perform all acts of/ kindness towards each other, as neighbouring, though/ distant families or branches of the one great family/ and houshold of faith. 2284 2286 2288

7. And lastly, they have fellowship and communion together, for their mutual benefit, in the social duties of/ an association. 2290

---

[1]See 1P, pp. 57-62 (A1358-1496).

CHAPTER XII.

[1P,pp.60-62] ## Of an Association.[1]

1. AN Association consists of delegates, or Messengers from different particular churches, who have agreed to associate together, at stated times, to promote/ their own interest, and the good of the common cause.

2. This practice is recommended by the reason of things, the spirit of religion, and apostolic practice. Acts xv.

3. The meetings thus of churches by their delegates is of special use; to gain acquaintance with, and knowledge of one another---to preserve uniformity in faith and practice, Phil. iii. 16---to detect and discountenance heresies--to curb licentiousness in the wanton abuse/ of church power---to afford assistance and advice in all/ difficult cases---to contribute pecuni-
[32] ary aid when ne-/ cessary---to make appointments of supplies for destitute/ churches---And every way advance and secure the inte-/ rest of religion, and strengthen and draw closer the/ bonds of union and fellowship.

4. Other churches, besides those that enter at the original constitution, may be admitted on making application, and giving satisfactory evidence in regard to their faith and practice, regular order and good standing.

5. The delegates thus assembled are, properly speaking, only an advisory council. They are not armed with coercive power, to compel the churches to submit to their decisions, nor have they any controul [sic] over the acts/ or doings of the churches. Every church still remains/ independent.

6. Nevertheless, the associated body may exclude from their connection any church that may act an unworthy part. This our association did some years ago, as also, virtually, last association. Indeed it would be absurd to examine churches at their admission, if afterward they are to be continued in the connection, let

---

[1] See 1P, pp. 60-62 (A1438-96).

[Owen,p.254] 4. THE same is the case with respect unto Worship, as also of Manners and Conversation. If it be reported or known by Credible Testimony that any Church hath admitted into the exercise of Divine Worship any thing superstitious or vain, or if the Members of it walk like those described by the Apostle, Phil. 3. 18, 19. unto the Dishonour of the Gospel and of the Ways of Christ, the Church it self not endeavouring its own Reformation and Repentance; other Churches walking in the Glory of Christ, and Honour of the Gospel, after more private ways for its Reduction, as Opportunity and Duty may suggest unto their Elders, ought to Assemble in a Synod for Advice, either as to the use of farther means for the Recovery of such a Church, or to with hold Communion from it in case of Obstinacy in all its evil ways. The want of a due attendance unto this part of the Communion of Churches, with respect unto Gospel Worship in its Purity, and Gospel Obedience in its Power, was a great means of the Decay and Apostacy of them all. By reason of this Negligence instead of being helpful one to another for their mutual Recovery, and the Revival of the things that were ready to die, they gradually infected one another, according as they fell into their Decays, and countenanced one another by their Examples unto a continuance in such Disorders. (1)

---

[1] John Owen, The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government (London: Printed for William Marshall, 1698), p. 254. Italics in the original. Microfilm copy in A.B.H.S.

their principles and practice be what they may, see Chap. X, ver. 22. vide also Confession of Faith, Chap. XXVII. Sec. 15. Our late discipline, p. 61. Dr. Owen on the nature of a gospel church, p. 254. (1)

7. Let it not be thought, that this power of the asso-/ ciation over the churches in connection with it disan-/ nuls or destroys the independence of those churches:/ for if any church of the associated body should become/ unsound in their principles, or act irregularly and dis-/ orderly, and will not do, what may be just and right;/ such a church will still remain an independent church,/ though an heterodox and irregular one; but it would/ be inconsistent and wrong in the association, to suffer/ such a church to continue among them, since, besides/ other considerations, they would hereby become par-/ takers of their evil deeds. The association can take/ nothing from them, but what it gave them. This, in/ such circumstances, it certainly may and ought to do.

8. From what we have said, as well as from considering, that the union of churches in an association, is a voluntary act, a voluntary union or confederation, like the voluntary confederation of members into a church, it follows that every church stands in the same
[33] relation to its association, as a member does to his church, and therefore is examined in the same manner on admission. Hence

9. Complaints may be received by the association, against any church belonging to it, especially when the complaint is brought in by another church. Hence also,

10. The association has a right to call any delinquent church to account, whether for a wanton abuse of its power towards or over any of its members, neglect of attendance at the association, disregard of those things recommended to them, or any material defect in principle or practice; and if satisfactory reasons are not given therefore, nor reformation, then to exclude them.

11. At the first formation of an association, or afterwards, there should be a set of rules, conditions and

---

[1] See 2P,10.22 (A2219-29); P,27.15 (A571-93); 1P, p. 61 (A1454-96); on John Owen, see facing page.

[TABLE OF CONTENTS.][1]

		Page
[1K]	Concerning a True and Orderly Gospel-Church.	5
	Of the work of a Pastor, Bishop or Overseer.	8
	The Office and Work of Deacons.	10
	Of the Duties of Church-Members to their Pastor.	11
	Of the reception of Members.	17
	The Power of the Keys, with Church-Discipline, and Members Duties one to another.	19
	Of Church-Censures.	21
	Of private Offenses of one Brother against another.	25
	Of Scandalous Persons guilty of gross Acts of Immorality.	29
	Of dealing with Hereticks and Blasphemers.	32
	Of such that cause Divisions; orUnduely separate themselves from the Church.	39
	Of Disorders, or causes of Discords, and how to be prevented, corrected, and removed.	45
	What tends to the Glory and Beauty of a true Gospel-Church.	54
	THE CONCLUSION.	63
	THE SOLEMN COVENANT of the Church of Christ, meeting in White-street, at its Constitution; June, 5. 1696. (2)	71
	F I N I S	74

[TABLE OF CONTENTS.][3]

		Page
[1P]	Concerning a true and orderly Gospel CHURCH	7
	Concerning Ministers, etc.	10
	Of Ruling Elders.	16
	Of Deacons.	17
	Of the Admission of Church Members.	18
	Of the Duties of Church-Members.	33
	Of the manifold Duties of Christians, especially to the Houshold of Faith.	38
	Of Church Censures.	40
	Of the Communion of Churches.	57
	THE END	62

[1] 1K lacks a table of contents.

[2] This is the covenant used by Benjamin Keach's congregation; his son Elias' group used an identical covenant.

[3] 1P lacks a table of contents.

regulations drawn up, as the ground on which the churches agree to associate together. 2370

12. For the maintenance of good order, the associated body when met, should choose a Moderator, to regulate, and bring forward what is to come before them, and to preside in their deliberations: as also, a Clerk, to take minutes of their proceedings. 2372 2374 2376

THE END.

[ii] CONTENTS.[1]

Chap.		[Page]	
1	Of a Gospel Church.	[5]	
2	Of Ministers.	[10]	2378
3	Of Deacons.	[13]	
4	Of Ruling Elders.	[14]	2380
5	Of settling a Minister over a Church.	[16]	
6	Of dissolving the connection between a Pastor, and his Church.	[18]	2382
7	Of the duties of Members to their Pastors.	[19]	
8	Of the Duties of Members towards each other.	[21]	2384
9	Of the admission of Members.	[22]	
10	Of Church Censures.	[26]	2386
11	Of the Fellowship & Communion of Churches.	[30]	
12	Of an Association.	[31]	2388

[1] Compare the sections to 1P and 1K on the facing page.

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL SOURCES ON ASSOCIATIONS

Appendix B includes additional materials for this study. Some of the excerpts were written by members of the P.B.A. None, however, was officially sanctioned by the Association.

The format for the presentation is similar to the one employed in appendix A. The texts are facsimiles of the original documents. Excerpts are taken from the following sources:

A. The Platform of Church Polity of Savoy, 1658

B. Rule of Procedure of the General Assembly of Particular Baptists of London, 1689

C. The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association, 1769

D. Narrative of the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, by Edwards, ca. 1770

E. "A Gospel Church Portrayed, and her Orderly Service Pointed Out," sermon by Oliver Hart, 1791

F. "On the Constitution and Order of the Christian Church," sermon by Richard Furman, 1789

G. A Summary of Church Discipline shewing the Qualifications and Duties of the Officers and Members of a Gospel Church, 1831

A. Platform of Church Polity of Savoy.[1]

[55-59] [Sections 1 thru 13 omitted.] (2)

XIV. However, they who are ingaged in the work of Publique Preaching, and enjoy the Publique Maintenance upon that account, are not thereby obliged to dispense the Seals to any other then such as (being Saints by Calling, and gathered according to the Order of the Gospel) they stand related to, as Pastors or Teachers; yet ought they not to neglect others living within their Parochial Bounds, (3) but besides their constant publique Preaching to them, they ought to enquire after their profiting by the Word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them (whether young or old) the great Doctrines of the Gospel, even personally and particularly, so far as their strength and time will admit.

XV. Ordination alone without Election or precedent consent of the Church, by those who formerly have been Ordained by vertue of that Power they received by their Ordination doth not constitute any person a Church-Officer, or communicate Office-power unto him.

XVI. A Church furnished with Officers (according to the minde of Christ) hath full power to administer all his Ordinances, and where there is want of any one or more Officers required, that Officer, or those which are in the Church, may administer all the Ordinances proper to their particular Duty and Offices;
[60] but where there are no teach-[60]ing Officers, none

---

[1]The text is taken from "Of the Institution of Churches and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ," in Walker, pp. 403-408. (Bracketed numbers refer to pages of the original.)

[2]Secs. 1-13 appear above as parallel texts to the Philadelphia Confession (A434-38; A446-593). Secs. 5, 6, 10, 12 and most of 7 were not used in P and 2L.

[3]The call to minister to everyone in the church's environs is not expressed in any P.B.A. sources.

may administer the Seals, nor can the Church authorize any so to do. (1)

XVII. In the carrying on of Church-administrations, no person ought to be added to the Church, but by the consent of the Church it self; that so love (without dissimulation) may be preserved between all the Members thereof.

XVIII. Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed and instituted as a means of Edification, that those who walk not according to the Rules and Laws appointed by him (in respect of Faith and Life, so that just offence doth arise to the Church thereby) be censured in his Name and Authority: Every Church hath Power in it self to exercise and execute all those Censures appointed by him in the way and Order prescribed in the Gospel.

XIX. The Censures so appointed by Christ, are Admonition and Excommunication: and whereas some offences are or may be known onely to some, it is appointed by Christ, that those to whom they are so known, do first admonish the offender in private: in publique offences where any sin, before all; or in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offence being related to the Church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duely admonished in the Name of Christ by the whole Church, by the Ministery of the Elders of the Church; and if this Censure prevail not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by the Excommunication with the consent of the Church.

[61] [XX. - XXI.] (2)

XXII. The Power of Censures being seated by Christ in a particular Church, is to be exercised onely towards particular Members of each Church respectively as such; and there is no power given by him unto any Synod or Ecclesiastical Assemblies to Excommunicate, or by their publique Edicts to threaten Excom-

---

[1] If "nor can the Church authorize any so to do" is understood in an absolute sense, it would differ from the practice, allowed in the later Church Discipline of the P.B.A., to call a minister to dispense the ordinances in a church of which he is not a member (See 2P,5.10 [A2014-22]).

[2] See above, A536-54.

munication, or other Church-censures against Churches, Magistrates, or their people upon any account, no man being obnoxious to that Censure, but upon his personal miscarriage, as a Member of a particular Church.

XXIII. Although the Church is a Society of men,
[62] assembling [62] for the celebration of the Ordinances according to the appointment of Christ, yet every Society assembling for that end or purpose, upon the account of cohabitation within any civil Precincts and Bounds, is not thereby constituted a Church, seeing there may be wanting among them, what is essentially required thereunto; and therefore a Believer living with others in such a Precinct, may joyn himself with any Church for his edification. (1)

XXIV. For the avoiding of Differences that may otherwise arise, for the greater Solemnity of the Celebration of the Ordinances of Christ, and the opening a way for the larger usefulness of the Gifts and Graces of the holy Ghost; Saints living in one City or Town, or within such distances as that they may conveniently assemble for divine Worship, ought rather to joyn in one Church for their mutual strengthening and edification, then to set up many distinct Societies.

[63] [Sections 25 thru 26 are omitted.] (2)

XXVII. Besides these occasional Synods or Councels, (3) there are not instituted by Christ any stated Synods in a fixed Combination of Churches, or their Officers in lesser or greater Assemblies; nor are there any Synods appointed by Christ in a way of Subordination to one another.

XXVIII. Persons that are joyned in Church-fellowship, ought not lightly or without just cause to withdraw themselves from the communion of the Church whereunto they are so joyned: Nevertheless, where any person cannot continue in any Church without his sin, either

---

[1]Baptists would not permit the use of Ordinances except in churches, or gatherings of church members, but they did permit ordinances in churches not yet completely organized with offices.

[2]See above, A555-93.

[3]Baptists had not only occasional councils, but associations.

for want of the Administration of any Ordinances
[64] instituted by Christ, or by his be-[64]ing deprived
of his due Priviledges, or compelled to any thing in
practice not warranted by the Word, or in case of Per-
secution, or upon the account of conveniency of habi-
tation; he consulting with the Church, or the Officer
or Offices thereof, may peaceably depart from the
communion of the Church, wherewith he hath so walked,
to joyn himself with some other Church, where he may
enjoy the Ordinances in the purity of the same, for
his edification and consolation.

XXIX. Such reforming Churches as consist of Per-
sons sound in the Faith and of Conversation becoming
the Gospel, ought not to refuse the communion of each
other, so far as may consist with their own Principles
respectively, though they walk not in all things ac-
cording to the same Rules of Church-Order.

XXX. Churches gathered and walking according to
the minde of Christ, judging other Churches (though
less pure) to be true Churches, may receive unto
occasional communion with them, such Members of those
Churches as are credibly testified to be godly, and
to live without offence.

FINIS.

B. Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689. (1)

... BEING AGAIN COME TOGETHER, after first solemnly seeking the Lord by Prayer, did conclude upon these following preliminaries, and lay them down as the foundation of this our assembly, and rule for our proceedings; wherein all the messengers of the churches aforesaid, in city and country, as well as for the satisfaction of every particular church, as also to prevent all mistakes, misapprehensions and inconveniencies that might arise in time to come concerning this general assembly, do solemnly profess and declare:

1. That we disclaim all manner of superiority and superintendency over the churches, and that we have no authority or power to prescribe or impose anything upon the faith or practice of any of the churches of Christ. Our whole intendment is to be helpers together of one another, by way of counsel and advice, in the right understanding of that perfect rule which our Lord Jesus, the Bishop of our souls, hath already prescribed, and given to his churches in his word, and therefore do severally and jointly agree,

2. That in those things wherein one church differs from another church in their principles or practices, in point of communion, that we cannot, shall not impose upon any particular church therein, but leave every church to their own liberty to walk together as they have received from the Lord.

3. That if any particular offence doth arise betwixt one church and another, or betwixt one particular person and another, no offence shall be admitted to be debated among us, till the rule Christ hath given, in this matter, be first answered, and the consent of both parties had, or sufficiently endeavoured.

4. That whatever is determined by us in any case, shall not be binding on any one church, till

---

[1] From "The Narrative of the Proceedings," in Joseph Ivimey, A History of the English Baptists, 4 vols. (London: Printed for the author, 1811-30), 1: 489-90.

the consent of that church be first had, and they conclude the same among themselves. 158

5. That all things we offer by way of counsel and advice, be proved out of the word of God, and the scriptures annexed. 160

6. That the breviates of this meeting be transcribed, and sent to every particular church with a letter. 162 164

7. That the messengers that come to this meeting, be recommended by a letter from the church to which they belong, and that none be admitted to speak in this assembly, unless by general consent. 166 168

Philadelphia Baptist Association: Plan of the Association for the Warren Meeting, 1767 (1)

That notwithstanding the independence of churches, the gospel authorized (Acts 15) and the nature of things teaches Churches to associate themselves together by representatives, for ends of public good. Some of these ends are; their general union and communion; maintaining more extensively the faith, order and discipline of the gospel once delivered to the saints; having salutary counsel in cases of doubt, and help in difficulties, wants, etc. Wherefore the Churches ought to appoint such men to represent them as are judicious and skilful in the word of God, for the grand business of an Association is to find out texts appropriate to the cases brought before them, and decisive thereof; else they cannot say in any case, It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us; neither/ will their proceedings affect the consciences of men while they come unstamped with Scripture authority. For an Association, or Synod, or Council, to assume decretive power, is gross usurpation, and subjecting themselves to that taunt, Ye take too much upon yourselves, ye sons of Zion. To arrogate such a power from the consideration of numbers, is vain; for though in the multitude of counsellors there is some sort of safety, yet no number of fallible men can make an infallible body of them. The real ground of appeals to Associations is, that they consist of men of superior skilfulness in the Word of God; just as in civil affairs we apply to attorneys, etc. because learned and expert in the law. Their use is that of expositors, common-place books, concordances, etc. The first Association proceeded not on the foot of power,/ or infallibility, but of an acquaintance with the will of the Holy Ghost in the written Word, who had long before forbid fornication, eating of

---

[1] This variant text is taken from the handwritten notes of Isaac Backus, clerk at the organizational meeting of the Warren Association, September 8, 1767, in Minutes of the Warren Association, 1767-1779, compiled from Isaac Backus papers by R. W. Guild (1863). Original in Brown University Library; microfilm copy in A.B.H.S. (n.p.).

C. The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association, adopted at the third session, 1769. (1)

Sentiments Touching an Association.[2]

1

[3] That such a combination of churches is not only pru- 170
dent but useful, as has appeared even in America by
the experience of upwards of 60 years. Some of the 172
uses of it are -- Union and communion among them-
selves -- maintaining more effectually the order and 174
faith once delivered to the saints -- Having advice
in cases of doubts, and help in distress. Being 176
more able to promote the good of the cause -- and
becoming important in the eye of the civil powers, as 178
has already appeared in many instances on this con-
tinent 2. That such an association is consistent 180
with the independency and power of particular churches,
because it pretends to be no other than an Advisory 182
council, utterly disclaiming superiority, jurisdiction,
coercive right, and infallibility 3. That an associ- 184
ation should consist of men knowing and judicious,
particulary [sic] in the Scripture. The reasons 186
are obvious; such men are the fittest to represent
communities who profess the Scriptures to be the only 188
rule of faith and practice in religious matters, and
who expect that every advice, opinion, or direction 190
they receive from an association be scriptural. They
should be skilful and expert in the laws of their 192
God as counsellors are in the law of the land, for

---

[1] Text is taken from The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association (Germantown: Printed by Christopher Sower, 1769). Bound with Warren Association, Minutes, 1767 to 1825. Copy in A.B.H.S. The substance of the version presented at the first session appears in handwritten notes of Isaac Backus (see facing pages).

[2] Composed by James Manning, these "Sentiments" helped Isaac Backus and the church in Middleboro to finally accept the Warren Association in 1770. The text is cited by Reuben Aldridge Guild, Life, Times and Correspondence of James Manning and the Early HIstory of Brown University (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864), p. 68; also Isaac Backus, A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists (Newton, Mass.: Backus Historical Society, 1871), 2:409, n.

blood, etc. What they determined of themselves was only what concerned themselves, viz. That they had given no such commandment to the teachers at Antioch, as they pretended to have received. Acts 15.

Particularly,

1. The association consists only of messengers chosen and sent by the several Churches. These messengers are their ministers, together with some other judicious members; and usually their expenses are defrayed by the Churches that send them.

2. With these messengers the Churches send letters addressed to the Association. In these letters they mention the messengers' names, and their authority to act from them;/ show the state of the Churches since the last Association, viz. how many added to them by baptism, and by letters commendatory from other Churches; how many restored by repentance; how many died; how many excommunicated, or dismissed to other Churches; and what the number of members in each Church is, etc. If they have any question to put to the Association, any advice to ask, any requests or appeals to make, they specify them in the same letter, with this difference, -- these last are specified in paragraphs by themselves, and not in the body of the letters, to prevent their being read in public.

3. All matters are determined in the Association by the suffrages of the messengers or deputies who constitute it, except what matters are/ determined or determinable by scripture. Such things are never put to vote.

4. The way of admitting Churches into the Association is by petition from the Church proposing, showing forth their desire of admission, their faith order and purpose to be conformable to the rules of the associated body. When a petititon is read by the clerk, the moderator puts it to vote, whether such Church shall or shall not be received.

that is the ground (1) of the churches application to them. (2) 194

Warren Association: Plan of the Association, adopted at the third session, 1769.

1. The association to consist only of messengers chosen and sent by the churches. These messengers to be their ministers (for the reason given in sentiment the 3,) together with some judicious brethren. Their expenses to be borne by the churches which send them. 196 198 200

2. With the messengers the churches send letters addressed to the association. In these letters mention is made of the names of the messengers, and their authority to act for their churches; also of the state of the churches touching their peace - their increase by baptism; and by letters dismissive & commendatory from other churches, -- touching their diminution by death, excommunication, and dismission to other churches and the present number of members. If any questions are to be put to the association -- any advice to ask -- or business to propose, (3) these are to be expressed in said letters. 202 204 206 208 210

3. All matters to be determined in this association by [4] the suffrage of the [4] messengers, except which are determined by Scripture -- such matters are never put to the decision of votes. All that speak are to address the moderator, who is to take care that none be interrupted while speaking, and that no other indecorum take place. 212 214 216

4. Churches are to be received into this association by petitions, setting forth their desire to be admitted -- their faith -- order -- and willingness to be comformable to the rules of the associated body. When a petititon is read, and the matter ripened for a vote; the moderator states the 218 220 222

---

[1]Earlier version reads "the ground of appeals . . ."

[2]This third sentiment is substantially in the original but the biblical basis from Acts 15 is deleted entirely (compare facing page).

[3]The earlier version reads "any advice to ask, any requests or appeals to make, . . ." Some objected to the term "appeals," especially the Church at Coventry (see chap. 5, pp. 431-34).

Consent being had, the moderator publishes that the said Church is received a member of the Association; in token whereof, he in behalf of the whole, gives the right hand of fellowship to the delegates of the received Church, and orders them to take their seats in the Association.

5. The Association is to meet annually at Warren the Tuesday/ after the first Wednesday in September, at 2 o'clock P.M.; the meeting to be opened by a sermon; after which they enter upon business, to wit, reading of letters from the Churches, considering of requests; and by direction of the Moderator, preparing an Association letter addressed to the Churches; of this letter when approved, copies are taken and are sent to each Church by their deputies. In these letters are shown the proceedings of the Association, the state of the Churches, when and by whom vacant Churches are to be supplied, who to preach the next Association sermon, the advice of the Association to the Churches; their decision of queries, appeals, requests, etc. Which letter is recorded, and the minutes of their proceedings are recorded in the Association book.

And this Association/ having received a letter from the Philadelphia Association, wherein they express their joy on hearing of this design, and their desire of a mutual correspondence, this Association did freely concur therewith, and accordingly ordered a letter to be written to them, and appointed President Manning to go with the same...

John Gano, Moderator.
Isaac Backus, Clerk.

By order of the
Elders and Brethren present.

(The foregoing plan was substantially that of the Philadelphia Association. It was afterwards amended by President Manning and adopted in 1769.) (1)

---

[1] Note added by Isaac Backus.

question, suffrage being given in favour of the petition, the said moderator declares that such a church is received into the association, in token of which he gives the messengers the right hand of fellowship, and bids them take their seats.

4. [sic] The association to meet annually at Warren on Tuesday next after the first Wednesday in September at two a clock in the afternoon; and to continue till business be finished. It is to be opened with divine service -- after which a moderator and clerk are chosen -- the letters from the churches are read -- the names of the messengers are written that they may be called over at after meetings -- then business is attended to, and minutes thereof made -- A circular letter to the churches is prepared and signed, and a copy of it sent to every church, containing the minutes of the association; the states of the churches; when and by whom vacancies are to be supplied; who to preach the next association sermon, and whatever else is needful for the churches to know.

5. A connexion to be formed and maintained between this association and that of Philadelphia by annual letter and messengers from us to them and from them to us.

6. The faith and order of this association are expressed in a confession put forth by upwards of a hundred congregations (in Great Britian) in the year 1689; and adopted by the association of Philadelphia in 1742. Some of the principles in said confession are -- The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity -- The inability of man to recover himself -- Effectual calling by sovereign grace -- Justification by imputed righteousness -- Immersion for baptism, and that on profession of faith and repentance -- Congregational churches, and their independency -- Reception into them upon evidence of sound conversion etc.

NB. The above mentioned Confession of faith may be had at Philadelphia in sheets, for 7 coppers a piece, and bound for 15 coppers. Also the baptist Catechism, for 4 coppers; and Norcott on baptism for 5 coppers.

D. Narrative of the Proceedings of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. (1)

[108] We here add a brief account of the philadelphia association. It was begun Sep. 27. 1707. and hath continued uninterruptedly to this day [1770]. Then it consisted of five churches; now of thirty three. The original rules of it are not extant; (2) but may be judged of by the following narrative of their proceedings, recorded in the association book.

1. It consists only of messengers chosen and sent by several churches concerned. These messengers are their ministers, together with some judicious laymen, commonly, the ruling elders. Their expences are defrayed by the churches that send them. (3)

2. With their messengers, the churches send letters addressed to the association. In these letters they mention the messengers names, and their authority to act for them. Show the states of the churches since the last association, viz. how many added to them by baptism; by letters commendatory from other churches. How many restored by repentance. How many died. How many excommunicated; or dismissed to other churches. And what the number of members in each church is etc. If they have any question to put to the association; any advice to ask; any requests, or appeals to make they specify them in the same letters, with this difference; these last are specified in paragraphs by themselves, and not in the bodies of the letters, to prevent their being read in public.

3. All matters are determined in this association by the suffrage of the messengers or deputies which constitute it; except what matters are determined or determinable by scripture. Such things are never put to the vote.

---

[1]Morgan Edwards, The Customs of Primitive Churches; Or, A Set of Propositions Relative to the Name, Materials, Constitution, Power, Officers, Ordinances, Rites, Business, Worship, Discipline, Government etc. of a Church . . . and Historical Narratives of the Manner in Which Most of Them Have Been Reduced to Practice (Philadelphia: Andrew Stewart, 1768), pp. 108-110.

[2]See items relative to proceedings in Gillette, 7:25, 27:28; 39:40: and 76:97.

[3]Encouraged at 1727 session (Gillette, 27:28).

4. The way of admitting churches into this association is, by petitions from the churches proposing, showing forth their desire of admission; their faith; order; and purpose to be conformable to the rules of the associated body. When a petition be read by the clerk, the moderator puts it to the vote, whether such a church shall, or shall not be received? Consent being had, the same moderator publishes, that the said church is a member of the association; in token whereof he, in behalf of the whole, gives the right [109] hand of fellowship to the delegates of the received church; and orders them to take their places in the association.

5. This association meet annually at Philadelphia on tuesday next after the second sunday in October, and continues sitting for three days.

6. It is opened at ten a clock on the said day with the public service of the church, and an association sermon. This sermon has always for its subject one of the xxxiv articles contained in the ancient baptist confession of faith. The article and preacher are nominated the year before; and in case of his failure, another. By this previous nomination there are two sermons prepared on the same subject. If the first preacher be present, the second delivers his in the evening of the same day. These sermons are to be printed.

7. When public service is over the moderator, for last year, resumes his seat; and after a special prayer, nominates a successor who when approved takes his chair; then the new moderator nominates a clerk who is also to be approved. That done, he calls for the letters, and reads. The clerk forms a list of the messengers named in the letters. After that he (by the advice of the minister of the church of Philadelphia) publishes a meeting at six a clock; informs them who is to preach then, and the two days following; and after prayer adjourns the association to nine a clock the next day.

8. None but the delegates of the churches have a right to be present the second day. These being met at nine a clock, and prayer made, the moderator orders the clerk to call over the names of the messengers, who answer to them. Then they enter on the business, which the letters, the minutes of preceding associa-

tion, the situation of the churches etc. bring before them. At twelve they adjourn to three in the afternoon. At that meeting also the names of the messengers are called over, etc. They continue to prosecute business to six; and adjourn to nine next day.

9. When met this day they enter on business, as before said. Part of which is, by direction of the moderator, preparing an association letter, addressed to the churches. Of this letter, when approved, copies are taken; and one sent to each church, by their deputies. In these letters are shown, the proceedings of the association; the state of the churches; when, and by whom vacant churches are to be supplied; who to preach the next association sermon; what the subject; and, in case of failure in the preacher appointed, who is to supply his place; the advice of the association to the churches; their decisions of queries, appeals or requests made etc. Which letter, and the minutes of the meeting are entered in the association book.

The advantages which the baptist interest in these parts hath reaped from this association are demonstrated by a course of about fifty years experience. By it, preaching imposters find no place among them; their ministry supplied with approved men, who all have credentials of their call, ordination, and good character; forward and unfit men kept out; church censures have a fair chance of answering their end etc. By it the baptists are become a respectable body of people, not only among other religious societies, but in the eye of the civil powers, as might be shown by several instances in Maryland, Virginia, [110] etc. [110] for which reason we could wish that all baptist churches in America, whether english or german, were to form themselves into such associated bodies in their respective provinces; and find some way to effect and maintain an union of those bodies; especially as there has lately been obtained a charter for a baptist college, and the corporation have begun to set the institution on foot, under the care of a learned pious minister of the baptist denomination.

D. A Sermon on a Gospel Church Portrayed, and Her Orderly Service Pointed Out. 1791. (1)

[8] THAT I may contribute my small mite towards the good work, I shall attempt, as God may assist, 378

I. To describe the house of the LORD, as built upon the gospel plan. 380

II. SHEW, when it may be said that the service of this house is set in order, or what is necessary thereunto. 382

I. I AM to describe the house of the LORD, as built upon the gospel plan, or, in other words, portray a true gospel church. 384 386

. . . . . .

1. WITH the foundation of the LORD's house. We may be sure that such a structure is well founded; and this will appear to be a fact, when we consider, that the foundation on which the church is built, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Under this character he is frequently spoken of in the Old and New Testaments. By implication, CHRIST is held forth as the foundation in the first declaration of gospel grace-- "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's "head." Which imports, that, notwithstanding Adam's fall, GOD would have a church in the world, and that this church should be founded on CHRIST, as an incorruptible, impregnable basis. But through mercy, we are not left to such abstruse, figurative [9] hints only. The evangelical prophet is more explicit-- Isai. 28. 16--"Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a "tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure founda- "tion." The testimony of the apostle Paul is not less express--1 Cor. 3. 11--"Other foundation "can no man lay, than that is laid, which is JESUS "CHRIST." And CHRIST himself hath confirmed 388 390 392 394 396 398 400 402 404 406 408

---

[1] Oliver Hart, A Gospel church portrayed, and her orderly service pointed out. Sermon delivered in the city of Philadelphia at the opening of the Baptist Association, October 4, 1791 (Trenton: Isaac Collins, 1791). Based on Chron. 29:35.

the point. When Peter made that noble profession,
"Thou art CHRIST, the son of the living GOD," 410
our LORD replied, "Upon this rock will I build
"my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail 412
"against it."

THIS then is the foundation of the church; and 414
a glorious one it is. For solidity, splendour, incorrupt-
ibility, and intrinsick worth, it far exceeds any of 416
those precious stones, said to be laid as foundations
of the "wonderful city," spoken of in the book of 418
Revelation.

FROM the foundation, I pass on, 420

2. To speak of the materials with which this house
of the LORD is built. 422

We may reasonably suppose, that the materials which
compose the edifice, will bear some analogy to the foun- 424
dation on which they are laid. It would be a great
blunder in architecture, to raise a superstructure, com- 426
posed of raw, uncultivated materials, as taken from the
quarry or forest, upon an elegant and magnificent foun- 428
dation. To the honour of the proprietary founder,
such a mistake has not here taken place. I confidently 430
assert therefore, that the materials with which the house
of the LORD is built, consists only of persons who are 432
[10] regenerated, converted and sanctified. Or, in a more
comprehensive style, of those who are saints. . . . 434
. . . . . .

[11] HAVING taken a view of the foundation of the
church, or house of the LORD, and pointed out 436
what kind of materials are to be built thereon,
we proceed, 438

3. To consider the erection of this house; or,
in other words, describe the constitution of a gospel 440
church.

[12] NOTHING is more certain than that the church, 442
or mystical body of JESUS CHRIST, has experi-
enced a variety of transmutations or modifications 444
in the world. In the primitive ages, the church
was patriarchal. Every pious father was a priest in 446
his family, and might be said to have a church
in his house. This mode continued until the giv- 448
ing of the law; when the church became national,

and remained so until the death of CHRIST:
when there was a change of the priesthood; and
"of necessity a change of the law"* respecting it.
This rendered a new modification of the church
absolutely necessary; and from this period it be-
came congregational; and will continue so until the
second coming of CHRIST. In this view I shall
consider the church, in all I have further to say
respecting it.

The materials have already been described. To
erect the building these materials must coalesce, or
be joined together; for while they continue as de-
tached pieces, (although of the mystical body of
CHRIST) they cannot, with any propriety, be term-
ed, a church. They become a gospel church, there-
fore, by confederation, or mutual compact; in
which, "they give up themselves to the LORD,
"And to one another, by the will of GOD;" co-
venanting by grace divine to discharge all the du-
ties incumbent upon them, in this gospel relation;
and to "walk in all the commandments and ordi-
"nances of the LORD blameless." Thus they be-
come a body corporate, under CHRIST the head,
"from which all the body by joints and bands, having
"nourishment ministered, and knit together, in-
"creaseth with the increase of God"†--"in whom

---

* Heb. vii. 12. † Coloss. ii. 19.

[13] "All the building fitly framed together, groweth
"unto an holy temple in the LORD."*

THE number necessary to constitute a church,
is not ascertained; but as CHRIST hath promised
his gracious presence "with two or three, gathered
"together in his name," if this may be applied to
the gathering of a church, (and I see not why it
may not) it must indicate that a few may compose a
church, even supposing these two or three are a
certain, for an uncertain number. They should not

---

* Ephes. ii. 21.

however be so numerous, as not to be able, commodiously, to meet together, for divine service, in one place.†

. . . . . .

† 1 Cor. xi. 19. Chap. xiv. 23.

[19] 10. HAVING thus attempted to describe the house of the LORD, as built upon the gospel plan; perhaps some may expect, that something should be said respecting the architect. When we see a magnificent edifice, neatly executed according to the rules of art, we are naturally led to inquire, Who was the builder? To this, in the present case, I might return a summary answer. "He "that built all things is GOD."* But the apostle addressing the Corinthian church, is more explicit. "Ye "are God's building."‡ Yes. The triune JEHOVAH was the builder of this edifice. GOD, the Father, chose the materials: GOD, the Son, purchased them with his most precious blood; and GOD, the Holy Ghost, by his powerful and gracious influences, hews, planes, polishes and fits them for the building. Each of these divine persons is equally concerned in the erection of the house. JEHOVAH then is the grand Architect or Master Builder; therefore we have no reason to wonder that it is such a magnificent structure. But as God works by means, ministers of the gospel may be considered as under-workers, in building the church. "We then are workers together with Him."§ An honourable employment this! Therefore the apostle enjoins it upon common members to "esteem them very "highly in love for their works' sake."// But then ministers should give all the honour of success to the

* Isaiah xl. 28.
† Heb. iii. 4.
‡ 1 Cor. iii. 9.
§ 2 Cor. vi. 1.
// 1 Thes. v. 13.

[20] LORD: For, "Except the LORD build the house, they "labour in vain that build it."*

I SHALL close this head with an extract from that most excellent expositor of scripture, Doctor Gill,

* Psalm cxxvii. 1.

on 1 Cor. iii. 9--Ye are God's building. "Believers in
"a church state, are God's house, in which he dwells, 526
"and which he himself has built; he has laid the
"foundation, which is JESUS CHRIST; he makes his 528
"people lively stones, and lays them on it; he raises
"up the superstructure and will complete the building, 530
"and ought to bear all the glory, and in all which he
"makes use of his ministers as instruments." 532

PROCEED we now,

II. To shew, when it may be said, that the service 534
of the house of the LORD is set in order, or what is
necessary thereunto. 536

I HAVE already observed, that the service of the
house of the LORD includes the whole of gospel wor- 538
ship, pointed out in sacred oracles, so far as it respects
social, publick worship. Now that this service may be 540
set in due order, it is necessary,

1. THAT the church be duly organized with proper 542
officers. No machine can move regularly, when it lacks
any of its main springs, or most important wheels. 544
Neither can a church without its officers. Divested of
these, the service of the house of the LORD can never 546
be set in complete order. There are some parts of di-
vine service which none but proper officers have a 548
right to perform. Uzzah was struck dead for touching
the ark, which none had a right to do but the priests. 550
The LORD is a jealous God, and will be worshipped in
[21] his own prescribed way. It is sinful and dangerous for 552
any one, however zealous, to go beyond his own line of
duty, and intrude on another's province. It would be 554
well if those, who are over-fond of thrusting themselves
into the ministry, would consider this. Probably you 556
are ready to inquire, "Who are the proper officers in
"a gospel church?" I answer, Ministers and deacons, and 558
they only. One of the excellencies of the gospel, in
my opinion, consists in its simplicity or plainness; being 560
free from parade, or pompous show. Under the Jewish
economy, while the church was in the state of infancy, 562
such tinsel ornaments suited the times, and temper of
the people: their place of worship, their priests' vest- 564
ments, and all their numerous rites were pompous and
showy. But under the christian economy, gospel wor- 566
ship, in imitation of its humble, yet adorable author
and object, puts away these (comparatively) gaudy, 568
childish things; and becomes more plain and spiritual.

Religious rites are reduced to two, plain, positive ordinances, baptism and the LORD's supper; and the officers of the church to the same number, ministers and deacons. By ministers, I mean such as sustain the highest office in a gospel church. Who are indiscriminately termed bishops, pastors, teachers, elders, etc. I have chosen to style them ministers, as being the most common appellation among us, if not in scripture. Their work lies chiefly, in preaching the gospel, administring ordinances, leading and governing the church. Deacons are "helps" to ministers, and their work consists, principally, in managing the outward concerns of the church. Which two officers, as I intimated before, are all that are pointed out in scripture, as necessary, for the due organization of a gospel church.*

2. MINISTERS and deacons should not only exist in

---

* Phil. i. 1.

[22] the church, but they should be inducted into office in a regular, orderly way. There is but little reason to expect that those who set out in a disorderly manner, will ever be reduced to order themselves; and still less, that they will contribute much towards setting the service of the house of the LORD in order. These officers then are to be chosen and set apart to office, by the common suffrage of the church; which certainly hath a right to the improvement of the gifts of all its members; and ought to call forward such as, in their opinion, are qualified for office, and to put them on trial. Thus candidates are to "be proven," and, upon giving sufficient evidence of their qualifications, are to be ordained, or set apart to their respective offices. As to the mode of conducting this business, I shall say but little. It is generally performed by imposition of hands and prayer; but as, in my humble opinion, the essence of ordination consists in the call of the church, and the acceptation of that call, attended with prayer, I look upon laying on of hands as a mere formal rite, not founded on scripture. Doctor Gill saith, "No instance can be given of hands "being laid on any ordinary minister, pastor or elder, "at his ordination; nor, indeed, of hands being laid "on any, upon whatsoever account, but by extraordi- "nary persons; nor by them upon any ministers, but "extraordinary ones; and even then not at and for the "ordination of them." However, when regularly called and ordained, a minister is vested with the whole

power of the ministerial office; and, by virtue of his great master's commission, may preach the gospel, and administer ordinances, in any part of the world, where GOD in his providence may call him; and is then eligible as pastor of any orderly church that may call him to preside over them.

3. Preaching the gospel is an essential branch of
[23] divine service. . . .

4. Social and publick prayer is a very material part of the service of the house of the Lord. . . .

[24] 5. HARMONIOUSLY singing the praises of God, with united voices, is also a branch of the service of the house of the LORD; and a delightful employ it is. . . .

[26] 6. ADMINISTRING gospel ordinances is an essential branch of the service of the HOUSE of the LORD: I mean baptism and the Lord's supper. These are plain and positive institutions of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, never to be dispensed with. Baptism, if not an initiating ordinance, as it is frequently called, it is an essential pre-requisite to admission into the church. Read over the apostolick account of gathering and settling churches, or receiving members into communion, and you will find that it was the uniform and invariable custom, (from which we ought never to swerve) first to baptize and then receive persons into the church. The administrators of this ordinance are regular, ordained ministers of the gospel; the only proper subjects of it are men and women,‡ professing repentance towards GOD,§ and faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST: // the mode of administration is immersion, or dipping the party in water,¶ in the name of the FATHER and of the SON and of the HOLY GHOST.‡‡

. . . . . .

---

‡ Acts viii. 12. // Acts viii. 37.
§ Mark i. iv.
¶ Many Pedobaptists have acknowledged this is the scriptural mode. ‡‡ Mat. xxviii. 19.

[27] The Lord's supper was instituted by CHRIST, immediately after eating the passover, on that sorrowful night in which he was betrayed; and is to

continue in the church until he shall come the second time, without sin, unto salvation. . . .

The administrators of this rite are the same as in baptism; the subjects are baptized believers, in a church state, who are to "examine themselves, "and so to eat of that bread and drink of that cup;" The symbols are bread and wine, over each of which thanks are to be given separately; when the bread being broken, and the wine poured out, communi-
[28] cants are to partake, in both kinds, with devout affections; and the solemnity is to be concluded by "singing a hymn or psalm." This service of the house of the LORD should be carefully set, and maintained in order; for it is of so much imporance, that there cannot be an orderly gospel church without it. "This do," saith CHRIST, "in remem- "brance of me."

7. Discipline is a necessary branch of the service of the house of the LORD. The design of this institution is to keep the church pure, regulate its concerns, remove disorders, and, as much as may be, prevent their taking place. Considered as a society, or incorporated body, the church adopts, and in effect, subscribes to certain constitutional rules, drawn up by CHRIST, and engrossed in the archives of sacred truth. By these rules the church is governed, and ought never to deviate therefrom, an hair's breadth. The government founded on these rules is truly republican; so constructed, as not to invade the rights of human nature. Every male member has an equal vote, in all matters of business. The executive power is lodged in the hands of the minister, who is to take the lead in all points of administration; but in no case whatever, is his will to give law. He is the church's "servant for JESUS' sake"--is amenable to her, and must not "lord it over GOD's "heritage." What I have further to say under this head, will respect the admission of members, their duties as such--offences cognizable by the church, and its dealings thereon. . . . . .

[31] 8. The communion of churches may contribute much towards setting the service of the house of the LORD in order.

ALTHOUGH churches are independent of each other, with respect to power and government, yet the gospel they profess binds them to hold communion, in

brotherly love--fellowship--gifts--council and property. Brotherly love is essential to christianity and necessarily exists, not only between believers, as individuals, but between gospel churches; especially those of the same faith and order. These ought to hold fellowship with each other, occasionally, at the LORD's table. Those who have a stated supply of ministerial gifts, should communicate to those who are destitute. A council of churches, is sometimes needful to settle disputes; and a communication of property to indigent churches, is but a reasonable service.

BUT that the communion of churches may ripen to maturity, they should associate, and become an ecclesi-
[32] astical body; to meet, by their delegates, periodically, for the transaction of business.

SUCH an association has been countenanced by the custom of the churches in all ages of christianity, and is sanctioned by an apostolick precedent.* And as "In "the multitude of counsellors there is safety," there appears to be the greatest utility in such a union of the churches, that they may consult the general good of the whole, consistent with the honour of CHRIST and interest of religion. They are all embarked in one common cause, and their united efforts are most likely to promote it. "Two are better than one, and a three, a thirty, "or a forty-fold cord is not quickly broken."

The advantages arising from the association of churches, are too many to be here enumerated. I shall instance only in a few particulars. 1. Hereby a more general knowledge of the state of the churches is obtained--desirable object this, in itself, and serves as a directory in our prayers and intercessions for the body at large. 2. These interviews are not only the means of forming acquaintances, but of promoting brotherly love, and uniting each to other, in the bonds of christian affection, and esteem. And oh! "How good and how "pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." 3. Nothing can have a more direct tendency towards an establishment in the doctrines of grace. To hear so many letters read from churches so widely extended, breathing the same language; and so many mouths speaking the same things, must be confirming. 4. Hereby a noble standard is erected against error, heresy and all innovations in doctrine and worship. 5. Cases

---

* Acts xv Chapter.

too difficult for determination in a particular church, may here be fully and satisfactorily solved. 6. Destitute 746
[33] churches, on application, may receive supplies. 7. A fund may be raised for educating candidates for the ministry and other valuable purposes. 748
In one word, no institution can be founded, that will have a greater tendency to set the whole service of the house of the LORD in order. 750 752

9. A DUE attention to the <u>time</u> for social worship, may contribute much towards setting the service of the house of the LORD in order. . . . 754

F. A Sermon on the Constitution and Order of the Christian Church. 1789. (1)

[6] . . . Thus we have at one view, 756

FIRST, The present state of the church.

SECONDLY, The officers ordained by Christ 758
in it, with their use, and the grace bestowed
unitedly upon them. Together, 760

THIRDLY, With a prospect of that future bles-
sedness, of which they are expectants. 762

To each of these, I would wish to draw the
serious attention of this respected audience; and, 764
with the blessing of God, attempt an improve-
ment of the subject, answerable to the interesting 766
[7] and important end for which we are convened:
with which we shall conclude the discourse. 768
And,

First, We begin with the present state of the 770
church: in which we shall principally direct our
enquiries to two things; its members, and con- 772
stitution. . . . . .
. . . . . .

[10] The church, collectively considered, is called 774
the body of Christ and is also represented, by a
variety of other metaphors and similies, in the 776
word of God: Such as a kingdom, a temple, a
vine, a city, family, etc. all tending to shew its 778
relation to Christ; the union of its members;
and the important uses for which it is designed. 780
As his body, it is united to him by a threefold
band of union: a federal, or covenant union, by 782
his espousing their cause in the covenant of re-
demption; a natural union, by his assuming hu- 784
man nature; and a vital, or spiritual union, by
giving them his spirit, and affording them life. 786
To each other they are also united in him:
[11] "Being all made to drink into the same spirit," 788
admitted by the same principles, moulded into the

---

[1] Richard Furman, A Sermon on the Constitution and Order of the Christian Church, preached before the Charleston Association (Charleston: Printed by Markland & M'Iver, No. 47, Bay, 1791).

same temper, pursuing the same ends, and sympathising with each other in their various offices and relations; and are, as members of the same body, each one necessary in his place. Its uses are, to be "an habitation of God through the spirit;" "the pillar and ground of the truth," and the means of displaying the sovereign and free grace of God, to all rational creatures.

This holy state, use and character, originating and secured, in the divine purpose and disposition, constitute the church essentially considered; but we are to take a farther view of it, in its outward and diversified state; in which it forms a visible society, state, or polity, under the authority of Christ: And may be considered as a worshipping assembly, or as a seat of authority and judicature.

As a worshipping assembly, it is properly described, as "a society of faithful men, to whom the word of God is purely preached and the ordinances duly administered;" and which frequently assembles together, to unite in acts of social worship. For these purposes it is favored with a revelation of the will of God, ordinances of divine worship, and a standing ministry, hereafter to be described.

The authority of the church is not original, but derived. It has not the power of legislation; but of enforcing the laws of Christ: And this not in the execution of wrath; but for the regulation of the saints, and reclaiming of transgressors. The power of the church, besides what
[12] of course belongs to it as a society for regulating its circumstantial concerns, forms to be comprehended in the following particulars: The admission of persons to membership and office; watching over and admonishing those, who are its members; and excluding such as become scandalously wicked and obstinately impenitent. In these various acts, the public officers take the lead; but the consent and authority of the church, united to their office-power, seem necessary for perfecting any act of public concernment. That the officers have a power from Christ, for which they are personally accountable to him, is very apparent: The charge, to "lay

hands suddenly on no man," is a text in point. 836
But though they may be justifiable in objecting
to such acts, in which they cannot accord with 838
the church, with respect to either expedience or
propriety; yet it does not appear, that they may 840
perform them independent of the church's ap-
probation. 842

The question of respecting the jurisdiction of
national churches, general councils, synods, dio- 844
cesan bishops, etc. have been subjects of much
controversy, and severally advocated, as well as 846
opposed, by great and good men. The objec-
tions against them are weighty, if not insuper- 848
able.

To us the congregational plan, which we 850
have embraced, appears most eligible; as coun-
tenanced by scripture, and the reason of things. 852
That the church of Christ is not national, etc.
but congregational, we argue: from Christ's 854
promising his presence to two or three met in
[13] his name; his making the church the last 856
resort in cases of offence, "If he refuse to hear
the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen 858
man, or a publican;" where a congregational
church appears evidently designed: From the 860
scriptural account of many congregational chur-
ches, after the gospel began its progress: As the 862
Seven Churches of Asia, the churches of Gala-
tia, Judea, etc. and from the exercise of power 864
in them, on various occasions. All which con-
spire to prove the congregational form and inde- 866
pendency of the church, in its present outward
and diversified state. At one time, we see a 868
person of the highest spiritual office, applying to
the church at Jerusalem for admission to mem- 870
bership, and denied it, until proper evidence was
given of his sincerity and gracious state. At 872
another, the body of the apostles addressing the
same church on the subject of choosing public 874
officers. In a third instance, we behold St. Paul,
treating on the subject of judging and excommu- 876
nication, as the proper work for the body of the
church at Corinth; and in a similar manner does 878
he address the Thessalonians, respecting their
disorderly members. 880

But, however distinct, and independent of each other, the different congregational churches may be, respecting the support of worship, and exercise of discipline; a strict regard should be ever had to union and harmony among them: That the unity of the spirit, which pervades the whole, may be kept in the bond of peace. Nor is this simply a prudential matter; it is the will and express command of HIM, "Who holds the seven
[14] stars in his right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:" The interests of his kingdom at large require it; and the welfare of each particular church, as a part of that Kingdom, is thereby promoted.

We proceed

Secondly, To take a view of the officers established by Christ in his church; their use; and the grace bestowed respectively upon them. Some of these appear to be of an extraordinary, the others of an ordinary character: Of the first, are apostles, prophets and evangelists; of the latter, pastors and teachers. . . . . .
. . . . . .

[16] . . . . . Such were the apostles, as the first order of ministers in the church; they fulfilled their office with their lives, the benefit of which will be experienced to latest ages. Nor can any, as their successors, confidently claim their authority, or influence, without their endowments, and divine credentials: Such pretentions must be folly and presumption in the extreme.

[17] . . . . . .
. . . . . In fine, the apostles, prophets and evangelists, were inspired men, and in this alone are sufficiently distinguished from the ordinary ministers of the church. Which I am to consider in the next place, under the character of

Pastors and teachers. Officers of this description are now found in the church; nor is there any thing extraordinary annexed to their character: By which it appears, they form that order of ministers which were intended to con-

tinue after miraculous gifts had ceased, and to attend on the gospel service until the end of the world. It will be acknowledged, they existed in the church in the apostolic age, from which it has been inferred they also were extraordinary; but they appear to have held the same station then, as at the present time: Being
[18] invested with the charge of particular, or congregational churches; while the care of the churches at large devolved on the extraordinary ministers. Some doubts, however, have arisen whether pastors and teachers, (poimenas kai didaskalous) intend persons in different offices; or are descriptive of the same character. Some learned expositors are of the latter opinion; one, in particular, argues thus: "Pastors and teachers; not some pastors, and some teachers, as though they were different; but and teachers, the kai, or and, being exegetical, explaining what is meant by pastors, even such who are teachers, to instruct in the knowledge of divine things*." Others consider the pastor, or shepherd, as having the care and government of a church, with power to exercise discipline, and administer ordinances, as well as to preach the gospel in it; the teacher as authorised to preach, or teach as the catechists of old; but not empowered to govern, or administer the sacraments. The truth of the subject seems to be this: The work of the ministry consists of two principal parts, teaching and governing; and of those called to the office some are more eminently qualified for one part than the other. Pastors must be teachers; but others may be useful preachers of the gospel, who yet, are not well qualified to have the care of churches. Though the office, with respect to each, appears to be essentially the same; and the teacher, who attains experience and improvement, will be fitted for the pastor's work. Or it may have respect

---

* Dr. Gill in his Body of Divinity.

[19] to the providential disposal of persons, equally fitted for the same service: Some being statedly fixed, with particular churches; while others

are called, as missionaries, to dispense the gospel in an itinerant manner.

The same officers are designed by presbyters, or elders, and bishops, or overseers, in the church: The elders of the church of Ephesus, (Presbyterous tes ecclesias,) which Paul sent for to Miletas, are not only stiled by him bishops, which the Holy Ghost had made, over the flock of God: (Pneuma to agion etheto episkopous;*) but the church is called (Poimnio) the flock, a term which has most strict relation to (Poimen) a shepherd or pastor, and the elders are directed (Poimainein) to feed them as a shepherd. And in his epistle to Titus, the apostle explains what he means by the persons called elders in the first instance, by stiling them bishops in the second.† As elders we behold them possessed of experience, wisdom and respectability; as bishops, invested with the oversight, or care of the church, and "watching for souls as those who must give account to God."

. . . . . .

---

* Acts. XX.17.28 † Titus, chap. I.v.5.7.

[25] The apostles, prophets and evangelists (we have seen) were employed in revealing the will of God to the world, and compleating the scheme of prophesy; in confirming the truth of the gospel, by miraculous evidence; and laying the foundation of the new testament church: In this, "though they be dead, they yet speak." So that in what was peculiar to their characters, [26] they contribute now, as well as when they were on earth, to the great ends of the gospel ministry. In other things, their work was not different from that of the ordinary ministers of the gospel now to be described. Which consists principally, in preaching of the gospel; administering the sacraments; leading in public acts of devotion; and watching over the church of God. . . .

G. A Summary of Church Discipline: Shewing the Qualifications and Duties of the Officers and Members of a Gospel Church. 1831. (1)

[127]

CHAPTER I.

Of a true and orderly Gospel Church.

1. God in every age hath had, has, and will have a church or people in the world, consisting of a greater or less number, and subsisting under various forms and in diverse circumstances, Acts vii.38. Eph. iii. 21.

The catholic, or universal church, considered, collectively forms one complete and glorious body, Cant. vi. 9, called Christ's mystical body, of which he is the head, Col. i. 10. Eph. i. 22. This is the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, Heb. xii. 23.

Under the Old Testament dispensation, the church was pretty much confined to family or nation; but under the present administration, Christ gathers to himself a people from among all nations. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And being thus gathered, by the power of Christ in the gospel, it becomes their duty to unite in distinct churches, Acts ii. 41, 47, that they may walk together, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Hence we find that under the gospel, churches were settled wherever there was a sufficient number of converts for that purpose, Rev. ii. and iii. chapters.

[128]

---

[1] A Summary of Church Discipline: Shewing the Qualifications and Duties of the Officers and Members of a Gospel Church, in Baptist Confession of Faith: and a Summary of Church Discipline. To which is added an appendix containing [7 different sources touching on church life] (Charleston: Printed by W. Riley for Daniel Sheppard, 1831), pp. 126-64. See full title in bibliography.

A particular gospel church, consists of a company of saints incorporated by a special convenant, into one distinct body, and meeting together in one place, for the enjoyment of fellowship with each other, and with Christ their head, in all his institutions, to their mutual edification, and the glory of God through the Spirit, 2 Cor. viii. 5. Acts ii. 1.

2. The temple of the Lord is not to be built with dead, but living materials, 2 Pet. ii. 5. None have a right to church membership, but such as Christ will own as his sincere followers, at the last decisive day, whatever pretentions they may make to an interest in his favour, Matt. vii. 22, 23. Except a man be born again, he has no right to enter into the kingdom of God, or into a gospel church, John iii. 3. Christ is a living head, and will have none but living members, in his mystical body. John xv. 6.

[129] 3. The constitution of churches, is plainly supposed, Acts vii. 47. Matt. xviii. 17, etc. and it is necessary, in order that the disciples of Christ may enjoy the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which is a church ordinance, watch over one another, warn the unruly, and lay censures on disorderly and impenitent persons.

The scriptures do not absolutely determine the number of persons necessary to constitute a church; but as our Lord has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Mat. xviii. 20, it should seem as if the number of godly persons might, at least in some urgent cases, form a church essential, though not a church complete, or duly organized, for lack of officers. Experience has sometimes proved, that such small beginnings have been succeeded with a large increase, consistent with that encouraging promise, Isa. lx. 22, a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.

A gospel-church is not national, but congregational. This was evidently the case in

the apostolic age; hence Paul sent a general epistle to the several churches in Galatia, Gal. i. 1, 2, and our Lord himself ordered epistles to be wrote to the seven distinct churches in Asia, Rev. ii. and iii. chapters.

With regard to the manner of constituting a church, it must be by the consent, and desire, of the parties concerned: and it will be expedient, to call in a minister or ministers, [130] if to be had, to assist on that important occasion. The parties being met fasting, the solemnity ought to be opened by fervent prayer to God, Phil. iv. 6; next a sermon suitable to the occasion should be preached; and then, for the mutual satisfaction of every individual, a strict enquiry should be made into their experience of a work of grace on their hearts, their soundness in the doctrines of faith, and the goodness of their lives and conversation; unless, as members of churches, they come honorably recommended for that purpose. Being thus satisfied with each others graces and qualifications, and united in the bond of love, they should give up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God, 2 Cor. viii. 5; by subscribing a written covenant, consistent with the word of God, Isa. xliv. 5. thereby binding and obliging themselves to be the Lord's, to walk in all his commands and ordinances, and in all respects to behave towards each other as brethren, agreeable to the spiritual relation they now enter into.

Being thus united in one body, under Christ their head, they become and are to be deemed a church essential, founded on the gospel plan. Let them then ratify their engagements by a participation of the Lord's supper, and so conclude the solemnity.

4. A church thus constituted, has the keys, or power of government, within itself, having Christ for its head, and his law for its rule. [131] It has the power and privilege of choosing its own officers, Acts vi. 3. chap xiii. 2, exercising its own discipline, Mat. xviii. 17; and of administering the word and ordinan-

ces, for the edification and comfort of its members, Acts ii. 46. All which, with every other act of discipline, each distinct church may exercise, without being subject to the cognizance of any other church, presbytery, synod, or council whatever, 1 Cor. v. 12. Mat. xviii. 17.

Churches being vested with such power, ought to use it with prudence; lest they dishonor Christ and his cause, or wound their fellow members, 1 Cor. x. 31. Rom. xv. 2. To guard against which, church business should be debated deliberately, with humility and moderation; that, if possible, the members may be unanimous in all their determinations. Nevertheless, when this unanimity cannot be attained, a majority of the male members may determine, and the minority ought peaceably to submit. This appears not only from that general rule, Eph. v. 21, "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God;" but more clearly from 2 Cor. ii. 6, "sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many:" Which many, supposes a majority; in the original it is upo ton pleionon, by the more, the greater, or major part. Which plainly points out a decision by a majority.

[132] Female members may, when called upon, act as witnesses in a church; and when aggrieved, are to make known their case, either in person, or by a brother; and must have a proper regard paid them: But they are excluded from all share of rule, or government in the church. 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 11, 14. . . . . .

. . . . . .

[159] CHAPTER VI.

Of the Association of Churches.

As the communion of saints, so the communion of churches, is a desirable blessing. To obtain and promote which, ought to be the study and endeavour of all the people of God.

Although churches formed on the gospel plan, are independent of each other, with regard to power; yet not so, strictly speaking, with regard to communion. For as saints in general, have an indisputable right to share in each other's gifts and graces; so have churches in this joint capacity. It is a general rule "To do good, and to communicate forget not," Heb. xiii. 16, which is applicable in a particular manner, to churches as such.

In order the more amply to obtain this blessing of communion, there ought to be a coalescing or uniting of several churches into one body, so far as their local situation and other circumstances will admit. But as it is impracticable for all the individual members thus to associate and coalesce together, the churches should, each respectively, choose and delegate some of the most able, pious and judicious from among themselves, and particularly their ministers, to convene at such times and places as may be thought most conducive to the great end proposed; to act as their representatives in the general assembly. [160] Their expenses ought to be defrayed by the churches who send them.

It appears advisable that these delegates at their first meeting, should in a formal manner, enter into covenant with each other, as the representatives of the churches, for the promoting Christ's cause in general, and the interest of the churches they represent in particular. They should then form their plan of operations; and fix on the most proper time and place for meeting in future. Once a year at least, they ought to meet, at a place the most centrical and convenient for all the churches in confederation to attend.

Although such a conjunction of churches is not expressly commanded in scripture; yet it receives sufficient countenance and authority from the light of nature, and the general laws of society. But more especially from a precedent established by apostolical authority; recorded Acts xv. chap. [sic].

The association thus formed, is a respectable body, as it represents, not a city, country or nation, but the churches of Jesus Christ. Yet it is by no means to be deemed a superior judicature vested with coercive power, or authority over the churches; it presumes not to impose its sentiments on its constituents, under pain of excommunication; nor doth it anathematize those who do not implicitly submit to its determinations; which would be nothing less than spiritual tyranny; and better comport with the arbitrary spirit of popish
[161] councils, than with that meekness, which distinguishes the true disciples, and humble followers of the lowly, yet adorable Jesus. The apostles, elders and brethren, who composed the first christian council, presumed not to impose their conclusions on the churches in such a lordly manner; but prefaced their determinations with this modest prologue, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, Acts xv. 28. The Baptist Association, therefore, arrogates no higher title than that of an Advisory Council, consistent with which epithet it ought ever to act, when it acts at all; without intruding on the rights of independent congregational churches; or usurping authority over them, Matt. xxiii. 10-12.

Nevertheless, the association hath a natural and unalienable right to judge for itself, what churches shall be admitted into confederacy with it; and to withdraw from all acts of communion and fellowship with any church, so admitted, provided such church should obstinately persist in holding corrupt principles, or in indulging vicious practices, notwithstanding all proper endeavours have been used to reclaim it, Eph. v. 7, Rev. xviii. 4.

It is generally agreed, an association, when transacting business, should proceed in the following manner. (1) Always begin and
[162] end each session by prayer. (2) Admit none as messengers but such as come recommended by letters, well authenticated, from the

churches to which they belong, or from whence they come. (3) When a church petitions by letter, for admission, if approved of, the moderator is to inform the messengers that their request is granted, and desire them to take their seats. (4) All who have any thing to offer, are to rise and address the moderator. (5) While one is speaking, the rest are to be silent; yet all have an equal right to speak in turn. (6) No partiality, or respect of persons is to be shewn. (7) Every matter should be canvassed with gravity, modesty, and a sincere aim to truth. (8) When all are not agreed, the matter may be put to vote, and a majority determine. (9) All queries regularly sent by the churches, should be answered, if possible. (10) Any matter proposed, relative to the general good of the churches, should be seriously attended to. (11) Every transaction should be conformable to the revealed will of God. (12) A circular letter should be written, and sent to all the churches in confederation, containing such instruction, information and advice, as may be thought most suitable; and with which should be sent the transactions of the association.

The benefits arising from an association and communion of churches, are many; in general, it will tend to maintain the truth, order and discipline of the gospel. By it (1) [163] the churches may have such doubts as arise amongst them cleared, which will prevent disputes, Acts xv. 28, 29. (2) They will be furnished with salutary council, Prov. xi. 14. (3) Those churches which have no ministers, may obtain occasional supplies, Cant. viii. 8. (4) The churches will be more closely united in promoting the cause and interest of Christ. (5) A member who is aggrieved through partiality, or any other wrongs received from the church, may have an opportunity of applying for direction. (6) A godly and sound ministry will be encouraged, while a ministry that is unsound and ungodly, will be discountenanced. (7) There will be a reciprocal communication of their gifts, Phil. iv. 15. (8) Ministers may

alternately be sent out to preach the gospel to those who are destitute, Gal. ii. 9. (9) A large party may draw off from the church, by means of an intruding minister, or otherways, and the aggrieved may have no way of obtaining redress but from the association. (10) A church may become heretical, with which its godly members can no longer communicate; yet can obtain no relief but by the association. (11) Contentions may arise betwixt sister churches, which the association is most likely to remove. (12) The churches may have candidates for the ministry properly tried by the association.

[164] These and other advantages arising from an association, must induce every godly church to desire an union with such a body: but should any stand off, it would argue much self-sufficiency, Rev. iii. 17, and little or no desire after the unity of the spirit, Eph. iv. 3, or mutual edification, 1 Cor. xii. 11-14.

APPENDIX C

AN EXTENDED NOTE ON CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM

The Philadelphia tradition developed from Particular Baptist views in England and from Puritanism in the American colonies. Both contexts, on either side of the Atlantic, manifested the unmistakable "stamp of Geneva."[1]

Calvinism offered a systematic theology for Protestantism that rivaled the great scholasticism in Catholicism. Though British and American religious sects shared principles particular to a Calvinistic system, there were differences that must be respected in any serious study of seventeenth and eighteenth century Protestant denominations. In particular, one must understand (1) the characteristics of orthodox Calvinism; (2) approaches to Calvinism's double predestination; (3) the teachings of Arminians or Remonstrants; (4) the Synod of Dort and the victory of orthodoxy; (5) the spectrum of Calvinistic groups and Baptists; and (6) the P.B.A. and American Calvinism.

---

[1] Hicks-Mowry-Burke, History, p. 27; also Hudson, Protestantism, pp. 17-19 and Ahlstrom, Religious History, pp. 79-81.

The Characteristics of Orthodox Calvinism

W. A. Curtis, in his thorough review of Protestant and Catholic creeds, highlights the four principle characteristics of orthodox Calvinism.[1]

1. The Primacy and Unity of Scripture

In the forefront is a conviction about the "primary and basal position of canonical and non-apocryphal Scripture" as the only rule of faith and practice. In this Calvinists agreed with the Lutherans. Both the Reformed and the Evangelical traditions agree.

The Scripture itself is the only true interpreter. The Old and New Testaments should be read in terms of each other. Interpretation is not a literalism that merely cites texts. One must argue not from isolated texts alone, but from parallel places and related texts that shed light upon the meaning, because all of Scripture is one.[2]

---

[1]Curtis, pp. 862-63. Quotations in the following paragraphs are from Curtis. Ahlstrom focuses upon the following main notes of the Reformed tradition in America: (1) absolute sovereignty of God; (2) human depravity and double predestination; (3) concern for God's revealed Law; (4) tension between Church and world; and (5) Enlivened Old Testament world view leading to sense of manifest destiny (Religious History, pp. 79-80; see also Ahlstrom, Theology in America, p. 27).

[2]Curtis, p. 862. See John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), bk. 1, chaps. 6-8. (Hereafter: Institutes; references are to book, chapter, and sections, e.g. 2.3.1 means bk. 2, chap. 3, sec. 1.)

See Institutes on need of Scripture, 1.6; interpretation of Scripture, 1.7; on Old and New Testament, 2.10-11.

2. Double Predestination, Unconditioned Election and Irresistible Grace

The eternal and absolute decree of God is the hallmark of orthodox Calvinism. Despite human sinfulness, some men are foreordained by God's mercy to eternal salvation. The rest, in accord with God's justice, are sentenced to eternal damnation. In God, then, there is a double predestination.

Nevertheless, man's freedom is affirmed. Originally it was intact, but now it is invariably "fettered" by original sin. Since Adam all mankind is utterly depraved, without freedom to accept election. Man alone is responsible for sin through his abuse of freedom in Adam.

God's foreordaining will is coupled with his foreknowledge of man's fall. In some sense he willed, or at least permitted, sin for his own purposes under "His all ruling Providence, for righteous ends and for merciful purposes, and to His Glory." Those whom God predestines to salvation are saved not by any works on their part, not even by a free acceptance of saving faith, but only by God's gratuitous grace.

Election is unconditional. Grace, for the elect, is irresistible. Man is not free to reject it if God's elects. Grace is open to all elected Christians. Only the impenitent sinner should consider himself lost. Each Christian should be confident that Christ is his savior. He must make his calling sure by living a good life, for God

"never does for man what He has given man power to do for himself.[1]

3. Real, though Spiritual Presence in the Lord's Supper

The teaching about the Lord's Supper rejects on the one hand a Zwinglian conception of mere symbolic presence, and on the other hand both Roman Catholic and Lutheran views of transubstantiation and consubstantiation. The elements are "signs or symbols of spiritual realities" of the spiritual presence of Christ. The presence is real, but not localized in the elements.

Christ's presence is made real through faith which is the "organ that partakes and assimilates, through the aid of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual body of the glorified Lord." An unbeliever, should he receive communion, would receive nothing but bread. The elements themselves undergo no change. Nevertheless the Lord's Supper is a "special sacramental presence" that transcends any other among his people. That presence, though guaranteed only by faith in the recipient, depends upon a memorial rite that is duly celebrated as Christ intended.[2]

4. Church Order

Calvinists, especially Presbyterians, maintained a fourfold church office: bishops, pastors (teaching elders), ruling elders, and

[1]Curtis, p. 862. See Institutes on predestination, 3.21-23; original righteousness, 1.15; original fall, 2.1; the origin of evil, 2.3; loss of freedom, 2.2; and confirmation about election, 3.24.

[2]Curtis, p. 862. See Institutes on sacraments in general, 4.14; Lord's Supper, 4.17; and the Roman Mass, 4.18.

deacons. A pure church is one that has the gospel preached, administers the ordinances, and maintains gospel order willed by Christ.

Government is by presbyterial courts that include both the ordained or teaching elders and the lay or ruling elders.[1] A thorough church discipline is necessary to maintain integrity of doctrines and morals. The civil and church authorities remain in dynamic relationship. The Church has absolute independence in its spiritual courts in matters spiritual. Once a decision is made, however, it is the duty of the civil authorities to carry out the civil consequences of the Church's spiritual sentence.[2]

For the American scene, these four features of orthodox Calvinism were embodied, in their most complete form, in the Scottish Presbyterianism of John Knox (1502-72), especially as articulated in the Westminster Confession of 1645.[3] Congregationalists and most Baptists (especially Particular Baptists), together with American Presbyterians, accepted the Calvinistic views in this Confession.

Most Calvinistic sects accepted the full Calvinistic (Reformed) theology of Scripture and the sacraments. Some, however, tended towards a Zwinglian view of the Lord's Supper.[4] The major differences

---

[1]John Calvin was the only layman of really superlative stature in terms of religious influences in the Reformation. He introduced a layman's role into church government.

[2]Curtis, p. 862. See Institutes on mode of government, 4.4; councils, 4.9; and church discipline, 4.12.

[3]Hardon, Source Book, p. 64; also Ahlstrom, Religious History, p. 78.

[4]Many individual Baptists accepted Zwinglian views. The particular Baptists recast both the Savoy and Westminster versions of

between Congregationalists and Presbyterians was not over the theology of salvation, but over the question of church order.[1] Baptists, moreover, not only followed a Congregational church polity but also rejected some Calvinistic attitudes towards the relationship between Church and civil authorities. All Baptists maintained a separation between the two. Of course, they also rejected the validity of infant baptism. The latter was acceptable to both Presbyterians and early Congregationalists.[2] General Baptists, as noted below, also differed from orthodox Calvinism in other basic views of salvation.

Within Calvinistic ranks, however, the greatest theological questions arose over the issue of double predestination.

Approaches to Calvinism's Double Predestination

Calvin himself regarded divine predestination as a mystery that men could not comprehend. His followers, however, sought to elaborate upon the subject. They developed two general approaches.

Some argued that God, in his predestinating will, decreed the election of some and the non-election of others before the fall of

---

confessional views on sacraments (see P, 29 [A630-39] and P,32 [694-748]), but accepted the Westminster view of real presence (P,32.7 [A761-72]).

[1]The Savoy, while accepting W,25 on the Church, including aspects of a visible Catholic Church, developed its Platform of Church Polity on congregational church order (see parallels to P,27 [A406-593] and PS,14-30 [B1-118]).

[2]On Particular Baptist views of Baptism see P,30 (A640-61), esp. sec. 2 (A649-53). The Second London Confession omitted secs. 3 and 4 of the Westminster chapter on civil magistrates. The Savoy also altered sec. 3 of W. (Compare P,25 to 1S,24 and W,23; see Walker, p. 393; also Curtis, p. 882).

Adam. Hence their views were called antelapsarian (also supralapsarian). Others favored a milder position, that God decreed salvation or damnation only after the sin of Adam. Their views were called infralapsarian (also sublapsarian or postlapsarian).[1] Both views maintained an unconditional predestination, namely, not conditioned upon God's foreknowledge of faith and perseverance in the believer.[2]

The harsher view was antelapsarianism. It made God appear obviously arbitrary because his will was absolute, without any relation to man's free nature. Even before man sinned God had decreed some to be saved and others to be damned. The milder form of infralapsarianism seemingly left room for man's use of freedom. God justly condemned man because he sinned against him. Out of respect for his own gift of freedom in man, God allowed man to sin. He created man even though he foresaw that he would sin. So long as one maintained the subtle distinction between pre-causation and predestination it appeared that man's rights to just treatment, and God's predestination to hell or heaven were both safeguarded. It was not God who caused sin, but only man who abused his freedom. God's

---

[1] See "Sublapsarians," in DCC, p. 1319; and "Supralapsarians," in DCC, p. 1324.

[2] In the judgment of this author, this is the crux of the difference between orthodox Calvinism and orthodox Catholicism over the question of predestination. It is a tragedy of history that the Arminian reinterpretation of the Reformed tradition did not meet with a more open hearing at the Synod of Dort. Once again the political struggles between men of varying theological traditions were largely responsible for their continued factions (on Arminianism and the Synod of Dort see below, pp. 760-62.

justice is vindicated in the condemnation of the sinner and his loving mercy is manifest in his free election of some to salvation.

The problem, however, remained. In effect, the decree of God is still quite arbitrary. Given the fact of Adam's fall, and the subsequent guilt of all others, the only difference between those saved and damned is the unconditioned decree of God. If one maintained God's sovereign justice at the expense of the offer of salvation to some sinners then what becomes of the all loving Father and Christ's work of universal atonement preached in the gospels?

To many the God of Calvin still appeared arbitrary, austere and lacking in justice. While Calvinism produced a seemingly coherent system of biblical theology, it suffered the consequences of an exaggerated Old Testament outlook. In remaining completely faithful to the message of the Old Testament, Calvinism sacrificed the New Testament revelation about God as loving Father and Christ as Savior of all mankind. Curtis observes:

> . . . it was perhaps the one defect of Calvin's own outlook that he could not detach at any point the Old and New Testaments from each other. Having committed himself wholeheartedly to a system purely Biblical in character, resting on non-Apocryphal Scripture as the unadulterated Word of God, revealing all needed truth to man, Calvin could not discriminate between the Old and the New, but read each in terms of the other, reaching a system of doctrine which was at least as faithful in form and contents to the Old testament revelation as to the New . . . .[1]

---

[1]Curtis, p. 862. A systematic theology of the Old Testament offered many teachings of great relevance for the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: ". . . : there was the spectacle of theocracy embodied in a Church-bound State, and surrounded by pagan adversaries; of prophecy overpowering priesthood; of stern Divine retribution; of the vocation and endowment of elect individuals. Similarly, the doctrine of the comprehensive eternal

This perhaps explains why nowhere in his Institutes does Calvin stress the universal Fatherhood of God. That factor might well be what helped others in their reading of the New Testament, leading them to attempt a reinterpretation of orthodox Calvinism. Among these, the most notable were the Remonstrants who followed the teachings of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609).[1]

The Teachings of Arminians or Remonstrants

Within orthodox Calvinism the antelapsarian stance was generally viewed as very strict; infralapsarianism represented the mainline view among true Calvinists. Some, however, through a rereading of the New Testament, sought to mitigate even the latter view. Their interpretation of predestination and atonement ultimately met with official condemnation at the Synod of Dort. The adversaries against orthodox Calvinism were called Arminians, after the man who developed their ideas, Jacobus Arminius, the celebrated Dutch Reformed theologian of Leyden.

Arminius knew Calvinism firsthand. As a student in Geneva he had learned from the strict Calvinist, Theodore Beza (1519-1605), the antelapsarian interpretations of predestination. Upon his return to

---

decree, based on the OT as much as on the Epistle to the Romans and occasional passages in the Gospels, was a re-statement of the sovereignty of God and the completeness of His prescient providence, . . ." (Ibid., p. 863).

[1]The term "Remonstrants" comes from the closing section of Articuli Arminiani sive Remonstrantia of 1610: "Hoc igitur articulos ita propositos et traditos consent Remonstrantes divino Verbo conformos, . . ." (see Schaff, 3:549).

Holland Arminius was ordained in 1588. Shortly thereafter, his study of the Epistle to the Romans led him to doubt seriously the validity of orthodox views about predestination. Branded as suspect, accused of Pelagianism and of disloyalty to his church, he was forced to refine his doctrines. He defended them so successfully that he received a chair in the noted University of Leyden in 1603. Until his death in 1609 he engaged in cordial but lively debate against the views of zealous Calvinists like his colleague at Leyden, Francis Gomar (1563-1641).[1]

The year after his death, Arminius's doctrines were set forth as five systematized tenets entitled, Articuli Aminiani sive Remonstrantia. The author, however, was not Arminius. Simon Bischop (1583-1643), who used an assumed name, Episcopius, systematized Arminian tenets. The statement of Arminian principles was drawn up in Gouda in the presence of forty-six ministers. The draft was probably composed by Jan (Hans) Uytenbogaert (1557-1644), though it is often attributed to the famous jurist-statesman, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and Episcopius.[2]

As a system of faith Arminian doctrines were a theological reaction against the deterministic logic of Calvinism. Five tenets, stated in both positive and negative terms, were set forth in the Remonstrantia. A preface and conclusion were also included. The

---

[1]"Arminianism," in DCC, p. 90; "Beza, Theodore," in DCC, p. 166; and "Gomar, Francis," in DCC, p. 579.

[2]"Episcopius," in DCC, p. 465; "Remonstrance, The," in DCC, p. 1173.

substance of the positive statements can be obtained from the text provided by Schaff.[1]

1. Conditioned Election

Article 1 affirms that election depends upon, and is inseparable from, God's foreknowledge of faith and perseverance. It is conditioned upon that knowledge. Reprobation is conditioned upon God's awareness of the unbelief and sin of the condemned. As Scriptural proof John 3:36 is cited.[2]

2. Universal Atonement

The second article states that Christ's atonement is universal and sufficient for all. It is not necessarily accepted and effectual in each case, but Christ offers atonement for all. This tenet obviously strikes at the core of any view of double predestination that would argue God decrees some to damnation directly and unconditionally. The texts cited are the Gospel of John 3:16 and the first epistle of John 2:2.[3]

---

[1]Schaff gives only the positive articles in three columns: (1) Official Dutch text from the 1st edition of 1612, in De Remonstantie en het Remonstrantisme. Historisch onderzoek door Dr. Joannes Tideman. Predikant bij de Remonstrantsch-Gereformeerde Gemeente te Rotterdam (Te Haarlem, 1851), pp. 17-20; (2) Latin translation by Petrus Bertius, in Scripta adversaria Collationis Hagiensis (Lugd. Batav. 1616); and (3) English translation made for Schaff's collection.
For the preface, five negative articles and conclusion see Tideman, pp. 8-27.

[2]"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36). See Schaff, 3:545; see also critical note above, p. 754, n. 2.)

[3]"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

3. Saving Faith as Gratuitous

The third article affirms that, unless regenerated through the Holy Spirit, the sinner cannot accomplish good or arrive at saving faith. The argument is from John 15:5.[1]

4. Free Will of Man

Article 4 denies that grace is irresistible. It does not force itself upon the elect. Man has a choice. Acts 7 shows that some have resisted the Holy Spirit. It is true that all good deeds must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. This grace is the beginning, the continuance, and the accomplishment of all good. But the modus operandi of God's grace is freely to be offered and freely to be accepted or rejected. Grace, therefore, is not irresistable.[2]

5. Man's Cooperation to Persevere

Article 5 affirms that through the Spirit's assisting grace those who are incorporated into Christ can persevere. Christ extends his hand to help in all difficulties if only the Christian is ready to make the effort to reach out to Christ, desirous of help, and is not inactive. The biblical reference is to John 10:28.[3]

---

life." (Jn. 3:16).

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 Jn. 2:2). See Schaff, 3:546.

[1]"Without me ye can do nothing." (Jn. 15:5). See Schaff, 3: 546-47.

[2]See Schaff, 3:547.

[3]"Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (Jn. 10: 28; additional citations in the Latin version are: Heb. 3:6, 14; 2 Pet. 1:10; Jude 3; 1 Tim. 1:19; and Heb. 11:13). See Schaff, 3:548-49.

The above articles incorporated the following beliefs which challenged orthodox Calvinism: (1) Christ's sacrifice is one of universal atonement and sufficient salvation for all who believe. (2) Divine sovereignty and a truly free will in man are compatible. Man is not utterly depraved. He can freely accept or refuse salvation, and he must freely cooperate with God's grace to persevere. (3) Both supralapsarian and sublapsarian views of predestination are unbiblical. God's election is conditioned upon his foreknowledge of belief or unbelief, and of perseverence or nonperseverence in grace freely cooperated with. It is not simply a matter of justifiable condemnation of some because of Adam's sin or of God's free and arbitrary election of some sinners to justification. (4) Man's continued cooperation with God's grace is necessary to continue and to persevere to the end with God's help.

It is interesting that many of the Scriptural references cited by Arminians came from the gospel of John, the one that celebrated the Fatherhood of God. The opposition to central tenets of orthodox Calvinism was clear, and that challenge was soon met in the Synod of Dort.

The Synod of Dort and the Victory of Orthodoxy

The religious differences between Arminians and strict Calvinists were unfortunately complicated by the politics of the day. The Remonstrants were suspected of supporting the pro-Spanish party against Prince Maurice of Orange. The assembly of the Dutch Reformed Church, convened by order of the States-General, met on November 13,

1618. It was supported by Prince Maurice, and headed by the strict Calvinist, Francis Gomar. Arminian spokesmen, headed by Episcopius, were not even present until December 6 of that year. The direction and decisions of the Synod were a foregone conclusion--against the Arminian party, in favor of the Gomarists.

On April 23, 1619, five sets of articles were approved. They asserted (1) unconditional election (opposed to conditioned election of Arminians); (2) a limited atonement (opposed to universal atonement); (3) the total depravity of man (opposed to man's freedom); (4) the irresistibility of grace (opposed to man's freedom to accept or refuse saving faith); and (5) the final perseverence of the saints (opposed to man's freedom to cooperate or to refuse to cooperate with continuing and final grace).[1]

The attempt to direct a stricter Calvinism towards a more comprehensive treatment of New Testament doctrines of universal salvation and conditioned election had failed. The effort was officially branded as heresy.

For the circle of strict Calvinists, the positive value of the Synod of Dort was that it set orthodox Calvinism upon clear and firm grounds. Not only was Arminianism discounted by the articles rejecting the Remonstrantia, the Synod also confirmed the authority of the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. Along with Calvin's

---

[1] "Dort, Synod of," in DCC, p. 421; also "Arminianism," in DCC, p. 90.

Institutes, and the great Westminster Confession, these proved effective milestones in Reformed faith and practice.[1]

The Spectrum of Calvinistic Groups and Baptists

The Arminian desire, to soften strict Calvinistic views of atonement and free will, never really died out. It remained very much alive in various groups that interacted with strict Calvinists. Eventually the groups maintaining the two theological points of view more or less coalesced.

On the continent Arminians, as a more liberal Reformed theology, exercised great influence on the formation of modern Dutch and European Protestant theology. The tensions between Calvinism and Arminianism decreased considerably until the modern rebirth of a stricter Calvinistic theology by Karl Barth (1886-1968).[2]

In England there was an anti-Calvinistic trend in seventeenth century Laudian theology. The Methodist movement of the eighteenth century divided along Arminian and strict Calvinist lines. John Wesley (1703-1791) held an Arminian position. George Whitefield (1714-1770), the great revival preacher in the American colonies, was a stricter Calvinist. The split between Wesleyan Methodism and Calvinist Methodism continues to this day.[3]

---

[1] On the importance of these sources in the Reformed tradition see the following: Hardon, Source Book, pp. 59, 64, 66, 87, and 124; Curtis, pp. 870 and 876; and "Dort, Synod of," in DCC, p. 421.

[2] "Arminianism,: in DCC, p. 90.

[3] Ibid.

British Baptists, from their beginnings, were divided between Arminian (General) Baptists and Calvinistic (Particular) Baptists. In the eighteenth century, for many reasons, General Baptists lost ground to Particular Baptists. Many became Unitarians or Quakers. The tensions between the two theological viewpoints gradually lessened to the point of insignificance. The two groups eventually merged both in England and in America.[1]

In England, in 1891, the New Connection of General Baptists (est. 1770) merged with the Particular Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland (est. 1813).[2] In America many splinter groups of General Baptists survive to the present day. The largest of these, the Free Will Baptists (est. in New England in 1780), merged in 1911 with the Northern Convention (est. 1908).[3]

---

[1] On the relationship and distinction between General and Particular Baptists in England see chap. 1, pp. 43-49; on their presence in the P.B.A. churches see chap. 2, pp. 136-42.

[2] Torbet, History, pp. 86, 112, and 116.

[3] Torbet, History, pp. 297 and 389. The P.B.A. was a combination of three major streams of Baptist tradition: British Particular Baptists (also some General Baptists); Separate Baptists of the Awakening; and converts from the revivals in the new evangelicalism (see chap. 2, pp. 113-27).

P.B.A. forces joined other Baptists in the formation of the Triennial Convention missionary efforts 1814-1845. Eventually the organization split into two large bodies that carried on Baptist work, somewhat independently, ever since: (1) the Southern Baptist Convention, est. 1845, and (2) the Northern Baptist Convention, incorporated in New York, 1910. The latter has gone by the name "American Baptist Convention" since 1950 (see Torbet, History, pp. 249-50, 293, 345, 388-89, 438 and 444.)

Besides the Free Will Baptists mentioned above, Torbet lists smaller groups of General Baptists that still existed as of 1963: (1) General Six Principle Baptists, organized in Rhode Island in 1670 (probably the first association of Baptists in America); (2) Original

The Philadelphia Baptist Association and American Calvinism

During the eighteenth century the Philadelphia Baptist Association participated in the American experience of Calvinism. A varied mixture of Calvinistic theological viewpoints blended together. Winthrop S. Hudson describes three general types who assumed the name Calvinists. These emerged most clearly in New England after the Great Awakening.

At the one extreme were the Arminians. They stressed man's free will and his innate goodness. Their cavorting with rationalistic views, and the ideas of Isaac Newton (1642-1727), John Locke (1632-1704) and John Taylor (1694-1761) led them to react against the strict Calvinists.

The Arminians risked watering down the "covenant of grace" by proclaiming, in practice at least, a "covenant of works" supported by man's own efforts. Deists and the Unitarians of Boston were a logical extension of this view. General Baptists, some of whom moved

---

Free Will Baptists (called "Original" because they traced their origins to Helyws's group), organized in Virginia and North Carolina in 1729; (3) Some Separate Baptists of the Awakening were Arminians, but most were absorbed into Regular Particular Baptist churches, or lost to Unitarian and Quaker groups; (4) Some United Baptists, a combination of Regular and Separate Baptists in Virginia and Kentucky (see above, pp. 122-23); and (5) a remnant of General Baptists surviving the New England Awakening that formed a General Association in 1870 (Torbet, History, pp. 256-61).

Except for the Virginia group (n. 4), the above had little to do with the P.B.A. For a listing of British Baptist groups, also of lesser significance to this study, see above, p. 109, n. 2.

to the middle colonies and joined churches of the P.B.A., were also of this type.[1]

The second group, called consistent Calvinists, placed emphasis on the other side, a "covenant of grace." Concerned always to safeguard God's sovereignty in Christianity, men like Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), and his disciples, Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790) and Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), established the New England theology. Their efforts, while avoiding the excesses of emotionalsim and a pure religion of the heart, brought a real theological discipline to the events of the Awakening.[2]

The last group, the old Calvinists, held a middle ground in the spectrum of Reformed thinking in America. They kept a balance between predestinarian views and man's responsibility, between God's sovereignty and man's free will. Hudson characterizes them:

> . . . Between these two extremes were the middle-of-the-road travelers who for some unaccountable reason were called the "Old Calvinists." The latter were a varied group. But whether more traditionally oriented or more rationalistically inclined, they tended to be distressed by theological wrangling, viewing it as the consequence of an overly fussy concern for "theological niceties" and advocating in its stead a "large measure of charity." . . . . . .
> [80] In this lack of concern for careful theological distinctions and in the emphasis upon "the fundamental principles of religion," the Old Calvinists were more closely akin to the general spirit of Evangelicalism than were the Edwardseans. Evangelicanism as a whole tended to prize a "warm heart" and to be impatient with theological controversy. . .[3]

---

[1] Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 78-79.

[2] Ibid., p. 79.

[3] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

Ezra Stiles (1727-95), a Congregationalist and president of Yale University, was a typical old Calvinist.[1]

In the opinion of the present writer, Baptists of the P.B.A., particularly in the aftermath of the Great Awakening, also lay somewhere in the midrange of American Reformed thought. Although some knew the excesses of classical Arminianism and extreme Calvinism, and although their Philadelphia Confession had roots in Westminster and Savoy, Baptists of the P.B.A. were "middle-of-the-road travellers." To use the term of the period, they were, especially from the mid eighteenth century, "Old Calvinists."[2]

---

[1]Stiles formulated the first charter of the Baptist College in Rhode Island, eventually Brown University (see Backus, History, 2: 347).

[2]The Universalists were logically related to extreme Arminianism (see above, pp. 52, n. 38 and 156, n. 115).

Strict Calvinist Baptists, like John Gill, were accused of being Antinomeans (see above, pp. 116-17). On the Philadelphia Confession see above, pp. 93-107 and 186-92.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography is divided into four categories: (1) primary Baptist materials, namely all relevant eighteenth century Baptist sources, including books, articles, or unpublished materials; (2) books consulted for this study; (3) articles from periodicals and essays published in books; and (4) unpublished studies and manuscripts.[1]

Primary Baptist Materials

ASPLUND, John. 1750-1807.

_____. The annual register of the Baptist denomination in North America; to the first of November, 1790. Containing an account of the Churches and their constitutions, ministers, members, associations, their plan and sentiments, rule and order, proceedings and correspondence. Also remarks upon practical religion. Humbly offered to the public, by John Asplund. 1792. EVANS: 26582. STARR: A2226-34.

[Problem of variants in known copies. PBL copy lacks pp. 57-67, missing in most copies; A.B.H.S. has complete copy; issue made up of sheets from 2nd ed., corrected (Richmond) with certain pages supplied from Phila. ed. of Sept. 1792. 1796 ed., photostat of original at Crozier Theological, at A.B.H.S.]

_____. The Universal Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America, for the years 1790, 1791, 1792, and part of 1793. Volume the second, containing 1. The Confession of Faith as published in London, 1689. 2. The Church Discipline, as adopted by the Charleston Association. 3. The Plan and Sentiments of

[1] Bibliographical references to works by EVANS, WHITLEY, and STARR are included for the items that are difficult to obtain. Complete data for these collections is provided in sec. 2 of this bibliography. The following libraries are mentioned: A.B.H.S. is American Baptist Historical Society archives, Rochester, New York; OOSP is St. Paul's University library, Ottawa, Ontario; and PBL is Lehigh University library, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

the Association in general. 4. The Rules of Decorum at their Sitting. 5. The Historical Account, how Gospel-Duties, both Ordinances and Commandments are believed and practiced, in general. Richmond, Virginia: John Dixon, 1794. STARR: A2235-36.

[Photocopy of part one, pp. 1-50, at A.B.H.S.]

BACKUS, Isaac. 1724-1806.

[Prominent New England Separate Baptist, influential preacher in Massachusetts. Helped establish Warren Association, later engaged as the Association spokesman for religious freedom. Addressed Continental Congress. Vigorous in evangelistic work, preached 2412 sermons between 1756 and 1767, travelled almost 15,000 miles beyond his own parish. Influential as historian and leader of denomination in fight for religious liberty (see text, pp. 125-26 and 195).]

_____. A Church History of New-England Extending from 1783 to 1796. An Account of the Religious Affairs of the Country, and of Oppressions Therein on Religious Accounts; with a Particular History of the Baptist Churches in the Five States of New-England. 4 vols. Providence: Providence Press Co., 1891.

_____. A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists. 2nd ed. with notes by David Weston. 2 vols. Newton, Massachusetts: Backus Historical Society, 1871.

[Original ed. in 3 vols. appeared in 1777 (reprints: 1783 and 1796); and new ed. in 2 vols.: 1871. Backus's purpose was to vindicate doctrinal orthodoxy and political innocence of Baptists, show evils of religious persecution, and justify religious liberty. Useful today for documents (WAMBLE, Foundations 2 [1959]:366-67).]

_____. A History of the Baptist Warren Association in New England, from the year 1767, to the year 1792, showing the times and places of their meeting; their principles and practice, with their labours to obtain equal Religious Liberty in America. Handwritten notes by Isaac Backus. WHITLEY: 44:52.

_____. Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism. Pamphlets 1754-1789. Ed. by W. G. McLoughlin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968.

_____. "Minutes of the Warren Association. 1767-1770." Copied from Backus manuscript by Reuben A. Guild, 1863.
[Photocopy in A.B.H.S.]

The Baptist Catechism; or, a brief instruction in the principles of the Christian religion, agreeably to the Confession of Faith put

forth by upwards of an hundred congregations in Great-Britain, July the 3d, 1689; adopted by the General Association of Philadelphia, September the 22d, 1742; and now received by churches of the same denomination in most of the United States. To which are added, the proofs from Scriptures. Boston: Manning and Loring, 1795. EVANS: 28232. STARR: B958-59.3.

[A.B.H.S. has the following editions: Boston, 1802; Phila., 1817; 1820; 1832; and Brooklyn, 1814. See P.B.A. Catechisms.]

Baptist Confession of Faith: and a Summary of Church Discipline. To which is added an Appendix containing [7 different sources touching on church life] . . . 1831.

[Main entry under CHARLESTON (S.C.) BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Baptist Confession of Faith . . .]

CHARLESTON (S.C.) BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. 1751.

[First Baptist association in the South, links with the P.B.A. through men like Richard FURMAN (q.v.) and Oliver HART (q.v.), its Confession was that of the P.B.A. (with chap. on laying on of hands omitted), its Discipline expressive of Philadelphia Baptist views.]

_____. A Confession of faith . . . adopted by the Baptist Association in Charlestown, South-Carolina. . . Charlestown: David Bruce, 1774. STARR: C2161-62.

[Same Confession as P.B.A., omitting article on laying on of hands. Later editions added appendices (q.v.). Subsequent editions: 1781 (title: Baptist Confession of Faith: and a Summary . . .); 2d ed., 1813.]

_____. Baptist Confession of Faith: and a Summary of Church Discipline. To which is added an Appendix containing 1. The Discipline of the Primitive Churches. [Fuller] 2. A Treatise on Church Discipline, with a Variety of Forms. [Jones] 3. Power and Duty of an Association. [Griffith] 4. Form of Rules for an Incorporated Baptist Church or Society. 5. Terms of Communion. 6. The Marriage Ceremony. 7. Duties of Church Members towards each other. Charleston, printed by W. Riley for Daniel Shepard, 1831. STARR: B1012; EVANS: 17826, 26759.

[Contains main sources from P.B.A.: Confession, Jones and Griffith. For authors of Church Discipline see HART, Oliver.]

_____. Summary of Church Discipline, shewing the qualification and duties of the officers and members of a Gospel church. By the Baptist Association in Charleston, South-Carolina. Wilmington: Printed by James Adams, 1783. EVANS: 17826, STARR: C2163-65.

[Other editions: Richmond: Printed by John Dixon, 1794 (EVANS: 26759); Charleston: Markland, M'Iver & Co., 1794 (STARR: B8588).]

A Confession of Faith put forth by the Elders and Brethren of many Congregations of Christians (Based upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country. With an Appendix concerning Baptism. London: Printed for John Harris, 1688.
[Orig. ed. printed in 1677 (UNDERHILL, p. 169, gives orig. title page). Basic source, text approved by P.B.A. (with addition of 2 chapters) in 1742. Many editions: 1693, 1699, 1719, 1720, 1791, 1794, 1809, etc. The 6th ed. was the P.B.A. 1743, 1st. American edition (q.v.).]

A Confession of faith, put forth by the elders . . . 6th ed. Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1743.
[Main entry under P.B.A. Confessions.]

CROSBY, Thomas. 1635-1702.

[Deacon in Benjamin Keach's church, influential mainly through his history. Works by this author printed in America before 1801 are available in PBL in the Readex Microprint edition of Early American Imprints published by the American Antiquarian Society. Arranged according to the numbers in Charles EVAN's American Bibliography.]

_____. The History of the English Baptists from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I. 4 vols. London: Printed for the author by John Robinson, 1738-40.
[As history it has many defects, yet useful primary sources included; fails to distinguish General and Particular Baptists; includes Discipline by Crosby (1:407-20) and Somerset Confession of 1691 (2:app. 1).]

EDWARDS, Morgan. 1722-1795.

[Born in Wales, raised as Anglican, seminary in Bristol at 16, ordained for Cork, Ireland in 1747. At request of 1st Church of Philadelphia sent by Board of London Particular Baptist ministers in 1761. Influential more as writer than preacher, kept records of P.B.A., having succeeded B. Griffith to this task. Kept library of the Association, corresponded with London Baptists. First to suggest Rhode Island College, on its Board of Fellows til 1789. Proposed plan of unity of all Baptists. First to print P.B.A. minutes. Clerk of the Association 1761, 1769, 1770, 1771 and 1773; moderator, 1762. Proposed his resignation in 1771. Chosen P.B.A. evangelist in 1776, until 1778. Falsely accused of universalist and antinomean views, suffered for his pro-royalist views during the War of Revolution. Married twice, retired to Newark, died at 73. Among his work is a 42 vol. series of sermons (12 per vol.), and works mentioned below. (See text, pp. 197-99.)]

_____. The Customs of Primitive Churches; Or, a Set of Propositions Relative to the Name, Materials, Constitution, Power, Officers, Ordinances, Rites, Business, Worship, Discipline, Government etc. of a Church . . . and Historical Narratives of the Manner in Which Most of Them Have Been Reduced to Practice. Philadelphia: Andrew Stewart, 1768.

[Few copies printed, only for ministers of P.B.A. 54 propositions, extensive notes and samples, never formally adopted. Useful, but requires discretion. Formally disowned by the P.B.A. (GILLETTE: 74:141).]

_____. Materials Towards a History of the American Baptists. Philadelphia, 1770-1792. 12 vols. projected.

[Only 4 published: Pennsylvania (1770), New Jersey (1792), both by the author, and Delaware and Rhode Island. Copies in NPL (New York public library) and A.B.H.S. Mss. at A.B.H.S. for volumes dealing with Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. MS. history of Maryland possessed by Mr. Alester G. Furman, Greenville, South Carolina. Edwards's Materials valuable for early information.]

_____, PELOT, Francis, and others. A Short Summary of Church Discipline . . . 1772.

[Main entry under HART, PELOT, and others.]

FULLER, Andrew. 1754-1815.

[British Particular Baptist minister-theologian, advocated moderate form of Calvinism encouraging a missionary zeal, in his writing opposed to extreme positions on predestination and Deism, collaborated with Wm. Carey and John Ryland to found Baptist Missionary Society (f. 1792) and served as its first secretary. Succeeded John GILL (q.v.) as the influential Particular Baptist (EB, 4:352; ERE, 1:465; see text, pp. 117-19).]

_____. The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation: Or the duty of sinners to believe in Jesus Christ. . . . By A. Fuller . . . Ostego. New York: Printed by H. and E. Phinney, jun. and sold by them at their bookstore, 1809.

[Editions: orig. ed., 1785; 6th Am. ed., Cincinnati: published by Roff & Young, stereotyped by J. A. James, 1832. The work offset an exaggerated Calvinism among Particular Baptists in England, influential on men like William Carey, missioner to India. Affected P.B.A. thinking on evangelism in late eighteenth century.]

FURMAN, Richard. 1755-1825.

[Well known Particular (Regular) Baptist clergyman of S. Carolina, respected among P.B.A. ministers, participated in P.B.A., influential in establishing CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION (q.v.).]

_____. A Sermon, on the Constitution and Order of the Christian Church, Preached before the Charleston Association. Charleston: Printed by Markland & M'Iver, 1791.
[On Eph. 4:11-13; basic source reflecting P.B.A. thinking (see B756-1006 for excerpts).]

GILL, John. 1697-1771.

[Influential British Particular Baptist, successor to Benjamin Keach. Accused of antinomean views; anti-evangelistic in his views. Had a great impact upon American Baptists, affecting the revivalistic enthusiasm in some sectors (see text, pp. 116-17).]

_____. A body of doctrinal and practical divinity; a system of practical truths, deducted from the Sacred Scriptures. London: M. & S. Higham, 1839.

_____. Gill's Complete Body of Practical and Doctrinal Divinity: being a System of Evangelical Truths, deduced from the Sacred Scriptures. Abridged by William STAUGHTON, D.D. Philadelphia: Printed for Delaplaine and Hellings, by B. Graves, 1810.

_____. Exposition and Body of Divinity. Orig. published in 1769; reprint: Atlanta: Turner Lassetter, 1950.
[Important to framers of the Charleston Baptist Church Discipline. (MAY [1961] study.)]

GILLETTE, Abram D., ed. Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from A.D. 1707, to A.D. 1807; being the first one hundred years of its existence. Preface by H. G. JONES. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851.
[Basic source, collation of available materials from P.B.A., includes "A Brief Narrative on Churches holding Believers' Baptism," circular letters of the P.B.A., and Centennial sermon by S. JONES (q.v.).]

GRANTHAM, Thomas. 1634-1692.

[British General Baptist, their "ablest writer." At 19 professed and baptized. Pastor at Northelm-Chapel in 1656. Founder of General Baptist church in Norwich. Was against congregational singing, wrote minutes of General Baptist Meeting, London, 1688, and General Confession of 1659 (copy in CROSBY, vol. 2, appendix). Argued strongly for power of general assemblies and the divine office of "messengers." Died at 58. His ideas influenced American Baptists principally through his writings.]

_____. Christianismus Primitivus: or, the Ancient Christian Religion, in its Nature, Certainty, Excellency, and Beauty,

(Internal and External) particularly Considered, Asserted, and Vindicated, from the many Abuses which have Invaded the Sacred Profession by Human Innovation, or pretended Revelation, Comprehending likewise the General Duties of Mankind, in their respective Relations, and particularly the Obedience of all Christians to Magistrates. And the necessity of the Christian Moderation about things Dispensable in Matters of Religion. With Divers Cases of Conscience Discussed and Resolved. London: [n.p.], 1678.

[Church Discipline used by American Baptists. Perhaps unknown to B. Keach when he wrote his Church Discipline in 1697 (see note to KEACH, B., The Glory of a True Church, . . . ?1668).]

GRIFFITH, Benjamin. 1688-1768.

[Born in Wales, arrived in America in 1710. Half-brother to Enoch and Abel Morgan (older). Called in 1722 and ordained for Montgomery Church in 1725. Influential in P.B.A. more as author than as preacher. Kept records of the P.B.A., moderator for 1755, 1759, 1760 and 1765. Wrote Church Discipline of 1743, essay on the power of an association of 1749, a narrative of member churches (GILLETTE, pp. 11-24) and an appendix to Abel Morgan's work, Anti-Paedo-Rantism. (See text, pp. 191-95.)]

_____. An appendix to the foregoing work [A. MORGAN, Anti-Paedo-Rantism]; being remarks on some particulars in a late pamphlet, entitled "Divine right of infant-baptism, etc." Written by another hand [B. GRIFFITH]. Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1747. EVANS: 6013.

_____. "The Power and Duty of an Association of Churches," in GILLETTE (q.v.), pp. 60-63; also in CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION, Baptist Confession . . . (1831), pp. 231-37. STARR: G386.

[Essay adopted by P.B.A. Sept. 19, 1749, and put in the Association book so "it may appear what power an Association of churches hath, and what duty is incumbent on an Association, and [thus] prevent the contempt with which some are ready to treat such an assembly" (GILLETTE, 49:60). Basic source. Text appears in A1498-1637.]

_____. A Short Treatise of Church-Discipline. Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1743. [Bound with P.B.A., A Confession of Faith put forth . . . 1743.] STARR: G3870, B972-6, B968.1.

[Future editions, bound with Confession: 1773, 1794, 1798, 1810. Shows stage of development among P.B.A. in first half of eighteenth century re. associations. Basic source (see excerpts, A818-1497).]

HART, Oliver. 1723-1795.

[Born in Warminster Township, Bucks Co., Pennsylvania, professed and baptized 1741 by Jenkin Jones. Strongly influenced by the Awakening, called to preach at Southampton, 1746, ordained 1749, set out for Charleston immediately. Took pastoral charge of Charleston in 1750 for 30 years. No formal education, received honorary masters degree from Rhode Island College. During siege of Charleston moved to Hopewell, New Jersey in 1780, pastor for 16 years. Influential in P.B.A., moderator 1782, 1785, 1789 and 1793. Organized society to assist education of ministers in Charleston Association, helped to establish the latter, co-ed. of Charleston Church Discipline. Twice married, died in 1795 in Hopewell.]

_____. A gospel church portrayed, and her orderly service pointed out. Sermon delivered in the city of Philadelphia at the opening of the Baptist Association, October 4, 1791. Trenton: Isaac Collins, 1791. EVANS: 23429.

[Based on 2 Chron. 29:35, published at request of assembly.]

_____. An Humble Attempt to repair the christian temple. A sermon, shewing the business of officers and private members in the church of Christ, and how their work should be performed; with some motives to excite professors ardently to engage in it. Preached in the city of Philadelphia, October 21st, 1783, at the opening of the Association, and published at their request . . . Philadelphia: Robert Aiken . . . , 1785. EVANS: 19033. STARR: H2178.

_____, PELOT, Francis, and others. A Short Summary of Church Discipline. Adopted by Charleston Association in 1772. [Bound with CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION, Baptist Confession of Faith: and a Summary . . . , 1831.]

[Hart and Pelot were aided by Morgan EDWARDS and David WILLIAMS of the P.B.A.]

HELWYS, Thomas. 1550-1616.

[British General Baptist, in John Smyth's original congregation, split over differences. Helwys founded first Baptist Church in England, at Spitalsfield. Except for universal atonement and general election, he was Calvinistic in his views (WAMBLE, 1955, pp. 53-54). Formulated a Confession for his church, which had some similarity to the Second London Confession of 1677. (See text, pp. 43-44.)]

_____. A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity. Reprint. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1935; orig. ed., Nottingham: 1612.

[An absolute landmark in whole historical development of religious liberty (COOKE, p. 86).]

JONES, Samuel. 1735-1814.

[Arrived at age 2 with family in Phila. in 1737. Father was pastor of Tulpehocken Baptist Church, Berks Co., Pennsylvania. Professed and baptized in 1st Church of Phila., 1760. Ordained 1763 with M. Edwards attending. Pastor of Phila. until 1771, and then of Lower Dublin. Conducted academies at both Phila. and Lower Dublin. Very influential in P.B.A. through sermons and circular letters. Clerk 1766, 1767, 1778 and 1779. Moderator of P.B.A. 1770, 1774, 1781, 1786, 1788, 1791, 1796, 1800, 1803. First president after incorporation in 1797, treasurer in 1782 and 1791. Wrote Church Discipline of 1789 and centenary sermon. (See text, pp. 200-2.)]

_____. A Century Sermon: delivered in Philadelphia, at the opening of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, October 6, 1807. Philadelphia: Bartram & Reynolds, 1807.

[Also appears in GILLETTE by 1846 mandate of the P.B.A. (pp. 451-68).]

_____. A treatise of Church Discipline and a Directory Done by Appointment of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. By Samuel Jones. Philadelphia: S. P. Ustrick, 1798. STARR: J2134-36. A.B.H.S.

[Commissioned by order of the P.B.A. in 1795, two years later brought to assembly by author, a P.B.A. committee appointed to review, approved for printing in 1798 (GILLETTE, pp. 306.21, 317.14, 325.14, 334.15). 1805 ed. (Lexington, Printed by T. Andersen), photocopy of DLC original at A.B.H.S. Also part of CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION, Baptist Confession of Faith . . . (q.v.). Basic P.B.A. view of church order, late eighteenth century. Excerpt appears in A1706-2388.]

_____, and ALLISON, Burgiss, jt. au. A selection of Psalms and Hymns done under the appointment of the Philadelphia association. Philadelphia: R. Aitkin & son, 1790. STARR: A702-5.

[Mandated by P.B.A. in 1788 (GILLETTE, 239.25). Editions: 1798, 1801 (2nd ed.), 1806, 1807 (3rd ed.), 1819. See P.B.A. Hymnals.]

KEACH, Benjamin. 1641-1704.

[Rebaptized at 15, called to ministry at 18. A British General Baptist accepting Calvinistic views. Married twice, son Elias born of 1st wife. Very influential among Particular Baptists around 1680s. Responsible for introducing views about laying on of hands, hymn singing, ministerial maintenance, and acceptance of Sunday as Sabbath. Wrote extensively, 43

publications: 18 practical, 16 polemical, and 9 poetical. Solemnly ordained in 1688 for Church at Goat Street, Horsleydown, Southwark, for which he wrote Small Catechism and Church Discipline in 1697. Died in 1704. His influence felt in P.B.A. through his son Elias and his works (see text, pp. 101-6).]

_____. The Articles of the faith of the church of Christ, or congregation meeting at Horsleydown, Benjamin Keach, Pastor, as asserted this 10th of the 6th Month, 1697. [Bound with The Glory of a True Church, . . . (q.v.).]

[Bound with Discipline, title: A Short Confession . . ., 1697 (q.v.), shortened form of Second London Confession of 1677/89, with addition of 2 chapters on laying on of hands and singing of psalms and hymns. Both Keach versions identical, except for place and date. Signatures follow a similar pattern: "Subscribed on behalf of the whole Church assembled at . . . on the . . . Benjamin [Elias] Keach [additional signatures follow]."]

_____. The Baptist catechism commonly called Keach's catechism. Compared with the early editions and revised by John Rippon. London: 1794.

[WHITLEY: 1-127 mentions a Baptist Catechism (1693) jointly written by Keach and William COLLINS. Editions at A.B.H.S.: new ed., Phila.: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851; and Grand Rapids: Baker book house, 1952, newly revised by Paul King JEWETT, from Rippon, 1794 ed. Catechisms used in P.B.A., subscribed by its order in 1738, 1747, 1761 and 1779 (GILLETTE, pp. 39, 57, 83, 163).]

_____. The breach repaired in God's worship; or, Singing of Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ. London: Printed for the author, 1691.

[Orig. in British Museum. Keach key spokesman for hymn-singing. 2nd ed., 1700. A.B.H.S.]

_____. The covenant and catechism of the Church of Christ, meeting at Horsley-Down in Southwark. London: Printed for the use of the church, 1700. WHITLEY: 33-700.

_____. The glory of a true church, and its discipline display'd. London: Printed for John Robinson, 1668.

[Early edition cited by WHITLEY: 33-668. Orig. in British Museum: 109.a.43.]

_____. The Glory of a True Church, and its Discipline Display'd. Wherein a true Gospel-Church is described: together with the Power of the Keys, and who are to be let in, and who to be shut out. London: Printed for John Robinson, 1668 [1768].

[Includes preface, dated Aug. 18, 1697! and "The Solemn Covenant of the Church at its Constitution" (pp. 30-32), later test for orthodoxy in P.B.A. in 1712, "at least the Covenant annexed to it [Confession of Faith]." Problem in dating: Preface dated 1697, t.-p gives 1668. Copy probably a 1768 edition with t.-p misprint (see WHITLEY: 33-668, 1768P). MDCLXVIII should read MDCCLXVIII.]

_____. The Glory of a True Church, . . . London, 1697. [Bound with The Articles of the faith.]

[With preface by Keach, mentions him as author, used by his son Elias.]

_____. "The Solemn Covenant of the Church at its Constitution." [Bound with The Glory of a True Church . . . 1668 (pp. 30-32); . . . 1697 (pp. 71-74).]

[Required of the church in Middletown, New Jersey in 1712 as test of authenticity (LUMPKIN, p. 349).]

_____. Spiritual melody, containing near three hundred sacred hymns. London: Printed for John Hancock, 1691.

[First Baptist hymnbook, orig. in Regent's Park College. 2nd ed., 1700. P.B.A. ordered hymnals printed: 1st ed., 1788; 3rd ed., 1807 (GILLETTE, pp. 239, 441). See E. KEACH, A banquetting-house . . . 1696; see also P.B.A. Hymnals.]

KEACH, Elias. 1667-1701.

[Born in England, ca. 1686 emigrated to America, "very depraved and dissipated youth." (IVIMEY, 2:469). Pretended he was a preacher, converted during his first "sermon," baptized and ordained at Cold Spring Church by Thomas Dungan, helped form church at Pennepek in 1687. Labored in Jerseys, at Trenton, Burlington, Middletown, Cohansey and Salem. Chosen pastor of Pennepek in 1688, resigned in 1689, returned to England in 1692. There established church, put out Short Confession and Church Discipline, copy of father's works. Died at 34 in 1701. Responsible for the influence of Keach Confession and Discipline in America, very influential in formative years of churches of the P.B.A. All five charter members evolved from the Pennepek Church. (See text, pp. 101-6, 138.)]

_____. The Articles of the Faith of the Church of Christ, or Congregation meeting at Tallow-Chandlers-Hall, Elias Keach, Pastor, as asserted this 2d of the 7th Month, 1697. London: Printed in the Year, 1697 [Bound with The Glory and Ornament . . . in A Short Confession of Faith . . .]

[Most probably the Keach Confession first used in America by P.B.A., shortened version of Second London Confession, author Benjamin Keach, perhaps consulting son Elias.]

_____. A banquetting-house full of spiritual delights: or, Hymns and spiritual songs on several occasions . . . London: Printed by Benj. Harris for the author, 1696.
[Compare with B. KEACH, Spiritual melody, . . . 1691.]

_____. The glory and ornament of a true gospel-constituted church. Being a brief display of the discipline of the Church of Christ, formerly meeting at Curriers Hall near Cripplegate, and now meeting at Tallow-Chandlers Hall upon Dowgate-Hill, London; Elias Keach, pastor . . . London: 1697. [Bound with The Articles of the Faith . . . in A Short Confession of Faith . . . 1697.] WHITLEY: 21-697.
[Preface by Elias, dated June 6, 1697, suggests his father was author: "composed by an experienced and worthy minister of the Gospel" (p. iv). Deals with defense of art. xxix, vigorous attack against infant baptism, treatment on close communion.]

_____. A Short Confession containing the Substance of all the Fundamental Articles in the Larger Confession, put forth by the Elders of the Baptized Churches, owning Personal Election and Final Perseverence. London: Printed in the Year 1697.
[Includes The Articles of the Faith . . . and The glory and ornament of a true gospel-constituted church . . . Compare B. KEACH, Articles of the faith . . . One copy in A.B.H.S. contains note: "used as evidence in The St. Mary's Norwich Chapel case."]

KINNERSLEY, Ebenezer.

[Baptist layman, inventor, friend of Benjamin Franklin. He objected to the 1746 decisions of the P.B.A. (see text, pp. 540-41).]

_____. Letter to the Reverend the Ministers of the Baptist Congregations, in Pennsylvania, and the New-Jerseys; Containing some Remarks, on the ANSWERS to certain QUERIES, proposed to them, at their Annual ASSOCIATION in PHILADELPHIA, September 24, 1746. Philadelphia: Printed by W. Bradford . . . [n.d.].
[Signed on Jan. 17, ---- at Philadelphia.]

MANNING, James. 1738-1791.

[Influential member of the P.B.A., moved to New England, established congregation at Providence and became first president of Rhode Island College. Formulated "Sentiments on an Association," which helped win over Separate Baptists to Warren Association. Extensive correspondent. Clerk of P.B.A. in 1772, moderator in 1787 and 1790. (See text, pp. 125-26, 430-32.)]

_____. Correspondence. 1759-1791.
[Main entry under PROVIDENCE (R.I.). Brown University.]

_____. "Sentiments Touching on Associations," in The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association. Germantown: Printed by Christopher Sower, 1769. Leaflet. [Bound in Minutes, 1767-1825 at A.B.H.S.]

[Influential in organizing Warren Association, copies widely available through incorporation into 1831 ed. of Charleston Association Discipline (q.v.). Manning gave statement at charter meeting for Warren, Sept. 8, 1767, probably influenced Isaac Backus to enter group in 1770. It was pre-fixed to the plan of the Warren Association, substantially that of P.B.A. (Isaac BACKUS, handwritten notes in GUILD, 1863). See copy in B170-94.]

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION. 1811.

[Founded in 1811 of 1700 members in 14 churches, including those dismissed by P.B.A.: Cohansey, Cape May, Manahawkin, New Mills (Pemberton), Upper Freehold, Burlington, Mt. Holly, Trenton & Lamberton (BENEDICT, pp. 587-89). See letter of dismission in N.J. Minutes for 1811 (p. 7, nn. 19-20).]

_____. A Treatise of Church Discipline, compiled by a committee of the New Jersey Baptist Association, appointed by them for that purpose, at their annual meeting at Trenton, Sept. 1820. Philadelphia: 1821.

PELOT, Francis, jt. au. Summary of Church Discipline . . . 1831.
[Main entry under HART, PELOT, and others.]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. September 27, 1707.

[Quarterly meetings as early as 1689, charter membership included 5 churches: Lower Dublin (Phila. Co., Pa.), Middletown (Monmouth, N.J.), Piscataway (Middlesex, N.J.), Cohansey (Cumberland, N.J.), and Welsh Tract (New Castle, Del.). By 1807 some 79 different churches had been members (list given by SPENCER, pp. 171-3). Chartered Jan. 24, 1797 (SPENCER, p. 154), great expansion 1740-1860 in membership. From 500 persons in 5 churches in 1707 to 1,000,000 in 64 churches (many having also been dismissed to other associations) in 1851 (JONES, H. G., in GILLETTE, p. 7). Virtually a "national" group of Baptists first half of eighteenth century, including churches from Pa., N.J.'s, Del., Conn., N.Y., Md., and Va. (see text, pp. 136-44).]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Catechisms.

[P.B.A. used B. KEACH Catechism (early ed. 1693; RIPPON, rev. ed. 1794, adv. by P.B.A. in 1795 printed Minutes, p. 10), called for reprints in 1735, 1761 and 1779, and Assembly took subscriptions at session in 1747 (GILLETTE, pp. 39, 83, 163, and 57). Adds in printed minutes promoted in 1769, 1773, and

RIPPON ed. in 1795 and thereafter. In 1794 P.B.A. appointed committee to revise Catechism (GILLETTE, p. 297), amendments to qq. 93-94, means of salvation, proposed 1796 (GILLETTE, pp. 307-9) but work set aside in 1796 (GILLETTE, pp. 317.13), probably because Boston ed. appeared in 1795 (see The Baptist Catechism . . .).]

_____. Catechisms. The Baptist Catechism; or, a brief instruction in the principles of the Christian religion agreeably to the Confession of faith put forth in Gr. Britain 1789. Boston: 1802.

[Earlier ed. 1795 (see The Baptist Catechism . . .), later eds. 1814 (Brooklyn), 1817 (Phila.), 1820, 1832. STARR: B2312-16. Copies in A.B.H.S.]

_____. Catechisms. The Baptist Catechism . . . 1693, by B. KEACH.

[Main entry under KEACH, B.]

_____. Catechisms. The Baptist Catechism . . . 1794, by J. RIPPON.

[Main entry under RIPPON, J.]

_____. Catechisms. A Baptist Catechism . . . 1700, by J. WATTS.

[Main entry under WATTS, J.]

_____. Catechisms. A Catechism for the use of the Baptist Churches. Philadelphia: Andrew Steward, 1764.

[1786 ed. (Phila.: Robert Aitken, 1786) given in STARR: B6238, copy in DLC. 1764 ed. in EVANS: 9588.]

_____. Catechisms. The Shorter Catechism for the use of Baptist congregations. Philadelphia: Printed by Robert Aitken, 1781. EVANS: 17089.

[Adv. in printed minutes of P.B.A., 1781 (p. 8), and 1782 (p. 8).]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Church Disciplines.

[P.B.A. used existing Disciplines mentioned in 1728 and 1735 (GILLETTE, pp. 29, 37) to answer queries from churches. It dealt with many disciplinary matters (e.g. 1741, GILLETTE, p. 44), and officially published two Church Disciplines in 1743 (GILLETTE, p. 46, see below) and 1798 (see JONES, S., A treatise of church discipline . . .). In 1773 P.B.A. (GILLETTE, p. 132) adv. EDWARDS, Customs . . . (q.v.), but it never officially accepted it (GILLETTE, p. 141.10). See text, pp. 191-95, 197-202.]

_____. Church Disciplines. The Glory of a True Church and its Discipline Display'd . . . 1697. By Benjamin KEACH.

[Main entry under KEACH, B.]

_____. Church Disciplines. The glory and ornament of a true gospel-constituted church . . . 1697. By Elias KEACH.
[Main entry under KEACH, E.]

_____. Church Disciplines. "The Power and Duty of an Association of Churches." By Benjamin GRIFFITH.
[Main entry under GRIFFITH, B.]

_____. Church Disciplines. A Short Treatise of Church Discipline. By Benjamin Griffith.
[Main entry under GRIFFITH, B.]

_____. Church Disciplines. Treatise in vindication of believers Baptism. Printed by subscription, 1746.
[A reprint of KEACH, B. (q.v.) by order of P.B.A. in 1746 (GILLETTE, p. 54). Work justifies stance on baptism in Confession, strong arguments against infant baptism. Also deals with issue of open communion, tolerance.]

_____. Church Disciplines. A Treatise of Church Discipline and a Directory. By Samuel JONES.
[Main entry under JONES, S.]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Confessions.

[P.B.A. in 1742 accepted Second London Confession of 1677/89 with the additions from Keach's Articles of the faith . . . (q.v.). Associations that patterned themselves after the P.B.A. accepted the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 (see text, pp. 185-91).]

_____. Confessions. The Articles of Faith . . . 1697. By Benjamin [and Elias] KEACH.
[Main entries under KEACH, B. and KEACH, E.]

_____. Confessions. The Baptist Confession of Faith. Portland: Thomas Baker Wait, 1794.
[Mentioned by EVANS: 26614.]

_____. Confessions. A Confession of Faith . . . 1677/89.
[Main entry under A Confession of Faith . . . Many editions in the British version. The 6th ed. is the 1st American edition of the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 (see next entry).]

_____. Confessions. A Confession of faith, put forth by the elders and brothers of many congregations of christians, (Baptized upon profession of their faith) in London and the Country. Adopted by the Baptist Association met at Philadelphia, Sept. 25.1742. The Sixth Edition. To which are added two Articles viz. Of Imposition of Hands, and Singing of Psalms in Publick

Worship. 6th ed. [British] 1st ed. [American], Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1743. [Bound with A Short Treatise . . .]

[Many American editions followed: 1764 (reprint), 1765 (reprint, see GILLETTE, p. 94.2), 1773 (2nd Amer. ed., 7th British), 1781 (3rd Amer., 8th British), 1798 (4th Amer., 9th British), 1810 (new ed.), 1827 (new ed.). See study by MAY (1961) comparing the 1810 and 1827 eds. Other printings and editions in 1813, 1818, 1825, 1829, 1831, 1854 (reprint of 2nd Amer. ed. of 1773), 1884 and 1907. See STARR: B972-83; EVANS: 5124, 9589, 9908, 12659, 17088, 33370; also STARR: P2320-24, 2333-34. Other copies of the Philadelphia Confession were published by other associations, notably CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION (q.v.). The British series of editions is: 1688 (1st ed.), 1693 (2nd ed.), 1699 (3rd ed.), 1719 (4th ed.), and 1720 (5th ed.). The series continued in Britain (see A Confession of Faith . . .). Excerpts in A1-817.]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Correspondence and Circular Letters.

[Baptists began their connectionalism among churches through correspondence. Each congregation sent letters with its "messengers," P.B.A. sent circular letters to member-churches, eventually associations sent letters to each other. Individuals also sent letters. Circular letters dealt with successive chapters of the Confession beginning in 1774. They are a reservoir of theology. The authors of circulars first mentioned in 1761. For a list of doctrinal letters from 1773 (for 1774) to 1807 see CLARK (1948), pp. 162-63.]

_____. Ebenezer Kinnersley to Philadelphia Baptist Association. Philadelphia. January 17, [1747].

[Main entry under KINNERSLEY, Ebenezer. A printed open letter complaining to P.B.A. of its decisions in 1746.]

_____. Philadelphia Baptist Association to Warren Association. Philadelphia. September 14-16, 1766. In Life, Times and Correspondence of James Manning and the Early History of Brown University, by Reuben A. GUILD (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1864), pp. 76-77. [Signed at end: Benjamin Miller, Moderator and Samuel Jones, Clerk.]

[P.B.A. decided to correspond with other associations in 1766 (GILLETTE, p. 97). Encourages Warren at its opening meeting for Sept. 8, 1767.]

_____. A large collection of Manuscript church letters both local church and associational chiefly from 1755-1811. McKesson Papers.

[Main entry under ROCHESTER, NEW YORK.]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Histories and Studies.

_____. BRUNNER, Weston. "A Query in Baptist History: The Philadelphia Association, was it in its organization and early history strictly Calvinistic?" Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1894.

_____. CLARK, J. L. "Some influences of the Philadelphia Baptist Association upon Baptists of America to 1814." Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1948.

_____. MAY, W. D. "The Philadelphia and Charleston Baptist Church Disciplines: a theological analysis." M.Th. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1961.

_____. Philadelphia Baptist Year-Book. 1907. S.v. "Historical Sketch," by J. G. WALKER, pp. 79-108.

_____. Philadelphia Baptist Year-Book. 1932. S.v. "History of the Five Churches that Organized the Association, 1707," compiled by A. H. BURTON, pp. 14-19.

_____. SPENCER, David. The Early Baptists of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore, 1877.

_____. TORBET, Robert G. A Social History of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707-1940. Philadelphia: Westbrook Publishing Co., 1944.

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Hymnals.

[P.B.A. accepted B. KEACH's views on hymn singing, put his article on it into Confession. It appointed committee (S. Jones, David Jones and Burgiss Allison) in 1788 to "prepare a collection of Psalms and Hymns for the use of the Associated Churches" and asked subscriptions from members and other associations (GILLETTE, p. 239; SPENCER, pp. 142-43), 3rd ed. in 1806 (GILLETTE, p. 440). Printed minutes of P.B.A. also advertized hymnals of J. Rippon in 1788 (p. 8), and I. Watts in 1780 (p. 4).]

_____. JONES, Samuel, and ALLISON, Burgiss. A selection of Psalms and hymns, . . . 1790.
[Main entry under JONES, Samuel, and ALLISON, Burgiss. 3rd ed. published in 1806 (GILLETTE, p. 440), 4th ed., 1819.]

_____. WATTS, Isaac. [Psalms and Hymns. Adv. in P.B.A. printed Minutes, 1780, p. 4.] See STARR: W1727-35.

_____. RIPPON, John. [Hymns. Adv. in P.B.A. printed Minutes, 1795, p. 10, and 1796, p. 8. Philadelphia: Printed by T. Ustick. Also ed. by Bradley adv. in Minutes, 1809, p. 7, n. 22.]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Member Churches.

_____. The Original States of thirty-one Baptist churches whose members annually meet in association at Philadelphia. Philadelphia: Andrew Steward, 1764. Broadside fol. EVANS: 9590.

_____. "A Brief Narrative of the Churches Holding Believers Baptists, in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys," 1750.

[Account of 19 churches, gathered by B. Griffith by order of the P.B.A. in 1746 (GILLETTE, p. 54), incorporated into the collection of minutes (GILLETTE, pp. 9-24).]

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Minutes of Proceedings.

[GILLETTE (q.v.) gathered all available minutes of the P.B.A. from 1707-1807 by order of the Association in 1843. The original "Association Book" was lost. Early accounts gleaned from notes by B. GRIFFITH (for 1746-1760), and minutes taken in legible hand by M. EDWARDS (for 1761-1794). 1851 ed. by GILLETTE included circular letters of P.B.A. While Gillette (p. 107) claimed first printed minutes appeared in 1769, printed minutes for 1767 and 1768 exist at A.B.H.S. and printed statistics for 1761-1766 (EVANS: 10234 lists printed minutes for 1766).]

_____. 1707-1807. GILLETTE, Abram Dunn, ed. Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from A.D. 1707, to A.D. 1807; . . . 1851.

[Main entry under GILLETTE, Abram D., ed.]

_____. 1749-1830. Association book containing a brief account of the beginnings and progress of the churches . . . practicing adult baptism . . . the ministers of the same. N.p. 1749-1830.

[In A.B.H.S. manuscript collection, bound into one volume, used for GILLETTE's edition of 1851.]

_____. 1807-1834. Collection of printed Minutes, 1807-1834. [Bound in one volume.] N.p. 1807-1834.

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Sermons.

[The P.B.A. very quickly developed the custom of an associational sermon preached to edify the gathering. The minutes first make mention of a sermon in 1729 "in the afternoon, as usual." (GILLETTE, p. 30.) In 1759 topics and preachers were assigned a year in advance, subject to be "upon one of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith." (GILLETTE, p. 79.) Preachers and alternates, were designated for the first

time in 1731 (GILLETTE, p. 32). CLARK (1948, Appendix 2, p. 161) gives a list of topics from 1760 to 1768, the following year topics continued on basic scriptural texts. Sermons were called to be printed in 1773 (GILLETTE, p. 128), in practice only the more notable were printed by request. Other sermons given on occasions of ordination, or church dedication, etc. were sometimes printed.]

_____. HART, Oliver. A gospel church portrayed . . .
[Main entry under HART, Oliver. Sermon based on 2 Chron. 29:35, preached at P.B.A. meeting of Oct. 4, 1791.]

_____. HART, Oliver. An Humble Attempt to repair the christian temple . . . 1785.
[Main entry under HART, Oliver. Sermon based on Haggai 2:4, preached at P.B.A. on Oct. 21, 1783.]

PROVIDENCE (R.I.). Brown University. John Hay Library. James Manning Collection of MS. letters. [Originals in the John Hay Library. Negative film in A.B.H.S.]
[Includes all available manuscripts of letter to and from Manning, with Zerox index, 1759-1791. Informative about Manning's views within P.B.A.]

RIPPON, John. 1750-1836.

[British Baptist, minister at Carter Lane Baptist Church from 1773, editor of Annual Register from 1790-1802. Correspondent with P.B.A. personalities.]

_____. The Baptist Annual Register. 4 vols. London: [no publisher given, n.d.].
[Includes 41 issues in 4 vols., each volume indexed. Vols. 3-4 continuous pages. Vol. 4 especially valuable. Excellent source of eighteenth century materials. Vol. 1 for 1790, 1791, 1792 and part of 1793. Including Sketches of the State of Religion among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad. Vol. 2 for 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797. Including . . . Vol. 3 for 1798, 1799, 1800, and part of 1801. Vol. 4 for 1801 and 1802 (continuous pagination).]

_____. The Baptist catechism commonly called Keach's catechism. Compared with the earlier editions and revised by John Rippon. London: 1794.
[Later editions available in A.B.H.S.: 1851 (Phila.); 1851 (Phila.: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851); and 1952 (Grand Rapids: Baker book house, 1952). See entry under KEACH, Benjamin, The Baptist catechism . . . 1794.]

_____. 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, printed at London in 1688, now reprinted, with a list of the 37 ministers who recommended it in 1689; to which this edition adds, what was never before given, the places where they labored. WHITLEY: 56-790.

[Mentioned in RIPPON's Annual Register, 1:124, list of publications for 1970. Usually bound in at end of vol. 4 of Rippon.]

_____. Hymns, original and selected; interspersed in the twenty-seventh edition of the selection with numerous doxologies. London: G. Duckworth, [n.d.]. WHITLEY: 75-828.

_____. A selection of hymns, from the best authors, including a great number of originals . . . 2nd American from the 15th London ed. . . . With an appendix by the Rev. William Staughton. Philadelphia: Printed by W. W. Woodward, 1813.

[13th London ed.: 1802. Editions of Rippon's selection appeared in 1787, 1802, 1808, 1813, 1827, 1831, 1836, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1842, 1847, etc.]

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK. Colgate Rochester Divinity. American Baptist Historical Society Archives. Samuel Colgate Collection. Mrs. Irving McKesson Papers. 1755-1811.

[A large collection of MS. church letters, both local church and associational, chiefly from 1755-1811, received March 1934 from Mrs. Irving McKesson. Basic manuscripts for P.B.A. activities.]

_____. The M. Semple Papers.

[Collection presented to A.B.H.S. Oct. 8, 1857. Includes mostly letters of churches to P.B.A.]

WARREN (R.I.) BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. 1767.

[New England Particular (Separate) Baptists were suspicious of organized church groups. The need to strengthen their fight for religious freedom led to affiliation. James Manning and Hezekiah Smith of P.B.A. helped organize. Manning's "Sentiments" (q.v.) and the P.B.A. "Plan" outlined by Isaac Backus, clerk at opening session, led to association. Backus's congregation joined in 1770, assuring others. Warren patterned itself after P.B.A., accepted its "faith and order" without demanding it as normative.]

_____. GUILD, A. Reuben. Life, Times and Correspondence of James Manning and the Early History of Brown University. Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1864. Pp. 76-77.

[Letter of P.B.A. to Warren, Sept. 14-16, 1766 session writing to Baptists in New England an encouraging word about their own plan to associate at forthcoming charter meeting, Sept. 8, 1767. Letter signed by Benjamin Miller, Moderator

and Samuel Jones, Clerk (pp. 76-77). GUILD includes description of the formation of Warren (pp. 72-84) and Association letters (pp. 83, 185, 236, and 320).]

_____. 1772-1800. Printed Minutes for 1772-1800, with a compendium of minutes from 1767 to 1825.
[Copy in A.B.H.S.]

_____. 1767-1779. Minutes of the Warren Association. 1767-1779. Compiled from Isaac Backus Papers by R. W. Guild, 1863.
[Original in Brown University library; zerox copy at A.B.H.S.]

_____. Minutes of the Warren Association. Boston: Manning and Loring, 1809.

_____. The Sentiments and plan of the Warren [Baptist] Association. Germantown: Printed by Christopher Sower, 1769. EVANS: 11519.
[Copy bound into Minutes, 1767-1825; another in Minutes, 1786-1829, in A.B.H.S. Includes both Manning's "Sentiments" and the "Plan" for Warren, on the P.B.A. model.]

WATTS, John. 1662-1702.

[Born in Leeds, Kent Co., England, spent 16 years in America, baptized by Elias Keach, Nov. 21, 1687. Second pastor of Pennepack (Lower Dublin), Dec. 10, 1690, founded first Phila. Church, succeeded Keach in Lower Dublin, 1692-1702. Minister in P.B.A. for 12 years, prepared Catechism and Confession of Faith (1700). Died Aug. 27, 1702 (SPENCER, pp. 26, 29, 42; S. JONES, Century Sermon . . ., p. 455). Not to be confused with British General Baptist, John Watts, d. 1712.]

_____. A Baptist Catechism. Philadelphia: Printed by Reynier Jansen, 1700. STARR: W1759-61; EVANS: 959.
[Probably influenced by E. Keach who baptized him, and whom he succeeded as pastor of Lower Dublin.]

WILLIAMS, David, jt. au. Summary of Church Discipline . . . 1831.
[Main entry under HART, Oliver, PELOT, Francis, and others. Williams, along with M. Edwards and O. Hart of the P.B.A., collaborated in the Charleston Association Church Discipline and Confession of Faith. Followed P.B.A.]

Books

This section includes those books used for the present study and not indicated in the previous section of the bibliography. The items marked with an asterisk (*) are works which date from the same period as the primary Baptist sources.

ABBOTT, Walter M., ed. The Documents of Vatican II. New York: Guild Press, 1966.

AHLSTROM, Sydney E. A Religious History of the American People. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

_____. Theology in America: the major voices from Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy. The American Heritage Series, 73. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1967.

ALLISON, William Henry. Baptist Councils in America: a Historical Study of their Origin and the Principles of their Development. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906.

AMES, William. 1576-1633.

*_____. Cases of Conscience. Tr. from Latin. 1639. [Orig. title: De Conscientia (1632).]
[Chief guide to moral theology for New England Puritans (AHLSTROM, Religious History, 131).]

*_____. A Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship. 1633. 1971 ed. with intro. by R. C. SIMMONS (International Publishers, 1971).

*_____. The Marrow of Theology. Tr. from 3rd Latin ed. 1629 and ed. by John D. EUSDEN. Milestone Library. Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968. [Orig. title: Medulla Theologia (Amsterdam, 1623).]
[Eng. trans. from Latin: The Marrow of Sacred Divinity (1642). Used by Benjamin (and Elias) KEACH for The Glory . . . (HUDSON, Foundations 1:12). Prime text for New England Puritan "Federal (Covenant) Theology" (AHLSTROM, Religious History, p. 131).]

ANGELL, J. William, ed. Seminar on Authority. The Proceedings of a Dialogue Between Catholics and Baptists Sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute of Wake Forest University and Belmont College. April 25-May 1, 1974. Winston-Salem, North Carolina: The Ecumenical Institute of Wake Forest University, 1974.
[Participants discussed (1) concept of authority, (2) authority of Scripture, and (3) authority of tradition.]

*An Orthodox Creed, or A Protestant Confession of Faith, Being an Essay to Unite and Confirm All True Protestants in the Fundamental Articles of the Christian Religion, Against the Errors and Heresies of Rome. London: Printed in the year, 1679.
[A General Baptist confession, the only one in Baptist history to exhalt the Assembly over the churches. Text appears in LUMPKIN, pp. 297-334 (see text, pp. 51-52 and pp. 246-48).]

ARMITAGE, T. A History of the Baptists, traced with their vital Principles and Practices from the Time of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the Year 1886. New York: Bryan, Taylor and Co., 1886.
[Dissatisfied with successionits theory of Baptist History, author speaks of vital principles and practices instead.]

BAUM, Gregory, ed. The church as institution. Concilium, 91. New York: Herder & Herder, 1974.

BENEDICT, David. A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World. Rev. ed. New York: Lewis Colby and Co., 1848. Statistical tables & Indices.
[First comprehensive history, many weaknesses, though it includes information not otherwise available (WAMBLE, Foundations 2 (1959):367).]

BERGER, Peter. The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967.

BETTENSON, H., ed. Documents of the Christian Church. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Index, appendices, & select bibl.
[Selection is from a British point of view.]

BINGHAM, Joseph. 1668-1723.

*_____. Origines ecclesiasticae: or, the Antiquities of the Christian Church. 2 vols. London: Printed for Robert Knaplock, . . . , 1708.
[Other editions: 1726; new ed. 1855; 1878 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1878). Used by GRIFFITH, essay on power of association (reference to bk. 2, p. 104).]

BOUYER, Louis. The word, church and sacraments in protestantism and catholicism. New York: Desclee, 1961.

BROWN, Raymond. Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections. Paramus/New York/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1970.

_____; DONFRIED, Karl P.; and REUMAN, John, eds. Peter in the New Testament: a Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars. New York/Paramus/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1973.

*BROWNE, Robert. A Book which sheweth the Life and Manner of all True Christians. Middleburg, 1582.

BURR, Nelson R., in coll. with SMITH, James Ward and JAMISON, A. Leland, eds. A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America. 2 vols. Religion in American Life, 4. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961.
[Part 5 of this work is BURR's Intellectual History, Theology, Philosophy, Science, pp. 957-1169.]

BURRAGE, Champlin. The early english dissenters in the light of recent research (1550-1641). 2nd ed. New York: Russell, 1967; orig. ed. in 2 vols. Cambridge: University Press, 1912.
[Vol. 2 is a collection of important documents (WAMBLE, Foundations, 2 [1959]:366); a fundamental study (CHADWICK, p. 448).]

_____. A History of the Baptists in New England. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894. Index. Appendices.
[Very broad use of sources from New England Baptist history.]

*CALVIN, John. Institutes of the Christian Religion. Tr. by Henry Beveridge. 2 vol. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966.
[Original version in Latin in 1534 or early 1535 (Institutio religionis Christianae) was constantly revised and enlarged during Calvin's life. Latin editions appeared in 1539, 1543, 1550, and 1559; French translation by Calvin, in 1541, 1545, 1551, and 1560. First printing in March 1536 at Basal; 2nd ed. in Strassburg in 1539 is 3 times larger (translated by Calvin into French and published in Geneva in 1541); final revision of 1559 (French translation in 1560) is 5 times the size of the original, with 80 chapters, divided into 5 books. Dutch version appeared in 1560; first English version appeared in 1561 with many more thereafter; and a German version at Heidelberg in 1572. The best Eng. ed. is Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. by J. T. McNeill, tr. by P. L. Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960). Critical eds. of Latin texts of 1536 and 1559 appear in Joannis Calvini opera selecta, ed. by P. Barth and W. Niesel (Munich, 1926-36). (See J. C. Olin in NCE, 7:548-49.)]

*CAMBRIDGE SYNOD. 1648. A Platform of Church Discipline gathered out of the Word of God: and agreed upon by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches Assembled in the Synod at Cambridge in New England. To be presented to the Churches and General Court for their Consideration and Acceptance, in the Lord. The eighth Month, Anno, 1649. Printed by S.G. at Cambridge in New-England, 1649. EVANS: 25.
[This 1st ed., composed probably by John COTTON (q.v.) but the orig. in the hand of Richard MATHER. May be 1st published work of Samuel Green. Reprinted in London, 1653. Many editions followed, mentioned by EVANS: 1st. ed., 1649 and 2nd ed., 1671 (EVANS: 25, 159); Others issued in 1680, 1700 (33 articles abstracted), 1701, 1711, 1713, 1717, 1731, 1749, 1757 (EVANS: 282, 929, 969, 1496, 1599, 1869, 3400-40, 6295, 7866).]

CAMPENHAUSEN, Hans von. Ecclesiastical authority and spiritual power in the Church of the first three centuries. Tr. by J. A. Baker. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969.

*CARRUTHERS, S. W. The Westminster Confession of Faith Being an Account of the Preparation and Printing of its Seven Leading Editions. Extra Publication, no. 2. Presbyterian Historical Society of England, 1937.
[Critical edition of Westminster on pp. 89-157.]

CHAMPION, Leonard G. The Church of the New Testament. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1951.
[Basic modern work by British Baptist.]

CONGREGATIONALISM. Collections. [Main entries given under names of authors or editors.]

*_____. Williston WALKER, The creeds and platforms of Congregationalism.

*_____. Larzer ZIFF, ed. John Cotton of New England.

*_____. John A. HARDON. The Spirit and Origins of American Protestantism: a source book in its Creeds.

*_____. Arnold G. MATTHEWS. The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658. Also Congregational Churches in England. Savoy Meeting, 1658.

*_____. Henry M. DEXTER. The Congregationalism of the last three hundred years as seen in its literature.

*_____. Philip SCHAFF, ed. The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes. Vol. 3.

COOK, Henry. What Baptists Stand For. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1947. Appendices. Index of names.
[Best work on Baptist principles (Wamble, Foundations 2: 369). Most valuable section is N.T. evidence about baptism. Much of work is response to Lambeth, 1926.]

COTTON, John. 1584-1652.

*_____. A Platform of Church Discipline . . . 1649.
[See main entry under CAMBRIDGE SYNOD.]

*_____. The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven. 1644.
[Copy in Yale University Library. Variants exist, some probably earlier than British Museum text. For copy see ZIFF, pp. 69-164.]

*_____. A Sermon Preached by the Reverend Mr. John Cotton Deliver'd at Salem, 1636. To which is prefixed, a retraction of his former opinion concerning baptism. Boston: Printed by B. Green (?), 1713.
[No known variants. Copy in ZIFF, pp. 39-68, based on copy in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society.]

*_____. A Treatise. I. Of Faith. II. Twelve fundamental articles of Christian religion. III. A doctrinal conclusion. IV. Questions and answers upon Church-government. Boston: [Printed by B. Green], 1713. EVANS: 1604.

*_____. The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared, in Two Treatises. 1648.
[Copy in ZIFF, pp. 165-364. An apologetical work answering various attacks on the New England Way.]

DAKIN, Arthur. The Baptist View of the Church and Ministry. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1944.
[Commissioned by principals of Baptist colleges in Britain and Ireland. Deals with Church and Ministry. Needs supplementing of PAYNE, WALTON, and CAMPION, focuses too much on local church.]

DANA, E. C., in coll. with SIPES, L. W. A Manual of Ecclesiology. Kansas City, Kansas: Central Seminary Press, 1940.
[Early church manual from Southern Baptist Convention circles.]

DARGAN, Edwin C. Ecclesiology: A Study of the Churches. Louisville: Chas. T. Dearing, 1897.
[Last serious study of Church among Southern Baptists until McCALL's study (LAKE). Both Torbet and Wamble speak highly of it.]

DAVENPORT, John. 1597-1670.

*_____. Another Essay for the investigation of the truth in answer to two questions concerning I. The subject of Baptist, II. The consociation of Churches. With an apologetical preface to the reader. Cambridge: Printed by S. G. and M. Johnson, 1663. EVANS: 78.
[Davenport wrote 2 essays, only the second printed, hence the title "Another Essay."]

*_____. The Power of Congregational Churches Asserted and Vindicated, In Answer to a Treatise of Mr. J. Paget, Intitled The Defense of Church-Government exercised in Classes and Synods. By John Davenport, B. of D. and Pastor to the Church in Newhaven, in New England. London: Printed in the Year 1672.
[Orig. in British Museum: 1351-a-33. Film copy at A.B.H.S., pp. 161-176 missing. Author develops seven conclusions, and accepts infant Baptism.]

*_____. An answer of the elders of severall churches in New England. In Church covenant: two tracts. New York: Arno Press, 1972.

*A Declaration of the Faith and Order Owned and Practiced in the Congregational Churches in England: Agreed upon and Consented unto by the Elders and Messengers in Their Meeting at the Savoy, October 12, 1658. London: Printed by John Field, and are to be sold by John Allen at the Sun Rising in Pauls Churchyard, 1658.
[This Savoy Confession appears in WALKER, pp. 340-402; also in SCHAFF, 3:707-29 (excerpts). It was used by Particular Baptists in the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession.]

DeJONG, Peter Y. The Covenant Idea in New England Theology, 1620-1847. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1945.

*DEXTER, Henry Martyn. The Congregationalsim of the last three hundred years as seen in its literature. With special references to certain recondite, neglected, or disputed passages. Reprint. 2 vols. New York: B. Franklin, 1970. With bibliographical appendix.
[Reprint of 1880 N.Y. ed.]

DRANE, James F. Authority and institution; a study in Church crisis. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1969.

DULLES, Avery. Models of the Church. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1974. Critical notes. Index.
[Uses theological method of models to study Protestant and Catholic ecclesiologies. Finds five, (1) Institutional, (2) Mystical communion, (3) Sacrament, (4) Herald, and (5) servant.]

DURNBAUGH, Donald F. The Believers' Church: the history and character of Radical Protestantism. London: Macmillan Co., 1968; Macmillan Paperback, 1970. Index.
[Develops useful categories and schema to locate Free Churches within mainline Churches. Adds to Troeltsch's categories by using works of his critics.]

EMPIE, Paul C. and MURPHY, Austin, eds. Papal Primacy and the Universal Church. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974.
[Incorporates position papers in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialog in the United States.]

*EUSDEN, John D., ed. The Marrow of Theology. Tr. from the Latin ed. of William AMES [Medula Theologica (Amsterdam: 1629)]. Boston/Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1968.

EVANS, Benjamin. The Early English Baptists. 2 vols. London: J. Heaton & Son, 1862-64.
[Historical study using Mennonite archives in Holland, transition from controversial to scientific Baptist historiography (WAMBLE, Foundations 2:366).]

EVANS, Charles. American Bibliography: a chronological dictionary of all books, pamphlets and periodical publications printed in the United States of America, from the genesis of printing in 1639 down to and including the year 1820. With bibliographical and biographical notes. 13 vols. 14th vol. is an index by Roger Pattrell BRISTOL (1959). Chicago: Privately printed for the author by Blakely Press, 1903-34; reprint: New York: Peter Smith, 1941-59.
Supplement: BRISTOL, Roger Pattrell. Supplement to Charles Evans' "American bibliography." Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1970.
[Provides chronological list, 1646-1800, of "not in Evans" items, with bibl.]
Imprints of publications in EVANS. Early American Imprints: 1639-1800. Clifford K. SHIPTON, ed. Worcester, Massachusetts: American Antiquarian Society. Microprint cards in 133 boxes.

FLEW, R. Newton. Jesus and his Church. A study of the idea of the Ecclesia in the New Testament. Published for the Fernley-Hartley Trust. London: Epworth Press, 1956.

_____, and DAVIES, Rupert E., eds. The Catholicity of Protestantism Being a Report Presented to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury by a group of Free churchmen. With a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1954. London: Lutterworth Press, 1951.

FOSTER, Frank Hugh. A genetic history of the New England theology. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963.

FURMAN, Wood. A history of the Charleston association of Baptist churches in the state of South Carolina; with an appendix containing the principal circular letters to the churches. Charleston: J. Hoff, 1811.
[Discusses link to P.B.A., esp. in biographies of Oliver Hart and John Gano.]

GARRETT, J. L., Jr. Baptist Church Discipline. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962.
[Discusses historical development of A Short Treatise and A Summary (COMPTON, [1968], p. 9).]

GAUSTAD, Edwin Scott. Historical Atlas of Religion in America. New York: Harper & Row, 1962. Indices. Appendices.
[Good basic tool to understand trends in religious development in America.]

_____. A Religious History of America. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

_____. Religious Issues in American History. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

GILMORE, Alec, ed. Christian Baptism. A Fresh attempt to understand the rite in terms of Scripture, history, and theology. With intro. by E. A. Payne. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1954.

_____. The Pattern of the Church. A Baptist View. London: Lutterworth Press, 1963. Indices.
[Compliments study on baptism. Includes chapters by different authors: (1) Baptist Church Life Today (West); (2) The Church in the New Testament (Winward); (3) The Fullness of the Church of God (N. Clark); and (4) Baptist Churches Today and Tomorrow (A. Gilmore).]

GOEN, Clarence Curtis. Revivalism and separatism in New England, 1740-1800. Strict Congregationalists and separate Baptists in the great awakening. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

GOODWIN, Thomas. 1600-1680.

* _____. Works . . . London: Printed by J.D. and S.R. for T.G. . . . , 1681-1704. In 5 vols.
[Copies in Toronto (Forbes Collection, rare books). OOSP has 12 vol. set published in Edinburgh, 1861-1866. GRIFFITH and EDWARDS made use of these works, esp. vol. 4: Of the object and acts of justifying faith. pt. 1. Of the Constitution, right order and government of the churhces of Christ. pt. 2. The Government and discipline of the churches of Christ. pt. 3.

Some letters which pass'd between the author and others concerning church-government.]

*_____, and others. An apologeticall narration. Edited by Robert S. PAUL. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1963.
[Facsimile of orig. t.-p.: An apologeticall narration. London: Printed for Robert Dawlman, 1643. Bibl. notes on pp. 127-130. Authors all attended Westminster Assembly, sought to shift arena for Assembly's discussion on church order to higher court and the people.]

GREEN, Robert W. Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1969.

GUILD, Reuben Aldridge. Early History of Brown University. Providence: Snow & Farnham, 1897.
[Source for James Manning's correspondence as first president of Baptist College of Rhode Island.]

_____. Life, Times and Correspondence of James Manning and the Early History of Brown University. Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1864.

GUTTIERREZ, Gustavo. A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation. Tr. & ed. by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973.

HAMER, Jerome. The church is a communion. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964.

HARDON, John A. The Protestant Churches of America. Rev. ed. Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1958; Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1969.

*_____. The Spirit and Origins of American Protestantism: a source book in its Creeds. Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum Press, 1968.
[Companion volume to The Protestant Churches of America.]

HARRISON, Paul M. Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition: a social case study of the American Baptist Convention. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959. Bibl. Index. Tables & charts.
[Basically his Ph.D. dissertation. Reprint: Arcturus Book (Carbondale/Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971). Caused great controversy in American Baptist Convention (Northern Baptists) circles.]

HASTINGS, James, gen. ed. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. 13 vols. plus supplements. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1910-27.
[Basic reference work for Protestant religious history.]

HEIMERT, Alan and MILLER, Perry, eds. The Great Awakening: documents illustrating the crisis and its consequences. American Heritage Series. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1967. Index. Select bibl.

HICKS, John D.; MOWRY, George E.; and BURKE, Robert E. A History of American Democracy. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966. Appendix. Tables. Indices.

HILL, S. S. and TORBET, Robert G., jt. au. Baptists North and South. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1964.
[Joint work by authors from Southern and Northern Baptist Conventions.]

HISCOX, Edward Thurston. The Baptist Directory: a guide to the doctrine and practices of Baptist Churches. New York: Sheldon & Co., 1859.
[Many subsequent editions (see text, p. 573, n. 77). Author influenced by nineteenth century individualism among Baptists. Generally replaced by the work of MARING and HUDSON.]

_____. The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1964.
[Includes sections updating ideas on interchurch relations.]

_____. The New Directory for Baptist Churches. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894.
[Many subsequent editions. Standard manual of the nineteenth century, major revision of earlier work.]

HOBBS, Herschel H. What Baptists Believe. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964.

HOLFIELD, E. Brooks. The Covenant Sealed: the development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1974. Index. Bibl. essay.
[Good information on covenant theology.]

HOOKER, Thomas. 1586-1647.

* _____. A survey of the summe of church-discipline. London: Printed in 1648. Reprinted ed.: New York: Arno Press (Research library of colonial America), 1972.
[The only work by Hooker on church polity, inspired by W. AMES (q.v.), employed by E. KEACH, EDWARDS, and S. JONES.]

HORTON, Douglas. Congregationalism: a study in Church polity. London: Independent Press, 1952.

HUDSON, Winthrop S. American Protestantism. The Chicago History of American Civilization. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
[Helpful introductory overview. Insightful about denominational theory in eighteenth century and about the departure from a theology causing the loss of Protestant identity.]

_____. The Great Tradition of the American Churches. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.
[Faults New Theology for the retreat of the Church. Stresses importance of revivalism and voluntary societies in evangelizing.]

_____. Religion in America. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965. Index.
[An historical account of the development of American religious life. Includes Roman Catholics.]

_____, ed. Baptist Concepts of the Church: a survey of the historical and theological issues which have produced changes in Church Order. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1959.
[Basic source, collection of papers for the 2nd national theological conference of American Baptists in 1959. Includes articles (given in section 3) by W. S. HUDSON, R. T. HANDY, J. Woolman BRUSH, N. H. MARING, and E. S. GAUSTAD. Compared to the Southern Baptist work (see McCALL) the stress is historical, rather than biblical.]

IERSEL, Bastiaan Martinus Franciscus, van. Office and ministry in the church. Concilium, 80. New York: Herder & Herder, 1972.

IVIMEY, Joseph. A History of the English Baptists. 4 vols. London: Printed for the author, 1811-30.
[Early effort at Baptist history, extensive copying, biased against General Baptists. Yet much useful data on Baptist biographies and churches esp. in London.]

KIRK, Kenneth Escott, ed. The Apostolic Ministry; essays on the history and doctrine of episcopacy, prepared under the direction of K. E. Kirk. London: Hodder & Staughton Ltd., 1946.
[Gives Anglican view of episcopacy. Basic work.]

KÜNG, Hans. The Church. Tr. by Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1967.

_____. Structures of the church. Tr. from the German by Salvator Attansio. New York: Nelson, 1964.

_____. Why priests; a proposal for a new church ministry. Tr. by Robert C. Collins. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972.

_____, ed. The plurality of ministries. Concilium, 74. New York: Herder & Herder, 1972.

LEAVENWORTH, Lynn, ed. Great Themes in Theology. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1958.
[Collection representing second stage of the American Baptist Convention theological discussions and results of regional meetings.]

LITTELL, Franklin Hamlin. The Anabaptist View of the Church: A Study in the Origins of Sectarian Protestantism. 2nd ed., rev. & enlarged. Boston: Starr King Press, 1958. Bibl. & notes.

_____. The Free Church: Significance of the Left Wing of the Reformation for Modern American Protestantism. 2nd ed. Boston: Starr King Press, 1962.
[Timely and challenging, "ranks with Niebuhr's Social Sources of Denominationalism" (Mosteller).]

*LUMPKIN, William L., ed. Baptist Confessions of Faith. Chicago: Judson Press, 1959; rev. ed., Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1969.
[Updates McGLOTHLIN, incorporates half century of extensive historical research since then. 3rd in line of collections: UNDERHILL, McGLOTHLIN, LUMPKIN.]

McCALL, Duke K., ed. What is the Church? A Symposium of Baptist Thought. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958.
[Stress on the biblical, result of two years of conferences on the Church under auspices of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1953-54. (Compare HUDSON.)]

McCORD, Peter J., ed. A Pope for all Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern Church. New York/Paramus/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1976.

*McGLOTHLIN, W. J., ed. Baptist Confessions of Faith. Philadelphia: Baptist Publications Society, 1911.
[Great improvement over UNDERHILL, twice as many confessions. British ed. 1908 special subscription for British Historical Society.]

McKENSIE, John L. Authority in the Church. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1966.

_____. The Roman Catholic Church. New York: Holt, Rinehardt & Winston, 1969. Index. Bibl. notes.

McNUTT, William Roy. Polity and Practice in Baptist Churches. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1935; rev. ed.: 1959. Index. Bibl.
[Baptist Church polity manual, now generally replaced by MARING-HUDSON, though still in use.]

MARING, Norman H. American Baptists Whence and Whither. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1968.

_____ and HUDSON, Winthrop S. A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1963. Index. Appendices.
[Highly recommended by GAUSTAD (Foundations 7 (1964):191-93). Considers newer thinking among Baptists, raises basic questions and serious problems needing rethinking.]

MARTY, Martin E. Protestantism. History of Religion Series, gen. ed. E. O. JAMES. New York: Holt, Rinehardt & Winston, 1972.

*MATTHEWS, Arnold Gwynne, ed. Congregational Churches in England. Savoy Meeting, 1658. The Savoy declaration of faith and order, 1658. With an additional notice by Daniel T. Jenkins. London: Independent Press, 1959.
[Provides the critical text. Intro. is "last word on the history and provenance of the Declaration" (ROUTLEY, p. 39).]

MILLER, Perry, jt. au. The Great Awakening from 1740 to 1750.
[See main entry under HEIMERT, A.]

MORGAN, Edmund S. Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea. New York: New York University Press, 1963.

MÜLLER, Alois. Obedience in the Church. Maryland: Newman Press, 1966.

MULLINS, Edgar Young. The Axioms of Religion: a new interpretation of the Baptist Faith. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1908.

_____. Baptist Beliefs. 2nd ed. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1925; orig. ed.: 1921.

_____. The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1917.
[Omits any study of the Church, perhaps influenced by the Whitsitt Controversy (questioning when Baptists arose, i.e. practiced baptism by immersion).]

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST (U.S.A.). Yearbook of the American Churches. New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1969.
[Published annually since 1916. Includes lists of depositories (archives) and publications by denominations.]

NETTELS, Curtis Putnam. The roots of American civilization; a history of American colonial life. New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1938; 2nd ed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963. Includes maps of colonial days.

NEWMAN, Albert Henry. A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States. 6th ed. rev. & enlarged. New York: American Baptist Publication Society, 1915; orig. ed.: New York: 1894.
[Before TORBET's history, nothing comparable covering the whole field of Baptist history. First satisfactory history of American Baptists.]

NIEBUHR, H. Richard. The Social Sources of Denominationalism. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1929. New York: The World Publishing Co. (A Living Age Book), 1967. Bibl. Index.
[Deservedly one of the real classics in sociology of religion. Shows how Baptists and Methodists outdistanced others by relating to the frontier situation.]

OAKLEY, Francis. Council over Pope?; towards a provisional ecclesiology. New York: Herder & Herder, 1969.

*Of the Institution of Churches and the Order Appointed in them by Jesus Christ, in A Declaration of Faith . . . (London: Printed by John Field . . . 1658), pp. 55-64.
[This Savoy Platform of Church Polity influenced the Second London (Philadelphia) Confession.]

OWEN, John. 1616-1683.

*_____. The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government. London: Printed for William Marshall, 1689. Orig. in British Museum: 4135.e.28. Abridged and ed. by John HUXTABLE, London, in 1947.
[Used by GRIFFITH and S. JONES. Contents include: I. The Subject Matter of the Church. II. The formal Cause of a particular Church. III. Of the Polity, Rule or Discipline of the Church in general. IV. The Officers of the Church. V. The Duty of Pastors of Churches. VI. The Office of Teachers in the Church. VII. Of the Rule of the Church, or of Ruling Elders. VIII. The Nature of Church Polity or Rule, with the Duty of Elders. IX. Of Deacons. X. Of Excommunication. XI. Of the Communion of Churches. Basic background.]

PATTERSON, W. Morgan. Baptist Successionism: a critical view. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1969.

PAYNE, Ernest A. The Baptist Movement in the Reformation and Onwards. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1947.
[Author supports thesis that there was a link between British Baptists and Anabaptists.]

_____. The Baptist Union: A Short History. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1959.
[Includes statements of Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland for 1888, 1889, 1918, 1926, 1948 and 1953. Valuable documents.]

_____. The Fellowship of Believers: Baptist Thought and Practice Yesterday and Today. Enlarged ed. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1952; orig. ed., 1944. 5 appendices. Index.
[Investigates eighteenth and nineteenth century views of church, ministry, baptism, supper, worship and discipline. Includes important documents on church, 1926, 1938, and 1948.]

_____. Free Churches and Episcopacy. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1952.
[Reprint of paper in Theology (June 1951), 209-17. Endorsed by Baptist Union in 1953. It is a reply to Lambeth proposal for an experimental episcopacy among Free Churches.]

_____. The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England. 2nd. ed. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1952.
[Good for history of early English Baptists.]

PENDLETON, J. M. Baptist Church Manual. Nashville: Convention Press, 1955. Orig. ed., Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1867.
[Reprinted many times. 205,000th copy printed in 1955.]

_____. Distinctive Principles of Baptists. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882.

PERRY, Ralph Barton. Puritanism and Democracy. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953.

*A Platform of Church Discipline . . . Printed at Cambridge in New England . . . 1649.
[Main entry under CAMBRIDGE SYNOD.]

POPE, Robert G. The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan England. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969.

[Challenges orthodox view erected by Perry Miller. Sees Half-Way Covenant as natural way to adapt to changed circumstances.]

PUREFOY, G. W. A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association from its Organization in A.D. 1758, to A.D. 1858. New York: Sheldon and Co., 1859.

PROVOST, James H. Interecclesial communion in the light of the II Vatican Council. Rome: Pontifical Universita Lateranense, 1967.

RAHNER, Karl. Bishops: their Status and Function. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963.

_____. The Church after the Council. Tr. by Davis C. Herron and Rodelinde Albrecht. New York: Herder & Herder, 1966.

_____, and RATZINGER, Joseph, jt. au. The episcopate and the primacy. Quaestiones disputatae, 4. New York: Herder & Herder, 1962.

_____, and others. Obedience and the Church. Washington, D.C.: Corpus Books, 1968.

ROBERTSON, D. B., ed. Voluntary associations, a study of groups in free societies; essays in honor of James Luther Adams. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966.
[Includes useful items by Catholic M. NOVAK and Baptist R. T. HANDY.]

ROBINSON, H. Wheeler. Baptist Principles. 3rd ed. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1935.
[Concise, good intro. to Baptists.]

_____. The Life and Faith of the Baptists. Rev. ed. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1946; orig. ed., 1927.

ROUTLEY, Erik. Creeds and Confessions: from the Reformation to the Modern Church. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1962. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.
[Provides comparative comments about Trent, Augsburg and Reformed confessions.]

_____. The Story of Congregationalism. London: Independent Press Ltd., 1961. Appendices. Index.
[Best one small volume intro. to Congregationalism.]

*SCHAFF, Philip., ed. The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes. 4th ed. rev. & enlarged. Vol. 3: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with translations. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1966. Orig. title: Bibliotheca, symbolica ecclesiae universalis.

SCHILLEBEECKX, Edward. Christ the sacrament of the encounter with God. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963.

_____. The mission of the church. New York: Seabury Press, 1973.

_____. The Unifying role of the bishop. Concilium, 71. New York: Herder & Herder, 1972.

SCHNAKENBURG, Rudolf. The Church in the New Testament. New York: Herder & Herder, 1965.

_____. God's rule and kingdom. New York: Herder & Herder, 1963.

SCHWEIZER, Eduard. Church order in the new testament. Studies in Biblical Theology, 32. London: SCM Press, 1959.

*Sixteen Articles of Faith and Order Unanimously Assented to by Messengers Met at Warwick, the 3rd Day of the 3rd Month, 1655.
[Copy appears in LUMPKIN, pp. 198-200. This Midland Association Confession probably was not published by its authors; an edition appeared in 1905 from the Tewkesbury and Bourton Church books, ed. by the Reverend W. Gwynne Owen.]

SHAKESPEARE, J. H. Baptist and Congregational Pioneers. London: National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, 1906.
[Based on detailed study of primary sources.]

SKOGLUND, John E. The Baptists. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1967.
[Though brief, a good statement of 4 essentials of Baptists: (1) gathered church; (2) religious liberty; (3) urgency to share gospel; and (4) reality of church universal.]

SMITH, H. Shelton; HANDY, Robert T.; and LOETCHER, Lefferts A. American Christianity; An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960-63.

SMITH, James Ward, and JAMISON, A. Leland, eds. Religion in American Life. 4 vols. in 5. Princeton Studies in American Civilization, 5. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961-62.
Vol. 1--The Shaping of American Religion (by the editors); vol. 4 (2 vols. in 5 parts)--A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America (BURR-SMITH-JAMISON).

Southern Baptist Periodical Index. Ed. by Lynn E. MAY. Nashville, Tennessee: Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1966- .
[Published annually.]

SPENCER, David. The Early Baptists of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore, 1877.
(Limited in scope, treats P.B.A. prior to 1877, includes list of all churches in the P.B.A., 1707-1807.]

STANLEY, David Michael. The apostolic Church in the New Testament. Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1965.

STARK, Werner. The Sociology of Religion: a Study of Christendom. 5 vols. New York: Fordham University Press, 1966-72. Vol. 5: Types of Religious Culture.

STARKEY, Marion Lena. The Congregational Way: the role of the Pilgrims and their heirs in shaping America. Religion in America Series. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966.

STARR, Edward C., compiler. A Baptist Bibliography, being a register of printed materials by and about Baptists including works written against the Baptists. Section A. Published by the Judson Press, Philadelphia, Pa., for the Samuel Colgate Baptist historical collection, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, 1947.
[Additional volumes were mimeographed by the editor, Edward C. STARR, A master catalogue of Baptist historical materials. Preliminary checking edition, mimeographed not published, 25 vols. (Hamilton, New York: Samuel Colgate Baptist historical collection, 1947-76).]

SWEET, William Warren. Religion in Colonial America. New York: Cooper, 1965.

_____. Religion on the American Frontier, A Collection of Source Material. General intro. by Shirley Jackson Case. 4 vols. New York: Cooper Square, 1964.
[Valuable collection of sources: vol. 1--Baptists (1783-1830); vol. 2--Presbyterians; vol. 3--Congregationalists; and vol. 4--Methodists.]

TAWNEY, R. H. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. New York: New American Library, 1947.

*THOMAS, Joshua. A History of the Baptist Association in Wales, from the Year 1650, to the Year 1790, Shewing the times and Places of their Annual Meetings Whether in Wales, London, or Bristol, etc., Including Several Other Interesting Articles. In RIPPON, for 1794, 1795, 1796-97. Indices of churches and names.

[Orig. printed in the Baptist Register, 1791-95. Bound in RIPPON, vol. 4.]

TORBET, Robert G. The Baptist Ministry Then and Now. Foreword by Lynn Leavenworth. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1953.

_____. Ecumenism . . . Free Church Dilemma. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1968. Index.

_____. History of the Baptists. rev. ed. With a preface by Kenneth Scott Latourette. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1963; orig. ed.: 1950. Extensive annotated bibl. Chronological list.

["Best one volume history of Baptists throughout the world" (WAMBLE, Foundations 2:367). Rev. ed. of 1963 is the 6th printing.]

_____. A Social History of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707-1940. Philadelphia: Westbrook Publishing Co., 1944.

[One of the few publications about the P.B.A. Treats social history in two periods, up to 1940.]

_____, and HILL, S. S., jt. au. Baptists North and South.

[Main entry under HILL, S. S.]

TROELTSCH, Ernst. Protestantism and Progress; a historical study of the relation of Protestantism to the Modern World. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958.

_____. Social Teaching of the Christian Churches. Tr. by Olive Wyon. 2 vols. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931; orig. ed.: Tübingen, 1912.

[Author's 1911 Magisterial work. Orig. title: Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen.]

*A Trve Confession of the Faith, and Hvmble Acknovvledgment of the Alegeance, vvhich vvee hir Maiesties Subjects, falsely called Brovvnists, doo hould tovvards God, etc. N.p., 1596.

[A Separatist Confession that had some influence upon London Particular Baptists.]

*UNDERHILL, Edward Bean. Confessions of Faith and other Public Documents, illustrative of the History of the Baptist Churches of England in the 17th Century. Edited for the Hanserd Knollys Society by E. B. Underhill. London: Haddon, Brothers, and Co., 1854.

[Now dated, replaced by LUMPKIN (1959) and McGLOTHLIN (1911). But includes editions not found in others, e.g., Keach Catechism and important public statements of Baptists from 1611 to 1677. Scattered notes helpful.]

UNDERWOOD, Alfred Clair. A History of the English Baptists. With foreword by J. H. Rushbrooke. London: The Baptist Union Publication Dept., 1947. Index. Select Bibl.
[Study limited to England, deals with portraits of leading Baptists. "At present the best textbook on English Baptist History" (WAMBLE, Foundations 2:366).]

VAIL, Albert L. The Morning Hour of American Baptist Missions. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907.
["Excellent account" (TORBET, History, p. 540).]

VEDDER, Henry Clay. History of the Baptists in the Middle States. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898.

_____. A Short History of the Baptists. New and illus. ed. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1967; 1st ed.: 1892; 2nd ed., Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907.

VISCHER, Lukas, ed. A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement, 1927-1963. St. Louis, Missouri: Bethany Press, 1963.
[Most useful single volume, generous excerpts from all Faith and Order Conferences through New Delhi, plus other relevant World Council materials.]

*WALKER, Williston. The creeds and platforms of congregationalism. Reprint ed. Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1960; orig. ed., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893.
[Includes sources and confessions of Congregationalists. Reprinted again in 1969.]

WALTON, Robert C. The Gathered Community. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1946.
[Work of several modern British Baptists. Advocates sect-type of ecclesiology, while disparaging exclusivistic individualism.]

WEBER, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1930.

WHITLEY, William Thomas. A Baptist Bibliography; being a register of the chief materials for Baptist history, whether in manuscript or in print, preserved in Great Britain, Ireland, and the colonies. Compiled for the Baptist union of Great Britain and Ireland by W. T. Whitley, . . . Vol. 1. 1526-1776. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1916. 2 vols. interleaved. Index.
[Title often abbreviated, often no mention of publisher or place of publication; few explanatory notes.]
Ibid. Vol. 2. 1777-1837, with addenda from 1613. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1922.

[Two shortcomings to list: ends with 1837 and very few American titles given.]

Microfilm Collection: select titles from Whitley's bibliography in "Early Baptist Publications," Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1952.

[Contains 46 reels (over 100,000 35 mm. frames) approx. 200,000 pages reproduced. Items selected by Drs. W. W. BARNES and R. A. BAKER of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.]

_____. The Baptists of London, 1612-1928. Their fellowship, their expansion, with notes on their 850 churches. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1928.

_____. A History of British Baptists. London: Charles Griffin & Co., Ltd., 1923. 2nd ed., London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1932.

[Incorporates finding of scientific research, treats American and British Dominion Baptists.]

WHITTEMORE, Robert Clifton. Makers of the American Mind. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1964.

WILLIAMS, C. Principles and Practices of the Baptists. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1903.

WOOD, Alfred Harold. Church unity without uniformity; a study of seventeenth-century English Church movements and of Richard Baxter's proposals for a comprehensive church. London: Epworth Press, 1963.

WOODHOUSE, A. S. P. Puritanism and Liberty. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

*ZIFF, Larzer, ed. John Cotton on the Churches of New England. The John Harvard Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968. Glossary of names. Index. Intro. by editor.

[Includes works of Cotton: (1) A Sermon Delivered at Salem (1636); (2) The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven (1644); and (3) The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared (1648). Valuable intro. (pp. 1-38).]

Articles and Essays

The following is a partial list of the periodical articles and published essays used for this study. Only the more basic ones have been incorporated.

"An Account of the Baptist Churches in Ireland, with letters which passed between the Irish, English and Welsh Churches, in 1653." In RIPPON, The Baptist Annual Register . . . , pp. 14-20 [pp. 1-13 missing].

ALLDREDGE, E. P. "The Problem of Baptist Organization." Review and Expositor 23 (July 1926):290-302.
[Addresses Southern Baptist situation, discusses 7 fundamentals of organization and makes 12 suggestions.]

BACKUS, [pseud.: Francis WAYLAND]. "Letters on Associations." American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer 4 (November 1823):198-203; 4 (January and May 1824):242-44 and 324-48.
[Wayland influenced Baptists of nineteenth century towards individualistic view of Church.]

BAINES, A. H. J. "Signatories of the Orthodox confession of 1679 (biographical sketches)." Baptist Quarterly 17 (January-October 1957):35-42, 74-86, 122-28, and 170-78.
[Gives sketches of 54 signers of the Confession.]

"Baptist Associations." Christian Baptists 6 (December 1828):114-16.

BARNES, W. W. "Churches and Associations among Baptists." Review and Expositor 52 (April 1955):199-205.
[Not relevant to P.B.A. but useful for examples of association acts of Charleston, Kehukee, Georgia, and especially Tennessee-Concord associations.]

BEAN, Raymond J. "The Philadelphia Baptist Association." Chronicle 20 (April 1957):51-66.
[Title of journal is The Chronicle until 1958; thereafter, Foundations.]

BERGER, Peter. "Sectarianism and Religious Sociation." American Journal of Sociology 64 (1958):41-44.

_____. "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism." Social Research 21 (1954): 467-85.

BORDIN, R. B. "The Sect to denomination process in America. The Freewill Baptist experience." Church History 35 (March 1965): 77-94.

BRUSH, John Wollman. "John Gill's Doctrine of the Church." In Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. by HUDSON, pp. 53-70.

CHAMPION, Leonard G. "The Baptist Doctrine of the Church in Relation to Scripture, Tradition and the Holy Spirit." Foundations 2, no. 1 (January 1959):27-39.

_____. "Baptists and the ministry; the nature of Christian ministry." Baptist Quarterly 17 (October 1958):341-50.
[Argument based on Ephesians for nature of ministry and its function. Purpose of ordination is induction into sphere of ministry.]

CHILD, R. L. "Baptists and the ministry." Baptist Quarterly 18 (October 1959):148-58.
[Stresses authority of the minister.]

_____. "Baptists and Ordination." Baptist Quarterly 14 (April 1952):243-51.
[Preliminary, partial response to Lambeth conversation report "Church Relations in England."]

_____. "The Priesthood of all Believers." Baptist Quarterly 16 (July 1955):99-108.
[Historical survey, concludes to need for a special ministry.]

CHIRICIO, P. "One Church: What Does It Mean?" Theological Studies 28 (1967):659-82.

CLARK, N. "Meaning and practice of ordination (among Baptists; review of a report to the Baptist Union Council)." Baptist Quarterly 17 (January 1958):197-205.
[Criticizes lack of Christological foundation, calls for unifying theological factor in the future.]

CROSS, F. L. and LIVINGSTONE, E. A., ed. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1974. S.v. "Anabaptists," "Antinomianism," "Arianism," "Arius," "Arminianism," "Browne, Robert," "Caesarius, St.," "Celestius," "Congregationalism," "Covenant," "Covenanters," "Fifth Monarchy Men," "Friends, Society of," "Hoffmann, Melchior," "homoeans," "homoousion," "Institutes," "King's Confession," "Locke, John (1632-1704)," "Mennonites," "National Covenant," "Pelagianism," "Pietism," "Quakers," "Racovian Catechism," "Semi-Pelagianism," "Socinus," "Solemn League

and Covenant," "Unitarianism," "Westminster Assembly (1643)," and "Westminster Confession."

DOBBINS, G. S. "Changing Patterns in Baptist Church Organization." The Adult Teacher, April 1964, pp. 5-8.

DURNBAUGH, D. F. "Theories of free church origins." Mennonite Quarterly 42 (April 1968):83-95.

The Encyclopedia Americana. New York and Chicago: Americana Corp., 1934. S.v. "Andrew Jackson," by Marcus W. Jernegan.

Encyclopedia Brittanica, 1962 ed. S.v. "Baptists," by Henry Cook.

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1910 ed. S.v. "Confessions," by W. A. Curtis.

FARIS, Ellsworth. "The Sect and the Sectarian." American Journal of Sociology 60 (May 1955):75-90.

GARRETT, J. L. "Nature of the Church according to the radical continental reformation." Mennonite Quarterly 32 (April 1958): 111-27.

GATES, John P. "The Association as it Affected Baptist Polity in Colonial America." Chronicle 6 (January 1943):19-31.

GAUSTAD, Edwin S. "Baptists and the Great Awakening in New England." Chronicle 15 (January 1952):41-48.

_____. "The Backus-Leland Tradition." In Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. by W. S. Hudson, pp. 106-34.

_____. "Themes for research in American Baptists history (bibl.)." Foundations 6 (April 1963):146-73. Correction published in 6 (July 1963):255.

GILMORE, A. "Some Free Church Reaction to Episcopacy." Baptist Quarterly 17 (January 1957):23-34.
[Discusses reactions to Anglican overture on Church Relations and covers bibl. on subject. Discusses 3 functions of bishops as proposed in 1950 statement.]

_____. "Some Recent Trends in the Theology of Baptism." Baptist Quarterly 15 (July and October):311-18, 338-45; 16 (January 1955):2-9.
[Scholarly review of theology of 1950's.]

_____, R. A. "The Denomination Work of President Manning." Baptist Review 3 (January 1881):74-85.

HANDY, Robert T. "The Philadelphia Tradition." In Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. by W. S. Hudson, pp. 30-52.
[Treats faith and life of P.B.A. Baptists: (1) authority of the Bible; (2) nature of the Church; (3) doctrine of the ministry; (4) worship in the Church; (5) discipline of the Church; and (5) development of associational principle.]

_____. "VI/ The Voluntary Principle in Religion and Religious Freedom in America." In Voluntary Associations, ed. by D. B. Robertson, pp. 129-39.

HANNEN, Robert B. "A suggested source for some of the expressions in the Baptist Confession of Faith, London, 1644." Baptist Quarterly 12 (1946-48):389-99.

HARDON, John A. "Towards an American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue." Foundations 10 (April-June 1967):150-58.

HARKNESS, R. E. E. "The Baptist Distinctive." Watchman-Examiner, 11 May 1944, pp. 460-61.

_____. "Principles Established in Rhode Island." Church History 5 (September 1936):216-26.

HARRELSON, Walter J. "Some Major New Testament Terms for the Church." Foundations 1, no. 2 (1958):4-18.

HARRISON, Paul Mansfield. "Weber's Categories of authority and Voluntary Associations." American Sociological Review 25 (April 1960):232-37.

HINSON, E. Glenn. "The Authority of Tradition: A Baptist View." In Seminar on Authority, ed. by J. W. Angell, pp. 57-77.

HOTCHKIN, John F. "An Ecumenical View from a Catholic Perspective--1977." New Catholic World 220 (1977):160-63.

HUDSON, Winthrop S. "The Associational Principle Among Baptists." Foundations 1, no. 1 (January 1958):10-24.

_____. "By Way of Perspective." In Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. by W. S. Hudson, pp. 11-29.

_____. "Define Your Terms." Foundations 4 (1961):99-101.

_____. "Documents on the Association of Churches." Foundations 4 (1961):323-39.

_____. "Prolegomena to a Theology of Church Order." Foundations 8 8 (April 1965):101-16.

_____. "Stumbling into Disorder." Foundations 1, no. 2 (April 1958):45-71.

_____. "Who were the Baptists?" Baptist Quarterly 16 (July 1956): 303-12.
[Argues origins of Baptists from left wing of Puritan Congregationalism, hence a Calvinistic theology, not one of humanistic Anabaptism. (His view somewhat countered by PAYNE and MOSTELLER.)]

JOHNSON, Benton. "A Critical Appraisal of the Church-Sect Typology." American Sociological Review 22 (1957):88-92.

_____. "On Church and Sect." American Sociological Review 28 (1963):539-49.

JONES, Horatio G. "History of the Lower Dublin or Pennepek Church." In Printed Minutes of the P.B.A., 1882, pp. 53-68.

LINDBECK, George A. "A Protestant View of the Ecclesiological Status of the Roman Catholic Church." Journal of Ecumenical Studies 1 (1964):243-70.

LITTELL, Franklin Hamlin. "The Historical Free Church Tradition Defines." Brethren Life and Thought 9 (1964):78-90.

MARING, Norman H. "British Baptists Rethink Baptist Traditions." Foundations 1, no. 2 (April 1958):85-91.
[Reviews works by British authors: WALTON, PAYNE, CHAMPION, DAKIN, COOK and ROBINSON.]

_____. "Andrew Fuller's Doctrine of the Church." In Baptist Concepts of the Church, ed. by W. S. Hudson, pp. 71-105.

_____. "Notes from Religious Journals." Foundations 1, no. 3 (July 1958):91-95.

MARTIN, Hugh. "Baptists and the Great Church: or Independency and Catholicity." Baptist Quarterly 14 (1951-52):310-19.
[Address delivered at annual meeting of the Baptist Historical Society, April 28, 1952.]

MATHEWS, S. "A Statement of the Baptist position on organic church union." Standard, 1919, p. 1005.

_____. "Dr. Mathews on the Interchurch movement." Watchman-Examiner, 1920, p. 20.

_____. "What Constitutes a Baptist Church." Baptist, 1929, pp. 1506-7.

MUELLER, David L. "Roger Williams on the Church and Ministry." Review and Expositor 55 (1958):165-81.

NEILL, S. "The Church: An Ecumenical Perspective. An Attempt at Definition." Interpretation 19 (1965):131-48.

New Catholic Encyclopaedia. 1967 ed. S.v. "Covenant Theology," by Joseph Vernon Rutland, "Authority," by R. J. McMorrow, "Authority, Ecclesiastical," by S. E. Donlon, "Calvinism," by Roger Edwin Metzerath, "Protestantism," by George H. Tavard, and "Society," by J. Messner.

NEWMAN, A. H. "History of Baptist Organizations." Review and Expositor 8 (July 1911):363-77.

NICHOLSON, J. F. V. "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." Baptist Quarterly 17 (January 1958):206-55.
[Extensive bibl. notes. Includes survey of period prior to 1660, consolidation of office 1660-1700, and eighteenth century developments.]

NOVAK, M. "Free Churches and the Roman Church; the conception of the church in Anabaptism and in Roman Catholicism: past and present." Journal of Ecumenical Studies 2 (Fall 1965):426-47.

OMMEN, Thomas B. "The Hermeneutic of Dogma." Theological Studies 35 (1974):605-31.
[Based on New Hermeneutic of Hans-Georg Gadamer and post-Bultmannians, treats situation of dogmatic texts and situation of the interpreter (preunderstanding, openess of interpreter and of text, and relativity of dogma). Excellent overview of new hermeneutic.]

PATTERSON, W. M. "Baptist Historiography in America in the 18th century." Review and Expositor 52 (October 1955):483-93.

PAYNE, E. A. "The Ministry in Historical Perspective." Baptist Quarterly 17 (April 1958):256-66.
[Reviews N.T. varieties of ministry, early Church, Reformation views (Lutheran, Calvinistic, Anglican and Free Church), with 3 final reflections.]

_____. "Who were the Baptists? A comment by Dr. Ernest A. Payne on Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson's article in our July issue." Baptist Quarterly 16 (October 1956):339-42.
[Disputes Hudson's view about relationship between British Baptists and Anabaptists.]

PETER, Carl J. "Ambiguity, Criticism, and Promise." New Catholic World 220 (1977):187-90.

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. Printed Minutes. 1882. S.v. "History of the Lower Dublin or Pennepek Church," by Horatio G. Jones, pp. 53-68.

Philadelphia Baptist Year-Book. 1907. S.v. "Historical Sketch," by J. G. Walker, pp. 79-108.

_____, 1932. S.v. "History of the Five Churches That Organized the Association--1707," compiled by Arthur H. Burton, pp. 14-23.
[Includes list of member churches past and present, and compiled from minutes of the Association.]

PRICE, Theron D. "Anabaptist view of the Church." Review and Expositor 51 (April 1954):187-203.

_____. "Church and the Churches." Review and Expositor 52 (October 1955):443-50.

_____. "A Southern Baptist Views Church Unity." In Christian Unity in North America, ed. by Nelson, 1958, chap. 7, pp. 81-88.

RICHARDS, T. "Some disregarded sources of Baptists' History." Baptist Quarterly 17 (October 1958):362-79.
[Concerned only with British Baptists.]

RYAN, Herbert J. "Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue." New Catholic World 220 (1977):168-72.

SEELEY, Richard A. "James Manning: First Pastor, First President." Foundations 16 (July-September):255-60.
[Good overview of his education (Hopewell, College of New Jersey [Princeton]) and work in founding Warren Association and Rhode Island College (Brown University).]

SKOGLUND, John E. "The American Free Church Tradition in the Movement for Christian Unity." Ecumenical Review 12 (1960):319-31.
[Treats early eighteenth to twentieth centuries, sees American ecumenism as "denominationalism," "the major trend was to recognize each as belonging to the true Church of Christ, yet each a different expression of the one Church" (p. 321).]

SMITH, Jonathan Z. "The Social Description of Early Christianity." Religious Studies Review 1 (September 1975):19-25.
[Troeltsch-Weber categories treated in sec. 3 on "social organization" of the early Church.]

Southern Baptist Handbook. 1933. S.v. "The Nature and Functions of Associations and Conventions," by E. Y. Mullins.

STEALEY, Sydnor L. "American Baptist Organization up to 1845." Review and Expositor 43 (April 1946):167-76.
[Overview by stages: to 1740, up to Revolution, up to Triennial Convention, up to split in 1845.]

STRATON, H. H. "Where is Our Authority?--A Baptist View." Watchman-Examiner, 25 October 1962, pp. 764-65.

_____. "Democracy the Baptist Ideal." Watchman-Examiner, 4 July 1940, pp. 740-42.

Tennessee Baptist, 30 October 1858, editorial by Dr. Graves Pendleton and A. C. Dayton.
["lays down the fundamental principle upon which an association, a group of churches, may say which faction in a church, minority or majority, they will recognize as their sister Church without interfering with the independency of a Baptist Church" (Barnes, Review and Expositor 52:202-3).]

TORBET, Robert G. "Baptist Thought About the Church." Foundations 1, no. 2 (April 1958):18-37.

TRENT, H. W. "Ourselves and the Ordinances." Baptist Quarterly 17 (January 1957):10-22.

VAIL, A. L. "The origin of the Philadelphia Association; the unfolding of the Philadelphia Association." Standard, 1907, pp. 1429-30.

WAMBLE, Hugh. "The Beginning of Associationalism among English Baptists." Review and Expositor 57 (October 1957):544-54.
[Suggests 5 factors responsible for associations: (1) security and fellowship; (2) defense against charges of heresy, sedition, and licentiousness; (3) preservation of unity; (4) propagation of Baptist views; and (5) mutual information and assistance.]

_____. "Book Reviews: For Laymen: Studies in the Baptist View of the Church." Foundations 2 (1959):363-69; 3 (1960):176-79.
[Reviews, Torbet (History), Stealey, Lumpkin, Robinson, and Payne (Fellowship of Believers).]

_____. "A Case Study in Baptist Ecclesiology." Foundations 3 (1960):242-53.
[Studies United Baptist Church of Jesus Christ called Pleasant Grove, shows slow, imperceptible shift from "gathered church" to an "institutional" ecclesiology.]

_____. "Landmarkism: Doctrinaire Ecclesiology among Baptists." Church History 33 (1964):429-57.

WESTIN, Gunner. "Who were the Baptists?" Baptist Quarterly 17 (April 1957):55-60.
[Responds to W. S. Hudson's article (Baptist Quarterly, July 1956) with questions about his characterizing early Anabaptists as Northern Renaissance (Erasmus) and as repudiating justification by faith.]

WHITE, B. R. "Doctrine of the Church in the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644." Journal of Theological Studies (new series) 19 (October 1968):570-90.

WHITLEY, W. T. "Associational Life Till 1815." In Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society (London: Baptist Union Publication Department, 1916-17), 5:87ff.

WILLIAMS, Daniel D. "The Mystery of the Baptists." Foundations 1, no. 1 (1958):7-9.

WILSON, Bryan. "An Analysis of Sect Development." American Sociological Review 24 (1959):3-15.

WINTER, E. P. "The Administration of the Lord's Supper among Baptists of the Seventeenth Century." Baptist Quarterly 18 (January 1960):196-204.
[Discusses instances from both General and Particular Baptists.]

_____. "Calvinist and Zwinglian Views of the Lord's Supper among the Baptists of the 17th century." Baptist Quarterly 15 (July 1954):323-29.

_____. "The Lord's Supper: Admission and Exclusion among the Baptists of the Seventeenth Century." Baptist Quarterly 17 (April 1958):267-81.
(Examines Payne's thesis (Fellowship of Believers, p. 54) that "terms of communion" were more central than the significance of the Supper itself.]

_____. "Who may administer the Lord's Supper?" Baptist Quarterly 16 (July 1955):128-33.

Unpublished Studies and Manuscripts

Dissertations and Theses

The following studies have been consulted for this work.[1] Two dissertations which were published appear under their respective entries in section 2.[2]

ANDERSON, Henry Lee. "The Ecclesiology of Ante-Bellum Baptist Churches in the South." Ph.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1960.

BENNETT, Frank Russell. "A Theological Study of the Association as an Ecclesiological Organization within the Southern Baptist Convention." D.R.E. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1965.

BRUNNER, Weston. "A query in Baptist History: The Philadelphia Association, was it in its organization and early history strictly Calvinistic?" Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1894.

BURDINE, Jr., James T. "English Baptist Ecclesiology from John Smyth to Robert Hall. 1600-1830." Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1951.

CAMPOLO, Jr., Anthony. "A Study of the controversy in the American Baptist Convention over the function and structure of the Church." Ph.D., Temple University, 1968.

CARLBERG, Robert L. "The Development of Centralizing Tendencies in the Northern Baptist Convention. 1907-1946." M.Th. thesis, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947.

CHAPMAN, Robert A. "The Development of Baptist Associations During the Colonial Period." M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1920.

_____. "Theological Interests of the Early American Baptist Associations." B.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1921.

---

[1] For a list of studies dealing with associations and the P.B.A. see intro. above, p. 8, n. 15.

[2] See works by Paul M. Harrison and William Henry Allison in section 2 above.

CLARK, James L. "Some influences of the Philadelphia Baptist Association upon Baptists of America to 1814." Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1948.

COMPTON, Bobby D. "Baptist Church Manuals in America: a study in Baptist polity and practice." Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968.

EHREN, Ralph Paul. "Connectionalism in Baptist life before 1826." Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966.

ESTEP, W. R. "A Historical Study of the Ecumenical Movement." Th.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1951.

FORD, Glynn Roland. "The Baptist District Association of Virginia 1766-1950: A Study in Baptist Ecclesiology." Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1961.
["By far the most scholarly treatment of associationalism" (SHURDEN [1967], p. ix).]

HARRINGTON, Donald J. "A contemporary analysis of ecclesiastical office." M.A. thesis, Mary Immaculate Seminary, 1973.

LAKE, Donald M. "Southern Baptist View of the Church: an analysis of the Ecclesiology of the Churches Affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention based on Selected Literature between 1925 and 1963." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967.

MacCORMAC, Earl Ronald. "The Transition from Voluntary Missionary Society to the Church as a Missionary Organization among the American Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1961.

MAY, William D. "The Philadelphia and Charleston Baptist Church disciplines: a theological analysis." M.Th. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1961.

NIXON, L. J. "The Principle of Authority in the Free Churches," Ph.D. dissertation, London, 1929.

PARKER, Raymond A. "Church Polity of the Seventeenth Century English General Baptists." Ph.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1958.

PATTERSON, W. Morgan. "A Critique of the Successionist Concept in Baptist Historiography." Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1956.
[See discussion in text, p. 31, n. 1. PATTERSON has also published some of his work (see above, pp. 802 and 814).]

PUCKETT, Garnett E. "Struggles of Baptists in America to Sustain their Distinctive Principles, 1639-1791." Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947.

SHURDEN, Walter B. "Associationalism among Baptists in America, 1707-1814." Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Seminary, 1967. [See discussion in text, pp. 8-11.]

STARBIRD, George M. "The Adaptation of the Baptist Associational Movement in America to Its Environment." M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1924.

STURM, D. E. "The Finalist Approach to Associational Theory." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1959.

TAYLOR, Raymond H. "The Triennial Convention, 1814-1845: a study in Baptist cooperation and conflict." Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1960.

THOMPSON, Donald N. "The History of Baptist Confessions of Faith: 1610-1800." B.D. dissertation, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1945.

VANDEVER, Jr., William Tolbert. "An Educational History of the English and American Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1974.

WAMBLE, G. Hugh. "The Concept and Practice of Christian Fellowship: The Connectional and Interdenominational Aspects Thereof, Among Seventeenth Century English Baptists." Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1955.

WHITE, B. R. "The development of the doctrine of the Church among English Separatists with special reference to Robert Browne and John Smyth." Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1960-61.

WOOD, Harold D'Arcy. "The Nature and Locus of Authority in the Church in the Ecumenical Context." Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1966.

Reports and Correspondence

ALBAUGH, G. P. "The Function of the Canadian Baptist Association." Lecture-address to the Baptist Convention, June 1956. [Discusses origins (New Testament, British & American), principles and practical operation of associations and functions of the C.B.A. Depends upon STARBIRD (1924) thesis.]

AMERICAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE. Green Lake, Wisconsin, June 25-July 3, 1954. New York: Department of Theological Education, 1965. (Mimeographed.)
[Photocopy in OOSP. The 2nd conference in 1959 had papers published in LEAVENWORTH and HUDSON, Baptist Concepts of the Church (see sec. 2).]

KREUNER, Harry H. "A Baptist Theology of Church Order." Research paper for the East Central Regional Theological Conference of the American Baptist Convention. 1956. (Mimeographed.)
[Also appears in LEAVENWORTH (see sec. 2).]

PORTER, W. Hubert. "The Baptist Doctrine of the Church and Ecumenicity." Address at Hong Kong Consultation on World Mission. 1963. (Mimeographed.)
[Author acting dir. of the Division of Cooperative Christianity of the American Baptist Convention. Revised in 1967 and published in periodical American Baptists and the Wider Fellowship.]

PRUDEN, Edward H. "The Government of the Church." Paper prepared for the American Baptist Theological Conference, 1954. (Mimeographed.)

ROCHESTER, New York. American Baptist Historical Society Library. The McKesson Papers. Donated by Mrs. Irving McKesson on March 31, 1934.
[Include letters of individuals and churches and associations to the P.B.A., 1755-1811.]

_____. American Baptist Historical Society Library. The M. Semple Papers, presented October 8, 1857.
[Include letters of member churches to P.B.A.: (1) Brandywine, N.Y., for 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1774, and 1775; (2) Mount Bethel, N.J., for Oct. 11, 1770; Oct. 13, 1771; Oct. 11, 1772; 1773, and Oct. 8, 1774; and (3) New Mills, N.J., for 1771, 1773, and 1775.]

TORBET, Robert G. "A Report to the Division of Cooperative Christianity." October 29, 1968. (Mimeographed.)

_____. "Reports to the Commission on Christian Unity."
[Author was the exec. dir. of the commission. Reports for the following sessions: (1) August 24, 1966 (9 pp.), (2) January 20, 1967 (10 pp.), (3) June 8, 1967 (1 p.), (4) January 9-10, 1968 (2 pp.), (5) April 30-May 1, 1968 (4 pp.), (6) January 8, 1969 (3 pp.), (7) June 19, 1969 (4 pp.), and (8) January 8, 1970.]