

THE BAPTISTS
AND THE
TRANSFORMATION
OF THE
CHURCH
1780- 1830

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The Baptists and the Transformation of the Church, 1780-1830

BETWEEN the age of Gill and Brine, on the one hand, and that of Fuller and Robert Hall the younger, on the other, the period about the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which saw the triumph of the moderate Calvinists over the hyper-Calvinists, there was a shift in the Baptist frame of mind as striking as the shift in literary style in which that mind was expressed; and friends of the Baptist Union have generally been in no doubt on which side they stand. Yet the nature of the shift and the reasons for it are still very difficult to grasp, and it must be confessed that European studies of the central development have been much less sophisticated than the treatment by American scholars of what went on at the fringe.¹ This evening, in the hope of goading someone to do better, I would like to chance my arm with the assertion that the shift arose from a transformation of the church partly effected, and partly evoked, by the transformation of the context in which it operated, and that the new frame of mind owed much to the effort to understand that transformed context. Certainly the change was not only, indeed not mainly, a theological one, for by the early nineteenth century the objection of the hypers was not just to Fullerism and offers of grace, but to a whole syndrome of activities, a renewed associational life, itinerant preaching and Sunday schools, ministerial training and foreign missions. That much of this programme had been actively canvassed by seventeenth century Baptists constitutes only part of the historian's difficulty in putting his finger upon what was new; so many of the usual explanations hardly seem to help. Like Anglican evangelicals but unlike Methodists, Baptists tend to look upon their history as a succession of personal networks, and have delighted to show how such networks took the prehistory of Fullerism right back through the age of the hypers. Certainly the relatively liberal Calvinism of Beddome² and the West of England had its influence on London and the South Midlands where the future founding fathers of the Baptist Missionary Society used Jonathan Edwards to help each other over their difficulties with hyperism, and linked up through John Sutcliff of Olney, with Fawcett, Alvery Jackson and other Baptists of the North who had never owned the sway of Gill and Brine, and early made a deep impression on the Rossendale area of Lancashire. It is less often said that the age of the hypers seems to continue right into the age of the Fullerites. There were ministers like John Hirst of Bacup³ and William Crabtree of Bradford⁴ who were never very clear how they stood in relation to the great crux about offers of grace.

It seemed a revolution when John Rippon succeeded Gill at Carter Lane, Tooley Street, yet he lived to write a *Memoir* of Gill defending him from the conventional evangelical charges of bigotry.⁵ Still more remarkable it was in the works of Dr. Gill that Fuller is said to have first found the famous distinction between man's natural and moral ability which other evangelicals drew from Jonathan Edwards to discredit the hypens.⁶ English Baptists and Scots evangelicals seem to have read Gill, Edwards and the Fullerites concurrently with no sense of incongruity.⁷

Moreover there was some awkwardness of stance among the Fullerites themselves. They were committed to the claim that their movement constituted a "new era" in the history of the denomination,⁸ that they were ending a usurped power to impose a ruinous doctrinal orthodoxy.⁹ Yet Fuller bent over backwards to minimise the disturbance in the reformed tradition which the hypens had been able to effect; Gill and Brine, he held, were great upright and independent-minded men who did not sustain a common orthodoxy.¹⁰ "The new system", it was alleged, "is little more than a revival of the old Calvinism which subsisted before the time of Hussey and the other founders of pseudo-Calvinism".¹¹ That middle path between Arminianism and Antinomianism which Baxter had taken,¹² which Watts had perceived in the preaching of Edwards and described as "the common plain *protestant* doctrine of the reformation",¹³ was the way also of the Fullerites.¹⁴ If the "new era" could be represented theologically as a return to the old mainstream doctrine and could find seventeenth century precedents for many of its institutional departures, the modern combined efforts of Baptists and paedo-baptists had been variously foreshadowed on both sides of the Atlantic in the early eighteenth century; indeed the upper-crust Baptists of Massachusetts, tainted with urbanity, had been hankering for "Fraternal Union" with the congregational establishment for a generation before the Great Awakening.¹⁵

I doubt whether the difference between the hypens and the Fullerites will yield to a structural theological analysis, any more than the difference between the Scottish moderates and the evangelicals of Chalmers's day. For Fullerism, evangelical Calvinism, was avowedly a rhetorical theology,¹⁶ aiming to persuade sizeable bodies of people to particular courses of action, and encountering in hyperism and "rational" religion two very different kinds of resistance in very different proportions in different parts of the reformed world.¹⁷ The English Fullerites were mainly concerned to dislodge the hypens, and their inveterate hostility to rational religion sprang from their self-consciously rhetorical standpoint; the trouble with English rationalism was that it opened the way to an aggressive popular anti-theology only too closely resembling the gospel of the Fullerites,¹⁸ and built, as Robert Hall perceived, on metaphysical propositions derived from Jonathan Edwards himself.¹⁹ Beyond England rational religion was not an affair of outsiders. Moderatism was strongly entrenched in

the Kirk, and the Old Lights of the Standing Order in Massachusetts and Connecticut, though eventually defeated, were never routed. Thus the problems of persuasion varied greatly from place to place, and time to time, and the best the historian can hope for is to pick up changes in the tone of voice, fugitive impressions of changes not merely amongst Baptists, but right through the reformed world. The transformation to which these led constituted a new era indeed.

Gill's eschatology makes it plain that he conceived his situation quite differently from the Fullerites. To Gill the history of the church was a continuous cycle of prosperity and adversity as the people of God worked their way through the various church-states symbolically represented in the book of Revelation, until the ultimate consummation;²⁰ and the minister's chief job was to keep his flock apprized where they were in the great pilgrimage; indeed the best way to illustrate his functions was to expound symbolically the doctrine of the cherubim, those knowledgeable messengers of God.²¹ "If it should be asked, What time is it with us now? Where about we are?", Gill was ready with his sign-post:

We are in the Sardian church-state, in the latter part of it, which . . . brought on the Reformation, and represents that; we are in the decline of that state; . . . we have a *name*, that we *live*, and are dead; the name of reformed churches, but without the life and power of true religion . . . yet it is not totally dark . . . it is a sort of twilight with us, . . . As to what of the night is to come . . . they are the slaying of the witnesses, and the universal spread of Popery all over Christendom.

The slaying of the witnesses, their bodies lying unburied, those signs of the end so anxiously canvassed in the reformed world of the eighteenth century,²² Gill also read symbolically, as referring to the day when the ministry, deserted by their flocks, would "cease prophesying, their testimony being finished". This state of affairs had already begun. "A sleepy frame of mind has seized us. . . . Coldness and indifference to spiritual things, a want of affection to God, Christ and his people, truths and ordinances, may easily be observed."²³ There was no denying that one set of facts in Gill's day was very much as he described it, nor can one mistake the eloquence with which he encouraged the flock to hold on until the Philadelphian church-state ushered in the spiritual reign of Christ; the Lord loved Zion's gates, and had taken up residence within them.²⁴ Of course Gill looked at life as a closed system. The basic factors in the predicament of men and the church were known. The fundamental enemy of evangelical truth was the Church of Rome, which, though in principle defeated, would enjoy a brief supremacy again at the slaying of the witnesses. How deeply the mentality of the closed system penetrated the hypens may be gauged by its tenacity in the patron saint of their critics, Jonathan Edwards. Edwards actually believed that the Red Indians had been led into North America by the devil at the time of Constantine, in order that he might keep a people for himself safe from

the spread of the gospel.²⁵ The millennial significance of the Indian missions of Eliot and Brainerd was that the Indians had once again been drawn into the history of redemption as it was mostly worked out in Europe. The closed system had reasserted itself. Yet the closed system was beginning to crumble, and one of the signs of the crumbling was the emergence among the evangelical Calvinists of a view of history quite unlike that of Gill.

The famous pamphlet in which William Carey called for the formation of a Baptist Missionary Society in 1792²⁶ differed from Gill in both manner and substance. Carey outflanked the objection that the heathen could not be brought in till the witnesses had been slain, by showing that at various times since the New Testament it had been possible to carry out the dominical command to teach all nations, and that the heathen were now being brought in many scattered parts. The obstacles overcome by popish missionaries or English traders could certainly be surmounted by Baptists, and Carey sought to proportion the means to the end in view by a business-like survey of the length, breadth, population and beliefs of the countries of the world.²⁷ The important thing about Carey's historical scheme was that it was already a cliché, and would have been instantly recognized as such not merely by his immediate circle,²⁸ but by like-minded men right through the reformed world. Continually repeated with very little variation, the new view of history stemmed from that curious compilation, the *Historical collections relating to remarkable periods of the success of the gospel* (originally published in 1754 and kept up to date with additional volumes in 1761 and 1796) by John Gillies,²⁹ an eminent minister of the kirk in Glasgow, and son-in-law of another pillar of Scots evangelicalism, and patron of Jonathan Edwards, John Maclaurin. In two large volumes of reports, letters and diaries, Gillies related the acts of the latter-day apostles, leaving the sources to suggest to those with eyes to see that God was leading his church not into the dark tunnel which must precede his mighty saving acts, but into full revival. Since the Reformation, and especially since the emergence of Puritanism, the Scots revivals, the early missions to the American Indians, and the rise of Pietism in Germany in the seventeenth century, a great tide had built up. In the present century the Danish overseas missions had been followed by unprecedented revivals in America, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, by the growth of Methodism in England, by evidence of renewal in the Dutch Church. Gillies's *Historical collections* originated in the exchange of correspondence and literature between Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Prince and other American friends of Whitefield, and the spokesman for the Scots revivals of the 'forties, Maclaurin, MacCulloch, Robe, Erskine and others;³⁰ it bore out much of Edwards' conviction that the millenium would come on this side of the apocalypse, and that history was worth the trouble of investigating since it displayed "the established means of success" in religion.³¹ The hypes might repudiate offers of grace if they wished, but offers of grace were being made,

accepted and blessed on an unheard-of scale all round the globe.

The effects of the new historical outlook among the Baptists were very striking. Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register* which ran from 1790 to 1802 aimed, like Gillies, to provide a compendious account of God's activity in the world,³² to canalize the energies of the denomination, and to get Baptists out of the way of regarding their history as a simple chronicle of Baptist sufferings. Such a view still deeply marked the outlook of Isaac Backus, the chief figure of the remarkable efflorescence of Baptist historiography in America. But underlying his massive *History of New England*³³ and the vast archive on which it was built,³⁴ was the conviction that the facts of the case indicated something important about God's way with the Baptists which Dr. Gill could never have inferred from Scripture symbolism. John Leland, Morgan Edwards, John Williams and others had already left their mark on American Baptist historiography and there was David Benedict to come. In England Baptists were pressed to improve their acquaintance with the Moravians by reading Thomas Haweis's *Church History*,³⁵ to get up their Pietism by reading Francke and others in translation,³⁶ and finally, a Fullerite, Joseph Ivimey, produced the first serious history of Baptist development in England, in instalments beginning in 1811, which gave evidence of a sense of having arrived which Dr. Gill had not possessed.

Yet the new attitudes could not fail to direct Baptist interest beyond the denominational boundaries. The tide of revival seemed to have turned decisively in the ministry of that oddity George Whitefield; indispensable theological ammunition came from Jonathan Edwards; ministers of the Kirk had played a key role in establishing the Concert of Prayer and the literary freemasonry of the revival, and assumed a central station not merely in the Reformed world, but in the Protestant world generally. When in the 1790's, the barriers to evangelism at home and abroad began to collapse, the new panoramic view of history produced spectacular fruit in the movement known as Catholic christianity,³⁷ and induced in the evangelical Calvinists of England a mood of euphoria at the "funeral of bigotry"³⁸ and the prospect of creating completely new Independent and Baptist denominations. The great evangelical battery of Bible, tract, missionary and Sunday school societies was in due course exported to America, where events had already moved more quickly in the same direction, and were much more powerfully injected with enlightenment. In a sermon reprinted for English Baptist readers by John Sutcliff, that faithful disciple of Edwards, Joseph Bellamy, had circumvented the hypes with Yankee verve and calculated that even on the pessimistic assumption that the population doubled every fifty years, and that all before the millenium were reprobate, those who were lost would be proportioned to those who were saved after the millenium only as 1 : 174564.³⁹ After American Independence even this modest restraint on optimism was intolerable to the social and spiritual technocrats who were piecing together a state, a society and even the kingdom

of God. Elhanan Winchester was by no means the only Baptist to be carried over into Universalism,⁴⁰ and even Isaac Backus, much more typical of the ordinary Baptist, was driven to political combination with Methodists and Jeffersonian deists in his compulsive desire to disestablish the Standing Order in Connecticut and Massachusetts. And not long after Backus's death in 1806, Lyman Beecher himself was assuring English Baptists not only of his own Fullerite convictions, but of the rapprochement between the Baptists and the Standing Order in New England brought about by the triumph of Edwardsean views there.⁴¹ As soon as the vestiges of establishment were destroyed, Baptists would feel free to take the middle way they coveted between establishment and rationalism, and to attempt the conversion of America and the world by evangelical association in the Benevolent System. On both sides of the Atlantic, Manifest Destiny and the work of God seemed in perfect harness. By the end of the eighteenth century American Baptists claimed about 10% of the population for their community,⁴² and the Philadelphia Association was almost intoxicated by "the display of the sovereignty of God" produced by the federal constitution and the separation of church and state.⁴³ In England evangelical Calvinists took over the coarse Anglican chauvinism of a previous generation, asking "why it hath been ordained that we, the most considerable among the professors of truly reformed Christianity, have of all others the most extensive commerce, and seem likely to possess the most extensive dominions in [the] new world";⁴⁴ and their hawk-like vigilance over the religious confusion in France under the Consulate provoked the creation of a series of Channel-coast bishoprics as a means of defence.⁴⁵

Moreover, even in England, forces of movement were at work so rapid that Christendom must clearly be contrived rather than reformed. The Sunday school open to all rather than the covenanted meeting of baptized saints was the sign of the times. Evangelism rather than sanctification was the church's business, and the more the slogan of "the missionary church" caught on, the more the kingdom of God seemed delivered over to associational principles. On both sides of the Atlantic associations had a bad name,⁴⁶ but whether for evangelism, Sunday schools or politics, they were indispensable. The Philadelphia Association was prepared to define the church simply as an association for the pursuit of ends beyond the power of individuals,⁴⁷ and in 1812 the Northamptonshire Association took it for granted that "associations and the spirit of religion . . . kept pace with each other".⁴⁸ With Baptists in this frame of mind the empirical and pragmatic spirit embodied in the associations could not fail to influence the spirit of religion. A veritable passion broke out against systematic divinity, as the illicit offspring of metaphysics, Platonic or scholastic.⁴⁹ Fuller's celebrated attack upon Socinianism was crudely pragmatic;⁵⁰ what he claimed as a brand-new method for assessing doctrine was to test its capacity for producing practical godliness. Later Fuller cautiously noted that although the book of

nature was as unsystematically arranged as the Bible, it was equally patient of systematic exposition; but it is significant that he made the observation in a *Body of Divinity* which he did not live to complete or publish.⁵¹

Whatever the suspicions of metaphysics, the new attitudes in religion encouraged receptiveness to the epistemology and psychology entailed on the eighteenth century by John Locke. Brine had been quite clear that the Lockean plan simply illustrated the total otherness of revelation. Sensation, reflection and abstraction could teach much, "but it was not possible that by these measures we should have ever discovered any evangelical truths."⁵² In similar vein, in America before the Great Awakening, John Walton had used Lockean sensationalism to explain why his contemporaries were still generally deluded by the doctrine of infant baptism; they absorbed error by ear and eye rather than the truth by revelation.⁵³ Edwards and the evangelicals could not solve their problems so simply, precisely because of their preoccupation with the personal response of faith. In his *Treatise Concerning religious affections* (1746) Edwards grafted the old Puritan interest in the work of the Spirit on to the Lockean scheme, arguing that the saints were distinguished from natural men by "the sensations of a new spiritual sense, which the souls of natural men have not", and devising an elaborate series of tests by which their response to the divine beauty might be assessed.⁵⁴ Unlike Edwards, the English Fullerites were trying to get rid of the introspection encouraged by the hypers' insistence that a man could not have true faith in Christ until he had the inner evidence of an interest in Him,⁵⁵ but they could find no alternative to taking Edwards' experimentalism further. The cliché of the literature was that doctrinal religion should be founded on experimental religion,⁵⁶ and that Christian people needed more intimate opportunities for the mutual analysis of their religious experience than were provided by the traditional covenant relations of church members.⁵⁷ Moreover Lockean psychology had institutional implications; it might chart a middle course between the hypers who would have no adaptation in the machinery of the church, and restless Sandemanians or Haldaneites who regarded every scripture precedent as prescriptive. Early in the nineteenth century, Alexander Macleod sought to proceed from the variety of inspiration to be found in scripture, to the gifts, faculties or organs by which it was imparted, with a view to laying out a new map of spiritual knowledge like the "survey of the natural and moral condition of the globe" demanded by the scientists.⁵⁸

The institutional implications of the new turn indicated what was happening to the church, its transformation from symbol to instrument, a transformation accompanied by a great turning to empirical modes of thought. Baptists, like everyone else, tended to find the nub of the question in the ministry. Their denomination was being altered out of all recognition by itinerant evangelism which found no clear doctrinal or institutional expression in their inherited view

of the church. Right down to 1800 nearly all English Baptists accepted Gill's definition of the Church as simply "a society of saints and faithful men in Christ Jesus that . . . by agreement meet together in one place to carry on worship of God, to glorify him, and, edify one another".⁵⁹ The office of evangelist was one of the extraordinary offices of the New Testament which had early lapsed, and the chief permanent officer of the church was the pastor.⁶⁰ When itinerant evangelism became the central concern of "the missionary church" some adaptation was unavoidable. Should the new duty simply be laid upon the pastor with such lay assistance as he could gather? If the office of evangelist was revived, how was it to be related to the pastoral office?⁶¹ The paradox was that after 1800 as the Methodist itinerants began to transform their status into pastors, the rest of the Protestant world, earnestly read and applauded by evangelical Baptists, was demanding either that the pastoral office be given over to evangelism or that the New Testament office of evangelist be revived. Thomas Haweis's *Church History* ascribed the real authority in the New Testament church to the itinerants;⁶² biblical critics like Macknight of the Scots church and Bloomfield and Scott amongst Anglicans called for the revival of the office of evangelist.⁶³ Amongst Baptists, Alexander Macleod, followed by David Douglas⁶⁴ in the North-east, sought to relate the old institutions held to be outwardly symbolical of the inner life of the Church, to the new instrumental devices for evangelism, by means of the Lockean map of spiritual knowledge. If the New Testament gifts of the spirit were teamed up with the varieties of ministry through which they were normally bestowed, it was clear that the office of evangelist had a permanent work in the Church, and the missionary force a scriptural authority. Moreover in Macleod's view, the great church conflict, which was brewing as he wrote in 1828, hinged on the office of evangelist. Episcopalians and Presbyterians preserved the office but built unwarrantable powers upon it; Congregationalists in self-defence had rejected it. John Wesley admirably organised his evangelists but failed to provide stated pastors. It was hazardous to amalgamate the office with organs of another kind, hazardous to reject it, hazardous to be a freelance innovator. Baptists ultimately proved no more successful than other parties to the church conflict in integrating evangelism effectively into a church-order at once empirically and biblically based; and already, difficulties of a religious character had been encountered in the new turn.

For new attitudes to the inner and outer life of the Christian had become apparent in new approaches to prayer and prophecy. There is no need to recapitulate the story of the Concert of Prayer,⁶⁵ that extraordinary combined effort of importunity, first called for by Edwards, instituted by the Scots revivalists in 1744, and implemented over much of the Protestant world for generations. One has the feeling that for the old Puritans, despite their willingness to plead the terms of the covenant in God's face, intercession was the work

of the Holy Spirit rather than the congregation, but Edwards put the boot on quite the other foot. "God is", he proclaimed, "... at the command of the prayer of faith; and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people."⁶⁶ A more explosive motto for the instrumental church could hardly have been conceived. The revival of the work of God, the great objective of the new prayer, was put squarely into the hands of the praying faithful. When deference began to crumble in England in the 1790's the amazing spread of cottage prayer meetings told its own tale, and, inevitably, the same methods were used to beat up enthusiasm for missions, and especially Baptist missions, overseas. But in the short run the exploitation of prayer as a means of impressing the importance of the missionary cause on children and servants⁶⁷ left a residue of guilt among the faithful,⁶⁸ and in the long run the barriers between the faithful and the rest became too tough to shift by the form of moral pressure exerted by the evangelistic prayer meeting. When this happened, a prayer meeting which was a means to an end became an intolerable bore.⁶⁹

Prophecy raised difficulties of a different kind. Despite the excitement raised by the troubles of the papacy in the 'nineties, the status of prophecy as a sign-post to the Christian pilgrim had by that date been destroyed beyond the possibility of recovery or replacement. From Edwards onward, empiricism and induction had been used to lay bare the divine decrees. As Samuel Davies, later President of Princeton, put it in 1755, "our readiest way to know what he [God] intended to do from Everlasting, is to enquire what he actually does in time".⁷⁰ By this device Joseph Bellamy could expound a view of the Millenium in which the European trappings of the defeat of Anti-christ, to which the Papacy had been central, had disappeared;⁷¹ and Baptists like Isaac Backus could brace themselves for the final defeat of the Beast in their own midst; the Beast which for Backus was Congregational establishment.⁷² On both sides of the Atlantic the protagonists of the "missionary church" became so powerfully possessed of the sense that the millenium was within the grasp of human will,⁷³ as to leave very little room in practice for a divine strategy full of quirks, paradoxes and tragedy. In 1792 Charles Whitfield, with unconscious irony, hit off the new status of prophecy in his advice on reading to the village lads of Hamsterly, Co. Durham. When well-grounded in the faith they might properly read for entertainment, and "a careful comparison of prophecies with the New Testament will afford much pleasure."⁷⁴ The slaying of the witnesses no longer really mattered, and the interpretation of prophecy had become the agreeable cross-word puzzle game familiar to readers of Edmund Gosse. Yet oddly enough, in this sphere the supplanting of symbol and allegory by empiricism was a very mixed blessing. For the facts to which the evangelicals drew attention, were the facts of religious experience, rather than the public events, political and ecclesiastical, which had constituted the apocalyptic drama. Some

portion of the political ineptness of the English evangelical Baptists was due to the devious tactics which they found necessary to defend the Toleration Act;⁷⁵ but some was due to the Fullerite belief that political involvement represented the biggest menace to spiritual health.⁷⁶ And the moral of McLoughlin's immense enquiry into the American Baptists is that once they had shaken off their second-class citizenship,⁷⁷ they could neither deploy their political strength nor recognize that they had now entered an informal religious establishment which bore hardly on minorities.⁷⁸ Yet on both wings of the English Baptist movement political realism flourished on the interpretation of prophecy. James Bicheno, a protégé of Robert Robinson,⁷⁹ who became pastor at Newbury in 1793, supported an intelligent appraisal of the French Revolution and its aftermath upon a framework of prophecy, and drew from it concrete and rational conclusions for social justice and foreign policy.⁸⁰ And the opposite extreme threw up the most effective postwar Baptist politician, the comic of Manchester radicalism, William Gadsby,⁸¹ the pioneer of Gillism in an industrial context and the greatest of the hypers.

Moreover, if the question of prophecy illustrates the hazards evangelical Baptists encountered in making empiricism work, the great controversy over open communion in the early nineteenth century suggests that they had special difficulties in reducing the role of religious symbolism. Baptists had of course a propensity to dispute the terms of communion,⁸² but, even if they had not, they would have been unable to avoid the spectacular debate on baptism which engulfed the English churches in 1812 and continued for years. The pace of social change at home and the new problems of the mission field abroad compelled all the churches to reconsider their relations with the public generally, as they were worked out in their inherited baptismal doctrine and discipline. Here circumstances differed immensely on opposite sides of the Atlantic. In America the strict communion position had almost taken possession of the Particular Baptists;⁸³ in England, release from the grip of the hypers, development of the "missionary church", and resistance to the Anglican establishment, all pointed to combined action, especially with the Independents, and combined evangelism, prayer and worship, were bound to lead to demands for open communion. The two striking things about this controversy, as it concerned evangelical Calvinists, are the amount of personal embarrassment it caused,⁸⁴ and the amount of common ground which all parties shared. Baptists saw plainly that the issues involved concerned not merely the history of the denomination, but the question of how far recent trends of thought and action could be taken. If Hall believed that interdenominational action and open communion were the conditions of progress,⁸⁵ the strict communionists could fairly reply that open communion simply provoked secession and the formation of strict communion churches.⁸⁶ Moreover, open communion would leave the Baptist denomination with nothing to stand for. Joseph Kinghorn saw with perfect clarity the situation

(which later came to pass) in which congregations claiming to stand for a sound doctrine of baptism would consist largely of unbaptized persons, and would have none of it.⁸⁷ Moreover, the Fullerite advocates of strict communion all saw their opponents as returning to the establishmentarian policies of Solomon Stoddard, Jonathan Edwards's grandfather and predecessor in the living of Northampton, Mass.; Stoddard had welcomed all the respectability of the parish to the Lord's Table, asking no questions about conversion, with a liberality bitterly repudiated by Edwards himself.⁸⁸ The Great Awakening as well as the Baptist denomination was at stake.

The open communionists did not miss the point that even Edwards would have been refused communion by their opponents,⁸⁹ and were aware that baptism acutely raised the question how far the church could substitute empiricism for symbolism. Just as some evangelical paedobaptists felt cornered into saying that baptism was not a sacrament at all,⁹⁰ William Steadman played baptism down on the grounds that there could be no baptism without conversion, and all might join in the work of evangelism,⁹¹ and other Baptists began to say that the essential condition of communion was not water baptism, but the baptism of the Spirit.⁹² Where Hall and Kinghorn differed was not in their estimate of the operation of open communion among Baptists, but in how much they were prepared to accept. Hall held that "were that practice universally to prevail, the mixture of baptists and paedobaptists in Christian societies would probably, ere long, be such that the appellation of baptist might be found not so properly applicable to churches as to individuals, while some more comprehensive term might possibly be employed to discriminate the views of collective bodies";⁹³ Kinghorn declared that "the plan of *open communion* makes the church a *society of persons who esteem each other to be Christians*".⁹⁴ Either way the church was not a symbol of God's truth constituted by those who responded to the symbolic language and practices of the faith, even to a symbol as powerful in the recent past as believer's baptism; it was an association of people with a common intention to pursue a particular work. This Hall could swallow but Kinghorn could not.

It is not for the historian to resolve this dilemma, but it is noteworthy that the approaches of historians and theologians to it seem in late years to have gone in entirely opposite directions. The theologians have put up a great clamour for evocative symbols. One has heard it said that we must drum up a belief in demon-possession in order to see baptism as exorcism, and one has seen it written that "there can be no new song until the angelic voices have first been heard to sing it in heaven. . . . When the angels are silenced there are no communications even of partial divine knowledge".⁹⁵ Historians, on the other hand, have been trying to assess on their own level what the symbolic and sacramental acts may be said to have accomplished. Dr. Bossy, for example, regarding the parish in late mediæval and early modern times as the theatre of perpetual conflict

between kinship groups, sees the parish priest as a peacemaker, and the baptismal arrangements with godparents (who might on occasion be children) as devices for strengthening the kinship-group and providing future support for the candidate in baptism.⁹⁶ This might not be very sacramental, but it was very useful, and gives one an inkling why the leading Reformers were so immoderately hostile to believer's baptism becoming the norm; they did not want individual option to intensify the warfare in the parish, and their fears were faintly echoed by evangelical paedobaptists early in the nineteenth century declaring that believer's baptism was a defiance of natural affections.⁹⁷ At the same time one may infer that the determination of churchmen, protestant and catholic, to drive the parish as a unit of christianisation instead of building on the natural and associational groups which existed within it, was one of the reasons for the long-term decline of the old religious establishments; the symbols at their disposal were not strong enough to absorb the smaller units into a larger parish cohesion. My colleague, Mervyn James, finds the first appearance of Baptist practice in the North-east rooted in forms of radical Puritanism which had appeared before 1640 on the confines of Durham and Northumberland, where it expressed the sense of independence of the extended family in hill areas, over against the systems of control applied by the gentry to the nuclear families of the plain.⁹⁸ It was doubtless theologically bizarre to assert the independence of a kinship-group on the basis of believer's baptism, but it is not difficult to understand how it happened; nor can one fail to note that when the north-country Baptists began to expand in the middle of the eighteenth century, they did so mostly in hill communities of a similar kind. What Hall and Kinghorn each understood Hall to be saying was that a religious appeal must take account of the forms of social cohesion with life in them; by Hall's time what counted was not the extended family, but the association,⁹⁹ and his view was that inherited symbolism and churchmanship should not be permitted to obstruct the use of this device for awakening and sustaining a Christian faith. In the century and a half since Hall died, religion has continued to escape from churches in Europe, America and Africa, into all manner of other groupings. Yet the most successful religious society of all, the Methodist connexion, has repeatedly crucified itself upon the claim to churchly status; in an ecumenical age ministers are obsessed with churchmanship and call even for the angels. In the middle of the nineteenth century the churches refurbished and multiplied their symbols for purposes of denominational warfare; in our re-mythologising days they use them as rallying cries against decay. Perhaps Robert Hall's contribution to the transformation of the church is overdue for a fresh look.

NOTES

¹ Perry Miller, Alan Heimert, Richard Bushman, William McLoughlin and Sydney Ahlstrom, have no real counterparts in English scholarship.

² Beddome, "a true disciple of the old school . . . [who] was not afraid

to press on his hearers with becoming earnestness, all those experimental and practical parts of the inspired volume" (*Evangelical Magazine* xiii. 562-3) based his sermon on "The nature and authority of the Christian Ministry" on Matt. iv. 19 ("I will make you fishers of men") and counselled ministers to "beseech men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God". *Sermons of the late Benjamin Beddome A.M., with a brief memoir of the author* (London, 1835), pp. 302-3.

³ James Hargreaves, *The life and memoirs of the late Rev. John Hirst* (Rochdale, 1816), pp. 272-7.

⁴ Isaac Mann, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Wm. Crabtree, first pastor of the Baptist Church at Bradford, Yorks.* (London, 1815), pp. 49-50.

⁵ John Rippon, *A brief memoir of the life and writings of Rev. John Gill* (London, 1838), p. 139.

⁶ *Evangelical Magazine*, xxvi. 3.

⁷ George Pritchard, *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. Newman* (London, 1837), pp. 139, 159; John Brown, *The evangelical preacher* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1802-6). Long before Edwards became the vogue with progressive Baptists, he had appeared on the reading lists of the Bristol Academy cheek by jowl with Gill and Brine, and with the Scots evangelicals Maclaurin and Wither- spoon. J. Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register* (London, 1790-1802), i. 253-6.

⁸ Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists* (London, 1811-30), iv. 41.

⁹ *The works of Andrew Fuller* (London, 1824), i. 273, iii. 468. John Ryland, *Pastoral Memorials* (London, 1828), ii. 325. *The works of Robert Hall* ed. O. Gregory (2nd ed. London, 1833), ii. 401. [Jn. Fawcett jr.], *An Account of the life, ministry and writings of Rev. John Fawcett* (London, 1818), pp. 237-8. Ivimey, *History of the Baptists*, iii. pp. ix., xi. The longer these criticisms went on, the harder they became to state moderately, cf. J. H. Hinton, *On completeness of ministerial qualification* (London, 1829), pp. vi-x. The moderate Calvinists' public image was of men who selfconsciously refused to "indulge a wanton curiosity to pry into what is not revealed" (Joseph Bellamy, *Sermons*, ed. J. Sutcliff (Northampton, 1783), p. iii. *Evangelical Magazine*, xxiii. 353. Cf. the important MS. letter of Joseph Hughes to John Pike, Battersea, December 14, 1807, prefixed to the Angus Library copy of J. Leifchild, *Memoir of the late Joseph Hughes, one of the secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London, 1835)), who maintained a proper proportion of faith (Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, i. 432), balanced a propensity to activism and committee sitting by a devotion to private prayer (J. H. Hinton, *The means of a religious revival* (London, 1829), pp. xiv-xv), and as Fuller himself put it, sustained "a lively interest in evangelical, faithful, practical and pungent preaching; an attention to things more than to words; a taste for the affectionate more than for the curious; a disposition to read and think rather than to dispute; a spirit to promote the kingdom of Christ." *Baptist Magazine*, v. 232.

¹⁰ Fuller, *Works*, i. 273, 276n. Cf. Ivimey, *History of the Baptists*, iii. 260.

¹¹ *Baptist Magazine*, vii. 267.

¹² Cf. John Evans, *A brief sketch of the several denominations into which the Christian world is divided; accompanied with a persuasive to religious moderation* (London, 1795), pp. 15-16. This characteristic production of the age of "catholic christianity" (*Evangelical Magazine*, iii. 299) by a General Baptist rapidly went through some twenty editions, and more than trebled in size.

¹³ Jonathan Edwards, *Faithful narrative of the surprising work of God . . . in Northampton*, ed. I. Watts and J. Guyse. Republished by J. Fawcett and W. Steadman (Halifax, 1808), p. ix. A paper on the English publishing history of Jonathan Edwards, to which the first (1737) edition of the *Faithful Narrative*, would provide an introduction, would be a useful exercise (The *explicanda* are provided by Thomas H. Johnson, *The printed writings of Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758. A bibliography* (Princeton, 1940)). Evangelical Baptists and Congregationalists seem to have reprinted his shorter

pieces whenever they thought the English revival needed an impulse, and John Wesley (sometimes to the fury of Baptists) [*Circular letter of the Northamptonshire Association, 1781*] would bowdlerize them for his followers.

¹⁴ The literary devices by which Baxter, Watts and Edwards were taken up into evangelical Calvinism are illustrated in John Gillies, *Historical collections relating to remarkable periods of the success of the gospel and eminent instruments employed in promoting it* (Glasgow, 1754), i. 258. Cf. John Erskine, *The signs of the times considered: or the high probability that the present appearances in New England and the West of Scotland are the prelude to the glorious things promised to the church in the latter ages* (Edinburgh, 1752), p. i.

¹⁵ W. G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833. The Baptists and the separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), i. 278 seq.

¹⁶ *Evangelical Magazine*, viii. 243.

¹⁷ The two fronts on which the evangelical Calvinists contended in England may be illustrated by William Gadsby for the hyperts and Walter Wilson for the old-style Congregationalists. The former proposed a text to be hung over William Roby's chapel in Manchester: "Mangling done here" (*The works of the late William Gadsby, Manchester*, ed. J. Gadsby (London, 1851), p. 49). Wilson lamented that "the true spirit of nonconformity has been dead by at least one generation; and its present representatives . . . consider it a happy omen for their age of liberality. The Calamys, the Bradburys, and the Robinsons, are now remembered no more, unless it be to malign their zeal, or to pity their bigotry. Dissenters of former days have been greatly blamed for not possessing what is called a "missionary spirit" . . . It is true they did not beat up a crusade in the religious world for the wild purpose of proselyting the savage hottentot, or the untutored islander, but they conducted plans of instruction for the rising generation of their countrymen which turned to infinitely better account." (Walter Wilson, *The history and antiquities of dissenting churches and meeting houses in London, Westminster and Southwark* (London, 1808-14), i. p. xii., iv. 435, 541, 551). Cf. A. Peel, *These hundred years* (London, 1931), pp. 36-7.

¹⁸ *Circular letter of Kent and Sussex Particular Baptist Association, 1793*, p. 7. Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, ii. 467. Charles Whitfield, *The obligations to mental improvement stated and the use of books recommended to youth* (Newcastle, 1792), p. 20.

¹⁹ Robert Hall, *Works*, i. 58-64.

²⁰ John Gill, *The watchman's answer to the question, "What of the night?"* (6th ed., London, 1812). The first edition was in 1751.

²¹ John Gill, *The doctrine of the cherubim opened and explained* (London, 1764), p. 29. (This sermon was preached again in Victorian dress without acknowledgement by Jabez Burns in *Sketches of sermons designed for special occasions* (London, 1860), pp. 113-6). Cf. John Gill, *The work of the gospel minister recommended to consideration* (London, 1763). John Gill, *The duty of a pastor* (n. pl. or d.), pp. 10-11. John Brine, *Diligence in study recommended to ministers* (London, 1757). The church was itself a symbol of God's way with men which would do its work in due course. John Gill, *Sermon on Jeremiah*, vi. 16 (London, 1750), p. 20.

²² See, e.g., Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (2nd ed. Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 85-90.

²³ Gill, *The watchman's answer*, pp. 25-7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37. John Gill, *The practical improvement of the watchman's answer* (5th ed., London, 1793). John Gill, *The glory of the church in the latter day* (2nd ed., London, 1753), p. 4. Cf. John Brine, *Christ the object of God's eternal delight, and the church, the object of Christ's everlasting delight* (London, 1761).

²⁵ *The works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. H. Rogers, S. E. Dwight, and E. Hickman (London, 1837), i. 600.

²⁶ William Carey, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens* (Leicester, 1793).

²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 36-7, 11.

²⁸ E.g., J. Fawcett, *Considerations relative to the sending of missionaries to propagate the gospel among heathens* (Leeds, 1793). A. Fuller, *The Calvinistic and socinian systems examined and compared as to their moral tendency* (ed. London, 1802), pp. 28-30.

²⁹ For a contemporary memoir of Gillies, see *Evangelical Magazine*, xvii. 89-93.

³⁰ Edwards, *Works*, i. pp. cxiv. seq., cxlv-clxiii. Sir Henry Moncreiff Well-wood, *Account of the life and writings of John Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1818), pp. 160-162. Cf. *The Christian history, containing accounts of the revival and propagation of religion in Great Britain and America* (Boston, Mass., 1743-5).

³¹ Edwards, *Works*, i. 569, 586.

³² After the *Register* had ceased publication the *Evangelical Magazine* maintained similar surveys, *Evangelical Magazine*, xviii. 384, 431, 503.

³³ Isaac Backus, *A history of New England with particular reference to the denomination of Christians called Baptists* (Boston, Mass., 1777-1796). Cf. Angus Library, Isaac Backus, MS. History of the Baptist Warren Association in New England, 1767-92.

³⁴ McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, ii. 774-6, 1286.

³⁵ Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, iv. 798-805. Rippon had already published extracts from their mission reports. *Ibid.* i. 378-84.

³⁶ *Baptist Magazine*, v. 381-2. August Herman Frank, *A guide to the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures*. Translated with a life of the author by Wm. Jaques (London, 1813). *Evangelical Magazine*, xx. 81-7, 120-6.

³⁷ E.g., "A great variety of denominations dwell together, and worship before the throne of God and the Lamb, without one jarring note . . . there Whitefield and Erskine, Toplady and Wesley, Romaine and Gill, Jonathan Edwards and Latrobe, can all unite in one song of praise to that true God to whose sovereign grace and almighty influence they cheerfully own themselves indebted for their complete salvation." *Evangelical Magazine*, xi. 207.

³⁸ The phrase is David Bogue's; the sentiment applauded by liberal Baptists.

³⁹ "The Millenium" in *Sermons*, p. 51.

⁴⁰ Cf. John Leland (McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, ii. 930) and Samuel Baker, *A solemn address to all Christians but specially to the Methodist and Baptist orders on the subject of christian fellowship and the union of doctrines* (Hallowell, 1814), p. 17.

⁴¹ *Baptist Magazine*, vi. 212-5. American Baptists had gone over wholesale to Fullerite views, David Benedict, *A general history of the Baptist denomination in America and other parts of the world* (Boston, Mass., 1813), ii. 456.

⁴² Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, iv. 813, 936.

⁴³ *Ibid.* iv. 813-4.

⁴⁴ *Evangelical Magazine*, xii. 170-1. The speaker is Dr. John Rotheram, fellow of University College, Oxford, and later Rector of Houghton-le-Spring.

⁴⁵ Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, iii. 465-7; iv. 912-6, 936-9, 1064-9. S. Delacroix, *La réorganisation de l'Eglise de France après les Révolution (1801-9)*, vol. i. (Paris, 1962), p. 125.

⁴⁶ In America they had been used to force Old Light ministers on predominantly New Light congregations, McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, i. 343, 364, 403.

⁴⁷ "As particular members are called together and united in one body, which we call a particular church, to answer those ends and purposes that could not be accomplished by any single member, so a collection and union of churches into one associational body, may be easily conceived capable of answering those still greater purposes, that any particular church would not be equal to." (Angus Library, Isaac Backus, MS. History of the Baptist Warren Association in New England 1767-92, fo. 11. Cf. Benedict, *Baptist Denomination in America*, ii. 464. Backus, *History of New England*, iii.

114-9). Gill would have groaned at this doctrine, but it was repeated almost to the word by the English Baptist New Connexion in 1793. Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, i. 549.

⁴⁸ *Circular letter of Northamptonshire Association*, 1812, p. 8.

⁴⁹ MS. Letter of Joseph Hughes to John Pike, Battersea, December 14, 1807, prefixed to Angus Library copy of J. Leifchild, *Memoir of Joseph Hughes*. [John Fawcett Jnr.], *Life of John Fawcett*, p. 95. Cf. David Eaton, *A familiar conversation on religious bigotry, candor and liberality; humbly intended as a persuasive to greater moderation, union and peace amongst the followers of Christ* (London, 1803), p. 8.

⁵⁰ *The Calvinistic and socinian systems compared as to their moral tendency*.

⁵¹ Fuller, *Works*, iv. 319. Cf. *Evangelical Magazine*, x. 88-90.

⁵² John Brine, *The proper eternity of the divine decrees, and of the mediatorial office of Jesus Christ, asserted and proved* (London, 1754), pp. 33-4.

⁵³ McLoughlin, *New England dissent*, i. 316.

⁵⁴ *The works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. II., Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, Conn., 1959), pp. 271, 449.

⁵⁵ Robert Hall, *Help to Zion's travellers* (Bristol, n.d. [1781]), p. 116.

⁵⁶ *Evangelical Magazine*, i. 150-3: Benjamin Beddome, *Twenty short discourses adapted to village worship or the devotions of the family* (7 series, London, 1805-19), vi. 39-40.

⁵⁷ John Fawcett, *The constitution and order of a gospel church considered* (Halifax, 1797), pp. 54-5.

⁵⁸ Alexander Macleod, *A view of inspiration comprehending the nature and distinctions of the spiritual gifts and offices of the apostolic age* (Glasgow, 1827), pp. 7, 9-10.

⁵⁹ John Gill, *Sermon on Jer. vi. 16*, p. 20.

⁶⁰ *Circular letter of Kent and Sussex Particular Baptist Association 1788*: Daniel Turner, *A compendium of social religion* (London, 1758), p. 39. Charles Whitfield, *The form and order of a Church of Christ* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1775), pp. 34-6. J. Fawcett, *The constitution and order of a gospel church considered* (Halifax, 1797), pp. 29-30. Wm. Newman, *A manual for church members drawn from the New Testament* (London, 1825), p. 58. In the America of the Great Awakening, Old Lights considered itinerancy as an intrusion upon the covenant relations of minister and people, and damned the "priest" Whitefield for introducing the "anarchy" of episcopalianism (Heimert, *Religion and the American mind*, p. 119); it was a sign of the times in England that Gill's long church covenants went out of fashion, and that in 1793 Fuller was wishing "we had a Whitefield" and commending Isaac Backus's itinerant missions in Virginia. Fawcett, *Life of Fawcett*, pp. 99-100, 297.

⁶¹ Fawcett, *Constitution of a gospel church*, pp. 41-2. Fawcett, *Thoughts on revival*, p. 16. *Circular letter of the Northamptonshire Association*, 1821, pp. 9-10. W. Steadman, *The Christian minister's duty and reward* (Gateshead, 1807).

⁶² Thomas Haweis, *An impartial and succinct history of the rise, declension and revival of the Churches of Christ* (London, 1800), i. 83-5. David Benedict, *Baptist denomination in America*, i. 43.

⁶³ James Macknight, *A new literal translation from the original Greek of all the apostolical epistles with a commentary and notes* (4th ed. London, 1809), ii. 393 n. 3; i. 580 n.l. S. T. Bloomfield, *The Greek Testament with English notes* (2nd ed. London, 1836), ii. 293. Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible . . . with explanatory notes* (New ed., 6 vols., London, 1812-14), sub. Eph. iv. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 1-5; Acts xxi. 7-14.

⁶⁴ Macleod, *View of Inspiration*, p. 496. David Douglas, *Essay on the nature and perpetuity of the office of primitive evangelist* (London, 1838).

⁶⁵ For a characteristic contemporary account: *Evangelical Magazine*, iii. 198-201.

⁶⁶ Edwards, *Works*, i. 426.

⁶⁷ *Evangelical Magazine*, xxv. 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* iii. 73.

⁶⁹ Its epitaph amongst Baptists was written by Jabez Burns, *A retrospect of forty-five years' Christian ministry* (London, 1875), pp. 368-9.

⁷⁰ Heimert, *Religion and the American mind*, p. 84.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 87: Bellamy, *Sermons* No. 2.

⁷² Angus Library. Isaac Backus, MS. History of the Baptist Warren Association, fo. 27. Backus, *History of New England*, ii. 406. Rippon, *Baptist Annual Register*, ii. 132.

⁷³ The evangelical reviewers could find no higher praise for David Bogue's *Discourses on the Millennium* for example, than that no man had done more than the author to bring on the millennium, "nor are the thoughts and emotions [the book] excites any other than such as are calculated to produce a Millennium." *Evangelical Magazine*, xxvi. 381, 432.

⁷⁴ Charles Whitfield, *The obligations to mental improvement stated*, p. 22.

⁷⁵ W. R. Ward, *Religion and society in England, 1790-1850* (London, 1972), pp. 50-62.

⁷⁶ Andrew Fuller, *The backslider* (3rd ed., London, 1804), pp. 24-5. (The Kent and Sussex Association actually began a circular letter on the *Signs of the Times* (1793) with the declaration "we do not mean to enter on a discussion of the political state of the world at large, or of these kingdoms in particular. We apprehend that subject to be foreign to our business"). Not surprisingly in a eulogy on *Christian Patriotism* (Dunstable, 1803), Fuller could find little wrong with the England of his day, negro slavery apart.

⁷⁷ Cf. on the English side, Samuel Pearce, *The oppressive, unjust and prophane nature and tendency of the Corporation and Test Acts exposed* (Birmingham, 1790).

⁷⁸ McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, i. p. xviii; ii. 1269-70.

⁷⁹ I am indebted to Mr. David Bebbington for information about Bicheno's background. There is no suggestion that Bicheno followed Robinson into unitarianism; his tone resembles that of a Congregational "Old Light" like Walter Wilson: "Many religious people have a most unaccountable notion that the affairs of government should be left to the wicked." *Dissenting Meeting Houses*, iv. 549.

⁸⁰ J. Bicheno, *The signs of the times: or the overthrow of the papal tyranny in France, the prelude of destruction to the papacy and despotism; but of peace to mankind* (2nd ed., London, 1794); J. Bicheno, *The probable progress and issue of the commotions which have agitated Europe since the French Revolution* (London, 1797). J. Bicheno, *The fulfilment of prophecy farther illustrated by the signs of the times* (London, 1817).

⁸¹ Gadsby's political career may be best traced in the Manchester press.

⁸² E. P. Winter, "The Lord's Supper: admission and exclusion among the Baptists of the seventeenth century," *Baptist Quarterly*, xvii. 267-81.

⁸³ The Great Awakening had given rise to numerous Separate congregations mostly conducted on mixed communion principles. But the success of the Separates in jolting the Standing Churches into greater strictness, giving up the half-way covenant, and so forth, opened the way for paedobaptists to return to the establishment, leaving the Separate movement in the hands of the advocates of believers' baptism. Until the last generation of the eighteenth century, most of the Baptist expansion in America resulted from the transformation of Separate into closed-communion Baptist churches, and after the mid-'sixties their distinctive position gave them a basis for a great drive against a Congregational establishment which had no counterpart in England.

⁸⁴ On the paedobaptist front it was held that the trouble was all created by a handful of ill-disposed Independent ministers in the South of England (*Baptist Magazine*, vi. 209-10); on the Baptist front Robert Hall maintained that "the practice of strict communion rests almost entirely on *authority*

. . . that were the influence of a few great names withdrawn, it would sink under its own weight," and Fuller's death in 1815 was followed by a wrangle between the open- and strict-unionists to claim him for themselves (Hall, *Works*, ii. 5; iii. 409-10. Wm. Newman, *The admission of unbaptised persons to the Lord's Supper inconsistent with the New Testament* (London, 1815), pp. 1-2, 4-6. Joseph Kinghorn, *Arguments against the practice of mixed communion* (London, 1827), pp. 23-5). The *Baptist Magazine* prohibited discussion of the question in its columns, and irritated readers of the "Catholic Christianity" school for not prohibiting it strictly enough. *Baptist Magazine*, iv. 326; vi. 189. Cf. *Evangelical Magazine*, xxiii. 370.

⁸⁵ At the crucial moment Hall received unexpected support from America. J. M. Mason, *A plea for Catholic communion in the church of God* (2nd ed., London, 1816). (For the voluminous comment this tract received see *Evangelical Magazine*, xxv. 144-6, 177-9, 215-7, 270-2.) Robert Hall, *A reply to Rev. Joseph Kinghorn* (2nd ed., London, 1818), pp. viii-ix.

⁸⁶ G. A. Weston, "The Baptists of North western England, 1750-1850" (unpublished, Sheffield, Ph.D. thesis, 1969), pp. 208-13.

⁸⁷ Kinghorn, *Arguments against mixed communion*, pp. 19-20.

⁸⁸ Joseph Kinghorn, *Baptism a term of communion at the Lord's supper* (2nd ed., Norwich, 1816), pp. 109-12. *Evangelical Magazine*, xxi. 460. Cf. W. Jones, *Memoirs of the life, ministry and writings of Rev. Rowland Hill* (London, 1834), p. 84.

⁸⁹ *Evangelical Magazine*, xxii. 90.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* xxvii. 370-1.

⁹¹ Weston, *Northwestern Baptists*, pp. 89-90, 207.

⁹² *The duty and importance of free communion among real christians of every denomination, especially in the present period, with some notices of the writings of Messrs. Booth, Fuller and R. Hall* (London, n.d.), pp. 14-15. Cf. similar views among paedobaptists, Joseph Francis Burrell, *Water baptism, circumcision and the Lord's supper dissected and analyzed. . .* (London, 1816), pp. 79, 81, 84.

⁹³ Hall, *Works*, iii. 452.

⁹⁴ Kinghorn, *Arguments against mixed communion*, p. 37.

⁹⁵ T. Fawcett, *The symbolic language of religion* (London, 1970), pp. 282, 273.

⁹⁶ John Bossy, "Blood and baptism; kinship, community and Christianity in Western Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries," *Studies in Church History*, vol. x. 129-43. I am indebted to Dr. Bossy for the kind loan of a copy of this paper before publication.

⁹⁷ *Evangelical Magazine*, xxiv. 138.

⁹⁸ Cf. the Independent "Dales Men" of Swalesdale discussed by Dr. G. F. Nuttall in his presidential address to the Ecclesiastical History Society, *Studies in Church History*, vol. x. 160.

⁹⁹ Though in 1809 a Methodist report from the Durham coal-field described how "whole families of several individuals unite themselves at once to our societies. This is truly conversion *per stirpes* and not merely *per capita*." Methodist Church Archives MSS., John Ward to Jabez Bunting, 27 March, 1809.

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