

## THE ROOTS OF BAPTIST BELIEFS

The people called Baptists have often identified their churches as "New Testament churches" and have frequently insisted that they are not a creedal people. Consequently one may be prone to assume that they owe nothing to the creeds, the church councils, or the theologians of the sixteen centuries prior to the advent of the Baptist movement. But that assumption needs to be challenged and tested.

### *The Councils, the Creeds, and the Fathers*

The four earliest ecumenical councils constituted efforts to resolve theological controversies after the subsidence of the major persecutions and the advent of favorable treatment of Christians in the Roman Empire. The Council of Nicaea (325) rejected the teachings of Arius (c.250-c.336), notably that God is an unoriginate and non-communicable monad and that Jesus was a creature having a beginning and being subject to change and sin, "less than God and more than man."<sup>1</sup> Nicaea responded by affirming that Jesus as "the Son of God" was "of the substance of the Father," "begotten, not made," and "of one substance with the Father."<sup>2</sup> Baptists have repeatedly affirmed the deity and eternity of Jesus as God's Son and his incarnation, thus manifesting only on rare occasions any tendency to resurrect Arianism.<sup>3</sup>

Apollinarius of Laodicea (c.310-c.390) refused to allow for a human mind in Jesus by holding that the Godhead and Jesus' body were fused into a single reality.<sup>4</sup> The Pneumatomachians, or Macedonians, opposed the full deity of the Holy Spirit, asserting rather that the Spirit was a creature or a being between God and creatures.<sup>5</sup> The Council of Constantinople I (381), building on the objections by Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus,<sup>6</sup> rejected Apollinarianism and likewise, together with other heresies, condemned the teaching of the Pneumatomachians.<sup>7</sup> Baptists have affirmed the full or complete humanity of Jesus<sup>8</sup> and the deity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), 226-31; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (100-600), vol. I, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), 193-200.

<sup>2</sup> "The Nicene Creed," in *NPNF*, 2d series, 14:3.

<sup>3</sup> Deviations, as in the case of the early eighteenth-century General Baptists, were recognized as heresy by other Baptists.

<sup>4</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 289-95.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 259-60.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 295-300.

<sup>7</sup> Canons of Constantinople I, 1, 7, in *NPNF*, 2d series, 14:172, 185.

<sup>8</sup> "Short Confession of Faith in 20 Articles by John Smyth," art. 6; "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," art. 8; Somerset Confession, art. 13; Second London Confession of Particular Baptists, art. 8, sect. 2; Orthodox Creed of General Baptists, arts. 6, 7; "Treatise and the Faith and Practices of the Free Will Baptists," art. 5, sect. 2, in William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1959), 100, 119, 206, 260-61, 300-301, 371; Southern Baptist Convention Statement of Baptist Faith and Message (1963), art. 2, sec. 2, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. ed. (Valley Forge, PA:

Nestorius (c. 381-c.451) was credited with advancing the view – whether he actually did continues to be debated by today's scholars – that the two natures of Jesus Christ, the divine and human, were veritably two persons and that these two persons, being unaltered, were only "conjoined" or loosely connected. Nestorius rejected the prevailing use of the term *theotokos* (God-bearing) for Mary the virgin, arguing that "God cannot have a mother" and "Mary bore a man, the vehicle of divinity but not God."<sup>10</sup> The Council of Ephesus (431) after no little intrigue rejected Nestorianism and its followers and deposed and excommunicated Nestorius.<sup>11</sup> Although modern Baptist confessions of faith have tended not to address this issue specifically,<sup>12</sup> there is no evidence of any Baptist effort to disavow the union of the two natures in the one person of Jesus Christ.

Eutyches (c.378-454), taking the word "nature" to signify "a concrete existence" and denying that Christ's manhood was of the same substance as our manhood, taught the confusion of his natures so as to imply one nature. Under interrogation, Eutyches acknowledged that Christ was "of two natures" but insisted that this was before the union of the natures and that after the union there was only one nature.<sup>13</sup> After being vindicated at the so-called "Robber Synod" of 448, he was deposed and exiled by the Council of Chalcedon (451). The confessional statement adopted by Chalcedon not only rejected Eutychianism but also Arianism, Apollinarianism, and Nestorianism and explicated the doctrine of two natures in the one person.<sup>14</sup> It would prove in later centuries to be common ground for Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants.<sup>15</sup> As was noted in respect to Apollinarianism, Baptists have consistently affirmed the genuine and

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Judson Press, 1969), 394.

<sup>9</sup> "A Short Confession of Faith" (1610), arts. 2-3; First London Confession of Particular Baptists, art. 2; Orthodox Creed of General Baptists, art. 8; "Principles of Faith of the Sandy Creek Association," art. 1; "Treatise and the Faith and Practices of the Free Will Baptists," art. 7; "Articles of Faith Put Forth by the Baptist Bible Union of America," art. 3, in *ibid.*, 103, 156-57, 301, 358, 372-73, 385; Southern Baptist Convention Statement of Baptist Faith and Message (1963) art. 2, sect. 3, in *ibid.*, rev. ed., 394.

<sup>10</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 310-17. See also J. F. Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius and His Teaching: A Fresh Examination of the Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1908; rpt. ed.: New York: Kraus, 1969); Friedrich Loofs, *Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1914; rpt. ed.: New York: Burt Franklin, 1975).

<sup>11</sup> "The Twelve Anathematisms of St. Cyril against Nestorius," and "Decree of the Council against Nestorius" in *NPNF*, 2d series, 14:206-19.

<sup>12</sup> "A Short Confession of Faith" (1610); art. 8; "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," art. 8; Second London Confession, art. 8, sect. 2; Orthodox Creed of General Baptists, arts. 6, 7, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 104-5, 119, 260-61, 300-301.

<sup>13</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 330-34.

<sup>14</sup> "The Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon," in *NPNF*, 2d series, 14:262-65. See also R. V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: S. P. C. K., 1953).

<sup>15</sup> See the author's "A Reappraisal of Chalcedon," *Review and Expositor* 71 (Winter 1974): 31-42, esp. 42.

complete humanity of Jesus and have in reality concurred in Chalcedon's definition even when not explicitly stating such.

Hence for Baptists the affirmations of the deity of Christ, the complete humanity of Christ, the one person of Christ, and the two natures of Christ imply some indebtedness to these early councils, whether or not that indebtedness is formally acknowledged. Moreover, concurrent with these councils -Nicaea I through Chalcedon -was the framing of certain widely used Christian creeds.

That which we call the Apostles' Creed, sometimes called "R" for Old Roman Symbol, developed during the second and third centuries, being expressed in various similar but not identical texts until finally there came to be a single common text. Framed in order to give instruction at baptism or to refute heresies or possibly for both reasons, R had a Trinitarian structure and an extended section on the Son of God.<sup>16</sup> The Nicene Creed (N), the product of the council in 325, was specifically anti-Arian.<sup>17</sup> That which is called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (C) has a more extended section on the Holy Spirit. It has traditionally been taken to be the product of the Council of Constantinople I, but it did not appear in official conciliar records until the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>18</sup> The "Athanasian" Creed, actually a formulation based on the Trinitarian theology of Augustine of Hippo, probably originated in southern Gaul in the fifth or sixth century.<sup>19</sup>

Baptists in their congregational worship have not normally included the recitation of any creedal or confessional statement. It is, however, worthy of note that the Orthodox Creed of General Baptists (1678) included the texts of the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed and declared that these "ought throughly [*sic*] to be received, and believed," may be proved from the Scriptures, ought to be understood by all Christians, and should be taught by ministers and "in all christian [*sic*] families."<sup>20</sup> Also at the first world congress of the Baptist World Alliance in 1905, its president, Alexander Maclaren, in the midst of his presidential address asked all those assembled to rise and to repeat the Apostles' Creed.<sup>21</sup>

Baptists have consistently affirmed that the canonical Scriptures are always superior to and more authoritative than any or all postbiblical tradition. Such a fact does not prevent or preclude evidence that certain of the church fathers, especially the Latin fathers, seem to have influenced positively the beliefs of the later Baptists. Two examples may be noted. Tertullian, who was the first Latin Christian writer to use the term *trinitas*, pioneered in the use of what

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<sup>16</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 2d ed. (New York: David McKay, 1960), 100-166.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-62.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 296-357.

<sup>19</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *The Athanasian Creed* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

<sup>20</sup> Art. 38, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 326-27.

<sup>21</sup> *The Baptist World Congress. London. July 11-19, 1905: Authorised Record of Proceedings* (London: Baptist Union Publication Department, 1905), 20. For a probing treatment of the dependence of Baptist confessions of faith upon patristic theology and possibly more future "interaction" with the patristic tradition, see Steven R. Harmon, "Baptist Confessions of Faith and the Patristic Tradition," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 29 (Winter 2002): 349-58.

became technical terms for the Trinity (one in substance and three persons )<sup>22</sup> and for the person of Christ (two natures, which he preferred to speak of as "two substances,"<sup>23</sup> in one person).<sup>24</sup> Augustine of Hippo, especially in his controversial writings against the Pelagians, set forth the doctrines of the universality of sin and the necessity of divine grace as pardon and power that would so greatly influence all Western Christians that espousal of strictly Pelagian views would be far less likely,<sup>25</sup> and this was true of most Baptists.

#### *Pre-Reformation Sectarian and Reforming Movements*

The modern advocates of Baptist church succession,<sup>26</sup> notably the Landmark Baptists, have posited and sought to identify a chain of pre-Reformation reforming and sectarian movements. Often the claims of identity between such groups and Baptists of the last four centuries have not matched the historical evidence. But the lack of total identity does not preclude a kinship in respect to particular teachings or a common rejection of teachings and practices prevailing in the dominant ecclesiastical system. Albert Henry Newman, a Baptist historian writing more than a century ago, could find no common ground between modern Baptists and such early movements as Montanism, Novatianism, and Donatism or such later movements as the Paulicians and the Cathari. But Newman saw in early reformers such as Aerius, Jovinian, and Vigilantius and in the ancient British church a nascent anti-ascetic evangelicalism which did not challenge infant baptism, and he found in the followers of Peter de Bruys and Henry of Lausanne, the Waldenses, the Taborites, Peter Chelcicky and the Bohemian Brethren, and the Lollards advocates of anti-sacramentalism, biblical authority, and primitivism, who stopped short of the full recovery of believer's baptism.<sup>27</sup> Baptists have had no interest in

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<sup>22</sup> *Unius substantiae; tres dirigens* (Against Praxeas, 2:4).

<sup>23</sup> *Utramque substantiam* (On the Flesh of Christ, 18:6).

<sup>24</sup> *In uno plane* (Against Praxeas, 27:14).

<sup>25</sup> Here we do not consider either Semi-Pelagianism or those aspects of Augustine's theology that pertain to predestination and irresistible grace.

<sup>26</sup> This is the theory that there existed from the apostolic era to the seventeenth century in unbroken fashion churches which in teaching and practice, although not in name, were conformable to Baptists. See, for example, George Herbert Orchard, *A Concise History of Baptists from the Time of Christ Their Founder to the 18th Century* (rpt. ed.: Lexington, KY: Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, 1956; first publ. in London in 1838 under title, *A Concise History of Foreign Baptists*; also Nashville: Graves and Marks, 1855; under title, *A History of the Baptists in England*, Nashville: Southwestern Publishing, 1859); David Burcham Ray, *Baptist Succession: A Handbook of Baptist History* (Cincinnati: G. E. Stevens, 1870) (St. Louis: St. Louis Baptist Publishing, 1880) (rev. ed.: Parsons, KS: Foley, 1912) (Rosemead, CA: King's Press, 1949); Willis Anselm Jarrel, *Baptist Church Perpetuity, or, The Continuous Existence of Baptist Churches from the Apostolic to the Present Day Demonstrated by the Bible and by History* (Dallas: author, 1894) (3d ed.: Fulton, KY: Baptist Gleaner, 1900); James Milton Carroll, *The Trail of Blood* (Lexington, KY: American Baptist Publishing, 1931; Lexington, KY: Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, 1979).

<sup>27</sup> Newman, *A History of Anti-Pedobaptism from the Rise of Pedobaptism to A.D. 1609* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1897). 15-61.

kinship with the mystical heresy of the Free Spirit,<sup>28</sup> with later mystics such as John Tauler, Henry Suso, and John Ruysbroeck,<sup>29</sup> or with late quasi-Evangelicals such as John of Wesel, Wessel Gansfort, and Cornelius Hoen.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Magisterial Protestant Reformation*

Despite modern denials by certain Baptists that Baptists are Protestants,<sup>31</sup> the matrix of the Baptist movement had been powerfully shaped by the Protestant Reformation, and some have even claimed that the Baptists are the truly thoroughgoing Reformers.<sup>32</sup>

Martin Luther's doctrines of the supremacy of the Scriptures over all, especially late, church tradition and of Christ as the center of the Scriptures, of declarative justification by God's grace through faith alone, and of the priesthood of all believers<sup>33</sup> were all affirmed by Baptists, even when no specific acknowledgment was made to Luther. Likewise, Ulrich Zwingli's doctrine of the Lord's Supper as a memorial or symbolic observance<sup>34</sup> proved to be the dominant, though not the sole, theme in the Baptist teaching about the Supper. Moreover, John Calvin's doctrine of predestination,<sup>35</sup> whatever its debt to Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Bradwardine, John Wycliffe, and John Huss, had an impact on the theology of many Anglo-American Baptists. Martin Bucer's teaching that discipline is a mark of the true church,<sup>36</sup> though perhaps routed through Calvin or through the Anabaptists, found acceptance among early Baptists. Among the

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<sup>28</sup> Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, c.1250-c.1450*, 2 vols. (Manchester: Manchester University; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 1:308-407.

<sup>29</sup> *Late Medieval Mysticism*, ed. Ray C. Petry, vol. 13, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), 245-62, 285-320.

<sup>30</sup> A. H. Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1933), 1:620-21; Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 63-65, 252-53.

<sup>31</sup> William Owen Carver, "Are Baptists Protestants?" *The Chronicle* 14 (July 1951): 116-20. Carver was refuting those who had given a negative answer largely on the basis of Baptist church successionism. According to Carver, "Anabaptists and Baptists have not improperly been described as 'Protestants of the Protestants'" (117).

<sup>32</sup> John Quincy Adams, *Baptists the Only Thorough Religious Reformers*, rev. ed. (New York: Sheldon, 1876).

<sup>33</sup> Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 72-102, 224-50, 313-18; A Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word: Martin Luther; Doctor of Sacred Scripture* (Exeter, U.K.: Paternoster, 1969), 119-28; E. F. Klug, *From Luther to Chemnitz: On Scripture and the Word* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 51-75.

<sup>34</sup> W. Peter Stevens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 94-110, esp. 98-99.

<sup>35</sup> Francois Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 263-84.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Bucer, *Common Places*, trans. and ed. D. F. Wright, vol. 4, The Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics (Appleford, Berkshire, U.K.: Sutton Courtenay, 1972), "Introduction" by Wright, 31.

confessions of faith produced by the magisterial wing of the Reformation the mid-seventeenth century Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)<sup>37</sup> was by far the most influential on early Baptist confessions of faith.<sup>38</sup>

### *Continental Anabaptism*

The sixteenth-century Anabaptists on the continent of Europe have played a singular role in the interpretation of Baptist origins. Those advocating different views of origins<sup>39</sup> have treated the Anabaptists differently. Those who have sought to trace Baptists in succession to John the Baptist and the Jerusalem church have regarded the Anabaptists as an essential link in the chain of succession but have usually done little research or exhibited no scholarly acumen in dealing with the Anabaptists. Those who have adhered to the "Anabaptist spiritual kinship" theory have posited on the basis of careful studies not only of sixteenth-century Anabaptists but also various pre-Reformation rebaptizing sects as kinspeople to the later Baptists. Those who hold on the basis of research that Baptists derived from English Separatist Puritanism usually have viewed Anabaptists as outside the story of Baptist origins and as not contributing significantly to Baptist

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<sup>37</sup> For the text, see Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877), 3:598-704.

<sup>38</sup> Especially the Second London Confession of Particular Baptists and the Orthodox Creed of General Baptists, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 241-95, 297-334.

<sup>39</sup> Here we follow the threefold classification of Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1950), 59-62. In mid-twentieth century and after the issue of Baptist origins was intensely debated by Baptist scholars. Those advocating Anabaptist Influence on English Baptists in terms of teachings, if not an organizational nexus, included Ernest Alexander Payne, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England* (London: SCM, 1944), 25, 27-28; idem, *The Baptist Movement in the Reformation and Onwards* (London: Kingsgate, 1947), 20; idem, *The Anabaptists of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and Their Influence in the Modern World* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1949); idem, "Who Were the Baptists?," *Baptist Quarterly* 16 (October 1956): 339-42; Alfred Clair Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1947), 21-27, 35-55; James D. Mosteller, "Baptists and Anabaptists," *The Chronicle* 20 (January 1957): 3-27; ibid. (July 1957): 100-114; William R. Estep, Jr., "A Baptist Reappraisal of Sixteenth Century Anabaptists," *Review and Expositor* 55 (January 1958): 55-58; idem, *The Anabaptist Story* (Nashville: Broadman, 1963), 200-222; and Glen H. Stassen, "Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the Particular Baptists," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (October 1962): 322-48. Those advocating the English Separatist origin of English Baptists with little or no influence from continental Anabaptism included Winthrop Still Hudson, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," *The Chronicle* 16 (October 1953): 171-79; idem, "Who Were the Baptists?," *Baptist Quarterly* 16 (July 1956): 303-12; ibid., 17 (April 1957): 53-55; Norman H. Maring, "Notes from Religious Journals," *Foundations* I (July 1958): 91-95; Lonnie D. Kliever, "General Baptist Origins: The Question of Anabaptist Influence," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (October 1962): 291-321; Barrington R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (London: Oxford University, 1971), 161-64; idem, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, vol. 1, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 21-23; and H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), 49-63.

theology.<sup>40</sup>

The classification of various types of sixteenth-century Anabaptists has been attempted by modern church historians who have specialized in this field. Their work is important in determining whether and which Anabaptists may have influenced Baptists. A. H. Newman posited a fivefold classification of Anabaptists: "the chiliastic" or millennial, "the soundly biblical," "the mystical," "the pantheistic," and "the anti-trinitarian."<sup>41</sup> George Huntston Williams within the larger framework of a threefold classification of "the Radical Reformation" (Anabaptists, Spiritualists, and Evangelical Rationalists) identified three types of Anabaptists: "revolutionary," "contemplative," and "evangelical."<sup>42</sup> Newman's "chiliastic" Anabaptists and Williams's "revolutionary" Anabaptists, which included Melchior Hofmann, and the Munster kingdom, were virtually identical but did not seemingly shape in a positive way the later Baptists, except at the point of Hofmann's Christology.<sup>43</sup> Williams's "contemplative" Anabaptists included Hans Denck and Ludwig Hetzer, as did Newman's "mystical" Anabaptists, but Williams did not include Newman's "pantheistic" Anabaptists such as David Ions, and Williams considered Caspar Schwenkfeld to have been an "evangelical Spiritualist." None of these can be seen as having significant influence upon the later Baptists. The same may be said of Newman's "anti-trinitarian Anabaptists," who may be equated with Williams's "Evangelical Rationalists," whose only traceable influence may have been that of Socinianism on the Mennonite-oriented Rhynsburger community,<sup>44</sup> from which Particular Baptists seemingly derived the practice of baptism by immersion. Hence the focus must clearly rest upon those whom Newman denominated "soundly biblical" Anabaptists, namely, the Swiss Brethren, the Hutterites, and the Mennonites

Who, then, were the theological writers among evangelical Anabaptists who may possibly have influenced even indirectly the Baptists? An excellent foretaste of Anabaptist teachings may be seen in George Blaurock's account of his meeting with two Swiss, Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz:

They came to one mind in these things, and in the pure fear of God they recognized that a person must learn from the divine Word and preaching a true faith which manifests itself in love, and receive the true Christian baptism on the basis of the recognized and confessed faith, in the union with God of a good conscience, (prepared) henceforth to serve God in a holy Christian life with all godliness, also

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<sup>40</sup> For a detailed account of the historiography of Anabaptist-Baptist relations, see Goki Saito, "An Investigation into the Relationships between the Early English Baptists and the Dutch Anabaptists" (Th.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974), 11-58.

<sup>41</sup> *A Manual of Church History*, 2: 156-200.

<sup>42</sup> "Introduction" to "Part One," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, ed. George Huntston Williams and Angel M. Mergal, vol. 25, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), 28-31. Williams also set forth a threefold classification of Spiritualists: "revolutionary," "rational," and "evangelical" (ibid., 32-35).

<sup>43</sup> Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 328-32; William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 290-91.

<sup>44</sup> On the Rhynsburgers, see Newman, *A History of Anti-Pedobaptism*, 321-22, 387.

to be steadfast to the end in tribulation.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, when Grebel and his associates wrote to Thomas Muntzer, a revolutionary Spiritualist and anti-pedobaptist, they urged him: "Go forward with the Word and establish a Christian church with the help of Christ and his rule, as we find it instituted in Matt. 18:15-18 and applied in the Epistles."<sup>46</sup> Reflective of the ecclesiological concerns of the early Swiss Anabaptists were the Schleithem Articles (1527), probably the work of Michael Sattler, with their sevenfold emphasis: believer's baptism, excommunication, the Lord's Supper, separation from the world, the office of pastor, non-use of the sword, and non-taking of oaths.<sup>47</sup>

Balthasar Hubmaier wrote his 36-article "On Heretics and Those Who Burn Them," "the first text of the Reformation directed specifically to the topic of the liberty of dissent,"<sup>48</sup> four major treatises on baptism,<sup>49</sup> a treatise on excommunication,<sup>50</sup> and "On the Sword,"<sup>51</sup> which was directed against his more pacifist fellow Anabaptists. It is not a question as to whether early English Baptists read the German-language writings by Hubmaier; rather it is whether his concepts of religious freedom, baptism, church discipline, and the rightful use of the sword<sup>52</sup> may have so crossed the English Channel as to make their advocacy by English Baptists something less than an innovation.

Pilgram Malpeck's two major writings contain a recurrent emphasis on the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament and a rather complete treatment of baptism as "witness" (*Zeugnis*) rather than as "symbol" (*Zeichen*).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Excerpted from the Hutterite *Chronicle*, in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 43.

<sup>46</sup> Grebel et al., "Letters to Thomas Muntzer," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 79.

<sup>47</sup> For the text, see Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 23-31, and *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*, trans. and ed. John Howard Yoder, vol. 1, Classics of the Radical Reformation (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1973), 34-43.

<sup>48</sup> H. Wayne Pipkin and John Howard Yoder, Introduction to "On Heretics and Those Who Burn Them," in *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, trans. and ed. Pipkin and Yoder, vol. 5, Classics of the Radical Reformation (Scottsdale, PA., and Kitchener, ON: Herald, 1989), 58. H. C. Vedder, *Balthasar Hubmaier: The Leader of the Anabaptists* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), 84, and William R. Estep, *Revolution within the Revolution: The First Amendment in Historical Context, 1612-1789* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 30, esp. fn. 11, have held that Hubmaier was espousing full religious freedom for all humankind, whereas Torsten Bergsten, *Balthasar Hubmaier: Anabaptist Theologian*, trans. Irwin J. Barnes and William R. Estep and ed. William R. Estep (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1978), 131-32, held that Hubmaier was calling only for religious freedom for the Anabaptists in Waldshut.

<sup>49</sup> "On the Christian Baptism of Believers," "Dialogue with Zwingli's Baptism Book," "Old and New Teachers on Believer's Baptism," and "On Infant Baptism against Oecolampad," in *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, 95-149, 170-233, 246-74, 276-95.

<sup>50</sup> "On the Christian Ban," in *ibid.*, 410-25.

<sup>51</sup> In *ibid.*, 494-523. This treatise helps to explain why for modern Mennonites Hubmaier is not such a hero, whereas for Baptists he is. Baptists have followed Hubmaier in holding that a Christian can be a civil magistrate and there in make proper use of the sword.

<sup>52</sup> See Bergsten, *Balthasar Hubmaier: Anabaptist Theologian and Martyr*, 382-98, esp. 385, 387, 397-98.



Among the numerous writings by Menno Simons were his *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*,<sup>54</sup> with its threefold "call to discipleship," refutation of Roman Catholicism, "and" appeals for toleration, his *Christian Baptism*,<sup>55</sup> three treatises on church discipline,<sup>56</sup> and three writings expressive of his peculiar view of the incarnation.<sup>57</sup> The argument has been made that the First London Confession of Particular Baptists (1644) was indebted to Menno's *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*.<sup>58</sup> Whatever influence his writings on church discipline may have had on early English Baptists such as John Smyth, any such influence stopped short of Baptist acceptance of "shunning," or the social ostracism of those excommunicated, including that of husband and wife.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Menno's views of the incarnation, namely, that, since women supposedly produce no seed, the Word became a human being in Mary, but not of or from Mary,<sup>60</sup> being akin to the teaching of Melchior Hofmann<sup>61</sup> as to the celestial flesh of Jesus, posed a problem for the early English General Baptists but did not gain acceptance by them.<sup>62</sup> Dietrich (or Dirk) Philips in his *Enchiridion* identified seven "ordinances" of the true church<sup>63</sup> and its

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<sup>53</sup> "Confession of 1532" and "The Admonition of 1542," in *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, trans. and ed. William Klassen and Walter Klaassen, vol. 2, Classics of the Radical Reformation (Scottsdale, PA, and Kitchener, ON: Herald, 1978), 108-57, 160-302; Klassen and Klaassen, Introduction to "Confession of 1532," 107.

<sup>54</sup> In *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, c. 1496-1561*, trans. Leonard Verduin and ed. John Christian Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1956), 103-226.

<sup>55</sup> In *ibid.*, 227-87.

<sup>56</sup> "A Kind Admonition on Church Discipline," "A Clear Account of Excommunication," and "Instruction on Excommunication," in *ibid.*, 407-18, 455-85, 959-98.

<sup>57</sup> "Brief and Clear Confession," "The Incarnation of Our Lord," and "Reply to Martin Micron," in *ibid.*, 419-54, 783-834, 835-913.

<sup>58</sup> Stassen, "Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the Particular Baptists," 322-48, esp. 347.

<sup>59</sup> "Short Confession of Faith in 20 Articles by John Smyth" (1609), art. 18; "A Short Confession of Faith" (1610), art. 34; "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdame in Holland" (1611), art. 18, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 101, 111, 121. The only confession favorable to shunning seems to have been "Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion" (1612-14), art. 80, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 139.

<sup>60</sup> J. C. Wenger, "Introduction" to "Brief and Clear Confession," in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, 420.

<sup>61</sup> See Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 325-32. As to Menno's slight alteration of Hofmann's doctrine, see *ibid.*, 395-96, 503.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Helwys opposed all forms of denial that Jesus took his human body from Mary in his *An Advertisement or Admonition unto the Congregations, which Men Call the New Fryelers* and "accused John Smyth of accepting the Christology of the Mennonites." James Robert Coggins, *John Smyth's Congregation: English Separatism, Mennonite Influence and the Elect Nation*, vol. 32, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History (Scottsdale, PA, Waterloo, ON: Herald, 1991), 123-26. "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," art. 8, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 119.

<sup>63</sup> Pure doctrine, two sacraments, footwashing, evangelical separation, command of disciples to love one another, keeping of Christ's commandments, and endurance of persecution: "The Church of God," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 240-55.

twelve "notes,"<sup>64</sup> the latter drawn from the New Testament Apocalypse. The early English Baptists would also identify and characterize the church as distinct from the eschatological kingdom of God. Baptists have not accepted the teaching about the community of goods set forth by the Hutterite theologian, Peter Rideman,<sup>65</sup> but some of his ecclesiological images<sup>66</sup> were employed by later Baptists.

What specific Anabaptist teachings, therefore, can be identified as possibly influencing, even indirectly, the English Baptists? In answering this question, we will utilize two Mennonite confessions of faith, the Waterland Confession (1580) and the Dordrecht Confession {1632}.<sup>67</sup> First, there is believer's baptism as constitutive of a gathered or truly ordered church. The Schleithem Articles<sup>68</sup> and the Waterland Confession<sup>69</sup> specified believer's baptism, and the Dordrecht Confession<sup>70</sup> related it to incorporation into the church. An early Helwys confession<sup>71</sup> was explicit both about believer's baptism and the constituting of churches, whereas other General and Particular Baptist confessions<sup>72</sup> only affirmed believer's baptism. A possible negation of such Mennonite influence comes from Irwin B. Horst's argument that so-called Anabaptists in pre-Elizabethan England did not practice believer's baptism.<sup>73</sup> But the Separatists retained pedobaptism, and John Smyth's congregation was in Amsterdam. For William R. Estep, Jr., there was "little doubt that Mennonite influence played a role in Smyth's rethinking of the biblical teachings on baptism and the church."<sup>74</sup>

Second, there is church discipline as necessary to the life of the true church, especially on the basis of Matt. 18:15-17. Anabaptist confessions<sup>75</sup> clearly specified admonition and excommunication, or the ban, and the same was true of early English General and Particular

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<sup>64</sup> The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, its having come down from heaven, a bride, the glory of God, high walls, twelve gates, without temple yet purified by tribulation, the gates being open, stream of living water and trees of life, inclusion of Gentiles and exclusion of the wicked, and servants seeing, serving, and reigning with the Lord, in *ibid.*, 255-60.

<sup>65</sup> *Account of Our Religion, Doctrine and Faith*, trans. Kathleen E. Hasenberg (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), 88-91.

<sup>66</sup> Especially holy people, bride, body, assembly of the true children of God, gathering by the Holy Spirit, light of the world, and community of saints. *Ibid.*, 38-44, 114.

<sup>67</sup> For the texts, see Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 44-66, 67-78.

<sup>68</sup> Art. 1, in *ibid.*, 25.

<sup>69</sup> Art. 31, in *ibid.*, 60.

<sup>70</sup> Art. 7, in *ibid.*, 71.

<sup>71</sup> "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," arts. 13, 14, in *ibid.*, 120.

<sup>72</sup> "Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion," art. 70; First London Confession of Particular Baptists, art. 39; Second London Confession of Particular Baptists, art. 29, sect. 2, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 137, 167, 291.

<sup>73</sup> *The Radical Brethren: Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558*, vol. 2, Bibliotheca Humanistica and Reformatorica (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1972), 178.

<sup>74</sup> *Revolution within the Revolution*, 45. See also Estep, "On the Origins of English Baptists," *Baptist History and Heritage* 22 (April 1987): 19-26.

<sup>75</sup> Schleithem Articles, art. 2; Waterland Confession, art. 35, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 25, 62.

Baptist confessions.<sup>76</sup>

Third, there is the elevation of the New Testament in authority over the Old Testament, especially in matters of ecclesiology. Marpeck had elevated the New Testament while retaining the canonicity and inspiration of the Old Testament.<sup>77</sup> Although this elevation of the New Testament is not specifically stated in the earliest Baptist confessions of faith, John Smyth's *Principles and Inferences concerning the Visible Church* (1607)<sup>78</sup> exhibits the much greater reliance on the New Testament.<sup>79</sup>

Fourth, there is the advocacy of religious freedom for all human beings and the absence of persecution. Although the claim that Hubmaier advocated such freedom has been challenged,<sup>80</sup> the advocacy by Menno Simons<sup>81</sup> is rather clear. Likewise, Smyth,<sup>82</sup> Helwys,<sup>83</sup> Mark Leonard Busher,<sup>84</sup> and John Murton<sup>85</sup> were advocates.

Finally, the fact needs to be noted that certain Mennonite teachings and practices, identifiably four, were specifically rejected by the early English Baptists. First, Baptists<sup>86</sup> rejected the Anabaptist teaching<sup>87</sup> that Christians ought not to serve as civil magistrates for they must use the sword, although John Smyth was an exception.<sup>88</sup> Second, Baptists<sup>89</sup> rejected the

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<sup>76</sup> "Short Confession of Faith in 20 Articles by John Smyth," art. 17; "A Short Confession of Faith" (1610), arts. 33,34; "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," art. 17; First London Confession of Particular Baptists, arts. 42, 43, in *ibid.*, 101, 110-11, 121, 168.

<sup>77</sup> William Klassen, *Covenant and Community: The Life, Writings and Hermeneutics of Pilgram Marpeck* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 105, 124-30; Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, 3d ed., 193-95.

<sup>78</sup> In *The Works of John Smyth, Fellow of Christ's College*, 1594-8, tercentenary ed., ed. W. T. Whitley, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1915), 1:249-68. Estep, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 41.

<sup>79</sup> For a modern Baptist exposition of the supremacy of the New Testament, see Henry Cook, *What Baptists Stand for* (London: Kingsgate, 1947), 13-24.

<sup>80</sup> See fn. 48 above.

<sup>81</sup> "Foundation of Christian Doctrine," part 3; "A Pathetic Supplication to All Magistrates"; "Brief Defense to All Theologians"; "The Cross of the Saints," in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, 190-226, 525-31, 535-40, 581-622.

<sup>82</sup> "Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion," art. 84, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 140.

<sup>83</sup> Helwys, *A Short Declaration of the Mystery [sic] of Iniquity* (1612), (replica ed.: London: Kingsgate, 1935).

<sup>84</sup> *Religion's Peace; or, A Plea for Liberty of Conscience* (1614), in *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution, 1614-1661*, ed. Edward Bean Underhill (London: J. Haddon, 1846), 1-81.

<sup>85</sup> *Objections Answered by Way of Dialogue*...(1615) and *A Most Humble Supplication of Many of the King's Majesty's Loyal Subjects*...(1620), in *ibid.*, 85-231.

<sup>86</sup> "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," art. 24, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 122-23.

<sup>87</sup> Schleithem Articles, art. 6; Waterland Confession, art. 37, in *ibid.*, 27-28, 63-64.

<sup>88</sup> "A Short Confession of Faith" (1610), art. 35, in *ibid.*, 111-12.

<sup>89</sup> Second London Confession of Particular Baptists, art. 24, sect. 2, in *ibid.*, 284.

Anabaptist teaching<sup>90</sup> that Christians ought not to be soldiers but rather be nonresistant. Third, Baptists,<sup>91</sup> with the exception of John Smyth,<sup>92</sup> rejected the Anabaptist teaching<sup>93</sup> that Christians ought not to take civil oaths. Fourth, Baptists rejected, as noted previously,<sup>94</sup> the Mennonite practice<sup>95</sup> of shunning those who have been excommunicated.

### *English Separatist Puritans*

Separatists we understand to have been those English Puritans who, not being willing to continue to await thoroughgoing reforms in the Church of England, separated therefrom by constituting congregations or conventicles on the basis of a church covenant and congregational polity. B. R. White has insisted that their goal was not so much reformation of the existing church as restitution of New Testament Christianity.<sup>96</sup>

Certain precursors to the Separatists have been identified, although the extent to which the Separatists acknowledged them as their forerunners is disputed. Sectarian "Freewillers"<sup>97</sup> in Kent and Essex during the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553) were cited by Champlin Burrage,<sup>98</sup> but White<sup>99</sup> discounted them as forerunners. The Strangers' Church, composed of foreigners, established by John a Lasco, expelled under Mary, and reconstituted under Elizabeth I, according to Timothy George, "with their own liturgy and discipline, was itself a source of envy on the part of some who found the pace of reformation in the established Church intolerably slow."<sup>100</sup> Secret conventicles, especially one in the London area, during Mary's reign (1553-1558), which seem to have been distinct from the earlier Freewillers,<sup>101</sup> "were sustained by the ministry of itinerant preachers" and practiced excommunication.<sup>102</sup> During the early Elizabethan era there were

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<sup>90</sup> Dordrecht Confession, art. 14, in *ibid.*, 75-76.

<sup>91</sup> "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," art. 25, in *ibid.*, 123.

<sup>92</sup> "A Short Confession of Faith" (1610), art. 36; "Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion," art. 86, in *ibid.*, 112, 140.

<sup>93</sup> Schleithem Articles, art. 7; Waterland Confession, art. 38; Dordrecht Confession, art. 15, in *ibid.*, 29-30, 64, 76.

<sup>94</sup> See fn. 59 above.

<sup>95</sup> Waterland Confession, art. 36; and Dordrecht Confession, art. 17, in *ibid.*, 63, 77.

<sup>96</sup> *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers*, xii, xiii, 2.

<sup>97</sup> O. T. Hargrave, "The Freewillers in the English Reformation," *Church History* 37 (September 1968): 271-80, who identified these as "Arminians *avant la lettre*" (280).

<sup>98</sup> *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research, 1550-1641*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1912; rpt. ed.: New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 1:50-53; 2:1-6.

<sup>99</sup> *The English Separatist Tradition*, 2-3.

<sup>100</sup> *John Robinson and the English Separatist Tradition*, no.1, NABPR Dissertation Series (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1982), 16.

<sup>101</sup> W. M. S. West, "The Anabaptists and the Rise of the Baptist Movement," in *Christian Baptism: A Fresh Attempt to Understand the Rite in Terms of Scripture, History, and Theology*, ed. Alec Gilmore (Philadelphia: Judson, 1959), 255.

<sup>102</sup> George, *John Robinson and the English Separatist Tradition*, 17-23. White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 6-14, has treated these as precursors to the Separatists.

congregations that were distinct from the Church of England as to worship and met in private homes, but they left no evidence of any teaching or practice of a covenanted or gathered church.<sup>103</sup> From one of these, the Plumbers' Hall Church in London, Puritan rather than Separatist,<sup>104</sup> which claimed a biblical warrant for church reform and practiced church discipline,<sup>105</sup> some members departed and united with the Privy Church.<sup>106</sup> The latter, led by Richard Fitz, was clearly Separatist vis-à-vis the Church of England,<sup>107</sup> indeed "the first-known congregation in England which had a covenant." "To obey this covenant each member separately pledged himself and then took communion as a ratification of his consent."<sup>108</sup>

Major writings by Separatist authors gave expression to Separatist principles.<sup>109</sup> Robert Harrison (?-1585?) in *A Treatise of the Church and the Kingdome of Christ* (c.1580) equated the church and the kingdom, enjoined the observance of Matt. 18:15-17, and defended a separated and gathered church.<sup>110</sup> Robert Browne's (1550?-1633) *A Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Anie* (1582) endorsed the civil duties of the magistrates but denied them the power to reform the church, conceived of the risen Christ as ruling covenanted congregations, and called on Puritans not to "tarry" for magisterial reform.<sup>111</sup> Henry Barrow (1550?-1593) in *Four Causes of Separation* (1587) identified the false manner of worshiping the true God, the ungodly members retained in churches, the anti-Christian ministry imposed on the churches, and the anti-Christian polity of churches.<sup>112</sup> Barrow and John Greenwood (?-1593) in *The True Church and the False Church* (1588) extended the list of marks of the false church to eleven,<sup>113</sup> and Barrow in *A True Description out of the Worde of God, of the Visible Church* (1589) prescribed a fivefold ministry (pastor, doctor, elders, deacons, widows).<sup>114</sup> Barrow's anti-Anglican polemic reached its full expression in *A Brief Discoverie of the False Church* (1590).<sup>115</sup> Henry Ainsworth (1571-1622?) answered the Oxford doctors in *An Apologie or Defence of Such True Christians*

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<sup>103</sup> West, "The Anabaptists and the Rise of the Baptist Movement," 258.

<sup>104</sup> Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 1:79-86.

<sup>105</sup> George, *John Robinson and the English Separatist Tradition*, 27-31.

<sup>106</sup> Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 278.

<sup>107</sup> Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 1:86-93; 2:9-18; White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 29-32; Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 179-80.

<sup>108</sup> West, "The Anabaptists and the Rise of the Baptist Movement," 258-59.

<sup>109</sup> McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 27-32, has labeled Robert Browne's congregation "the pioneer church," Francis Johnson's "the ancient church," John Robinson's "the pilgrim church," and Henry Jacob's "the JLJ church."

<sup>110</sup> For the text, see *The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne*, ed. Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson, vol. 2, Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), 31-69.

<sup>111</sup> For the text, see *ibid.*, 151-70. White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 58-62.

<sup>112</sup> For the text, see *The Writings of Henry Barrow*, 1587-1590, vol. 3, Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), 54-66.

<sup>113</sup> For the text, see *The Writings of John Greenwood; 1587-1590, together with the Joint Writings of Henry Barrow and John Greenwood; 1587-1590*, vol. 4, Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), 98-102.

<sup>114</sup> For the text, see *The Writings of Henry Barrow*, 2:4-23.

<sup>115</sup> For the text, see *ibid.*, 263-673.

as *One Commonly (but Unjustly) Called Brownists* (1604),<sup>116</sup> whereas Francis Johnson (1562-1618) in *Certayne Reasons and Arguments Proving That It Is Not Lawfull to Heare or Have Any Spiritual Communion with the Present Ministerie of the Church of England* (1608)<sup>117</sup> set forth seven reasons.

The Separatist congregation in London of which Francis Johnson was pastor, but which was exiled in Amsterdam without Johnson and which then chose Henry Ainsworth as pastor, framed in 1596 a confession of faith entitled *A True Confession*. It expressed Calvinistic doctrine and congregational polity and would be used "as a model" by Particular Baptist churches in London when they framed their 1644 Confession.<sup>118</sup> Among its major doctrines were divine foreordination to salvation and to condemnation, the fall of Adam and its consequences, Christ's offices as mediator, prophet, priest, and king, the royal priesthood of the people of God, the identification of the church with Christ's spiritual kingdom, the fivefold ministry, congregational polity, and the duty of civil magistrates to suppress false religions and established the true religion.<sup>119</sup>

What specific Separatist doctrines may have positively influenced the early English Baptists? First, there is humanity's Adamic disability. The First London Confession of Particular Baptists<sup>120</sup> employed language almost identical to that of *A True Confession*,<sup>121</sup> and the Second London Confession,<sup>122</sup> being a revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith, was even more specific as to humanity's being "in" Adam and Eve when they fell. Second, we take note of the Bible as the rule of faith and practice. *A True Confession* described the Bible as "the rule of this knowledge, faith and obedience,"<sup>123</sup> and the Second London Confession, modifying the Westminster's language, declared "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience."<sup>124</sup> Third, the royal priesthood of all Christians seems to have come to the Baptists from Separatism. Whereas both Anabaptist<sup>125</sup> and Separatist<sup>126</sup> documents referred to the offices of Christ as prophet, priest, and king, only *A True Confession*<sup>127</sup> specifically and in detail taught the universal Christian priesthood. Fourth, there is congregational polity, about which the Separatists were very explicit. *A True Confession*<sup>128</sup> explains the congregation's duties respecting its ministers, excommunication and its careful use, and mutual counsel and help among congregations. A Helwys confession taught

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<sup>116</sup> Photocopy from Cambridge University Library.

<sup>117</sup> Photocopy from Bodleian Library, Oxford.

<sup>118</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 79-81.

<sup>119</sup> For the text, see *ibid.*, 82-97.

<sup>120</sup> Art. 5, in *ibid.*, 158.

<sup>121</sup> Art. 5, in *ibid.*, 83.

<sup>122</sup> Second London, art. 6, esp. sects. 2, 3, in *ibid.*, 258-59; Westminster, art. 6, esp. sects. 2, 3, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., 4th ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), 3:615-16.

<sup>123</sup> Art. 7, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 84.

<sup>124</sup> Second London, art. 1, sect. 1, in *ibid.*, 248; Westminster, art. 1, in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3:600-606.

<sup>125</sup> Waterland Confession, arts. 11, 12, 14, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 50-51.

<sup>126</sup> *A True Confession*, arts. 10, 12-18, in *ibid.*, 85-88.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, arts. 14, 17, in *ibid.*, 85-86, 87.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, arts. 22-25, 38, in *ibid.*, 89-90, 94.

that no congregation should assert any "prerogative" over another,<sup>129</sup> the First London Confession spelled out the authority of each congregation to choose its officers,<sup>130</sup> and the Second London Confession taught that congregations have authority over their worship and discipline and for choosing and ordaining both bishops or elders and deacons.<sup>131</sup>

But there were some Separatist teachings which were rejected or at least not accepted by early English Baptists. First, there is double predestination, which was clearly taught in *A True Confession*,<sup>132</sup> whereas the First London Confession<sup>133</sup> referred only to election to salvation and vengeance toward, not foreordination of, the non-elect. According to the Second London Confession<sup>134</sup> the non-elect are "left to act in their sin to their just condemnation" in what some call the doctrine of preterition (passing over). Moreover, the Westminster Confession's references to foreordination "to everlasting death" and ordination to wrath were deleted.<sup>135</sup> The Orthodox Creed of General Baptists, building upon the Westminster, relocated and rewrote the doctrine of divine decrees so as to treat them as conditional.<sup>136</sup> Second, the doctrine of double reconciliation was not retained. According to *A True Confession*,<sup>137</sup> not only are elect human being reconciled to God through the death of Jesus Christ but also God is reconciled to elect humans through the cross. But the First London Confession<sup>138</sup> referred only to Christ's reconciliation of the elect, and the Second London<sup>139</sup> likewise affirmed single reconciliation. Third, some functions of civil magistrates taught by Separatists were rejected by Baptists. As previously noted, according to *A True Confession*<sup>140</sup> magistrates have the power and function of suppressing false religions and establishing the true religion. On the other hand, the First London Confession<sup>141</sup> acknowledged subjection to king and parliament as to civil laws but declared that conscientious objection to some ecclesiastical laws may be necessary. The framers of the Second London Confession<sup>142</sup> deleted the Westminster doctrine of the suppression of false religions and emphasized generally obedience to and prayer for magistrates. Fourth, whereas *A True Confession*<sup>143</sup> never questioned or deviated from pedobaptism, the earliest Baptist confessions of faith<sup>144</sup> clearly taught believer's baptism.

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<sup>129</sup> "A Declaration of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," arts. 11-12, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 120.

<sup>130</sup> Art. 36, in *ibid.*, 166.

<sup>131</sup> Art. 26, sects. 7-9, in *ibid.*, 286-87.

<sup>132</sup> Art. 3, in *ibid.*, 82-83.

<sup>133</sup> Arts. 5-6, in *ibid.*, 158.

<sup>134</sup> Art. 3, sect. 3, in *ibid.*, 254.

<sup>135</sup> Second London, art. 3, sects. 3, 6-7, in *ibid.*, 254-55; Westminster, art. 3, sects. 3, 7, in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3:608-10.

<sup>136</sup> Arts. 9-10, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 302-4.

<sup>137</sup> Art. 14, in *ibid.*, 85-86.

<sup>138</sup> Art. 17, in *ibid.*, 160-61.

<sup>139</sup> Art. 8, sect. 5, in *ibid.*, 262.

<sup>140</sup> Art. 39, in *ibid.*, 94-95.

<sup>141</sup> Arts. 49, 52, in *ibid.*, 169, 170.

<sup>142</sup> Art. 24, in *ibid.*, 283-84; Westminster, art. 23, in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3:652-55.

<sup>143</sup> Art. 35, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 93.

In summary, Baptists have adhered to the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines formulated by the first four ecumenical councils and expressed in the earliest Christian creeds. They have shared with medieval sectarian and reforming groups anti-ascetical, anti-sacramental, and primitivist intentions. They seem to have been indebted to various magisterial Reformers: Luther for the supremacy of the Scriptures over tradition, for justification by grace through faith, and the priesthood of all Christians; Zwingli for a memorialist understanding of the Lord's Supper; Bucer for church discipline as essential to the true church, and Calvin for predestination as a major doctrine. Continental Anabaptist influence can most clearly be seen in believer's baptism as constitutive of a truly ordered church, church discipline as necessary, the New Testament as superior to the Old Testament, and religious freedom for all humans. English Separatist influence can be most accurately identified in terms of humanity's Adamic disability, the Bible as the rule of faith and practice, the priesthood of all Christians, and congregational polity .

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<sup>144</sup> "Short Confessions of Faith in 20 Articles by John Smyth," art. 14; A Short Confession of Faith (1610), art. 29; "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland," art. 14; "Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion," art. 70; First London Confession, art. 39; Midland Association Confession, art. 13; Standard Confession of General Baptists, art. 11; Second London Confession, art. 29, sect. 2; and Orthodox Creed of General Baptists, art. 28, in *ibid.*, 101, 109-10, 120, 137, 167, 199, 228-29, 291, 317-18.