

An Historical Examination

into

Baptismal Usage in the

Reformed Churches of

Scotland.

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## Declaration.

I declare this thesis to be the result of my own research and I believe its contents to be an original contribution to learning in the following points :

1. There is no existing survey of the field on such a comprehensive scale.
2. Manuscript sources in Scotland and elsewhere have been explored.
3. A considerable amount of field work has been done in the inspection of baptismal vessels.
4. The compilation of a bibliography of works on baptism printed in Scotland has been attempted.

The thesis includes many other items which have not been brought together before e.g. the sections on baptismal hymnody; on customs; registers, and the like.

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## Introduction.

All branches of the Christian Church in Scotland, with the exception of the Society of Friends, acknowledge the sacrament of baptism to be a perpetual ordinance of Jesus Christ according to his valedictory command,

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost".<sup>1</sup>.

It is the purpose of this investigation to set down in a descriptive manner the methods by which the Churches in Scotland dealt with this sacrament from the Reformation to the present day. The emphasis is placed on usage rather than on doctrine. The two, of course, are inseparable for usage is normally based on what is considered to be an adequate reason, and a reason presumes some theological scheme. The aim, however, is not to compile a history<sup>of</sup> doctrinal interpretation so much as a history of method, and to attempt a conspectus of baptismal usage which will be both comprehensive in matter and in temporal development. This will enable the broad sweep of the history of the sacrament to be reviewed with the corollary benefit of providing premisses from which conclusions may be drawn in the laboratory of time.

1. Matt. 28, 19.



The themes that arise in the course of such a review are so manifold, that in order to get an arrangement which would help toward an appreciation of the several items the subject has been dealt with topically. This will involve slight overlapping in the various sections ; but it avoids the very great difficulties which a chronological narrative would create in the way of grasping the history of usage in one particular from among the complex of other issues.

The temporal succession of events as it relates to the subject dealt with in any particular section has been emphasised in the description of the subject as it arose and was accepted, rejected, applied, modified or enlarged by the non-Roman Churches.

If the discussion may be anticipated, reference may be made here to the diversity of contributions which have appeared in relation to the theme as Scottish ecclesiastical history has progressed. The scene is far from being homogeneous. In this Scotland is thoroughly representative of what have been the fortunes of the sacrament in other lands. Uniformity was an ideal of the first Reformers who piloted the revolt against the Roman Church and brought the movement through the stormy waters of the transition period. It was achieved de jure; but never completely de facto. There were always dissentients from legal orthodoxy and, no doubt, it could not be otherwise where the very principle on which the Reformation moved to its achievements was that of the authority of Jesus Christ as expressed in Holy Writ over against the authority of an institution. To supplant one institution by another, as appeared to happen, did not confer upon

the successor the right to the type of authoritarianism which had been claimed and exercised by the predecessor. If the Church collectively could consult her title deeds so also could the churchmen individually, and by this consultation the latter could attempt an assessment of the value of the former. The priesthood of all believers was a difficult doctrine to marshal under a close-knit ecclesiastical polity. It encouraged emergent factors which could claim a right to emerge.

This had its repercussions in baptismal practice as in other departments of Christian activity. The full effect of it was not immediate, but time brought the utmost diversity of opinion, and Christian people coagulated round what they severally thought to be the more excellent way. The toleration which allowed these opinions to exist side by side with a degree of respect for their advocates was foreign to the spirit in which the Reformation was born; but it was potentially present in principle in the very right by which the Reformers themselves had rejoiced to give battle to Rome. Ideas are not static, nor are they the monopoly of the few, and they are apt to intrude themselves where they are not welcome guests. There was no lack of these in the exegesis of baptism. It is for the succeeding sections to disclose this very rich variety, and by bringing the different schools of thought together ( at least on the printed page ) to offer a statement of their history which may assist in the discernment of the direction from which consistency and harmony may come.



## The Transition Period .

Feeling against the Roman Church and her baptismal usage had simmered long before boiling point was reached in 1560.

The impact of events on the Continent and in England could not be prevented. "This thaire tyranny notwithstanding," wrote Knox of events about 1534, " the knowledge of God did wonderouslie increase within this realme, partlie by reading, partlie by brotherlye conferance, which in those dangerouse dayis was used to the comferte of many; butt cheaflye by the merchantis and marinaris who, by frequenting other cuntreis, heard the trew doctrin affirmed and the vanitie of the Papisticall religioun openlye rebucked" <sup>1</sup>. The subject of baptism was only one of the many points at issue, but in so far as it was raised in this period of preparation the protests made and the line of action taken deserve attention.

### The Lollards.

The earliest liberation from mental and ecclesiastical bondage was assisted by the presence of Lollard groups. Their leavening influence was not spectacular but it was significant. When they came north is uncertain. <sup>2</sup>. It would probably be at the time of the persecution which broke out after Wiclif's death in 1384.

Those of the dispersion who settled in Kyle do not appear to have held any radical position in either the doctrine or practice of baptism, although it is known that Adam Wallace

1. Laing, K.W., I, p.61.  
2. Fleming, Reformation, p.10.

who was born in Kyle <sup>1</sup>. baptised his own child in 1550 for lack of "a trew minister". Whether this was the result of an outlook acquired in Kyle or an isolated incident it is impossible to say. In the Thirty-Four Articles detailed by Knox as the propositions held against the thirty Lollards who were tried for heresy in 1494 baptism is not mentioned, but neither is the reading of the Scriptures, so that the catalogue of their opinions may not be exhaustive. They constituted, as Knox put it, a "sponk of light" though it was a fairly illuminative "sponk" when the nature of the future history of that quarter is reviewed.

To encourage them in dissent from the Roman rite they had precedents tracable back to Wiclif himself who, while his main sacramental position is in the interpretation of the Mass, was critical of all the Roman sacraments. Among the Twenty-Four Conclusions affirmed by a Council in London in 1382 to have been extracted from his writings, the fourth runs, "That if a bishop or priest be in mortal sin he does not ordain, consecrate or baptise".<sup>2</sup> This anticipates the argument of Adam Wallace. Lechler challenged the correctness of this accusation, at least as coming from the author direct.<sup>3</sup> "Now", he wrote, "so far as my knowledge of the writings of Wycliffe reaches, there is not to be found in them a single expression in which the saving efficacy of the sacraments is made dependent, in language free from ambiguity, upon the moral and religious worthiness of the ministrant priest". Certainly in De Ecclesia this is quite clear. Christ as the principal minister of the sacraments may supply any defect in the priest. "The foreknown", he argued, "even when in actual sin can minister the sacraments with profit to others" though he may at the same time minister to his own damnation.<sup>4</sup>

1. Laing, K.W., 1.545.
2. Docs. of the C. Church, p.243.
3. John Wycliffe...., trans. Lorimer, pp.335-338.
4. De Ecclesia, Wyclif Scy. edn, p448f.

The mature thought of Wiclif is to be found in the Trialogos which Workman assigns to his later years and there it is emphasised that baptism of itself is of little avail if there is not also "the washing of the mind by the Holy Spirit".<sup>1</sup> This early critic of Roman ways also thought it probable that unbaptised infants would be saved by a special act of grace on the part of Christ, thus opposing the entrenched opinion of the Roman Church that there was a special department of hell called "limbus" or "infernus puerorum" inhabited by unbaptised infants.<sup>2</sup> The appeal to Scripture and the hard-hitting criticism of the reformer were suggestive enough to many of his followers and it was widely reported that they were hesitant about infant baptism.

There must have been a considerable Lollard influence coming from the students who went south from Scotland in search of learning at Oxford which was from the first a centre of Lollardy. Great numbers of safe-conducts were issued to facilitate the journeys of the students and, while there is no direct evidence to prove a connection between these returning students and the growth of heresy, it would be surprising if the critical ideas current at Oxford were not mooted in some homes in Scotland. Only the inflow of opinions by such means can explain the alarmist references to Wiclif and the Lollards on the part of the Scottish Church. In 1398 an oath to suppress Lollardy was introduced to the coronation service,<sup>3</sup> and when the new university was founded at St. Andrews it was thought advisable to have all who proposed to take a Master's degree to bind themselves to resist all who supported the Lollards.

A curious reference occurs in the Annals Ecclesiastici of Raynaldus which connects an unknown group of Lollards (haeretici Wicleffistae) with unorthodox views of baptism. 1. Trialogos IX, p.156. 2. Useful digest, Wall, Infant Baptism, A.&M.Lib. edn, 2, pp.105-113. 3. Acta Pl.Sc.1. pp.572-573.

Speaking of the year 1420 this historian chronicles that, "In Scotia hoc circiter anno deprehensi sunt haeretici Wicleffistae nonnulli, qui docebant infantes fidelium parentum non esse baptismo abluendos, quod iactarent Spiritus Sancti gratiam in eos infundi; neque confirmationis sacramentum usurpandum, quod abunde Divino verbo confirmarentur."<sup>1</sup>. This contention that children of Christian parentage have the grace of the Holy Spirit anticipates Calvinism, but the latter did not go so far as to maintain that on this ground baptism was irrelevant. That was the thesis of the Anabaptists.

Had the Lollard movement flourished with greater strength in Scotland it might well have developed into an Anabaptist type.<sup>2</sup>

Patrick Hamilton.

No other useful references to baptism have been found until the trial of Patrick Hamilton, 1527/8. His doubts about the sacrament were confined to the interpretation of it. Among the articles held against him was the following; "That the sayd Mr. Patricke himself doubted whether all children departing incontinent after their Baptisme, are saved or condemned".<sup>3</sup> In the sentence pronounced against him the matter is put more definitely.

"We have found also, that he hath affirmed, published, and taught divers opinions of Luther, and wicked heresies, after that he was summoned to appeare before us and our council... ..That children incontinent after their baptisme are sinners".<sup>4</sup>

Alexander Alesius records that Hamilton was interrogated, inter alia, on the proposition, "That the corruption of sin remains in children after their baptism".<sup>5</sup>

1. Raynaldus, Ann. Eccles. VIII, p. 523. 2. An exhaustive account of Lollardy in Scotland will be found in MS. thesis by MacNab, Scottish Lollardy, Glas. Univ. Lib. 4. Laing, K.W., l.p. 510. 5. Lorimer, Presursors of Knox, p. 143.

No reference to baptism occurs in Patrick's Places as recorded by Knox, and the foundation of the charge must have been the preaching of Hamilton, which when reproduced he admitted. The opinion that original sin was not fully dealt with in baptism was common to all the Protestants and was bound up with their denial of the sacrament of Penance as a method of dealing with post-baptismal sin. The Reformers were not prepared to draw such a sharp distinction as the Romanists between pre-baptismal and post-baptismal offences.

Sir James Borthwick.

Another interesting expression of dissatisfaction appears in the protest of Sir. John Borthwick in 1540.<sup>1</sup> He was cited to appear before Cardinal Beaton and his colleagues on 28th. May, 1539/40, immediately after the baptism of Prince James. Whether he had been outspoken on that occasion or not is not known, but it would appear probable that the presence of the English ambassador, whom he attended by command of the King, would be an opportunity for discussing reformation generally, and baptism in particular. He escaped from the country and penned a defence of his action, preserved by Foxe, in which he states that he finds no difference between the position in Scotland and that in England except that in the latter country they had "cast off the yoke of Antichrist. "The profaning of the Supper and Baptisme", he went on, " was alike unto them both". What he would support in place of the profanation is not stated.

Legislation against Heresy.

By this date, 1540, the reforming spirit was developing

1. St. Andrews K.S. Reg. 1.p.      Laing, K.W., 1.p.153.



rapidly. From about 1525 Tyndale's New Testament was being circulated furtively and no influence toward reformation in religious matters exceeded that which acquaintance with the Scriptures produced. The same year saw an Act, "Anent the dampnable opunzeouns of heresy", put into the Statute Book. It bluntly called the new opinions "filthe and vice" and ordained that no strangers should be allowed to carry in any Lutheran propaganda. A letter of James V to the authorities at Aberdeen bears witness to the need of drastic action in that area in the same year as the Act.<sup>1</sup> Ideas travel fast, however, and Scotland was ready to absorb them from whatever quarter they came. Another Act was found necessary in 1535, "For eschewing of heresy within this realm and the panis thereof". There were those who preferred truth to life itself and martyrdoms increased. In 1540 the laws were augmented by yet another attempt to batten down the critical disposition of many minds, entitled "Of fugitives suspect and summoned for heresy". Special mention was made of the sacraments in the order of the Privy Council, June 2, 1543, against "Sacramentaris", which presumes that the land was alarmingly well supplied with citizens who were expressing their doubts on the cardinal tenets of the Roman Church. In order to curb the zeal of the sceptics and thwart their influence it was ordered that "na man disput or hald openionis of the sacramentis, nor of the effect or essence thair of, uther wayis nor is ellis ressavit be the Haly Kirk, under pane of tinsale of lif, landis, and gudis".<sup>2</sup>

1. M'Crie, Knox, 7th. edn., appendix, p.444.

2. Robertson's Statuta, II, p.294.

In addition to the heretical opinions infiltrating in through the seaports, Cranmer, and others, in England were busy sponsoring an attack by land. This was a strategic move to preserve the progress made in the south as well as, no doubt, a genuine desire to assist in spiritual enlightenment. Prisoners who had been taken in the wars were indoctrinated before being allowed to depart homeward. The Earl of Cassilis, for example, actually lodged for a time at Lambeth and was instructed in the new ideas. Barlow, Bishop of St. David's, was equipped with some copies of "The Institution of a Christian Man", and despatched to do some canvassing in Scotland. The volume had been composed in 1537 by Cranmer and his colleagues as an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, the seven Sacraments, the Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. The missionary was not able to report a very promising situation for the type of outlook he represented. The literature he carried, said Strype, "made no great impression on that people".<sup>1</sup> Whether the propagandist was not a good advocate of his cause, or whether the cause itself was the reason for the lack of enthusiasm is uncertain. If the bishop was unable to discern the signs of the times at least the Scottish ecclesiastics did not underestimate them for they petitioned the candidate for the See of St. Andrews, John Hamilton, in March, 1546/7 for "help and remeid against the pestitential hersie of Luther".<sup>2</sup> They bitterly

1. Strype, Cranmer, p.140.

2. Keith, History, I, p.147.

complained against the extensiveness of the enemy's infiltrations and asserted that the followers of the new way were not only "in the far parts of the Realme, but als (come) to the Court and presens of your Lordships, and sometimes preaches opinlie, and instructs utheris". This alarmist mood must have had an adequate cause which appeared to be sufficiently ominous to those who were in a favourable position to assess the situation.

George Wishart.

A great step forward was taken in the presentation of systematic Reformed doctrine with the return of George Wishart to Scotland about the year 1544. The translation by Wishart of the First Helvetic Confession pioneered the way for many other documents of the same type in Scottish history. It was not published until after the translator's martyrdom. That it was actually used by Wishart may be inferred from the "Decla<sup>ti</sup>on" appended, which states that "It was our pleasure to use these wordes at this present tyme..."<sup>1</sup> The martyr is known to have organised congregations in Scotland and it seems likely that he would counsel the adoption of some such set of principles.<sup>2</sup>

Section XX of the Confession is "Of the Power or Strengthe of Sacraments". They are stated to be two, "Baptyme and Howslynge", the latter being defined in section XXIII as "the Holy Supper of thankes". "These be tokens of secret things" and "are not of naked synes. For in Baptisme the water is the sygne, but the thyng and veritie is regeneracyon and adopcion in the people of God".

1. Reprinted, Wodrow Society, Miscallany I.

2. Mitchell, Scottish Reformation, p.75.

Article XXI, Of Baptym, may be quoted in full.

"We affyrme Baptym to be the institucion of the Lord exhibiteth to his chosen by a visible syhne by the ministracion of the congregacion as is aforesayde. In the which holy laver we wasse our infantes, for this cause, because it is wychedness to rejecte and caste out of the felowshyp and company of the people of God them that are borne of us, which are the people of God, except them that are expressly commanded to be rejected by the voice of God; and for this cause chefely, because we shulde not presume ungodly of theyr election".

In Article XXIV, Of Heretykes and Sysmattyches, the division of the Church is deplored, "with the whiche evyll the Anabaptistes (Latin text, Catabaptistae) are chefely infecte this tyme".

The evidence at the trial at St. Andrews in 1546 does not mention the Confession. It must be admitted that in the light of the Confession the position stated is strange. Knox, probably working on notes and memory, says that the admissions of Wishart were as follows:

"First and chieflie, since the tyme I came into this realme, I tawght nothing but the Ten Commandmentis of God, the Twelf Articles of the Fayth, and the Prayer of the Lord in the mother toung. Moirovir, in Dundy, I tawght the Epistill of Sanct Paule to the Romanes".

When accused of saying that there were not seven sacraments, he answered,

"I tawght never of the number of the Sacramentis, whither thei war sevin, or ane ellevin. So many as ar instituted by Christ, and ar schawin to us by the Evangell, I profess opinlie"

The accusation of unorthodoxy with regard to the sacrament of baptism came in the form of the charge,

"Thow Heretike didst say openlye, that is was necessary to everie man to know and understand his Baptisme and that it was contrarie to Generall Counsallis, and the Estaites of Holy Churche".<sup>1</sup>.

The answer to this makes use of an analogy.

"My Lordis, I beleve thare be none so unwyse hear, that will mak merchandise with ane Frenche man, or any other unknowin stranger, except he know and understand first the condition and promise maid by the French man or stranger. So lyikwyse I wold that we understood what thing we promeis in the name of the infante unto God in Baptisme: For this caus, I beleve, ye have Confirmatioun".

From these statements it would appear that the Reformer strove to make judicious answers and an inference to be made from them is that in his ministry he tried to be suggestive rather than dogmatic. His aim was to propose reformation, not to impose it, to lead rather than to drive. There is no evidence to show that he used the Swiss Confession in Scotland, rather the contrary, but it is scarcely possible to believe that he ignored it's contents. There would be ample scope for its message when expounding the Epistle to the Romans.

St. Leonard's Yards.

The man who had carried the mundane sword of Wishart, was in due course called to carry the spiritual sword also. John Knox was invited to leave the seclusion of his tutorial work at Longniddry and become to colleague of John Rough, chaplain to the Castle group at St. Andrews, and he threw himself immediately into the animated discussions on the Reformation doctrines which were proceeding in the town.

1. Laing, K.W., 1, p. 158.

In his first public sermon he committed himself to a programme more thorough than any advocated by his predecessors. He punched hard and often. The sequel was a gathering in St. Leonard's Yards to examine both Rough and Knox. Nine articles were set forth as the substance of the conflict and the fourth ran thus :

"The Sacramentis of the New Testament aucht to be ministred as thei war institut by Christ Jesus, and practised by his Apostles; nothing awght to be added to thame; nothing awght to be diminished from thame."

This was a position which was to be reiterated again and again in the succeeding years and from it Knox never professed to depart. The determining factor in sacramental usage was not Councils, Traditions or Papal decisions but the original warrant. The history of the Reformation is the history of this principle.

The examination began with reference to this affirmation. It was fundamental. Winram asserted that the "Ceremonies to decore the Sacramentis" were justifiable. "It is in fayth that the ceremonyes ar commanded, and thei have proper significationis to help our fayth; as the hardis in Baptisme signifie the rowchnes of the law, and the oyle the softnes of Goddis mercy".<sup>1</sup>.

To this Knox answered:

"It is not yneucht that man invent a ceremonye, and then geve it a signification, according to his pleasure. For so mycht the ceremonyes of the Gentiles, and this day the ceremonyes of Mahomeit, be mainteaned. But yf that anything procead from fayth, it man have the word of God for this assurance; for ye ar nott ignorant, "That fayth cumis by

1. Laing, K.W., 1, p.195.

hearing, and hearing by the word of God'. Now, yf ye will prove that your ceremonyes proceed from fayth, and do please God, ye man prove that God in expressed wordis hes commanded thame: or ellis shall ye never prove, That thei proceed from fayth, nor yitt that thei please God; but that they are synne, and do displease him, according to the wordis of the Apostill, 'Whatsoever is nott of fayth is synne'".

This reply could not have been more uncompromising. Winram shrewdly judged that the weakest link was not in the principle of faith but <sup>in</sup> the demand that everything done in the name of Christ should have express warrant in Scripture.

"Will ye bind us so strait, that we may do nothing without the expresse word of God? What! and I ask a drynk? think ye that I synne? and yitt I have nott Goddis word for me".

To this Knox replied that he had Scripture consent to eat and drink and "that yf ye eyther eat or drynk without assurance of Goddis worde, that in so doing ye displease God, and ye synne into your verray eattng and drynking".

The Dean did not pursue the topic and passed on the debate to the grey friar Arbuckill who promptly asserted that the ceremonies of the Church were grounded in Scripture. To him Knox answered, "Such as God hes ordeyned we allow, and with reverence we use thame. But the questioun is of those that God hes nott ordeyned, such as, in Baptisme, ar spattill, salt, candill, cuide, (except it be to keap the barne from cald), hardis, oyle, and the rest of the Papistical inventionis". All that the friar could produce by way of proof text was that the foundation laid by Jesus Christ was ~~to~~ built upon by gold, silver and precious stones, which "it is most plaine", are the ceremonies of the Church. Knox made short work of that argument, and the friar shifted to another, "That the Apostles had not received the Holy Ghost, when they did wryte there Epistles; but after, thei receaved him, and then

thei did ordeyn the Ceremonies". This, commented Knox, was a very foolish answer for such a learned man. The point of it, however, that the Holy Spirit had been given to the Church as well as the Scriptures was not so foolish, and if the friar had got hold of it in another form he might have retired with more credit. As it was the inability of the Roman representatives to dislodge the truculent Knox from his platform resulted in accessions to the Reforming Party in later years. Winram himself was one of the six Johns who prepared the Scots Confession of Faith.

Adam Wallace.

In 1550 Adam Wallace was brought before an imposing court of nobles and ecclesiastics at Edinburgh. Foxe's account of his trial mentions only his courageous testimony against the Mass, but Knox in his History supplies the interesting detail that baptism was also mentioned.

"False tratour, heretik, thow baptised thy awin barne:" cried his accuser. "It was and is als lauchfull for me," was the reply, "for lack of a trew minister, to baptise my awin child, as that it was to Abraham to circumcise his sone Ismael and his familie".<sup>1</sup>.

This is evidence of the isolation in which many of the early Protestants lived, but it is also a curious sidelight on the common assertion that infant baptism was analogous to circumcision. The later Reformers were not prepared to support the parallel to this extent even though Knox had counselled the Reforming Party to be priests in their own homes until such times as their cause was victorious. In the action of Wallace there is presented the first example known in Scotland of a non-Roman baptism, and in the light of the controversies which were to flare up in later years,

1. Laing, K.W., 1, pp.239-240.



it is most interesting to note that this was a private baptism of a unique sort, and that it was done on the basis which was repudiated by the Genevan tradition, namely, that the character of the administrator did affect the validity of the action. Perhaps this is why Knox adds that he was "a sempill man, without great learning".

The criticisms of the apostate Church which have been preserved can only be a fraction of what was actually expressed. What was being thought by many found literary form in the compositions of Sir David Lindsay who was in close touch with the anti-Roman movement. In his "Complaynt to the King" he asks,

"Cause thame mak ministratioun  
Conforme to thair vocatioun,  
To preche with unfeyneit intentis,  
And trewly use the Sacramentis,  
Efter Christis institutionis " 1.

And in "Kitteis Confessioun" he describes "ane preichour trew" as one who will

"The Sacramentis schaw thee at length,  
The little faith to stark and strength;  
And how thow suld thame rechtlie use,  
And all hypocrisie refuse" 2.

Hamilton's Catechism.

Before the avalanche descended the old Church made an attempt to explain its position to the people. The Latin of the Service Manuals had made Divine Worship an unintelligible performance to the unlearned, apart from the Offices themselves being elaborate in the extreme and wearisome to the listeners. This, together with the widespread contempt of the representatives of the Church on moral grounds, aroused such dissatisfaction that the Provincial Council, in whose hands lay the general oversight, was compelled to pass legislation to abate the flood of criticism.

1. Line 414f.            2. Line 131f.

At the Council held in Edinburgh on the 27th. November, 1549, therefore, there were enacted sixty-eight statutes designed to correct scandals and impose clerical discipline. No one consulting these records can be left in any doubt as to the shocking state of the Holy Church. But the situation had got beyond the control of statutes however solemnly announced. The same Assembly of clerical authorities met some eighteen months later and by their augmentation of the already lengthy list of statutes provided all the evidence required to prove that its effectiveness<sup>ness</sup> was negligible. The sacraments administered by a Church whose own admission was that "the morals of churchmen have now for a long time been corrupted....of almost all ranks, together with crass ignorance of literature and of all the liberal arts"<sup>1</sup>, were bound to be suspected by even the simplest of the people however much academic theory might insist that the character of the administrator did not matter. As means of grace they had not been very efficient among those who ought to have been the principal witnesses to their worth.

The Provincial Council of 1551/2 not only passed purging canons but also took the constructive step of directing that a popular exposition of the Roman rites be prepared and circulated. Thus the year 1552 saw the book known as Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism placed in the hands of the clergy for them to read in the churches when no preacher was present. It was a fully authorised publication embodying the best that the Roman Church could offer. The title announced that it was

"....set furth be the maist reverend father in God, Johnne Archbisshop of sanct Androus, Legatnait and primat of ye Kirk of Scotland, in his provincial counsale haldin at

1. Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559, trans. Patrick, S.H.S., p.84.

Edinburgh the XXVI day of Januarie, the yeir of our Lord 1551, with the <sup>adv</sup>ise and counsale of the bischoppis and uthir prelatiſ with the doctours of Theologie and Canon law of the ſaid realme of Scotland preſent for the tyme..... Prentit at ſanct Androuſ, be command and expreſſe of the maist reverend.....the XXIX day of Auguſt the yeir of our Lord M.D.lii."<sup>1</sup>.

An examination of the paſſages relevant to baptiſm preſentſ the teaching of the immediate Pre-Reformation Church aſ it confronted the Reformers. To underſtand what they ſet themſelves againſt extractſ from thiſ important document may now be preſented.

The ſacrament of baptiſm iſ dealt with in two placeſ, firſt in the expoſition of the Apoſtles' Creed, tenth Article, "The Forgiveness of Sins", and ſecond, in two ſectionſ of the third part of the Catechiſm which deal with the adminiſtration and iſ meaning.

"I beleive fermely," the tenth article directſ the reader to affirm, "that allanerly in the holy Catholyk and Apoſtolik Kirk gadderit be the haly ſpreit, iſ remiſſioun of ſynnſ, be Baptyme, and eftir be Penance, and the keyſ gevin to the Kirk. And certainly Baptyme may be gevin be thame quhilk ar out with the kirk aſ ar all heretikis, ſciſmatykiſ etc. For gif thai pronunce the wordiſ of Baptyme trewly in the forme of the Catholyk Kirk, the perſone ſwa Baptiſit reſſaviſ the full effeck of the ſacrament quhilk iſ remiſſioun of all hiſ ſynnſ and iſ incorporat to the myſtik body of Chriſt. For generally the vertew of all ſacramentiſ ſtandiſ nocht in the gudeness of the miniſter, but in the word of God pronunſit be the miniſter weil, in the forme of the Catholik Kirk, ſa the evil miniſteriſ ſtoppiſ nocht

1. Thiſ, and the following extractſ, from a firſt edition in John Rylandſ Library, Manchester.

the effect of the sacramentis. Thus I beleive fermely that in the Sacrament of Baptyme al synnis ar forgevin, bayth original and actual before committet, and sall nevir be imputit agane.

I beleive that in Baptyme a christin man young or auld is renewit be the haly spreit, delerit fra the thirldom of syn, the devil andhell, and maid a fre man with the fredome of the spreit, that he may stoutly fecht agane the devil, the warld, and the flesche, and be the help of God ouircum thame, and sa with victorie be crownit of God with glore and joy and with Christ evirmair ring in hevin. But and we eftir Baptyme fal in synnis, suppose thai be never sa grevous and mony, we have the second remeid quhilk is the sacrament of Penance, be quhilk remissioun of synnis is gevin be vertew of Christis blude.....This sacrament is the secund tabil or buird quhilk is ordainit to saif al thame that ar schipbrokin eftir Baptyme.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to this passage from the tenth Article, there may be noticed another from the exposition of the fifth, "descended into hell", where the fate of unbaptised infants is made plain.

"Thair is infernus puerorum, the hel quhairin is the saulis of al the barnis that departis of this warld nocht being baptizit, allanerly in original syn without any actual syn, and thair is privatioun of Grace and privatioun of glore, bot na sensibl payne, and the payne of thir barnis is verrai lital, eisy and soft because that thai ar private of grace and glore, nocht throch thair awin actual syn, bot allanerly throch the syn of our first father Adam".

In the third section of the Catechism the explanation of the ritual of the sacrament is of considerable length

1. This metaphor was St. Jerome's and was often used. Luther condemned it in *The Babylonish Captivity*, though he accepted the sacrament of penance. It occurs in *Statutes*, supra, p. 30.

and it will be sufficient to indicate the nature of the exposition.

The sacrament, it is stated, consists of two parts, "The one part is the element of watter, and the other part is the word of God". Water is used because it signifies cleansing, is easily procurable, and was used by John when he baptised Jesus in Jordan. The water must be associated with the word of God. "Tak away this word fra the watter, quhat is the watter bot allanerly watter". Further this word is significant not only because it is spoken by the priest, but "also because it is beleiffit and ferme faith is gevin to it". When these conditions are present the effect of baptism is threefold:

1. There is granted remission of sins.
2. The Holy Spirit is received.
3. The baptised are clad in the righteousness of Christ.

The rite, so far as the laity are concerned, is described in the section headed "Of the ceremonyes usit in the ministratioun of Baptyme". These are used "As ane wyse mother fedis hir young tendir barne with milk and soft meitis, till it may grow to mair perfectioun of strenth".

The successive stages of the Roman ritual are then described with comments.

1. The infant is presented at the door of the church and received by the priest who "makis our the barne ane exorcisme". This is done by blowing on the child to signify that the evil spirit is expelled and the Holy Spirit "sal dwel in it as gyder and governour".
2. Then the sign of the cross is made on the brow and breast to mark the infant as a Christian and to show "that he suld all the daies of his lyfe lippin in Christ Jesus that for him

was crucifyit".

3. Salt is put into the child's mouth as a symbol of purification.

4. The Scripture story of Jesus blessing the children is then read to encourage parents to observe the sacrament.

5. The sponsors place their hands on the infant and repeat the Creed and Lord's Prayer, and in this they are representatives of the whole congregation "quhilk is content that barnis be baptizit".

6. The priest then takes his spittle and wets the nostrils and ears "to signifie that a Christin man suld have ane sweet savoir" and "alwais his eiris opin to heir the word of God".

The baptismal party then enter the church and stand at the font.

7. The name of the child is given and the godparents in the name of the child "renunceis the devil and al his workis" in a threefold affirmation.

8. The anointing with oil follows, first on the breast to "signifie that his is consecrate to God" and between the shoulders to "signifie that God giffis him strenth to do gud deidis".

9. Thereafter the sponsors answer again for the child on "ane Catechism" based on the Apostles' Creed. The infant is then addressed, "Wil thow be baptizit?" The sponsors answer, "I will". The absurd explanation of this is that it is ~~the~~<sup>to</sup> signify "that no man can be saffit bot be the consent of his frewill movit be grace and callit be the word of God".

10. At this stage the baptism proper is administered. The Catechism rules that the mode is not important, some dipping thrice, and some pouring thrice.

11. Chrism is put on the forehead to show that "he is than maid ane Christin man".

12. The ceremonies end with the placing of a white linen cloth ( the cude) over the child to declare that "he is

clene weschin fra all his synnis" and a lighted taper is put in his hand to teach him to "geve the licht of gud exempt to his nychtbour".

The exposition concludes with the reminder that while the ministrant should be a priest "of laudabil lyfe" this is not necessary since it is Christ who gives effect to the baptism. If a priest cannot be had for a dying child baptism must be administered and anyone who knows the formula should do it.

The rite in full was provided in the Sarum Manual and this included forms for the sanctification of the baptismal water, the preparation of the oil and chrism, and other details. It included also two forms of exorcism for male and female children respectively. These forms are interesting for they present a picture of what the Church thought an unbaptised infant possessed, or was possessed by. The form for a male child ran:

"I exorcise thee, O unclean spirit, in the name of God the Father Almighty and on the Son and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go forth and depart from this servant of God, N, for thou accursed one, who art damned and to be damned, He himself commands thee, Who walked upon the sea, and Who stretched forth his right hand to Peter when he was drowning"

The exorcism for a female child was similar but ended with:

"He himself commands thee Who opened the eyes of him that was born blind, and raised Lazarus from the tomb after he had been four days dead".<sup>1</sup>

While this treatise on Roman usage was being issued

1. The Rathen Manual, trans. MacGregor, Transc. Aberdeen Eccles. Soc., 1905. cf. Wodrow MSS., Append. Sect. 29, Liturgy, Secundum Jsum Sarum, Glasgow Univ. Lib.

in Scotland the Catechismus Romanus was being drawn up in conformity to a decree of the Council of Trent and was ultimately issued under the authority of Pius V in 1566. It offered, after the style of the Scottish Catechism, an analysis of the meaning of baptism and a descriptive commentary on the ritual. A comparison of the two Roman documents confirms the Scottish production as thoroughly orthodox on Tridentine standards the variations being in minor details only. A noteworthy addition in the Catechismus Romanus is the discussion of the case of an adult baptism where a somewhat different complexion is put on the meaning of the sacrament. In the case of an infant unworthy reception of Divine grace (obex sacramenti) was not in question, but with an adult this became a possibility. In such a candidate right intention might be absent and this obstruction would prevent reception. Baptised infants enter heaven, but baptised adults may not. The security which the sacrament was said to minister in the former case, cannot be affirmed in the latter. "These ( the benefits of baptism).....as far as regards the efficacy of the sacrament, are, no doubt, common to all; but so far as regards the disposition with which it is received , it is no less certain that all do not participate equally of these heavenly gifts and graces". When discussing the Roman theory this loophole in the opus|operatum principle has to be kept in mind. The "ferme fayth" of the Scottish Catechism when referring to godparents, was expected of the candidates themselves if these were adults, as much by the Roman Church as by the Protestant and, as will be noted at greater length later, the Reformers had to compromise on the sola fide principle when adapting the baptismal service to infants. They differed in their method of getting round the difficulty, and/of the result achieved in their understanding



when it was presumed that it could be got round; but both had to recognised a factor in adult baptism which made it difficult to call the two situations by the same name, the differentiating factor being the presence or absence of a personal confession of faith, a consideration of no mean weight when attempting an assessment of the value of the sacrament.

The last decade.

If the Roman Church was unable to consolidate her position with the help of her friends, it could not be said of the Reforming Party that they were faring much better. There was a marked absence of leaders of conviction and ability to rally the dissentients. The fate of the "Treatise on Justification by Faith " by Balnaves, which Knox had sent on to Scotland, was illustrative of the torpor into which the opposition had sunk in the years immediately following the clearance of the castle at St. Andrews. Parliament renewed the support it had given to the hierarchy in 1551, and the Provincial Council of 1551/2 could boast, that "through the singular favour of the government, and the vigilance of the prelates, heresy which had formerly spread throughout the kingdom, was now suppressed and almost extinguished".<sup>1</sup>.

The exultation was premature for refugees from England soon appeared and conducted an itinerant ministry, a circumstance which kept hope alive in many hearts.

1. M'Crie, Knox, p.82.

These preachers brought with them the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI and its use was sponsored by some of the nobility. Nor were the copies of the Scriptures in circulation to be overlooked, or the literature which supplemented them such as the work of the Wedderburns, which included a piece on baptism. So far as is known, however, the overt actions of the dissatisfied did not include any large scale withholding of children from the Roman sacrament of baptism. There is some obscurity in this period arising out of the scanty nature of the clues and it is not easy to say just what was happening in this respect. Knox provides a general statement which may have been true when he wrote, that "men almost univerrallie begane to dowbt whetther that thei myght ( God nott offended,) give thare bodelye presence to the Messe, or yitt offer thare childrein to the Papisticall Baptisme".<sup>1</sup>

As a general judgment it is probably true to say that men were confused, not knowing which way events would turn. Some were asking for reformation within the Roman Church; others were hoping for that as a temporary measure, while desiring a great deal more. In 1558 what Knox calls, "The First Oratioun, and Petition, of the Protestantes of Scotland to the Quein Regent", requested, inter alia, "That the holy Sacrament of Baptisme may be used in the vulgare tounge; that the godfatheris and witnesses may nott onlie understand the poyntes of the league and contract maid betuix God and the infant, bot also that the Churche then assembled, more gravelie may

1. Laing, K.W., I, 299.

be informed and instructed of thare dewiteis, whiche at all tymes thei owe to God, according to that promise maid unto him, when thei war receaved in his household by the lavachre of spirituall regeneratioun".<sup>1</sup> The answer was postponed, and in the mean while the Romanists offered a compromise, namely, that if the Protestants would consent to the Mass and some other items, "then thei wold grant unto us to pray and baptize in the vulgare tounge, so that it war done secreatlie, and nott in the open assemble".<sup>2</sup> The compromise was refused and the original petition was pressed. The Regent attempted pacification by granting the petition on condition that there should be no public services in either Edinburgh or Leith.

This was the limit of toleration granted before the final episode.

1. Ibid., p.304.

2. Ibid., p.306.



## The Administrant.

The Confession of Faith which was accepted by the Estates in 1560 " as a doctrine grounded upon the infallible word of God", declared in Article XXII that for the right administration of the sacraments it was necessary that "they be ministered by lawful ministers whom we affirm to be only they that are appointed to the preaching of the word into whose mouths God hath put some sermon of exhortation, they being men lawfullie chosen there to by sum church....ells we affirm that they cease to be right sacraments of Christ Jesus".<sup>1</sup> The straightforwardness of this definitive position gave a clear expression of the general agreement among the principal Reformers on the question of who should be authorised to baptise. It immediately ruled out the Roman usage that a child in extremis ought to be baptised by anyone who was acquainted with the formula and who administered cum intentione saltem id faciendi quod facit ecclesia.

The instruction prefixed to The Order of Baptism in the Book of Common Order was uncompromising.

"First note, that forasmuch as it is not permitted by God's Word that women should preach or minister the Sacraments, and it is evident that the Sacraments are not ordained of God to be used in private corners as charms, or sorceries, but left to the Congregation, and necessarily

1. Imprinted at Edinburgh by Robert Lekprewik, Cum Privilegia, 1561, Copy in Mitchell Lib., Glasgow.

annexed to God's Word as seals of the same".

The Roman usage had made it extremely important to be emphatic in these matters in relation to the sacrament of baptism.

The problems of displacement.

The apparent simplicity of the restriction to lawful ministers, however, is deceptive. These persons were to be "laughfullie chosen there to by sum church". This leads directly to such questions as to what constitutes a valid ordination and what sort of company of professing Christian people is to be entitled to call itself a church or congregation. There can be no doubt that those who owned allegiance to the Papal system would be denied the name of a true Church by the composers of the Confession. That they were a Church despite corruption was granted; that they were a true Church was denied. The significance of the distinction is illusive, but in relation to the sacraments it was obvious that the Roman Church was defective in that her priests were not primarily preachers of the Word; hence their claim to be proper ministers of the sacraments was excluded in terms of the definition.

The emphasis on "preaching" is the pivot on which the position turns. The Romanists did not divorce the sacrament and the Word. Hamilton's Catechism expressly affirms the connection, and there could be no doubt about

their assent to Augustine's rule, Accedit verbum ad elementum, fit sacramentum, in some sense. What was denied was that the purum verbum Dei was central in their administrations, and that the Word was not a preached Word. "But consider, sister, what I have affirmed", wrote Knox, "to wit, that wher Christ Jesus is not Preached - marke well that I say preached - that there hath the Sacrament neither life nor soule".<sup>1</sup> The Book of Common Order was careful to state, that "the pastor or minister's chiefe office standeth in preaching the word of God, and ministring the sacraments".<sup>2</sup>

The Romanists and the Reformers were at one in holding that the Minister principalis of the sacraments was Christ, and that the ministers of the Church were acting as his agents. The expression of the agreement, however, was quite different, for in the one instance, to use a common description, the ministry was conceived as priestly, and in the other, as prophetic.

What the Reformers meant by their definition is not free from obscurity. By preaching they did not, primarily, mean the proclamation of a humanly prepared sermon, but an enunciation of Divine truth. It is the ministerium verbi divini that is intended. The sacrament of baptism was in itself a verbum visibile, but must be accompanied by an audible exposition of its meaning. The difficulty arises when in fact what did accompany the sacrament was a "sermon word", an interpretation mediated by a human mind; and in this situation "the preaching of the Word of God" is a description which would require qualification.

1. Laing, K.W., VI, p.14. 2. Of Ministers and their election, 2.

The problem is a constant in the whole field of sacramental theory, namely, that Christ is held to be the real Minister of the sacraments and that what is taught is the pure Word of God, yet the sacraments are controlled in their operation as Church rites by human directives who prescribe time, place, and manner, and are set in a context which contains human judgments as to their meaning. Each school propounds its own thesis and all link their theses to the name of Christ; and each claims a stricter logic or a better authority than the other.

On the question of what would constitute a right or lawful ministry it would appear that the Scots Confession placed a generous interpretation on the issue. The phrase "sum kirk" has a vague comprehensiveness about it which might be taken to indicate uncertainty or perhaps charity. It is possible to argue that it covered any ordination which could be defended as subsequent to a call of the Holy Spirit, as orderly, and as based on an invitation from, or on the concurrence of, a fellowship of true believers. There are difficulties which it might be hard to meet if, for example, a judgment were asked on the Anglican ministry which was not normally a preaching office. England had only a few preachers compared with the demand of the Scottish Reformers that every minister should be a preacher. If it is suggested that the phrase might be taken to mean "some Church which holds the substance of the Scots Confession", then it could also be contended that the Confession itself was held to be defensible only in so far as it was Scriptural.



Hence any Church which could justify itself at the bar of Scripture would be eligible for inclusion in the class of true Churches, and its ministers would be true ministers of the sacraments.

Further practical problems arose when,

1. a situation was presented in which there was no qualified minister to celebrate the sacrament of baptism, and
2. when a disqualified, or a non-qualified, person did in fact presume to administer it.

The belief that the Roman Church did not possess the marks of a true Church compelled the Reformers to condemn her sacramental practices and prohibit the nation, through Parliament, from observing them. They had always been corrupt and, strictly, no one ought to have been baptised by the Roman rite. Should parents, then, have allowed their children to grow up without baptism? The answer given was that by their ignorance they had offered their children to the limb of Antichrist, but their blindness was excusable. Such blindness could no longer be excused. What had always been wrong could now be declared to be so, and the alternative, what was asserted to be baptism in its pristine purity, could now be demanded. There is no suggestion anywhere in Reformed literature in Scotland that a compromise of appeasement was acceptable in any circumstances. This was further than even Calvin was prepared to go, for he was of the opinion, stated in a letter to Socinus about 1549, that to deny baptism to an infant was a greater fault than to present it to a Roman priest. Such a denial, he argued, would amount to contempt

of Christianity itself.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate task, however, of the Reformed Church was to put a stop to the administration of the sacrament in the Roman manner. Multitudes must have been quite ignorant of the theological significance of the dispute between the Reformed and Roman contestants and would simply act as they had been accustomed to do. Conditions of life over the greater part of the land were primitive in the extreme, and superstitious notions permeated the whole of existence from birth till death. Only where the new laws could be enforced and a minister provided to give instruction could it be expected that this screen of darkness would even be partially lifted. Hence, while the work of consolidation proceeded the adherents to the older order sustained their witness either openly or covertly according to local conditions.

It was soon discovered that it was one thing to impose discipline by punishment and bring delinquents to repentance where known, and another to decide the status, if any, that was to be given to a baptism, or pseudo-baptism, that had already taken place. If the Roman form of service was recognised as indeed a baptism, although encrusted with censorable ceremonies, then it would appear to conflict with the total prohibition of the rite in such places where no other form was available. On the other hand, if the Roman rite was declared no baptism at all then there was the plain conclusion to be faced that the sacrament had not been observed in Scotland for at least several centuries. The whole land would have had to be (re)baptised, the Reformers themselves included. They were not prepared to accept such a conclusion however much they were committed to a repudiation of the Roman ceremonies. A

1. Milner, Church History, Scott's Continuation of, 3, p.400.

distinction, therefore, was drawn between baptism rightly or lawfully administered and baptism irregularly administered. This device was both ancient and convenient. Its only difficulty was that it left an ungrasped nettle, namely, that both forms of baptism enshrined a valid or real baptism so far as Christ and the child were concerned, the Roman form being only invalid ecclesiastically or in a sense which was very subordinate in comparison. But this ecclesiastical invalidity was elevated to the point of being so important that all non-Reformed baptisms were prohibited; in other words baptism was denied some children, which is as near to a contempt of baptism as makes no difference. The Reformers were insistent that it was not the denial of baptism, but the contempt of it which brought Divine punishment. They appear to have combined the two in their drastic attitude to the Roman Church.

The difficulties of this enigma were raised prior to 1560 and had been dealt with at some length by Knox in "Ansueris to sum Questionis concerning Baptisme, etc." <sup>1</sup>.

They were so obvious that it is not surprising that they should appear early. Those who were groping their way to a settlement of religion in non-Roman terms could not escape the very practical issue of what was to be done with the children who were being born while reformation tarried. There were few approved ministers in the country and the possible suspension of baptism in the hope that one day a minister would be available was a severe test of faith.

With typical vehemence Knox denounces the very thought of offering children to the priests whatever the consequences. "The Baptisme now usit in the Papistrie," he wrote, "is not

1. Laing, K.W., 4, p.115f. circa 1556.

the trew Baptisme whilk Chryst Jesus did institute, and command to be usit in his Kirk; but it is ane adulteratioun andprophanatioun of the same, and thairfoir is to be avoydit of all Godis childrene". He makes a pun of the words sacrilege and sacrament, and continues, "whasoever offireth thair childrene to the papisticall baptisme, offireth thame to the Devill, wha was autour and first inventer of all sic abominationis".

The strength of this language would appear to be, on the face of it, a preliminary to denying any virtue to the despised rite. Knox will not have it so, however, for he poses the question of rebaptising those who had been baptised in the prevailing manner and answered in a decided negative. "I answer, Na, "he wrote, "for the spreit of regeneration, whilk is frelie gevin to us be Chryst Jesus oure hail suffiencie, hath purgeit us from that poysone whilk we drank in the dayis of our blindnes. The fyre of the Holie Gaist hath brunt away whatsoever we ressavit at thair handis besydis Chryst Jesus simpill institutioun". This was the uniform attitude of all the Protestant divines with the exception of the Anabaptists. Luther's words equal those of Knox in intensity. "The holiness of the Word and purity of the doctrine," he had written, " is so powerful and sure that if even Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Pope, Heintze, and the Devil himself preached the same or baptised (without any additions, pure and right ) you would still receive the right pure word, the right holy baptism".<sup>1</sup> "The Church is defectible as visible," said Calvin, " but even in the Roman Church God preserved baptism and other things".<sup>2</sup>

The point is clearly stated, but it is not easy to understand the reasoning of Knox. It might be asked in

1. The Ministry and Sacraments, edit. Headlam and Dunkerley, p. 452, note. 2. Ibid. p. 456.

reply, By what right can it be affirmed that the Holy Ghost will use effectively the Roman service in some cases and not in others? If "the malice of the devill could never altogidder abolische Chryst's institutioun" and a Roman baptism is still a valid baptism, then enough has been granted<sup>to</sup> support the argument that to deny Roman baptism was to counsel disobedience to a command of Christ.

The Scottish Reformer seemed prepared to accept such a conclusion, namely, that it was better to be without baptism than to consent to it in an impure form.<sup>1</sup> "Oure plane and contineuall confession mair serveth to me than that we suld be rebaptisit," he stated. This clarifies his values. The sacrament is "nether the cause, nether yit the effect and vertew" of regeneration. On the other hand, should it be said, "That to the regenerat man the Sacramentis are not necessarie greatly", he replied, that no man is "sa regenerat" that he is not in need of what Christ had appointed. Baptism only adds to the degree of regeneration achieved and is not indispensable to salvation. Where obtainable in the Reformed manner it must be sought, but in places where it is

1. A comment on this attitude is provided in the dispute at Frankfort, circa 1555, about the liturgy to be used among the Marian exiles. The omission of any provision for private baptism in the forms approved by Knox as containing the limits of his concessions to the Prayer Book party was understood by Ridley (in a letter to Grindal, Oct. 15, 1555) to mean that Knox held it to be better to let infants die unbaptised than to grant them private baptism. Laing, K.W., VI, p.61. The interpretation was correct. What Knox was prepared to concede for the sake of peace may be consulted in the version of "The Order of Common Prayer" or Frankfort Liturgy printed in the Church Service Society's edition of The Second Prayer Book of Edward VI and The Liturgy of Compromise (1905).

unobtainable in this particular manner it can be dispensed with and the regeneration which is wrought by faith through the Word and the Spirit will provide all that is necessary for salvation. Yet the curious puzzle remains that in order to justify their own baptisms the Reformed churchmen were driven to find some element of virtue in the Roman form, and with the next breath to deny that the same element of virtue ought not to be received by others.

It is to be noted in the arguments of Knox and others for the rejection of the Roman rite that the propriety of that form is not attacked on the ground that it was, or might be, administered by bad men. Merely to observe the language which is used to describe the malignancy of the Papacy would suggest such a course, but it is never formulated in so many words. The vigorous language of the manifesto of 1560, if taken literally, overstates the position, when it is said that "no part of Christ's action abydies in the original puritie". This is more than was admitted elsewhere, for example, in the General Assembly of 1565, Session four, "no papist ministers baptisme without water and some form of words, whilk are the principalls of the external signe." The main position was that the priest was an advocatus diaboli because he accompanied baptism by the abnoxious ceremonies.

The problem of the administrator comes up again in relation to the possibility of the rite being performed by unordained persons, either men or women. The proper formula might have been used; the ceremonies might have been entirely absent; the moral condition of the administrator might have been above suspicion; and serious intention to do the will of Christ might have been present, but if the

administrant could only claim the priesthood which belongs to all believers and not the formal recognition of the Reformed Church the baptism was not even a corrupt baptism, it was not a baptism at all. It is essential to grasp the completeness with which such baptisms were repudiated in order to understand the full significance of the position so strongly held by the Scottish Reformers. While the moral status of the administrator was irrelevant the ecclesiastical status was of decisive importance. Calvin in some places seems to take away all barriers, as, for example, when he says in the Institutes, "its (the sacrament's) dignity neither gains nor loses by the administrator. And just as among men, when a letter has been sent out, if the hand and seal is recognised, it is not of the least consequence who or what the messenger was". The General Assembly, 1583, Session ten, said what amounted to the opposite conclusion.

"Anent baptisme ministrat be laik persones, and such as has no ordinarie function in the ministrie of the kirk: The General Kirk in ane voyce, hes concludit the same to be no legall baptisme; and that these that in the pretendit manner are baptized shall be baptized according to God's word".

By this enactment a technical difference in ecclesiastical status unrelated to faith ~~for~~ morals, a distinction which paid no attention to learning, saintliness or Christian experience, was made the law of the Church. How far such a rigid classification could be justified in New Testament usage cannot be in doubt. It is granted almost everywhere that no proof can be offered to support the contention that in the Records from which the Church professed to draw her foundation principles baptism was invariably ministered by a class of persons who could be said to be ordained. This statute accepted fully the idea of a professional class possessed of a monopoly denied even to the Roman

priesthood. This class alone could dispense sacraments and stood between the Supreme Minister and those who desired the sacrament to be administered. Ecclesiasticism could attain no higher heights.

If the condemnatory emphasis can be said to be heavier on one class of unordained person than on another it was made very plain that the greater degree of censure fell on women who dared to administer baptism. This sex was singled out for special mention in the Order of Baptism of the Book of Common Order. It was not, of course, specially inserted by the Scottish Reformers, but was allowed to stand as it had appeared in the Forme of Prayers drawn up by Knox, Whittingham, Gilby, Foxe and Cole at Frankfort, and used, with the approval of Calvin, by the English Congregation at Geneva.<sup>1</sup> Again, the Confession of 1560, after denouncing the Roman priesthood, added, "Zea (quhilk is mair horrible) they suffer wemen, whome the Haly Ghaist will not suffer to teache in the Congregation, to baptize".<sup>2</sup> The same sentiment is repeated in many Genevan treatises, the following being typical:

"Their error therefore is very grievous, who commit this office unto private men, and much more grievous, who give women leave to intermeddle in this action, in case of necessitie, as they call it".<sup>3</sup>

The Roman provision had midwives principally in mind. In some places part of their licencing was the taking of an oath to administer baptism in the permitted manner. This survived in England and the oath as administered in the time of Archbishop Parker is recorded in Strype's Annals under the date 1567, the period when the practise was being so spiritedly repudiated in Scotland.<sup>4</sup>

1. Imprinted at Geneva by Iohn Crespin M.D.LVI.
2. Sect. XXII.
3. Grounds and Propositions of Religion... determined by M. Theodor Beza and M. Anthony Fauius, Geneva, 1586, p. 266.
4. Annals, i, ii, p. 537. Glas. Univ. Wodrow M<sup>c</sup>SS., Appendix 44.



The inadmissibility of women was accepted by some of the ancient writers who were quite ready to acknowledge the validity of baptisms by unordained male persons. Tertullian, for example, would not acknowledge baptism by women,<sup>1</sup> and The Apostolic Constitutions are against it, and against lay baptism also. They state, "Now, as to women's baptizing, we let you know that there is no small peril to those that undertake it. Therefore we do not advise you to it; for it is dangerous, or rather wicked and impious".<sup>2</sup> Nor do they permit any of the clergy to baptise other than bishops and presbyters. Deaconesses might assist at the baptism of women.<sup>3</sup> The Gallician Fourth Council of Carthage decided against baptism by women.<sup>4</sup> These illustrations, however, do not express the tradition which developed in the West, and certainly not the usage of the Roman Church in cases of urgency. Where baptism was held as necessary to the removal of original sin, baptism by anyone was a work of mercy if a priest couldnot be got.

The strong antipathy to women baptising was an invariable part of the Reformed tradition in Scotland. In his contributions to the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 James VI or I reflected his background when he voiced the opinion "that any but a lawful minister might baptise anywhere, he utterly disliked; and in this point his highnesse grew somewhat earnest against the baptizing by women and laikes".<sup>5</sup> Rutherford in *Due Right of Presbyteries* is staunchly scornful of the custom, but lays bare its difficulty. "Yea many of great learning thinke," he wrote, "that at the beginning of the Reformation thousands being under popery baptized by Midwives and private persons, were never rebaptized, not that they thinke such Baptisme valid, but where the Sacrament is wanting, ex invincibili ignorantia facti, out of an invincible ignorance of a fact, such that

1. De Baptismo, 17. 2. Apost. Consts. 3, 9. 3. Ibid. 3, 16.  
4. Canon, 100. 5. *Due Right of Ps.*, p. 239.

way baptized doe indeed want the Lord's Seale; but we cannot for that say that they are no better then infidells and unbaptized Turkes and Iewes...." On the same page he repeats, "our Divines esteeme, and that justly, baptisme administered by Women, or such as have no calling, to be no baptisme at all". If such baptisms are not baptisms, not even irregular baptisms, then, so far as the sacrament is concerned, it is irrelevant to make a distinction between the unbaptised who live in one country and not in another. It is a very curious distinction to assert that the unbaptised should remain unbaptised in one land because it is nominally Christian, and that the unbaptised in another land, because it is Jewish or Mohammedan, should be baptised, Theological rightness appears to be subordinate here to practical convenience.

Another way out was put by Charles I in a letter to Henderson in June 1646, when the latter had raised the question of lay baptism. "In regard to the sacrament of Baptism", wrote the monarch, "as no one would say that a woman could lawfully administer it, though when it was done it was admitted to be valid".<sup>1</sup> This acceptance of a fait accompli was a degree better than stubbornly refusing to admit the genuine quality of the baptism, yet refusing to rebaptise.

This draws attention to another feature of the Scottish Reformed system on the Presbyterian side, namely, the entire absence of any conditional formula such as had been used by the Roman Church in doubtful cases. If a priest had reason to doubt the validity of an emergency or other baptism he was instructed to perform the rite again using the formula, *Si tu es baptizatus, ego non te baptizo; sed si non es baptizatus, ego te baptizato, in nomine Patris, etc*".  
1. Quoted Grub, *Eccles. Hist. of Scot.*, p.119.

The need for such a formula might well arise where ignorance abounded. It was ordered to be used in the case of certain baptisms in the Reformed manner in 1559. In that year the Scottish Council passed Canon 293 which read:

Whereas Paul Methven, Wm. Harley, John Grant, John Willocks, John Patrick, and several other apostates from the Catholic faith, and from the unity of the Church, have not only scattered broadcast the baleful dogmas of heresy but have also introduced a form of christening which is new and nowhere ever heretofore received by the Catholic Church (*sed et novum, inusitatum et nusquam ab ecclesia catholica hactenus receptum baptizandi modum induxerunt,*) whence it may reasonably be doubted whether infants baptized by them and their likes have or have not been really baptised: wherefore for the removal of all dubiety on this head, and to take better the more certain measures for securing the salvation of infants, this Synod has decreed that such infants shall be christened according to the form instituted by Christ and received by the Church, by priests who, in using this form received by the Church, shall pronounce these words, 'If thou art baptised, I do not baptise thee....etc'<sup>1</sup>. What the baptismal usage of these preachers was which could merit such great suspicion is unknown. Clearly it was not simply the omission of the ceremonies surrounding the Ritus Baptizandi. Most probably it was the fact that these were lay baptisms not administered in emergency conditions. For the accused it could be said that their friends had reached an understanding with the Queen Regent that such baptisms by Reformed ministers would be permitted provided they were done "without tumult, and

1. Statutes, p.186.

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so that their preachers should not preach openly to the people in Edinburgh and Leith".<sup>1</sup> Emboldened by this secret approbation of the Regent, commissioners of the nobility produced a paper requesting progressive measures within the Roman Church herself, but were rebuffed by the answer, as reported by Leslie, "that it was an offence to think that quhat the kirk hes confirmet under a gret pane, ony man can reduce or onie way reforme, or put out of memorie, or change ony way".<sup>2</sup> The Regent was silenced by a bribe and the preachers outlawed.

When power ultimately came to the Reformers they did not vindictively retaliate by the introduction of a conditional form of baptism for all who had received it after the Roman way. When the matter came up for formal decision in the General Assembly of 1565, Session 4, the attitude of Knox ten years previously was reaffirmed:

"If baptisme administrat by ane papist priest, or in the papisticall manner, sal be reiterat? When sic children comes to years of understanding, they should be instructed in the doctrine of salvation, the corruption of the papistrie might be declared unto them, whilk they most publickly damne, before they be admitted to the Lord's table; whilk if they doe, there needs not the externall signe to be reiterat; for no papist ministers baptisme without water and some forme of words, whilks are the principalls of the external signe; we ourselves were baptized be papists, whose corruptions and abuses now we damne, cleaveing only to the simple ordinance of Jesus Christ and to the veritie of the Holy Spirit, whilk makes

1. Buchanan, History, trans. Aikman, 2, p.339.  
2. Leslie, Historie, S.T.S., 2, p.398.

baptisme to work in us be proper effects thereof, without any declaration of the external signe. If sic children come never to the knowledge of trew doctrine, they are to be left to the judgement of God".1.

This decision finally settled the matter of the recognition of Roman baptisms and it did not arise again as a disputed issue. The reasons offered cannot escape notice. It was admitted that "the principalls of the external signe" were the use of water and "some forme of words" ( a curiously indefinite phrase ). But could the same not be said of lay baptism which was decisively rejected ? Something more was surely required to justify the acceptance of the one and the repudiation of the other. Where now is the stress laid on a lawful and preaching minister ? Was the dogma still valid that "The Papistical Priestis have neather power nor authoritie to minister the Sacramentis of Jesus Christ; because that in thair mouth is not the sermon of exhortation"?<sup>2</sup>. Again the Roman priests who conformed were denied the right to administer sacraments, their former ordination being

1. A recent publication, Ainslie, Doctrine of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches, Edin., 1940, misinterprets this decision. "In the early days of the Scottish Reformation .....priests were judged to have no validity to baptize. At the Assembly of December, 1565, it was enacted, 'If baptisme be administrat be ane priest, or in the papistical maner, sal be reiterat'. This was going far in discounting the old priesthood and at the same time showed all confidence in the validity of the sacrament administered by the Reformed ministers". p. 245. Obviously from the complete quotation in the text this is precisely what was not decided.

2. First Book of Discipline, XVI,3.

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regarded as no ordination at all for the purpose. They were treated as mere laymen. Now either their priestly orders were regarded as valid for sacramental purposes or they were not. If they were not it is quite illogical to accept their baptisms as somehow valid if those of other self-appointed, unordained, or non-recognised ministries were to be rejected. Even a bishop of the Roman Church was put on the footing of a layman.

"ordeaned according to the fourth head of the Booke of Discipline, that all persons serving in the ministrie, who had not entered their charges according to the order appointed in the said Booke, be inhibited.... and that this act have strenth, als weill against those who are called Bishops as others".<sup>1</sup>.

Again the position comes back to a practical rather than a theoretical consideration. Theoretically the Roman priesthood was not only unlawful but invalid for sacramental purposes, but in order to get the Reformed religion started on a national scale theory had to give place to other influences. The key phrase in the argument is "we ourselves were baptized as papists". As an argument it is wholly outwith the issue. It mattered not whether they had been baptised by Papists or by someone else. The crux lies in the validity of the baptismal rite administered and is not to be justified because it was the only baptism the Reformed churchmen had known. No plea for personal consideration is admissible. For obvious reasons, however, such a plea had to be introduced to validate all that had been done in the name of Christ by the Reformers. Had they denied the validity on the only baptism they had received they would have removed with a stroke their own right to administer the sacraments, or to be where they were, or

1. General Assembly, Dec., 1562. Calderwood, 2, p.206.

to do anything which presumed baptism as a qualification for the doing of it. Not only so but it is highly improbable that the Estates would have been prepared to support the Reformers if they had demanded the rebaptism of the nation. Such a proposition would have vetoed any overtures toward a national reformation mediated by law. In many matters the change was thought of in terms of extirpation rather than reformation, but in the matter of baptism things had to be handled differently. The carry-over from the Roman Church of infant baptism committed the Reformed Church to a justification of that sacrament within the older Church, although the justification would have been rejected as insufficient by the Romanists. A past action was rationalised by a subsequently held theory, which had considerable, if not fundamental, differences from the theory evolved to justify the action called by the same name within the Reformed Church. The similarity of name disguised the fact that when Roman and Reformed spoke about infant baptism they were really speaking about two things, not one; but the Reformers decided that the one was sufficiently like the other to allow them to accept the one for the other. The stubborn fact remained that the Reformers accepted a baptism for themselves which they were not prepared to allow other people if they could prevent it, and a Romanist put the point with disturbing clarity when he penned the charge,

"Sen your principall ministers doutes gyf the Baptisme administrat be unlawfull ministers be trew baptisme, and ye yourselves denyes the catholic preistes to be lawfull ministers of the kirk, quhou can ye quha ar baptised be thame compt your selves in the number of

these that ar trewlie baptised."<sup>1</sup>.

### Extra-Ministerial Officials.

The provision of lawful ministers to put the civil law into operation was a vexing problem which hung about the skirts of the Reformed Church for centuries. The Parliament or Convention of 1560, enacted on August 24th. the Act, "Anent the Abolition of the Masse" wherein it was legislated:

"Notwithstanding the reformation already maid according to Goddis Word, zit, nottheless, thair is sum of the same papis kirk that stubbornlie persueris their wickit doctrine, sayand mess and baptizand, conforme to the papis kirk, prophanand thairthrow nather God not his holie Word. Thairfoir, it is statute and ordanit in this present Parliament, that na maner of persone or personis, in ony tymes cuming, administrat ony of the sacramentis foirsaidis secretlie, or in ony uther manner of way bot thai that ar admittit, and havand power to that effect".

At that time, however, there were only a mere handful of ministers to take over the vacant parishes and until the supply of ordinees had been augmented the law imposed a suspension of sacramental practice over great sections of the land. In 1567, for example, there were about 1080 parishes but only 257 ministers. The registers of 1574 give the figures at 988 churches and 287 ministers.<sup>2</sup> What happened is well known. A class of persons were recognised as readers who were authorised to take over parishes from the Roman Church and provide prayers and Scripture reading for the parishioners. They were expressly prohibited from performing any act which was the exclusive province of a lawful minister. Others

1. Catholic Tractates, S.T.S., Certaines Demandes, by John Hay, p.39. 2. Maitland Club, The Register of Ministers, 1567; Wodrow Scy. Miscell., 1, Register...1574.



were appointed and called "exhorters" and, because they had "the word of exhortation", were empowered to baptize. A large number of priests conformed to the new way and a few were utilised as readers under the general oversight of district superintendents.

It was not long before this scheme produced a crop of disciplinary actions. Mr. Alexander Wardlaw who had been appointed to Balingrie by John Winram, Superintendent of Fife, objected vigorously to a minister baptising in his parish in 1561, and said "that he would not be ane reader to John Knox or ony other in Scotland".<sup>1</sup> The ex-priests and others apparently found themselves confronted with a populace who demanded baptism for their children and naturally looked to the "incumbent" to provide the desired benefit. Visits of the superintendents were often separated by long intervals for a multitude of duties were waiting to be done. It was reported to the General Assembly in 1569, for example, that Falkirk and Whitekirk were complaining that they had not received the sacraments since the Reformation nor heard the Word preached twice. More remote places had not even been visited once. There was therefore a strong temptation for the readers to yield to the pressure of parishioners and take upon themselves the responsibility of baptising. They all possessed the Psalm Book to which was appended the Book of Common Order so that they had the baptismal service in their hands.<sup>2</sup>

1. Wodrow, Biog. Colls., 1, part 2, p.460.

2. There is some dubiety about the expression "common Praiers" in the First Book of Discipline, IV, Of Readers. It has been said to refer to the 2. Prayer Book of Edward VI. (McMillan, The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, p.42 ) This may be so, but the date of the extant text of the passage is not certain, and that makes it difficult to argue from it. (Laing, K.W., 2, p.587 ). It is unlikely that the B.C.P. was as widely used as is implied in this section. But it may be doubted whether enough is known to settle the issue.

Nor will it be doubted that some of the ex-priests employed in the emergency were either pure in motive or sufficiently grounded in the Reformed outlook. There must have been a sprinkling of them who, having been schooled in the Roman doctrine of the necessity of baptism to salvation, would not find it easy to rid themselves of a bias that way <sup>1</sup>. Whatever was the reason a situation arose in which many of the readers were usurping the functions of the ministry. This malpractice grew to be a danger to the ministerial scheme and was found to be an awkward trend to control. In the Assembly of 1568 "It was ordained that superintendents should command readers to abstain from all ministration of the sacraments, under pain of being accused as abusers, and criminall according to the Act of Parliament"<sup>2</sup>. This may have checked the transgressions in some quarters, but the tendency to overstep the commission continued to produce dissatisfaction. A general overhaul of the system was ordered in 1576. "It is thocht meet that the hail readers within this realme sall be examinitt and try it de novo in their Synodiall Assemblies; and if after examinatione, they be fund to want the qualities prescryvit in the Book of Discipline, to be deposit, and removitt from their office: And sicklyke, that no reader within this realme minister the holy sacrament of the Lord, except such as hes the word of exhortatione". This was

1. There were not many ex-priests altogether in this office, and very few indeed were ordained to be ministers. (Ainslie, Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches, p.174.) A suggestion came in 1573 from the Regent to the Assembly which said: "Seing the most part of the persons who were Channons, Monks, and Friars within this realme, have made profession of the true religion; it is therefore thought meet, That it be injoined to them to pass and serve as readers at the places where they shall be appointed". It implies that not many were in any office before that date.

2. A useful collection of notices about readers is given in Appendix M, C. G. M'Crie, Public Worship in Presbyterian Scotland.

repeated in 1580 for in the interval things became worse instead of better. It was stated in 1579, "In respect of the great inconvenients that hes ensewit, and daily does ensew, be readers in using their office, the haill brethren hes inhibite all readers from ministring the sacrament....." Ultimately the Assembly decided to discontinue altogether this office which they could not restrain within its appointed bounds. It was omitted from the Second Book of Discipline in 1581, and the decision was registered, "The Kirk, in ane voyce, hes votit and concludit farder, That in no tymes comeing any Reader be admittit to the office of Reader, be any haveing power within the Kirk". The readers, however, were not to be so easily dislodged and they appear as far forward as the nineteenth century. With the general increase of the authorised ministry the misuse of the appointment died out.

What falls to be especially marked in the history of this stubborn enemy of lawful sacramental usage is the singular absence of any order by the Assembly defining the status of those who were baptised by the readers. Their baptisms seem to have been accepted as irregular but valid once performed. If some of these baptisms were administered by those who were formerly priests they might have been classed under Roman baptisms. There is no evidence that any were of this type or that they were so classified. In theory the readers' baptisms could have no higher standing than that of baptisms by private persons, and therefore no standing at all. How this puzzle was disentangled does not appear.

Another class of persons recognised specifically

in the Book of Common Order, but not in the First Book of Discipline, was that of teachers or doctors. They were "a fourth kind of Ministers" whose office was to teach and instruct the faithful.<sup>1</sup> In The Second Book of Discipline has a chapter on these persons, and distinguishes their office from that of the minister in this that, although they are to teach and open up the Scriptures, they are not to use "sic applications as the minister usis". Otherwise stated they are not "to preich to the people, to minister the sacraments, and to celebrate mariages".<sup>2</sup> This became a tradition in the Scottish Presbyterian Church. The "Form of Presbyterial Church-Government" agreed to by the Westminster Assembly attempted to alter this and stated that the teacher or doctor "is also a minister of the word, as well as the pastor, and hath the power of administration of the sacraments".<sup>3</sup> The attempted reversal of the Scottish system evoked a reservation in the Act of the General Assembly of 1645, "Approving the Propositions concerning Kirk-government and Ordination of Ministers". This ran:

"Provided alwayes, That this Act shall be no wayes prejudiciall to the further discussion and examination of that Article, which holds forth, that the Doctor or Teacher, hath power of the administration of the Sacraments as well as the Pastor:"<sup>4</sup>.

This was followed, in 1647, by a revised document, "A Directory for Church-Government and Ordination of Ministers to be examined against the next Assembly".

1. B.C.O. Of the Deacons, addendum.

2. 2 B. of D., Chap.V.

3. West. Form of Ch.-G., Teacher or Doctor.

4. Peterkin, Records of the Kirk of Scotland, p.422.

It stated the matter thus :

"In the Scripture we also find the name and title of Teacher, who is a Minister of the Word, and hath power of administration of the Sacraments and Discipline, as well as the Pastor".<sup>1</sup>.

This was almost the identical language of the Westminster document, and apparently connotes that the supporters of that proposed system on this point were in the majority. When the subject did come up at the next Assembly it was continued to the next again without any decision being taken, and thereafter seems to have been lost in the disturbed state of the Church.<sup>2</sup> The printed copies of the Westminster standards which were circulated in Scotland simply contain the approved form together with the Act containing the reservation.

When Stewart of Perdiven put out his "Collections and Observations Methodized" in 1709 the custom of a doctor not dispensing the sacraments was in operation. He wrote:

"It were to be wished, that this custom of Synods reporting to General Assemblies the Names of such as are fit to be Professors, were again revived, and more exactly practised; for it would prevent the Transporting of Ministers to be only Teachers or Masters in Universities, which is an appointing of him to exercise the Office of a Doctor, and dispensing with him from preaching of the Word and administrating of the Sacraments: Which Dispensation, or the loosing of which Tie, if it be a favour, it can never be imposed upon any Pastor without his own consent; but if it be a punishment, it can be inflicted upon none without their fault. It is liker a Commutation of Offices

1. Reprinted and bound with Henderson's Government and Order, Edinburgh, 1690, Sect. 2, Of the Officers of the Church, par.3.

2. Peterkin, supra. p. 519, item 127.

than a Transportation: or if he still continue to be a Pastor, his pastoral talent is thereby but much hid in a napkine".<sup>1.</sup>

Other offices recognised were those of elders and deacons, but in neither case was there any question of preaching, hence no authority to administer sacraments. In the case of the deacon it was specially noted in the "Form of Presbyteriall Church-Government" that the office was "not to preach the word, or administer the sacraments", for in the Episcopal system a deacon was permitted to baptise, although he did not preach. It was a sore point with Presbyterians during the First Episcopacy in Scotland because "They debarre persons to the ministry presented by lawful Patrons, because they refuse to enter by the degree of a baptizing Deacon".<sup>2.</sup>

### The Seventeenth Century.

The seventeenth century saw many changes in the ecclesiastical polity of the Church in Scotland. The situation was dominated by the bitter contentions between Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Independents. The Convention of Leith, in 1572, brought back the name of bishop into the arena, and the beginnings of endless disputes lay there. At that stage, however, no one questioned the right of every lawful minister to baptise whatever were his opinions about Episcopacy. The interest with regard to baptism centred on other matters which will be discussed

1. Title VI, Of Doctors, and Professors of Theology.
2. A Short Relation of the state of the Kirk of Scotland since the Reformation to the Present Time for information ..... 1638. In Anglican usage a deacon might also preach if he received permission to do so from a bishop. His sphere was to assist the priest in Divine Service. A "preaching deacon" received mention in Scotland before the First Episcopacy was swept away. McMillan, Worship, p.357.

in another place

Had the Scottish Service Book of 1637 been accepted by the nation and the type of polity it stood for put into operation the result would have been a prolific crop of typical Episcopalian difficulties about valid ministries. The rejection of the book and the reassertion of a strongly Presbyterian system cleared the way for the Westminster standards. These were accepted as in harmony with the existing order, with the exception of the doubtful instance a doctors functions. In the section, "Of Baptism" in the Directory of Public Worship, homologated by the General Assembly February 6, 1645, Session 10, the sacraments were not to be administered in any instance by any private person, but always by a minister of Christ, called to be the steward of the mysteries of God.

In the debate on this at Westminster, July 11, 1644, as reported by Lightfoot,<sup>1</sup> Mr Seaman objected to the phrase "in any case" on the ground that occasions might arise, for example in times of persecution, when no minister would be available. The amendment failed to find the necessary support and the phrase was allowed to stand. The same fate met another amendment by Henderson, who scrupled at the description "a minister" and would have preferred "the minister". The point was rather niggling for, even if it had been conceded, it would not have in itself contributed anything of consequence to the submitted text without further definition.

1. Lightfoot, Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly, p.292.

The Westminster standards were not in operation long in Scotland before the political upheavals of the times brought a more drastic point of view into the land. The Baptist churches had been gathering strength in England and were foremost in their allegiance to the Parliamentary cause. Hence, when Cromwell's army engaged the forces which Scotland had raised to advance the claims of the king whom they had crowned Charles II, the Baptists were found on the field in considerable numbers against the royalists, and in due course were busy witnessing to their faith in the garrison centres.

The conditions under which they settled at various points throughout the land were not conducive to the commendation of their message. Nevertheless the zeal with which it was advocated made it a factor which could not be ignored. Together with the Independents they called for gathered churches of true believers in opposition to the "national way", and many who remained within Presbyterianism began to have doubts about the propriety of administering the sacraments as comprehensively as the institution of a national Church implied.

Among the Baptists the administration of baptism was normally in the hands of a chaplain. Such was the case, for example, at Cupar-Fife, where a Mr. Browne made a notable stir. Lamont in his Diary entered the following news item under the date October, 1652.

"Cupar. This month and the former the said Mr. Browne did rebaptise several of Col. Fairfax's regiment of foot in the water of the Eden...."<sup>1</sup>.

1. Lamont's Diary, Maitland Club, p.49f.



The numerous Baptists who appeared in and about Edinburgh and Dalkeith published a Confession of Faith in 1653 and Article XLI of this said :

"The person assigned by Christ to dispense baptism, the scripture holds forth to be a disciple; it being nowhere tied to a particular church officer, or person extraordinary sent, the commission enjoining the administration being given to them as considered disciples, being men able to preach the gospel".<sup>1</sup> This is not to be taken to imply that the Confession is against an ordered ministry. It makes explicit provision for such to be appointed by the suffrage of a congregation. They are to be "lawfully called and to continue in their calling and place"(XXXVII) and to "have whatsoever they shall need, supplied freely by the church". (XXXVIII) The privilege of preaching, however, is not thought of as exclusively the right of a minister. Every disciple, if possessed of the requisite gift, is enjoined to exercise it in due order, and any convert won by such preaching ~~may~~<sup>might</sup> also be baptised by the preacher. The link is preserved between preaching and the ordinance, but it is not restricted to official channels. What would be considered by Presbyterians<sup>as</sup> baptism by a private person is fully recognised. That baptisms by persons not appointed to the ministry in Scotland were administered is not known. It is sufficient to note that the principle was supported.

The reintroduction of Episcopacy when the Commonwealth days passed away began a period of persecution for the Presbyterian Church, or that part of it that became non-conformist. The adherents to the Covenants repudiated the clergy who were placed in the parish churches by the bishops.

1. Confession of Faith of those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists.... Printed at Leith, 1653.

These curates were everywhere admitted to have been of mixed quality and men of unworthy life, or merely time serving nominees, were common. This, no doubt, had some effect on the judgment of the Covenanters, but the principal basis of their refusal to recognise the status of the new parish ministers was the fact that they represented another order of things which was regarded with extreme antipathy. The pages of Wodrow's History of the Sufferings abound with examples of those who refused to offer their children to the curates for baptism. There was the widespread opinion that this was justifiable even though the children had to remain without the sacrament. So far as Parliamentary legislation and Privy Council decisions were concerned the only baptism recognised was that of the parish ministers and numerous enactments were promulgated to enforce the law. They culminated in the Act of 1672, "Against such who do not Baptize their Children".

"The King's Majestie Considering that diverse dissaffected persones in this Kingdome being unwilling to have their Children Baptized in an orderly way, doe either delay to baptize them, or pretend that they are not baptized; thinking thereby to escape the punishment which by former acts of Parliament is appointed to be inflicted upon such as are guilty of disorderlie Baptizing; Doeth therfor, with advice and consent of his Estates in Parliament, Statute and Declair, that such Parents who shall heirafter keip their children unbaptized for the space of threttie dayes togidder, or shall not produce a testificat under the hand of the minister of the parochie Beiring that the Children were Baptized within the said space, etc."

It was not the baptismal service as such that created the obstacle for that did not differ from the form of service used by Presbyterian ministers. "The Reader will be astonished," wrote Sir George Mackenzie in a vindication of the government, "when we inform him; that the way of Worship in our Church, differed nothing from what the Presbyterians themselves practised ( except only that we used the Doxologie, the Lord's Prayer, and in Baptism, the Creed, all which they rejected). We had no Ceremonies, Surplice, Alters, Cross in Baptism, nor the meanest of those things which would be allowed in England by the Dissenters in way of accomodation".<sup>1</sup> Nor would the straiter Presbyterians who followed Cameron and Cargill offer their children to the Presbyterian ministers who accepted any Indulgence, whose baptismal service was undoubtedly in full accordance with Westminster standards. "We neither can nor will hear preaching, nor receive Sacraments, from the Ministers that hath accepted of and voted for that liberty", ran a statement.<sup>2</sup>

The Revolution of 1688 brought no change to the Societies, as these stricted Coven~~ant~~ers were called. "For sixteen years," wrote their historian, " they never listened to the voice of a minister of Christ, never sat down at the Lord's Table, and their children grew up unbaptized". Nor were their adherents allowed to attend the baptismal feasts of those who differed from them.<sup>3</sup>

This was plainly to adopt a drastic attitude to baptismal theory. The Larger Catechism was against them.

Q.161. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation ?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation,

1. A Vindication....1691, p.9. 2. A True and Exact Copy of a Treasonable Paper...taken from Donald Cargill, June 3, 1680. 3. Hutchison, Reformed Presbyterian Church, p.127.

not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted".

The position of the Societies implied that the relation of a minister to a particular form of government disqualified him from having the right to baptize, and again, that baptism to be rightly administered depends not only on the minister, but also on the politico-religious implications of the action for the parents. The child is lost sight of in the controversy. What the baptism means to the parents is the determining factor in whether the child shall be baptised or not. The symbolism of the rite is interwoven into the symbolism of political theory and the latter decided whether the former would be realised or not. The attitude may be understandable, but it is indefensible on Westminster standards. What was held to be a Divine ministry became tied up with the fluctuations of national fortune. The more important question was not "Was this child baptised?" but "Who baptised him?" The shape of the revolt had its roots in the rigidity of the Reformed principle that baptism to be rightly administered must be done by a particular sort of person and no other.

### Episcopal Fluctuations.

This same difficulty about what constitutes a lawful minister of baptism arose in another form among the Episcopal groups after the Revolution. It was some years before it appeared in prints. After the ejection it took some time for the formerly favoured party to reorganise.

Once the paper warfare had begun it continued for a considerable time sometimes on a respectable level, but more often not, and central to the whole argument was the conception of the ministry, the Episcopalians contending that the Presbyterians had merely preachers, and the Presbyterians proving that the Episcopal claims were insecurely founded on either Scripture or the Fathers. In 1703 a pamphlet appeared called "The Practice and Doctrine of the Presbyterian Preachers, about the Sacrament of Baptism, Examined" by Alexander Sutherland, and the very title chosen conveys a clue to the author's opinion on the ecclesiastical standing of the ministers of the Church of Scotland in relation to the sacrament. This was answered in "The Doctrine and Practice of the Church of Scotland, Anent the Sacrament of Baptism, Vindicated From the Charge of Gross Error", published anonymously, but said to be by James Hadow. After the Toleration Act of 1712 at least the law of the land recognised the right of both parties to celebrate baptism.

The next few years found the bishops of the non-conforming Episcopalians puzzled about a uniform rule for dealing with any who sought their fellowship after having been baptised by a Presbyterian minister. There was a general unwillingness to recognise the sufficiency of these baptisms, and a marked absence of the realism of the Reformers when they had accepted Roman baptisms on the ground, inter alia, that they had been themselves baptised during the Roman period. To doubt the validity of baptism by a Presbyterian was, in many instances, to doubt the validity of the very thing on which many of the Episcopal party rested their right to Church membership. There was, in addition, some precedent for

the full acceptance of baptism as administered by Presbyterians in the undoubted fact that in 1610 Spottiswoode, Lamb and Hamilton went to London to be consecrated to the Sees of Glasgow, Brechin and Galloway, and were there so consecrated on October 21, 1610, without their baptism being in any way disputed.<sup>1</sup> Again, in 1661, Sharpe and Leighton were reordained and then made bishops with only Presbyterian baptism. If these baptisms were invalid or doubtful, then the very succession of the Scottish bishops was so far invalid or doubtful. If the querulous had been disposed to investigate further it might have been found that the Canons of the Anglican Church, dating from 1604, included a direction to pray for "Christ's holy Catholic Church, that is for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout all the world, and especially for the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland", in which time the Church in Scotland was without any orders which might establish an Episcopal succession yet was fully recognised as a part of the "Christ's holy Catholic Church".

The dilemma of the ~~of the~~ perplexed prelates is best illustrated in their own words. In 1713 Bp. Falconer wrote Bp. Rose on the matter requesting his opinion. The following is taken from his reply:

"I am loth to annul all such baptisms and to impeach both our own church and others that seem to allow them..... in so far as they allow such persons ( who have no other) all Christian privileges, on the other hand, I know not how to own the validity of what's don without a commission"

1. Spottiswood, History of the Church of Scotland, 1676, p.514.

He continues by saying, that if persons so baptised are content "I reckon their Baptising tho invalid in matter of right, yet not so in matter of fact, through the Divine Indulgence from the churches in which they live, their admission and acceptance of them, and the insuperable difficulties the far greater part of the people are under to know otherwise, for the churches admitting of such baptisms tho no further than to pass censure on them seems to me to put these persons in bona fide to rely on such baptisms, and I hop that they shall sustain no prejudice in that case. But how to accompt for affording that ground of confidence I do not know, but for ye others who upon maturity of judgement after diligent enquiries and weighty consideration scrupl the validitie of their baptism their case seems to be very different from that of the others, and I think it hard to reject them when they crave to have the defects of their former supposed baptism supplied. But this I think fit to be don in the way and manner you wrote me of, and that upon many obvious and weighty considerations God Almighty direct you and give us all fuller and clearer light and establish all things among us on the true antient foundations"<sup>1</sup>.

After the intervention of the 1715 Rebellion the correspondence is resumed on the subject, and from St. Andrew's Bp. Falconer wrote Bp. Millar telling him that he had been confronted with a candidate for confirmation who had been baptised by a Presbyterian minister.

1. MS. Notanda of Wm. Bright, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Trinity College, Glenalmond, extracted from the Episcopal Chest there. MS. in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow. Some of this correspondence is reprinted in the Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal, 1852-3, and in Gordon's Scotichronicon, 4, p.142f.

"I did discourse her", he wrote, "and treated her with all the gentleness and encouragement that I thought proper, but put off the confirmation till another time without telling her the reason why lest I should have occasioned a disquiet in her, or any debate among ourselves. This is a matter of the last importance, with respect to consequences, and such as perhaps would need the consideration of a general council seeing it supposes the invalidity of Presbyterian Orders, and then the invalidity of Lay Baptism: and so hath a terrible aspect as on so many, nay on all the foreign churches ( the Swedish and Bohemian excepted ), so on vast numbers within this and the neighbouring great island. Many other consequences will follow on a practice founded on that principle ( of the invalidity of Lay Baptism ) wh. now I shall not insist on. I have read the books wrote on that subject on the occasion of Mr. Lawrence Baptism<sup>1</sup>. and I want to know what the advocates of the Church of Rome have pleaded on behalf of their practice. And it would be a favour done if you could direct me to that kind of help. I think the decision of the Council of Nice will not meet with the present case; for there is great odds between Baptism by Hereticks validlie ordained and Baptisms by mere Laymen: seeing sealing of a covenant in the name or vice of God supposeth a commission from him for that effect: which cannot be pretended by mere laymen....."

1. Lawrence wrote "Lay-Baptism Invalid" and in reply Bingham wrote "A Scholastical History of Lay Baptism": to this Lawrence replied with a second part of his treatise, to which Bingham answered with the second part of his. Others took part in the controversy which was being widely discussed when the matter was under review in Scotland.



Another letter came from Bp. Rose to St. Andrews, dated September 17, 1719, after the preceding had been despatched. He counsels a firm line of action on principle, without regard to consequences. Previously he had confessed, "I am scarce able to resolve myself clearly", but now he has apparently clarified his attitude. He wrote:

"I am extremely sorry that our bretheren in the north should any kind of shyness in the matter of baptising. I hop you have, and further will warmly advertise them that the doing of that office is by no means to be neglected whatever may happen upon the doing of it, and indeed to me there seems no danger by the doing of it, seeing our acts against irregular baptisms are cancelled, and I believe you are sensible enough what difficulties we labour under both as to confirming and the communicating such as are initiated by presbyterians; the case might be duly and maturely considered that we may take on and the same course in it....."

There were still scruples in Bp. Falconer's mind, however, for in 1721 he sought advice from the Anglicans Bps. Collier and Brett. Two questions on baptism were put thus:

"1. Whether confirmation be sufficient to make up the defects of Presbyterian-Baptism, especially if admitting such to communion by confirmation they are willing to renounce Presbytery, but if not allowed they will adhere to Presbytery being afraid of Rebaptisation.

2. Whether they who had adhered to the communion of the church and have often received the Holy Eucharist in, ought to be expelled the communion unless they will receive

regular baptism who have no other Baptism than that of the Presbyterians."

The answer to these queries was communicated by Bp. Collier.

"The first two Querys being the same in effect, I humbly conceive, must be answered in ye same way, y<sup>t</sup> is, ye first and ye 2<sup>d</sup> affirmatively: The reason is because our Baptized Saviour authorized none but his apostles to administer ye Holy Eucharist ( St. Matt.26 ) so neither did he commission any to Baptize but ye same apostles ( Matt. 28 ) and therefore those who have no apostolicall, y<sup>t</sup> is Episcopall succession, can have no authority to administer this initiating sacrament".

These excerpts from the private correspondence of influential parties in the Episcopal Church in Scotland make it very obvious that extremist tendencies were at work toward a repudiation of all non-Episcopal baptisms. It is in these letters that there appears for the first time since the Reformation the judgment that a presumably irregular baptism is de facto invalid, and rebaptism simpliciter is supported, solely on the ground of a belief about ordination.

Another force that was pulling against moderation was the interest of the Nonjurors in the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Anglican Church was looking upon the gyrations of the Nonjurors with the greatest suspicion and was at pains to disassociate herself from the Jacobite enthusiasts lest her own position in England should be jeopardized.

This, with other causes, assisted some of the Scottish Episcopal leaders to look with an admiring eye on Russian and Eastern Orthodoxy. Bp. Falconer wrote to a George Pattullo in Riga in 1722 seeking information about the Orthodox baptismal usages, and received a reply, dated Riga, 26th. Oct., 1722, which stated that "they administer the sacrament of the Eucharist to none except first baptised by their church, so that any that will communicate w<sup>t</sup> them must be rebaptised; which they do by ~~em~~merging the person in watter, sometimes only by anointing several parts of his body w<sup>t</sup> a Balsam....."

There are many illustrations of the rebaptising of adult converts, particularly when they expressed dissatisfaction with their previous baptism, and the well known case may be cited of John Skinner who became Dean of Aberdeen. Bp. Forbes, was the administrator, and the entry in his Journal reads:

"1740, June 8th. (1st. Sunday after Trinity ) Mr John Skinner came to my Room after Vespers and at his own desire, received Baptism from me, after that he had declared that he was not satisfied with the sprinkling of a layman, a Presbyterian Teacher, he had received in his infancy, and had adduc'd several weighty arguments for his conduct". 1.

The same bishop seems to have been very ready to rebaptise. In his tours in the Highlands he records that he baptised large numbers, as many as seventy at one time.<sup>2</sup> His own description of these matters at the end of one tour is as follows.

"Baptised in all 277, of whom only two were lately

1. Bishop R. Forbes, Journals and Church in Ross, Ed. by Craven, 1886, p.11. 2. Ibid, First Journal, p.294.

born, and not sprinkled irregularly".<sup>1</sup>.

This was anabaptism with a vengeance ! Most of these candidates were just children, but some were adults; for example, on February 4, 1767, he wrote, "I baptized Mr. Allan Cameron, from Lochaber, a person of riper years, who, in his infancy, had been sprinkled by an unauthorised Holder forth".<sup>2</sup>. Whether the conditional formula was used on these occasions is uncertain. There is no clue in the Journals to suggest that this convenient way out of the tangle was favoured. The term "baptised" is given with straightforward bluntness, and the use of the term "sprinkling" to describe the baptism after the Presbyterian form supports the argument that the previous rite was not regarded as a baptism at all. Nevertheless, it has also to be said, that when the Episcopal Church was adjusted in 1731, it was agreed among the bishops that the English Prayer Book was lawful for use in all Church services in Scotland, and the conditional formula was to hand in it at the end of the Office for the Private Baptism of Children. It was prefaced by a rubric which instructed the priest to use it where the answers to the queries as to whether the child had been baptised or not were uncertain. The first of these interrogatories was, "By whom was this child baptised?" and such a question left the onus of deciding whether the person named was a proper administrator at the discretion of the priest. The Scottish Episcopal usage, so far as can be ascertained, was to place that onus of responsibility primarily on the candidate, or presumably on the parents in the case of a child, an attitude which is not covered by the Prayer Book, and was novel in the history of the rite. It was quite a strange idea in sacramental usage for the applicant for Church privileges to decide whether or not he had been baptised

1. Ibid. p.309.

2. Ibid.p.127.

and to let the issue turn on that decision.

This attitude received official sanction in a later codification of Scottish Episcopal usage. The Code of Canons as amended and enacted by the Ecclesiastical Synod at Edinburgh, 1828, in Canon XXII, stated:

"In all cases where the applicants shall express doubt of the validity of the Baptism which they have received from the minister or pretended minister of the sect to which they formerly belonged" baptism is to be given by the conditional formula. The revision of 1838 retained the same principle, and that of 1863, Canon XXXIV, modified the "is" to "may". There were other revisions of these regulations, but it will be sufficient to conclude the notice of them by referring to the Scottish Book of Common Prayer, 1929, wherein the conditional formula is retained, as in the English Prayer Book, at the end of the Scottish Office called, "The Public Receiving of Such as have been Privately Baptized". In the "Office of Public Baptism for Such as are of Riper Years" there is appended the rubric, "If it be doubtful whether one that is of riper years hath been duly baptized or no, the Priest shall baptize him in the form here appointed, saving that he shall use this form of words: "If thou art not already baptized, N, I baptize thee, etc"". .

This abandons the former attitude of allowing the applicant to determine the issue, and brings the procedure into line with the Anglican rule, by placing the decision upon the officiating priest.

## Independent Groups.

There is nothing that calls for comment in the relationships existing between the various Presbyterian communions which appeared in the 18th and 19th. centuries. They all accepted the Westminster standards and regarded baptism performed in accordance with these standards as valid and regular, with the proviso that communicants of one section would be liable for rebuke if they presented a child for baptism to a minister of another section.

No such general uniformity covered the congregations of the Independent tradition. There was never any question of rebaptising a person in a congregation that accepted infant baptism, but the nature of Independency was such that each congregation, or fellowship of congregations, undertook to manage its own affairs, and this included the administration of the sacraments. Hence it was always possible for a congregation to recognise a member other than the minister <sup>as having</sup> ~~to have~~ authority to baptise, or for an agent of a Home Mission association, though not ordained, to perform the ordinance.

The Methodist Church was as strict as the Presbyterian in limiting the administration of baptism to a minister.

In the Baptist churches, within the context of baptism on confession of faith, the principle was as in Commonwealth times, namely, that any preacher might baptise his converts or call in the assistance of another to do so who was recognised by a congregation for the purpose. In contradistinction to the long standing difference of function between a preacher and a teacher held among Presbyterians

Archibald McLean, the foremost pastor and controversialist among the churches of the Scots Baptist order, singled out the teaching function of a pastor as the qualification for baptising, and in the churches that associated themselves with his outlook the administration of baptism was confined to the pastors on principle. In his principal work, "The Commission given by Jesus Christ to his Apostles",<sup>1</sup> he wrote, "There is no part of the commission itself which men possessed of ordinary gifts cannot now perform".<sup>2</sup> He proceeded to say, however, that "it ought to be noticed that this commission is given only to teachers; all Christ's disciples are not teachers; all have not the Scriptural character and qualifications necessary to that office. Though men should think themselves qualified, nay, though they should actually be so; yet, if they are not called and ordained according to the Scripture rule, they cannot regularly execute this commission".<sup>3</sup> The same sentiments are repeated elsewhere in the same work, and in other writings of the same group.

There were not wanting within the Scots Baptist churches, however, those who questioned this emphasis placed on the ministry, and one of the earliest disagreements was on the conditions governing the Communion. Some affirmed that it was not necessary for a formally ordained pastor to be present, provided it was to the mind of the particular fellowship desiring to celebrate the ordinance that a certain member should preside. The "McLeanists" fought the issue and maintained their ground that the presence of a pastor was necessary before the ordinances could be rightly administered.

1. First Edition, Glasgow, 1786. 2. Second Edition, enlarged, 1797, p.12. Included in McLean's Works, Four Vols., 1811, and Six Vols., 1848. 3. Ibid., p.13.

When the Baptist movement was on the point of beginning again in Edinburgh there was no one known to the adherents who was competent to baptize. Sir William Sinclair of Denbeath, the pastor of the Baptist congregation at Keiss, was in Edinburgh about that time, 1765, but they were unaware of him. The assistance of Dr. Gill, a prominent pastor in London, was requested and a former Anti-Burgher minister, Robert Carmichael, went south and was in due course baptised in the Barbicon baptistery, which was in general use among the Baptists of London.<sup>1</sup> While there he had conversations with the administrator on Church matters. Dr Gill held strong views on the sole right of the minister to celebrate the sacraments<sup>2</sup> and there may have been an influence from that quarter which assisted in the moulding of opinion in the Edinburgh and parent church of the Scots Baptist congregations.

The Baptists of the present type in Scotland had a slightly later origin and among the pioneers was Christopher Anderson of Edinburgh. He preferred the outlook of the Particular Baptists of England, and had himself been baptised by an English Baptist student, one of a group who were at Edinburgh University completing their training. These men had gathered some interested people around them and Anderson became associated with them. There was thus a freedom from rigid theory <sup>among</sup> ~~in~~ the Baptists of what was called "the English order", though in the normal working of congregational life only the minister baptised. No other rule was known than that of fitness and good order. The exceptions to the custom of

1. An Account of the Scots Baptist Churches, Rippon's Baptist Register, Vol.2., 1796, p.36lf. Cf. Adam's, Religious World Displayed, 1809, Vol.3, The Scottish Baptists, by Braidwood, p.233f.; Wilson, Origin and Progress of the Scotch Baptist Churches, 1844, Scott, M.S. Thesis, Baptists in Scotland, Glasgow Univ. Lib. 2. Payne, Fellowship of Believers, 1944, p.43.



only ordained persons baptising were chiefly exemplified in the operations of Home missionaries. They were not always ordained, although recognised as agents by a society, but there was never any objection to their baptising converts as occasion required, indeed it was held that they were enjoined to do so for good Scriptural reasons.

The only possible case of a baptism being considered unacceptable was where the administrator had been a woman. McLean held that they were not included in the commission to teach and baptise being enjoined to "keep silence in the churches".<sup>1</sup> This was, of course, precisely the same reason as had been put forward by the Reformers, but in the case of the Baptists no instance ever arose which would cause a congregation to face the issue, and if it did arise now the general liberty given to women in the home churches and in overseas work would probably bias a decision in favour of receiving such baptisms as perfectly valid though unusual.

### Synopsis.

A summary of the changing, and often conflicting, course of baptismal administration is hampered by the acute tensions which have appeared from time to time. In one area of operations the prophetic function was foremost, in another the priestly; in other words, the administrator was sometimes thought of as a minister of the Word and sacraments, and sometimes as a minister of the sacraments and the Word. The general conspectus may be set forth as in the form of a comparative table.

The Administrator of Baptism .

Presbyterian	Episcopal	Congregat'n't	Methodist	Baptist
ALL ACCEPT THAT THERE IS A SACRAMENT CALLED BAPTISM, AN ORDINANCE OF CHRIST, TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THOSE WHO ARE APPOINTED BY THE CHURCH. OF THIS RITE CHRIST IS THE PRINCIPAL MINISTER.				
The sacrament is PROPERLY administered if the administrator is				
ordained for the purpose by a society having the "notes of a trew kirk"	ordained for the purpose by a bishop in true succession	ordained for the purpose by a Reformed Church		himself baptised on confession of faith, by immersion
The sacrament is IMPROPERLY administered if the administrator is				
a Roman priest ; (?) an unordained official of the Church, e.g. a reader in the early period	a non-Episcopal minister	a Roman priest		a private person
		a private person		
The sacrament is improperly administered and NOT ACCEPTED if the administrator is				
a private person ; a woman of whatever status	a private person ; a woman of whatever status ; emergency baptisms always excepted.		a private person	

## Chapter Three.

### Orders of Service.

The Reformers of the Church were however in pi-  
the idea that there should be a uniform type  
of ritual service provided for the congregation  
both clergy. There was no objection to this a-  
course, in Holy Scripture, and they professed  
of the ritual, but it was not necessary to any  
measure of uniformity, and, therefore, in their  
opinion, the ordering of a book of church service  
which has been said to be "a relic of mediævalism"  
may be granted that many of the things done and  
said by the Scottish Reformers had their re-  
spective methods of procedure. There was not  
anything mediæval in the production of a book of  
service, however, and it may be said that  
the Scottish churches had the volume concerned  
with the ritual and the minister supply to  
the church, especially in the presence of the  
people, a degree of uniformity which was not  
found in the opposite number in England.

It is a difficulty in attempting to  
reconstruct a uniform service of any stage in the  
Church. The forms of service, however, in all the  
of the Episcopal tradition were intended  
to be uniform and not liturgical or invariable. It  
is to be understood that the service, in the  
Church, was intended to be uniform and not liturgical or invariable.

The service, in the Church, was intended to be uniform and not liturgical or invariable. It is to be understood that the service, in the Church, was intended to be uniform and not liturgical or invariable.

## Orders of Service.

The Reformers of the Roman rite adhered in principle to the idea that there should be a uniform type of baptismal service prescribed for the congregations under their charge. There was no injunction to this effect, of course, in Holy Scripture which they professed to follow meticulously, but it need scarcely be argued that a measure of uniformity was preferable to individual caprice. The ordering of a book of church services at all has been said to be "a relic of mediaevalism"<sup>1</sup> and it may be granted that many of the things done or commended by the Scottish Reformers had their roots in traditional methods of procedure. There was nothing essentially mediaeval in the production of aids to ministerial tasks, however, and it may be said in favour of the Scottish changes that the volume commended was not understood to bind the minister rigidly to set forms, especially so in prayers. In this the Scottish minister was a degree further removed from mediaevalism than his opposite number in England.

Hence arises a difficulty in attempting to chronicle the actual baptismal service at any stage in Scottish usage. The forms of service available in all but a part of the Episcopal tradition were intended to be directories and not liturgies or invariable formulae. It has to be understood in discussing these matters that a measure of discretion was always allowed, and the forms prescribed are types which admit of many variations according to circumstances and personal factors.

1. M'Millan, *Mediaeval Survivals in Scottish Worship*, Church Service Society's Annual, 1931-2 p. 21

## Second Prayer Book of Edward VI.

The first alternative to the Sarum rite to reach Scotland was the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, published in 1552. The First Prayer Book had been more or less a translation into English of the Roman Office, with some of the ceremonies deleted, and some fresh material added. In it the baptismal rite still began at the door of the church with the preliminary inquiries, exhortation and prayer. The exorcism, Gospel, Lord's Prayer and Creed all preceded the entry into the church. Thereafter the service at the font was much the same as the Sarum usage without the presentation of the lighted taper. This 1549 book had only a short life in England and there is no evidence to show that it ever penetrated into Scotland.

It is certain that the Second Book did.<sup>1</sup> The surprising thing about it was that its life in Scotland appears to have been longer than its course in England, for in the country of its origin it was abandoned by Parliament in the year following its appearance on account of the accession to the throne of the English Mary. She restored Roman Catholicism and many of the Reforming party had to fly for their lives carrying with them the condemned book. Some came to the precarious refuge of Scotland, and thus the Second Book arrived and in due course its use was supported by the anti-Romanists.

The form prescribed for baptism was a radical departure from the First Book. The redundant section which had its origin in the catechumenate was omitted, the service began

1. The story is usefully summarised in the Church Service Society's edition, edited by Wotherspoon, 1905. Cf. M'Millan, *Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, 1931, Chap.2.

at the font, and the whole arrangement was simplified.  
The outline is as follows:

Public Baptism.

Short Exhortation.

Prayer. Two Collects.

Gospel. St. Mark, chap.10.

Explanation of the Gospel.

Prayer. Thanksgiving and Petition

Exhortation to the Godparents.

Renunciation. "Dost thou forsake the devil",etc.

Creed. Said by the Minister: "Dost thou believe"etc.

Prayer. Four Petitions: Prayer for all baptised.

Baptism. Two rubrics,1. Dip the child,2. Pour, if weak.

Signing with the Cross. On Forehead.

Intimation of Regeneration. "Thesē children be regenerate"

Lord's Prayer.

Prayer. For the child.

Instruction to the Godparents.

A Second Office is added "Of Them that be Baptised in Private Houses in Time of Necessity". It is prefaced by a statement of the form to be used in emergency, and, following upon this, some interrogatories to elicit sufficient information for the priest to say whether the emergency baptism had been administered properly or not. Thereafter follows the service as in the rite for public baptism, without, of course, any repetition of the baptism itself. A conditional formula is appended lest there should be any doubt in the mind of the priest as to the validity of the rite as privately administered.

The publication of this Second Book, with its considerable revisions, was in itself a sign of the mobility of thought among the English Reformers. The First Book had been indebted to Lutheran opinion through Herman's Consultatio - compiled by Melancthon and Bucer - which had been rendered into English in 1547 with the title, "A simple and religious Consultation by what means a Christian Reformation may be begun". The Second Book, while retaining this Lutheran influence, gave evidence of the growing importance of Genevan influences. It was prefaced by an essay, "Of Ceremonies, why some to be abolished, and some retained", Therein a distinction is made between ceremonies that had their genesis in Scripture, and those "which although they have been devised by man, yet it is thought good to reserve them still, as well for a decent order in the church ( for which they were first devised) as because they pertain to edification". It was not to be expected that all shades of opinion would be satisfied with the retentions, and it is not to be presumed that those who carried the book into Scotland were among the satisfied. Apart from dissatisfactions, no law created an obstacle to the imposition of any variation desired when the book was used in Scotland, and hence without more detailed knowledge it is impossible to dogmatise on the use to which it was put. There is no known example of the use of the Baptismal Office, though it would appear that the probabilities are stronger for the use of its Communion Office when this was celebrated in the Reformed manner. There is so very little of detailed description extant that a judgment one way or the other is open to dispute. In April, 1559,

Knox gave vent to some strong expressions when referring to the English Service Book, which, in the baptismal service, was unaltered in that year, "The whole Order of your Booke," he wrote, "appeareth rather to be devised for upholding of massing priests, then for any good instruction which the simple people can thereof receive. Your Sacraments wer ministred, be the most part, without the soule, and be those who to Christ Jesus wer no true ministers; and God grant that so yet they be not. Without the soule I say, they wer ministred, becaus they wer ministred without the Word trulie and openlie preached; and your Ministers before, for the most part, were none of Christ's ministers, but Masse-mumming priests."<sup>1</sup>. The weight of such an antagonist telling against the Prayer Book in Scotland was enough to decide its fate. Where it was possessed it may be surmised that it would be used privately, or adapted to the sentiments of the owners, for all books from a Reformed source in a time of scarcity would be treasured, but in baptismal usage the argumentum a silentio is a difficult thing to handle and the best that can be said is that nothing is known and anyone is a liberty to guess what happened if there was a baptismal service where the minister had the Prayer Book in his hand.

#### The First Book of Discipline, 1560.

The introduction to the baptismal procedure of the Reformed Church in Scotland came, with the greatest

1. Laing, K.W., 6, p.12. This attitude is contrasted with that of John Rough, who called Knox to be a preacher at St. Andrews. When he was asked his opinion of the Prayer Book, he answered "that he did approve the same, as agreeing in all points with the word of God". Spottiswood, History, p.87.



definiteness compared with what had gone before, in the compilation of the First Book of Discipline. Two things are to be noted. The first is that in this book of polity the essentials of baptism in the eyes of the compilers is stated; the second is that a recommendation is made as to where these essentials can be most usefully found set out in an order suitable to ministers.

The relevant passages are as follows:

"To Christ Jesus his holie Evangell trewlie preached, of necessitie it is, that his holie Sacramentis be annexit, and trewlie ministred, as sealis and visible confirmationis of the spirituall promisses contened in the wourd: And thai be two, to wit, Baptisme, and the Holie Supper of the Lord Jesus: quhilk ar then rychtlie ministred, quhen by a lauchfull Minister the pepill, before the administratioun of the same, ar planelie instructed, and put in mynd of Goddis free grace and mercy, offered unto the penitent in Christ Jesus; quhen Goddis promisses ar rehersit, the end and use of the Sacramentis declared, and that in suche a tounge as the pepill dois understand; quhen farther to thame is nothing added, from thame no thing diminissit, and in thair practise nathing changit besydes the institutioun of the Lord Jesus, and practise of his holie Apostles.

And albeit the Ordour of Geneva, quhilk now is used in some of oure kirks, is sufficient to instruct the diligent reader, how that boyth these Sacramentis may be rychtlie ministred; yit for ane uniformitie to be keipit, we have thought gude to adde this as superaboundand.

In Baptisme, we acknawlege nothing to be used except

the element of watter onlie, (that the wourd and declaratioun of the promisses aucht to preceid we haif said befoir.) Quhairfoir, quhosoevir presumeth in baptisme to use oyle, salt, wax, spattill, conjuratioun, or croceing, accuseth the perfyte institutioun of Christ Jesus of imperfectioun; for it wes void of all suche inventionis devysed by men: And suche as wald presume to alter Christis perfyte ordinance yow aucht seveirlye to punische".<sup>1</sup>.

This book was drafted and presented to the Convention of 1560 but it never became the law in either State or Church. It was subscribed to by some of the nobility, but not by all, and it remained only an expression of the mind of the six Johns who had to do with the making of it, and who had also been responsible for the Scots Confession. Despite the failure to obtain for it full authorisation it remained a most important document for the assessment of the attitude of the principal men of the Reformed Church to the sacraments.

The absence of any bias toward the type of service contained in the Prayer Book is most marked. No formulary is thought of as essential to the proper administration of baptism. The outstanding impression gained from the reading of the proposals is that whatever method was used it should be simple enough for the average mind to understand and rigorously pruned, <sup>to be</sup> in line with the New Testament. There cannot have been many copies of the Book of Geneva in Scotland at the time of the presentation of this document, and there was a better chance of obtaining a good supply of the Prayer Book, yet there is an obvious ignoring of the latter and an unqualified advocacy of the former. The uniformity aimed at, in the first place,

1. The Secound Head, Of Sacramentis, Laing, 2, p.186-187.

however, is not the uniformity of a service book, but a uniformity of simplicity of administration.

The volume recommended where obtainable was known by various names. As the Book of Geneva the place where it was approved and used was indicated; as the Book of Common Order or of our Common Order its relation to the Reformed congregations in Scotland was suggested; its full title as given on the original print was The forme of prayers and ministration of the Sacraments, etc., used in the Englishe Congregation at Geneva: and approved, by the famous and godly learned man, John Calvyn. Imprinted at Geneva by John Crespin, M.D.LVI. The authorisation of its use in the Reformed Church of Scotland is contained in a decision of the General Assembly of December, 1562, Session 5;

"It is concluded, That ane uniforme order shall be taken or kepted in ministration of the Sacraments.....according to the Kirk of Geneva".

The volume was altered and enlarged in parts shortly afterward, and in 1564 a further Act of Assembly was passed which stated:

"that everie minister, exhorter, and reader, shall have one of the Psalmes Bookes latelie printed in Edinburgh, and use the order conteaned therein, in prayers, mariage, and the ministration of the sacraments".<sup>1</sup>

This introduces another name, the Psalm Book, so called because a version of the metrical Psalms were bound with the Book of Common Order as indicated in the full title, The Forme of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments, etc., used in the English Church at Geneva, approved and received by the Church of Scotland, whereunto

1. Calderwood, History, 2, p.284.

besydes that was in the former booke, are also added sondrie other prayers, with the whole Psalmes of David in English meter". The prefacing letter in the original edition, signed "At Geneva, the 10 of february, Anno 1556", addressed to "Our Brethren in England, and elsewhere", was omitted. Thus a volume primarily composed with England in view, happened, as the course of history unfolded, to find its most congenial home in Scotland.

The arrangement of the "Order of Baptisme" is the same in both editions, with the exception of an addition in 1564 of Ane Exposition of the Creed, an insertion of considerable length. The whole service, with this exception, was borrowed almost entirely from an order of Calvin which the latter had composed at Strasburg for the baptism of some children of Anabaptist parentage who had been brought to him from the surrounding district, the implication of his description of their parents being that the children involved were taken for baptism against the avowed principles of their parents and in direct opposition to their wishes. It was commonplace for the children of Anabaptists to be torn from their parents by the zealots of paedobaptism, and Calvin, who with all the notables among the Reformers believed that the cure for Anabaptism was not argument but extermination, would have no conscience about administering the rite in such cases.<sup>1</sup> The genesis of the Scottish form was

1. Calvin's description quoted in Maxwell, John Knox's Genevan Service Book, 1556, (1931), p.48. Cf. Troeltsch, Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 2, p.704: "The response (to Anabaptism) of the official Churches to the movement was a horrible and sanguinary persecution. First of all, the leaders of the movement were slain and put to death. Some were burned alive; some were slain by the sword; others were drowned. Then came the turn of the masses, who were decimated with savage cruelty".

not above reproach.

The order of service authorised for Scotland was on extremely simple lines. The following is an outline.

Preliminary Question. "Do you here present..."

Exposition "Then let us consider..."

Articles of the Faith. Said by the father.

Exposition of the Articles or Creed. (1564)

Prayer for the Infant.

Lord's Prayer. Said by the witnesses.

Baptism. Water laid on the forehead of the Infant.

Prayer. Thanksgiving and Petition for Divine favour.

The contents of the order will be discussed in the later parts of this treatise dealing with particular items in Scottish usage. The omissions fall to be marked here.

1. The first is a significant deletion from the prayer preceding the baptism proper as it had been set forth in Calvin's composition.<sup>1</sup> The matrix of this ante-baptismal petition had contained a reference to the removal of original sin and this was dropped in the reformulation. It was not that the translators denied the doctrine. On the contrary they heartily believed it. The relation of baptism to birth-sin had, however, been a puzzle to many of the Reformed schools. This was a feature of the trial of Patrick Hamilton, to cite a Scottish example. With the Romanists the matter was clear cut for it was precisely with this inheritance that baptism had principally to do. One of the potent factors in the advocacy of baptism in infancy had been that somehow this Adamic curse had to

be removed for it carried with it the damnation of the soul. The Pelagian controversy turned on the issue, and Augustinianism flourished on the strength of it. Only among the Anabaptists was the conception challenged, at least in so far as it had been the basis and stimulus to the evolution of infant baptism. Calvin retained it but changed the point of transmission to the sphere of the will, an alteration which only added to the difficulty of understanding how it could be transmitted at all. The exposition of the meaning of the sacrament in the Book of Common Order clearly implies the fact of original sin but asserts two positions, the first that the soul is possessed of a "corruption and deadly poison, wherewith by nature we were infected", and second "that children begotten and born (either of the parents being faithful)" are "clean and holy". How the sin which damns and the virtue which gives the infant the title of Christian are both a legacy of birth and exist contemporaneously in the one person, is explained, not in the baptismal service but, in "The Confession of our Faith, which are Assembled in the Englishe Congregation at Geneva, Received and Approved by the Church of Scotland", which formed the first section of the volume. There it is stated that in Baptism it is "signified that we (aswel infants as others of age and discretion) being straungers from God by originall synne..... althoghe this roote of synne lye hyd in us, yet to the electe it shal not be imputed". This can only mean that the power of it remains and may explain some post-baptismal sins, but the guilt of it is remitted for the elect. The sacrament, then, does not deal with the root of original sin in any, a doctrine which removed at a stroke the principal Mediaeval justification of infant baptism. This

on a simple reading of the situation, ought to have brought into question the retention of the baptism of infants, but such simplicities were foreign to the Genevan theologians. Rather than drop the custom they found new reasons for its retention, and thereby proceeded far on the road to the postulation of a new sacrament with the same name and subjects as the old.

2. The comparison between other orders of baptismal service and that adopted in Scotland reveals another omission, or perhaps better, the absence of an insertion, on the subject of sponsors renunciations. This vow on the child's behalf to forsake the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, and the carnal desires of the flesh was commonplace in baptismal formularies. It was an impressive part of the ritual of the baptism of the catechuminate in earlier days and was based on the belief that until a person had the mark of a Christian, he was a citizen of Satan's realm. The elaborate exorcisms of the Roman rite were pronounced with a view to the expurgation of the evil spirits who haunted the heart of every unbaptised person, infant or aged. The form of baptism used by Knox at Frankfort continued the renunciations as in the English Prayer Book, but Knox was never happy in the compromise and he turned violently against them. The basic notion, in the form of the Roman conjuration, was formally condemned in the National Covenant or The Confession of Faith of 1580, and renewed with additions in 1638, and elsewhere; although in the form of a renunciation after the pattern of the Prayer Book the custom seems to have survived sufficiently for Steuart of Pardovan to say that it was in vogue when he wrote in 1709. There is a trace of it even in the

Westminster Directory of Public Worship, no doubt due to Anglican sources, where the phrase "the Devil, the World, and the Flesh" is used twice in the suggested baptismal service. The associations of the notion that a child of Christian parents was, with all others, inhabited by agents of Satan were too unhappy for the first generation of Reformers to welcome anything which reminded them of the pit from whence they had been rescued.

3. Few things aroused the fury of the Genevan school more than the consignation with the cross in baptism. No trace of it was allowed to intrude into the Book of Common Order although it had an ancient lineage, going back at least as far as Augustine. It occurred at all sorts of places in the older service manuals, but in the Prayer Book of 1552 it was confined to a single instance in the baptismal office. The history of Puritanism in the South was bound up with the fight for its abolition, and a special explanation was drafted in 1604, Canon 30, to support its retention in the Prayer Book. This did not assuage in the least the fierceness of the opposition and Scotland fed the flame. On every possible occasion the matter was mentioned for denunciation.<sup>1</sup>

1. The Puritan antipathy is adequately documented in "The Seconde Parte of a Register", ed. by Peel, 1915. The whole multitude of Scottish anti-Episcopalian treatises make great cry on the issue. Curiously, The Book of Common Order, 1940 edition, adopts the abjured passage of the English Prayer Book, as a statement for the Minister to make after baptism, but deleting the reference to crossing.  
p.92.



4. At the close of the Prayer Book an instruction is given to the godparents to bring the child to a bishop for confirmation at the appropriate age. The Scottish service is silent and refrains from even referring to what became known as "the renewal of baptismal vows" prior to first Communion. The only reference made is in the ante-baptismal prayer where it is petitioned that the infant, on coming to perfect age, will confess the only true God.

5. An interesting part of the revision of the 1556 edition of the Book of Common Order was the excision of that part of the instruction prefacing the rehearsal of the Articles of the Faith which enjoins a kneeling posture. Instead of "the Minister exhorting the people to praye, sayeth in this manner, or such like, kneeling", the sentence ran, "which done, the Minister expoundeth the same as after followeth." The deletion was made in the 1562 edition, hence it was not due to the fact that in 1564 an exposition of the Creed followed and not a prayer. In the former edition the prayer followed immediately and yet the injunction to kneel was omitted. Is it then that the Minister, to whom at least the instruction applied, was to remain standing? This is a possible explanation, but it is improbable since kneeling at prayer was quite a general attitude in early Reformed times in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> Admittedly there were very practical reasons which, while not anywhere stated, must have influenced the question of posture on the part of the congregation, namely, the miserable state of many of the church fabrics with their earthen

1. C. G. M'Crie, Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland, p. 150; Maxwell, John Knox's Genevan Service Book, p. 199.

floors and imperfect roofing. There is little imagination required to prompt the thought that these conditions were not conducive to the encouragement of kneeling. The simplest explanation of the omission, however, seems to be that the specification of posture was inconsistent with its non-insertion before the other prayers in the book, and, being redundant, was taken out. Its omission tells neither one way nor the other in assessing the opinion of the Reformers on the general matter of posture during prayer.

It is appropriate to mention at this point that whatever the posture of the minister or congregation at particular parts of the baptismal service, in some places the custom is indicated of the party presenting an infant kneeling at the moment of baptism. There is a reference in the Knox Papers collected by Lorimer, of Becon asking why there was kneeling enjoined for the reception of the Communion elements when it was not enjoined for the sacrament of baptism. This refers to England, but there may have been all the more reason for it being true in Scotland where baptism was usually administered without the preacher leaving his pulpit. The most natural effect of this would be to encourage the father to stand and hold up the infant rather than to kneel. On the other hand it appears from Gillespie, when discussing the kneeling posture at Communion raised by the Perth Articles of 1618, that parents knelt when the baptism of their children was being administered. This is confirmed by a passage in John

1. English Popish Ceremonies, p.186. The principle affirmed again and again was "We all commend kneeling in immediate worship", but not in mediate. Kneeling in itself was not a Divine institution, hence was indifferent. p.142.

Forbes' Irenicon, written in answer to some queries by the minister of Kintore about the same disputes, which read:

"One who comes to be baptised or presents a candidate for Baptism humbles himself and prays to God to make that Baptism fruitful of Salvation unto eternal life; and yet he does not adore either the water or the font, before which he bows"<sup>1</sup>.

How far this was true of the Church at large the meagre evidence available does not permit to judge. The loose attachment to ceremonies of any sort by many ministers would argue that a diversity of practice was probable, especially at infant baptisms.

6. The revisers of the Book of Common Order made no change in the discountenancing of private baptism. The Order is simply called "The Order of Baptisme" without any qualifying adjective such as "Public", the place of administration being defined as,

1. not in private corners,
2. in the church,
3. after sermon, therefore, implicitly, near the pulpit.

Nothing illustrates the severance of the Scottish Reforming party from the dominant influences in England more than this insistence on the publicness of baptisms. No compromise was permitted. Contemporaneously with the adoption of this strict rule in Scotland the Elizabethan settlement in England incorporated the baptismal sections of the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI almost without alteration. Considerable Puritan opinion was against the private celebration of the sacraments and in the recensions of the Prayer Book as sponsored by the Puritans

1. The First Book of the Irenicon, ed. by Selwyn, 1923, p.78.

alterations were made in accordance with their outlook.<sup>1</sup>

7. Again, it is to be noted that the Order used both in Geneva and in Scotland did not contain any service for the admission of candidates of maturer years to the baptismal rite. The only parties for whom provision was made were infants.

This is in marked contrast to the exposition of the sacrament in the Confession of Faith, 1560, Article XXIII, "To whom the Sacraments appertain". It reads:

"We confess and acknowledge, that Baptism appertaineth aswell to the Infants of the Faithful, as unto them that be of Age and Discretion; and so we condemn the error of the Anabaptists, who deny Baptism to appertain to children, before they have Faith and Understanding".

The sacrament by this and other confessions and formulae of the Reformation period was set forth as primarily applicable to those who professed faith, and the administration of the rite to children was an extension of this for a particular class of persons. The norm was a believer and the inclusion of infants was derivative therefrom. When the Book of Common Order is consulted, however, the only form provided is that for infants, and no indication is given that this is in itself only a derivative from what the Confession of Faith accepted as the standard type. Taken by itself the baptismal service gives a mistaken impression of what was the theoretical position, and to present a balanced book of services corresponding to the Confession there was an obvious case for the formulation

1. Liturgical Services, Queen Elizabeth, Parker Society, 1847, p.XVI.

of a baptismal service for those professing faith on their own behalf, followed by an order of service for the baptism of infants adapted to suit a particular application of the sacrament. Instead of this the Reformers followed the Roman usage. Historically it was Mediaeval, theoretically it was a distortion, practically it was the form of service they would be most likely to require. All the liturgical work of the Reformers in Europe show this disparity between their Confessions and their service manuals.

8. It is surprising also to note that no provision was made in the Scottish volume for the reading of some appropriate passage of Scripture in the course of the rite. Reference was made to the covenant, the status of the children of Christian parents, and the story of the blessing of the children by Jesus, but the actual reading of Scripture does not seem to have been contemplated, nor is there any evidence that it was ever done. One explanation of this may have been that the minister left the reading of Scripture to the Reader, where such persons were functioning. The Bible would lie on the Reader's desk, and since the minister did not normally leave the pulpit for the administration of baptism, it would have been inconvenient to have demanded a Scripture lesson. Against this may be put the provision of the Anglican Prayer Book in which a passage of Scripture was printed as part of the Office of Baptism, and the priest did not require to have a copy of the Bible beside him. This might very well have been expected in the Scottish usage for which the supporters of it were so ready to claim

that it was more Scriptural than the Prayer Book. Whatever be the reason the fact remains that, while the Creed was prominent and the Lord's Prayer included, not even the baptismal commission was awarded a place.

9. No attempt was made to introduce anything in the nature of a hallowing of the baptismal water such as had been included in the Prayer Book of 1549 as "The Blessing of the Font", but deleted in the revision of 1552. The "matter" of baptism was regarded as just water without any reference being made to it which might stimulate a superstition that it was somehow "holy" water. The water used was apparently made available as required, and presumably was disposed of afterward without any regard to the use to which it had been put.

10. The absence of a sense of fitness in the arrangement of the sections of the Book of Common Order is worthy of notice. The forms of service for the two sacraments, Communion and Baptism, are separated by the "Form of Marriage" as if the plan of contents had followed a biological rather than a theological principle. The placing of the two sacraments was the reverse of the order in the 1556 edition of The Forme of Prayers. There the sequence was Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and then Marriage. For some reason unknown this was altered.

In the Book of Common Prayer the provisions for Baptism followed immediately after Communion as the first of the occasional offices. Then followed Confirmation and Matrimony. The sequence is the subject of a remark in L'Estrange's Alliance of Divine Offices. He wrote:

"But if Baptisme be, as it is, the Sacrament of our initiation and entrance into Christianity, it may be demanded, why hath not the Office belonging to it the preeminence ? Why is it not in our service Book inserted and marshall'd before that of the Communion; this Sacrament being in order of nature after that ? My answer is, the Communion was, both in the Primitive Church and in the beginning of our Reformation accounted the principle part of the Diurnal service of God in public, it being celebrated dayly in both times instanced, as I have proved before, for the ancient Church, and as may be evidenced for the last, by the Rubric after the exhortation to the Communion in the first book of Edw.6. The Eucharistical Office being then so concomitant with the dayly prayers, and Baptisme more rarely happening, the Church thought it fit to make them contiguous in order, which were so frequent in use".<sup>1</sup>.

In the Scottish usage Communion was much less frequent, hence such an explanation does not apply. Again, in the Confession of Faith Baptism is mentioned and explained before the Lord's Supper, as is the natural order. It would seem then that the sequence in the Book of Common Order was inverted, and still further upset by the placing of the Marriage Service between the sacraments. This cannot be accepted as satisfactory on theological grounds and might well be seriously questioned as a perversion of the Biblical order by which it is generally agreed that Baptism ought to precede Communion. Ultimately the source of the confusion is traceable to the change which was accomplished in the use of Baptism in the Mediaeval period when the baptism of infants took the place of the baptism of catechumens, and what had been the rule scarcely survived as the exception. The Biblical, logical and chronological

<sup>1</sup>. London, 1659, p. 241.

order was ignored where it might have been expected that it would have been observed, especially with the lead given in the original Genevan volume. The tradition thus begun has continued in all Scottish service books ever since.

Something may now be said, briefly, of the interval between the authorisation of the Book of Common Order and the appearance of the Service Book of 1637.

On "the 24th day of the month of Aprile, in the fifteen hundred and sixty-seventh year of the annals of our Lord Jesus Christ", the translation of the Book of Common Order into Gaelic was completed by John Carswell, Superintendent of Argyll and the Isles, afterward Bishop of the Isles.<sup>1</sup> This was a notable piece of work and allowed Reformed preachers to operate more easily in the extensive Gaelic areas. The evidence of subsequent history does not permit an enlargement of the claim that provision was made for an approach to the Western Highlands, but this does not diminish the honour due to Carswell for his commendable industry in translating the standard formulary. During the Roman period there does not appear to have been any provision made for even emergency baptisms to be administered in the Gaelic tongue. The Statutes of the Church only allowed, or at least specifically mention, Latin or English. It is strange, wrote Bp. Dowden, "that in the Scottish statutes no reference is made to the Erse tongue which must have been then very extensively

1. The Book of Common Order; commonly called John Knox's Liturgy. Translated into Gaelic Anno Domini 1567.....  
Ed. by Thomas M'Lauchlan, 1873.



used".<sup>1.</sup>

Many editions of the book were called for in its usual form<sup>2.</sup> and recensions of it with varying alterations were printed for use in England. Efforts began after the turn of the century to revise it again to bring it nearer to the English Prayer Book. By 1616 these had reached the stage of a direction being given by the Episcopal Assembly of that year to Patrick Galloway "to revise the Booke of Commoun Prayers containit in the Psalme Booke, and to sett downe ane commoune forme of ordinaire service, to be used in all tyme heirafter".<sup>3.</sup> A paper dated the previous year was left by Spottiswoode, Archbishop of Glasgow, containing suggestions for the reformation of church worship. In the first paragraph of it there was stated:

"There is lacking in our Church a form of divine worship; and, while every minister is left to the framing of public prayer by himself, both the people are neglected and their prayers prove often impertinent". Again, "the forms of marriage, baptism, and the administration of the Holy Supper, must be in some points helped".<sup>4.</sup>

Communications and drafted papers were evolved and circulated between parties in Scotland and London, but nothing came of these labours.<sup>5.</sup>

It seems clear enough that, while the Book of Common Order was the acknowledged standard of the Church, great liberty was taken with it. Speaking of the beginning of the seventeenth century Calderwood wrote:

1. Dowden MSS., National Library, Edinburgh, Scottish Mediaeval Church, not catalogued, On Baptism.  
2. A useful list of editions is appended to Sprott's edition, p.195. 3. Session 17th August, 1616, B.U.K., 3, p.1128. 4. Liturgies of James VI, Ed. by Sprott, pp.XVI-XVII. 5. Ibid. Introduction.

"During the thirteen years in which I discharged the functions of the Ministry, whether in administering the Sacraments or in celebration of other sacred rites, I never used the exhortations or prayers which are extant in our Agenda. And also many others."<sup>1</sup>.

Balcanquhal in his Declaration printed in the name of the King, averred that in Scotland there was no form of prayer, and the services were a "shame to all religion". He is a prejudiced witness, but, nevertheless, well acquainted with Scottish life, and some attention must be given to his testimony. On the other hand, in an oft quoted description of a baptismal service about 1634 by Sir William Brereton, a visiting Puritan, the minister made use of "a printed form of baptism".<sup>2</sup> Alexander Henderson, later in 1641, puts up the best case he could devise for the Scottish ministers in his "Government and Order of the Church of Scotland", published anonymously, and defends his brethren against the allegations "That they had no certain rule or direction for their public worship, but that every man following his extemporany fansie, did preach and pray what seemed good in his own eyes". Again, "The form of Prayers, administration of the Sacraments, admission of Ministers, Excommunication, solemnising of Marriage, visiting of the sick, etc., which are set down in their Psalm Book, and to which the Ministers are to conform themselves, is sufficient witness. For although they are not tied to set forms and words, yet they are not left at randome, but for their testifying their consent and keeping unity, they have their directory and prescribed order".<sup>3</sup>.

1. Altare Damascenum, 1623, p.613. 2. Hume Brown, Early Travellers in Scotland, p.146, from Chatham Society's edition of 1844. 3. pp.14-15, in 1690 edition.

These witnesses combine to testify to the judgment, which applies to the whole of Scottish history in this matter, that a measure of freedom was allowed and taken by the ministers of the Reformed Church. In a phrase of Leishman's, "the book was printed without change, and used with constant change".<sup>1</sup> There were those who pined for set forms within the Episcopal party, as represented by Spottiswoode in 1619 ( at the trial of the minister of Dysart for refusal to keep the Perth Articles ), when he said, "That in a short time that Book of Discipline would be discharged, and ministers tied to set forms";<sup>2</sup> but there were others who cherished the liberty they had received and would not part with it.

By the Perth Articles of 1618, homologated by the Parliament in 1621, private baptism was permitted in time of necessity, but no form for such administration accompanied the relaxation of the traditional strictness.

### The Book of Common Prayer, 1637.

This notorious volume was short lived, if not still-born, and never affected baptismal usage in Scotland to any extent worthy of prolonged notice. The Communion Office was later revived, and still survives, but the Baptismal Office of this particular edition of the Book of Common Prayer dropped out of sight. It merely serves as an illustration of what the majority in Scotland turned away from as repugnant. Gavin Young, minister of

1. The Church of Scotland, Ed. by Story, 5, p.365.

2. Quoted, Story, Liturgies of James VI, p.XXXVII.

Ruthwell, wrote to the Earl of Annandale, on October 31st., 1637,

"In Edinburgh, the 17 October last was a gritt Councell day for the Service Book; but a gritt number of noblemen, gentlemen, churchmen, and burgois cam from all the pæirts of the kingdom, som for them selfs, and their shyres, presbyteries, or parochins, or brughes, protesting against that Book. Eight hundred subscrivit a supplication to the Counsell for that effect that it may be presented to his Majestie, who must be understood not as so many persons but as so many parochines, presbyteries or brughes, for they who are commissioners. I have it of a certaintie that so many noble men have subscriv'd a confederacy against that Book and that they shall all stand and fall together".<sup>1</sup>.

The rejection could scarcely have been more decisive. All the negotiations of a quarter of a century were swept away as so much chaff. Diligent search was made for every crumb of Romanism in it, and the results were placarded to provide ammunition for pulpit use. "We doubt not, "ran the Royal Proclamation of December, 1636, "but all our subjects, both Clergy and others, will receive the said Public Form of Service with such reverence as appertaineth:" but never was confidence so thoroughly disintegrated. A crescendo of rage disabused the Royal mind and damned the book.

Spalding said that the Service Book was "put in practeiss in diverss countreis ( districts ), and there was an attempt made to compel its use by the recalcitrant,"<sup>2</sup>.

1. Laing MSS., Hist. MSS. Comm., 1, p. 198

2. Aiton, Life and Times of Alexander Henderson, 1836, p. 165f.

hence it is possible that some baptisms were conducted according to the new order. It is extremely unlikely, however, that the rubrics were fully observed because a font according to the Anglican or Roman pattern was implied - and by the Book of Canons enjoined.

It is needless to linger over the secret instructions, manoeuvrings, stratagems, prevarications and protestations common to all such situations. The King made a display of moderation, but the assurances only exasperated the anti-prelatic party. Events had gone too far for the possibility of a mere suspension of the Service Book being effective to remove the fears. Nothing short of a repudiation of the "said buik" and its complete and unequivocal withdrawal, together with an abolition of episcopacy and the convening of a General Assembly would appease the sense of outrage. The National Covenant was signed and the Glasgow Assembly convened. In Session 14, December 6, 1638, this Assembly condemned, inter alia, the offending volume in these terms:

"The Assembly therefore all in one voice, hathe rejected, and condemned, and by these presents doth reject and condemne the said book, not only as illegally introduced, but also as repugnant to the doctrine, discipline and order of this reformed Kirk, to the Confession of Faith, constitutions of General Assemblies, and acts of Parliament establishing the true Religion: and doth prohibite the use and practice thereof: and ordaines Presbyteries to proceed with the censure of the Kirk against all such as shall transgresse".

## The Second Reformation.

Nothing was said officially about the Book of Common Order in the documents of the Second Reformation, as the changes of 1638 have come to be called, but it was implied in the general references to the "order of the Kirk". There was a strong feeling, however, that the time had come for a revision of the order of public worship. The Prayer Book had been utterly unacceptable, but the idea of introducing improvements was not. In the Assembly of 1641 Henderson proposed that a Confession of Faith, a Catechism, and a Directory of Public Worship be prepared and apparently he had an eye on the possibility that such a move might facilitate closer cooperation between the Presbyterians of Scotland and like minded brethren on the other side of the border.<sup>1</sup> A letter had been received at that Assembly from a group of English ministers proposing cooperation, and a reply was sent reciprocating the desire expressed and suggesting that "there might be in both Kirks, one Confession, one Directory for publike worship, one Catechisme, and one Forme of Kirk-government".<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Assembly, for their part, passed two Acts which must be taken together. The first was an Act anent Novations, which laid down, "that no Novation in doctrine, worship, or government, be brought in, or practised in this Kirk, unlesse it be first propounded, examined, and allowed in the Generall Assembly".<sup>3</sup>

The second was an Act for drawing up one Catechisme, one Confession of Faith, Directory of publike worship and forme of Kirk-government.<sup>4</sup> The duty of compiling the

1. Peterkin, Records, p.295. Aiton, Henderson, p.468.  
2. Ibid., p.296. 3. Ibid., p.294.

drafts was laid upon the proposer. The task was accepted, but when Henderson thought about it further and compared the proposal with the course of events in both kingdoms, he thought it unwise to proceed with a unilateral revision. The position in 1942 was described in a letter he wrote to Baillie.

"I confess I found it a work surpassing my strength; nor could I take it upon me either to determine some points controverted, and to set down other forms of prayer than we have in our Psalm Book, penned by our great and divine Reformers. Although neither time nor weakness had hindered, I cannot think it expedient that any such thing, whether Confession of Faith, Directorie of Worship, Form of Government, or Catechism, less or more, should be agreed upon and authorised by our Kirk till we see what the Lord will do in England and Ireland, where I will wait for a reformation and uniformity with us. But this must be brought to pass by common consent. We are not to conceive that they will embrace our form. A new form must be set down for us all, and, in my opinion, some men set apart some time for that work. And although we should never come to this unity in religion and uniformity in worship, yet my desire is to see what form England shall pitch upon before we publish ours."<sup>1</sup>.

What he did was to publish anonymously a synopsis of the Scottish system under the title, "The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland" and, in 1641, this was distributed in England to combat the notion that Scotland had no forms, and to let it be known what the forms were.

1. Aiton, *ibid*, p.513.

This small volume is invaluable for assessing the form of baptism as understood by a leading Presbyterian before the introduction of the Westminster Directory of Public Worship. An examination of the relevant section reveals that Henderson does not set out a digest of the 1564 edition of the Psalm Book, but a form which is only an approximation to it. The substance of Henderson's version is as follows:

The action begins with a short and pertinent prayer. Next come some words of instruction touching the Author, nature, use and end of this sacrament, the duties to be performed, in their own time, by the person to be baptised, and of the parent or vice-parent. "Thirdly, he that presenteth the Child, maketh confession of the Faith, unto which the Child is to be Baptized, and promiseth to bring up the Child in the Faith and in the fear of God. Fourthly, the Minister being informed of the name of the Child, baptizeth the Child so named, by sprinkling with water, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Lastly, the Minister concludeth, as well the publick worship for that time, as the action, with thanksgiving for the Word, and Sacraments, and with prayer for a blessing, and with such Petitions, as he useth at other times after Sermon, and in the end dismisseth the Congregation with a Blessing"<sup>1</sup>.

The obvious variations in this from the form set down in the 1564 Psalm Book are,

1. the omission of any mention of the preliminary question to the baptismal party, though this may be

1. The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland, reprinted Edinburgh, 1690, from the first edition Edinburgh, 1641.



understood,

2. the adaptation of the close of the service to suit the preaching service preceding,
3. the taking of promises for which no explicit provision is made in the Psalm Book,
4. nothing is said of the exposition of the Creed, which is apparently referred to in the phrase "confession of the Faith", and
5. no mention is made of the repetition of the Lord's Prayer.

This digest may be compared with the edition of the Psalm Book issued from the press of Robert Bryson the same year. Henderson's work was said to be issued from the press of James Bryson, in the 1690 edition. The order in "The Psalmes of David...with an exact Calender; the order of Baptisme and Marriage..." was not that of 1564, but of the edition of 1562, with the instruction, "Then the Father, or in his absence the God-father, shall rehearse the Articles of his Faith. Then followeth the prayer. Almighty and everlasting God.....Our Father who art in Heaven, etc." The exposition of the Creed was absent, and the minister was enjoined to lay the baptismal water on the child's forehead.

### The Directory for Public Worship, 1645.

When the opportunity came for the Church of Scotland to collaborate with the reform movement in England, the General Assembly supported the project and appointed commissioners to represent it at Westminster. The first of the standards resulting from the consultations was entitled, "The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, Agreed upon by the Assembly of Livines at Westminster,

with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, as a part of the Covenanted Uniformity in Religion, betwixt the Churches of Christ in the Three Kingdoms of Scotland, England and Ireland", as printed for circulation in 1647.

Approval was given to it by the General Assembly on February 3, 1645, Session 10, with the proviso,

"It is also provided, That this shall be no Prejudice to the Order and Practice of this Kirk, in such particulars as are appointed by the Books of Discipline, and Acts of General Assemblies, and are not otherwise ordered and appointed in the Directory".<sup>1</sup> An Act of Parliament three days later "cheerfully and heartily", concurred in the ratification of the Directory.<sup>2</sup>

The object in view by the compilation of the work was believed to be such as would be approved by the first Reformers. It was put out "not from any love of novelty, or intention to disparage our first reformers, (of whom we are persuaded, that, were they now alive, they would join with us in this work....)". The Preface proceeds:

"our meaning therein being only, that the general heads, the sense and scope of the prayers, and other parts of publick worship, being known to all, there may be a consent of all the churches in those things that contain the substance of the service and worship of God; and the ministers may be hereby directed, in their administrations, to keep like soundness in doctrine and prayer, and may, if need be, have some help and furniture, and yet so as

1. Peterkin, Records, p.422. 2. Charles I, Parl.3. Sess.5.

they become not hereby slothful and negligent in stirring up the gifts of Christ in them."

The arrangement proposed for baptism was as follows:

1. Regulations. Time, Administrator, Place, Intimation.
2. Words of Instruction;
  - a. Exposition of doctrine,
  - b. Admonition to congregation,
  - c. Exhortation to parent.
3. Prayer;
  - a. That doctrine would be realised,
  - b. For sanctifying the water to this spiritual use.
4. Baptism. The method to be,
  - a. The formula spoken as the water applied.
  - b. Pouring or sprinkling to be sufficient.
5. Prayer;
  - a. Thanksgiving
  - b. Divine reception and protection of the infant.

This pattern was obviously an approximation to the Book of Common Order, and had little in common with the Book of Common Prayer. The political considerations of the time, apart from general desire, were sufficient to ensure this result.

1. In contrast to the Book of Common Prayer, only one form of service was drafted, that for infants. No private celebration was contemplated. In July, 1644, Baillie was able to write:

"We have carried, with much greater ease than we

expected, the publickness of baptism. The abuse is great over all this land. In the greatest parish of London, scarce one child in a year was brought to the church for baptism".

2. The place of the baptismal service in the Directory follows the section dealing with a preaching service, and is followed by the Lord's Supper. This was the order in Henderson's Government and Order as against the Psalm Book of 1564.

3. The omission of the Lord's Prayer was an important alteration, but this was offset by the recommendation that it should be included in the Public Prayers of the Church at some point in the service, "Because the Prayer which Christ taught His disciples is not only a pattern of prayer but itself a most comprehensive prayer". On this ruling it was permissible for the minister to place the Lord's Prayer where he pleased, so that it need not be repeated twice at one service.

4. The ordinary service was to finish, where convenient, with a prayer, a psalm and the blessing. Should the ordinance of baptism have to be administered it was directed that it should be inserted between the psalm and the blessing; hence the baptismal service does not include the blessing.

5. The major issue in the new scheme for some of the Scottish churchmen was the omission of any provision for the repetition of the Apostles' Creed to be said by the presenter of a child. "The Belief in Baptism

was never said in England, "wrote Baillie, " and they would not undergo that yoke". It had been a point of principle in Scotland to require the rehearsal of the Creed or "Belief", and ignorant parents were always told to learn it before presenting their children.

As a compromise, four questions were inserted into the original draft of the Directory, and , while they were comprehensive, they did not satisfy some in the Scottish Assembly, when the draft was discussed. These interrogatories, as proposed by the Westminster drafting Committee were:

"Do you believe all the articles of faith contained in Scripture ?

That all men and this child are born in sin ?

That the blood and Spirit washeth away sin ?

Will you have therefore this child baptized ?

The debate at Westminster considerably altered the initial draft. There could be no question that as they stood they were devoid of either felicity of expression or discrimination in the fine points of baptismal theory. In their place the Westminster Assembly proposed another three, less doctrinaire and more happily phrased.

"Dost thou believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost?"

Dost thou hold thyself obliged to observe all that Christ hath commanded you, and will you endeavour so to do ?

Dost thou desire this child to be baptized into the faith and profession of Jesus Christ ?

This substitution was an improvement, but the Independents in the Assembly were still dissatisfied and would gladly have abolished questions altogether from the baptismal service. The Scottish commissioners fought the issue through, and extracted the inclusion of at least some profession of faith. "We have got the Assembly", wrote Baillie, "to agree to equivalent interrogatories much against the mind of the Independents"<sup>1</sup>. Their work was in vain. In the end what was thought a great gain at Westminster was rejected by the General Assembly, and at the request of the Scottish Church they were deleted by the English Parliament when the Directory was passed for use in the churches of the land. The only remnant of the profession of faith which was given a place in the legalised form was a phrase at the end of the exhortation to the parent, "Requiring his solemn promise for the performance of his duty". Strictly, this should have involved no more than a promise, but there can be no doubt that behind the advice of the Scottish Church there was the thought that the omission of the proposed queries would leave the way open for the retention of the Scottish usage. They had actually requested that some statement be added to the Directory requiring that the parent should covenant "to bring up the child in the knowledge of the grounds of the Christian religion and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". This was not granted. It may be noted, however, as interesting that the General Assembly did not insist that the Apostles' Creed should be the prescribed form of faith. This may have been due to one of two reasons. First, the knowledge before them that such a demand would have had little chance of acceptance in the state of the parties

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in England, or, second, the changing attitude toward the use of the Creed by some of the ministers in Scotland. Rutherford, for example, had no objection to it, but, on the other hand, had "no intention to put jus divinum upon it".<sup>1</sup> Henderson would seem to have been of the same mind. In his correspondence with the King in 1646, in his third paper, he critic<sup>12</sup>es the argument of antiquity and the unanimous consent of the Fathers when at variance with Scripture, and proceeded:

"Many other instances might be brought forward to prove such universal practice of the Church, as was not warranted by the apostles, as in the rites of baptism and prayer, and the forming up and drawing together of the articles of that creed that is called symbolum apostolicum, the observance of many feasts and fasts both anniversary and weekly".<sup>2</sup> The King took up this point and asserted that he would believe that this creed was written by the apostles until other authors had been found for it.

Again, a growing number of the ministers in Scotland were being influenced by opinions widely accepted in England, one of these being a depreciation of the Creed. It was not, of course, a criticism of the contents of the Creed as being erroneous. It was the combined argument of a fallacious title, and associations with Episcopal and Roman usage. There constantly recurs the appeal to Scripture and the custom of the apostles, often in a form that would also remove any justification for the acceptance of any systematic doctrinal symbol. Indeed, it may be remarked that it was a constant factor in Scottish tradition to exalt the appeal to, and the authority of, the Scripture for faith, but the

1. The Westminster Directory, Ed. by Leishman, p.110.
2. Aiton, Henderson, Appendix, p.657.

examinations on the knowledge of the Faith were not inquiries into the extent of Scripture knowledge so much as examinations into the extent of catechetical knowledge, not necessarily the same thing.

The Apostles' Creed did find a place in the printed editions of the Westminster standards in a note at the end on the Catechisms:

"And albeit the substance of the doctrine comprised in that Abridgement commonly called The Apostles Creed, be fully set forth in each of the Catechisms, so as there is no necessity of inserting the Creed itself, yet it is here annexed, not as though it were composed by the Apostles, or ought to be esteemed Canonical Scripture, as the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer (much less a Prayer, as ignorant people have been apt to make both it and the Decalogue ) but because it is a brief sum of the Christian Faith, agreeable to the Word of God, and anciently received in the Churches of Christ".

The whole question of the Directory in Scotland cannot be said to have been taken up with enthusiasm. The reaction to the Service Book of 1637 had accelerated the desire for freedom from forms, a bias which can be traced from the opening of the century. There is a considerable amount of evidence, however, that the Directory was widely used. It is an understatement to say, as does Leishman in his introduction to the Church Service Society's edition of 1901, that "During the ascendancy of the Commonwealth the historical enquirer is seldom reminded of the Directory."<sup>1</sup>

1. p.XXVI.



In the Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, September, 1646, Session 3, there is the enactment, "It is appoynted that the directory be put in practise as nearly as can be, and intimation thereof be made the next Lord's day in the several congregationnes".<sup>1</sup> The reservation probably referred to the necessity of the Directory being translated into Gaelic during the service where this was the only language understood. In the same Synod, in 1650, a point was made against a minister accused of irregularities, that "he hes not the directory of publick worship".<sup>2</sup> In the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie there are references to it being used as a criterion of order. On March 14, 1649, for example, at the visitation of Garty Kirk, the elders "confessed he ( their minister ) had ane James Marr, reader, continowing in his office, contrar to the directorie".<sup>3</sup> The following year at Botrusnie, the elders "being posed how he ( their minister ) celebrat the sacrament of baptisme, if he did that according to the Directorie, and if he had ane particular day in the week for lecture or catechizing, and celebration of the sacrament of baptisme, as they sould occure".<sup>4</sup> In Banffshire, on the occasion of the visitation of a church, the minister was asked, in 1649, inter alia, "if he used the directorie".<sup>5</sup> An interim Act of the disputed Assembly of 1562 stated, "That every minister do so dispose of the time appointed for the reading of the Scripture, as both the order of the Directory and the Act of Uniformitie in point of the lecture may be observed".<sup>6</sup> The dissenting brethren in

1. S.H.S., 1, p.102. 2. Ibid, p.160.

3. Presbytery of Strathbogie, Spalding Club, p.99.

4. Ibid., p.143. 5. Annals of Banff, New Spalding Club, 2, p.30.

6. Directory, Ed. by Leishman, p.XXVI.

a letter of protest against this Assembly's decisions about the supply of ministers, say that men were condemned who "differ in nothing in judgment with their Brethren in the Confession of Faith, Directory for Worship and Government".<sup>1</sup> The Protestors refer to the Directory again in 1654, when they vigorously declaim against toleration of religious opinions such as had been granted in the first declaration of toleration which Scotland had known, granted by the English Commissioners at Dalkeith in 1652,<sup>2</sup> "by which, "said the anti-tolerationists, "all our former confessions of faith, Catechisme, Directory for worship, propositions for Kirk Government, all our Assemblies and their acts and determinations, yea, the whole frame of our religion and Church as to the publick profession is turned upside down". Their brethren of the contrary opinion as to the policy of the Church for the hour, also recognised the full validity of the Directory. They appended a list of the Acts of Parliament establishing the position of the Church to a letter to the President of the Council, Lord Broghill, in 1656, and among these Acts they cite the "Approbation of the Directorie for Worship agreed upon with the Assembly of divines in England, Act 2, Sess.4, Parliament 1645".<sup>3</sup>

This selection of the references drawn from a wide area confirms the judgment that the Directory was in wide circulation after its acceptance as a governing formulary for public worship.

1. Peterkin, Records, p.654.      2. Consultations of the Ministers of Edinburgh, S.H.S.,1,p.47.      3. Ibid.p.198.

## The Restoration, 1660.

A comprehensive Recissory Act was passed through the Scottish Parliament in 1662. By this most extraordinary measure all Parliaments since 1633 were annulled, the only reservation included being one which allowed those who had obtained private rights and securities within the period to retain their advantages. This summary procedure removed at a stroke the legal basis of the Westminster standards. This negative measure was accompanied by a positive law reestablishing Episcopal Church government, namely, the "act for the restitution and re-establishment of the ancient government of the church, by archbishops and bishops" of 1662.

Against these drastic enactments there was a flood of protests. They accomplished nothing. Those who could not square their consciences to Episcopal jurisdiction had to leave the country, or gather their adherents around them as best they could. One third, or about four hundred ministers, dispossessed themselves by non-conformity. There are few details of the baptisms at the clandestine meetings which evolved, but such as they are they indicate that it was the general rule to accompany the sacrament by preaching, all other matters being relative to circumstances. An example may be cited from the ministry of John Blackadder, as related by Smellie. On one occasion in 1668 "he rode about nine miles of a very bad road, and came to the place very weary, expecting to have gotten rest that night. But the people had trysted the parents with their children, so

he behaved to address himself to the work, and went about eleven oclock at night to a great meeting where he preached an hour and a half, and thereafter baptized forty-two children, dividing them, the one half at one time, the other afterwards, because they could not get all conveniently stood together; and after this was done it was hard on the break of day".<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, there is perhaps a reminiscence of other practices in the objections which Kirkton and others raised in the Assembly of 1690 against over strictness on the matter of private baptisms, which brought from the Moderator the comment, "There is a distinction both of times and places, for in times of persecution I think an honest minister riding on the way, may go into a man's house, baptize a bairn, and come out and take his horse again".<sup>2</sup>. How far the Directory was used it is impossible to say. A critical letter to the Covenanters in 1684 asserted, "The Ring-leaders of your faction condemn all set-Prayers what soever, and all set forms of celebration of the Sacraments.....You Baptize, celebrate the Communion, not as you were wont to do after the form set down unto you at the Reformation; but every day after a divers forme and manner, being changable like the wind".<sup>3</sup>. The itinerant preachers of the Societies were very exacting on one particular, the profession of faith demanded of parents. This will be dealt with at length in a later section on vows and engagements. Again, where baptisms were performed in conditions which could be classed as private, there was no formulary which could have been used other than by adaptation.

1. Men of the Covenant, 1, p.257.

2. Quoted, Leishman, The Ritual of the Church, Church of Scotland, Ed. by Story, 5, p.408. 3. The Epistle Congratulatory of Lysimachus Nicanor....to the Covenanters in Scotland, Oxford, 1684, p.30.

## The Revolution, 1689.

The restoration of the Presbyterian Church to be the Church of Scotland came with accession to the throne of William and Mary. For a short interval there was confusion while Presbyterians and Episcopalians negotiated for advantage. Then came the Act of 1690 (cap.5.) "Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith, and Settling the Presbyterian Church Government". The Directory of Public Worship and the Catechisms were not mentioned in it, although the Presbyterians would have preferred their inclusion.

This Act was followed by another in 1693, cap.22, "Act for Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church ", in which the position is more definite, without specifying the Directory by name.

"And their Majesties, with advice and consent foresaid, statute and ordain that uniformity of worship, and of the administration of all public ordinances within this Church, be observed by all the said ministers and preachers, as the samen are at present performed and allowed therein, or shall be hereafter declared by the authority of the same, and that no minister or preacher be admitted or continued for hereafter, unless that he subscribe to observe, and do actually observe, the foresaid uniformity".

Nor is there any Act of Assembly authorising or recommending the Directory in relation to the baptismal service until 1705, when an Act in general terms states;

"Recommendation concerning the observation of the Directory for Worship. The General Assembly hereby seriously recommends to all ministers and others within this National Church the due observance of the Directory for the Public Worship of God, approved by the General Assembly held in the year 1645, Sess. 10". The only previous reference had been in 1694 when it was stated with regard to lecturing that it was desirable that the "old custom introduced and established by the Directory may be by degrees by recovered". The phrase "by degrees" is an apt description of the outlook of the time with regard to uniformity in such a matter as baptism also.

In 1696 certain interested parties drew up "Overtures concerning The Form of Process, and Method of Church Discipline in the Church of Scotland" and circulated their suggestions. These included a section, "Of the Admission of Children to Baptism" These latter proposals revised were republished in 1711 by the Assembly, and sent down to the Presbyteries for review. In 1712, Act 4, they became the law of the Church. Their substance will be discussed later, but they are noted here as symptomatic of the lack of clarity in the Church for many years after the reestablishment.

The whole matter of Church law and practice was taken up by an advocate, Walter Steuart of Pardovan, and the result of his labours was published in "Collections and Observations Methodized, concerning the Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland", in 1709. He remarks upon the necessity for such a volume in the

Dedication. "It was a Matter of Regret, "he begins, "especially about the beginning of our happy Revolution in the year 1689, that the Judicatories of this Church, very much wanted fixed and established Rules, for directing Proceedings; Or, though they had them, yet they lay so scattered and hid, that Intrants to the Holy Ministry, and the younger Pastors, yea even some among the more aged of that sacred Order, were too much Strangers to them".

In Book 2 he sets forth what he considers to be the Church's teaching on Baptism, with which is incorporated, "The Form of Ministration of baptism & the Prayer".<sup>1</sup>. This is simply a reprint of the major portion of the Directory, and the authority cited is the Act of Assembly, 1645.

About the same period, in 1704, James Hadow in his "Doctrine and Practice of the Church of Scotland anent the Sacrament of Baptism" takes the Confession of Faith and the Directory as his standards, and the same holds good for the polemical treatises against the calumnies of the Episcopal party. This was the official position until the arrival of the modern Service manuals.

When the secessions within Presbyterianism took place from time to time all alike professed to hold the Westminster standards, as did also the branches of the Presbyterian Communion which appeared in other lands among Scottish colonists. It is unnecessary to detail these affirmations. One typical statement may be deemed sufficient. It is taken from the Basis of Union agreed upon by the United Associate Synod of the Secession Church, September 8, 1820, Article 3, and says:

1. Title III, par.10.

"The Directory, as heretofore, shall be retained as a compilation of excellent Rules".<sup>1</sup>

In 1802 there appeared the first published collection of forms by a private hand. It was printed at Inverness, and entitled, "The Scotch Ministers' Assistant, or a Collection of Forms for Celebrating the Ordinances, etc, of the Church of Scotland". The section "Forms of Baptism" contained five parts, giving the order of service, the address and explanations. The following is the form proposed:

1. Prayer.
2. Presentation of the child. "Do you present..."
3. Exposition of the Doctrine.  
The element of water used 1. as a reminder of guilt and pollution, 2. as denoting, by its sprinkling, the means of recovery, 3. represents the nature of grace as free.
4. Profession of Faith by the Parent.  
Do you believe in the Scriptures, Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church "and are you sincerely desirous that your child should be baptised in this faith?"
5. Prayer. As Directory.
6. Baptism. As Directory.
7. Prayer. As Directory.

Another recension of the Directory was issued by Brunton in 1848 with the title, "Forms of Public Worship in the Church of Scotland". James Anderson of Cults was responsible for another, published in Edinburgh in 1846 with the title, "The Minister's Directory, or Forms for the Administration of the Sacraments". In this there

1. Testimony of the U.A. Synod, 1828, p.186.



there are two forms of baptismal service offered, the first being along the general lines of the Directory, and the second consisting simply of an initial question and a prayer to suit the needs of private ministrations.

By the middle of the nineteenth century opinion was beginning to change in the minds of many with regard to the public worship of the Church, and, while baptism at this period was not normally a public service, the order used was inevitably brought under review, and voices in influential quarters were beginning to be heard advocating the restoration of the sacrament to a place in public worship. In the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1856 a "Recommendation and Declaratory Act on Public Worship" was passed in these terms:

"The General Assembly had laid before them an Overture on Public Worship.....The General Assembly approve of this Overture and enjoin all ministers of this Church to observe.....the regulations on this and other particulars connected with public worship and spiritual instruction contained in the Directory for the Public Worship of God trusting that the principles maintained in that Directory will be duly observed".

The following year, 1857, Dr. Robert Lee published his "Prayers for Public Worship", in the Preface to which he acknowledged the status of the Directory "which contains the present law of the Church on this subject, and indeed on the whole subject of public worship". To the second edition, 1858, he added, inter alia, a section "The Administration of Baptism". The order suggested was:

1. Scripture Sentences on Baptism.
2. Exhortations. As appear necessary.
3. Prayer. Based on the Directory.
4. Baptism.
5. Prayer.
  1. Thanksgiving. As Directory.
  2. For the Parents / and Family.
  3. Lord's Prayer.
6. Psalm.
7. Benediction.

In this there was no explicit provision for a profession of faith or engagements. The Lord's Prayer follows the baptism as was the Anglican usage, though that influence need not be presumed to be present.

During the second half of the century various groups were at work on the improvement of public worship. Among them The Church Service Society was prominent and issued the Euchologion which went through many editions and was widely used in the Church of Scotland. The first edition was a volume of some two hundred pages; the later editions had swollen to four hundred. In the second edition, 1869, there were two sections inter-related, "Administration of Baptism to Infants" and "Admission of Young Persons to the Lord's Supper". Both were prefaced by an explanatory statement which drew attention to the sources of the forms, the second quoting largely from other Genevan Communion services to support the inclusion of this section, and proving, from Scottish documents, that at least the principle of confirming baptismal vows was well founded. For the service of infant baptism it is exceedingly

interesting to note that the Savoy Liturgy was used in the formation of the section on baptismal vows. So far as this revision of the Anglican Prayer Book by Baxter is concerned it had fallen by the wayside when the Savoy Conference of 1661 between the Puritans and the Bishops ended in a humiliating rejection of the Puritan suggestions. At the time the baptismal service was the most disputed topic and changes of a fundamental nature were demanded. No one, it was held by the Puritans, ought to be compelled to baptise the children of ungodly parents; sponsors ought not to be compulsory; interrogatories addressed to the child and responded to by the sponsors should be abolished as savouring of the Anabaptist opinion that the recipients' faith should be professed before the rite; the declaration of regeneration ought to be clearly conditional, and so on. These pleas were disdainfully ignored in the revision of the Prayer Book which ultimately appeared. The Church Service Society rescued the liturgy Baxter had completed in a frantic fortnight (from oblivion) a reading from the Gospels was included; the Apostles' Creed reappeared; the child was to be presented at "the font or laver"; petition was to be made for the mother or family; and the Lord's Prayer preceded the Benediction.

The sixth edition, a typical later printing, presented a more comprehensive section. The provisions for baptism follow those for the Lord's Supper, the sequence being what is called "The Order for the Administration of Holy Baptism", "The Order for the Admission of Catechumens", and "The Order for the Baptism of Adults". These titles indicate the fulness of the treatment, though they ask for criticism on the ground that the first form is obviously meant for infants, but does not say so, and implies that the baptism of adults is a secondary form and not

the historically primary type. The use of the term "catechumens" has the flavour of ancient usage about it, but the subjects to which it applies are not the same class as that covered by patristic usage, namely, the unbaptised. The full title to this section is awkwardly long, but defines the use, "The Order for the Admission of Catechumens to the Confirmation of the Baptismal Vow and to the Participation of the Lord's Supper".

The rite proposed for infants included a selection of relevant Scripture passages, and alternative forms of profession, the first consisting of the Apostles Creed to be said by the minister, and a renunciation of "the devil, the world, and the flesh"; the second consisting of a simple promise to give the infant a Christian education. A post-baptismal declaration is included adapted from the Prayer Book statement at the signing with the cross. The Lord's Prayer is included after the post-baptismal prayer. The form for adults is constructed with that for infants as a basis.

In 1882, the "United Presbyterian Devotional Service Society" was formed, and issued, in 1891, its "Presbyterian Forms of Worship". In the same year, from the side of the Free Church, came "The Public Worship Association", which published, in 1898, "A New Directory for the Public Worship of God, founded on the Book of Common Order and the Westminster Directory".

Once the movement for the improvement of the services of the Church had begun, the advance was rapid compared with what had preceded, and service books from private as well as semi-official sources became available in

generous proportions.

The report submitted to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1871 is noteworthy in that it, for the first time in Presbyterian history in Scotland, proposed a form of service for the baptism of adults on profession of their faith. The Overture anent Baptismal Vows had been presented in 1869, and produced two results:

1. A report was sent to every Established minister which "recommended them to frame their baptismal addresses and exhortations according to the method set forth in the Directory for the Public Worship of God" and enjoined them to confine the exercise of their discretion, in exacting baptismal professions and obligations, within "those just and reasonable limits which the Directory prescribes".
2. An instruction to the committee to renew consideration of the subject "with reference to cases of adult as well as infant baptism: and to prepare a form consistently with the rules in the Directory, in which the professions and engagements of Christian parents may be expressed".

Thus there were submitted to the Assembly three forms of pre-baptismal address, one containing the substance of the example provided in the Directory, another consisting of an exhortation to the parent incorporating the Apostles' Creed, and a third combining these two and adjusted to suit an adult candidate.

The introduction of a form of service for adolescents and adults, it may be remarked, was not on a basis of theological principle so much as the pressure of an increasing number of occasions when ministers were requiring

to invent some such service for the reception of first communicants who had not been baptised in infancy. In the case of the Church of England, in 1662, the provision of an Office for those "of riper years" was due, as stated at the time, to Anabaptism and overseas work. The Church of Scotland did not contemplate the introduction of a new form for either of these reasons, but on account of the widespread withholding of children from baptism principally in urban districts.

Service manuals thereafter include forms to meet the need. The "New Directory" of the Free Church provided a most comprehensive collection of aids covering in all twenty-four pages. There are so many alternatives in prayers, exhortations, professions and engagements in these ministerial assistants that it would be tedious to attempt anything like a survey of them all. In any case, they all emphasise the liberty which was granted to an ministrant to choose his own order of service.

The most recent manual to be issued by the authority of the General Assembly of the reunited Church of Scotland is dated 1940, and the framework upon which the baptismal services of this "Book of Common Order" are built may serve to close this section.

Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism  
to Infants.

1. Baptismal Hymn.
2. Scripture Sentence.
3. Instruction (including Scripture readings).
4. Profession of Faith.
  - a. The Apostles' Creed, or,
  - b. Do you confess your faith in God as your

- heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and the Holy Spirit as your Sanctifier ?
5. Engagement for the Child's Christian education.
  6. Pre-baptismal Prayer; including "Sanctify this water!"
  7. Presentation of the Child "at the Font"; the only mode mentioned is sprinkling.
  8. Baptism followed by a Blessing (said or sung)
  9. Declaration. "...this child is now received into the membership of the holy Catholic Church,..."
  10. Post-baptismal Prayer. Petitions for,
    - a. the future of the child,
    - b. the home of the child,
    - c. the congregation.
  11. The Lord's Prayer.
  12. The Benediction, or The Blessing.

Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism  
to Adults.

1. Scripture Sentence.
2. Instruction (including Scripture readings)
3. Profession of Faith ( as for parents ).
4. Engagement. "Do you promise to make diligent use of the means of grace, and to be a faithful member of the Church of God?"
5. Pre-baptismal Prayer ( adapted)
6. Baptism ( candidate kneels "and the minister shall sprinkle water on him").
7. Blessing (said).
8. Declaration.
9. Post-baptismal Prayer. Petitions for,
  - a. the candidate.
  - b. the congregation.

10. The Lord's Prayer.
11. "Here an Exhortation may be given."
12. The Benediction or The Blessing.

Those who are familiar with actual usage in the Church of Scotland will not require to be reminded that these forms are presented as commendable types and are not always used in full. "Liberty in the conduct of worship", says the Preface to the Book of Common Order, 1940, "is a possession which the Church of Scotland will not surrender". To this principle the Presbyterian Communion has been consistently true.

#### Episcopal Forms from 1660.

When Episcopacy was given legal status after the Restoration of 1660 the Recissory Act left the State Church without either the Westminster Directory or the Service Book of 1637. What happened at Aberdeen may be taken as typical. The Diocesan Synod was constituted on 21st. November, 1662, in the College Kirk of Old Aberdeen. In the second session it was enacted "that the liturgie in the old psalme book be used and practized".<sup>1</sup> In the fourth session it was ordered that "the directorie practized be the late pretendit Generall Assemblies be laid assyde, and not maid use of in tymes coming".<sup>2</sup> At St. Andrews the Synod, in 1662, was told by the Archbishop that he "did signify to the brethren that its His Majestie's will that henceforth the way of worship prescribed in the

1. Eccles. Records of Aberdeen, Spalding Club, p.263.

2. Ibid, p.264.



Directory should cease".<sup>1.</sup>

A new liturgy was contemplated and steps were taken to formulate something which might be submitted to the King. The bishops had a draft before them in 1666, but no agreement could be reached. "At last," wrote Burnet to the Archbishop of Canturbury, "when it was apparent that our new forms would not please, another booke of common-prayer was produced, which is that our predecessours offered to King Charles the First.....this gave more satisfaction".<sup>2.</sup> The King was against the repetition of that which had given so much trouble in the time of his father, and asked Lauderdale's brother Charles Maitland, to inform the Duke of his mind. "Wreit to yr Brother from me, That by no mens Ther be anything done as To A litorgie in Scotland att this tyme, and sayes he let not a word be motioned off it....."<sup>3.</sup>

In the absence of a liturgy of their own there is evidence that various practices were flourishing. The Laird of Brodie notes under August 15, 1662, "Yesterday the Bishop of Edinburgh did baptis the advocat's son and usd som of the ceremonies and service book".<sup>4.</sup> There are many references in the ecclesiastical documents of the time to the reintroduction of the Book of Common Order, at least in the matter of the repetition of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, though the formulary is not usually mentioned.

Apart from the notices of Episcopal enactments, there are other materials which confirm the absence of any

1. Register of the Presbytery of Dundee, quoted, Hunter, *ip* Dunkeld, 1, p.60. 2. Lauderdale Papers, 2, Append. pp XXX, XXXII. 3. *Ibid*, p.236. 4. Diary, p.270. r,  
Dunkeld, 1, p.60. 2. Lauderdale Papers, 2, Append. pp. XXX, XXXII. 3. *Ibid*, p.236. 4. Diary, p.270.

generally. "The Sacraments are Administered after the same Way and Manner by both", writes an Episcopal apologist when making comparisons between Presbyterians and his own party.<sup>1</sup> "In Baptism neither party use the Cross, nor are any Godfathers and Godmothers required, the Father only promising for his child. The only difference in this Sacramentis, the Presbyterians make the Father swear to breed up his Child in the Faith and Belief of the Covenant or Solemn League, whereas the Orthodox cause the Father to repeat the Apostles' Creed, and promise to breed up the Child in that Faith which he himself then professes". Sir George Mackenzie's testimony has been quoted already. An English student at Glasgow, 1671-2, who became a dissenting minister in the South afterward, put down his impressions in these words: "The public worship in the churches, though the Archbishop himself preaches, is in all respects after the same manner managed as the Presbyterian congregations in England, so that I much wondered why there should be any Dissenters there, till I came to be informed of the renunciation of the Covenant enjoined, and the imposition of the hierarchy".<sup>2</sup>

Another visitor, Thomas Kirke wrote, "They use no service book. Their christenings (as all other things) are without form, only water is poured on the infant and some such words used as Sir John Mephistophilus supplies him with, and so the child commences Christian, as good ( or better) than the best of them".<sup>3</sup>

1. The Case of the Present Afflicted Clergy in Scotland Truly Represented, London, 1690, Preface.
2. Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis, 3, p. xxv.
3. Hume Brown, Early Travellers in Scotland, 1878, p. 258.

A more favourable sample of a traveller's testimony was furnished by the English chaplain Morer, in his "Short Account of Scotland" published in 1702. He describes a service at the Second Episcopacy, about 1689, with the discerning mind of one who was interested in ecclesiastical usages. "I know of no Book of Canons they have, "he wrote, except the Perth Articles, and the Lirectory above mentioned, which they also seem to have an Eye to, and are very Uniform be that means in their Worship and discipline...."<sup>1</sup>. This reference to the Directory is an indication of some importance that its use still survived in some parishes, however much it may have been officially frowned on by the prelates. His account of the baptismal service is a most welcome addition to the material available. It runs:

"Baptism is mostly done in the Church and on the Lord's Day. When ( after Sermon ) the minister discourses on the Constitution, Necessity and Benefits of that Sacrament: then he prays for a Blessing on the present Action and beseeches God that the baptizing of the Child ( or Children ) may answer to the Ends for which the ordinance was made and continued among 'em. After which some Questions are proposed to the Father ( for he presents the Child and holds him in his Arms ) concerning the Creed, and the care he is to take for the Education of the Infant to make his Behaviour suitable to it, and the honourable Character which Baptism confers on him. To all which the Father giving the minister an affirmative Answer, the minister prays the second time, that God would be pleased to continue the Parents in this Belief and good Resolution, and dispose of the Child to be govern'd, and guided by them. Then with Water out of a Bason conveniently fastened

to the Pulpit-side, the minister sprinkles the Child in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and so a very few words more added, dismisses 'em with the usual Blessing." 1.

This service, while not conforming in every particular to the Directory, might very well have been used by one who accepted the Directory as a guide, and there is nothing in it which suggests a partiality for the Book of Common Prayer as against the Book of Common Order.

It may be concluded with certainty that during this period, 1660-1689, there was no radical change in the order of baptism, such as might show a borrowing from England. No prelate sponsored the Book of Common Prayer. In Bp. Leighton's charges to his clergy in the diocese of Dunblane, for example, nothing whatever is said about any particular manual when instructing his subordinates. In his Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter there is a long dissertation on the meaning of baptism which makes no reference to any Canons, Articles, Confessions, or Service Book, where one might be expected had these items been important. He keeps strictly to the meaning of the ordinance in Scripture. There is perhaps a hint that the forms in use were not new in such a sentence as, "We have no other word, nor other sacraments, to recommend to you, than those that you have used so long to no purpose; only we call you from dead forms to seek the living power in them, that you perish not".<sup>2</sup>

There is an entire absence of disciplinary cases

1. p.62.

2. First Epistle of Peter, Works, Ed. by Aitkman, Edin., 1839, p.226.

among the clergy on the subject of formularies.

It is not until Episcopacy was disestablished again that the Book of Common Prayer becomes a factor of any importance. Writing to Ralph Thoresby of Leeds, Will Nicolson said on August 21st, 1699,

"The late change in ecclesiastical discipline in Scotland has brought our Common Prayer book into greater request in that kingdom than ( in all probability ) we should ever have seen it without such a revolution, insomuch that it is now the general opinion of the suffering party there that the English Service book will be established at the next return of Episcopacy which few of them despair of seeing".<sup>1.</sup>

The use of the Prayer Book, or any other usage, was, of course, illegal for the Episcopal ministry. They were prohibited from baptising under pain of imprisonment until security could be found for perpetual exile. This compelled the adherents of this order to become "the Church invisible", but it did not stop their ministry, the extent of their operations being determined by the bias of the neighbourhood in which they laboured. It is uncertain how widely the transfer to the Prayer Book was adopted for the situation was confused for a number of years; but in Perth in 1711, for example, an offender was dealt with who had used the Prayer Book for baptisms, apparently for some time.<sup>2.</sup>

The first appeal from Scotland to the House of Lords

1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Laing MSS., 1, p.490.

2. Chambers, Domestic Annals, 1, p.23.

1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Laing MSS., 1, p.490.

2. Chambers, Domestic Annals, 1, p.23.

a ministry. This was the celebrated case of Greenshields, an Episcopal clergyman who persisted in using the Book of Common Prayer within the bounds of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and was tried and convicted before that court on the ground that he had declined to recognise their authority, ministered without their sanction, and introduced a form of worship contrary to the law. The usurper defied both the Presbytery and the Magistrates, was imprisoned, had his appeal to the Court of Session rejected, and in the end had the charges against him quashed by the House of Lords. This was a calamity of the first magnitude for the Scottish Church. At the first Assembly after the Revolution the Royal Letter to the Church had stated that "Moderation is what religion enjoynes; Neighbouring Churches expect from You, and We Recommend to You"<sup>1</sup>. The mood of the Church was not so gracious as the "Gracious Letter". In 1690 the Parliament rescinded the Act of 1670 against disorderly baptisms,<sup>2</sup> and that of 1695 put a positive ban on irregular baptisms, or Episcopal baptisms,<sup>3</sup> so that what had formerly been orderly became disorderly, and vice versa. Furthermore the strongest possible terms of security that legal minds could devise were incorporated into the Act of Union in the interest of the uniformity and perpetuity of the Presbyterian Church worship, and the clauses had been taken to mean that the door was locked, barred, and bolted against any possible poaching on the preserves of the Church. It, the Act of Union, had been thought to established an exclusive right to the expression of religion within the nation. The decision of 1711 shattered the illusion and the Toleration Act of 1712<sup>4</sup>.

1. Acts of Assembly, 1690, p.4. 2. Acts Parl. Scot. 1690, c.57, IX, 198. 3. Ibid, 1695, c.15, IX, 387. 4. Statutes at Large, 1699-1713, pp.513-5, 10 Anne, cap.7.

followed. This had the title, "An Act to prevent the disturbing of those of the Episcopal Communion in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, in the exercise of their religious worship and in the use of the Liturgy of the Church of England; and for repealing the Act passed in the Parliament of Scotland intituled 'An Act against irregular Baptisms and Marriages'".<sup>1</sup> No stone was left unturned by the Scottish Church to prevent this far-reaching legislation from becoming law. The printers were hard put to it to keep pace with the pamphlets from either side that enlightened or bewildered the public during the whole sequence of events; but the rebuff to intolerance went through, and the worst fears of those who had bitterly opposed the Act of Union looked as if they were to be realised.<sup>2</sup>

One result of the Toleration Act was that one thousand, nine hundred copies of the Prayer Book were despatched from England for free distribution in Scotland.<sup>3</sup> In the same year the Earl of Winton, at his own expence, reprinted the rejected Service Book of 1637 for use in his own private chapel, an action against which Bp. Rose protested with vigour.<sup>4</sup> "Qualified chapels" sprang up wherein those who had taken the oath of allegiance to the Throne worshipped and the Prayer Book was generally used. The Non-Jurors apparently continued to preserve a variety of usages.

1. Curiously the Act of 1662 "Concerning the weittings of Anabaptists, Quakers, etc." subjecting such to imprisonment remained on the Statute Book until the Statute Law Revision (Scotland) Act, 1906, cap.19. 2. Vide Lord Belhaven's speech, Lockhart Papers, 1, p.180f.; Webster's, Lawful Prejudices against an incorporating Union with England, Edin., 1707, passim. 3. Mitchell, Biog. Studies in Scot. Ch. Hist., p.223. 4. Neale, Life and Times of Bp. Torry, p.267.

A good example of the accommodation exercised by some Episcopal ministers is contained in the Baptismal Register of St. Paul's Edinburgh, the entries dating from 1735. The notice "per liturgy" or "sine liturgy" is entered against many of the baptisms, and under the date January 24, 1739, and expanded explanatory comment is found after an entry referring to a child of a Robert Balfour.

"N.B. Yt I had first converse with Mr. Balfour to know qther it was wt his good likeing yt I was employed oyrwayes I would proceed no further. He told me that it was his own motion, & yt the reason I had not been called to christen his former child was one apprehension yt the clergy of our com̄ were strictly tyed down to the use of Liturgies, ceremonies, etc. To this I replied that for what was essential to the Sacrat (e.g. water, the Invocatn of the Holy Trinity to ane authorised administration) being parts of the Institution, twas not in my power to dispense with them, nor would he desire it. But for what was merely Ceremony ( e.g. Books, Sign of the Cross, taking the child into the arms of the Priest ) however ancient and decent & Symbolical yet these we had a Discretionary power to omitt, when they were like to offend the weak, etc." <sup>1</sup>.

The possibilities are that this dispensation in favour of the sensitive was not widely used for those who normally would call upon the services of an Episcopal minister would be sympathetic toward the Anglican forms. This period in the Episcopal Church, however, is confusing for the "Qualified congregations" which appeared after the Penal Act of 1719 were not subject to the oversight of the bishops, and the Jacobite section who would not take the oath of abjuration were so severely crippled by the

1. The Scottish Antiquary, 1892, pp.12-13.



penal laws that public worship practically ceased. The 1719 Act permitted only nine persons to be present other than members of the household ( where the service was in a home ) and the 1746 Penal Law reduced this to five persons. To this diversity there is to be added the fact that different sections had different views on what might be done at a baptismal service - the controversy between the "usagers" and the "non-usagers". Apart from the knowledge that the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 was the most widely used formulary it is difficult to tell what exactly happened at baptisms. Some of the clergy were subject to the bishops and some were not, and the bishops themselves were not in agreement.

Baptism in private became the general rule. In Aberdeen it was never a public action by the end of the century and long afterward.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere it was the same, although, in 1828, Canon 22 of the revised Code of Canons stated that it was a public action and ought to be administered "in a place of public worship". Furthermore, "the privacy of the administration shall be no reason for any departure from the form prescribed for public use". This latter point is important. Whether the baptism was in a house or in a consecrated building ( but administered privately) the only form to be used was that for public baptism, the minister being enjoined to keep to that form. This was an advance on what had been permissible. The previous revision of the Canons, that of 1811, had only been able to achieve a unanimity of regret that parents

1. Eeles, Traditional Ceremonial and Customs Connected with the Scottish Liturgy, Alcuin Club, 1910, Append.V.

could not be persuaded to bring their children to a place of public worship. "Therefore", Canon XIX, 1811, continues, "Baptism being thus almost constantly administered in private houses, without the possibility of obtaining any solemn recognition of it before a Congregation, or in a place of Public Worship, the officiating clergyman may select from the Office of Public Baptism, in the Book of Common Prayer, such parts of that Office as are essentially necessary to the due Administration of that Sacrament, provided that such selection be approved of by his Bishop, and do not tend to excite any doubt as to the validity of the Baptism so administered."<sup>1</sup>.

The use of the same Prayer Book as the English Church became a sensitive point in the policy of the College of Bishops, and in the middle of the nineteenth century they had occasion to complain of a Prayer Book put out in 1849 by Bishop Torry entitled, "The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Use of the Church of Scotland, etc". His fellow bishops repudiated the publication in the strongest terms and went so far as to circulate the following letter.

"Circular addressed to the Most Reverend the Archbishop and the Right Reverend the Bishops of the Anglican Communion.

Edinburgh, Sept. 5, 1850.

My Lord,

The Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church

1. Ibid, p.139.

assembled in Synod, have ascertained that a book intituled, 'The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, according to the use of the Church of Scotland' has been printed in Edinburgh, and is now sold and circulated in England.

They consider it their duty to inform your Lordship, and all other Prelates of the Anglican Communion, that the said book is not the Book of Common Prayer according to the use of the Church in or of Scotland; that it possesses no Canonical authority; and that neither the College of Bishops nor the Church at large is answerable for a work compiled and published without their approbation, consent or knowledge.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's

Faithful brother and servant in Christ,

W. T. Tower, D.D.,

Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, etc." 1.

In so far as this book was used by the clergy of the St. Andrew's Diocese the changes involved in the baptismal service were those authorised in the Canons of 1838, namely, the permission given to parents to be sponsors at the baptism of their children, the re-baptism of those who expressed doubt about their previous baptism, and the service was terminated, if in private, by the Apostolic Benediction, the customary Scottish usage.

In 1929 a step of some magnitude was taken by the authorisation of "The Scottish Book of Common Prayer" to be a service book on the same level as the Anglican book.

1. Neale, Life and Times of Bishop Torry, pp.289-290.

This is stated in the current Canon XXIII, in the following terms:

"The authorized Service Books of this Church are - the Scottish Book of Common Prayer approved by the Provincial Synod of 1929, and the Book commonly called the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, according to the Book annexed to the Act of Parliament XIV, Carol.II, Cap.4."

Any compounding of the two books is forbidden so that in the Baptismal service, for example, either book may be used, but whatever version is preferred it must be used in its entirety. (Canon XXIII, par.3.)

The two books have much in common, as might be expected. They are not, however, identical, in the forms of baptismal service. In the Anglican Book the administration of Baptism is divided into three sections, 1. The Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants, 2. The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children, and, 3. The Ministration of Baptism to Such as are of Riper Years. The Scottish rescension contains four divisions, 1. The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants, 2. The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children, 3. The Public Receiving of Such as have been Privately Baptized, and, 4. The Ministration of Baptism to Such as are of Riper Years.

The first in order of printing in the Scottish book continues to be that of the Public Baptism of

Infants, and this is taken as the norm. The analysis is as follows, the variations from the Anglican book being noted. The sectional headings are in the Scottish book only.

1. Interrogatory.
2. Explanation. "conceived and born in sin" altered to "from their birth are prone to sin".
3. Prayer for the Infant. S.V. divided, either half being sufficient.
4. Gospel. St. Mark.
5. Exhortation. Optional in S.V.
6. Prayer. Thanksgiving.

#### The Promises.

7. Exhortation to Sponsors.
8. Renunciation. "Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil...."
9. Profession. S.V. only. "Dost thou, in the name of this child, profess the Christian Faith?"
10. The Apostles' Creed. S.V. Said with the minister.
11. Promise. S.V. "Dost thou, in the name of this child, promise obedience....."
12. Interrogatory. S.V. "Dost thou, in the name of this child, ask for baptism?"
13. Prayer. A.V. shortened.

#### The Blessing of the Water. S.V. only.

14. Salutation and Responses.
15. Prayer of Thanksgiving and Sanctification.

The Baptism. One rubric only in S.V.; dip or pour.

15. Declaration and Signing

The Thanksgiving.

16. Invitation. A.V. "Seeing.....that this child is regenerate and grafted into...."; S.V. "Seeing....that this child is born again and received into the family...."

17. Prayer Lord's Prayer.

Thanksgiving. "...that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant..."

Petition for the home. Optional. S.V. only.

The Duties of the Godfathers and Godmothers.

18. Exhortation. S.V. Revised.

19. The Blessing. S.V. only.

The S.V. retains the addendum of the A.V. "It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved."

In the Private Baptism of Children the Scottish book introduces a prefatory prayer; and the "Public Receiving of Such as have been Privately Baptized" is simply a convenient separation of what had been in the Anglican book marshalled under the heading of the Private Baptism of Children. It supplies those parts of the service which had been omitted at the private baptism.

The section entitled "The Ministration of Baptism to Such as are of Riper Years", etc., is an adaptation of the service for infants with the Gospel changed from St. Mark to St. John, and the other parts adjusted. In the action of baptism the priest is instructed to "take

each person to be baptized by the right hand, and placing him conveniently by the Font, according to his discretion, shall ask the Witnesses the name, and shall dip him in water, or pour water upon him". The retention in this rubric of the mode of immersion without having any appropriate facilities in any Episcopal building in Scotland seems curious, and will be further discussed in the chapter on baptismal furniture.<sup>1</sup>.

#### Other Paedobaptist Forms.

John Wesley declared "I live and die a member of the Church of England" and desired that his converts and followers would retain the same standard. The refusal of the Church of his baptism to conciliate or welcome Methodism led to secession and the administration of the sacraments within the meeting houses. Where the minister was in Anglican orders the Book of Common Prayer was the formulary used for baptismal services, but the appointment of preachers with authority to administer the sacraments and who were not in Anglican orders led to other usages. The Model Trust Deed of 1832 for the setting up of new buildings affirmed adherence to the doctrinal standards of Wesley as contained in his Notes to the New Testament and the first four volumes of his sermons and stated that "the superintendent preacher for the time being..... (shall) have the direction and control of the said worship". In Scotland, so far as is known, the baptismal services

in the Methodist churches were of a simple pattern which might be varied according to the discretion of the administrant. There was no rigid formulary such as the Book of Common Prayer which had been the service book of Wesley himself. The spirit of Methodism did not encourage an emphasis on liturgics.

The autonomous nature of the congregational life of the communions which are grouped under the terms Independent or Congregational does not make it possible to state with precision the forms of baptismal service which were used when these churches appeared in the eighteenth century. John Glas of Tealing broke away from the national Church in 1730 to form the first church in the genealogy of modern Congregationalism in Scotland. His "Dissertation on Infant Baptism" affords no clue to the type of service he used or encouraged though it is not improbable that he would adapt the form he had been accustomed to use in his Presbyterian days. One point is known which varies from what, at least, he ought to have done as a minister of the Church of Scotland. Archibald M'Lean, the Baptist controversialist, had been a member of a Glasite congregation in Glasgow and in his "Letters Addressed to Mr. John Glas", written in 1766, he comments on the customs of his former pastor when baptising children. "With respect to their parents", he wrote, "you never enquire whether they have been believers, or whether they have ever made the scriptural profession of faith or not".<sup>1</sup> Thus it would appear that, whatever else was absent, the profession of faith on the part of the parent was not requested. But this was the practice of an individual and cannot be taken as typical of the movement. It is certain that a variety

1. Letter VIII, Collected Works of A. M'Lean, 3, p.97, Edin. 1811.



of baptismal services would be employed according to the opinions of the ministers concerned and the concurrence of the respective congregations. As the congregations of this type acquired traditions by their lengthening history orders of service were evolved and printed but they are all of recent date and are all subject to change according to the preferences of the administrant. All the controversial literature is concerned with the meaning of baptism, and there is simply no literature at all on liturgical issues so far as they affect the uniformity of usage.

### The Baptist Forms.

Here again there was no standard nor any interest in forms as such. Baptism was administered on profession of faith and such examples of baptism as were found in the New Testament were taken as a guide to the order that ought to be followed, *mutatis mutandis*, in Baptist worship. Ministerial aids came with the general development of these in recent times, and prior to their appearance each administrant was guided by the immediate possibilities of the service. In Commonwealth times these services had been in the open by the side of a river or other place suitable for baptism by immersion. The baptisms were made an occasion for the preaching of a relevant message on Christian privilege and duty; then the prepared candidates were led into the water and solemnly baptised in the name of the Trinity.

When the Baptist movement in Scotland began which had a sustained history the earliest baptisms were of this sort, but with the acquisition of property interior baptisteries were constructed. In these circumstances the baptismal service took the form of a normal preaching service in the course of which the baptisms were administered. It was not usual for the candidate to make a lengthy confession of his or her faith during such a service. The preparation of candidates and their acceptance by the respective congregation as proper persons for the rite was completed before the time of baptism. An appropriate affirmation, however, might be requested by the administrator immediately before the action. There was no tradition in this, however, the public character of the administration being taken as a sufficient testimony to the significance of the ordinance for both candidate and congregation, and the sermon preceding normally contained a suitable exposition of the meaning of the faith to be professed by the action and an admonition to the persons presenting themselves for baptism. Where baptisteries were not possessed by congregations the service continued to be observed in the open, and in such cases the baptisms would, if possible, be preceded by a service of worship in the church building. In all cases extreme simplicity was observed.

## Chapter Four.

### The Subjects of Baptism.

The baptism of persons of any race or their faith, and of those who were not requested by any member of the Church, from time to time on special occasions, and on the basis of a profession of faith, or an affidavit, or some particular verse of Scripture, and others were insisted to baptism on the basis of faith which made no reference to any particular article of belief. The practice, however, was not universal and where an applicant satisfied the church in any particular situation, it was held that he was a Christian person, that person should go through the ordinance.

A dissenting voice was raised in the congregation, so far as to draw attention to the baptism of infants. The statement was made in 1830, by Mr. [Name], and [Name] responded and acknowledged that baptism should be administered to the infant of the faithful, and of age and discretion, and so forth. [Name] (the archbishop), who deny baptism to infants, but that their parents should be baptized.

## The Subjects of Baptism.

The baptism of persons who could supply credible evidence of their faith and fitness for the rite was never questioned by any section of opinion within the Reformed Church. There were differences of emphasis from time to time on what constituted a sufficient testimony on the basis of which baptism could be granted, some demanding an affirmation of the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, or some particular version of Christian doctrine, and others were content to baptise on a confession of faith which made no reference to a formulated system of belief. The principle, however, was never an issue and where an applicant satisfied the authority controlling admission to baptism that he or she was a Christian person, that person could go forward to the ordinance.

No dissenting voice was raised in Scotland at the Reformation, so far as is known, against the continuance of the baptism of infants. The statement in the Confession of Faith, 1560, Cap. XXIII, was :

"We Confesse and acknowledge that Baptisme apperteaneth alsweall to the infantis of the faithfull, as to those that be of age and discretioun. And so we dampne the errorr of (the) Anabaptistes, who deny baptisme to apperteane to children, befoir that thei have faith and understanding."

This was reiterated in the exhortation in the Book of Common Order where reference is made "to that obedience which Christians owe to the voice and ordinance of Christ Jesus, who commanded to preache and baptise all wythout exception" unless these appointments were contemptuously refused, a condition which could only apply to adults.

### The Absence of Anabaptism.

A notable feature of the reforming movement in Scotland which made it almost unique among the areas affected by the Reformed Faith was the absence of anything corresponding to the Anabaptism as it had appeared in England and the Continent. Knox refers to the Anabaptists in his "Letter to his Brethren in Scotland", 1557, and he was apparently under the impression that some of that persuasion were already in the country<sup>1</sup>. No other reference, however, has been found and it may be presumed that Knox had been misinformed or was colouring the picture by what he had seen elsewhere. Of Anabaptism Scotland knew nothing except by repute and the tales that were carried lost nothing in the telling. The movement was described by Knox in his letter and in his "An Answer to the Cavillations of an Adversary respecting the Doctrine of Predestination", 1560,<sup>2</sup> as a hydra-headed monster so anarchic and chaotic that no one could contemplate its presence without a shudder. All the more spiritual side of Anabaptism was either unknown or ignored.

Basically there was no reason why Anabaptism in some form should not have appeared where men had the New Testament in their hands. Given that condition some

1. Laing, K.W., 4, p.361f. 2. Ibid., 5, p.9f.

protest against infant baptism might have been expected as not obvious in the New Testament. The fact that it had to be expressly authorised in the Reformed documents is significant. In other words the influence of the Bible on the Scottish Reformation was only one of the factors present. The native element contributed to the great purgative movement was chiefly a revulsion from Romanism and the constructive contributions arrived already shaped on other anvils. Hence the judgment of Hume Brown may be questioned when he wrote:

"In Scotland the national type of character and intellect was sufficient guarantee that anabaptism could never be a real source of disquiet. The counsels which Knox now gave for checking its growth seem to have been so effective that in all the eventful history of Scottish religion nothing resembling anabaptism ever again exercised the mind of the country. 'Suffer na man', was his advice, 'without trial and examination to take upon himself the office of preacher neither to travell amangst the simple sheep of Christ Jesus assembling them in private conventions'.<sup>1</sup>

If Anabaptism was what Knox and others set it forth to be then there is abundant truth in the statement that the dominant parties desiring an orderly reformation would be utterly opposed to it. Stripped of its political aberrations, however, there would have been no reflection on the national character had Anabaptism been received as an interpretation of the Reformed thesis. It is now recognised by historians of every school that large sections of the Anabaptist movement disowned the excesses of some who were denominated by that name, excesses which

1. John Knox, 1895, I, p.351.

were due in large measure not to anything inherent in a protest against infant baptism and the desire for a more radical reformation than the classic reformers were prepared to concede but to the ferocity of the policy of extermination fomented by the dominant schools of thought. "They had been tortured on the rack", wrote a Scottish historian, "scourged, imprisoned in dungeons, roasted to death before slow fires, and had seen their women drowned, buried alive, pressed into coffins too small for their bodies till their ribs were broken, others stamped into them by the feet of the executioners. Is it to be wondered at that those who stood firm sometimes gave way to hysterical excesses?"<sup>1</sup>.

It is also unjust to a movement of very considerable dimensions to suggest that its rise in Scotland would have been a reproach to the intellect of the nation. The idea of the holy community which is at the heart of Anabaptism commanded the allegiance of many minds of eminent ability although on the whole the multitudes who turned to Anabaptism on the Continent were of the peasant class. The research of the last hundred years or so has revealed many surprising things about this much maligned people and has led to a complete re-evaluation of the contribution they proposed to make to the Reformation. They were as those born out of due season and the bitter intolerance which pervaded the anti-Roman groups would not suffer them to live.<sup>2</sup>.

1. Lindsay, History of the Reformation, 2, p.237. cf. p.430f.  
2. The most recent study in English is Smithson, The Anabaptists, 1935. It contains an extensive and up-to-date bibliography. The original writ, under the hand of Elizabeth in 1575, for the burning of two Flemish Anabaptists, is in the Hunterian Library, Glasgow Univ. Foxe, the martyrologist, interceded for them in vain, Evans, Early English Baptists, 1, p.151f.

Other reasons must be sought for the lacuna in the Reformation history of Scotland and they are not difficult to find. In the preparatory stages, for example, there was a scarcity of both preachers and books such as might raise a ferment of theological discussion. The fierce persecution induced the anti-Romanists to remove themselves from the land and, on persecution arising in England, most of the leaders fled to the Continent. Any literature which did manage to penetrate ecclesiastical supervision was calculated to associate a questioning of infant baptism with social anarchy. This state of affairs is abundantly verified in the communications which passed between England and Scotland. In November, 1547, Dudley wrote to Somerset:

"Most of the honest and substantial men favour the Word of God, and would be glad to become English, and being unwall'd, to be fortified. Angus and Fife greatly desire a good preacher, bibles, and testaments, and other good English books of Tyndale and Frithe's translation, which I pray you of your grace to send me".<sup>1.</sup>

Again in December of the same year Dudley wrote to Wilton:

"Send them a good preacher and good books which would do more good than fire or sword".<sup>2.</sup>

On January 17, 1547/8 he repeated the request again,

"I am daily 'cried' on by Dundee and the lords and gentlemen for a good preacher, and bibles, testaments, and other good books".<sup>3.</sup>

1. Calender of Scottish Papers, 1, 1547-63. Paper No. 74. J. F(rithe) wrote what appears to be the first treatise in English on Baptism, A Myrroure or lokyng glass wherin you may beholde the Sacramente of baptisme described, Anno M.C. xxxiii. Copy in John Rylands Lib., Manchester.

2. Ibid., No. 107. p. 50.

3. Ibid., No. 129.



Again, the penetration of Scotland by Reforming ideas of a religious sort was sporadic and limited. It is doubtful how far the generality of the population was affected until the full impact of the new outlook was released on the Lowlands and coastal towns after 1560. It has been suggested that if Lollardism had developed it might have been the basis of a movement akin to Anabaptism,<sup>1</sup> but it did not spread. Nor was there sufficient theological strength among the nobility who had encouraged the use of the Book of Common Prayer to sustain their policy when Genevanism arrived with Knox in 1559. The more the Reformation period is studied the more the mind is impressed by the argument that there was a paucity of theological vigour of native growth. Lutheranism as a theological position never attained strength, and the English influence was more a matter of expediency than productive of deep mature convictions. The general disgust of the Roman Church was not matched by an alternative theological system.

Row's well known saying that "The ministers that were took not their pattern from any Kirk in the world, no, not fra Geneva itself; but laying God's word before them, made reformation according thereunto"<sup>2</sup> has often been questioned with good reason. It is true in so far as constant appeal was made to Scripture as against the Councils of the Church or tradition, but it is indefensible to argue that the Scriptures alone formed the textbook of the Reformers. Both in doctrine and ecclesiastical polity they were deeply indebted to Calvin and often borrowed his expressions when setting down their beliefs and proposals.

1. Macgregor, Presbyterian Polity, p.8.

2. Row's History, Wodrow Society, p.12.

The state of indecision within the Reforming party on the eve of Reformation came to an end with the alchemy of Knox's tremendous personal ability. "He ruleth the roost" <sup>1.</sup> wrote a contemporary and the metaphor was apt. With his arrival any possibility of Anabaptism arising was foredoomed to extinction. His greatness had its weaknesses and prominent among them was the violence and bitterness of his spirit against any who questioned his opinions on the sacraments. While in England his ability to preach down Anabaptism earned him the offer of the Bishopric of Rochester, <sup>2.</sup> and in Scotland the ardour of his intolerance did not abate. Calvin had advised Somerset with regard to England in 1548 that "These (Anabaptists) altogether deserve to be well punished by the sword, seeing that they do conspire against God" <sup>3.</sup> and it was undoubtedly Knox's following of this lead that introduced into the First Book of Discipline the advice to the civil authorities that they should punish any refusal to participate in the Reformed sacraments by death. <sup>4.</sup> The Confession of Faith prefixed to the Book of Common Order spoke of the magistrates purging the Kirk of "Anabaptistes" and "such like limmes of Antechrist" and the First Book of Discipline postulated that ministers were to be examined on their opinions of "Anabaptistis...or other such ennemies to the Christiane religioun" <sup>5.</sup> both statements being proleptic for there were no Anabaptists to persecute. Scotland was saved from the sickening savagery of the Continental pogroms by their non-appearance.

1. Cal. of Scottish Papers, I, 1547-1563, p.548. Randolphe to Throckmorton, Aug. 26, 1561. Item No.1010.
2. Laing, K.W., III, p.81.
3. MSS. Domestic, Edw.VI, V, 1548.
4. Laing, K.W., II, p.254.
5. Ibid., p.190.

## The Reactions of Roman Apologists.

The apologists of the Roman Church were not slow to seize upon the polemical gift of the continuance of infant baptism by the Scottish Reformers on the basis of Scripture unsupported by the interpretations of the Councils of the Church. Almost all the counter-attacks of the displaced Church make the most of the point. John Hay was a typical critic when he wrote:

"Gyf ye beleve that the infants ought to be baptised.....  
Quhat wretin wourd have ye for establishing your faith  
tharin".<sup>1</sup>.

It may be admitted that the thrust was shrewd and telling. No attempt, so far as is known, was ever made to deal directly with the criticism. The Abbot of Crossraguel in his Compendius Tractive, for example, made the point that it was necessary to accept the authority of General Councils because some things were not decided in Scripture " as for example, baptizing of barnes"<sup>2</sup>. When John Davidson in 1563 answered this important opponent he did not attempt to meet the position<sup>3</sup>. Ninian Winzet did not spare his words when ridiculing the variations of practice among the Reformers on the sacrament of baptism and challenged their acceptance of infant baptism as illogical compared with the Anabaptists.

"Siclyke, quhat haf ye for you expresslie written to convict the Anabaptistis errour, denying that bairnis in thair infancie suld be baptizit. For Origene, Augustine,

1. Certaine Demandes, Catholic Tractates, S.T.S., No.9, p.33.  
2. Ane Compendius Tractive conforme to the Scripturis...1558, Wodrow Miscellany, I, p.168. 3. Ane Answer to the Compendius Tractive, 1563.

and also the Lutheranis lenis in this mater rycht wechty to the Apostolik tradition and universal observatioun of the holy Catholic Kirk".<sup>1</sup>.

Another, Nicol Burne, bluntly stated in 1581, recording an earlier encounter with the Scottish Reformers,

"The Anabaptistis quhais doctrine is no thing ellis bot sum conclusionis necessarilie inferrit of your groundis".<sup>2</sup>.

Pages could be filled with such extracts for the Roman Church was not lacking in men of critical acumen who saw loopholes in the fortifications of their supplanters, and particularly the weakness of attempting to base everything on express Scripture warrant and keep the nexus between faith and the sacraments in the matter of infant baptism. John Hamilton even challenged the right to use the term sacrament if Scripture only was permitted as a criterion.

"Quaeritur.....and quhair is it expreslie writtin, that baptisme and the lordis suppar ar sacramentis ?" <sup>3</sup>.

### The Classification of Infants.

The Church ruled, and the Parliament accepted, that baptism was a sacrament of the Christian religion, therefore the nation, as a Christian nation, ought to be a baptised nation according to the form prescribed, or have a baptism by a prior form confirmed.

1. Certain Tractates, 1562, S.T.S., par.68, p.117, That infantis suld be baptizit contrare the Anabaptistes.

2. Catholic Tractates, S.T.S., The Disputation concerning the controversit headdis of Religion, p.163.

3. Ibid., Certane Orthodox and Catholik conclusions, 1581, No.12. p.95f.

In England this meant that all children presented for baptism in the prescribed manner were to be baptised because they were nationals and the administration of the sacrament was planned to be co-extensive with the right of citizenship. This led to strong protests on the part of those who believed that children should not be baptised indiscriminately but that parents should be first examined, and only when pronounced fit to undertake the Christian education of their children should they be allowed to have their children presented. A typical document was the plea presented by "The Privy Council of England to the Bishop of London" which requested release from bondage of promiscuous baptising and used the metaphor;

"as it wer an offence worthie of punishment to abuse hir Majesties great seal to anie blanke or writinge not signed with hir royall hand, even such for the proportion of theise spiritual misteries shoulde be our offence in this case".<sup>1</sup>.

Such objections were bound to arise where the sacrament was not thought to confer grace by the mere operation of it and this opinion was one of the most widely held, in one form or another, by the Reformed Churches. The earliest printed work on baptism in English had emphasised this point of view in the plainest terms.

"Now we have expanded the signification of baptisme which signification we may obtayne onely by fayth, for if thou be baptised a thousande tymes with water and have no fayth it avayleth the no more towards God, then

1. Hist. Commiss., Laing MSS., 1, p, 30f. January, 1579.

it doth a gose (goose ) when she ducketh her selfe under ye water".<sup>1.</sup>

The controversy around this point of the examination of parents was a stock grievance of the Puritan parties and the literature on it is voluminous. They were supported by the writings of Scottish churchmen. Men like John Field commended the writings of Knox and assisted in their circulation in England, to the extent that Bancroft accused the Puritans of borrowing "Knox his Stile and violent spirit, in many places word for word".<sup>2.</sup>

In Scotland the obligation to baptise all children without exception was never laid on the ministers. The tension, however, existed between the principle that all ought to be baptised and the right taken by the Church to refuse baptism to the children of unfaithful parents. The law of the land compelled every parent to present his child for baptism to a Reformed minister, but no law compelled the minister to baptise the child presented, or obliged a session to grant permission. This will be discussed further in the section following on Church discipline. Here it is proposed to notice the different categories into which children were divided and to emphasise that the baptism of infants meant for the Church the baptism of some infants, namely, those whose parents were in good standing or who were presented by those in good standing who had premission to act in loco parentis.

1. J.F., A Myrroure or lokyng glass, 1533, Imprinted at Lōdō by Ihon Daye....

2. The Seconde Parte of a Register, Ed. by Peel, 1, p11.

In the Confession of Faith, 1560, an important distinction is made in the terms on which a person was admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and those which admitted to baptism. Both are acknowledged to be commanded for the use of the faithful, and in both the benefits can only be received by the exercise of faith. But in the section, "To whom the Sacramentis Apperteneane - Cap XXIII" it is directed that "publict and particulare examinatioun of the knowledge and conversatioun of suche as are to be admitted to the table of the Lord Jesus" is to be undertaken. Entrance to baptism, on the other hand, was conceded on conditions exactly the opposite of those posited for the Lord's Supper and the infants of the faithful "befoir that thei have faith and understanding" were to be admitted. It is difficult to see how the Reformers could have successfully turned an argument for infant communion when it was acknowledged that both sacraments operated on the same principle of faith yet they resolutely abandoned it for the one sacrament in the form it which it was just as resolutely demanded for the other. This disparity of treatment left the Reformation system with a very serious weakness.

The definitive phrase governing the admission to baptism was "infantis of the faithfull" and the Church had to turn to the task of applying this to the nation. At least four classes of children were doubtful.

1. The infants of those adhering to the Roman Church.
2. The infants of those under Church censure.
3. The infants of those who ignored the sacrament.
4. The infants of strangers or visitors

While the Reformers were still the protesting party Knox had written saying that they required "nothing bot the

libertie of conscience, and our religion and fact to be tried by the word of God", but immediately they were in power no such liberty was granted to any other party, the claim for monopoly being based, of course, on the contention that they only had a faith which could stand the test of the word of God. The Reformed Church claimed the right to decide who should receive baptism and who should not. Their problem was not an easy one.

There was one enlightened feature in the doctrinal analysis of the meaning of baptism which allowed the Reformers a certain amount of freedom of action without raising to a dangerous degree the charge that they were cruel in their judgment toward those whom they might refuse. They did not hold, as did the Roman Church, that baptism was necessary to salvation. To this dogma they were violently opposed. By denying it they considerably reduced the presumed significance of the rite and gave themselves an intricate problem to unravel, namely, how to hold the balance between a reversion to the Roman theory and an emptying of the sacrament of all meaning whatsoever to the infant qua infant.

The first and greatest of the complex difficulties was what to do with the children of those whose parents remained stubbornly Romanist. These children, as all children, the law affirmed ought to be baptised by a Reformed minister, yet in the nature of the case there could be no guarantee that the children would be educated in the Reformed faith, and baptism without that link with



a future possibility i.e. that there would be favourable conditions for its becoming effective, was a frustration of one of its important foundations. Such situations were simple for those who shared the outlook of Knox. The parents, as idolaters, would be excommunicated and this sentence would automatically carry the prohibition of baptism to their children. There is evidence, however, of considerable disquiet among the Reformed party on the whole issue. If in England the majority were in favour of the baptism of all and the minority called for discrimination, in Scotland the position was reversed but there appears to have been a weighty section in the minority who could not or would not see why baptism should be restricted. This is clear from the nature of the problem which was causing the acutest tension, which was, not whether or not excommunicate persons should be permitted to have their children baptised, but whether or not the illegitimate children of such should be baptised, as if some sort of compromise had been reached on the baptism of legitimate children. There is no evidence other than this inference of any such compromise.

The New Testament contained no advice on such matters and even Knox was perplexed apparently, so he consulted Calvin. His query was :

"Should the bastard sons of idolaters and excommunicated persons be admitted to baptism, till either of the parents have by repentance submitted themselves to the church, or their offspring are qualified to ask for baptism ? " 1.

The question is astonishing for the subject of it would

seem to be fundamental to the maintenance of the most elementary discipline. Calvin consulted his colleagues and the answer was even more astonishing. It advised that anyone ought to be baptised provided there was a proper sponsor. This it was held would check promiscuous baptism and guard the sacredness of the mystery. The answer came down on the side of human kindness, but it may be doubted if the fabric of discipline and the significance of the rite would be assisted by it.

The advice was accompanied by a theory which purported to be an explanation and justification of the rule. Baptism, it was propounded, ought to be granted on Christian parentage even though that parentage should be a thousand places removed from the immediate parents since "the promise not only comprehends the offspring of each of the faithful in the first degree, but is extended to a thousand generations". This holds good whatever may have been the iniquity of the intervening generations. To hold anything else, it was argued, would be "contrary to all reason". This meant in effect that no child could be denied the right of baptism, and it might even be argued that if the right existed and was valid on account of remote or near parents, it should be held to be a right carrying with it an obligation for the Church whether there were sponsors provided or not since the right does not exist nor is it created by the sponsorship, but by the parentage. And, again, how is such a pedigree to be proved or disproved should it be questioned? The whole argument is as curious as any

ever put forward to justify infant baptism and shatters any hope of sustaining the nexus between faith and the sacrament. Behind it there may be traced a remnant of the Roman theory of the necessity of baptism and a willingness to conciliate by an elasticity which is a strange companion to the dogmatism and intolerance retained in other matters. In the rationalising process all thought of appeal to express Scripture is abandoned. An important rider followed the judgment. Calvin is careful to add that the policy recommended is only an emergency rule. "In process of time the licentiousness which has crept in must be corrected, and parents must be forced to present their own children, and to be their chief sponsors". In this the dragon's teeth are revealed. It is a case of gentle dealings until power is consolidated, then, whether parents are willing or not, every coercive instrument must be used to compel obedience to the Church. The apparent humanity of the first ruling is cancelled out by the ultimate policy envisaged.

What was happening, and might be illustrated by any Genevan exposition of baptism and its subjects, was that the idea of a holy community or Church of the faithful to whom the privileges of the Christian sacraments was given was not proving too easy to fit into the idea of a national church which, theoretically, embraced every citizen. To get extensiveness with intensiveness was involving a series of adjustments which removed the actual further and further away from the ideal. Faith had to be found somewhere to give practice a semblance of justification and a confusing variety of alternative ~~habitations~~ <sup>locations</sup> resulted. The process

of a desperate mind is well illustrated in Bullinger's Fifth Decade which was carried into Scotland and circulated by John ab Ulmis and the preachers of the Marquis of Dorset circa 1550. He is grappling with those who objected to infant baptism on the ground that infants as such have no faith. "Thus they babble", wrote Bullinger. But "by the imputation of God infants are faithful, 'He that shall offend one of these little ones that believe on me'. For he manifestly calleth little ones believing; for imputations sake doubtless, not for confession, which by no means as yet is in little ones." 2. The father believes in his desire to have his child signed with the mark of the people of God. 3. But if the father does not believe, "Be it so; yet that is no hindrance to the infant; for in the faith of the church he is brought to be baptized". There is the further possible objection, namely, that the faith of the parent or the faith of the church does not mean that the infants have a faith of their own in any way resembling conscious faith. "Be it so. Yet most certain is that saying, that the Lord counteth infants among his, that is, among the faithful, so that now they are not baptized in another's faith, but their own, that is to say, which it pleaseth the Lord to impute unto them". This tortuous string of assertions and arguments gives the impression of shifting from one foot to another in a most unhappy instability as if the rapidity of the motions would keep the mover from sinking in the quicksands of confusion.<sup>1</sup>

1. Bullinger, Fifth Decade, Parker Society, 1852, p.343f. Lorimer, Knox, p.44f.

The proposals of Calvin did not find favour in Scotland despite the high regard in which he was held. Instead of following a generous course the whole story of ecclesiastical discipline in the years immediately following the Reformation settlement declares that the reverse operated. The principle of sponson on the part of another than the father of the child was permitted as an extremity and only after satisfaction to the Kirk had been promised or obtained and caution found for future propriety. The Book of Common Order did not alter its directions one whit from what had been in the original Order of Geneva or Form of Prayers and only the father was mentioned as a presenter of a child. He might be accompanied by a godfather or others as witnesses, but any companions took a subordinate place in the service. The exposition of the meaning of the sacrament included a reference to the promise that God would be the God of the children of the faithful "unto the thousand generation", but again the subject is only mentioned and not stressed, and was there prior to Calvin's reply. The mind of the Scottish Reformers is found better in the First Book of Discipline and there it is laid down without reservation, that all Papists and others who would not fully conform were to be cut off "frome all participatioun with hir (the Church of God) in prayeris and sacramentis, till oppin repentence manifestlie appeare in thame".<sup>1</sup> At the end of the section "Of Ecclesiasticall Discipline" the full force of this rigorism is set forth.

1. The Sevint Heid, Of Ecclesiasticall Discipline, Laing, K.W., 2, p.227.

"His ( the excommunicate's ) children begottin or borne efter that sentence and before his repentence, may nocht be admitted to baptisme, till eathir thei be of aige to require the samin, or ellis that the Moder, or sum of his especiall freinds, members of the Church, offer and present the child, abhorring and dampnyng the iniquitie and obstinat contempt of the impentitent. Yf one think it seveir, that the child suld be punisheit for the iniquitie of the Fader; let thame understand that the sacramentis appertene onlie to the faithfull and to thair seade: But suche as stuburnlie contempt all godlie admonitioun, and obstinatlie remene in thair iniquitie, can nocht be accompted amangist the faithfull".

Here the consideration of remote Christian parentage is not contemplated. The immediate parent decided the issue should the mother or other acceptable person be unwilling to present the infant. This is reinforced by an acceptance of the principle that it was perfectly just that a child should suffer for the sins of its immediate parent. The judgment was added, apparently, in the knowledge that some would object to such discipline.

When the Book of Discipline came up before the nobility for ratification only a section of them consented to it after it had been debated for six days.<sup>1</sup> It is not known whether this particular section was a stumbling block, though it may be suspected that it was. Knox simply says that "the warldlingis refused... quhat Policie the godlie Ministeris requyred" and that "avaritiousnes wald nott

1. Calender of Scottish Papers, 1, 1547-1563, p.512, Randolphe to Cecil, Feb. 6, 1560/1.

suffer this corrupt generatioun to approve" of it. The English representative Randolphe was wrong in thinking that the Lords had consented to the book, although he added "I cannot assure myself what root it has taken in men's minds, whereof trial will soon be taken, if this discipline be universally embraced and in all points observed".<sup>1</sup> The General Assembly never ratified it either, so far as is known from the extant records, although among the later Presbyterians it is sometimes mentioned as if it did become the law of the Church, as for example, in the Act ratifying the Westminster Directory in 1645 mention is made of the Books of Discipline. Whatever was considered to be the legal status of this sketch of a Christian commonwealth according to the mind of Knox the sections dealing with baptism certainly did become the accepted standards of the local Church courts. The evidence for this will be produced in the section specifically dealing with Church discipline.

Toward the end of the sixteenth century and during the early part of the seventeenth, there was a swing away from the rigour of the entrance qualifications to the sacrament on the part of many who favoured the King's party. The movement begins with a relaxation of the rule that baptism ought only to be administered on preaching days and to those who were brought to the church in favour of children who were certified to be weak or dying. In such cases many sessions were influenced by a plea of humanity that the child should be baptised before it died. The complementary opinion to this can only have been a resurgence of the notion that baptism had something to do with the child's salvation although

1. Ibid.

the full doctrine of the necessity of baptism to salvation was abhorred.

At Perth, on October 25, 1584, the following entry occurs in the Kirk Session minutes:

"It was also ordained that no bairn should be baptized off ane preaching day, except the midwife declared on her conscience that the bairn was weak to whom the parents desired baptism".<sup>1</sup>.

On the first leaf of the M. S. Kirk Session Records of Anstruther Wester there appears among the entries dated 1601 what looks like a transcript from an earlier session decision of 1575 stating:

"It is statut y<sup>t</sup> na barnis be baptheised bot one Sunday onlie except ye barnis be waik".

In the Aberdeen Kirk Session there was this rule:

"The sext day of May, 1599, it is statute and ordanit that no bairnis be baptezit heirefter bot in the preching dayes in tyme of preiching, without the barne be tryit be the minister and medwyff to be weak".<sup>2</sup>.

These extensions of the subjects of baptism were undoubtedly popular among the people who always appear to have chaffed at the restrictions of the Book of Common Order and other expressions of rigorism. The Roman theory of the necessity of baptism to salvation was too deeply embedded in the average mind and encrusted with gross superstitions to be removed by the dicta of the Knoxian tradition. The relaxation was authoritatively confirmed

1. Book of Perth, ed. by Lawson, 1847, p.155.

2. Selections from Eccles. Records of Aberdeen, Spalding Club, 1846, p.76.



in a decision<sup>upon</sup> of the General Assembly of 1602 at which the King was present and, no doubt, influenced this particular enactment. It ran :

"It is statute that the sacrament of baptisme be not refusit to any infants if the parent crave the same, he giveand a Christian confessioun of his faith, upon any uther particular pretence; and specially, that baptisme be not delayit to certain particular dayis".<sup>1</sup>.

No corresponding change was authorised to be made in the instructions contained in the Book of Common Order. It continued to be printed with the former regulations printed unaltered, an anomalous position.

In the fourteen instructions of the King to his Commissioner, the Earl of Montrose, for the Episcopal Assembly of 1616, number thirteen stated:

"That every Minister shall minister the Sacrament of Baptism quhensoever it shall be required, under pain of deposition: the godfather promising to instruct the infant in the faith".<sup>2</sup>.

This proposed to take away all barriers, and the royal instructions included a provision for a new Confession of Faith and a new "Liturgie" which would balance and support the departure from precedent. The new Confession incorporated the requisite adjustment in the following form:

1. B.U.K., 3, p.1002. 2. Ibid., p.1123, and in, Original Letters Relating to Ecclesiastical Affairs, 2, p.481.

"We believe, that Baptism is necessary to salvation, if it can be orderly had: and that, therfor, not the want of it, but the contempt of it doth damne.

We believe, that Baptism sealeth up unto us the remission of all our sins, whereof we are guilty, either before or after our baptism".<sup>1</sup>.

A commentary on the times may be read in the Kirk Session Records of Aberdeen, 1611, where the transition from the tolerated exception in the case of extreme emergency to the removal of all restrictions on private baptism is most clearly illustrated. Some parents, according to these records, were objecting to the ministers refusing to baptise when called upon to do so and the ministers defended themselves by referring to the ruling of the Session in 1599, which authorised them to baptise in private only when the infant was proved to be in extremis. The whole matter was reopened with the following result.

"The mater being reasoned and disputed at length, pro et contra, quhither the said act shuld stand or quhither the same suld be dissolvit and dischargit, and the sacrament of baptisme ministred to the infantis laughfullie begotten in mariage at sic tyme as the same suld be required to be ministred unto thame. In end, efter long reasoning and disputatioun, be mature deliberatioun, the sessioun for the most pairt ffind, votit, and concludit that the sacrament of baptisme

1. Ibid., 1137. Useful comments on this Confession generally are to be found in C. G. M'Crie, The Confessions of the Church of Scotland, p.27f.

aucht to be ministred to bairnis, lauchfullie gottin in marriage, at all occasiones quhen the same is required be thair parentis, or ony uther in thair names, and that the ordinar ministeris of this burgh suld be redie at all occasiones to do the same, as they are requyred".<sup>1</sup>.

The revision of the Reformation attitude to the scope of baptism was crowned by the inclusion of an article on private baptism in the hotly disputed Five Articles of Perth, 1618, which were ratified by the Parliament in 1621. Thereafter, until 1638, a minister was bound to baptise a child in private i.e. in a private house, if timely warning was given to him and upon "great and reasonable cause" being declared. Intimation of the baptism was to be made on the next preaching day.<sup>2</sup>.

The pressure from the throne was resented by those who desired to adhere to tradition and there were those also among the King's party who doubted the wisdom of giving such legal right of demand to the parents. Patrick Galloway sounded a warning to the King on the hardship it imposed on the ministers. He wrote:

"As to the Third Article, Of Baptism, to be ministred at all times to those who crave it. I think it should be granted, and between sun and sun in the day time to be denied to none who is a known honest person of that flock. But to grant Baptism in private houses and under silence of night to such as craise it (if this be the article's meaning ) were to confirm the opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism which is dangerous and to do as our Church wer under persecution....." <sup>3</sup>.

1. Selections, supra, p.76. 2. B.U.K. supra, p.1166.  
3. Original Letters, supra, p. 511.

The Articles were formally renounced in the General Assembly of 1638 amid a general re-affirmation of Presbyterianism. There was never uniformity of zeal, however, on the most extreme form of rigorism but no one was left in doubt as to the ardour of the leading men. The purist attitude was represented at Aberdeen by the strong-minded Andrew Cant. Spalding tells the tale of the Aberdeen episode with marked disapproval of the ways of the ministers. Baptism was refused unless the children were brought to the church at a particular time and Cant, he complains, "began to bring in novations: he would not baptize a bairn, yea, albeit at the point of death, but after preaching on Sunday or any other preaching day in the week".<sup>1</sup> Feeling ran high on a certain occasion which Spalding relates at length when a dying infant was brought to the church at great hazard, but whom the minister would not baptise until the lecture was over, by which time the infant had died in the arms of the father, and "Mr. John Oswald who said the lecture, perceiving the bairn to be dead, said since the bairn is dead in the kirk cause bury it in the kirk, which was instantly done; whereat sundry godly persons were not well content at the church government".<sup>1</sup> On another occasion the child was brought to the church a little late and baptism was refused, whereupon the mother died in excess of grief, and the child also before the next morning, and the two were buried together.

This stricter supervision of the administration of baptism coincided with a tremendous output of theological

1. Spalding, Memorials of the Troubles in Scotland and England, II, p.274.

writing and much of it is relevant to baptismal theory in so far as that applies to the subjects to be admitted to the rite. The development of the Baptist groups stimulated these polemical treatises and from the Presbyterian side, both in England and in Scotland, there is scarcely a book or pamphlet which fails to refer with wrathful indignation to the Baptists, or the Anabaptists as they were termed by their opponents. The latter term was always repudiated by the Baptists on two grounds, first, because it implied two baptisms where it was held that there was only one, and, second, it associated the Baptists with the political anarchism which was popularly thought to be characteristic of the earlier Continental Anabaptists.

Among the protagonists of Presbytery the name of Samuel Rutherford takes a prominent place and in baptismal theory his name is linked with a re-assertion of what, on the face of it, looks like the position suggested by Calvin to Knox in an earlier day. How far generous terms of eligibility propounded by Rutherford were due to his strong reaction to anything which looked like a Baptist idea is impossible to say. What is known is that antagonism to the Baptists and his theories of national holiness and the nature of the Church both appeared at the same period. His doctrine of the nature of the Church was the fundamental tenet. In the main it was a presentation of the position which Calvin had made much of, that the Church was one but could be spoken of in two ways, namely as the church visible and the church invisible. The doctrine is notoriously difficult to state for it was

far from Calvinistic orthodoxy to hold that there were two Churches, one visible and one invisible. The Church invisible was the society of those who would ultimately be redeemed, the elect, and the Church visible was the society of professing Christians who might or might not be elect. This latter, however, was the only Church known on earth hence, it was argued, was entitled to be called the Church with the reservation always implied that it was a mixture of wheat and tares.

In "A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland", London, 1644, Rutherford contends with all of the Calvinistic tradition that the visible Church, or the organised society of professing Christians, is the sphere of the administration of the sacraments. The question of the relation of baptism to this nominally Christian company is raised in chapter twelve, which is entitled, "Whether or no do some warrantably teach that Baptism should be administered only to infants born of one at least parent known to be a believer and within the covenant, and who are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper?" That a child should have its right to baptism derived only from its immediate parents he flatly denies. The holiness on the basis of which baptism is granted is a covenant holiness and the covenant embraces a Christian nation. It is sufficient that a child should be born with<sup>in</sup> a nation professing the Christian religion for it to be eligible for the sacrament. This is argued as an implication of the parallel between circumcision and baptism, the stock analogy of the Institutes. By such

an approach he is able to defend the widest application of the rite as against any who contended that the parent must of necessity be a professing Christian in the strict sense of the adjective far less be a regenerate person, or, on the other hand, that regeneration itself ought to precede baptism. The ordinance is the privilege of the foederati, or all within the covenant, in the same sense as all Jews without discrimination were circumcised. That only male Jews were circumcised is not taken as a valid objection to Christian baptism being for both sexes. From this it follows that the question of immediate or remote Christian parentage is subordinate to the fact that an infant should be born in a land where its parents either immediate or remote were within the scheme or area of national holiness. The distinction is retained, of course, that the right to baptism is not an inherent right of a child qua child, but is a transmitted right through a covenant which God has made with his people on a national scale. The baptism thus granted gives an infant a standing in foro ecclesiae but not in foro Dei. It is possible, as Rutherford says<sup>1</sup>, that in a Church of seven members, six may only be profession Christians, or non-elect. He might have said seven out of seven, as did another of the same school, Brown of Wamphray.

There is no evidence, however, to proceed from this theoretical position to believe that Rutherford, or those who shared his opinion, applied what might be held to

1. Due Right of Presbyteries or a Peacable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland, 1644, p.245.

be the logic of their argument to the supervision of admission to baptism in parochial work. Whatever the theory on which admission was granted the correction of morals by the withholding of baptism until discipline was satisfied in situations where parents were thought to need such discipline was always regarded as thoroughly justified. The inclusiveness of the doctrine was accompanied by a selectiveness in its application. How this anomaly was explained is not known.

When discussing the Lord's Supper, Rutherford holds strictly to the view that for this sacrament evidence of faith is necessary. The interpretation of the covenant which was pressed for baptism is apparently inadmissible for the Lord's Supper. Precisely on the ground that infants are not capable of examining themselves they are not to be allowed to receive the benefits of this ordinance although both sacraments are called signs and seals of faith.

In the Catechism which Rutherford drew up prior to the Westminster Assembly no statement is made of those to whom baptism is to be administered except in a reference to circumcision "q<sup>l</sup>k in substance and natur answereth to baptisme", and this is expressly said to have been a rite for "everie manchild the 8 day after they wer borne" without any explanation of what obviously called for explanation that both in the class of children circumcised and in the time of its administration there was lacking the very parallel which was asserted ! The



answers given to other questions mention only infants as the subjects of baptism and nothing at all is said of the possibility of those who confess faith being candidates.<sup>1</sup>

The Westminster Confession, in the framing of which Rutherford assisted, the scope of baptism is set forth in the paragraph which runs:

"Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized".<sup>2</sup>

The Larger Catechism, Q. 166, reads:

"Unto whom is baptism to be administered ?

Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but infants descended from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized".

The Shorter Catechism, Q. 95, reads:

"To whom is baptism to be administered ?

Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience unto him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized".

1. Mitchell, Catechisms of the Second Reformation, pp. 219-221.

2. Chap. XXVIII, Of Baptism, par. IV.

The three statements put together yield:

1. One or both believing parents.
2. Infants descended from parents, either both or one of them professing faith.
3. Infants of such as are members of the visible church.

Thus either the narrow or the wide view can find support in at least one of the Westminster documents. Both immediate parentage and descent do not occur specifically in any one standard as contrasting<sup>ed</sup> positions, but both occur separately. All parties could obtain a measure of satisfaction but whether the one or the other was correct was left unanswered.

Baptism as confined to moral agents.

In contrast to both versions of the subjects who have a right of entrance to infant baptism, the Baptists maintained that admission to the two sacraments ought to be on the same conditions. The whole significance of the ordinance of baptism, they affirmed, lay in its being the action of a moral agent in response to a Divine command, and the reception of helpful grace as a result of such obedience. In none of their numerous treatises did they either deny or in any way diminish the salvability of infants, but, on the contrary ardently affirmed that infants dying in infancy, whether born of Christian parents or otherwise, were in the hands of a gracious God, and as a companion tenet to this they further affirmed that the ordinance of baptism had no relation to either their status before God or their status before the Church. They<sup>y</sup> averred that the extension

of the subjects of baptism to include infants was not only extra-Scriptural but anti-Scriptural. This position was itself based upon a theory of the Church as a fellowship of believers and none other.

There is reason to believe that there may have been isolated persons of this persuasion in Scotland in the years immediately prior to the advent of the Cromwellian army, but it is certain that there was no Baptist group before that time. When the army of occupation did arrive both Arminian and Calvinistic Baptists were represented in the witness made around the garrison stations.

Two main sources of information are available for assessing the arguments presented.

1. The public debates at Cupar-Fife and Stirling of Mr. James Browne, an Arminian or General Baptist, with Presbyterian ministers.
2. The Confession of Faith printed at Leith in 1652/3 by a Calvinistic or Particular Baptist group.

The Baptist chaplain, James Browne, debated with James Wood, minister at St. Andrews, in the parish church of Cupar-Fife, on October 12th and 14th., 1652. Infant baptism had been on the agenda for discussion, but after two days debating on the extent of the atonement and the freedom of the will the St. Andrews minister confessed himself "spent" with the item on baptism still untouched. The chaplain offered to continue the discussion on this item with any who would care to handle it. No one volunteered and the contest terminated, the protagonists

retiring to Mr. Wood's lodging, where Mr. Browne, without rancour, "protested that, although they were of different judgments, yet they might not be of different affections".<sup>1.</sup>

The debate of the same chaplain with James Guthrie, one of the ministers of Stirling and a Presbyterian of the Protestor type, furnishes an abundance of material for the whole debate has been preserved verbatim, together with letters exchanged before and after. The agenda to be covered was comprehensive. A national Church, the atonement, original sin, freewill and toleration were all specified, together with the proposition, "That the baptizing of some infantes under the Gospell hath a sound a<sup>t</sup>ie (authority) in the scriptures".<sup>2.</sup> Browne assured the Stirling minister that he was agreeable to debate this issue. "I salbe willing", he wrote, " to hear your proofes and to speak my reasons why I dissent from you". These consisted of proving the absence of infant baptism from the New Testament, the necessity of repentance and faith for compliance with the conditions of salvation, and the denial that circumcision and the Abrahamic covenant were applicable to the ordinance of Christian baptism. On the part of Guthrie arguments were offered to show that these propositions and the like were not acceptable. The debate ended at sunset, but was continued in correspondence. Guthrie compiled a long exposition of his position and sent it on to Browne at Burntisland on December 21, 1653. This the chaplain answered in a letter of January 27, 1653/4, written from Perth.

1. Lamont's Diary, p.49f. Also reported in A Perfect Diurnal, No.150, Oct18-Oct.25, 1652. Copy in Glasgow Univ. Lib.

The reply takes up a point introduced by the Stirling minister:

"You say ther is a comand for it ( infant baptism) from the lord Jesus in 28 Matth. 19 goe teach or disciple all nations, baptizing them. Heir is no mention made of infants. They are not capable of being taught or of being disciples whilst infants.....surely I cannot but stand amazed at such deallings..... But I shall only give you your owne arguments thus:

If the tearme infants be not exprest in our Saviours commission to his servants concerning discipling and baptizing all nations, then they who put it into the commission ad to the scriptures.

But the tearme infants is not exprest in our Saviours commission to his servants concerning discipling and baptizing all nations, Ergo, etc.

Again the apostle on your arguments must be discomanded, for if it wer the mind of our Saviour that infants should be disciplid and baptized whilst infants they did ill in that they never taught or baptized any such whilst such. In a word your practise of paedobaptisme doeth condemne that generatione of just men to ignorance or unfaithfulness....."

The Baptist returns again and again to the criterion which Knox in his day had propounded of express Scripture precept, and challenged Guthrie by the query:

"If you would shew me any precept or example in the Scriptures speaking expressly thus that you must baptize the infants of all such as beleeve, or by such an apostle,

brother, or disciple there was one of the infants of a beleever baptized, or yett if you can prove by the expresse wordes on the Lord that any were ever blamed for not baptizing ther babes, or that any beleevers ever desired baptisme or Rantisme for them, I would condescend to your arguments. Otherwise all the arguments you can produce out of your owne heart and art are of no value with impartiall men who are resolved to adhere to the plaine unerring word of God as the rule to walk by in all Gospell obedience".

The Stirling minister became exasperated by this reiterated insistence on proof by precept or example and told the chaplain that he was "like to a man who hes a dogg by the ears, who knows not whither to hold or to let goe". Nor did he fail to let Browne know that he was using "subtillitie and craft". He admitted the point, however, that infant baptism "cannot be found in the text litterallie", and again, "as for infant baptisme nether the precept for it nor the practise of it is to be found expressly in any text of Scripture". He rested his case on inference pleading that such a method was sound Scriptural usage, and to deny this approach is to "doe infinit injurie to the holy Ghost who doeth thus argue" even though by this means there is no "demonstrative infalible confirmationes but only probable supports and illustrations of thes points".

"I do affirme", he wrote, " that thes trueths whether theoreticall or practicall which are deduced from the Scriptures by necessary consequences are to be entertained as divine trueths which oblige us unto faith and obedience

and that the Lord hath allowed and warranted his church and people to make thes deductiones and consequences for attaining the knowledge of divine trueths and hath warranted them to build ther faith therupon and to regulate ther practise therby".

He proceeds to illustrate this by the use of inference in the New Testament itself. It is doubtful, however, if he successfully turned the argument for the citations from within the New Testament would have been quite freely admitted by the Baptist advocate. The difficulty was to produce a passage from which a plain and necessary deduction could be made which would be an equivalent of an express precept. Browne complained that his opponent had adopted the system of proving "precept by consequent".

The lengthy discussions ended with neither party admitting defeat.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere in the land the Baptists were making a stir, the other principal centres being garrison towns such as Ayr, Perth, and Aberdeen, and around the army headquarters at Dalkeith.

1. This hitherto unnoticed debate is contained in a MS. volume, The Letters of James Guthrie, Laing MSS., Edinburgh Univ. Lib. The letters and debate are given in extenso. Hist. MSS. Comm. Report gives wrong number of pages in MS. and fails to note that one leaf of the debate is missing.

In the latter area the Baptists were of the Calvinistic persuasion and printed a Confession of Faith at "Leith, the 10 of the first month, vulgarly called March, 1652/3". This was a reprint of a Confession published by seven Baptist churches in London in 1644, revised in 1646, and widely used. The Leith edition was prefaced by an address "To the Impartial Reader" in which the signatories "in the name and by the appointment of the church of Christ usually meeting at Leith and Edinburgh", state, "we find ourselves engaged to bear witness to the truth of God which we professe and practise, which is so much mistaken, vilified, and rejected".

This Confession has always been recognised by Baptist historians to be a fine specimen of their churches who accepted the Calvinistic tradition, and it is worthy of the eulogy of the late Professor David Masson who said of it that it was "a document which, by its orthodoxy in all essential matters shamed the more candid of their opponents". One of the most bitter critics, the contemporary Robert Baillie, diligently studied both the 1644 and the 1646 editions in order to replenish his armoury and met its orthodoxy by affirming that it could not be taken as representative. He wrote:

"The London Anabaptists' Confession is such an one as I believe thousands of our new anabaptists will be far from owning, knowing that their usual and received doctrines do much more agree with the anabaptists in Germany, than with that handful who made this Confession" <sup>1</sup>.

Anabaptisme the True Fountaine of Independency, Brownism, Antinomy, Familisme, etc., London, 1647, pp. 18, 28.



The judgment was unjust and was disproved by the popularity of the document. The Baptists of the Commonwealth period were very far from reproducing the more lurid features of some phases of Continental Anabaptism, which, at the time of these accusations, was an old story of the past.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental position of the specifically Baptist part of this Confession is the doctrine of the Church contained in it. This is stated in Section XXXIII as follows:

"Jesus Christ hath here on earth a spiritual kingdom which is his church, whom he hath purchased and redeemed to himself as a peculiar inheritance; which church is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joined to the Lord, and each to other, by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the ordinances commanded by Christ their head and king".

This prepared the way for the Section on baptism (XXXIX) which stated :

"Baptism is an ordinance of the new testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith, or that are made disciples; who upon profession of faith, ought to be baptized, and after to partake of the Lord's Supper".

1. What Baillie did not notice, nor has any Baptist historian, is that if the Confession of the Aberdeen Episcopal Assembly of 1616 and the Baptist 1644 Confession be put side by side, there can be no doubt that the Calvinistic passages of the later are based on the earlier. Many passages are identical in phrasing, and other similarities confirm this curiosity. No other Confessions of the time, or earlier, suggest a common parent. How the Aberdeen Confession arrived in London is unknown.

On the whole the advocacy of the Baptist principles fell on unfruitful soil. More persons were influenced by what was called "the congregational way" as opposed to the "national way" than by the Baptist theory of the sacraments. Nevertheless there were many baptisms on profession of faith among the soldiers and not a few among the Scots. The diarist Nicoll provides the information that at one period there were baptismal services twice a week in the water of Leith, among the candidates being men and women of good rank such as Lady Craigie Wallace<sup>1</sup>. Kirk Session, and other Church records, supply little to encourage the belief that the Church courts were troubled by a great many dissensions from this cause. The Cupar Presbytery Records<sup>2</sup> and the Fife Synod Records,<sup>3</sup> provide the most interesting notices. The diarists Nicoll, Lamont and Hay<sup>4</sup> all chronicle information and the Hexham and Fenstanton Baptist Church Records contain valuable material for the building up of the picture. The Journal of George Fox contributes its quota of experiences of Baptists in Scotland. Army news prints,<sup>5</sup> the Clarke Papers on the Army debates,<sup>6</sup> and the Phillipps MSS. in the National Library, Edinburgh, can all be drawn on for information. A small pamphlet of Robert Pittillok is invaluable for details of the Baptists who flourished until the purges of the army removed them<sup>7</sup>. A degree of publicity

1. Nicoll's Diary, p.109. Memoirs of Walter Pringle of Greenknowe, 1739, Sect. XI, p.34. Hay's Diary, S.H.S. 5th. and 7th. Nov., 1659. 2. Feb.26, 1657; Dec.30, 1658; Feb.10, 1659, etc. 3. Various dates within the same period. 4. Nicoll, p.109, etc., Lamont, p49, etc., Hay, supra. 5. A Perfect Diurnal; supra. 6. Clarke Papers, IV, p.229, etc. Puritanism and Liberty...from the Clarke MSS., ed. by Woodhouse, p.474. 7. Tracts Legal and Historical, 1. The Hammer of Persecution, 1659, reprinted 1827, p.9f.

was achieved but the nett result was small. When the reversal of 1660 came the notices of their presence dwindle away.

### Infant Baptism required by law.

The period between the Restoration and the Revolution was abnormal, and both Episcopalians and Presbyterians tended to extremes in defining who should be baptised.

The law of 1672 already quoted, marks the greatest extension of the principle accepted at the Reformation that every citizen and his household ought to be baptised. The inclusive ideal is here enforced with exceedingly heavy penalties, and a limiting time factor of thirty days is introduced. The whole idea of baptism as a sacrament of any quality is smothered and almost obliterated by the significance of the ordinance as a determinant of political allegiance. The principle of coercion by civil penalties is undisguised though these did not go to the length of exacting the extreme penalty. Nevertheless, although not mentioned in the Act, the sword was used against the stricter Presbyterians in an effort to compel them to obedience in a way that differed little from earlier phases of Christian history when advances were made in the name of the Church by the simple expedient of offering baptism or death. In this way the Orkneys were Christianised in the tenth century.<sup>2</sup> As an encouragement to the enforcement of this Act of 1672 the "sheriffs, stewarts, lords of regalities and their deputes, and magistrates of

2. Transactions, S. E. S., 1921, p.115, Early Christian Remains in Orkney and Shetland.

1. Useful surveys are to be found in Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., Records III, Baptists in Scotland during the Commonwealth, Scott, p.175f.; Henderson, Religious Life in XVII Century Scotland, chap. Some Early Scottish Independents.

the burghs royal" were allowed to retain the rich booty of the fines for their own use, with the exception of fines levied upon heritors. The disgrace of these proceedings to the Episcopal rule is unforgettable, yet in principle it is only to be distinguished from the recommendations of the First Book of Discipline by the fact that Parliament acted in the one case and not in the other.

The right of the civil magistrate so to act was granted in treatises written by Presbyterians when their cause was on the ascendancy, always, of course, with strong protests against Erastianism as such. Rutherford, for example, agreed that "fire, sword, or warre, or the coactive power of the magistrate is not God's way of planting the Gospell in a heathen nation, which never heard the Gospell before"; but where a nation has been declared Christian the same objection cannot be argued. "Where a nation hath embraced the faith" he continues, "and sworne thereunto in Baptisme, it is lawfull for the magistrate to compell them to professe that truth to which they have sworne in Baptisme". Again, "He may command the use of the meanes of Religion, though he cannot force Religion it selfe".<sup>1</sup> It was a grim turn of history that put the theory into action against the Presbyterian Church itself. What was meant to be medicine for Baptists and Quakers and the like, was prescribed to the physicians, though not by the proposed patients for their principles of toleration opposed such remedies.

1. Rutherford, *Due Right of Presbyteries*, 1644, pp. 353-354. The pagination of the book is faulty. The quotations are from the second set of pages with these numbers.

## The extreme limitation of Infant Baptism.

The opposite tendency, that of exclusiveness, was developed among the Covenanters who became known as the Societies. It is impossible to ignore the excess of zeal which sustained them is their dogged fight against harsh laws, and it is not surprising that one of the effects of this is to be found in their baptismal usage. There were degrees of strictness among them, but on the whole the most exacting tests were introduced for parents before baptism was administered to children. On the other side, parents themselves limited the use of baptism by withholding their children from the administration as offered by the parish ministers, and they were encouraged to take this course by representative leaders. Alexander Shields quoted Voetius with approval on the point and commended the Covenanters for "refusing to bring their children to be baptized by such corrupt ministers, because they may wait until they have occasion of a minister, for if the best gifts are to be coveted why should not the best ministers be preferred".<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes great numbers were baptised by the preachers within a short space of time, baptisms having been postponed until a preacher of requisite loyalties was available. James Renwick was reported to have baptised over six hundred within a few months of his arrival, but these numbers did not imply any slackening on his part of the qualifications required from parents. Those among whom he ministered

1. Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, 1687, pp. 222-223.

desired that it should be so. When his life was sought after and a preacher of his gifts was desperately needed by the Societies, it was typical of the outlook of these men of the Covenant that it should be solemnly debated whether he had been justified in accepting ordination to the ministry at the hands of the Dutch Church on the ground that there were objectionable points in the ritual of their baptismal services.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter of October 23, 1686, he at least cleared himself of any imputation that his own baptismal services were open to censure. He wrote:

"As for my changing my method in dealing with the parents of children to be baptised, I declare them to be misinformers who have so said unto you. Those persons that have complied with one thing or other I do not permit to present their children, unless they have evidenced a right sense and practical reformation, by standing out against the temptation unto these things, that they have been chargable with, and their engagement to give due satisfaction when lawfully called for. Or else we have the attestation of some acquainted with their case, that, in the judgment of charity, they appear convinced of, and humbled for their sin, and they engage to forbear this sin, and give satisfaction in the manner foresaid. But when compliers and persons guilty of defection come, who have not yet desisted from their offensive courses, I do not let them present their children. Neither will or do I let other persons present

1. Walker, *Scottish Theology and Theologians*, p.109. S

their children, lest the parents should be hardened in their sin thereby, unless they engage to forbear and give satisfaction as said is ; and some prove true and some prove false. Further when the parents are guilty of very gross compliance, even though they have given evidence of a right sense thereof, I do not admit them, but suffer another to present their children, for fear of reproach, albeit I might do it lawfully".<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, there were those who were not enamoured of the bishops, but who did not feel justified in objecting to baptism at the hands of the Episcopal ministers. One of the most informative of books on the period, because of its conscientious recording of so many sidelights on baptismal usage, is the Diary of the Laird of Brodie and that honest, but often perplexed man, confessed:

"I allow, and love thes mens persons abov others farr (the outed ministers ). I give them testimony of more faithfulness and abiliti to that function then others, but cannot sie how I can consent to ther principls and opinion in this, That the conform ministers ar noe ministers, and the ordinances which they dispenc ar noe ordinances. Ther failing does not unminister them, nor tak away the blessing of God's ordinance from us.....The consequence of this opinion does at once unchurch all the churches of thes 3 nations, nay, brings in question thes exercises of the ministri which our fathers and ourselves, and our children wer admitted to, and partakd of".<sup>2</sup>.

Brodie did not favour a widening of the subjects of baptism by the removal of proper safeguards on the parental side. He had questioned "if simply being born in Scottish

1. Carslaw, Life and Letters of James Renwick, p.187.

2. Diares of the lairds of Brodie, Spalding Club, Feb.26,1671.

or English air, give a right to Baptism and Church membership"<sup>1</sup>and had even been willing to accept a toleration of "simple Independents or Anabaptists holding nothing contrary to the Confession of Faith, except in the matter of Infant-baptism or Government"<sup>2</sup>, an admission accompanied by some hesitancy, but nevertheless far removed from the mind of the zealots. There were many who held the extremists on both sides to be guilty of faults.

The reformulation of opinion after 1689.

After the convulsions of the seventeenth century there re-emerged in the course of time the opinions that had appeared within it, and, with the growth of toleration, these various and conflicting attitudes flourished side by side.

Within the Church of Scotland there appeared a group who were exercised about the need of more specific guidance on admissions to baptism than <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ discernable in the statements of the standards. This resulted in the publication of an important set of "Overtures concerning the Form of Process and Method of Church Discipline in the Church of Scotland". The printed document was circulated in 1697.<sup>3</sup> A summary of the recommendation with regard to baptism will indicate the scope of the proposals.

Section 3 (p.15 ) Of the Admission of Infants to Baptism.

1. "Children borne within the Verge of the Visible Church of parents professing the Christian Religion, have a right to baptism, whatever be the ignorance or Scandalousness of

1. Ibid. p.20.

2. Ibid. p.22.

3. Printed, Edinburgh, 1696. Authorised for consideration by Presbyteries, Acts of Assembly, 1697, V, p.9.



the Parents".

2. No sponsor but the father. ( M S. add. "in ordinary cases".<sup>1</sup>)
3. If father absent, then any friend or the mother.
4. If father under scandal, then another.
5. If father ignorant, then another.
6. If no one will present, the elder of the district to be sponsor.
7. Foundlings to be the responsibility of the session.
8. ( M S. add. ) "If process of scandal begun, but not proved against the parent, then another is to be sponsor".

A committee was appointed to revise the Overtures and "to set out a new edition of the said Overtures, that the several Presbyteries may have Opportunity to animadvert thereon" in 1698<sup>2</sup>, and the next year additions were made to this committee, and the matter continued.<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1711 that the matter was again presented to the Assembly and by it transmitted to the Presbyteries. This new formulation became the law of the Church in 1712, Act 4, and remained so until 1933. This most important decision was as follows :

"Children born within the Verge of the Visible Church of Parents one or both professing the Christian religion, have a right to baptism.

It being the Duty of Christian parents to dedicate their children to God in Baptism, and to covenant for

1. Copy used belonged to William Dunlop, Principal of Glasgow University, and original member of revision committee. In Glasgow Univ. Lib. M. S. notes in his hand.  
2. Acts, 1698, IX, p.14. 3. Acts, unprinted, 1699.

for their education in the Faith of Christ. No other Sponsor is to be taken, unless the Parents be dead or absent, grossly ignorant or under scandal, and contumacious to Discipline; such being unfit to stand as Sponsors in transacting a solemn covenant with God: in which Cases the immediate Parent who is in such Circumstance, is to be requested to provide some fit Person, and, if it can be, one related to the Parent of the Child should be Sponsor. But, if either of the Parents, whether Father or Mother, give evidence to Church-judicatories and the Congregation offended of their Repentance for the removing of Scandal, the Suspension they were under as to Church-privileges should be taken off, and the penitent Parent should be allowed to present the Child.

In the Case of Children exposed, whose Baptism after enquiry cannot be known, the Session is to order the presenting of the Child to Baptism and to see to the Christian education thereof and it is recommended to the Parish to take care of the maintenance of the child.<sup>1</sup>

The Parent or Sponsor ought to <sup>2</sup> speak to the Minister of the Parish before the Child be offered to Baptism".

There is no mistaking the tendency of this legislation to provide for the baptism of every child that could conceivably be regarded as within the sphere of influence of the Church. The close proximity of the phrases "verge of the Visible Church" and "professing the Christian religion" indicate that the quality of the profession is not to be taken as a criterion of the child's right to baptism. The point at which the quality of profession comes in is on the question of who is to be permitted to present the child. Nevertheless the right is thought

1. Last clause added to 1711 draft.

2. Draft read "It were fit that the Parent or Sponsor".

of as arising out of the profession of the immediate parent and not either as an inherent right possessed by every child or as having its source in the fact that the nation within which it is born is a nominally Christian nation.

This Act also clarifies the position of the mother from whom the right to baptism may come by laying down explicitly by the use of the term "parents" that the mother has an equal right to present the child. No preference is given to the father as had been so obvious a feature in the initial proposals of 1696.

It was during the period of the formulation of this position that Thomas Boston was greatly exercised over the same matter and reached a different conclusion. His exposition of the sacrament attempted to recover the emphasis on the quality of the profession made by the parents. His difficulties began with a situation which confronted him in his parish at Simprin. He found many of his people grossly ignorant and when one in this condition requested baptism for a child Boston, "could not have freedom to grant his desire for some time".<sup>1</sup> He gave himself to the task of studying the question and wrote out his mind in a memorable exercise, "Who have the right to baptism and who are to be baptized?"<sup>2</sup>

The treatise is a conscientious examination of the issue and is so competently written that it became a

1. Boston, Account of My Life, Ed. by Law, 1908, p.155.  
2. Boston's Complete Works, Ed. by McMillan, 1849, VI, pp.125-220.

landmark in the history of baptismal theory in Scottish theology. He states his initial problem thus :

"The Anabaptists, denying infant baptism, have been faulty in making the subject lawfully receptive of baptism too narrow; so it is a question to me, whether or not others have made the same wider than the word of God will allow.....That some infants born within the visible church may be baptized I doubt not, but that all ought to be admitted to this holy ordinance, I find I cannot subscribe unto".

He does not deal at length with the Anabaptist thesis. His anxieties are on the score of Presbyterian usage. He first presents the case for the classes of persons whose right to baptism he does not dispute, namely, those who have a right either before God or the Church, and their children, on the ground of at least a credible profession of religion. "But now", he continues, " I come to the main point of this inquiry, viz., Whether or no all infants born of Christian parents, so called in opposition to Jews, Turks and pagans, have a right before the church to baptism. Or whether the open wickedness and profanity, or gross ignorance of the parents, should hinder the infant to be baptized, till either the parent reform, or the child comes to mature age and by his personal walk satisfy the church ?" Rutherford's proposals for the widest inclusiveness within the circumference of a Christian nation is at the heart of Boston's problem although that theologian is not mentioned.

Boston states the case of those who favoured the inclusive theory in a series of eight arguments which are presented with a degree of impartiality uncommon in such discussions. Against them he formulates his own position in closely reasoned sections. On the question of whether or not the right is obtained from immediate or remote parents he reduces the case of his opponents to an argumentum ad absurdum. If their premises be granted, he says, "there is no infant under heaven that hath not the right to baptism, which is absurd". His own thesis is that the immediate parents confer the right, and that their status before the Church is the deciding factor. "If the parents of such infants concerning whom our greatest question is, have no right to be at the table of the Lord, then the infants have no right before the church to the ordinance of baptism".

The propriety of other sponsors taking the place of the parents he will not allow unless these sponsors are in a position to fulfil their engagement, which means, argues Boston, that they must have absolute control over the education of the child as they would have if the child were adopted by them. If this measure of control is absent then the sponsors are unable to implement their vows, and the taking of the vows in such circumstances ought not to be allowed.

Behind this exercise there was the contemporary situation within and without the Church and any attempt

to appreciate the movement of Boston's thought cannot omit to notice this environment. The intense piety of the Simprin minister's personal outlook contrasted with the apparent growth of secularism within the Church. Boston recoiled from this worldliness and lowering of spiritual tone as is evident in another conclusion of this deeply sensitive mind. "From that time", he writes, "I had little fondness for national churches and wished for an amendment of our own church and the members thereof".<sup>1</sup> He had not arrived at the Independent idea of a gathered Church, but he was leaning toward it. Such an opinion assisted the secession from the Church of Scotland in the eighteenth century.

The tenets of Boston never became the official voice of the Church of Scotland. Support for them is more commonly found in the writings of the seceding groups.

0 When Steuart of Pardovan came to write his "Collections and Observations Methodized" in 1709, he interpreted the position along the lines of the Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly when they had argued strenuously, according to Baillie, for an acceptance as a "main head" of "the right of ordinary professors to the sacraments though they can give no certain or satisfactory signs of real regeneration".<sup>2</sup> "To testify", wrote Pardovan, "that it doth not appear that the children have any right unto the privileges of that sealing ordinance through their immediate parents: and that they may notwithstanding have a right thereon by their more remote parents, it is necessary that a Sponsor present the children, and engage for them".<sup>3</sup> This comprehensive work became a textbook on Church procedure for over a century and its decisions influenced

1. Memoirs, Ed. by Morrison, p.171. 2.

3. Book 2, Title 2, par.3.

the practice of a generation of ministers.

It would be tedious to trace the fluctuations in standards of admission to baptism throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries so far as they related to individual ministers or particular areas. A measure of discretion was granted to ministers, at least in the Church of Scotland, and this left the door open for variations in the quality of profession required from parents. The relaxation of discipline and the surrender to the demand for private baptism were other sources of variety in administration.

As the eighteenth century progressed Independent, Baptist, and Methodist Churches appeared all making their own contribution to the variety of supervision, and by the nineteenth century conditions became chaotic. A statement made before the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction in 1836 by an Independent minister in Edinburgh gives an insight into conditions in the Lowland areas. In his evidence Mr Henry Wight said:

"Individuals frequently ask me to baptize children, which I make it a rule never to do, except to those who are members of my own church, or in cases of sickness, where there is a necessity for it. I find there is a great desire amongst people to have their children baptized, because it is not considered respectable for a woman to appear out of doors till her child is baptized. I have known them staying in the house for four or five months

on account of this: and they have a great desire to get their children baptized, not because of any good, but because it is considered a matter of credit among themselves. Therefore when they come and want this duty performed I endeavour to show them what the real meaning and object of baptism is. I find that where they can get it more easily, and without any examination into the state of their personal religion, they are ready to take it; and the facility that is afforded them in this way, from the competition to which I have alluded, I personally feel to be a hindrance to the spread of religious instruction".<sup>1.</sup>

One of the outstanding examples of what amounted to promiscuous baptism is to be found in the evidence in the M.S. Baptismal Registers of St. Andrews by the Green Episcopal Church, Glasgow. There had always been complaints by the Church of Scotland that the Episcopal clergy baptised children who were in no way associated with the Episcopal Church and in 1828 the Code of Canons incorporated a regulation to meet this long standing objection. This read:

"Regarding complaints that Episcopal Clergy baptize children whose parents belong to another body it is now enacted that Clergy of this Church shall not henceforth administer the Sacrament of Baptism except to the children of those persons who are either members of the Congregations under their charge, or who are desirous on good grounds to become so".<sup>2.</sup>

1. Commission of Religious Instruction, Scotland, Parliamentary Papers, dated 16th. March, 1836. In the collected and separately bound sets of these Reports, Vol. 1, p. 345.

2. Code of Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Scotland, 1828, Canon 22.



This ruling was not always accepted for in the small dissenting chapel mentioned, situated in a congested area, the baptisms from 1832 onwards for about thirty years averaged well over one thousand per year, and in 1842 reached a peak of one thousand, seven hundred and five recorded administrations, and the chapel acquired the name of "the hauf-croon kirk" where baptism for any child could be got by the payment of the small fee.

The ease with which baptism could be obtained for any child, particularly if the parent did not trouble about distinctions between administrators, was deplored in responsible quarters on the ground, inter alia, that it took away all the practical significance of the rite as a solemn sacrament. An anonymous contributor of some standing within the Presbyterian Church apparently, gave his opinion in an important article in *The Presbyterian Review* of July, 1841. He wrote:

"Hitherto what has baptism done? It is one of the great moving forces of Christianity, and its waters have flowed in torrents over our land; yet how parched, waste and barren of life is all around? It is time therefore, at least to try another system, were it for nothing else than to try the experiment. We have stubbornly taken our own way as to the mode of celebrating this rite, and it is manifest that we have not got from God, what through this very rite he tells us he is willing to bestow".<sup>1</sup>

"Baptism appears to produce but little benefit, and so, were it not for an inveterate usage, many would dispense with it as a nugatory form".<sup>2</sup>

1. p. 256.

2. p. 259.

Sometimes the different standards of admission caused a tension in parochial work. At Elgin, for example, a local dispute received some publicity by the circulation of a "Statement in Reference to the Administration of Baptism, by the Elgin Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church, March, 1850". This arose on account of some persons in Cromarty who were not communicants in any Church applying to the U.P. minister for baptism to their children. It was refused as "contrary to the rules of the U.P. Church and the principles acknowledged by the Presbyterian Churches in this country, as embodied in their standards, and as in accordance with the Word of God".<sup>1</sup> But the parties applied to the Free Church minister and from him received the baptism they desired.

In order to clarify if possible the most unsatisfactory situation prevailing within the Church of Scotland on the subject of admission to baptism a Committee was set up by the Assembly of 1914 to investigate the law and procedure of the Church. The Report submitted by this Committee was candid. What was called "a singular anomaly" was revealed by "two utterly different customs prevailing within the Church, so that a parent who has had his elder children baptized without question in the north may find the privilege refused to the younger if he migrates to a southern county".<sup>2</sup>

The Procurator, in an appended "Memorandum in regard

1. p.20.

2. Reports, 1915, p.889.

to Admission to Baptism", had no difficulty in demonstrating that all children of parents professing to be Christian, or of unknown parentage, have a right to baptism, and that the definition of a parent's profession need have no reference to his membership or otherwise in a particular congregation. If such a parent was under Church censure it was the law of the Church that the child must be baptized if another Christian person was prepared to take the place of the father or the mother.

On the basis of this Report the Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1917 decreed that a child had a right to baptism provided that one of the immediate parents had been baptised.

In the Reunited Church the Assembly of 1933 legislated again on the question in the "Act Anent the Admission of Infants to Baptism". This important statement may be given in full:

"Whereas it is expedient of new to declare the law of the Church concerning the admission of infants to baptism the General Assembly, with the consent of the majority of the Presbyteries, enact and ordain as follows:-

A Child has a right to baptism, 1. whose parents, one or both, having themselves been baptised profess the Christian religion; or, 2, who, being of unknown parentage, or otherwise separated from its parents, is under Christian care and guardianship".<sup>1</sup>.

1. Reports, 1933, p. 999. Draft Act 1.

When this was submitted to the Assembly a member queried the force of the term "right" on the ground of which baptism might be demanded by a parent and a minister unable to refuse it. The answer given called attention to the distinction between the right of a child to receive baptism and the right of a parent to present a child, implying that baptism might be refused on such grounds should a minister scruple to administer it. There can be no doubt, however, that should a sponsor in place of the parent present a child, and he or she be in good standing before the Church, a minister of the Church of Scotland cannot refuse to baptise if the law of the Church is to be observed.

Thus the inclusive principle on the subjects of baptism prevailed in the Church of Scotland as the official position.



## Professions and Engagements.

The task to be undertaken in this section is the investigation of the responsibilities implied in presenting a child for baptism. Several names are associated with presentation and they are expressive of the ideas which have been taken to be bound up in it. These names are:

1. Godparents, those who undertake parental responsibilities in things pertaining to God.
2. Gossips, those who are related in God to the child, from 'God' and 'sib', the latter an old term for 'kindred'.
3. Sponsors, those who respond for the child.
4. Sureties, those who pledge security for the Christian education of the baptized.
5. Witnesses, those who accompany the baptismal party proper and witness the vows taken. <sup>1</sup>.

All these terms occur in the literature of the rite, but their mere use must not be taken to imply that their original meaning is being retained. The terms obtained currency as part of the language associated with baptism and traditional terminology is often found in a context which is far removed from the environment of thought in which the particular term used was born. It is a hazardous proceeding, especially in Reformed theology to argue from the mere use of a term to the presence of ideas corresponding to a former usage.

There is no evidence in the baptismal usage of Scotland, with the exception of modern Episcopacy, that anyone was

1. The name "cummer" was common for a female companion. There was nothing distinctively baptismal about the name for it was used in many connections. Occasionally it is used of a male companion as, for example, by Knox, Laing, K.W., I, p. 38.

required to present a candidate who came forward for baptism on profession of faith. That is not to say that there never was an example of someone taking the place of the parent in infant baptism. All that can be said is that no example has been noticed. Some of these abnormal situations in paedobaptist churches may be cited and in all of them there is no mention of sponsors or sureties.

In Elgin, in 1598, an adolescent was discovered to be unbaptised and the Session ordered him to learn the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and then to present himself to the ordinance. On January 9, 1601, the record alludes again to the case. "It is appointit that the boy callit Hay, presentlie in Thomas Hayis hous quho is zit onbapteist that he compeir on Sunday nixt befoir the blessing and thair desyir the minister to ressave him into the kirk be the sacrament of bapthisme and becaus he is cum to zeires of discretioun being about XIX zeir of age he is appointit to gif a confessioun of the articles of the faith publictly and thaireitir to ressave the seall and sacrament of baptizing".<sup>1</sup>

In the same year, on the 17th. May, a "boy of thretein zeir auld" was dealt with in the same way; and again on the 28th. August, 1603, another boy said he was not baptised. He gave evidence of his faith and the minister at Birney was instructed to baptise him instantly after the session was dismissed, a method which did not conform to the usual public nature of the service.

1. Records of Elgin, New Spalding Club, p.64. Elgin Kirk Session Records, Ed. by Crammond, 1584-1779 under dates.

In later years there were instances of the same sort in other districts, and especially interesting are the notices of the baptism of those who had formerly been Quakers at Lesmahagow in 1701<sup>1</sup>, Kirkintilloch in 1693<sup>2</sup>, and at Aberdeen in 1715<sup>3</sup>. Items from the Baptismal Register of Kirkintilloch may be taken as typical of these.

"24 Novembr Baptized Isobell Findlay ane quaker upon the aige or thereby of twenty-four years efter sermone. Witness the congregacione and elders there pnt."

"27 Novembr Baptized James Findlay in Gartshoir ane quaker upon the agge of Twentie six yeares in gartsho(oir, edge of M.S. torn) place efter sermone witness the Laird of Gartshor."<sup>4</sup>

After the rise of industrial centres and the expansion of the large cities and towns toward the end of the eighteenth century many children were left unbaptised and instances of adolescent baptisms become more frequent. Churches in the Baptist tradition, of course, knew no other candidates than those who came forward on confession of faith and in their usage there was no cognizance taken of anything resembling sponsorship.

Patristic usage was that a candidate was accompanied by a godparent, but it <sup>was in</sup> ~~is~~ the baptism of infants that the function of the party presenting someone for baptism

1. The Presbytery of Lanark, Abbotsford Club, p.135.
2. Johnston, Old Kirkintilloch, p.131.
3. Records of Old Aberdeen, New Spalding Club, 2, p.128.
4. M.S. Register of Baptisms.



became most easily definable. Whenever the extension was made to include infants someone had to present the child and request baptism for it, and as the usage developed the interpretation of the meaning of presentation became more and more weighted with acquisitions. By the sixteenth century the theory of the spiritual relationships set up by baptism had become wonderfully complex in their effect upon social relationships. In particular they affected the possibilities of marriage between persons who stood in spiritual relationship to each other through baptism. Just as certain natural relationships between kinsfolk were recognised to be a barrier to marriage so it was conceived there were parallel relationships between those who were related spiritually on account of godparentage. This duplicated the forbidden degrees of consanguinity, and since this happened in the case of every baptism in the Roman Church, the inter-relationships of a spiritual sort multiplied in the course of time to a point at which it was almost impossible in Scotland for a person to meet another person in the circles within which marriage might be expected without confronting some barrier arising out of cognatio spiritualis<sup>1</sup>. Again, not only did baptism create incapacitating relationships, but confirmation did the same.

The Reformers cut away all this tangle from the implications of presentation and replaced the Roman system

1. Dispensations could be obtained at a price for release from these impediments. One granted by Urban V, in 1366, explicitly stated that "there was such a dearth of nobles (in Scotland), that it was hard for them to marry, except within the Forbidden Degrees". Calender of Papal Registers, 4, p.56. A table illustrating the complexity of the impediments is in Liber Officialis Sancti Andree, Abbotsford Club, facing p.xxv. The whole is discussed in Fleming, Reformation in Scotland, p.477f.

by the introduction of the principle that the father of a child was the most suitable person to take the baptismal vows. There is no hint that the adoption of the Roman pattern of impediments was ever discussed. The placing of the responsibility for the education of the child squarely on the shoulders of the father was so revolutionary that its adoption carried with it the complete abandonment of the Pre-Reformation outlook.

The claim that the father ought to present the child appeared early in England. Frithe in his treatise on Baptism of 1533 suggested radical changes. He wrote:

"And as concerning godfathers and godmothers they promise for theyr godchildrē that they shall mortifie the rote of synne which spryngeth in the bodeis and subdewe theyr lustes under the lawe of God.

They promise also that they will instructe and brynge up theyr godchylde in the faythe of Chryste: which office pertaineth unto theyr parentes, for they are commaunded of God to teach theyr children. So that the parentes should be other alone, or at the least the chiefest Godfather. But now a daies the fathers may not be suffered to knowe any thyng of them selves"<sup>1</sup>.

This line of development was not favoured in the subsequent Prayer Books, but it found many supporters in the Puritan documents.

1. A Myrroure or lokinge glass wherin you may beholde the Sacramente of baptisme described. Anno M.D.xxxiii. Per me J. F. Imprinted at Lōdō by Ihon Daye, dwellynge in Sepulchres parishe at the syne of the Resurrection, a litle aboue Holburne condite. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum. Black letter. John Rylands Lib., Manchester.

The central idea, then, in the system of presentation to baptism put forward and accepted in Scotland at the Reformation was that the actual parent of the child should be the person to take the baptismal vows, and that he should occupy the place of the godparents under the Roman scheme, and, as it were, become both natural parent and godparent to the infant. It is essential to hold this fundamental pattern firmly in mind when surveying the usages which developed for it is not always easy to see the simplicity of the basal thought amid the mixture of terms and functions that are actually found in, or may be inferred from, the multitude of notices of baptisms in the relevant documents. It is not to be expected that the slate was wiped clean and a new pattern set out on it overnight without any admixture of the ideas in which men had previously been schooled. It was one thing to propose a new system and another to get it absorbed into the thought forms of general custom.

One of the major sources of confusion was the relating of old terms to new functions. The retention on occasion of the term godfather is a case in point. This had three roots:

1. The Roman vocabulary.
2. The Anglican vocabulary, borrowed from 1.
3. The Genevan vocabulary of the English congregation there, borrowed from 1. and 2.

In this third instance the source of information as to the use of the term is the extant baptismal register

of the congregation in which Knox was minister for a time.<sup>1</sup>  
In this register godfathers are recorded in addition to  
the natural father.

In direct descent from this source the term appears  
in Scotland in the Book of Common Order. Therein the  
instruction preceding the baptismal service directs that  
the infant to be baptised shall be brought to the church  
"accompanied by the Father and Godfather".

Nothing is said of godmothers, The evidence from  
Ninian Winzet is that godmothers had been allowed, or  
the term at least used, in the earliest stages of the  
Reformation. "Why had ye Godmothers in the beginning", he  
queries, "and now repel the same?"<sup>2</sup>. Presumably he is  
referring to some use of the Prayer Book of England prior  
to the adoption of the Book of Common Order. The inference  
to be made from this reference is, obviously, that opposition  
was raised to any continuance of the function undertaken  
by the godmother where such continuance had been proposed.  
The same opposition, in the terms of the new theory, would  
be offered to any continuance of the godfathers' function  
as set forth in Roman and Anglican usage in so far as  
it displaced the right granted by the Reformers to the  
father.

The only situation in which it was contemplated that  
a woman would take the principal place in the presenting

1. The Genevan tradition was stated thus: "The use of witnesses  
(called God-Fathers) is neither absolutely necessarie, nor yet  
to be clean rejected: but such witnesses onlie are to be  
chosen, as both know, and are also likelie to performe what  
they promise, concerning the holy bringing uppe of the infant".  
Grounds and Propositions of Religion....determined by M.  
Theodor Beza and M. Anthony Faius, Professors of Divinity,  
Geneva, 1586.

of an infant to baptism was that in which the father was either absent on some lawful mission or prohibited by church censure from taking his rightful place. Even then a male relative was expected to present the child, but failing this the mother might do so.<sup>1</sup> There was no objection, of course, to women being in attendance at the service as friends of the parents, and indeed it was the custom for the midwife to carry the child to the church,<sup>2</sup> but in no case is there any hint that women were acceptable as the principal witnesses at a baptism, far less the persons who might present a child, with the single exception of the mother in abnormal circumstances.

In the text of the service in the Book of Common Order the term godfather is not used. Instead the minister is enjoined to ask "the father and surety" to repeat the Articles of the Creed. It is debatable whether the phrase "father and surety" refers to the same person or to the father and his companion. There is as much reason for taking it in the one sense as in the other for the father was undertaking to be security for the infant's Christian education when he responded to the instructions of the minister, and the companion was also accepting some responsibility either directly for the encouragement of the child in the things of God or indirectly by attesting the father's undertaking and becoming, as it were, surety for the father.

1. First Book of Discipline, Chap.lX, par. 10.

2. Winzet refers to the father carrying the child, but no other support for this has been noticed.

Strong evidence in favour of the interpretation which limits the phrase to the father is supplied by the few baptismal registers which contain very early entries. In these the term used for the companion or companions of the father is "witness" or "witnesses" thereby signifying the subordinate place in the service of these persons. In the Dunfermline register only the father's name is recorded until 1618. Not even in the entries relating to important baptisms is there any note of other persons than the parents from 1561 to that date. The following are the first two entries:

"The 16 day Alx<sup>r</sup>. Marshall had a man chyld born to him of his wyff Effie A..... baptixit and callit Patrik.

The 20 day Jhone Sanders had a woman chyld born to him of his wyff Bessie brown baptizat and callit Jonat"

In the Perth register, on the other hand, sometimes the names of the parents are omitted and only those of the witnesses are recorded. The father is first mentioned on July 18, 1561.

The Canongate register, beginning 1565, is prefaced by the statement, "The names of the bairnis Baptized in the Kirk of Edinburghe with thair names, fathers, and witness".

In the Kirk Session of St. Andrews in 1584, it was thought sufficient to order the Reader to "haif ane Register Buik, in the quhilk he sall insert the names of all barnis that ar baptizit within this parroche, the parentis names, the day of thair baptisme.....and als

the day of the birth of every barne baptizit".<sup>1</sup>.

Thus even though it was argued that the companion of the father took some vocal part in the service his function, by whatever name it might be called, was quite distinct from that of the godfather of the Roman or Anglican usage. The principal responsibility for the infant was laid upon the father and the term godfather, if used at all, was reduced in significance. It was never used of the father, though it might well have been.

The use of the term "witness" is interesting, for if that of godfather was reduced in significance, that of witness was increased. In Roman times the latter term was applied to the attendants at a baptism other than the godparents. Three godparents at the most were to be recognised and "If more can be had they are to be witnesses, and not godparents, and this rule is made for various causes".<sup>2</sup> Principal among these causes was the serious nature of the spiritual relationships created by godparentage and their relation to possible marriage contracts. All who were present at a baptism other than the three who were to be honoured by the title of godparent were to be regarded simply as witnesses and not persons spiritually related to the infant.

In Reformed terminology and usage, the godparents, in the Roman sense, were abolished, and those who stood

1. Register of St. Andrews Kirk Session, S.H.S., 2, pp530-531  
2. Statutes, trans. Patrick, S.H.S., 2, p.31.

up with the father at a baptism, and whose names were recorded in the parochial register, were called witnesses. The term was applied generally to all the companions and attendants composing the baptismal party, but for the purposes of the parochial records and the customary order of the service, a small number from among the attendants were recognised as having a special place in the proceedings. These persons, together with the father, took the place, *mutatis mutandis*, of the principal parties at a baptism after the Roman form.

Where the baptism was that of an illegitimate child it was considered important, apart from the correction of manners, that the father should be discovered so that he could hold up the child to the minister at the service. At St. Andrews, in 1582/3, for example, the instruction was given that the father "haldis up the barne him self, than the barne to be baptizit, utherwis nocht".<sup>1</sup> It was usual to withhold baptism until the father was found and the affair cleared up. At St. Andrews again, in 1584, a child was denied baptism for over three years on this account, and when the mother still refused to disclose the name of the father, she was judged unworthy to retain the custody of her child and ordered "to remoif the on baptizat barne".<sup>2</sup> When the name of the father was revealed and the baptism of the infant was authorised it was common for the witness to stand surety for the future good conduct of the delinquent, and in addition a

1. Register, *supra.*, p.497.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.521, 524, 529.



sum of money had often to be deposited with the session as additional security. In such circumstances it is clear that the witness discharged a duty which gave the term a different connotation than that which was implied in the normal meaning of the word.

Indeed it may be held with some justification that the term witness as applied to those who were most closely associated with the father in the presentation of a child to baptism would generally be taken to mean more than the simplest interpretation of its significance. Something of the Roman idea of a godparent would percolate through the Reformed theory and cling to the baptismal service in this particular. The sense of a special relationship to the infant would remain though undefined and variable in intensity according to the evaluation of the privilege on the part of the persons involved. In the same way the attestation of the father's vow on the part of the witness would involve a relationship to him as well as to the child and the term surety would admit of three associations;

1. the father's undertaking to bring up the child in a Christian manner,
2. the witness's sense of responsibility toward the child,
3. the witness's sense of responsibility toward the father,  
(a) for the fulfilment of the father's accepted obligation, and (b) where the father was, or had been, under church censure, as security for his future rectitude.

If, however, the use of the term godfather was of short duration in the stricter Presbyterian nomenclature

as contrasted with the outlook of those who would have valued a closer approximation to Anglican forms, the term gossip continued in good use in all parties and this goes far to cancel out any significance which may be attached to the dropping of the term godfather, at least in so far as both terms conveyed the idea of being related in the things of God. Again the evidence comes back to the principle that no more may be read into a term than what can be educed from the context in which it is found. It is plain that the term gossip supplanted the term godfather and is found almost everywhere in references to baptisms. Only very rarely has the more formal word been found in use. One outstanding example is in the Commonplace Book of Andrew Melville, 1621-1640, where both the terms godmother and godfather occur. His family register opens with the words, "The names of my Bairnes with the day of yair Birthes as also quha was thair godfathers and godmothers". Thereafter the names of those who undertook these offices are given. The dates range from 1628 to 1638.<sup>1</sup>

Something further may now be said about those who were merely witnesses of the baptism. The inconvenience caused by the numerical strength of many baptismal parties was a vexatious problem for the kirk sessions. The custom of having a retinue of female friends in attendance was a survival from Roman times and proved a constantly recurring nuisance. Energetic measures were often taken to stamp it out. The degree of success attained was doubtful. A

1. Andrew Melville's Commonplace Book, 1621-1640.

sample of the regulations at St. Andrews, July, 1584, is as follows:

"The quhilk day, for eschewing of misorder and tumult and satling of the abuse enterit in the ower great number of witnes or gossipis to the barnis that ar baptizit in this kirk, the session hes tocht gude and concludit that, in all tymes cuming, witnes, that salbe advertisit and warnit be the parentis to the baptisme of the barnis, sall sitt still in thair awin places, quhairin thai salbe in for the tyme in the kirk; and nane stand up tyme of baptisme bot the parent and father of the barne holdand up his awin barne him selfe onlie, except tua or thre witnes at the maist".<sup>1</sup>.

The nuisance is noticed elsewhere. At Aberdeen, for example, it was alledged that the parent "invitis twelff or sextene persones to be his gossipis and godfatheris to his barne, whereas in former tymes the custom wes to invite only tua godfatheris at the maist".<sup>2</sup>. Hence it was ordered that two, or four at the most, take part in the service and the Reader was instructed to take only a few names to the minister.

Brereton, writing of circa 1634, mentions the witnesses who, he says, "are many, sometimes twelve, sometimes twenty".

In Glasgow, under the date "Aprile 2, 1646", a fresh

1. Register, supra., p.533.      2. Selections, p.110. The date is 1622.

attempt was made to apply the guillotine.

"It is intimate, that those who Baptise on the Sabbath, have no more gossips nor six, and that they shall sit no longer together than five, and that they shall consign 4 pound, and the meaner sort 40 shill. and lose it if they transgress".<sup>1.</sup>

About the same time a similar regulation was entered in the session book at Ayr. Six women attendants were allowed but only three witnesses were to stand up with the father, and the penalty for disobedience was to be £10.<sup>2.</sup>

Later some concern was again shown at Aberdeen, in 1668; the situation there appears to have been almost out of control. "It is recommended to the elders" runs the report, "to think on som convenient way of restraining the tumultuarie number off peopl qch is ordinarily at Baptisms and Marriages and uther publict meetings off that nature, qch is many tymes the occasion off not a little ryot and to report to the next dyet".<sup>3.</sup>

In 1681 Parliament intervened for an economic reason, and the Act was passed entitled, "Act restraining the exorbitant expence of Marriages, Baptisms, and Burials". By this legislation no more than four witnesses were to be present at a baptism in addition to the members of the family. Local records provide illustrations of this Act in operation. One of the most interesting appeared

1. Wodrow, Biographical Collections, 2, p.2.

2. Lyon, Ayr in Olden Times,

3. Records of Old Aberdeen, New Spalding Club, 2, p.65.

at Peebles, where a swoop was made on delinquents with the following result.

"11 Jan, 1688. The persons following:- viz. Archibald Halden ( and eighty-three others ) being all accused of haveing moe persons at their baptisms since October, 1682, then the Act of Parliament allowes, all of them confest, and therefore are found guilty and fyned, conforme to the Act of Parliament".

Thirty-nine others were "all lawfullie summoned being absent, are likewise fined".<sup>1.</sup>

The stubborn bias of custom, however, was more than a match for legislation ecclesiastical or civil, and the number of persons attending baptismal services and celebrations continued to be a cause of comment and complaint. It was a strange baptism that was impoverished in this respect. John Anderson, a minister of Dumbarton, noted in his Diary in 1705 the baptism of a neighbouring minister's son. "I observed", he recorded, "that he had neither cummers or gossips which, whether it proceedeth from Christian simplicity, or his monkish nature, I will not determine".<sup>2.</sup>

Of the nineteenth century, another minister, John Mitchell, writing about 1842, said, "A train, sometimes a considerably long train, of females accompanied the child to church".<sup>3.</sup> From this long chain of evidence it is obvious that for many a baptism was more of a social occasion than a solemn sacrament.

1. Extracts from the Burgh Records of Peebles, p.121.

2. Papers of the Rev. John Anderson, p.89.

3. S.H.S., Miscellany VI, Memories of Ayrshire, p. 294.

The earliest voice raised against witnesses being present at baptisms was that of a passing Englishman, Robert Browne, an outstanding advocate of Independency whose stormy career brought him from the Continent to Scotland in search of a place of settlement. His extreme anti-Episcopal propensity commended him to Andrew Melville who received him hospitably in 1584, and passed Browne and his friends on to Edinburgh. The historian Calderwood relates the sequel.

"Upon Tuisday the 14th, he made shew, after an arrogant maner, before the session of the kirk of Edinburgh, that he would mainteane that witnesses at baptisme was not a thing indifferent, but simplie evil. But he failed in that probation".<sup>1</sup>

The point appears to have been a foolish one and not worth making a fuss about if the term witnesses be interpreted simply. There was little hope of proving that to have persons present at a baptism was an unalloyed evil. Browne may have been eccentric according to the ideas of his time but he may be credited with some reason, and it may be suspected that the brevity of the notice does him less than justice. It is possible that the term witness was used by Calderwood in a sense which Browne was not greatly concerned about, and that what Browne was expounding was the controversy which the Puritans had stirred up against the continuance of godparents in the Prayer Book meaning of their function. This was a major issue in the South and among the exiles. With this background and the loose use of the terms in Scotland Browne seems to have been advocating the abolition of something which didn't exist in Scotland in the form which antagonised the Puritans of

1. Calderwood, History, 4, p.1.

England. The two traditions were quite distinct though the superficial similarity might lead a stranger of a few days duration to confuse them.

The English usage which Browne almost certainly had in mind had always been a bone of contention. Leading theologians like Bucer had openly declared disapproval of the godparents answering the professions of faith as vicar or proxy of the infant, and had advocated the usage, which was that adopted in Scotland, of the godparents or the principal person presenting the child, <sup>and</sup> of answering only for themselves. The Twenty-ninth Canon stated that "no parent shall be urged to be present, nor admitted to answer as godfather to his own child" to which the Elizabethan Puritans put up strong opposition and held that it was the parent's right so to act, and demanded the exclusion of godparents as sureties for the education of someone else's child. Neal, in his History of the Puritans, supplies the data of the dispute for which some were thrown into prison "marshalled with the worst criminals" on the charge, as phrased by the Justices of the Peace in Suffolk, that they had turned "the questions in baptism concerning faith, from infants to the godfathers, which is but you for thou"<sup>1</sup>

Hooker, in 1594, had charged the Genevan school with what the Calvinists of England were denouncing as error. "Have they not," he challenged, "the old Popish custom of using godfathers and godmothers in baptism....?"<sup>2</sup>. At

1. Neal, History of the Puritans, 1, 254.
2. Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, 4, par.10.

best, however, the allegation can have been true only of some of the Genevan school, and even if it was true it missed the main point of the objection against the Anglican liturgy which rested, not in the mere use of this or that term, but against the inclusion of godparents to the exclusion of the natural parents and the necessity of the contracting party speaking vicariously for the child. There is evidence, for example, that the editions of the *Forme of Prayers* circulating among the Puritans of England made use of the term godfather more than the Scottish version. The edition published in Middleburgh in 1586,<sup>1</sup> the city from which Browne came to Scotland in 1584, prefaces the section "Of Baptisme" with the instruction that the infant is to be presented at the church "accompanied with the Father and godfathers as the Eldershippe of that Congregation shal thinke convenient". It omits the instruction, "Then the Father, or in his absence;" etc., but prints a note in the margin "The true use of the Catechism to the executiō whereof the fathers and godfathers binde themselves". The Scottish version of *Forme of Prayers* only used the term godfather once, and that in the prefacing instruction and not in the text of the section "Of Baptisme", and Scottish churchmen would have nothing to do with the term godmothers. Thus if even Hooker could go astray in his reading of the matter, there is some excuse for Browne, especially when it is known that he came from an area where

1. A booke of the *Forme of Common Prayers, administration of the Sacraments, etc., agreeable to Gods worde and the use of the reformed Churches...* Middelburgh by Richard Schilders, Printer to the States of Zealande, 1586. Copy used in John Rylands Library, Manchester.



the term godfather appears to have been in greater use than it was in Scotland. An explanation of this sort seems to be necessary to explain the account of Calderwood. What Browne failed to do was to convince the Edinburgh session that the father alone was acceptable surety for the Christian education of the infant, thereby supporting the contention that a witness was not considered to be merely a companion to the father but a person on whom some measure of responsibility devolved for the fulfilment of the obligation implied in baptism; that it was the opinion of a representative group in the Scottish Church that a double security was desirable for this fulfilment. If the argument before the session was to some extent at cross purposes, at least this position emerged from the examination.

Henderson in his Government and Order, in 1641, does not mention in his description of the baptismal service either godfathers or witnesses. He simply wrote,

"The Father, or in his necessary absence, some other man, who is reputed godly, presenteth the Child to be Baptised".

This subordination of all present at a baptism to the place given to the father is most marked in the Westminster Directory of Public Worship. The reaction to the office of godparent combined with <sup>the</sup> antipathy of Scotland to exclude all reference to either godparents or witnesses. This was a cause of complaint by Ramsay

of Aberdeen, in 1650, who deplored the disappearance of the Creed and godfathers in baptism, according to Wodrow.<sup>1</sup> although the Directory had been accepted by the General Assembly only in so far as it did not prejudice existing custom. It is impossible to say how many shared the opinion of Ramsay, but it would be safe to affirm that the trend of opinion in Scotland was away from anything which smelt of Episcopacy such as the use of the term godfather might suggest.<sup>2</sup> The meaning attached to the office of a witness continued to fluctuate according to the outlook of the person concerned. Some would hold it lighty and to others it would carry serious obligations. The Laird of Brodie provides an example of the latter at its highest level. His Diary is full of solicitations for the realisation of the baptismal covenant by those whose baptism he had witnessed as well as for his own children. In one instance, in 1653, he plans to provide for the education of a boy for whom he "stood up in baptism" as a necessary duty, until he, as he says, "may see what the Lord's mind is toward him".<sup>3</sup>

Opinion in England about the same period among those who are generally classed as Presbyterian, is provided by the Savoy Conference of 1661. The restored king had promised that the Liturgy would be reviewed to ease the burdens on

1. M.S. Life of Ramsay, Glasgow University Library.

2. The only baptismal register using the term godfather regularly, so far as has been noticed, is that of Aberdeen, 1647-1658. It was beautifull written by Thomas Davidson, Master of the Music School. Only once does he use the term witnesses. The number of godfathers named varies from two to eight.

3. Diaries of the Lairds of Brodie, Spalding Club, p.89.

the consciences of the Presbyterians and their allies. He ordered that twelve Presbyterians should meet with an equal number of bishops and reach an agreed compromise. At the centre of the matters to be discussed was the baptismal service. The objectors requested a cessation of promiscuous baptisms and requested that the subject of godparents should be left an open matter for parents to decide upon as they wished. The Liturgy which Baxter hurriedly drafted on request to provide a basis of discussion contained no reference whatever to godparents, and the bishops gave little attention to it, but as a matter of history it supplied an example of the prevailing opinion among the critics.

Almost nothing is heard of godparents during the Second Episcopacy in Scotland for, as has been already noted, there was no important change in the form of baptism. There is some support for the belief, however, that in common parlance the term godfather at least was in use in some quarters. In a part of a diary preserved among the Laing MSS., for example, this entry is found: "Edinburgh Fryday the 26 January, 1683, at 12 oclock at night, William Morisone of Prestoungrang, his eldest sone and child wes born, and upon the nixt day, Saturday the 27 baptized by the name of Alexander, his guidsir being goodfather by Mr. George Trotter, minister of the Tron Church, witnesses, Sir Patrick Murray, Deuchar, Henry Trotter of Mortonhall, Cragintynie, Dean, younger, Mr. William Manipenny, advocat, and me, etc."<sup>1</sup>.

1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Laing MSS., 1, p.425.

It may be taken for granted that where there was admiration for an Episcopal type of church polity there would be a tendency to assimilate the language of the Anglican baptismal service, although it may be said with emphasis that no more than a tendency can be presumed for a comprehensive survey of the references to baptism in native Scottish literature will yield only a very occasional clue to support any such tendency. The main stream of baptismal usage in Scotland remained singularly free from imitation despite the proximity of the two nations. The Anglican forms appeared with any fulness only when an Episcopal Church arose as a dissenting group. Even then the baptismal office was seldom used as it was printed. It has been, and is, a distinctive mark of Scottish Episcopacy that parents were permitted to act as sponsors to their children. This was regarded as a concession and not the ideal, but in actual practice it was the normal type. It proved impossible to persuade those who applied for baptism for a child to conform to the Prayer Book position.

The matter was the subject of a query of Bp. Falconer sent to Bps. Collier and Brett in 1721.

"Whether, where proper sponsors cannot be had, Parents may be permitted to undertake for their children".

The answer affirmed that such permission might be granted.<sup>1</sup>

1. MS. Bright's Notanda. Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

The Canons of 1811 fully recognised this compromise. In Canon XLX, "Respecting the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism", it was stated that it would be found "improper to press upon them ( members of this Church ) the expediency of procuring any other Sponsor, under the name of Godfather or Godmother, than the Father and Mother of the Child, if no impediment lies against their being received as such". In view of this, inter alia, the officiating clergyman was allowed to select from the Prayer Book such parts as were necessary to the validity of the sacrament, and to use his discretion in the use of any other part.

Attempts were made in other editions of the Canons, for example the<sup>one</sup> of 1863, to limit sponsors to communicant members, but this rule was often broken.

The present position is that contained in Canon XXVII of the codification now in force, and is as follows:

"1. In the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism the sponsors must have been themselves baptized, and shall, if possible, be communicants.

2. In default of others, the parents of the child may be admitted as sponsors, and in cases of necessity, of which the Clergyman shall be judge, one sponsor shall be deemed sufficient".<sup>1</sup>.

1. The extract prefaces the section on "The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants" in the Scottish Prayer Book, 1929. It is discussed in Perry, The Scottish Prayer Book, Its Value and History, p.106. Useful notices about earlier times are to be found in Eeles, Traditional Ceremonial and Custom Connected with the Scottish Liturgy, Alcuin Club Collections, 1910, Appendix V.

Enough has now been said to describe the composition of the baptismal group. Attention remains to be given to the conditions under which the scheme operated and the nature of sponson.

Four things were constant in Scottish usage as distinct from any Anglican forms proposed from time to time.

1. The baptism was administered by the consent of the father of the child, or those who took the place of the father should he be absent or unknown.
2. Baptism was administered only to children presented by those who were acceptable to the Church.
3. Some form of profession of faith was demanded from the sponsors.
4. A promise was taken by the sponsors that the child would be nurtured in the faith professed

#### 1. Consent.

It cannot be claimed that the consent of the parent was always obtained freely. Mention has already been made of the coercive powers which the Reformers advocated as proper for the submission, for example, of Romanists. There are numerous examples of parents being ordered to present their children to baptism; hence it is only in a formal sense that the term "consent" can be used in connection with many baptisms. Illustrations of these will be found in the section on Church discipline.

Nevertheless the baptismal service in the Book of Common Order began with the question,

"Do ye here present this child to be baptized.....?"

Unless this was answered in the affirmative presumably the service would not proceed.

## 2. Status of the Sponsor.

The second condition was that the sponsor must be acceptable to the Church and be free from scandal, or under promise to satisfy the session. This denied the privilege to those who had committed pre-marital or extra-marital sin, and other causes of condemnation, before repentance. In a case of excommunication the ban was absolute. In Session 9, March 11, 1569/70, the General Assembly enacted a general law:

"The children of the excommunicate persones to be receavit be ane faithful member of the Kirk to baptisme".

Thus even in such an extreme situation the official opinion of the Church was that a child might be baptised if a suitable sponsor was prepared to present it. The baptism might be delayed for some time, and there are examples of it being refused until certain conditions were fulfilled, but in general provision was made for baptism on a national scale.

## 3. The Faith Confessed.

Given the fulfilment of these conditions the sponsor was asked to make confession of his faith. In the Book

of Common Order this took the form of the repetition of the Apostles' Creed. It was short and easily learnt by any who might be illiterate, and had, from time immemorial, been associated with the service. It is not to be assumed, however, that this was the only requirement of the Church. Local records from time to time include notices of an examination prior to the service especially in cases where the faith of the parent might be doubted or his ignorance be apparent. The degree of preparation demanded varied according to local need or opinion but it is certain that in all occasions the Church retained the right to postpone a baptism if the person presenting the child was unable to satisfy the Church on the competence of his knowledge. The recital of the Creed was preceded by an exposition of the meaning of the sacrament according to the Reformed tradition and it was taken for granted that this also was acceptable to the sponsor. Should there be any desire or need on the part of the minister to supplement the substance of the printed form a discretionary power was always conceded to the ministrant.

The change in the printed form of the Westminster Directory of Public Worship has often been the subject of remark. At the close of the exposition of the meaning of the ordinance, the exhortation to the congregation, and the parent or vice-parent the short phrase appeared, "requiring his solemn promise for the performance of his duty".



The absence of the Creed was a notable omission. It was due to opposition to its inclusion in the Westminster Assembly, and the fact that no alternative confession was printed was due, as has been already noticed, to differences of opinion within the General Assembly.

The position which resulted in the administration of the ordinance was that the tradition of examining the sponsors faith was retained, but the substance of the examination was more open than ever to diversity. At Glasgow the kirk session resolved as follows:

"July 17, 1647, That those who have children to be baptised come to the Minister of the quarter the day before and give account of the Lord's Prayer, Belief, and 10 Commands, and be examined therupon".<sup>1</sup>

On June 27, 1650, the Presbytery of Dalkeith dealt with two persons who were charged with speaking against set prayers, the Creed, and witnesses in the baptismal service and were obliged to recant. "Concerning the Creed, commonly called the Creed of the Apostles", ran their recantation, "I acknowledge it to be profitable and necessary".<sup>2</sup>

A movement had been gathering force for a considerable time to depreciate the use of the Apostles' Creed and a considerable quantity of printed matter was being

1. Wodrow, Biographical Collections, 2, p.2.
2. Sprott, Lee Lecture, 1893, p.36.

circulated on the controversy. Episcopal writers in particular rallied to the defence and their prominence in this role would not be helpful to the support of the traditional formula on the part of Presbyterians in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>.

A tendency is observable in some quarters to replace the use of the Creed as a test of orthodoxy by the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Scots Confession of 1560 had never been used in this way so far as is known, but in those earlier days the use of the Creed had not been challenged and there was no call for an alternative. The change is seen in the records of the Presbytery of Lanark, June 28, 1655, when a case came up for decision involving a child of a mixed marriage. The mother was called on to repent of her clandestine marriage to an Englishman and the father promised to bring the infant up in the doctrine of "the Confession of Faith, <sup>as it is</sup> now professed in the Church of Scotland".<sup>2</sup>.

The extent of the abandonment of the Creed in the baptismal service is best estimated in the directions given in the various diocese after the establishment of Episcopacy to restore its use. At Dunblane on April 11, 1665, for example, "it was earnestly recommended by the Bishope to the brethren that if there was any among

1. Ashwell's Fides Apostolica appeared in 1653, and Bp. John Pearson's celebrated Exposition of the Creed in 1659.

2. Records of the Presbytery of Lanark, Abbotsford Club, 1839, p.98.

them who neglected to cause the parents of children to repeat the Belief at the baptism of their children, they would not neglect it in tyme coming".<sup>1</sup>.

When the Presbyterian Church was re-established at the Revolution no standard was authorised for the baptismal professions and the draft overtures of 1696 simply referred to "parents professing the Christian religion". This does not give any indication of the type or degree of faith demanded and, since there was nothing to the contrary, every minister had liberty to do what seemed most fitting. The prevailing temper may be assessed by referring to two typical Presbyterian writers. Alexander Sutherland from the Episcopal side opened a brisk controversy on baptism with a pamphlet in which he refers to Presbyterian usage in the matter of professions.<sup>1</sup> They were guilty, he avers, of "requiring of the Parents or Sureties, in the name of the children to be Baptized, a Belief of their Confession of Faith, and Shorter and Larger Catechisms, as if all the Propositions contained in them were as Fundamental as the Articles of the Apostolical Creed". Other Churches, he continued, imposed creeds as articles of communion, but not of baptism. The Presbyterians were therefore open to the charge of adding to the Apostolical Creed in baptism and thereby made themselves peculiar in Christendom.<sup>2</sup>.

In reply James Hadow from the side of the Presbyterians

1. Sutherland, The Practice and Doctrine of the Presbyterian Preachers about the Sacrament of Baptism Examined, Edinburgh, 1703. 2. Ibid., p.15.

accepts the charge and intimates that he will defend "their requiring of a Belief of their Confession and Catechisms in Baptism", but did not get to that point in Part 1 of his rejoinder. Part 2 was never printed. So far as he goes he quotes the sections on baptism in the Confession and Catechisms and challenges his critic to show that there is anything contrary to the teaching of the Reformed theologians therein. "When this is the current Doctrines of Divines in all the Reformed Churches", he says, "it must be either Ignorance, or at least scarce fair dealing, to represent it as peculiar to the Scots Presbyterians".<sup>1</sup>

In another skirmish John Anderson published "A Defence of the Church Government, Faith, Worship and Spirit of the Presbyterians",<sup>2</sup> and in answer to the accusation that the Westminster Confession was used in baptism, replied,

"Tis false that the Confession of Faith is the Creed into which they baptize. They baptize into the Belief of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and only declaratively assert their Confession of Faith to be agreeable thereto " Both the Apostles' Creed and the Westminster Confession are human compositions, he continued, and the one is as lawful as the other."<sup>3</sup>

The use of the Westminster Confession, however, never

1. The Doctrine and Practice of the Church of Scotland anent the Sacrament of Baptism, vindicated from the Charge of Gross Error..... Part 1, 1704. Anonymous, but reputed to be by Hadow. 2. Glasgow, 1714. 3. Ibid., p.278.

received the formal sanction of the General Assembly. All that was authorised was a serious recommendation in 1705 ( Session 12 ) that the Directory be used by ministers, and in 1712 the overtures were passed which directed that children born within the verge of the Church one or both "of whose parents profess the Christian religion" have a right to baptism. The interpretation of the term "profess" was left to the discretion of each minister.

An important indication of the generosity with which the profession of faith was to be assessed for the purposes of baptism is found in contemporary dealings with children whose parents were English Episcopalians, and who for military or business reasons were resident in Scotland. For some years complaints were being circulated against the demands of the ministers of the Church of Scotland upon the parents of children who were presented to the ordinance, the substance of these being that parents were compelled to profess Presbyterianism before baptism was granted to their children. A passage in Wodrow's Correspondence describes the situation and the danger that was latent in it.

"Since there are complaints come in from the English officers, that they cannot get their children baptized privately, nor without owning our Confession of Faith and Catechism, which they know not, and that representations anent this are come from court, there is a general overture recommended to a committee of five or six, to be brought in, recommending all proper gaining methods to be used to persons of another education and communion

in admitting to baptism and Church privileges, as said, otherwise they will bring their own ministers down".<sup>1</sup>

To offset the possibility of an incursion of Episcopal ministers with official standing the General Assembly passed an accomodating law which must have appeared like a capitulation to expediency and a portent of degeneration to the rigorists. The Act, of 1711, was called an "Act concerning the Receiving of Strangers into Church Communion, and Baptizing their Children". It urged ministers to deal sympathetically with requests for baptism from strangers. "If such strangers", it ran, "being free from scandal, and professing their faith in Christ and obedience to Him, shall desire baptism to their children, ministers shall cheerfully comply with their desire, in administering the sacrament of baptism to their children, upon the parents engaging to educate them in the fear of God, and knowledge of the principles of the Reformed Protestant religion".<sup>2</sup> The fact that such an Act was necessary is a significant item in an evaluation of the spirit in which much of the parish work was conducted. On the other hand, the fact that the General Assembly was capable of passing such an Act is indicative of a changing temper on the part of that court. There was a day when all the persuasions of strategy would not have produced such a concession. The Act, as stated, only allowed a concession to strangers. It was only another short step to the Act of 1712 which granted the concession of a general profession

1. Wodrow, Correspondence, 1, p.227.

2. Acts of Assembly, 1711, XII. Vide, Wodrow's Correspondence, I, p.227.

of faith to all.

Another factor in the over-all situation was the revolt within the Church against all Creeds and Confessions as restrictive. An Act of 1711 had authorised certain questions to be put to all officebearers and among them was a demand for an unqualified subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith. This aroused the opposition of those ministers and others who had departed from, or were unwilling to commit themselves to, the corpus of Westminster orthodoxy. The Simson controversy was not far away. Dunlop's "Collection of Creeds and Confessions" appeared in 1719 prefaced by an able defence of their uses, but admitting in the opening paragraph that creeds were being "generally decried" and "of late years not only undervalued as mean and useless, but exclaimed against as unjust, arbitrary, and inconsistent in their frame and tendency with the liberty of mankind".<sup>1</sup> Murmuring continued throughout the century the spiritual atmosphere of which was, for the most part, the reverse of the vigorous life of its predecessor. Thus ministers who were not partial to Calvinistic orthodoxy were scarcely likely to over-emphasise it in the baptismal professions. That some ministers at least dropped all mention of the Westminster Confession in the baptism of infants is implied in the minister of Dundonald's treatise, "A Vindication of the Discipline and Constitutions of the

1. A Collection of Confessions of Faith, Catechisms, Directories, Books of Discipline, etc., of Public Authority in the Church of Scotland, two volumes, 1719 and 1722.

Church of Scotland for Preserving Purity of Doctrine".<sup>1</sup>  
Mr. Walker, under the signature of Philalethes, asked,  
"Was there ever any man refused the privilege of  
presenting his child to baptism because, when a student  
of divinity, he would not sign the Confession of Faith?"

On the other side, a minister's manual was published  
in 1802, entitled "The Scotch Minister's Assistant, or a  
Collection of Forms for celebrating the Ordinances", and  
in it there are comprehensive suggestions offered for  
use at baptisms. The vow to be taking by the parent  
is phrased:

"Do you believe in the Scriptures, Confession of Faith,  
and Catechisms of this Church, and are you desirous that  
your child should be baptised in this faith?" The  
volume was published at Inverness and may reflect the  
type of profession expected in the North, but the  
manual professes to set down what would be suitable for  
all parts of the land.

Passing on to another period, the diversity of usage  
is confirmed in a complaint of the most notable voice call-  
ing for reform, that of Dr. Robert Lee. "It appears  
intolerable", he wrote in 1866, "that in the same Church,  
and that recognised and established by law, one minister  
shall demand of the candidates for Baptism or the Lord's  
Supper a different profession of faith from that which  
another demands; that one shall require assent to almost  
nothing; another to the Apostles' Creed; while a third

1. Edinburgh, 1774.



requires assent to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments with the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms".<sup>1</sup>.

This protest bore fruit in an Overture presented by various ministers and elders to the General Assembly of the Established Church in 1869. This stated:

"Whereas it is desirable that members of the Church, when called upon to make professions of faith and to come under solemn obligations, as in the case of parents acting as sponsors in the Sacrament of Baptism, should know beforehand what professions and promises are to be exacted from them, and also that there should be, as far as possible, uniformity in such matters throughout the Church, it is humbly overtured....."<sup>2</sup>.

The Committee on Aids to Devotion reported the next year and sent to every minister a recommendation that the Directory of 1645 be followed, and that they "confine the exercise of their discretion, in exacting Baptismal professions and obligations, within those just and reasonable limits which the Directory prescribes".

The Committee was authorised to go into the matter further and consider adult as well as infant baptism, and prepare forms of service consistent with the Directory. The report compiled on these instructions stated that although forms of exhortation, etc., were presented it

1. Lee, The Reform of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1866, p.177. 2. Reports, Church of Scotland, 1871, p.443.

did not desire or expect the Assembly to formally sanction them, but recommended that the freedom and discretion "hitherto allowed to all the ministers in the celebration of Divine Ordinances" be not interfered with.

That the utmost diversity continued was shown by returns made to an investigation in 1897. To the question, "What professions of faith and promises do you require from the parents or other sponsors?" the following answers were made: <sup>1</sup>.

148. As in the Euchologion.

181. Belief in the Creed.

24. No profession of faith.

4. Neither professions nor promises.

A few. a. Require renunciation of the devil, the world and the flesh.

b. Belief in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

c. No set form.

d. Vary with different classes of sponsors.

The Service manuals produced by the different sections of the Church in Scotland operated to the removal of any reference to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and simple forms of affirmation were general. In some manuals the Apostles' Creed was restored, but with this difference that it was not rehearsed by the sponsor. In the 1940 edition of the Book of Common Order, published by authority of the General Assembly of the Church of

1. Recommendations of a Commission of the General Assembly, Worship and Celebration of the Sacraments, 1897.

the Church of Scotland, adequate allowance is made for alternative forms of profession of faith.

#### 4. The Engagement Contracted.

The preceding section has discussed matters which are relevant to the engagement entered into at baptism for the profession of faith and the promise to rear the child in that faith are inter-related. It is desirable to distinguish them, however, on account of the fluctuations which have occurred in the interpretations of the nature of these obligations, promises or engagements.

In the Book of Common Order, 1562, and in the Westminster Directory they are not treated separately. In the former the subject is introduced thus:

"Finally to the intent that we may be assured that you, the father and surety, consent to the performance thereof, declare here before the face of the Congregation, the sum of that Faith wherein ye believe, and will instruct this child".

In the Directory the promise is mentioned, but nothing at all is said about the profession of faith.

What is not hinted at in either book is that the promises exacted from the parent should include a profession of faith in the name of the child, an engagement in addition to the promise to train the infant in the Christian Faith.

It has been already mentioned that a vicarious faith and promise was adopted in England against the protests of the Puritans. In this the Puritans had the support of Scottish Presbyterian forms. The whole of the Genevan tradition was against anything which looked like an identification of the faith of the parent with whatever might be presumed to be the actual possession of the child. The only sense in which the father's faith was imputed to the infant was that in which the infant was regarded as within the covenant of grace on account of the faith of the parent. The father promised for himself and because of that promise all his children were thought to be in covenant relationship with God. A typical statement of the position ran thus:

"Whereas every man is said to be saved by his owne faith, and not by another man; it is to be understood only of those that are of yeares, and we cannot allow of the opinion, concerning the actual faith of infants. But leaving unto God his secret judgments, we doubt not, but that the faithful parents, do according unto the condition of the Covenant, apprehend the promise both for themselves, and also to their children".<sup>1</sup>.

The principle could not be more clearly stated, namely, that what was done was done by the parent and not by the child. There is no suggestion that the promise or engagement was undertaken by the child by the mouth of

1. Grounds and Propositions of Religion....Geneva, 1586, supra, p.271.

the parent.

Nevertheless the vicarious engagement appeared in Scotland. The distinction between engaging for personal behaviour and engaging as the spokesman of another became blurred and the confusion continues to the present day.

The evidence begins after the reassertion of Presbyterianism in 1638 as if it was a relic of the tendency in some quarters to follow Anglican modes.<sup>1</sup> The heterodox nature of the innovation escaped the scrutiny of the anonymous person who compiled "The New Catechisme according to the Forme of the Kirk of Scotland....set forth for the general good of both Kingdomes.....published by Authority, London, 1644". The relevant part reads thus:

"Q. What duty did your parents in your name promise at Baptisme ?

A. That I should forsake the Devill, and all his workes, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and beleve all God's Word, which is summarily conteined in the Articles of the Faith, and live in holiness all my lifetime".<sup>2</sup>

The Directory of 1645 contains a statement which might well have been challenged in Scotland.

"That Children by Baptism..... and that all who are baptized in the name of Christ, do renounce, and by their baptism are bound to fight against the devil, the

(2. Mitchell, Catechisms of the Second Reformation, p.277f.  
1. The bias was in Simson's "A Short Compend of the growth of the Romane Antichrist.....1616": "....a confession of that same Faith, which their parentes had professed in their name in Baptisme...."p.175.

world, and the flesh".

How or when this renunciation was made at the infant baptismal service does not appear. It was certainly not enjoined in the Directory at the appropriate place, and if it was not called for from the father, it was beyond the possibility of the child. The statement is absurd as it stands, but its presence was an encouragement to any who wished to put an explicit renunciation of this sort into the service.

Some phrases in the Larger Catechism are suggestive of the same anomaly, if they are supposed to refer to infant baptism. Q.165 on "What is Baptism ? " closes with the information, "The parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's"; and Q. 167 contains phrases such as "our solemn vow made therein". It is nonsense to say that an infant "openly and professedly" makes a "solemn vow", and, unless the father does it vicariously, the words can only apply to persons of maturer years. This distinction, however, is not made and without it the Catechism remains unintelligible as descriptive of infant baptism. Again there is encouragement to provide for such an engagement by the father in the course of the service.

This mode of statement does seem to have influenced opinions held about baptism in infancy. "This day at my coming home", wrote the Laird of Brodie in 1655, "I

took occasion to speak to Jhon Dumbar, Boig's son: and after I had laboured hard to bring hom to som sight of sin, and of his danger and guiltiness.....enquired of him, If he remembered the covenant that he made with God in his baptism, and if he were willing to renew it".<sup>1</sup> The word "remember" is singularly inapt for it is certain that he did not make a covenant with God in his baptism. Whether the person who presented him acted as his spokesman on the matter or not is not known, but if the language of Brodie can be made intelligible at all it would imply that such had been the case.

At Dunblane, in 1668, the Bishop recommended his clergy to be diligent in their preparation of young persons for first communion and requested that they "cause them, each one particularly and expressly, to declare their belief in the Christian Faith, into which, in their infancy, they were baptized, and reminding them of that their baptismal vow, and the great engagement it lays upon them to a holy and Christian life".<sup>2</sup>

The same bishop in his "Catechism for Children" asks children before their first admission to the Lord's Supper to renew "the Baptismal vow of renouncing the service of Satan, the Lust of the Flesh," and the devoting of themselves to God in all holiness of life.<sup>3</sup>

1. Diaries of the Lairds of Brodie, p.125.

2. Leighton's Works, ed. by Aikman, 1839, p.344.; Register of the Diocesan Synod of Dunblane, 1662-1688, pp.63-64.

3. Bishop Leighton's Catechism for Children, Edinburgh, 1700,

A curious position is disclosed in the Overtures of the General Assembly, 1705, where, in the section, "Of the Admission of Infants to Baptism" all that is demanded of the parents is that " they covenant for their ( children's) Education in the Faith of Christ": but in the section on the "Admission to the Lord's Table" it is stated, in paragraph 3, "At the first admission of any to the Lord's Supper ministers should put the Person to be admitted in Mind of their Parent's Engagements for them in Baptism, and put them explicitly and personally to renew their Baptismal Covenant to be the Lord's". Something is demanded in adolescence for which no provision was made in infancy ! Such language is highly misleading and unreal and ignores the first principle of moral responsibility that no man is responsible for either the piety or wickedness of his parent or for anything which is done without his consent.

The phrase "to renew the baptismal vow" was commonplace and such importance was attached to the understanding of what baptism should mean, for this is all that can be made of the appeal, that printed sheets were in circulation for the benefit of those who desired to undertake such a discipline. A short description of one of these prints entitled "The Christians Solemn Vow in Baptism, Explicated and Renewed" is appended to this chapter.

The confusion which reigned on the matter may be illustrated by another reference to James Hadow and John Anderson in their treatises against Episcopal critics.



The former in his controversy with Alexander Sutherland, already referred to, brought his Episcopalian opponent sharply to book for a slip. Sutherland had written, "it is agreed to by our Brethren as well as by us, that the Christian Parents' or Sureties profession of the Faith in the name of the Children, is sufficient in Baptism". Hadow answered, "That the Parents' profession of Faith is sufficient for a minister to administer Baptism to their Children I may grant. But it is more than I know, if Presbyterians do agree, that Parents profession of the Faith at Baptism, is sufficient unto the Salvation of their children. How Parents make profession of the Faith in the name of their Children, and how their Profession, or their real Faith, is imputed unto their Children, or how the Parents profession of Faith, at the Baptism of their Children performs the same thing with respect to the Salvation of these Children, that actual Faith doth in the Adult, I do not comprehend ". The lack of comprehension is understandable, but Hadow does not seem to have been aware that some of his Presbyterian brethren were not so clear in their thinking. No one will impune the loyalty of John Anderson, but in his controversy with Mr. Rhind, he takes another line of argument. When speaking of repentance and faith as necessary to salvation he poses the question, "Why then are infants baptized when by Reason of their Tender Age they cannot Perform them ? " His answer is, "Yes. They do Perform them them by their Sureties, who promise and vow them both

in their names. Which, when they come of age, themselves are bound to perform".

Stuart of Pardovan comes down heavily of the wrong side of the fence in his digest of authorised baptismal usage, and the fact that such an eminent advocate should be mistaken, is so far evidence that the practice of which he speaks was in operation, whether well-founded or not. Of the baptismal engagement he wrote:

"Though Christian infants be not capable to come under themselves; yet by their parents vowing in their name and stead, they do hereby become absolutely bound to the performance thereof".<sup>1</sup>.

And in giving the terms of the engagement he said:

"The Parents or Sponsors in the Name of the Child, do renounce the Devil and all his works, the vain Pomp and Glory of this wicked world, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.....The Engagements to be given in the name of the Children at Baptism, should be exprest in these or the like general terms, conform to the Directory for worship....." <sup>2</sup>.

This is a complete misreading of what had been, and ought to have been, Presbyterian and Genevan usage, though it will be admitted that false clues were not wanting to deceive the unwary.

Such variations of practice and theory were constantly intruding into the correct tradition.

1. Collections and Observations, supra., Title III, par.3.  
2. Ibid., Title III, par.9.

The Report of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland Anent Baptismal Professions and Obligations, in 1870, reasserts the only usage ever properly authorised.

"The parent vows for himself, not for his infant offspring. He promises much in his own name, but nothing in the name of the child. He undertakes to discharge faithfully his own parental duty, but further he does not make himself accountable as a proxy or surety for his child's after-conduct, which may possibly be such as to frustrate his most earnest desires and most zealous endeavours".

This Report reprobates language which speaks of the young communicants as taking upon <sup>themselves</sup> ~~himself~~ "at the Lord's Table those obligations which their parents had undertaken for them at their baptism".

Despite the warnings contained in this Report the doubtful language continued to be used. The term "engagement" persisted in the sense that the child had been engaged or bound to a course of action instead of the more realistic use of the idea in relation to the parent's <sup>of</sup> engagement to nurture the child in the Christian Faith. No contract in civil law can be made by an infant, and one can only be made for an infant when the contractor has the right to confer the benefit for which he contracts; and any such contract does not imply any responsibility on the part of the infant to accept the benefit on reaching maturity. It is quite erroneous to presume that any responsibility is imparted

to an infant who is said to be "engaged" to something in infant baptism, and the further impediment enters this particular field of possible contracts for ~~civil~~<sup>spiritual</sup> purposes that in the matter of the benefits said to accrue from baptism the contracting party has not the ability to confer that of which baptism is the sign and seal. Yet statements continued to be made about infant baptism which pronounced an engagement of the infant to be the Lord's by virtue of a desire on the part of a parent, and when in adolescence the person baptised in infancy came forward for first communion he was told that he was honouring an engagement made for him by others. The implication is made that those who do not come forward to implement the engagement are guilty of dishonouring a covenant they had made with God through their parent ! It is more than doubtful if spiritual relationships can be conducted in this way, and there is no satisfactory answer to the person who denies that he is bound by an engagement to which he was never a party, other than to admit that the engagement was undertaken without the permission of one of the contracting parties and hence was never an engagement in any moral or real sense at all.

It is also open to question whether such a phrase is correct theologically, for on the basis claimed for infant baptism in Genevan tradition the child already belongs to God by right of Christian parentage and in virtue of the covenant of grace, and baptism is the

recognition of a status that is already there. To aver that the child is at baptism engaged to be the Lord's is to imply a denial of the covenant relationship on which baptism is administered. If the infant, in virtue of its birth is already foederally holy, it already is the Lord's and to engage it at baptism to be the Lord's is a work of supererogation.

Be that as it may a degree of unreality continues. The idea of an engagement of the child is absent from the baptismal service suggested in "A New Directory for the Public Worship of God" issued by an association of the Free Church in 1898, but it is introduced in the "Topics for Address" on the significance of baptism. It does not occur in the "Baptism of Infants" service in the Book of Common Order 1928, and no hint is given that it is implied. But, strange to say, in the "Order for Admission to Full Communion" the candidates are informed that they now "do for themselves what was done" in their name; at the baptismal service the parent was only asked to profess and promise in his own name, not in the name of the child.

Increasing emphasis is place on this unethical scheme in the Book of Common Order 1940, where, again, the phrase "engaged to be the Lord's" is given as part of the meaning of baptism in infancy; and after the rite has administered the minister is instructed to state:

"According to Christ's commandment this child is now

received into the membership of the holy Catholic Church; and is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and to be his faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end".

The parent, however, was not asked to enter into any such contract in the name of his child, but only to speak for himself. No engagement in the name of the child having been made, none ought to be affirmed.

In the "Order for the Administration of Adult Baptism" the same declaration is made, but in that service an engagement is accepted by the candidate and the statement has a basis in fact.

Turning over the pages of this manual to the "Order for the Confirmation of Baptised Persons and for their Admission to the Lord's Supper" the candidates are reminded that they were "engaged to be His" and that in coming forward for "Confirmation" they come "to bind themselves anew". Not having either engaged or bound themselves previously such language is most unsatisfactory.

There is nothing to be gained by persisting in this phraseology, and the maintenance of it shows a lack of appreciation of the main lines of the Genevan tradition, apart from the objections which can be put against it on ethical grounds. It is to be hoped that some consistency will yet be achieved between the parents

actual commitment and the Church's declaration upon it,  
if the criticism against the baptism of infants is to  
be minimised, or at least not unnecessarily provoked.

Appendix, I.

A printed baptismal covenant.

A single sheet, 10½ ins. by 13½ ins. Imprint at the bottom of the page, "Edinburgh, Reprinted 1688". Copy in the National Library, Edinburgh.

Title: "Christians Solemn Vow in Baptism, Explicated and Renewed".

Arrangement of the matter: Certain Scripture texts are boxed in the centre of the upper half of the page with the rest of the contents set at either side and beneath.

An explanatory preface begins : "It is manifest that a Covenant comprising mans duty, is the Gospel way of Salvation. In the Scriptures we read of mutual engagements between God and his People ; of God to them, of them to God ....."

The vow begins : O Most Gracious God, for the sufferings of thy Son, I beseech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal, now prostrating himself at thy Footstool. I have fallen from thee by mine iniquity, and am by nature a Child of wrath, and a thousand-fold more heir of Hell by my wicked practice,....."

The contents continue on this strain with a wealth of detail on various types of sin and the punishment they merit.

The final paragraph reads : "This Covenant you are advised to make, not only in Heart, but in Word, not only in Word, out in Writing; and that you would with all possible Reverence spread the Writing before the Lord, as if you would present it to him as your Act and Déed. And when you have done this, set your hand to it. Keep it as a Memorial of the Transactions





## Appendix II.

### Confirmation.

It has been the custom at least from the time of Tertullian for baptism to be associated with the rite known as "confirmation". This confirmation of baptism succeeded the sacrament without any time interval, the candidates having been instructed in the Faith and able to testify to their appreciation of the baptismal action. Confirmation was itself followed immediately by the admission to first communion. The confirmation part of the initiatory ceremony was the responsibility of the bishop. It may be taken as undisputed that in the early stages of sacramental practice the whole ceremony was regarded as one. When the doctrine of the necessity of baptism to salvation was developed with its complementary expansion of infant baptism it was impossible for the bishop to be present at every baptism, and the practice appeared of holding over confirmation until such time as the bishop could visit for the purpose. It is agreed that there was the greatest confusion of method in the several provinces of the Church for a considerable period; at one place presbyters would confirm as well as baptise; at another the former was strictly reserved for the bishop to administer.<sup>1</sup>

The basic idea of confirmation was that by this

1. Thompson, The Offices of Baptism and Confirmation, p.175f. Confirmation, I, Historical and Doctrinal, by various theologians, S.P.C.K., 1926.

ceremony the Holy Spirit was received by those who had been baptised as in Acts, 7, 14-17. This reception of the Holy Spirit was thought to complete, in some sense, the sacrament of baptism. When the two rites were separated by an interval of time, the confirmation was observed at a very early age, two or three years being usual. The matter of confirmation, however, admits of many complications, and has been the theme of many disputes, which makes the subject difficult of statement. All that is proposed in the above is simply to state that this rite was in use in the Roman Church, and was a matter on which the Reformed churchmen in Scotland had to make a decision.

Confirmation in the Roman - or the Anglican - sense involving the laying on of the hands of a bishop was abolished. Baptism was held to be complete in itself in so far as the relationship between the baptised and the Holy Spirit was concerned. A ratification or renewal of the " baptismal vows" was demanded before admission to the Lord's Supper, and it might be held that certain elements of the confirmation service were carried over in this form; but it is certain that the Reformers did not confuse this with what was normally called confirmation.

There exists some <sup>ambiguities</sup> in the language with which baptism was surrounded - this will be dealt with later - but in whatever way it was described it was

always regarded as a seal or confirmation of the covenant of grace, and a confirmation of this confirmation was not continued in the old form. This may be illustrated by an incident at the Hampton Court Conference where King James scrupled the idea that baptism was incomplete without confirmation, "but the archbishop on his knees replied that the church did not hold baptism imperfect without confirmation"<sup>1</sup>, and James' Presbyterian bias, if the term can be used of this monarch, was satisfied. When the words "confirm" and "confirmation" were used in Reformed literature they are convenient terms of description and nothing more.

The desire to have nothing to do with confirmation as another sacrament was stated at the Episcopal Assembly, Aberdeen, 1615, and the resolution was incorporated into the Articles of Perth, 1618. The statement at Aberdeen drew attention to the care with which, it was argued, the primitive Church shepherded the education of youth, and deplored the absence of a like care in Scotland. The neglect was due "in respect of the great abuse and errors quhilks creip in unto the Popishe church, upon the said good ground he bigging thereupone ane Sacrament of confirmatione"<sup>2</sup>. To refute the error of this Roman sacrament the Assembly resolved that the matter be set forth in integrity by the

1. Neal, History of the Puritans, I, p.396.

2. B.U.K. III, p.1126. Article 4, 1618, p.1166. There was no sub-heading supplied.

resuscitation of religious instruction among youth.

The same point was discussed by Patrick Simson in his "A Short Compend of the growth of the Romane Antichrist", 1616. In the section entitled " A Treatise of Confirmation" he speaks of the "derogation of the dignitie of Baptisme"<sup>1</sup>. implied in the Roman rite of confirmation, and argues that the Holy Spirit is given at baptism. In the true ancient custom, he proceeds, " children were presented to Baptisme by their Christian parents: and albeit their infancie could not comprehend the summe of Christian faith, yet neverthelesse they were instructed and catechised when they came to yeeres of discretion: and when they had sufficiently comprehended the summe of Christian Faith, their parentes of newe againe presented them to the Bishop, who after hee had received in audience of the people, a clear confession of their Faith, hee blessed them, and with the ceremonie of imposition of handes, prayed to God, that these persons, who had given out of their own mouth a confession of the same Faith, which their parentes had professed in their name in Baptisme, might continue in that same true Faith constantly unto their lives end.....But in doing of this, there was no purpose to institute a newe Sacrament of Confirmation in the Church".

This gives a clear enough description of what was intended by "bishopping", as it was called, and makes

1. p.169. Confirmation is treated from p.167.

it apparent that the term "confirmation" was not encouraged. Nevertheless the Presbyterian section looked at the provisions as the thin end of the wedge, and did not hesitate to allege that it was confirmation that was being introduced. Gillespie condemned it as confirmation;<sup>1.</sup> Baillie objected to the Canterburians affirming confirmation by the laying on of the hands of a bishop as necessary before persons "be esteemed full Christians"<sup>2.</sup>; and the Assembly of 1638 roundly accused the bishops of introducing the "Episcopal confirmatione of children".<sup>3.</sup> For all of these the sacrament of baptism was confirmatio fidei and any suspicion that it was divided into two parts was unacceptable.

The use to which they were prepared to put the term confirmation is illustrated in "A Catechisme for Yong Children", 1644.<sup>4.</sup>

"16. Qu. Be what meanes doth God's Spirit confirme this faith in yow ? a. By the Word and by the Sacraments.

17. Qu. What call ye the Sacraments ? A. They are visible signes and seales ordained of God for the confirmatione of my faith."

Later Anderson in "A Defence of.....Presbyterians, 1714, repudiates confirmation in the Episcopal sense; and Boston, for example, uses the term as applicable to both sacraments, "The word is the means of conversion,

1. English-Popish Ceremonies, p.91.

2. Ladensuum Autokatakrisis, p.72.

3. Peterkin, Records, p.49.

4. Mitchell, Catechisms of the Second Reformation, p.267f.

and the sacraments the means of confirmation".<sup>1</sup>.

The renewal or ratification of the baptismal covenant which preceded admission to first communion is not only to be distinguished from the rite of confirmation, but is also to be set against the background of a frequent renewal of this covenant. It assists the assessment of pre-communion ratification to remember this. All the baptised were enjoined to be constantly renewing their covenant when present at the baptising of another, or in the privacy of their devotions. Both the Book of Common Order and the Directory for Public Worship make provision for the exhortation of the congregation to this effect. The subject was a common exercise for students of divinity, and some of these exercises on the theme "What is our duty when we are at the Administration of Baptism unto others ? " at Glasgow in the time of James Wodrow have been preserved in the Wodrow Papers in the possession of that university. An example of a personal covenant may be inspected in the MSS. of the same university in the Book of Miscellanies by John Bannatyne, a Covenanter, and later minister at Lanark. On the sixtieth anniversary of his baptism, for example, he wrote:

"....being baptised upon the 27 day of December, 1641, (which I have seen under my Father's own hand ) and

1. Body of Divinity, III, p.347.

preserved till this day.....I would with the greatest deliberation and seriousness which I am capable of solemnly renew my Baptismal vow and covenant." This expression of devotion had been a yearly exercise.

It is only in recent years, and in particular with the Book of Common Order, 1940, that the service of "Admission to Full Communion" has also been called "Confirmation". How far such a use is justifiable when the service to which it is applied differs in what would be regarded in Roman and Anglican circles as essential points is a matter which may admit of some doubt. Attempts have been made by some Presbyterians to find common factors in the Anglican, or "Catholic" type of order as it is commonly denominated, and the Presbyterian pre-communion arrangements. It has been boldly claimed by Wotherspoon and Kilpatrick in their "Manual of Church Doctrine" that "what we administer is effectually and substantially confirmation".<sup>1</sup> The amount of argument which precedes this conclusion in this school of thought would make it seem that the contention is not self-evident. It is certain that it is a new discovery.

The appearance of the Anglican type of confirmation service began in the Scottish Episcopal Church with the full acceptance of the Anglican Prayer Book in

1. p.66. The publications of the Church Service Society contain the gist of the modern presentation. Wotherspoon, Religious Values in the Sacraments, p.186f. Excursus as to Confirmation, "the practice of Infant Baptism demands such a complement" (p.216).



the eighteenth century. The usage in one section at first was distinctive in that infants were confirmed immediately after baptism in the manner of the Greek Orthodox Church. It was the concern of men like Bp. Falconer in the early part of that century to reintroduce confirmation with chrism, and for the purpose he obtained a recipe for the cream from Orthodox sources. It consisted of " Oil of Olives, Oil of Nutmegs, Cloves, w<sup>t</sup> a Mixture of Balsamum Anti-apoplecticum, with some Myrrh, Storax, and other Ingredients thickened to an Ointment". He also noted that the chrism used by S. Cyprian consisted of "Oil and Balsam". The formula used at these confirmations was :

"I sign thee with the Sign of + Cross, and Confirm thee w<sup>t</sup> the Chrism of Salvation, and lay mine hands upon thee, in the name of ye F., and of ye S., and of ye H. G., Amen ".<sup>1</sup>.

Bishop Forbes and others encouraged the same practice. I never journey," he wrote, " ...without Chrism in my pocket, which is used when desired, but *privatum sub rosa dictum est.*"<sup>2</sup>. Later, Bp. Petrie, with other non-Jurors, confirmed infants and did not merely accept the custom of renewing baptismal vows.

When the controversy about the status of a baptism by a Presbyterian minister was at its height, the

1. Scotichronicon, IV, pp.142-143.

2. Craven, Journals and Church in Ross, p.42, note.

3. Neale, Life and Times of Bp. Torry, p.34.

question was put by Bp. Falconer in 1721, "Whether confirmation be sufficient to make up the defects of Presbyterian Baptism, especially if admitting such to communion by confirmation they are willing to renounce Presbytery, but if it is not allowed they will adhere to Presbytery being afraid of Rebaptisation?"<sup>1</sup>. This was answered by Bps. Collier and Brett in the negative by maintaining that Presbyterian baptism was not simply a defective baptism; it was not a baptism at all.

It is now the custom in the Scottish Episcopal Church to have confirmation when preparing children for first communion in accordance with normal Anglican usage. Should the party concerned have been baptised by a Presbyterian minister, the baptism is normally accepted without dispute.

1. MS. Bright's Notanda

## Chapter Six.

### The Mode of Baptism

The mode of baptism is a subject of great importance in the history of the church. It is a subject which has been discussed by the fathers and the school divines, and which has given rise to many different opinions.

The first question which arises is, whether baptism is a sacrament, or whether it is only a rite. If it is a sacrament, it must be held to be essential to salvation, and its mode must be prescribed by God. If it is only a rite, it is not essential to salvation, and its mode may be determined by the church.

The second question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by immersion, or whether it may be administered by aspersion, or by affusion. The third question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity. The fourth question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity. The fifth question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity. The sixth question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity. The seventh question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity. The eighth question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity. The ninth question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity. The tenth question which arises is, whether baptism is to be administered by the minister alone, or whether it may be administered by the laity.

## The Mode of Baptism .

The investigation now deals with two allied subjects the mode of baptising and the church furnishings available for dispensing the ordinance. The matter will be dealt with in this and the following chapter.

The Scottish usage in the method of baptising had its genesis, as had so many other forms, in the outlook and practice of Calvin. From this source came the invariable usage, so far as Presbyterianism is concerned, of pouring or sprinkling.

The dictum of Calvin was to the effect that the mode of baptising was indifferent. "Whither the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, is not of the least consequence; churches should be at liberty to adopt either according to the diversity of climates, although it is evident that the term baptize means to immerse and that this was the form used by the primitive church".<sup>1</sup> This deliverance has an arbitrary ring about it which is in sharp contrast to the fidelity to Scripture and apostolic practice professed in other matters dealt with in the Institutes and elsewhere. Had the Genevan Reformer decided to support a return to what he admits to have been the apostolic mode and such a statement been made by an opponent it would have met with scathing

1. Institutes, IV, XV, p.334.

denunciation as self-determined and insufferable. Again, the indifference he professes toward the mode will not bear comparison with his arguments for the inclusion of infants within the sacrament, for on that subject the thought of indifference is anathema. In that he is at pains to show that there is a Scriptural foundation for his opinion, and on the Biblical basis which he propounds he demands consent to comprehensiveness. The admission that in the method of baptizing he is prepared to waive this basal conception is a curious assertion of independency.

There is no evidence that baptism was ever administered by the confessedly apostolic mode at Geneva in Calvin's time. All the information available points in the other direction.

Nevertheless Calvin made use of the symbolism implied in the mode of dipping as provided by the Epistle to the Romans, that of death, burial and resurrection unto newness of life. "These things we ought to feel", he writes, "as truly and certainly in our minds as we see our body washed, immersed, and surrounded by water".<sup>1</sup> No formulary for the ordinance published by Calvin provides for immersion of the body in the act of baptism, and if this was never the experience of the candidate then there seems to be little justification for writing in this manner, unless in so far as imagination can be said to supply the deficiency of fact.

1. Ibid., p.339.

Calvin made history in the field of liturgics when he drew up a formulary at Strasburg in 1539 or 1540 in which there was an order of baptism which made no mention of the mode of immersion.<sup>1</sup> It was this form which was taken over by the English congregation at Geneva and published in 1556; brought to Scotland by Knox in 1559; and became, as has already been stated, the order of baptism in the Book of Common Order authorised for use in all Reformed congregations in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

Through this source the mode of baptising in Scotland became separated from that prevailing in the whole of Christendom outside the Genevan tradition.

In order to appreciate the difference a brief review of the state of the matter in other circles is necessary. Reference to the Lutheran and the Anglican developments will be sufficient.

Luther was strongly in favour of a return to immersion as the only satisfactory and complete method of declaring the meaning of baptism. Significantly he translated the Greek work to baptize in his New Testament by the German taufen in preference to a transliteration of baptizein. In "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church" he depreciates an exposition of the meaning of the sacrament which would make it indicate only a washing from sin and

1. Wall, The History of Infant Baptism, A. and M. edition, 2, p.211, "For an office or liturgy of any Church, this is, I believe, the first in the world that prescribes affusion absolutely".

2. The history of the formulary is discussed in detail in Maxwell, John Knox's Genevan Service Book, 1556.

contends for the further claim that it expresses the Pauline teaching of death, burial and resurrection. He continues:

"For this reason I could wish that the baptised should be totally immersed, according to the meaning of the word and the signification of the mystery; not that I think it necessary to do so, but that it would be well that so complete and perfect a thing as baptism should have its sign also in completeness and perfection, even as it was doubtless instituted by Christ".<sup>1</sup>

This preference is emphasised in all Luther's works by his vocabulary and phrasing. There is no doubt as to where he stands. In his "Treatise on Baptism" he declares himself opposed to the laxity which had crept into the Church in Roman areas and says:

"Although in many places it is the custom no longer to thrust and plunge children into the font of baptism, but only to pour the baptismal water upon them out of the font, nevertheless the former is what should be done".<sup>2</sup>

In an edition of "Enchiridion, De kleine Catechismus...." of Luther, Leipzig, 1545, there is a cut illustrating the baptism of an infant showing the minister holding a naked child face downward over a large font with the baptismal group standing around. This confirms the opinion that it was common for Lutheran pastors to follow the advice of the Saxon Reformer.

1. Luther's Primary Works, Wace and Buchheim, p.351.

2. Works of Martin Luther, 1, p.56. Quoted in Kerr, Compend of Luther's Theology.

England was different from the Continent in this that when the Reformation began to affect the Church immersion was still the normal practice in baptism and there was no need to protest against any reduction of the method on the part of the Roman Church to something less than dipping. It is important to bear this in mind for it explains why immersion appears as the only form mentioned in the first group of documents relative to reformation of the Church. A sentence of Erasmus, often quoted, is convincing evidence. He is speaking of the contrast between the Netherlands and England. "With us", he wrote, "they have the water poured on them; in England they are dipped"( perfunduntur apud nos, merguntur apud Anglos )<sup>1</sup>. This is confirmed in the first treatise on baptism in English, that of John Frithe in 1533, where immersion is spoken of as if it were the only mode in use. "We are plunged bodily into the water", it said, "Even so we are deade and buried with Christ from synne and as we are lyfted agayne oute of the water. Even so we ryse w<sup>t</sup> Christ from oure synnes...." Again, baptism "is begonne whē we are dipped in the water". Again, when emphasising the necessity of faith, "if thou be baptised a thousande tymes with water and have no fayth it avayleth the no more towardses God, then it doth a gose when she ducketh her selfe under y<sup>e</sup> water".<sup>2</sup>

When the change-over came from the Manuale ad usum Sarum to the first formulary of the Church Reformed, the

1. Quoted in Wall, supra, p.207.

2. A Myrroure or lokyng glass wherein you may beholde the Sacrament of baptisme described. Per me J. F. Anno M.D.xxxiii.



First Prayer Book of Edward VI, 1549, the normal mode was retained. In the Ritus Baptizandi of the Sarum Use the rubric ran:

"Deinde accipiat Sacerdos infantem per latera in manibus suis, et interrogato nomine ejus, baptizet eum sub trina immersione, tantum sanctam Trinitatem invocando, ita dicens: N. Et ego baptizo te in nomine Patris: et mergat eum semel versa facie ad meridem: et Spiritus Sancti. Amen: et iterum mergat semel versa facie versus aquam."

This was adopted in 1549 in the rubric:

"Then the Priest shall take the childe in his hands, and ask the name: and naming the child, shall dyppe it in the water thryse. First, dypping the right side: Secondly, the left side: the third time dypping the face toward the font".

The first authorisation of an alternative mode came with the Second Prayer Book of 1551, in which the priest was directed to dip the child "discreetly and warily",

"And if the child be weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it".

The addition to the rubric is not to be taken as beginning a new practice. It appears to have been recognised previously that in an emergency baptism might be administered by pouring. The concession in favour of the clinici can be traced at many stages in the history of the rite. All that is done by the inclusion of the concession in this rubric is that it is given authorisation in a formal manner.

What is to be especially marked is that there is a complete absence of the attitude of indifference to the mode such as had been advocated by Calvin. There was never any suggestion that the consideration of climate entered into the concession. It was granted wholly on the ground of indisposition or extreme weakness. The plea of Calvin that climatic conditions could be a justification for altering the normal mode was peculiar to his outlook and it is a well attested fact in the history of the sacrament that the mode of pouring was introduced first in areas where climatic reasons were not admissible.<sup>1</sup> Its introduction was due to the simple fact that the doctrine of the necessity of baptism to salvation and the demand that the mode be that of immersion could not be held together. One of them had to be surrendered and the Roman Church gave way on the latter point. Thus, it might be argued, Calvin, and all the Reformed Churches who accepted something other than immersion, were debtors to the doctrine of the necessity of baptism to salvation !

Once permission was granted to baptise by another form than that of dipping the child in the font, and this was supplemented by the spread of Calvin's opinion, variations in usage became common in England. Those churchmen who had fled to the Continent of the accession of the Roman Mary to the English throne returned upon her death and created chaotic conditions in the Anglican Church. Strype records the information laid before

1. "One would have thought that the cold countries should have been the first that should have changed the custom from dipping to affusion....But by history it appears that the cold climates held the custom as long as any: for England, which is one of the coldest, was one of the latest that admitted this alteration of the ordinary way". Wall, History of Infant Baptism, IX.

Canterbury in 1564 about the liberties taken by some of the clergy under such influences.

"How that some conferred Baptism in basins, some in dishes ( rejecting the use of the font ) as he himself had seen. Some held there must be seven godfathers. Some would either that every father should christen his own child, or at least admit him to be chief. Some took down the font, and painted a great bowl, and caused to be written on the outside BAP/TIS/ME as was notably known".<sup>1</sup>.

In the same year Cecil laid the situation before Elizabeth detailing the wonderful mixture of usages in vogue.<sup>2</sup> As a result an advertisement was put out in 1564, "that the font be not removed, nor the curate do baptize in any basons". This had to be repeated later.

While all this variety was vexing the Anglican Church Scotland was being introduced to the Genevan forms without anything comparable to the transition difficulties that had appeared in England. Before detailing the elements in the Scottish revision some notice may be given to the position in the Roman Church.

1. Strype, Parker, 1, p.306. The subject of the changes in the manner of baptising in England is dealt with in many treatises on baptism and antiquities. Among the older writers, apart from official documents, W. Walker, Doctrine of Baptisms, 1677, and Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Vol. 2, first edition 1704, Robinson, The History of Baptism, 1790, Fallow, The Order of Baptism according to the Church of England, 1838, will be found interesting.
2. Feby., 1564, Neal's Puritans, 1, p.125.

## Pre-Reformation Practice.

No complete manual of the rite from a Scottish source is extant; but it is beyond doubt that the Manuale ad usum Sarum was the service book for baptism. This had been drawn up by Osmund, bishop of Salisbury, about 1085 and was widely followed. Nor is there any doubt that the mode, as detailed in this Use, was that of immersion. The Canons of the Church support this. The Synodical Statutes of the Diocese of Aberdeen in the XIII th. century legislated that when a child who had been baptised by a layman in emergency was presented to the priest for certification that the baptism had been properly performed the priest was to allow "all things be done to the child beside the font that are wont to be done except the immersion and blessing of the water".<sup>1.</sup> In another Canon the same situation was directed to be dealt with as follows, "By no means let the priest supplement the last rites which in baptism precede the immersion, but only those which follow".<sup>2.</sup> The custom which was known as lifting or heaving the child from the font by the godparents also indicates the standard usage. "For raising the child from the font", ran the direction, " let three persons at the most be admitted in baptisms" ( Ad levandum vero puerum de fonte tres and plus admittantur persone in baptismo.).<sup>3.</sup>

1. Statutes, Canon 56, p.30. On this Dowden comments, "There can be no doubt that immersion was the ordinary mode of baptizing in medieval times. Later on in this same Scottish Canon immersion is expressly referred to as if it were the rule. Even in baptism by a layman in a private house in case of necessity it would seem that immersion was, as a rule, observed". Dowden MSS. National Library, uncatalogued. 2. Ibid., Canon 118, p. 62.  
3. Statuta, 2, p.31.

The only known variation from immersion in these times, apart from the possibility of an emergency baptism being performed by pouring, is preserved in a tradition of the Borders, and also known in Ireland, of leaving the right hand of a male child unbaptised, the explanation of this being given in Layden's "Ode to Flodden".

"And at the sacred font the priest  
Through ages left the master hand unblest,  
To urge with keener aim the blood-encrusted spear".

Sir Walter Scott also notes the custom in "Minstralsy of the Border".

The first indication of a permission to alter the mode is in Hamilton's Catechism of 1552. There the description of the baptismal service includes a comment that in some countries the child is dipped three times and in others they lave or pour the water on the child thrice. Baptism, it is said, is accepted as valid if administered either way.

A possible reference of earlier date occurs in Sir David Lyndesay's "Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis" in which the condition of the Church is held up to ridicule. Two characters, Falset and Dissait act a mock baptism with Flatterie taking the part of the candidate.

Flatterie. Brother Dissait, cum baptize me.  
Dissait. Then sit doun lawlie on thy kne.

Flatterie. . . . .  
The Devill resave the, hirdoun loun !  
Thow hes wet all my new schavin croun.<sup>1</sup>.

1. Line 791f.

Nothing can be argued from this reference, however, about normal baptisms; but it does confirm the possibility of aspersion, or some such form, for extraordinary occasions.<sup>1</sup>

The first reference in Church sources to aspersion is in Canon 293 of 1559, among the last Statutes of the Roman Church. Parish priests are there directed to baptise by aspersion, using the conditional formula, all those children who had been baptised by Reformed preachers.

"This synod has decreed that such infants shall be christened according to the form instituted by Christ and received by the Church, by priests who, in using this form received by the Church, shall pronounce the words, "If thou art baptized, I do not baptize thee; but if thou art not baptized, I baptize thee.....etc.", adding also the sprinkling with water, the anointing with oil, and other rites wont to be observed in baptism".<sup>2</sup>

The conditions again are abnormal in this that the children in question were, at the time of the decision, too large to be baptised in any font by immersion. The proper conclusion to be drawn from the action of the synod is not that by this time baptism was usually performed by aspersion; but that when it was impossible to use a font the normal mode of immersion was waived.

It is therefore possible to argue that the normal mode of baptism in Scotland until the introduction of

(2. Statutes, p.186.

1. Winzet states the ordinary mode in Scotland, "...to be thryiss dippit in the wattir - quhy accuis ze ws of idolatrie superstitioun, or papistrie, as ze call it, for the vseing thair of..." Certain Tractates, 1562, S.T.S. To the Calviniane Precheouris, 16, p.83.

Reformed opinions was that of dipping a child thrice in the font, though a modification of the customary procedure was accepted as valid; and modification was normal in the case of a candidate who was too large for the font, and possible in an emergency baptism. It is only by asserting the normality of dipping in the pre-Reformation Church that a reasonable explanation can be offered for the continued use of the chrisom cloth or cude, in which the naked child was wrapped after immersion in the font, and to which Knox did not object, in 1547, if it was necessary to protect the baptised infant from the cold.<sup>1</sup>.

#### The Mode of the Reformers.

There is no clue other than that contained in the Prayer Books of Edward VI to the method of baptism used by any of the Reformed preachers who may have administered the rite in Scotland prior to 1560.

Clarity comes with the introduction of the Genevan Book in 1559, in which the instruction to the minister was:

"And as he speaketh these words, he taketh water in his hand, and layeth it upon the Child's forehead".

There is no assurance, however, that this was precisely what was done by every minister. The mode was a matter of indifference provided that water without any admixture was used.

1. Laing, K.W., 1, p.197, "cuide, (except it be to keap the barne from caid)".

The importance of this new attitude to the manner of baptising in Scotland is considerable. This was the first time that a service book was put out by the Church which made no reference to immersion, and there is good ground for believing that baptisms after the mode it prescribed represented a clean break with what had been in operation as the normal method prior to its use.

There is not the slightest indication in any of the Reformed Church documents of the period in Scotland that anyone was concerned to practice what was held to be the Scriptural and apostolic mode. It might have been expected that with all the protestations on the part of the Reformers that they were returning to Biblical ideals that immersion would have been set down as the norm and pouring or sprinkling as a valid alternative. The fact ~~the~~ all mention of immersion was completely omitted is a singular testimony to the influence which the opinions of Calvin had on the minds of those who shaped this part of Scottish Reformed policy.

The point did not escape Ninian Winzet who was presented with another missile in this inconsistency. He asked,

"Gif ze will admitt in zour Kirk na ceremonie, except expresslie commandit in Scriptuir.....And quhy baptize ze in the Kirk, and in ony prophane basin, and nocht in the plane fieldis and in the river or fluid (flood), as did St. Iohne the Baptist, and Philip, and the rest of



the apostolis ?"<sup>1</sup>.

There is nothing to show that the custom of triple pouring was ever considered as a possible usage. It was not unknown in Genevan usage elsewhere. Bullinger in his Fifth Decade, circulated in Scotland about 1550 by John ab Ulmis,<sup>2</sup> regarded the single or triple use of water in baptism as of no great consequence, but recognised both. "We by thrice dipping", he wrote, "do signify the mystery of Christ's lying in the grave three days".<sup>3</sup> He refers to the other explanation of the triple use when quoting the Council of Toledo's permission in the mediæval period to dip either once or thrice as it was intended to symbolise the unity of God, or the Trinity of the Godhead. Nothing has been found to show that this ever became an issue, or was even discussed, in Scotland.

When the direction which was printed in the Book of Common Order is examined a difficulty is at once apparent on the question whether the instruction included the mode of sprinkling the baptismal water, or only recommended a form of pouring. The question is not unimportant in relation of the symbolism of the action.

The elucidation of the position is by no means easy for although pouring and sprinkling are two distinct

1. Winzet, Certain Tractates, 1562, S.T.S., To the Calviniane Precheouris or The Buke of Four Scoir Thre Questions, Question 18, p.81f.

2. Lorimer, Knox, p.44f. 3. Parker Society Edn, 1852, p.364.

actions and can be taken to represent different things the words are used interchangeably by many writers as if there was no difference between them. Hence it is difficult often to know whether pouring as a mode is meant when that word is used or , on the other hand, it is taken to be the equivalent of sprinkling.

If the word pouring is to be taken literally in the following passage then it would confirm that Calvin himself used that mode as contrasted with sprinkling. Preaching in the year 1556, the date of the publication of *The Forme of Prayers at Geneva*, he said:

"At this day in Baptisme, when the water is poured upon the head of a little child.....Therefore let us mark well when the Minister layeth the water on the child's head, therein he representeth the person of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

The conjunction of the words "poured" and "layeth" in the same place and year as the Book of Common Order or Form of Prayers was published would appear to indicate that the use of the word "layeth" in the "Ordoure of Baptisme" should be taken to mean the action of pouring. There is good reason to believe that this was the intention of Calvin when he set down the direction. Certain factors were present, however, which assisted the reduction of the mode still further until it became not a pouring but a sprinkling.

1. Sermons of M. John Calvin upon Deuteronomy, Sermon No. 170, April, 1556, p.1055.

The first of these was, as has been already stated the acceptance of the mode as indifferent. The second was the use of basins as containers for the baptismal water, a factor which will be discussed later. The third was the influence of the Biblical use of the sprinkling of blood in Jewish ceremony.<sup>1</sup>.

The last appears in "The Catechisme or Maner to teach children the Christian religion.....John Calvin" which was bound with the Form of Prayers in 1556, and reprinted and used in Scotland. In this Calvin says that death, burial and rising again in baptism "is therwithall figured, in that, that the pouring of the water is but a thing of a very shorte continuance and not ordeined that we shoulde be drowned herby"(therby ? ).

In the next answer he maintains that the soul is cleansed by blood and not by water, "which things then taketh effecte in us, what tyme our consciences be sprinkled therwith by Goddes holy spirite: but the sacramente doth testifye and declare it unto us".<sup>2</sup>.

The conjunction of this idea of sprinkling with blood is often found. "Is not the element of water, which Christ instituted, sufficient to represent his precious blood for our regeneration, without these mixtures ?" asked a preacher before the Assembly at Glasgow in 1610 when denouncing Roman ceremonies in baptism.<sup>3</sup>.

1. Heb.10.22; 12.24; 1 Pet.1.2.

2. 1556 edition, p.132. Also Institutes, IV, XV.

3. Sermon preached in the Citie of Glasgo in Scotland on the Tenth day of June 1610. At the holden of a generall Assembly there. by Christopher Hampton D.D., London 1611.

The position of the administrator in relation to the position of the child would be an added difficulty in observing the direction to lay water on the forehead of the child. In Anglican usage the minister took the child in his arms, and by holding the infant over the font was able to lave the head. The Scottish usage was for the father to hold the infant in his arms at a place convenient to the minister in the pulpit. The testimony for this practice in the earliest stages of the Reformation is that of Ninian Winzet who queried,

"Quhy will ze the nocht baptize the barne except the father thair of hald it in his armis afoir zour pulpēt ?"<sup>1</sup>.

In this position it would be impossible for the minister to lay water of the head of the infant, and it would be difficult in many cases to actually pour water on the infant without great inconvenience.

Again, if the action was to be done by the hand of the minister, a shallow baptismal basin or dish would encourage simply the dipping of the fingers into the vessel and dropping the water adhering to the fingers on to the head of the child.

For these reasons, it may be conjectured, sprinkling of water on an infant became the method of baptising in Scotland. The river or pool of apostolic times became a small basin, and for dipping the body of the candidate in water there was substituted the dipping of the fingers of the minister. The transformation is astonishing in

1. Certain Tractates, supra., p.83.

the light of what was meant to be a serious principle; that, " to them ( the sacraments ) nothing is added, from them nothing diminished, and in their practise nothing changed besides the institution of the Lord Jesus, and the practise of his holy Apostles ".<sup>1.</sup>

The Book of Common Order made no provision for the baptism of a person of mature years. The occasions when it might be required were few, and when they appeared the application of the baptismal water would be by affusion or aspersion on the head of a kneeling candidate, but not on the forehead as in the case of an infant. The custom in such administrations in England appears to have been that the candidate received baptism in a standing position. This was used by Thomas Becon as a reason why kneeling should not be insisted on at the Lord's Supper, the principle of standing having been conceded for baptism. "But why bind ye the people rather to kneel at the ministration of the Lord's Supper rather than at the ministration of baptism ? " he asked, "seeing Christ is no less present in the one as in the other, and, by his Holy Spirit, worketh no less effectually in baptism than he doth in the Supper".<sup>2.</sup>

The change in England is interesting, if it was uniform, for it appears to have been common for a few centuries before the Reformation for the Roman Church

1. I Book of Discipline, Chap.2, par.2.

2. Lorimer, John Knox and the Church of England, Knox Papers II, p.278.

to baptise adults in the kneeling posture. The example from Lyndesay's "Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis", quoted earlier, is relevant here again. Other examples come mainly from manuscripts of Continental origin. These, with few exceptions, depict the candidate in a large font, nude, and apparently kneeling.<sup>1</sup> Not many have been observed. The usual illumination is a representation of the baptism of Jesus, and for his baptism, as an examination of the extensive collection of Latin manuscripts in John Rylands Library, Manchester, has confirmed, the figure of Jesus is shown as standing in a stream or river.<sup>2</sup> Another example of this is in a manuscript entitled "Ludolphi De Saxoni, Vita Christi, Gallice", first volume, in the Hunterian Library, Glasgow University, and in this instance it is the Baptist who is kneeling on a high river bank.<sup>3</sup> A useful comparison of this normal difference in posture between the baptism of converts and the baptism of Jesus is supplied in the same manuscript, for in another illumination John the Baptist is represented as baptising f<sup>u</sup>r kneeling figures.<sup>4</sup>

1. J.R. Library, Latin MSS. Cat., Vol. 2, Plate No.41, Baptism of Drusiana, adult in font, 14th. cent., French.  
2. Ibid., No. 14, a quarto volume of initials cut out of MSS, mainly 15th. cent. work, Italian; No.117, Psalter and Horae, late 13th. cent; No.164, Horae, Paris, 15th. cent. A magnificent ivory on the Covers for a Gospel Book, 10th. cent, is of the same type.

3. f.105, r<sup>o</sup>, col.a.

4. f.85, r<sup>o</sup>, col.a. An interesting Saxon representation in stone is on the font at Bridekirk, Cumberland. In this Jesus is sometimes thought to be in a font (as in Cote, Archaeology of Baptism, p.245), but examination of the font makes it clear that the lateral lines covering the lower part of the body of Jesus are meant to represent water and not a baptismal vessel.

Probably one of the earliest prints of a baptism is in the incunabula room of the John Rylands Library. It is in a volume of Pius II, Meditations on the Gospels, 1472, Rome, of which this is the only known copy. The baptism of Jesus is represented with the figures standing. 1. Another cut was included in "A Short Instruction of the Christian Religion, being, A Catechism, Set forth by Archbishop Cranmer, M.D.XLVIII.", reprinted Oxford, 1829. Again it represents the baptism of Jesus with the central figure disrobed standing in a river; with John the Baptist robed on the bank, kneeling. 2.

Among the paintings, there is a panel in the National Gallery, Edinburgh, depicting the baptism and martyrdom of two saints, by Bernardo Daddi ( ? ), circa 1355. The two saints, male and female, are shown as kneeling, the administrator standing. Cote in his "The Archaeology of Baptism, London, 1876, includes many illustrations of baptism from frescos of varying dates with the candidate standing, or kneeling if a font is being used, but in one instance, a painting of the fifteenth century, Peter is represented as administering baptism to a disrobed kneeling convert. 3.

So far as the evidence available has been examined the indications are that in late medieval Roman usage adult candidates were baptised in the kneeling posture. In no instance has the candidate been robed.

1. No pagination, verso ll.      2. p,181.      3. p.180.

The Roman usage may have been the prototype of the custom of kneeling in Scotland. If it was the usage was continued because it was the most convenient way of pouring or sprinkling the baptismal water on the head. A mock baptism at Elgin in 1626 provides a clue. On 21st. July of that year a group of men were accused of sacrilege for the offence. The entry in the session records is as follows:

"Lykwyse the said Thomas confessit that he sat on a little crose about 3 or 4 in the morning and fillit a quart stoup full of aill, they all sittand on the knies and cast aill ouer their headis in the manner of baptizeing them and gave a libertie to Androw Small to be receavit in all menis company, and said, I release the, Androw Small, fra the bishopis horne, and all uther menis horne to be the kingis man".<sup>1</sup>.

This posture was further mentioned by Gillespie in his "English Popish Ceremonies" from the Presbyterian side, and by J. Forbes in his "Irenicum" from the Episcopalian. The latter when discussing the issues raised by the Perth Articles argues that kneeling does not necessarily imply adoration of an object or person. In a case of discipline an offender might kneel before the minister and session. "One who comes to be baptised or presents a candidate for Baptism humbles himself and prays God to make that Baptism fruitful of salvation unto eternal life;

1. Elgin Kirk Session Records, 1584-1779, ed. by Crammond, under date.

1. Elgin Kirk Session Records, 1584-1779, ed. by Crammond, under date.



and yet he does not adore either the water or the font, before which he bows."<sup>1</sup>.

It is not possible to assess that matter with any more definiteness than these few clues suggest. It was never the subject of a formal decision on the part of a Reformed Church court in Scotland until the modern period when an adult baptismal service was recognised in Scottish Presbyterian service manuals. In the editions of the Book of Common Order of 1928 and 1940, authorised for use by the General Assembly, the direction as to posture for a candidate coming forward on profession of faith enjoins the kneeling attitude.

The Westminster Assembly and after.

Only two documents with any official character mention dipping as a possible mode prior to the publications of the Westminster standards. The first was the Confession of Faith put out by the Episcopal Assembly at Aberdeen in 1616. The relevant paragraph ran thus :

"We believe, that Baptism is to be ministred simply in the element of water, with the rite of dipping, washing, or sprinkling, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to Christ's institution, without other elements or sacramental rites devised by man".<sup>2</sup>.

This Confession seems to have been still-born, though

1. J. Forbes, *Irenicum*, Ed. by Selwyn, A b 78  
2. B.U.K., 3, p.1137.

it was fully authorised by this Assembly.

A draft of a proposed Scottish service book had been in circulation during the period that followed this Assembly where it had been decided that such a book should be compiled. This draft borrowed much from the Book of Common Prayer, but in the rubric for baptism it retained the direction of the Book of Common Order in so far as it mentioned only pouring as a mode. <sup>1.</sup>

The movement toward a Prayer Book was completed by "The Book of Common Prayer....for the use of the Church of Scotland," commonly known as Laud's Liturgy. This simply reproduced the rubric of the Anglican book to the effect that infants should be dipped in the font unless they were said to be weak when it was sufficient to pour water upon them.

Alexander Henderson mentioned only sprinkling in his Government and Order of 1641. <sup>2.</sup>

There was considerable debate in the Westminster Assembly before a formula was agreed on by all parties. According to Lightfoot who chronicles the debates the question at issue was whether the minister was to dip or sprinkle, and some, probably Henderson was among them, had spoken to the formula "It is lawful and sufficient to besprinkle the child". Lightfoot strongly protested against voting on this as it stood, and in particular objected to the

1. Scottish Liturgies of James VI, Ed. by Sprott, p.77.

2. p.16.

word "lawful" which, he argued, was superfluous. The debate then continued on the inclusion of dipping in the formula. Coleman propounded the case for the affirmative and Lightfoot that for the negative. Finally, after a long dispute, the matter was put to the vote in the form, "The minister shall take water and sprinkle or pour it with his hand upon the face or forehead of the child". "It was voted so indifferently", wrote Lightfoot, "that we were glad to count names twice: for so many were unwilling to have dipping excluded that the votes came to an equality within one, for the one side 24 - and the other 25 ", the odd vote being against any reference to dipping. The vote caused " a great heat" of dissatisfaction. No progress could be made and the issue was left over until the next day.

Again all the points under discussion were thrashed out with a great show of erudition. Marshall affirmed that he had no doubt but that all the members were of the opinion that dipping was lawful. To this Lightfoot protested and declared his opinion that it was unlawful. In order to make headway it was agreed to vote on the inclusion of pouring or sprinkling first. This was done and confirmed without any difficulty.

"But as for the dispute itself about dipping it was thought fit to let it alone and to express it thus in the Directory, "He is to baptize the child with water, which for the manner of doing it not only lawful, but also

sufficient, and most expedient to be by pouring or sprinkling water on the face of the child without any other ceremony'. But this cost a great deal of time about the wording".<sup>1</sup>.

This decision meant more in England than it did in Scotland. The Prayer Book had included dipping and excluded sprinkling: but now, by decree of Parliament, ministers were permitted to use sprinkling and discourage dipping. The disturbed state of England makes it difficult to say how far the relaxation was taken advantage of; but if the testimony of Baxter is representative of a considerable section of the non-Anglican ministers there is an indication that pouring, as opposed to sprinkling, was common. "For my part, " wrote Baxter, "I may say with Mr. Blake, that I never saw a child sprinkled: but all that I have seen baptised had water poured on them and so were washed".<sup>2</sup>.

Caution has to be used in those passages from contemporary works which speak of either pouring or sprinkling without contrasting the two for it is evident that many used them as general expressions. Hamon L'Estrange in "Alliance of Divine Offices", 1659, defends the usages of the Prayer Book against the proposals of the Directory, and in his annotations on the baptismal office he nowhere mentions pouring, but only immersion and sprinkling. The term "sprinkling" for L'Estrange, appears to be accepted as the equivalent to "pouring" which is the Prayer Book term. That this ardent apologist should use this terminology looks, at a first glance, like a mistake such as it is impossible to conceive that L'Estrange could make. The

1. Lightfoot, Journal of the Assembly of Divines,  
2. Baxter, Infant Church Membership, 1656, p.134.

only explanation is that these two modes were not distinguished so sharply as their symbolism would require.<sup>1.</sup>

Another example of a loose use of the term "sprinkle" may be taken from Burnet's History of the Reformation. When describing the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI he says:

"If the child were weak, it was sufficient to sprinkle Water on his Face".<sup>2.</sup>

Thus the terms "sprinkle" and "pour" may simply connote "non-dip" unless there is good reason from the context to believe otherwise.

The acceptance of the Directory by the General Assembly in 1645 was not likely to alter Scottish usage. No baptismal register so far as is known makes any reference to a change in procedure such as is recorded in a few of the English registers.

Whitworth, Durham.

"1645. July 27. James, son of Ambrose Bell, was the last Baptism with the Book of Common Prayer in this Parish".  
Fitz, Salop.

"1647. Nov.16. John s. of Joseph Lloyd and Elnor bap. The infant was the first baptzd after the new forme of the Directorie and not by the Common Prayer Book".<sup>3.</sup>

The documents of the period in Scotland, and the type

1. L'Estrange, Alliance of Divine Offices, 1659, p.245.
2. Burnet, History of the Reformation, 1681, 2, p.77.
3. Waterville-Muncey, The Romance of Parish Registers, p.127.

of utensil employed, all point to the continuance of sprinkling at baptisms. It has been noted that Henderson uses only this term. Rutherford's catechism "The Soume of Christian Religion" answers a question, "Quhat seeth your eye in baptisme qk is the signe ? " by a brief description, "Water sprinkled upon ane infant "<sup>1</sup>. The "Catechism" of Thomas Wyllie speaks of "the external sign of water sprinkled".<sup>2</sup> It would be hazardous, of course, to say that pouring was never practised for ministers were quite at liberty to baptise in that manner if they desired; but a reader of the evidence available might very well press for a strict interpretation of the term "sprinkling".

The utter confusion into which baptismal usage was thrown by the politico-ecclesiastical affairs of the second Episcopacy added to the obscurity of the subject. In some parishes the baptismal basin was taken away and among the dispossessed ministers any suitable utensil appears to have been used. Where the mode of baptism is indicated the majority of instances are on favour of sprinkling. The schoolmaster at Lundy, and his wife, were severely censured in 1668 " for mocking of Baptizim in casting water upon the face of a dead child".<sup>3</sup> In 1676 a Quaker was fined for brewing on the Sabbath and defended himself by asserting, that "he might as weel brew on a Sunday as Mr. Hamilton might take money for going up to a desk and talking and throwing water upon a bairn's face."<sup>4</sup> In Morer's "A Short Account of

1. Catechisms of the Second Reformation, Ed. by Mitchell, p.221. 2. Ibid., p.260. 3. Hunter, The Presbytery and Diocese of Dunkeld, 1660-1689, 1, p.188 note. 4. Chambers, Domestic Annals, 1, p.334.

Scotland", describing what he purports to be the general custom at baptisms in the Episcopal period, says that "with water out of a basin conveniently fastened to the pulpit side, the minister sprinkles the child in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost...."<sup>1</sup>. Another observer, however, Thomas Kirke says, "They use no service book" and "Their christenings ( as all other things ) are without form, only water is poured on the infant....."<sup>2</sup>.

After the Revolution the Confession of 1647 again became the standard by law established. The ruling it contained was the following:

"Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person".<sup>3</sup>.

On this basis any mode was permitted and nothing can be said with certainty other than this that dipping was unknown among Presbyterians.

There were many frank admissions, however, on the part of Presbyterian writers that apostolic baptism was by immersion. Robert Wodrow preached a sermon before Communion in the Barony Church of Glasgow on October 24, 1712, on Luke 12.50, "I have a baptism to be baptized with", in which he said:

"In the time when the Scriptures were written it (baptism)

1. Morer, A Short Account of Scotland, 1715, p.62.
2. Hume Brown, Early Travellers in Scotland, p.258.
3. Chap. XXVIII, par.3.

has a sense very applicable unto sufferings, and it properly signifys to dip, to drench, to drown into deep waters, and in the dispensation of the sacrament of baptism it is certain yt the primitive christians they were dipped and immerged in the waters and covered with them". Again, " In the primitive baptisms they were dipt and drenched and covered wt water ".<sup>1</sup> The preacher was unable to explain the passage he had chosen as his text by Presbyterian usage.

None was stouter in maintaining the lawfulness of sprinkling than Thomas Boston, who flourished in the same period, but he readily grants that immersion was the ancient usage. "The unlawfulness of dipping is not to be pretended, " he wrote about 1715, " since it is not improbable that it was used by John, Matt. L.III,6, and Philip Acts VIII,38, but seems to have been used by the ancient church, and in some places is used to this day".<sup>2</sup>

An Edinburgh minister had his sermons published posthumously, and in the third printed sermon, on Romans 6.4, dipping is affirmed as the only mode which explains the text. "Now the Rite of Baptism", he said, "is altered as to us from dipping to sprinkling ( tho', by the by, I know not by what good warrant ) yet the Import and Obligation of the Rite and Ordinance still remains the same".<sup>3</sup>

1. MS. Sermons by Robert Wodrow, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
2. Boston, Body of Divinity, (written 1709-1720), Glasgow, 1796-1797, 3, p.365.
3. Craig's Sermons, Edinburgh, 1732, I, Sermon III, p.83.



## Some Episcopal opinions.

The admission on the part of Presbyterian writers that dipping was the apostolic method of baptism did not produce any body of opinion in favour of a change which would bring usage nearer to the original type. Among the Episcopalians, on the other hand, there was such a movement in the early eighteenth century. A group arose who stood for the introduction of certain "usages" such as the mixed chalice, unction for the sick, prayers for the dead and other things of a similar kind. Among the "less important" of these "usages" was the plea for a return to immersion in baptism as the principal mode specified in the Prayer Book. The controversy covered a number of years and was the cause of some feeling. It split Episcopal adherents into two groups with the bishops of one refusing to recognise the bishops of another. A Concordat was achieved in 1732 by which it was agreed that either the Scottish, or 1637, Liturgy or the Anglican Liturgy might be followed at Communion; but refusing recognition to immersion as a normal mode of baptism, chrism in confirmation, or unction for the sick.

There were practical difficulties about the adoption of immersion, whatever its theoretical advantages, for the places of worship were not equipped for such a procedure. Improvisation might have served the purpose until suitable furnishings were available; but it was agreed that the matter should not be pressed.

Some details of the controversy may now be offered. The desire of an adult convert was the occasion of some correspondence between three bishops in 1713.<sup>1</sup> On August 14 of that year Bp. Gadderer forwarded his opinion to Bp. Falconer, who had consulted him about this anonymous, but apparently important, convert, and stated that "he is of the candidates opinion as to Imersion of adult persons; he thinks the Imersion of the head thrice, being the principle part of the body sufficient seeing the Church dispenses with Imersion altogether in some cases. But if the gentleman chuses rather Imersion of ye whole body, in that case Femoralia Lintea will be necessary, and a meet vessel in a convenient apartment fit for the celebration: other circumstances to be left to the prudence of the administrator". It was further stated that there were " no Baptisteria fit for the Imersion of adult persons".

On August 17 a reply was received from a Mr. Spinckes on the same subject.

"Our Church, it is plain, recommends Immersion in Baptism, where it may be w<sup>t</sup> safety; and I could wish it oftener practised than it is, in conformity with primitive Usage, and the tenor and design of St. Paul's 6th. chap. to the Romans".

Bp. Falconer wrote to Bp. Campbell on Nov. 2, 1713,

1. The excerpts are taken from MS. Bright's Notanda culled from the Episcopal Chest, Trinity College, Glenalmond, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

"If affusion be thought sufficient, or the thought of the old man about the head, I think the whole may be done as follows, viz., The party concerned ( supposing he is satisfied in conscience that witnesses are not of absolute necessity) may come to the place where the administrator ordinarily resides before Christmas without any with him save a servant.....It is thought that the utmost secrecy should be used".

It was obviously a perplexing matter for the advocates of immersion when someone requested that the Prayer Book be observed.

In the later part of the same century Episcopal writers continued to speak disparagingly of Presbyterian "sprinklings" as if the mode they operated was different, and there are indications that some normally poured water on the children, or others, presented. The fact that it was customary to baptise privately places obstacles in the way of ascertaining what method was generally followed.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and markedly in the twentieth there was a reemphasis on the propriety of pouring. Indeed in 1850 the bishop of St. Andrews encouraged a return to the immersion of children in his diocese, and it was reported that this was the mode used about that time in the Episcopal church at Kirkcaldy.<sup>1</sup>

In 1885, Bp. Chinnery-Haldane, Argyle and the Isles, in a charge to his clergy deprecated a minimising of the

1. The Evangelist Magazine, 1850, p.190.

quantity of water used at baptismal services. "I must confess", he said, " that on several occasions, both in our own Communion and also in that of the Church of Rome, I have seen the baptismal water so carelessly or sparingly applied, as to suggest to my mind that it would hardly be regarded as an outward, or at any rate a visible sign". He pointed out that the rubric of the Prayer Book was that where immersion was impracticable the ministrant was to pour water on the child or person. "Use plentifully and visibly, "He urged, " that outward sign, water".<sup>1</sup>.

The Scottish Book of Common Prayer, authorised for use in 1929, retains the alternatives of the Anglican Prayer Book, but omits the qualifying clause that pouring is permitted only when the child is certified to be weak. The fonts now common in Episcopal buildings in Scotland would permit of either dipping or pouring. The retention of the mode of dipping in the office of baptism for "such as are of riper years" is curious, because no facilities are provided in any Episcopal building in Scotland for the immersion of an adult, nor is there any call for their introduction. To instruct the priest to place the candidate " conveniently by the Font, according to his discretion...and then shall dip him in the water or pour water upon him" is to suggest a procedure in the rubric which cannot be followed.

1. A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Argyle and the Isles, Edinburgh, 1885, p.20.

## Usage in Baptist churches.

A uniform administration of baptism by immersion reappeared with the rise of the Baptist congregations from the middle of the eighteenth century. Sir William Sinclair was baptising by immersion on profession of faith at Denbeath Castle, Caithness, from about 1742,<sup>1</sup> and another Baptist congregation was formed in Edinburgh in 1765.<sup>2</sup> Scotsmen like David Fernie of Fife were taking a very active part of Baptist affairs in England before congregations of that persuasion were operating in Scotland.<sup>3</sup> The apologists of the movement adopted the argument that the prevailing custom was not discoverable in the New Testament whereas the mode of immersion, it was claimed, could be found there, a thesis which was generally granted by those who averred that, notwithstanding, there was justification for other modes.

The Baptists pressed their claims orally and in print and stimulated, in the course of time, a number of replies.<sup>4</sup> Theological pamphlets and books on the subject from England were circulating freely in Scotland in addition to those of native origin and a considerable quantity of literature became available for anyone who was interested in the subject. Great erudition was displayed in many instances particularly in matters of etymology; history was ransacked for precedents; the Anglican doctrinal disputes on the meaning of baptism added to the interest taken in the sacrament.

1. History of the Baptists in Scotland, 1927, p.39f.  
2. Ibid., p.44f. 3. Douglas, History of the Northern Baptist Churches, 1846, p.169f. 4. Vide Bibliography appended to this thesis.

It only remains to remark that the three modes of baptising all continue to claim their adherents, immersion among the Baptists and their allied groups, pouring among the Episcopalians for the most part, and sprinkling in the Church of Scotland and her allied Churches, as also among the Methodists and Congregationalists. There are indications that in the Church of Scotland there are some who would favour pouring as a mode in the place of sprinkling, the re-introduction of stone fonts being significant in this direction. The New Directory of the now reunited Free Church, 1898; the Book of Common Order, 1928 and 1940, and some other modern manuals mention only sprinkling, however, and there appears to be no considerable body of opinion opposed to this.

No special legislation was ever passed by the Presbyterian Communion to guide the representatives of the Churches in the missionary areas who had to deal with converts who had professed faith long before a service was prepared for admission of persons in that category to the Churches in Scotland. The overseas representatives apparently worked out their own system, and in some areas baptism by immersion was adopted. It is interesting to note that as a result of this experience of immersion abroad it has been suggested that more serious thought should be given to this mode of baptism in Scotland by the Presbyterian Churches. "Baptism we present", said a representative from the overseas fields at a recent Church Congress, "not as a mere ceremony of initiation

but as a symbol of cleansing from sin. Not in Baptist Churches alone is 'immersion' a common practice, and we feel that it might be more generally adopted for the sake of its clearer symbolism".<sup>1</sup> It may be opined that if symbolism is to be regarded as of importance the suggestion that the thought of cleansing from sin should be more emphatically stated in the form of administration of the sacrament is worthy of attention.

1. J. H. Maclean, *The Congress Message*, p.308.





## Baptismal Vessels and Furnishings .

The transfer of Church property at the Reformation was undertaken in a mood of iconoclasm which stripped many buildings of everything that suggested idolatry. In many localities a sense of discrimination was lacking and deplorable excesses of pillage cost non-idolatrous ecclesiastical art many a precious treasure. Undoubtedly much was removed by the vacating custodians ; much was sold or stolen; and what remained was often destroyed or cast out to the mercy of the open sky. The attack on Romanism was intentionally thorough. The mood of many was aptly summarised in the introductory letter, "To Our Brethren in England, and elsewhere..." which originally prefaced the Book of Geneva.

"It was not without great cause commanded by almyghtye god that the places, and other appertinances, which had served to Idolatrie shuld be utterly consumed, lest babes and children, through occasion remembering the same, shuld falle into like inconvenience".<sup>1</sup>.

This was not reproduced in the editions printed in Scotland for the very good reason that it had been accepted too enthusiastically in some quarters and the Reforming party had to counsel moderation if church fabrics were to be left in a usable condition. The full force of such a recommendation as this letter demanded was inimical to the interests of the Reformers for the principle enunciated implied the removal of buildings as well as furnishings. On the other hand, it may be

1. The Forme of Prayers...M.D.LVI, p.13.

taken as proved that 1. the parish churches in many instances were in a lamentable state of repair prior to their transfer, 2. that tremendous destruction had been done by English invaders, and that 3. a considerable amount of the rioting had neither the sanction nor the approval of responsible leaders of reform. These conclusions have been well established by the investigations of Dr. D. Hay Fleming and are fully documented in his "The Reformation in Scotland." <sup>1</sup>.

What falls to be more particularly observed here is that the Reformed Church did not succeed in inculcating a very high regard for ecclesiastical property in the years that followed. Reasons may be offered to explain this, but the fact remains that the story of fabrics and furnishings is a miserable sequence of inadequate financial resources and a lamentable lack of high ideals for the worship of God. The non-cooperation of the nobles, the rapacity of heritors, the mutations of church government, the semi-civilised state of many areas, and the paucity of ministers are all influential factors in assessing the position; but at the heart of the disgraceful condition of the churches was the inability to rise above a policy of negation to a pride in church decoration.

The condition of the places of worship continued to be shocking in the extreme for about three centuries.

1. Vide chapters X and XI.

Shortly after the Reformation the following description was penned :

"The parish kirks, I ween, they sae misguide,  
That nane for wind or water therein may bide:  
Therefore nae pleasure tak they of the temple,  
Nor yet to come where nocht is to contemple.  
But craws and dows cryand and makand beir,  
That nane throuchly the minister may heir;  
But feathers, filth, and dung does lie  
Where folks should sit to hear the word of God abroad" <sup>1</sup>

About a century later, about 1689, Morer's "Short Account" contains this description:

"In the Country they are poor and mean: covered no better than their ordinary Cottages, and some of them so low, that they may be compared to the subterraneous Houses of Hungary..... more like Caves than Churches. But in the Boroughs and Cities they are Brick'd and Tiled".<sup>2</sup>.

Another century later still reports are in much the same tenor. Bishop Forbes, who delighted in disparaging anything Presbyterian, in his journal of itinerations in the north, did not spare his criticism of the parish churches. There is an abundance of material in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland, 1792, compiled from the parochial surveys of the ministers themselves, to illustrate the appalling conditions in which many of the country churches were allowed to lie. From Glenorchy

1. The Lamentation of Lady Scotland, addressed to Erskine of Dun, 1572.

2. p.53.

the minister of the parish wrote with candour, "With us, in the Church of Scotland, many of our country kirks are such dark, damp, dirty hovels as to chill and repulse every sentiment of devotion; they besides endanger the health of every class of worshipper."<sup>1</sup>. At Logie Easter Church, in 1763, the place was falling down, the timbers of the roof were rotten, the heather thatch would not keep out the rain, the walls were out of plumb, and there was not a pane of glass in any of the windows.<sup>2</sup>.

This general scene, however distasteful, must always be kept in mind when dealing with any department of public worship, and it has an obvious bearing on a review of sacramental usage. In such environments the sacrament of baptism in particular cannot have been as reverent and dignified a service as the high purposes of the rite deserved.

#### The displacement of the fonts.

Every parish church in Roman times was equipped with a capacious font. About one hundred or so of these pre-Reformation baptismal vessels have been recovered. Their condition ranges from the splendour of the Inverkeithing font to simple and broken relics such as that at Whithorn Priory. It may be conjectured that the fonts which were elaborately tooled would be among the objects to be thoroughly demolished. One of the finest examples, that of Foulis Easter, was apparently in the process of being destroyed when, for some reason,

1. Stat. Account, 1792, viii, p. 392. 2. Macnaughton, Church Life in Ross and Sutherland, 1688-1914, p. 247.

the destroyer stayed his hand.

In England the same iconoclasm had operated, but to nothing like the same extent as in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> There a multitude of magnificent fonts are still to be seen, and they bear silent testimony to the administration of baptism according to Roman and early Anglican usage.

Protestant opinion in Scotland decided that any temptation to a reversion to Romanism was to be removed. The fonts constituted such a temptation. They provided a reminder of the forewarned regime, were associated with a repudiated doctrine, were adorned by idolatrous symbolism, and therefore must be displaced. Only the fact that they were made of stone and not easily to dispose of preserved some of them from complete annihilation.

The introduction of what were called "basins" came with other Genevan usages. The very term "font" was expunged from the vocabulary in use. A clear indication of the change over is provided in the First Book of Discipline, in the chapter entitled, "For Reparatioun of Churches". The reference also bears witness to the desolation of some of the churches. "Everie Church", it was laid down, "must have dures, cloise wyndoes of glass, thak or sclait able to withhold raine, a bell to convocat the people together, a pulpite, a basyn

1. J. C. Wall, Porches and Fonts, p.218f.

for baptisme, and tables for the ministratioun of the Lordis Suppar". Nothing is said about the provision of vessels for the Lord's Supper - a remarkable omission.

These demands put beyond dispute any suggestion that the stone fonts were to be adapted for Reformed Church purposes. No doubt it was common knowledge that most of them had been destroyed or buried, but it is now known than in some parishes they may have been preserved and, if not in their original position, yet recoverable.<sup>1</sup> Many of these fonts had no objectionable symbols on them at all and there is no reason, other than their associations, why they should not have been pressed into service. Calvin is said to have directed that the fonts should be returned to the churches in Geneva if they had been removed, and his theory of art was that it could be put to a good use, always provided that that use did not encourage superstition. "Forasmuch as carving and painting are the gifts of God, I require that they be both pure and lawfully used", he wrote. He would not have anything in the churches, however, which would detract attention from the preaching of the Word. He wrote on the matter as follows :

"When I consider for what use temples are ordained, methinks it is very ill beseeming the holiness thereof, to receive any other images, which the Lord by his word hath consecrate, I mean baptism and the Lord's Supper, and other ceremonies wherewith our eyes ought both more

1. The font in the ruined church of Southdean was found recently in situ; at Aberdour the font was found still in the church hidden under debris. McMillan, article in The Church Service Society's Annual, 1944-1945. p.2.

earnestly to be occupied and more lively to be moved, than that they should need any other images framed by the wit of man ".<sup>1</sup>.

There is not a word in any Scottish record proposing that any compromise should be made on the matter of fonts. The fact that some of them were without any decorative carving whatever does not seem to have had the slightest weight in deciding their fate.

Thus the Reformed ministry began under a handicap, and it is doubtful if the demands of the First Book of Discipline had any effect on the heritors. "We know the slouthfulness of men in this behalf", said the same section of the Book of Discipline. Hence the furnishings of the churches immediately after the Reformation remains a field of uncertainties. The repeated complaints from the ministers about the inability to obtain manses, and the necessity of non-residence in such cases where a minister was appointed to a parish, did not establish conditions in which the provision of accessories could be supervised and their safe custody assured. It may be presumed that any available dish would be utilised for baptisms. Ninian Winzet spoke of the preachers using "ony prophane basin"<sup>2</sup>. and nothing is known to the contrary. In the larger centres where ministers were resident and church life conformed to a regular pattern a utensil would be set aside or purchased

1. Ramsay, Calvin and Art, Considered in relation to Scotland, passim. 2. Certain Tractates, S.T.S., p.83.

for the purpose. As early as 1574 a notice occurs in the Aberdeen records stating that eighteen pence was expended on a "standart that holdis the bassing on the pulpett".<sup>1</sup> In 1589 the officer at St. Andrews was instructed "that the towall and the bassin be sett on the pulpet at the secund bell to sermon".<sup>2</sup> The oldest surviving baptismal bason, in St. John's, Perth, dates from about 1591. It is the only example from the sixteenth century. It should be noted, however, that unless there is a date engraved on the utensil specifying the time when it was acquired, or an equivalent entry in a document, it is only a conjecture to date an article of this sort by the maker's stamp. This sixteenth century dish associated with St. John's, Perth, may have been acquired by the session long after the period within which it was made. The Old Kirk, Edinburgh, for example, possesses a basin and laver which were purchased in 1728, and the laver has this date engraved on it, but the maker's mark declares that it was made in 1602-1603. The earliest baptismal vessels which can be dated with certainty by the inscriptions on them are the laver of the Tron Church, Edinburgh, 1633, and the basin of Trinity Church, Edinburgh, of the same year.

The baptismal vessels authorised to be purchased for Church use by the Parliament of 1617 have entirely disappeared. Not a single baptismal utensil remains

1. Cooper, *Cart. Ecc. Sancti Nicolai*, p. 384, 386.

2. Mitchell, *Reg. of St. Andrews Kirk Session, S.H.S.*, 2, p. 652. Thus Wilkie's painting, "The Preaching of John Knox" is historically correct in showing a basin set in a bracket at the side of the pulpit. The painting also shows a jug or laver hanging beside the basin.



from this period in which every parish in the land ought to have had a basin and a laver.<sup>1</sup> The Act specifies:

"That all the parochie Kirkis within this Kingdome be provydit off Basines and Lavoiris for the ministration of the Sacrament of Baptisme.....He ( the minister) and his heiris executoures salbe answerable to the parochin incaise the same be lost or utherwayis useit to any prophane use, and ordanis the expensis thairroff to be maid to the parochineris, and the Ministeris of everie Kirk, to do thair diligence for provyding the same by causing the parochineris stent and taxt thame selffis to the effect foirsaid betwixt and the first day off felmare nixt under the payne of lossing ane yeiris stipend".<sup>2</sup>

There are not many session records which date as far back as 1617, but in some of them, for example, Kirkcaldy, Tynninghame and Falkirk there are entries about the enactment.. At Lasswade the entry runs:

"1618, March 16, Stentmasters decret for payment of cups, basins, ewers, and cloths for administration the sacrament, conform to Act of Parliament".

Thereafter follows a list of the heritors and their payments in ratio to the yearly rent of their estates

1. MacLeod, Ministry and Sacraments in the Church of Scotland, p.242, quotes saying "There are twenty-eight parishes in which the original vessels are preserved" after mentioning the Act of 1617. This is an error, if baptismal  
2. Acts Parl. Scot. 1617, Act 6, Vol.4,p.534. (vessels are referred to.

The Tynninghame session records also detail the action taken "for providing of basingis and lavoiris for the ministratioun of the sacrament of baptisme....according to ye Act of Parliament last haldin be his Majestie".<sup>1</sup>

In the St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, records the entry reads:

Thursday, 1618, January 29. The Sessione being frequentlie convenit tocht it maist meit that ther be four coups of silver to serve at the tabills, tua bassings of tein with ane laver and board cloeths".<sup>2</sup>

It is not clear from this minute whether or not the two basins of tin ( or pewter ) and the laver were baptismal vessels or classed as Communion utensils. It is often a difficult matter to decide when nothing is mentioned other than the fact of their existence. The reference is given, however, as evidence that many of the utensils acquired by the churches were not of any intrinsic value, and this seems to have been especially true of baptismal vessels. Nothing was stated in the Act of Parliament about the quality of the utensils to be furnished, and heritors as a whole were not likely to burden themselves with unnecessary expence. The only example noticed of a silver basin being used at a baptism is in a description given by Calderwood of a ceremony at the Royal Chapel, Holyrood, where quality might be expected. The historian says of this administration that

1. Ritchie, The Churches of St. Baldred, p.168.

2. Quoted in Burns, Old Scot. Comm. Plate, p.210. This work contains a great many quotations and illustrations of baptismal utensils. Vide also the same author's Church Property, Lecture 3.

"The Bishope ( of Galloway ) came down, efter sermone, to a table standing on the floore covered with fyne linnen or cambridge, where there was also a basen of silver and laver, with some cupps".<sup>1</sup> This was August 19, 1617. Silver basins are frequently found, of course, at later dates, and there may have been others of the same date, but it is not at all probable that there were many.

It has been suggested that the total loss of all the baptismal vessels acquired by the Church under the 1617 Act was due to the "gradual introduction of silver vessels".<sup>2</sup> This puts the motive for their removal or disappearance too high. The explanation most consistent with the general outlook of the Church is that such furnishings were not adequately safeguarded and were either lost, stolen or strayed. The uniform testimony of the records until recent times is that replacement of a baptismal vessel was made only when what had been possessed or used could not be found, or were no longer servicable.

Ecclesiastical fluctuations accounted for many. Outgoing ministers of all parties often carried off what they could. To this cause may be added the requisitioning of Church property for war purposes. At every stage of history from the Reformation all parties made use of this source. The font of gold presented to Mary, Queen of Scots, by Elizabeth of England was melted down to provide the needs of her war chest.<sup>3</sup> In 1640 the Committee

1. Calderwood, History, VII, p.277. 2. Burns, Church Property, p.138. 3. Kirkcaldy of Grange to the Earl of Bedford, 8th. May, 1567, quoted in Tytler, History of Scotland, V, p.409.

of Estates who were responsible for meeting the war expenditure of the covenanting cause enacted that all silver and gold in the land be delivered up to defray the cost of the struggle. The terms of the legislation were:

"Edinburgh, xv day of Julij, 1640. It is appoyntit, that all the silver worke and gold worke in Scotland....be given in to the said Comittie at Edinburgh...upon such securitie for repeyment as the said Comittie and they shall aggrie at the prycess following.....Lykeas, it is heirby declarit, that these quha hes any silver or gold worke, quhich they crave raiter to keip for thair ane use than delyver the samyn to coinized, shall have power to redeime thi samyn at the prycess efter following".<sup>1</sup>

Failure to declare the possession of what the Committee required rendered the owner or custodian liable to have his silver and gold confiscated without recompense. Only those districts that owned the Covenant, or individuals who were loyal to it, would accept the authority of this direction, and it may be concluded that the Church as a whole would be within such limits. Thus silver vessels now extant and acquired by the Church prior to 1640 must have been redeemed or in some way escaped forfeiture. The legislation did not cover pewter utensils and other reasons must be found for their loss.

The student of such antiquities is compelled to confess that it is a twilight region where much has to be surmised.

1. Quoted in Burns, Church Property, p.139, note 1.

Records of the parishes as well as sacramental vessels have disappeared, and those that have survived are often lacking in allusions that are sufficiently detailed to be of value. Yet it is beyond all doubt that baptisms in every parish were commonplace, and hence every minister at every stage in Reformed Church history must have used some utensil whether session property or not. There was no necessity, or Church law, which obliged a minister to use one utensil rather than another, and it seems probable that all sorts of containers for the baptismal water would be utilised. There is an absence of any sense of the sacredness of vessels so used, and there was no strong urge, apparently, to regard the presence or the absence of any specific baptismal dish as of great importance. When baptisms were in private, in the sense of in a place other than the church, no doubt some domestic bowl was regarded as suitable.

Here it may be remarked that there is no trace of any custom of dedicating the utensils which were acquired by the sessions<sup>1</sup>. Had such articles been dedicated with solemn ceremony the chances of their survival might have been greater. The only provision made by the Act of 1617 was that the minister, not the session, was personally responsible for the safe custody of the articles purchased in terms of the Act by the parishioners. This may have been a reason for the removal of the property by the outgoing minister when a change took

1. The Presbyterian attitude to church furniture in the early days may be inferred from George Gillespie's remarks on the table used at Communion. It is not to be called an altar or holy, "as if any Table, though not so consecrated would not as well serve the turn". It and the building itself is to be regarded as consecrated in the sense that everything is consecrated to man's use. English Popish Ceremonies, p121f.

place in ecclesiastical polity.

During the period between the Restoration and the Revolution the Episcopal oversight encouraged inspections of the parishes, and a customary query put at these visitations was, " Iff ther be requirit outenseills and furniture for administratione of the sacraments, and ane inventur therof to be produced and kepted in retentis"<sup>1</sup>. Should there be a deficiency the heritors were to "be seriouslie dealt with". This supervision was in many cases very necessary and beneficial. Alas, that it should have to be said that the defaulters had short memories and the advice given was not always taken. In 1675, October 7, it was recorded:

"The said day, the bishop haveing found, in his revising the presbitrie bookes, that, at visitatione of the churches, divers things anent the churches and outinseills thairof have been recommendit to the minister and heritors, quhich are afterwards forgotten, no account thairof being requyred till the nixt visitatione of that church; thairfor, the bishope, with consent of the synod, appoynt and ordaine that whatsoever is recommendit by ane minister or heritor at the visitatione of the churches, inquiry shall be maid by the presbitrie at the nixt privie censure, what dilligence hath been used therin, and record taken thairof"<sup>2</sup>.

Whatever benefit these parochial visitations brought to the equipment of the churches it has to be offset

1. Selections from the Eccles. Records of Aberdeen, Spalding Club, p.304. 2. Ibid. p.308.

by the widespread failure to transfer the church vessels to the Presbyterian ministers when they took over after 1690. If the Episcopal minister did not himself retain the property, which no doubt in many cases was conscientiously believed to be the heritable property of the Episcopal Church, it was not unknown for the incumbent to deposit the articles with a collaborating heritor who made it his business to withhold them from the Presbyterian representative as long as possible.

Some of the baptismal vessels that survived the change are the following :

Basin,	Walston,	1671.
Basin and Laver,	Dalkeith,	1673.
Basin and Laver,	Inveresk,	1673.
Basin,	South Leith,	1673
Basin and Laver,	Canongate,	Edinburgh, 1674.
Basin and Laver,	Elgin,	1675.
Basin and Laver,	St. Andrews,	Trinity, 1675.
Basin and Laver,	Newbattle,	1680.
Basin and Laver,	Ratho,	1685.
Laver,	Kirkcaldy,	1685.

There may be a few more, but this list is complete so far as has been discovered.

During this Episcopal period the Presbyterians who remained in the land appear to have used any suitable container for their baptisms. This was not always a portable dish. There are sites still shown where tradition claims that from this or that cavity or

depression in a stone some covenanting itinerant baptised children. There is one such, for example, in the Parish of Douglas, on Glentaggart Farm. It is a large boulder, about 3ft. in length and 2½ ft. in height, with two small depressions on the top. <sup>1.</sup> At the other end of the scale there is a small dish of beaten copper to be seen in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow University, which was claimed by the donor to have been used by a covenanting preacher. It measures only 6½ins. by 5½ins. and is 2½ins. deep. If it was so used it must have been borrowed for the purpose for it has a ½in. everted flange as if it had sat in a piece of furniture or other stand. Its size would make it easily portable, and indeed it was used as a portable baptismal dish for private baptisms by the donor. <sup>2.</sup>

The number of surviving baptismal basins which date from the period immediately succeeding the Revolution is ample testimony to the need for providing the churches with the requirements of administration. Many of these were provided by individuals and not by a levy on the heritors. The following baptismal utensils date from this period.

Basin,	Auchterderran,	Prior to 1700.	<sup>3.</sup>
Basin and Laver,	St. Cuthbert's, Edin.	1701.	
Basin and Laver,	Peebles,	1702.	
Basin and Laver,	Kingsbarns,	1705.	
Basin and Laver,	Campbeltown,	1706	

1. The Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, 2, Glasgow, 1844, App. p.166.  
 2. Cameron Collection. 3. Included in an inventory of this date, Houston, Auchterderran - A Parish History, under date May 30, 1700.



Basin,	Dunbarny,	1707.
Basin and Laver,	West St. Giles, Edin.,	1708.
Basin,	Greenock,	1708.
Basin,	Hawick,	1711.
Basin and Laver,	West Kirk, Edin.,	1711.
Basin and Laver,	Crail,	1712/3.
Basin and Laver,	Steill, —	1716.
Laver,	Old Kirk, Edin.,	1728.
Basin and Laver,	Dunblane,	1730.
Basin,	Anstruther Easter,	1737.
Basin and Laver	Traquair,	1738.

At Campbeltown the laver was found, after a search, adorning the top of a meal-chest in the manse.<sup>1</sup> The silver basin at Hawick was acquired in 1711 to replace a pewter "plate" which the session obtained about 1691 when it was reported that the Episcopal minister had taken away the sacramental vessels and registers. The old basin was bartered for "a choppin stoup".<sup>2</sup> There is an abundance of references in Church records to basins, ewers, stoups, and flaggons that are only known to have existed from such notices. What happened to them all may only be guessed. Some must have been in the category of the bason at Invera'an, of which the session records in 1721, August 27, "there were none but an old bason, which, being much abused and full of holes, was for no use".<sup>3</sup> It would be tedious to recount the tales that were told of many of them.

1. Burns, Old Communion Plate, p.527. 2. Vernon, The Parish and Kirk of Hawick, 1711-1725, p.21. 3. Dunnett, The Kirk of St. Peter, Invera'an, under date.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the multiplicity of baptismal utensils becomes so great that any enumeration of them would require an account of some length. By far the greater number of them have not survived. Private baptism was by this time in great demand and the disuse of the Church facilities would serve to the disappearance of the utensil possessed. The divisions within Presbyterianism produced an augmentation of basins. Thus the subject becomes complex to handle for records are patchy, the utensils vary greatly in size, quality, and type i.e. domestic ware, glass or metal, and sometimes they were provided by the minister and sometimes by the session or the heritors.

When public baptism reappeared after a period of eclipse many of the churches found themselves obliged to procure new utensils. "In many churches", it was said, "and in the church once served by Knox himself, until lately there was not even provision made for dispensing the holy and edifying rite of baptism".<sup>1</sup> In the parish of Humble, for example, a new basin was purchased for four shillings and sixpence in 1841, and in 1842 a small building in the churchyard was put into use for baptisms.<sup>2</sup> Many of the more modern vessels are of good quality and craftsmanship, and it is common for them to be placed on a stand or pedestal specially designed for the purpose. Some were designed for placing on a table, the Communion table being frequently used for the occasion. Worthy of mention in this class is the

1. Presbyterian Review, July, 1841, "Practical Reforms in the Church". 2. Nisbet, Humble Parish, p.39.

vessel called a "Baptismal Cup" in the form of a quaich in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, bearing the Glasgow city arms and the motto of the University. The cup is 7 inches in diameter, 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches high, with a base. Occasionally a place of worship is found still without any baptismal utensil of its own. A crystal or other dish is made to serve the purpose when there is a baptism, and in one instance an inquiry was met with the answer that there were not many baptisms and the party requesting the ordinance usually provided their own vessel for the service.

#### Secondary uses of baptismal basins.

In earlier days of Scottish Reformed worship it was not uncommon for a parish church to be without the means of celebrating any of the sacraments. Communion cups and tables, and any other requisites, were often borrowed from another parish. If any article was possessed it was frequently declared to be simply a basin for baptism. Hence, whatever utensils were the property of the parishes from time to time, these few possessions had to serve more than one purpose on occasion. In many records it is stated that the church or session possessed, inter alia, a basin, without supplying any definitive adjective, so that the basin might be a communion paten, a collection plate for the poor's money, a dish for receiving communion tokens, a baptismal vessel, or all together. Sometimes

the inventory will mention two basins without saying whether they were the same in size or purpose. On the other hand, in the absence of any basin for baptism where the parish was fortunate enough to possess a communion cup this cup would serve for both sacraments. This was the case with the Dalrymple Hay Cup of early seventeenth century date.<sup>1</sup> At Bothkenner the basin is inscribed, "Bought by the Church Session of Bothkenner, for the use of the Sacraments there, Mr. John Skinner being Minister, 1694". The plural "Sacraments" is indicative of its dual purpose.<sup>2</sup> The same is true of the basin at Dunbarny, presented in 1707, and may be assumed to be true also in the many notices which mention only cups, but no basin or paten. At Arbuthnot, the silver basin, presented about 1638, is inscribed, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst", clearly indicating its primary purpose as a plate for the bread used in the Lord's Supper. It served as a baptismal basin also.<sup>3</sup> At Leith, in 1687, the kirk session authorised the purchase of a "puther basin for receiving the collections and holding ye watter for baptisms".<sup>4</sup> Mackenzie, in his Vindication, 1691, refers to this custom of having a plate at the church door for the poor, and the worshippers "put into the Bason what they think fit". The Elgin kirk session books speak of, in 1719, "the elders with those that stand at the basons".<sup>5</sup> At

1. Burns, Old Scottish Communion Plate, p.262.

2. Ibid., p.532. 3. Ibid., p.516.

4. South Leith Records, Ed. by Robertson, Aug.4., 1687.

5. Elgin Kirk Session Records, Ed. by Crammond, 1897, under date May 11.

Keith the basin inscribed, "This Baptismal Basin belongs to the Kirk of Keith, 1777", was used at Communion and for the reception of coppers at the steeple door, and also, on occasion, employed to keep open the door of a smoky session room.<sup>1</sup> Communion cups are known to have been used as collection containers as far forward as the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Such is only a sample of the evidence that might be catalogued in illustration of the multiple use of church vessels.

#### The use of the laver.

The Act of 1617 on the furnishing of churches with sacramental vessels brings into prominence the utensil called the "laver". Its appearance and purpose have been the subject of some difference of opinion. The term "laver" itself was in common currency and there is no difficulty in defining it as a container for water. Its association with the baptismal basin would, at a first glance, convey the idea that it was a vessel for holding the baptismal water until it was required in the action of baptism. Then the water would be poured into the basin by the minister, or by another for the use of the minister. This simple explanation has not found uniform acceptance, and the question has been raised whether or not the laver mentioned in this Act of Parliament was intended to have another function than simply that of

1. Gordon, The Book of the Chronicles of Keith, p.253.  
2. Gordon, Scotichronicon, 1847, 4, p.97. St. Andrews and Crail are mentioned.

a water jug. It has been suggested that it was used to pour the baptismal water on the face of a child. In the absence of any detailed description of a baptism in Scotland where the laver was used all that can be done is to set forth the evidence available and show that it leads to only one conclusion.

An examination of late medieval manuscripts makes it indisputable that when immersion gave way to pouring on the continent the baptism was usually administered by the aid of a dish or patera. The common pattern in representations of baptism by pouring shows the ministrant with his hand over the head of the candidate and water flowing from a shallow dish held in the hand. In these illuminations, as also in frescos and sculptured work, there are some which do not show any dish, or in which the hand of the priest appears to rest on the head of the candidate. It is open to question whether the action represented by the posture is the baptism or the anointing with chrism. If the latter is intended then the stream in which the candidate is usually standing would represent the water. The craftsmen had difficulty in representing the action of immersion when that mode was implied and allowance must always be made for the symbolism of water being sufficient to indicate the matter of the sacrament, but not necessarily the mode of it. In some cases an attempt has been made to convey the idea of quantity without concealing the figure of the person being baptised, as, for example, by the magnitude of the font, or the presence of a river,

or, as in a fine vellum Psalter and Horae, circa 1280, of French origin, by heaping up water before the central figure in a realistic fashion.<sup>1</sup> The nudity of the candidate might be taken as another symbol.<sup>2</sup> The laws of perspective were not observed in these representations and the interpreter must always be guided by the symbolism rather than by mathematical calculations.<sup>3</sup> The mere fact therefore that the candidate is not shown as immersed in water need not preclude the interpretation that immersion was quite well understood by the craftsman to be the mode of baptism, and hence the hand of the ministrant over the head of the candidate need not always mean a pouring of water, but may be intended to mean an anointing or simply a convenient gesture of association. The 10th. century ivory on "The Covers of a Gospel Book" in John Rylands Library is a case in point. The German craftsman shows John the Baptist full-robed with his right hand on the head of Jesus. At the feet of the figures is a small symbolical representation of the river-god Jordan, reclining in water which rises about halfway up the person of Jesus, but not in front of him. Judged by modern usage this would not convey the idea of immersion; but taken by the emblematic standards of the medieval craftsmen it is as clear a portrayal of immersion as an artist of that date could

1. John Rylands Library, Latin MS. No.117, f.218.

2. The influences to which illuminators were open are illustrated in the Vita Christi, Hunterian Library, Glasgow, supra, where the nude figure of Christ has been covered by a later hand.

3. McMillan, Ch. Ser. Soc. Annual, 1944-5, analyses by mathematical standards the well known cut of the baptism of Richard Beauchamp in 1389, and argues that immersion need not be inferred because the water in the spacious font is too shallow. The criterion is inadmissible for such an early cut.

plan. The same may be said of the carving on the Saxon font at Bridekirk. Most of the books on fonts supply other illustrations.<sup>1</sup> The device of the artists did not pass unnoticed at the time as misleading and was put down to the ignorance of the craftsmen.<sup>2</sup> Despite the utterly unhistorical and erroneous character of these medieval devices they are still reproduced in abundance for modern stained glass decoration. Craftsmen in this field have been content, for the most part, to follow obsequiously the pattern of the late medieval Roman artists instead of sharing the Reformed Church ideal of shedding superstition and other obscurations of truth.

What may be conceded in the matter of the use of some utensil for pouring the baptismal water in pre-Reformation times is that there is good reason to believe that in the West this was sometimes done. There is no ground whatever for asserting that the custom influenced the Scottish use of the laver. Baptism in Scotland, as has already been contended, was by immersion in normal cases and it is unlikely that lavers for pouring water on the candidates existed, or at least were in such common use as to be a pattern for Reformed usage. It is suggested, however, that the lavers were used for pouring in this manner. "There is no doubt", it is asserted, "that formerly one practice was to pour the water upon the face of the infant directly from the laver".<sup>3</sup> Again,

1. Walker, English Fonts, 1908, Illustrations Nos.1-11. Other volumes as noted in following section on fonts.

2. Robinson, History of Baptism, 1790, pp.434, 445f. Cote, Archaeology of Baptism, 1876, p.178f.

3. Gunn, The Book of the Parish Church of Peebles, p.67.



"Remembering the strong prelatial forces which then (1617) were influencing and shaping the Church's actions, there is every reason to suppose that the purpose of the laver was for pouring the water on the child's face".<sup>1</sup> The link between the laver and the dish sometimes used in Roman baptisms is suggested by McMillan in an article where it is stated in opposition to the view of Burns in the quotation just given, that "Vessels which might have been termed lavers and which were used for a similar purpose existed in the mediaeval church."<sup>2</sup> The illustration given in support of this hypothesis is from a cut in a Venician book of 1555 which shows a priest using a dish "like a rather deep saucer".<sup>3</sup> It has already been stated that many manuscripts, frescos, etc., would furnish other illustrations of the same sort. The weakness of such a genealogy is that nothing parallel to this continental usage can be produced from Scottish sources, or, so far as has been noticed, from English sources. An illustration of it does occur, however, in an Irish source, the broken cross shaft at Kells, where a rude carving of the baptism of Jesus presents him as standing in the river Jordan, nude, with John pouring water on his head from a ladle.<sup>4</sup> Until it can be shown that some such usage was present in the pre-Reformation Church in Scotland it remains a doubtful hypothesis to suggest that the laver of the Reformed Church had any connection with the small dishes known to be used in

1. Burns, *Old Scot. Comm.* Plate, p.513.

2. McMillan, article in *Ch. Ser. Soc. Annual*, 1944-5, p.7.

3. The same author uses the same illustration in *Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550-1638*, p.250; and in another article, *Mediaeval Survivals in Scottish Worship*.

4. Reproduced in Roger, *Baptism in the Early Church*, p.26.

other lands. To make the conjecture acceptable it would require to be proved that what became a custom elsewhere also became a custom in Scotland, a principle which it would be difficult to establish.

There does not seem to be much hope in finding support for the guess of Burns that the appearance of the laver was due to strong prelatie forces. It is made without any proof being offered, and the known Anglican usage at the time is against the conjecture. In England the laver was simply a vessel for holding the water, but not for pouring it on the child.

It is surprising that an origin should be sought for the laver associated with baptismal basins in any other source than the most obvious one, that it was an ordinary article in everyday use where water was made available for washing purposes. A basin and a ewer went together as articles of domestic furnishing and it would be a natural thing for the two to be together for church furnishing. The laver or water jug might not be so necessary when any basin was utilised for a baptism, but it would certainly be the most convenient method of having water to hand when the basin was more or less a fixture in a metal bracket by the side of the pulpit. These complementary vessels were used in the Roman ceremony of the Mass as indicated in the inventory of Glasgow Cathedral, 1432, where the item occurs, "A basin with a laver of silver for the high altar"<sup>1</sup>. They were

1. Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis, 2, pp.329-331.

provided for the washing of the celebrant's hands during the service. Sir Patrick Vaus, pre-Reformation parson of Wigton, and late Reformed statesman and Privy Counsellor, lent a basin and laver to a friend, Ninian Adair, as security for a loan when his friend was in urgent need of money, and took a bond from him to restore them dated December 17th, 1582. The articles are described as "ane silver basene gilt about the ageis, weyand sevyne schoyr ten unss, and ane laver of silver, etc".<sup>1</sup> These vessels were probably in his possession when he was at Wigton; but whether they were part of the church furnishings is not indicated. Baillie, a Roman priest, in "A True Information, etc." bitterly complained that "Knox.....provoked the furious people by his own sacriligious example to the spoiling and downcasting of churches.....breaking of Images, chalices, chandlers, basines, lavers....."<sup>2</sup>.

An example of the occurrence of these utensils outwith the Church is given in a "Collection of Inventories of the Royal Wardrobe", as among the treasures of James V. The item is described as "ane bassing and laver".<sup>3</sup>

The custom in connection with the Roman fonts was for the water to be hallowed and left in the font for a certain time; hence a vessel for filling the font on every occasion of baptism was not necessary. Whenever moveable basins were substituted, and the hallowing of the water periodically was dropped, a container for carrying the water would come into use as a natural sequence.

1. Corresp. of Sir Patrick Vaus...., Ayr and Galloway Arch. Assoc. p. 91  
2. Catholic Tractates, S.T.S., Appendix.  
3. Quoted Burns, supra., p.123, note.

There is a very great contrast between such vessels and the shallow, small and saucer-like dishes used for baptismal purposes in other lands. The contrast is so great that no association is obvious. Again, in every case these dishes appear to have been dipped in the water and then the water poured on the head of the candidate. The presumed use of the laver in Scotland was quite different. It was not dipped in the font or basin and then used; but it itself contained the water and this was poured directly from the laver. The true parallel to these medieval dishes is found in a practice known in modern Episcopal circles of using a sea shell or small ladle to lift the water from the font instead of using the hand. Any usage deducible from, or approximating to, the medieval custom must be in the form of a joint use of font and laver in some such manner.

The argument for the use of the laver for pouring instead of the hand has also been linked with the action of baptism described both in the Book of Common Order and the Westminster Directory in so far as they allow pouring as well as sprinkling. If pouring was permissible in Scotland, it is argued, some such vessel as a laver in the shape of a flagon or jug might have been used. "Are we to find the reason for this insistence on 'pouring' in the views of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly?" asks Dr. McMillan.<sup>1</sup> "All of them must have known of the Scottish use of lavers". This

1. McMillan, Ch. Ser. Soc. Annual, supra, p.7.

might have been possible if the Scottish use of the laver was as is surmised. There is good reason to believe, however, that if this was the Scottish custom it was not supported by the Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly. In the form in which the first recommendation came from the committee dealing with the matter, and on which the Scottish Commissioners sat, the mode was to be sprinkling; at least so it would appear from Lightfoot's remark that the proposition "It is lawful and sufficient to besprinkle the child" had been canvassed "before our adjournment".<sup>1</sup> In Henderson's Government and Order, 1641, sprinkling is the only mode mentioned, and he states only, with regard to utensils, that a large basin was provided for the minister. It was Dr. Lightfoot himself who raised strong objection to this formula. "I spake against it, as being very unfit to vote", he said, and continues, "After long dispute it was at last put to the question whether the Directory should run thus, 'The minister shall take water and sprinkle or pour it with his hand upon the face or forehead of the child ' and it was voted so indifferently that we were glad to count names twice: for so many were unwilling to have dipping excluded that the votes came to an equality within one". From this it is clear that the mode of pouring was suggested as a compromise on dipping, and that it was expressly said to be by the hand of the minister. There is not a word anywhere to support the contention that the Scottish Commissioners favoured

1. Lightfoot, Journal, ed. by Pitman, 1824, p.299.

pouring rather than sprinkling, or that they knew anything about, or were willing to advance, the mode of pouring by the aid of a laver or other vessel. The evidence is all against their being aware that this was the usage in Scotland. When the debate on baptism was finally concluded there was nothing to suggest that the Scottish Commissioners had anything to do with the inclusion ~~of the inclusion~~ of pouring.

There is little assistance for the argument to be gained from the use of the term "laver" to denote the vessel to be provided by the Act of 1617. The Latin lavo, I wash, and the Middle English lave, to pour out, add nothing to the general meaning of the term as denoting a water vessel. In Tomson's Genevan Bible, in general use in Scotland till about 1640, there is a cut against Exodus XXX, to illustrate the laver of brass which was part of the furniture of the Tabernacle. It is shown as a large font-like vessel with a circular bowl, of about eight feet in diameter (using the figures included as a standard of measurement) and about the same in height, set in a square shallow foot-bath of larger dimensions, surrounded by a low parapet. The bath is replenished from the bowl by two spouts. The cut is accompanied by the explanation, "Because the maner of this figure is not particularly described, we have put it in this forme: as well for that it agreeth with the text as also it is after this fashion in other countries of sundry languages".

The term "laver" was also in common use as descriptive

of the font, as in the phrase " the laver of regeneration", from the Latin "per lavarum regenerationis" (Titus 3.5.). Wyclif translates "waisschyng" ; Nisbet's Scots version following this renders "wesching" ; the Genevan version gives "washing", and this is repeated in the Authorised version of 1611. The Rheims translation follows the Latin closely in the use of "laver". Despite the translation of the Protestant versions the influence of the Latin continued to be strong in theological writings, although the rendering "laver " in this phrase was never prominent in Scottish literature. It appears in the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, and in the translation of the First Helvetic Confession by George Wishart. In the latter the passage runs:  
"In which holy laver we wasse oure infantes".<sup>1</sup>

In Cramer's Catechism of 1548 an attempt was made to keep nearer the Greek by speaking of "the bath of regeneration",<sup>2</sup> and this rendering is occasionally offered elsewhere.

Thus the term "laver" was used in a comprehensive manner to denote a wide variety of vessels for holding water.

There is some difficulty also in understanding to what use the baptismal basin would be put if the laver was used for pouring water on a child. If it was to

1. Chap. XXI, Of Baptym.  
187, 190, etc.

2. Reprint of 1829, pp.

be used at all the child would require to be held over the basin by the father, for it was the uniform custom in Scotland for the father to retain the child in his arms. The basin, however, was usually placed on the pulpit, or in a bracket attached to the pulpit, and in a position in which such an action would be impossible. At Aberdeen in 1574 there was a "standart that holdis the bassing on the pulpett" and a few years later the church purchased "ane bassin and laar to the babtisme in the kirk".<sup>1</sup> At Tynninghame in 1631 the local smith repaired "the iron olk holds the water to the bapisme".<sup>2</sup> Brereton's account of a baptism about 1635 in the College Church, Edinburgh, mentions "a frame of iron shaped wherein there stands a silver basin and ewer"<sup>3</sup>. A tradesman's account for making an iron ring to hold the baptism dish was paid at Lyne in 1669. Wilkie's painting of "John Knox Preaching" shows a basin in a bracket by the side of the pulpit and a flagon hanging beside it. This was probably what Wilkie knew of the arrangement in his father's church at Cults, Fife. A selection of these brackets may be seen in the Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh.

w/ The basin might be placed elsewhere, however, so long as the baptism took place before the congregation. The minister at the "kirk of Balhelvies" was called upon in 1602 to give an account of a disturbance in

1. Cooper, *Cartul. Eccl. Sancti Nicola.*, pp. 384-386.
2. Ritchie, *The Churches of St. Baldred*, p. 226.
3. Hume Brown, *Early Travellers in Scotland*, p. 146.



the church, and he said "that he knew nocht, in respect he was than on cum furtht of the pulpet in the actiome of baptisme".<sup>1</sup> A baptism at the Royal Chapel, Holyrood, has already been quoted in which the bishop came down from the pulpit " to a table standing on the floore". It is not possible to say how widespread such a practice was in operation, but where it was the custom it is conceivable that the laver, if possessed, could have been used for pouring the water on the child and the basin used for receiving it. On the other hand there is no description of a baptismal act which suggests this and some may be put against it. Mr. George Black, the minister at Dunscoir, for example, complained to the Privy Council in 1631 against an excommunicated person who inter alia had behaved violently at a baptism. "Whill the minister wes in the verie actioun of celebrating the sacrament of baptisme", says the record, " he tooke the laver off its proper place in the pulpit, and to the contempt of that holie actioun, despitefullie slang the laver with the water being in the same in the mids of the kirk".<sup>2</sup> If the laver was not in the minister's hand "in the verie actioun" then it was not being used to pour the water on the face of the child.

The alternative terms used to describe the container for the water suggest that it was used only for this purpose. At Lasswade in 1618 the vessels provided are

1. Eccles. Records of Aberdeen, p.187.
2. Reg. P. C., Second Series, IV, p.223.

described as " basins, ewers"; Brereton uses "ewer"; on the back of the basin at Campbeltown the inscription begins, "This Bason and Youer was gifted...."; Crawford in 1704 reported "a powder basin and stoup for baptizme"; the inventory at Strathendrick in July, 1731, mentions "a choppen stoup for baptism water - a little plate for baptism" a clear distinction of function; At Killearn in April 1732 the sessiön reported the possession of " a peuther bason for baptizme; item a little peuther flaggon for carrying the water".

The main argument for the use of the laver otherwise than for holding the water is taken from the shape of some of the lavers that have survived. These are of the same type as the wine flaggons of the same period.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that they were designed to allow only the smallest quantity of water to escape for the convenience of baptising. The general features of these utensils, however, do not differ from those of wine flaggons, and there is no reason to believe that they were designed with specially contracted lips or spouts for the special purpose of use at baptisms. The smallest orifice is that of the Kingsbarns laver of 1705. Burns in his Old Scottish Communion Plate says of this laver that "there is a very small aperture  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch in diameter, through which the water trickled. If in this case the laver was used to hold the water to pour out into the basin for baptism, then a considerable time

1. Wood, Scottish Pewter-ware and Pewterers, Chap.10, pt.2.

must have been required to empty the vessel of its contents"<sup>1</sup>. McMillan says of the same laver "only a trickle of water could fall on the child's head".<sup>2</sup>. It would be mild to say that these statements are misleading. The orifice of the Kingsbarns laver is  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch, not  $\frac{1}{8}$  as has been stated by Burns ( and others who have accepted his measurement ), and through such an aperture a pint of water will flow in about twenty seconds. This laver has been used simply as a container in recent years and the water has been poured from it into the baptismal basin without any inconvenience or undue delay. The other lavers of this type still in use simply function as containers for holding the water until it is required . At Kirkcaldy the laver itself is now used as the baptismal vessel, and is set on a board within the stone font when required.

It is not possible to dogmatise on such an issue, but from the evidence available it seems improbable that any laver was used for pouring the baptismal water directly on to the face of a child.

1. p.513.

2. McMillan, Ch. Ser. Soc. Annual, 1944-5, p.7.

## Baptismal Linen.

Quite a number of references to "cloths", not infrequently defined as "linen", are to be found in Church records dealing with baptismal furnishings. The First Book of Discipline and the Act of 1617 do not mention them, and they appear to have been provided in some churches by a local arrangement. At St. Andrews, in 1589, the instructions to a new church officer included, "that the towall and the bassin be sett on the pulpet at the secund bell to sermon".<sup>1</sup> In 1590 permission was given for the purchase of "ane new towall to the bassing, tyme of the sacrament of baptisme, xxs."<sup>2</sup> The Aberdeen session were more economical for in the same year, 1590, they purchased two ells of "lyning clayth to be ane towall to lay onder the basson at the time of the baptism of bernis" at a cost of twelve shillings.<sup>3</sup>

Local ideas seem to have governed both the number and the use of these cloths. Henderson in his "Government and Order" refers only to "a fair linnen-cloth in a convenient place"; the records of the Presbytery of Inverness and Dingwall, 1643-1688, usually mentions two cloths;<sup>4</sup> Fintry had one in 1668<sup>5</sup>; Leith purchased a cloth for under the collection plate and another for baptism in 1687<sup>6</sup>; the schoolmaster at Meigle in 1706 reported that he had "a towel for putting under the plate at Baptisms", and by 1776 the Meigle linen had multiplied

1. St. Andrews Kirk Session Register, 2, p.652.  
2. Ibid., p.677. 3. Cooper, Cart. Ecc. S. Nich., p.391.  
4. p.109, etc. 5. Smith, Hist. of Strathendrick, section on Fintry under 4. Aug., 1668. 6. Robertson, South Leith Records, p.155.

to four baptism napkins.<sup>1.</sup>; Salton had two towels in 1674, which in 1682 were described as "two Dornick napkins"<sup>2.</sup>; Temple reported "two towells of linen for baptism" in 1683<sup>3.</sup>; the inventory of the minister of Dumbarton in 1698 included "two towels for baptism";<sup>4.</sup> Merton session in 1705 bought "a couple of towels for the administration of Baptism"<sup>5.</sup>; at Hawick in 1713 "the Session thought it expedient that linen were bought for drying ye minister's hands after baptizing of children"<sup>6.</sup>; and at Pittenweem in 1711 the church officer was allowed "for washing the baptism cloath, £00. 01. 00"<sup>7.</sup>. This list could be further extended, but it includes enough to show that,

1. A cloth was often provided for drying the hands of the minister,
2. Another was sometimes used for placing beneath the basin.<sup>8.</sup>

It is also possible that these articles were put to good use at Communion services for inventories do not always distinguish between linen associated with Communion cups and that used at baptisms.

1. Burns, *Old Scot. Comm. Plate*, p.290.
2. *Ibid.*, p.221.
3. Burns, *Church Property*, p.177.
4. *Papers of the Rev. John Anderson, Minister of Dumbarton, 1698-1718*, p.9.
5. Burns, *ibid.*, 174.
6. Vernon, *The Parish and Kirk of Hawick*, p.21.
7. *MS. Session Records*, under 12 April, 1711.
8. Illustrated in Wilkie's *The Preaching of John Knox*, National Gallery, Edinburgh, where a white cloth is shown as draped over the bracket holding the basin.

## Fonts.

The term "font" is an adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon term for fount or fountain, and this sense is used in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI, 1549.

"O merciful God, grant that the old Adam, in them that shall be baptised in this fountain....."

"Grant to all them which at this fountain forsake the devil and all his works....."

" Sanctify this fountain of baptism....."

The Statuta of the Scottish Church use both fonte and baptisterium, the latter term being used when describing the vessels to be provided in the parish churches.<sup>1</sup> The transliteration " baptistery", however, does not appear to have attained currency to any extent. It is generally reserved in ecclesiastical usage for the building, or section of a building, which contained the baptismal pool or font. These large and richly ornamented edifices were built in considerable numbers in Italy and elsewhere during the medieval period, the earliest of the Italian examples remaining being that of St. John of Lateran, Rome, of the fourth century, and the latest that at Pistoia, circa 1337. Notable examples of the baptisteria at their best are those at Ravenna and Pisa. In these self-contained fabrics there was the piscina ( or fish pond ) or baptismal pool in which the elaborate and impressive act of initiation was performed by solemn trine immersion.<sup>2</sup>

1. Robertson's Statuta, 2, p.30-31.

2. Data on these baptisteria will be found in Cote, The Archaeology of Baptism, Bingham, Christian Antiquities, and other manuals of the same sort.

In the course of time the term baptisterium became associated with the pool itself. The Latinised form of the Greek original retained the thought of a dipping or immersion, whereas the term font preserved the thought of running or living water, as in the rivers and streams which were used for baptisms from earliest days.

There is no known instance of a baptistery in the form of a separate building in Scottish history. What is possible is that a part of a church building would be set aside for the purpose. Such a custom does not seem to have been unknown in England where fontes and baptisteria are dealt with as separate items in some ecclesiastical statutes, for example, those of the Council of Durham and the Constitutions of St. Edmund of Canterbury from which the Scottish Church borrowed when framing their own statutes. <sup>1.</sup>

The term font seems to have been the vernacular in the Scotland of Roman times for the vessel in which children were baptised. The disuse of these vessels by the Reformed Church has already been mentioned. For some time the tendency has been to reverse the policy of the Reformers and to reinstate the ancient font where it was available and in suitable condition. This will be discussed in due course.

The first move toward the use both of the term font and the article itself came from Archbishop Laud in the

1. Dowden MSS., National Library, Notes entitled Scottish Mediaeval Church, Vide also printed volume.

Canons published and given the force of law before the introduction of the short-lived Service Book of 1637. In the Canons it was enacted, "That for the administration of the sacrament of baptism a font shall be prepared and fixed near the church porch, according to ancient usage: that fine linen should likewise be provided for this purpose and all decently kept".

Water was to be placed in these fonts and consecrated for the purpose of the sacrament. This water was to be renewed twice a month.

~~On this episode Spalding wrote, "Scottish" prelates haven't boldness to trouble us with.... fonts.... but Canterbury is punctual and peremptory in these".<sup>1</sup>~~ The Scottish representatives who spoke against Laud at his downfall laid the blame for the attempted introduction of fonts on the Archbishop and not on the Scottish prelates who had assisted in the matter of the Service Book.<sup>1</sup> The intense indignation of the Presbyterians rejected the whole volume with such expedition that there was no time for the provision of fonts in those areas where it was acceptable and, hence, all fonts in Scotland today are either ex-Roman or recent acquisitions.

The Westminster divines, with the hearty concurrence of the Scottish Commissioners, directed that baptism was to be administered " in the face of the congregation, where the people may most conveniently see and hear; and not in places where fonts, in the time of Popery, were

1. Spalding, *Memorials*, I, 365



unfitly or superstitiously placed".<sup>1</sup>. The Scottish Churchmen would have gone further and had the fonts removed altogether, but such a drastic recommendation did not find general acceptance. The decision as it stands is undoubtedly open to the criticism that the Roman baptisms did not pollute any one place in the church more than the Mass made every part of the building a place which had been superstitiously used, and the principle implied would have made all worship in any building where Romanism had flourished impossible. This was countered by an Appendix to the Directory of 1645 "Touching Days and Places for Publick Worship" in which it was stated,

"As no Place is capable of any holiness, under Pretence of whatsoever Dedication or Consecration; so neither is it subject to such Pollution by any Superstition formerly used, and now laid aside, as may render it unlawful or inconvenient for Christians, to meet together therein for the publick Worship of God. And therefore we hold it requisite, that the Places of publick assembling for Worship among us, should be continued, and imployed to that Use."

This would appear to cancel out the suggestion stated earlier in the Directory that certain places within the church were not to be used for baptism because of their association with superstition. The direction, however, had particular reference to England, and, while

1. Instruction prefacing The Administration of Baptism.

it remained in the printed form used in Scotland, the "Committee for keeping greater Uniformitie in the Kirk", when reporting its findings on the Directory to the General Assembly of 1645, omitted this reference to fonts as, no doubt, irrelevant to Scotland.<sup>1</sup> The Scottish mind at this period, after its experience of the Service Book of 1637, was so resolute against fonts in any place in a church building that it was unnecessary to mention the subject.

The return to the stone font began first among the Episcopal congregations. The reintroduction was slow for public baptism was unusual, and when they began to arrive they were reproductions of Episcopal types in England, or, more exactly, medieval types. Where there was no stone font a baptismal basin was used in the same manner as in Presbyterian circles.

The movement toward the acquisition of stone fonts in the Church of Scotland was not due to, and did not affect, the mode of administering the sacrament. The innovations had their source in the return to public baptism and a new attitude to public worship as a whole. Emphasis was placed on the aesthetic element in worship and the raising of the artistic level of church furnishings. As a direct result of this ministry to the eye as well as to the ear considerable interest was created in the renovation, restoration and decoration of the

1. Peterkin, Records, p.421.

older churches. It was not long before the remaining Roman fonts were objects of attention and attempts were made to preserve, and even to use them. It became increasing common to accept the gift of a font after the old style. There are so many of them installed now that it is unnecessary to detail them, but something may be said of the use to which the restored or acquired fonts have been put.

Not many of these fonts are used as fonts. By far the majority of them are simply ornaments used as a sort of pedestal for the baptismal basin. At Holy Trinity, St. Andrews, for example, an iron frame sits in the large modern stone font, and the basin gifted by Archbishop Sharp in 1675 rests on it at baptisms. At Kirkcaldy the old laver, dated 1685, is placed within the modern stone font and used as the baptismal dish. The most recent ancient font to be put into service again is at Luss where the font only, and not the base, has survived from the ruined chapel of Rossdhu. The stone was brought down to the present church at Luss in 1945 for a special baptism. This relic is a splendid specimen of the unadorned and capacious fonts of pre-Reformation times, being a block of white freestone, almost a cube, of about two feet square with a circular cavity as large as the mason could make it. A temporary wooden stand raises it to a convenient level, and across the interior a board has been fixed on which the normal baptismal utensil is placed. Otherwise, as in so many cases, the font is not used at all.

The same practice is rife in England where ancient fonts of every shape and age abound to the delight of the antiquarian. One of the outstanding treasures, the Saxon font at Bridekirk, near Cockermouth, surprises the visitor not only in the grotesque vigour of the craftsmanship, but also by a strange pewter contraption of no beauty whatever which rises from the centre of the interior. At one end of the scale there may be seen an ordinary domestic china bowl scarcely larger and no more beautiful than a common saucer in a baptismal font of great lineage and interest; and at the other end of the scale such massive grandeur as is presented by the font at Hexham Priory, or the font which sits under the North-West Tower of Chester Cathedral, measuring some three feet long, two feet wide and one and a half feet deep, oblong in shape and of Italian workmanship, and used as it stands. Some of the fonts have pewter basins of no value fitted into the cavity, and, in one astonishing case, a font was found with six undisguised and none too clean jam jars in the cavity, on the top of which rested as small china bowl - all set in a corner of an important city church railed off and furnished as a baptistery !

As a rule in Scottish Episcopal churches the stone font is used without the aid of a basin or bowl; but exceptions are not unknown, and in one cathedral church, lifting the font cover disclosed a startlingly white enamel basin, such as is sold in any hardware store, of

equal proportions to the diameter of the cavity, and resting neatly in the font, but in unpleasing contrast to the soft grey stone of the exterior.

Many of the ancient fonts have been recovered and preserved, but have not been put into service again. Alas, it has also to be said, that some have seen in stone vessels found in some farmyard the semblance of an ancient font and have leapt too hastily to conclusions. It is known that some of the cast out fonts were put to use as querns or feeding troughs, and even baser purposes, without any regard to their former associations; but many of the stone troughs to be seen about farmyards were made for the purpose however much they may resemble ecclesiastical vessels, and it is not uncommon to see what has all the dimensions and appearance of an ancient font serving as a flower pot in a garden. The beadle at St. Monance delights to show a visitor a collection of old pig troughs in his garden all of which were certainly made for that purpose, with the exception of one holy water stoup. In one church where, it is suggested, a mistake has been made, the oval stone vessel recovered from a local farmyard is used for baptisms, and in order to sustain the custom of only using a little water a shallow cavity about six inches by three inches and about half an inch in depth has been chiselled in the bottom of the interior. In this case it would have been better to have used the former baptismal dish by placing it within the newly acquired font. Sometimes a holy water stoup has been mistaken for a baptismal

font, or at least is being used as a font. A stoup in its original position may be seen in King's College Chapel, Aberdeen.

Most of the ancient fonts were made of stone, and all the large modern fonts are of quarried material, mostly freestone. Pedestals of wood are usual where a metal basin continues in use. There were exceptions to stone work from earliest times in church fonts, and, of course, when emergency baptisms were administered whatever vessel lay to hand was pressed into service. In the Synodical Statutes of the Diocese of Aberdeen the 13th. century Canon, Of Baptism, stated:

"Let there be provided in every baptismal church a suitable stone or wooden font, which may be decently covered over and reverently kept, and not applied to other uses " ( *Baptisterium habeatur in qualibet ecclesia baptismali lapideum vel ligneum competens.....* )<sup>1</sup>. No example of these wooden fonts, if such ever existed in Scotland, has survived, and the perishable nature of the material from which they were made is a sufficient explanation of their disappearance. There is only one example in Britain still in use. This relic stands in the little church at Efenechtyd in Denbighshire, a massive piece of oak in excellent preservation though fissured by the drying up of the wood. It is about two feet in diameter and lined with a deep lead receptacle. Its antiquity is obvious and its uniqueness confers distinction.

1. Statuta, 2, p.30. Canon No.56.

In the same district, at St. Asaph's Cathedral, the ancient font was partially destroyed; but it has been skilfully repaired by the tooling of another stone to match, so that four of the sides are new and four are old. There is no example of such a restoration in Scotland. The utmost that has been done has been to set an old vessel on a new shaft.

The only font in pre-Reformation Scotland known to have been made of metal ( other than the lead linings which were made for fonts of other material ) was that of Holyroodhouse. It was carried away as part of the spoils of war in 1544 by Sir Richard Lee and presented to the Abbey Church of St. Albans. This font was made of brass.<sup>1</sup>.

Many of the stone fonts of recent dedication are worthy products of their craftsmen and, as is traditional, are highly individual in design. The diversity of shape and decorative treatment is such that it is not possible to classify them in a satisfactory manner. They may be illustrated by reference to a few of them.

1. Brunton, Antiquities of Edinburgh, pp. 131-132. A translation of the Latin inscription said to have been placed on this interesting font is as follows:  
".... Sir Richard Lee, knight, saved me from burning, and brought me into England. And I, being mindful of this so great benefit, whereas before I was wont to serve for baptizing none but king's children, have now willingly offered my services even to the meanest of the English nation....." The font was melted down during the Civil War.

At St. Margaret's, Broughty Ferry, the font has eight panels each bearing an emblem on a shield. This octagonal type of bowl is very common. The installation at St. Leonard's, Dunfermline, is cylindrical, the base and bowl being similar externally with the exception of the decorative work. The font at Wilton is built of Caen stone, designed by English craftsmen, and has a square bowl supported by four shafts of Iona marble. At Dunino, Fife, the font is a large cube of red sandstone standing on a single shaft, the severity of its simplicity being relieved by a rounding of the angles and a slight depression effect in each of the four sides, the decorations being carved in the depressions. A notable feature of this font is that the stone is left solid with only a shallow cavity on the top, sufficient to allow the small silver dish to sit in it.

Three fonts of more peculiar construction may be mentioned.

1. In St. Andrew's, Glasgow, the font is of the type usually associated in England with the name of Gringling Gibbons. It consists of an ornamented bowl set on a long narrow stem, a style which evolved from the chalice pattern by diminishing the size of the bowl and narrowing the diameter of the shaft.

2. The Angel Font of St. Giles, Edinburgh, is a radical departure from any of the traditional patterns. It consists of a receptacle after the style of a large clam shell held out in the arms of a kneeling angel. This sea-shell idea is also illustrated in the font of Inverness Cathedral. The only other example known in Britain is the specimen in the Marble Church, Boddelwyddan, North Wales, which has two figures



two children - the elder of whom holds the same species of shell. The shell is of smaller dimensions than that in St. Giles.

3. The third is the font in St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, which was the subject of a special inquiry by the General Assembly in 1912. It was designed on the model of a fifteenth century font in the baptistery at Sienna, Italy, and consists of a large hexagon of marble, three feet high, each side being two feet four inches in breadth, the basin resting on the top of the hexagon and surmounted by a bronze group of a mother and child modelled on a Michael Angelo statue at Bruges. The whole makes up the largest infant baptismal structure in Scotland. At Sienna the bowl of the font is more than a foot in depth; but the cavity in the St. Cuthbert's font was reduced to a diameter of eight and a half inches, and the depth to four and a half inches. The complaint against this acquisition was to the effect that the bronze group represented the Virgin and Child, and the erection of such an image within a fabric of the Church of Scotland was said to be a violation of Reformed principles. The objection was not upheld by the Assembly on the ground that there was neither idolatrous intention in the donor or recipients, nor was there any likelihood that the group would become an object of worship; but church officials were enjoined to submit any proposals for the erection of structures of unusual type within church buildings for the approval of the appropriate Presbytery before proceeding with

the erection.<sup>1</sup>.

The larger fonts are sometimes accompanied by covers, some plain and some elaborate. Where a cover is simple it is removed by hand; where it is built up with tabernacle work after the manner of the canopies surmounting the choir stalls in Cathedral and Collegiate churches a counterpoise is fitted, and the cover remains suspended above the font. These more elaborate covers are usually found in Episcopal buildings, but a good examples will be found in St. Leonard's, Dunfermline, (septagonal), and in Hillhead, Glasgow, (octagonal). The finest that has been observed is that in All Saints Episcopal, St. Andrews.

It is not unusual for stone fonts to be placed upon a stone platform one or two steps high. The bowl is normally fitted with a drain through which the baptismal water can run back to the earth. It is also becoming common in buildings of the Church of Scotland for the font to be erected near to the entrance to the church as is the regular practice in Episcopal buildings. This is, of course, directly opposed to the Reformed tradition in Scotland which advocated that baptism should always be in the face of the congregation. The removal of the font back to the entrance where it stood in Roman days has not always been done, and in the case of St. Mary's, Kirkintilloch, the baptismal bowl has been built into the lesser pulpit.

1. Report of the Committee to inquire with reference to the Baptismal Font in St. Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh, Assembly Reports, 1912, pp.1234-1247.

In some instances the part of the building where the font stands is called the baptistery. The custom of using that term and railing off a section of the building concerned is common enough in England. The only known building to be set apart for baptisms in Britain was erected by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the middle of the eighth century. Prior to that there may have been wooden structures built over a pool or stream for baptismal purposes. In Scotland the term "Baptism Room" was used of a part of the Tron Church, Edinburgh, in 1736 when the Council ordered, "that the Elders seat in the Tron Church be enlarged by the adding to it of the seat possessed by the Reverend Mr. Wisheart and that the Baptism Room be changed into a Seat to the Reverend Mr. Wisheart, and that the area or Entry be changed into the Baptism Room, so as the entry to the pulpit be saved" <sup>1</sup>. This parish was populous and no doubt it was convenient to have a place where baptism could be administered without resorting to the main church building.

The term "Baptizary" occurs in a "Description of the Chanonry in Old Aberdeen, 1724-1725", written circa 1760. The passage reads:

"This Church had also a large Baptizary pertaining to it".<sup>2</sup>

This was inside the church building for the notice goes on to say that the water for baptisms was drawn from

1. Butler, The Tron Church, Edinburgh, 25 Feby., 1736.
2. MS. in Glasgow University Library, p.52.

St. John's Well and "was brought into said Church at ye North Door for Baptisms". The term baptistery is now used in some Episcopal churches, and in such Presbyterian churches as Wilton and St. Andrews, Glasgow. It is also in current use as descriptive of the baptismal pool in Baptist churches. In these the provision for baptism is always a structure adequate to the baptism by immersion of adolescent or adult persons. At the beginning of the Baptist movement the ordinance was administered in the sea or in a river. It is not normal now to baptise in the open, but it is not unknown.

What is claimed to be an ancient font or baptistery, and is certainly a reservoir cut out of the solid rock, exists at Burghead.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested also that the pot-hole in Dunino Glen, Fife, was used for the same purpose. The place is locally associated with Druid worship and the rocky projection on which the pool is situated is known as Bell Craig, reminiscent of the Druid divinity. The Dunino church which stands nearby is known to have been the site of a Christian centre in the dim past, and it is just possible that this pool, measuring four and a half feet in diameter and three feet deep, was adopted for Christian lustrations. A standing stone a few yards away is marked with a cross to indicate a transfer of ownership, and the pool may have been likewise requisitioned. For centuries it was completely covered over, the suggestion being

1. Trans. Glasgow Arch. Soc., 1891.

that the Reformed Church concealed it to prevent it from being put to a superstitious use.

In the older Baptist churches possessing a baptistery this was normally covered over when not required. One of the earliest of these provisions, however, that of the Pleasance church, Edinburgh, a building now serving a congregation of the Church of Scotland, the baptistery was in an open court between the church building and the hall.<sup>1</sup> It is now customary for the baptisteries to be permanently exposed as in the case of the veined white marble baptistery of the Thomas Coats Memorial church in Paisley.

No baptistery of dimensions suitable for the baptism of an adult by immersion is possessed by any other communion of the principle Christian groups in Scotland, although this mode is permissible by all, and the Episcopal Prayer Books, Anglican and Scottish, expressly state this. In England there are some thirty baptisteries of this type in Episcopal possession.<sup>2</sup> One of these is a memorial to the late Archbishop Benson of Canterbury and is in Lambeth Parish Church. It is a semicircular structure of ample proportions, with a flight of steps down into it from either side, and designed for the baptism "of those of riper years" as the Prayer Book phrase runs.

1. Williamson, Reminiscences of the Pleasance Church, p.6.
2. Tyrell-Green, Baptismal Fonts, Appendix, p.167.

Thus there have been many changes in the baptismal utensils of the Reformed Churches in Scotland. From the use of any convenient vessel from which water might be applied by the hand of the minister, the buildings began to be equipped with pewter or silver basins, these being often affixed to the pulpit by means of a metal bracket. When public baptism gave way to private baptism any domestic dish would be utilised. The return to public baptism brought with it a pedestal on which the baptismal dish might rest, and the stone font. The place of administration was changed from the pulpit to the entrance in some places, such as in Glasgow Cathedral. It is a theme with many variations and considerable diversity in the use of the utensils, not the least astonishing being the return to the stone fonts which had been treated so contemptuously by the Reformers. Had there been a return also to the mode of baptism for which this type of font was originally made the installations would have had some adequate reason for their presence in Presbyterian buildings at least; but to place such large structures in churches without any intention of using the capacious cavities appears to the observer as an anachronism, and as such, an absurdity. Enthusiasm for the recovery of ancient usages has been uncourageously selective, the selection being medieval in appearance but not in reality. It may also occur to an observer to ask why the later medieval types were thought to be specially valuable and worthy of reproduction when it ~~it~~ not pretended that they are anything other than

reminders of a late stage in baptismal usage. In churches which do not desire to be medieval in worship, customs, and beliefs, but to be Biblical and apostolic, it is exceedingly strange to find such homage paid to one particular, and one only, of the baptismal practices. To put it bluntly, these medieval-type fonts were made for the immersion of infants and are neither apostolic nor Genevan, and in the Scottish Reformed Churches, with perhaps the exception of the Episcopal, they are useless, cumbersome and unnecessary, however pleasing they may be in craftsmanship. They simply ape the old and have neither antiquarian nor utilitarian interest. When used only to house the baptismal dish they have lost their right to exist as fonts, and become merely examples of baptismal furniture which it was once the custom of the Church to use. In the case of an original Roman font recovered and set up again in a church it is a misnomer to say that it is now restored to its original use instead of lying about elsewhere. That is just what is not done and there is no intention of doing. The baptismal basin or plate has just as much right to a place in the history of baptismal vessels as the medieval-type font, and both merely mark stages in the departure from apostolic forms, the one having no more claim to perpetuation than the other; and indeed the font, being associated with the most corrupt stage of the Roman Church, may be less worthy of reproduction than the Genevan basin.

## Chapter Eight.

### Baptismal Registers

The introduction of baptismal registers in Scotland is almost a civilised community in its infancy. In the early days of the Reformation, the records of baptisms, marriages, and burials were not kept in any regular manner. The only records were those of the ministers, who were not bound to keep any records at all. It was not until the late 16th century that the idea of baptismal registers was introduced. The first register was kept in the parish of Glasgow in 1581. It was a simple book in which the names of the children were written, along with the names of their godparents, who were, in effect, the only witnesses to the ceremony. The registers were kept in the parish churches, and were not accessible to the public. It was not until the late 17th century that the registers were made public, and were kept in a central office in Edinburgh. The registers were then used to settle disputes over inheritance, and to provide evidence in court cases. The registers were also used to trace the ancestry of individuals, and to provide a record of the population of Scotland. The registers were kept in a simple book, and were not written in any particular order. They were usually written in the Latin or French language, and were often written in a cursive hand. The registers were usually written in the parish churches, and were not accessible to the public. It was not until the late 17th century that the registers were made public, and were kept in a central office in Edinburgh. The registers were then used to settle disputes over inheritance, and to provide evidence in court cases. The registers were also used to trace the ancestry of individuals, and to provide a record of the population of Scotland. The registers were kept in a simple book, and were not written in any particular order. They were usually written in the Latin or French language, and were often written in a cursive hand.

The benefits of an authorised register to which all should be made and by which claims could be traced were apparent and the example was followed. It was some time before any formal law was taken in Scotland to set up a similar system.



## Baptismal Registers.

Registration of births and deaths is a very ancient custom, known in almost all civilised communities and in various forms. Greeks, Romans and Hebrews all had their public records from which ancestry, citizenship, and other benefits could be demonstrated. Genealogies have been incorporated into the Scripture narrative, the birth of Jesus being traced by these tables back to Adam. Within the Christian Church notices occur from time to time of a register being kept of the baptised; but nothing in the form of parochial registers were known until 1497 when they were introduced by Cardinal Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo. The primary purpose of this innovation was to obtain some means of regulating the moral state of his archdiocese, the baptismal register being a record both of the baptised and their godparents, who were, on account of spiritual affinity, unable to marry, or being married, possessed grounds upon which their marriage could be declared null and void.

The benefits of an authorised register to which appeals could be made and by which claims could be adjudicated were apparent and the example was widely followed. It was some time before any formal steps were taken in Scotland to set up a similar system.

Not until the Provincial Council of 1551 is there any sign of parochial registers and what was done then was ratified in 1559. It may be claimed with some justification that what was done by these two Councils was stimulated not only by the desperate state of the Church, but also by the pressure of the new ideas which were everywhere stimulating ecclesiastical consciences. These Councils do not appear to have been very successful in achieving reformation within the Roman Church in other matters, and it may be presumed that the proposition concerning registers would take more persuasion to put into operation than the legislative body of the Church could muster. In any case the interval of time between the proposal and the acceptance by the Convention of 1560 of the Scots Confession of Faith was too brief to allow the Church to boast of an achievement. The statute, for what it is worth, was as follows:

"That forasmuch as it is full well known by daily experience and pleas and debates on births and clandestine marriages, (that people) even although they have been legitimately born, are brought into the greatest risk of losing their inheritances from their fathers or forhears, and all their fortunes, and this chiefly through the lack of legal documents bearing upon births and dates of birth and proclamation of the banns; therefore it is statute that henceforth the curates' of each parish shall have a register wherein shall be inscribed the names of

infants baptized, together with the names of persons who by common report are held and reputed to be the parents of such baptized children, as well as of their godfathers and godmothers, with the day, month and year, attested by the signatures also of two witnesses".<sup>1</sup>.

The first phase of parochial registration.

The Reformers brought with them the principle of the baptismal register, at least in the form of a congregational register of baptisms. The Livre des Anglois contains the baptismal register of the English Congregation at Geneva and this is the earliest record of this sort associated with Scottish Reformed churchmen. In it the baptisms of the two sons of John Knox are entered thus:

1557. 23 of Maye. Nathaniell, the sonne of John Knox, Willm Whittingham the Godfather.....

1558. November 29. Eleezer, the son of Jhon Knox minister, Miles Coverdal wisse. <sup>2</sup>.

Those of the Reformers who had served in England would have the benefit of knowing the system of parochial registers introduced there. The establishment of these in the Anglican Church dates from 1538 when the obligation to keep them was imposed by Cromwell as Vicar General. This Injunction, after an introduction, gave the following directions:

"That you and every parson vicare or curate within

1. Patrick, Statutes, No. 251, p.142.

2. pp.14-15.

this diocese for every churche kepe one boke or registere wherein ye shall write the day and yere of every weddyng christenyng and buryeng made within yor parishe for your tyme, and so every man succeeding you lykewise. And shall there insert every persons name that shalbe so weddid christened or buried. And for the sauff keepinge of the same boke the parishe shalbe bonde, to provide of these comon charges one sure coffer with two lockes and keys wherof the one to remayne with you, and the other with the said wardens, wherin the saide boke shalbe laide upp. Whiche boke ye shall every Sunday take furthe and in the presence of the said wardens or one of them write and recorde in the same all the weddinges christenynges and buryenges made the hole weke before. And that done to lay upp the boke in the said coffer as afore. And for every tyme that the same shalbe omytted the partie that shalbe in the faulte therof shall forfeit to the saide church IIII s IIII d to be emploied on the reparation of the same church....." 1.

This Injunction was repeated in the reigns of Edward VI in 1547, and Elizabeth in 1559. The keeping of a register by the English Congregation at Geneva would, no doubt, be influenced by this English law.

No law was promulgated, or other known direction given, in Scotland prior to 1616. Registers were kept before that date in some parishes; but only, so far as is known, in a few. The Privy Council imposed the

1. Dated September 5. Quoted in Waterville-Muncey, *The Romance of Parish Registers*, London, 1933, pp.12-13.

obligation from the civil side and the Episcopal Assembly of Aberdeen, 1616, set forth the instructions from the ecclesiastical. The latter was in the following terms:

"Item, It is ordainit, that every Minister have a perfyte and formall Register, quherin he sall have registrat the particular of the baptisme of every infant within his paroch, and quho wer witnesses therto; the tyme of the mariages of all persons within the same; and the special tyme of the buriall of every ane deceisand within their parochin; and that they have the same to be in readiness to be presentit be every ane, at thair nixt Synod Assemblie, under the paine of suspensicoun of the Minister not fulfilling the same, from his Ministrie. And it is desyrit, that the saids Commissioners, in thair supplicacions direct to his Majestie, wold crave humblie that his Majestie wald ordaine the extract foorth of the saids Registers to make faith in all tyme comeing: and quho so observes this Act, the Archbiscops and Bischops sall let them have thair quots of thair testaments gratis."<sup>1</sup>.

officially  
What had been done/by way of registers in the Church before this comprehensive Act had referred only to registers of the dead. Attempts had been made to compile such lists ( copies of which had to be delivered to the procurator fiscal ) but the success attending the venture was the subject of complaints.<sup>2</sup>.

1. B.U.K. p.1129. 2. Notice of these registers occurs, not in the books of the General Assemblies, but in Calderwood's History. They are inserted in B.U.K. at pp. 63, 310, 372, 389.

Some of the baptismal registers kept prior to the decision of 1616 have been preserved, and an inspection of them makes it clear that even when a register was in existence it did not contain all the names of the children baptised. The Perth register may be cited. It begins with the claim:

"The names of all Bairns that has been baptized in the Kirk of God that is at Perth since the year of God 1561, and since the last day of October within the same year 1561".

The first entries are undated and were probably inserted from information collected or from memory. The first date is July, 1561 which must also have inserted from information received according to the date given in the title. The number of entries given in the subsequent pages <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ not consistent with the introductory flourish for there are gaps in the register, for example, December 12, 1566 - January 22, 1567/8 - thirteen months omitted; 1568 - November omitted; 1573 - August omitted; 1576-1577 - twelve months omitted, and so on. The testimony of the kirk session records is that between October, 1579, and November, 1580, there were seven persons found guilty of adultery, sixty-eight of fornication, and others found to be defaulters in morals. The children begotten of these persons ought to have appeared in the register, but do not; on the other hand, some forty children of such persons are entered for 1581, Whatever the reason it cannot be held that the record is inclusive.<sup>1.</sup>

<sup>MS.</sup>  
1. A transcript of the Perth register with comments as above is in the National Library, Edinburgh.

It is commonplace to find notices of baptisms in the kirk session records. The Anstruther-Wester MS. begins in 1577 and in its entries like the following may be found:

Tysday the 5 of Jan. 1601 Baptized the last Saboth to James Philp, a child called James, witness James Scot.

The register with the earliest dates is that of Errol, Perthshire, MS. vol.1, 1553-1691, but the first four pages with the dates prior to 1571 appear to have been compiled from local knowledge and the proper record does not begin until February, 1571. The Dunfermline MS. begins July, 1561, without any attempt being made to compile a list of baptisms from information or recollection. The first entry reads:

The 16 day Alxr. Marshall had a man chyld born to him of his wyff Effie, baptizit and callit Patrik.

The style of entry varies considerably according to what was thought sufficient by the clerk. It is usual to find the form with which the register begins being continued by succeeding clerks. The entry usual in the first pages of the Dunfermline register does not make it clear whether the date refers to birth or baptism. By comparison of dates the conclusion is drawn that the date refers to the baptism for the entries are grouped at regular intervals; for example, from July, 1561 entries are made for 16 - 20 - 27; August, 3 - 10 - 14 - 31; September, 4 - 14 - 17 - 21 - 28; October, 1 - 5 - 8 - 19 - 29, from which it would appear that baptisms were normally on Sundays and Thursdays.

When it was decided to have a register at St. Andrews in 1584 it was expressly stated that the day of birth should be entered as well as the day of baptism.

24th. June, 1584. "The quhilk day, it is tocht gude and concludit, be my Lord of St. Androus and haill sessioun, that Tomas Wod redar, in all tyme cuming, haif ane Register Buik, in the quhilk he sall insert the names of all barnis that ar baptizit within this parroche, the parentis names, the day of thair baptisme; .....and this in presens of the said Thomas Wod, promising to do the samyn; and als that the day of the birth of every barne baptizit; and the redar ilk Weddinsday to bring and produce all thir foirsaidis names befoir the sessioun, to be inrollit in ane Register ad perpetuam rei memoriam."<sup>1</sup>.

Only a few of the registers include the mother's name. This only became common at a much later date. Sometimes, as in the Canongate register, the father's occupation is given. The Dunfermline register does not give the names of any witnesses until 1618. In no register examined where witnesses names were included were these names signatures of attestation as had been the recommendation of the Roman Provincial Council quoted above. The attention given to witnesses is extremely varied. The St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, register begins in 1573 and the entries take the form,  
Sunday, 14 March 1573.  
Patrick Knox A D N Christin w James Nicoll.

1. Mitchell, St. Andrews<sup>w</sup> Kirk Session Register, pp.530-531.



In the Canongate register, after naming the witnesses, the sentence often occurs, "Ye said bairne resavit in ane faythfull witness". The number of witnesses named, in this and other registers, is not uniform. Two contrasting entries from the Canongate register will illustrate the point.

7th. April, 1565. "Johnne Brand, Mynister, ane madyne, callit Elizabeth; hes witnesses, Johnne Wastone, Johnne Modie, Johnne Seton".

29th. January, 1564/5. "Johnne Broune, ane child, James; hes witness, ye Lorde o' Rykertoune".

The age at which a person might be qualified to act as a witness is nowhere stated. "James Rex" appears in the entry in the Perth register which refers to the baptism of James Murray. No name is given as parent to the child. The king can only have been fourteen years of age at the time; but the acceptance of his sponsion is probably singular. Among the other witnesses were William, Lord Ruthven, John, Earle of Athole, and Tullibardine.

The Book of Common Order speaks only of ane "godfather" coming forward with the parent of the child. Roman custom was for three godparents to be permitted, with others acting simply as witnesses. The Reformed practice, so far as the registers are concerned, appears to have had no rule other than that enacted locally. Sometimes none are given; sometimes a great many.

The fact that the designation "godfather" was not transferred from the Book of Common Order to the parochial registers has already been discussed and need not be enlarged upon again. It may be observed from the citations from the Genevan register above that in the first quoted entry "godfather" is used, and in the second "witness", an indication that from the first the terms were thought of as interchangeable.

The kirk sessions had the unhappy task of dealing with many illegitimate births and the registers usually have an appropriate comment or mark against such entries when these baptisms are recorded on the same page as others. In some registers these baptisms are listed apart, as in the Aberdeen MS, 1573-1591, the section being entitled, "The namys of ye bairnes gottin in fornicatione bein baptist ". In other registers no such baptisms were recorded, or at least if they were the record of them has not survived. The Dumfries MS., 1605-1715, begins, "The Register For the names of the barnes bapteissit be mastir Thomas Ramsay minister beying upon ye sext day of October 1605 and onlie yame yt ar lafullie begotten ( and ) tain up be Adame Wilson, Beadle ". The succeeding clerk opens his record with the same assurance, "The Names of the bairnes Bapteissit ( edge of MS. worn ) of Drumfreis ( sic ) baith lawfullie begottin and naturallie beginning upon ye twentie saxe day of Maii 1607. Registrart ( sic ) be David (?) Reader at Drumfries as eftir follouis".

The responsibility for entering the register was a matter of local arrangement. In some instances the minister himself undertook the duty, but the usual practice was to delegate the task to another. Where a reader was competent he would supervise, or whoever was clerk to the session. The minister, however, was responsible for the register being in existence. The visitation at Falkland, Fife, in 1611, for example, resulted in the direction, "The minister to have ane sufficient register for baptisme", etc. Similar direction was given elsewhere in the same Synod.

It was customary for anyone desiring baptism for a child to interview the clerk in the first instance and furnish particulars. Regulations to this effect appear at Aberdeen :

"1568. Twysday, the xii day of Aprile, Ordanit that the fader of the barne that is to be baptised, and in his absens the nerrest frende off the barne, or the gosseppes, cum the day befoir the barne is to be baptised and schew the reder, to the effect he may adverteise the Minister, quhidder the barn (is) begottin in matrymony or nocht".<sup>1.</sup>

A similar regulation was in force at St. Andrews from 1583/4<sup>2.</sup> and renewed in 1600<sup>3.</sup>; also at Kirkcaldy in 1620<sup>4.</sup> and at Stirling in 1622<sup>5.</sup>

1. Selections, Spalding Club, pp.14-15.  
2. Mitchell, St. Andrews K.S. Reg., p.531. 3. Ibid., p.936.  
4. Burns, Communion Plate, p.483. 5. Ibid., p.484.

The decision of 1616 meant that there ought to have been a nation-wide system of parochial registers in operation and given the force of law. The reason offered for the formal acceptance of the principle was that by this means legal disputes might be settled with justice to the parties concerned. Additional to this, though not mentioned, was their usefulness to the Church in determining who had been baptised and who had not. Admission to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and other benefits of the Church, depended upon a person being able to declare, and if necessary to prove, that he or she had been baptised.

By the Act all churches were obliged to keep a register. There was not the same clarity in the position of the parishioner. There was no law complementary to the creation, or legalising, of the registers which compelled a parishioner to have the names of his children entered therein. There was no civil law, for that matter, which compelled a parent to have his child baptised. Citizenship in Scotland was never restricted to the baptised as had been the case over great areas of the West during the Middle Ages. Such a law of compulsory baptism was not possible where the national Church retained the right to refuse baptism as a matter of discipline. Where baptism was granted, however, in some parishes the name of the baptised was entered in the register as the Act required. At Aberdeen in 1616 it was ordered that the minister "shall have registrat the particular of the baptisme of every infant within his paroch", though this might be interpreted locally to mean that

the baptisms might be classified into at least three groups, lawfully begotten, illegitimate, and Roman Catholic as in the Aberdeen MS. registers.

The good intentions of the legislators were thwarted by causes which were more difficult to control than decisions were to make. The registers which resulted or were continued were neither nation-wide nor reliable. Not only was there no compulsion attached to the legislation so far as the parishioner was concerned, but there was no system of supervision perfected by either Church or State which would have made sure that the registers were being operated satisfactorily. Visitations, either presbyterial or diocesan, produced good advice without a corresponding degree of obedience. Among the Presbyterian section of the Church there were those who were prepared to dispute the legality of all that the Aberdeen Assembly had enacted and the keeping of baptismal registers would be ignored. Many of the clerks to the sessions were careless. Too often the reason for the non-entry of a baptism was that the clerk did not receive from the parent the fee which was expected.

There was conflict also between the decision to keep a register and the local method devised for writing it up. At the same Assembly of 1616 it was decided that the sacrament of baptism be not refused to any parent who requested it and who was able to give "ane Christian confessione of his fayth ", which meant that

baptisms were not to be confined to preaching days, or to any time of any day. This was further legalised by one of the Perth Articles of 1618, which became law by Parliamentary ratification in 1621. The delegation of the task of keeping the register to the clerk of the session opened the way to omissions arising from clerk not being informed that a baptism had taken place. Only the minister would be able to supply the particulars of private baptisms performed at different places throughout the parish and at odd times, and if he failed to notify the clerk or failed to collect the registration fee the register would be so far defective.

If a parish operated the system by which a clerk had to be informed before the minister would baptise then this difficulty would not arise. The tendency of the Perth Article, however, was against the full working of such a plan, and against the system which had been superadded to it in some places of issuing baptismal tokens or tickets without the possession of which a parent could not have baptism for his child. This was a feature of the parish of St. Andrews in 1600<sup>1</sup>. and was introduced in Stirling in 1622. The latter session legislated as follows:

"Feby 12. The quilk day the present Assemblie findis ane great number of the bairnis baptizit in this kirk omitted furth of the Register thair of in default of thair parentis, quha will nocht sute the samin expres contrar the actis of the generall kirk, and to the greit hurt of our posteritie quha sall have ado therwith; for the

1. Mitchell, St. Andrew's K-S Reg., pp.936-937.

quhairrof, It is statut and ordeinit to this assemblee that befor any bairne be baptizat in this kirk at any tyme heiraftir, the father of ilk bairne, or in his absence ane special freind therof, sall first pass to the Clerk of the said Register and give up the name thairrof, with the parentis and wtinessis quha salbe hauldin to try if the parentis hes sclanderit the kirk and nocht removit the samin; quhilk if he find, that he declair the samin to the minister and follow out his directione therintill, and thairaftir to register thame according to the ordur, and to deliver ane tiket thair-upone to the father of the bairne to be reportit to the minister, quhairby he may knaw if the ordur be keepit, and the clerk sall receave for his travellis ijs."<sup>1</sup>.

This plan - so exactly formulated - gave considerable powers to the clerk and penalised each parent to the extent of two shillings. It is doubtful if any such penalty was intended by the decision that registers should be kept. What was said with reference to costs was that the ministers, their wives and executors were to "have thair quots of thair testaments gratis". This implies that payment would be expected in other cases for extracts from the registers. What the Aberdeen decision does not appear to have considered (in the light of their decision to facilitate the baptism of children) was the introduction of a new barrier to baptism by way of a registration fee to be produced before baptism, either private or public, by every parent. The Aberdeen enactment seemed to understand that the imposition of a fee would be a post-baptismal, not a prebaptismal matter, and

1. Stirling Kirk Session Register, Maitland Club Miscellany, I, pp.460-461.

certainly not a barrier to the observance of the rite.

The Aberdeen decision might have been enhanced by a direction standardising the type of entry to be made in the parochial registers. There was very great need of guidance on this account if the compilations were to have the precision usually associated with legal documents. This factor did not escape the attention of those who framed the short-lived Canons of 1636. The 13th. Canon read :

"Of Christenings<sup>1</sup>, Weddings, and Burials to be Registrated.

In every parish a permanent book shall be provided, at the charge of the parochin, wherein shall be kept the day and the year of every Christening, wedding and burial".

Thereafter particulars are given of the use, inspection, and preservation of the registers on the lines of the 17th. Canon of the Church of England, 1603.

1. The term "christening" was not in common use in Scotland. Shakespeare's line in Henry VIII, Act 5, Scene 3, where the king says to Cranmer,

"I long  
To have this young one made a Christian",

was not Genevan in flavour. The term does occur, however, in one document with a full Presbyterian background, "The Great Sin and Chief Guiltiness of Scotland in the Contempt of the Gospel" issued by the Commission of the Assembly, 1650. There it is regretted that parents use baptism as a mere custom or fashion "merely to have a difference put between them (their children) and unchristened people". This was reprinted many times. Thomas Boston wrote a preface to the third edition, 1732, Curiously he himself condemned the use of the term "christening", Body of Divinity, III, p.367. The only MS register noticed which uses the term is that of Colonsay, "Christening Register", 1796-1819. The only printed register is Melrose, 1642-1820, S.R.S., circa 1795, p.343f.



## The position at the Second Reformation.

When the Episcopal form of government was disowned and suppressed by the General Assembly of 1638 no mention was made of the parochial registers. The Act of Parliament, "Anent the Ratification of Acts of Assembly", passed on June 11, 1640, the Assembly of Aberdeen, 1616, inter alia, was pronounced "corrupt" and "null and unlawful, as being called and constitute, quite contrary to the Order and Constitution of this Kirk, received and practised ever since the Reformation".<sup>1</sup> This sweeping judgment implied the disowning of the regulations there enacted for the keeping of registers. In the Act Recissory of the same Parliament, however, the detailed Acts annulled do not include a reference to the paragraph of the former Act which legalised the registers; but the whole section in which these are mentioned may be held to be condemned since it included the permission to baptise privately, and that was most certainly heartily rejected at the Second Reformation. The Church was said by this Act Recissory to be as it had been established by the Act of Parliament of June 1, 1592, and this Act was by the Act Recissory ratified and renewed.

Nor is there a word said about baptismal registers in the Westminster documents as received in Scotland. The only reference to a register occurs after the section of the Directory entitled "The Solemnisation of Marriage", and this refers only to a record of marriages.

1. Charles 1, Parl.2, Act 4.

In England there was a law passed covering the position. In the Act of the Parliament of England displacing the Book of Common Prayer by the Directory for the Public Worship of God, 21st. February, 1644/5, specific directions were given,

"That there shall be provided at the charge of every Parish or Chapelry in this Realm of England and Dominion of Wales, a fair Register-Book of Vellum, to be kept by the Minister, and other Officers of the Church, and that the names of Children baptized, and of their Parents, and of the time of their Birth and Baptizing, shall be written and set down by the Minister therein... ..And that the said Book shall be shewed, by such as keep the same, to all Persons reasonably desiring to search for the Birth, Baptizing, Marriage, or Burial of any Person therein registered; and to take a Copy, or procure a certificate thereof".<sup>1</sup>.

There was no parallel to this in Scotland and the records which were being kept were left to be continued on the basis of custom.

1. This was the first time that a minister was required enter the date of birth as well as baptism in England. Both dates were sometimes given in Scotland e.g. MS. Dunfermline register, August 1640, "The 4 Day Robert Wallis hade ane manchylde borne to him of his wyff Jonet Wely baptised upon the 8 day thaireftir and called Robert,....." The day of birth was emphasised in this entry of 23rd. March, 1652, "being the mirk and dark monday Peter McGrew was born". If baptism occurred after an unusually long interval this was noted; or if immediately, e.g. St. Ninians MS., 1672, "10 June, borne on Monday morning betwixt 9 and 10 and baptized immediately". One at least of the later Episcopal registers, that of Cruden, Bp. Kilgour's, first entry 1714, gives day of birth only. This might also be the day of baptism.

In the larger centres of population the parochial registers were not at the mercy of every changing wind of Church polity in the same way as were the smaller communities, for in the cities the Town Councils took an interest in the records. In Edinburgh the keeper or registrar was appointed by the Town Council and they laid down the conditions of service, as, for example, the granting of the registrar a guarantee of the income as long as he lived in 1649.<sup>1</sup> At Glasgow a register was begun in 1609 for the city, but the session retained responsibility for it.<sup>2</sup> In these centres there was also the possibility of obtaining the services of a better quality of registrar. The Aberdeen MS, 1647-1672, begins, "Ane Register of the Baptisms of the burgh of Aberdeen Begun upon the Fyrst day of December 1647 and ended 6 June 1658 Whair of Thomas Davidson Mr. of the Musick Scoole is Appointed Collector." The following register included in the same bound volume begins in the same terms by the same clerk. Against the date September 17, 1674, the St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, MS. contains the statement, "The qlk day Mr. John Wishart was admitted Master of the Grammer School in Ports Burgh, Clerk and Precentar of St. Cuthberts, alias the West Kirk of Edinburgh". Unfortunately all the parishes were not so happily placed and in the Kirkintilloch MS. the efforts of a Mr. Robert Anderson who described himself as schoolmaster and precenter when entering on his duties in 1677, October 10, were subject to the following censure by his successor, who took the trouble to pen

1. Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, Ed. by Wood, Vol. II, 1642-1655, p. 304.

2. Cleland, A Letter...respecting the Parochial Registers of Scotland, 1834, p. 34; MS. Glasgow Registers.

it in a large hand,

"Well Mr. Anderson you are a plainer Writer by far than your Predecessor, butt you will forgive me if I say you are a miserably ill keeper of Books".

Occasionally a register is found that contains the registration of a baptism which took place in another parish. The Dunfermline MS which was kept by a clerk of the same name as the above, Mr. Robert Anderson, begun in August, 1640, may be used for illustration. In it are such entries as :

"..... baptized be requeist in the Kirk of Baith.

..... baptized in the Kirk of Cleeshe be a testimonial to the minister thair.

..... baptized in the Kirk of Inverkeithing be a testimonial to the minister thair."

Among the local circumstances which interrupted the registration from time to time in the middle of the seventeenth century first place must be given to the consequences of unsettlement due to the political disturbances. The absence of the male parent is not infrequently marked and his place was taken by another. There was occasional interruptions due to the plague which had broken out about 1645. It was at its height in Dunfermline about October of that year. An entry in the session records reads:

"19 Oct. At this tyme meetings were not frequent because of the plague of the pestilence w<sup>ch</sup> then was

in the parochie, and increasit in the same so that many died".<sup>1</sup>.

A marginal note opposite the date October, 1645, in the MS. baptismal register says:

"In this time of the plague of pestilence few came to give up thair bairnes names to be registrat bot as they were sought y<sup>r</sup>to, many being negligent of this dutie".

There was a baptism of a child of about nine or ten weeks old on February 12, 1645/6 "The delay thairoff was becaus they were under suspicioun of the plague".

The Aberdeen register in this enthusiastically Presbyterian period is curious and unique in that the clerk, with the exception of only one entry, uses the term "godfather". This is the register of Thomas Davidson, before mentioned. This register is outstanding also on account of the beautiful script in which it was written, each entry being given a separate date with the surname repeated in the margin. The first entry reads:

"Fyft day of december, 1647.

James Raite and Margaret Clerke ane doghter in fornication callit Janat, William Pattersone and Wm. downy, godfathers".

All other entries are in the same style with the exception of the third, where the three names following the notice are called "witnesses".

In the neighbouring parish of Old Machar the register, MS. 1641-1699, consistently uses the term "witnesses".

1. Extracts from the K-S Records of Dunfermline, 1640-1689, ed. by Henderson, Edin., 1865, p.16.

The fact of military occupation is reflected in the registers of the garrison towns.

St. Ninians MS., Stirling.

Jan. 31, 1656. The qlk day John Neilson presented ane child procreat betwixt ane English souldier and Janet Nilson daughter to John Nilson, who undertakes that he shall see to the education of the child. Janet Nilson produced her testimonial from the Session of Stirling".  
Cupar MS., Fife.

"Nov. 7, 1656. Wm. Hutcheson ane inglish man and Anna Bruce a Scottish woman his wyff had y<sup>r</sup> sone baptized this day. Halden up by Patrick Mackally, apothecarie".

In other entries of the same sort it is not said that another was called on to present the child. In 1658, for example, there is the entry:

"Nathan Herringtoun, an English Sergeant in Captain Pym's Companie, and Ketherin Leitch his spouse had yr daughter Ann baptized".

The continuation under Episcopacy.

When Episcopacy took over in 1662 some of the registers show a gap, in others a new clerk appears, while in others again there is nothing in the register to signify a change in church government. This is duplicated in the session records.

At Dunblane it was enacted "that the readers at kirks doe keep a register of burials as well as of baptisms and marriages". This was in April, 1663.<sup>1</sup>

1. Register of the Diocesan Synod of Dunblane, Synod 2.

In the Synod of Galloway, in Covenanting territory, there was difficulty experienced. The complaint recorded on October 26, 1664 was serious for the Episcopal churchmen. "The which day it was represented to the Bishop and Synod by divers ministers present, that many of their parishioners did willfully absent themselves from y<sup>e</sup> preaching of the word and other divine ordinances and did refuse to bring their children to the church to be baptized by them, but either kepted them unbaptized or took them to the outed ministers of their owne principles to be baptized privately by them".<sup>1</sup>.

To make matters worse the outed ministers took the registers with them, and steps had to be taken to obtain new ones. The decision to do this is dated November 1, 1665.

"Act Anent baptisment, mariages and burials.

The which day y<sup>e</sup> Bishop and Synod considering upon many inconveniences that either have been or in time to come may be through the want of a public Register for baptisment burrials and mariages doe ordaine that every minister within the Diocese take care that for y<sup>e</sup> future there be an exact register.....ye circumstances of place, time and persons being therein inserted".<sup>2</sup>.

It was said further that the books of the churches could "not be gottin from y<sup>e</sup> late ministers".

At the visitation of the parish of Moy in the presbytery of Inverness and ~~Dingwall~~, on March 17, 1675, the elders

1. Synod of Galloway 1664-1671, p.5 .

2. Ibid., p.38.

"being enquired if he ( the minister ) had an register for discipline, baptisms, marriages, and collections for the poor, Answered that they knew of none and y<sup>t</sup> they regrate the want of the samen".<sup>1</sup>.

At Aberdeen it was decided by the Synod that among the matters to be inspected at visitations was "whether ther be a perfect record of dyetis of f preaching, catechising, baptisme, marriages, burialls ".<sup>2</sup>. This was in October, 1671, and surprisingly in October, 1674, when a detailed agenda of some length of the questions to be asked at visitations was drawn up no mention was made of an inspection of registers. <sup>3</sup>.

In the parochial registers of this period there is little to be got as evidence that parents were reluctant to bring their children to the curates. It may be suspected from some of the records that all the baptisms have not been included, but this is true of every period, and there is no means of determining how many children were not baptised by the parish ministers unless information can be obtained from other sources.

Another factor which may have operated toward the non-entry of some baptisms was the return to the permission to baptise privately in cases of necessity.

1. Presbytery of Inverness and Dingwall, S.H.S., p.52.
2. Selections, Spalding Club, p.296.
3. Ibid., p.299f.



There was no extreme swing toward private baptism, however, and the church remained the normal place of baptising. From the MS. register of Kirkintilloch this is supported emphatically by the incorporation of the phrase "before the congregation" from April 5, 1663. The form of entry was:

"2 June, 1663. Janet Wallace daughter law<sup>l</sup> to James Wallace in Wester Gartshoir was law<sup>l</sup> baptized before ye congregation".

Witnesses are mentioned in addition to this formula only from January, 1667.

All the parochial registers of the south-west for the covenanting times, with the exception of the remains of the register of Dumfries, have disappeared; hence the material by which the effect of the unlawful baptisms upon registration could be assessed is wanting. Most of the extant registers from this area begin after 1690.

In the east of the country the register of the parish of Liberton from 1625 onward shows an average number of baptisms per annum to be between 60 - 110, and in the Episcopal period after 1660 there is nothing abnormal in the totals.<sup>1</sup>

Before this episode was over some of the Presbyterian ministers accepted the indulgence granted by James II in 1687, and these ministers found meeting houses for themselves.

1. Trans. Soc. of Antiq. of Scot., I (1792), Account of the Parish of Liberton.

The baptisms in these were recorded in private registers, and in Glasgow an Act was passed in the Town Council in which the magistrates declared;

"that they hereby ordaine the haill inhabitants within the said burgh to booke their marriages, and what children they shall baptize, in the publict and authentick register as formerlie, that hazard may be evited and minouris may not be prejudged when extracts of their aige may be called for at the publict register, and they pay the ordinary dewes therefor to the clerk, beddellis and otheris of three pund Scots to be exacted aff the contraveeneris totius quoties ".<sup>1</sup>.

A MS. register of the baptisms in "the Meeting House", 1689-1691, is bound with the MS. Hamilton Parochial Register; and those of the "Canongate Meeting House", with the MS. Canongate Register, beginning August, 1687.

#### Increasing complications.

The Revolution brought a repetition of the difficulties of recovering Church records from the outgoing ministers. Where the registers were transmitted they were often in a poor state as, for example, at Old Aberdeen. The complaint was not against the clerk, but against the fact that he was often left in ignorance of a baptism with the result that the parochial register was far from complete. The situation was described as follows:

1. Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, 1663-1690, pp.404-405.

"It is found that the Register of baptisms and burials belonging to this church is deficient and many blanks in it ther being severall persons calling for extracts of the date of their baptism and of their friends burialls which could not be found in the registers, the reason thereof being inquired was found that none or very few of the people did ever come to the Clerk to have their children or friends names registered, but always went to the bedall who collected the dues both of the Clerk and himself and it may be supposed that the officer or bedall forsd might conceal from the Clerk some of the burialls or baptisms for his own advantage".<sup>1</sup>.

The session forthwith decided that no child was to be baptised in the future except they had first gone to the Clerk and registered the particulars.

These grave defects in the existing system must have been well known yet no move came from the Church either to preserve such registers as had survived or to encourage the careful entering of those in current use. Important enactments were passed by the General Assemblies from time to time, however, to impress on the Church the need of regular inspection and proper entering of the books containing the transactions of the Church courts and these provisions would have a salutary effect on record keeping in general.<sup>2</sup> The extent of obedience to these Assembly decisions was far from satisfactory in the parishes and improvements begun were not always sustained.

1. Jan. 22, 1693. Records of Old Aberdeen, New Spalding Club, p.92. 2. Printed Acts, 1700, IX, p.15 ; 1703, XI, p.21 ; 1706, VIII and IX, p.11.

The quality of paper used for the parochial registers was generally inferior; the handwriting is often careless, and respect for a tidy page was a virtue unknown to many registrars. There was no standard size of page or type of volume. Pages as small as 6 ins. by 4½ ins. have been perused. When the paper possessed was finished a new book might be purchased or the old one enlarged, as at Pittenweem, MS. session records, November 1, 1706, "Allowed to John Berry for binding ye Register of baptisms and for clean paper put into it £001 - 16 - 00." This reference to binding the leaves of the register is interesting for it illustrates the lamentable habit of some clerks of making their entries, in the first instance at least, on odd scraps of paper. The register of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh seems to have been made up from such jottings about 1675. A new clerk inherited a collection of slips of paper and diligently copied their contents into the register, prefacing the entries with the following explanation.

"The Register of the childrens names ffollowing wer scattered in little books and papers among the other pepers of the Kirk Session and being gathered together Mr. Adam Mitchell, Clerk to the West Kirk Session, are insert in the register as follows".

Samples of the loose leaves containing a mixture of notes on marriages and baptisms are bound in at the end of the MS. parochial register of the period. They measure about 8 ins. by 5 ins.

It must be added, however, in praise of some parents that they did take the trouble to see that their children would have the benefit of the records should they ever require them. Occasionally the scrutineer will light on a whole page devoted to one family as if a collection of extracts obtained from time to time had been handed to the registrar for the purpose of making a collected entry. Two examples will illustrate this feature. In the Cupar, Fife, records a local laird has a page to himself containing baptisms in the years 1700, 1702, 1703, 1705, 1706. Another family group is that of "William Rigg, apothecary in Coupar" whose family baptisms, ten of them, occur between 1702 and 1719. These baptisms were by different ministers and in different parishes, and they are inserted under the date 1702, which must mean that he asked for a page to be reserved for his use. The second illustration may be taken from the Kirkintilloch register. At the close of September, 1677, there are seven entries relating to the baptisms of the family of the Earl of Kilmarnock, the dates ranging from 1665 to 1675. They are all in a form which suggests that they were entered at the same time.

The obvious need for a revision of the whole system was a concern of some persons for a Bill was drafted for presentation to the last Scottish Parliament. It was to the effect that,

"one authentic register be kept in every parish of the Kingdome by the respective clerks of their Kirk Sessions".

Failure to implement this law was to be made subject to a penalty of "ffyftie pounds Scott's and deprivation from their office". Arrangements were also suggested for the care of the register during a vacancy. Unfortunately nothing is known of the well intentioned person or persons behind this proposed "Act for the Keeping of Registers of Births, Baptisms, Marriages and Burialls". The extant copy in the Register House simply states that it was a "Copie of some private lawes to be presented to the Parliament". The reason for its failure to reach the Statute Book is also unknown.<sup>1</sup>

During the eighteenth century the divided state of the Church in Scotland made the possibility of a complete parochial register kept by the Church of Scotland session clerks more remote. The general state of the Established Church was not promising for the exact performance of such a duty. Private baptismal registers, as against parochial registers, became increasingly common, and many individuals preferred a page of the family Bible to either. Much feeling was aroused by the complications and one parish clerk penned his in a quaint description of the contents of his register:

"Heir is fild wher ye may see a catalog of children initiated into the true Christian church which wil redlie stand until they be al rotten in their graves".<sup>2</sup>

1. Proceedings of the Soc. of Antiq. of Scot., Vol II, 1854-1857, p.313f. 2. MS. Tweedsmuir, 1731.

When the industrious advocate Walter Steuart of Pardovan compiled his "Collections and Observations Methodized; concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland", 1709, he included in the section "Of Baptism", Title IV, par. 13, a categorical pronouncement that,

"There is a Register to be kept of the Names of all Baptized, and of their Parents Names and designations, and of the time of their Baptism, and of the Names of the Witnesses thereto. And of all illegitimate Children's Names, and those of their parents shall be likewise insert;

But of such it is only said, that they are not born in Lawful Marriage. When it is an incestuous Child, it shall suffice to Name the Mother, with the presenter of the Child, that the remembrance of so Heinous a sin may be extinguished. This is conform to the 19th. Article of the foresaid 11 Chapter".

The authority quoted is not a Scottish source, but the French Church Discipline, which had no formal authority in Scotland at all. There was no Scottish law of either Church or State then in force which could have been quoted.

## Non-parochial Registers.

### 1. Episcopal.

The Episcopal ministers who kept registers of their baptisms were able to compile complete records since they were dealing with a limited constituency and their note books were in their own charge. A varied assortment of

these private documents have survived. The Muthill register dates from 1697 and might be classed among the parochial registers for it contains the baptisms of a minister who managed to remain resident - except for short interludes when political disturbances necessitated a suspension of ministry.<sup>1</sup> Bp. Kilgour's register of Cruden dates from 1714.<sup>2</sup> A Dundee register of Bp. Norie, 1722-1726 has been preserved.<sup>3</sup> St. Paul's, Aberdeen have a record dating from 1720 onward<sup>4</sup>; Hunter's Shetland administrations between 1734-1745 are known<sup>5</sup>; fragments of a St. Andrews record were recovered from a tobacconist's shop where its leaves were being used as wrapping paper for snuff, the fragments covering the years 1722 - 1787<sup>6</sup>; the register of Old St. Paul's, Edinburgh is from 1735 onward<sup>7</sup>; and Falconer's register of administrations at Musselburgh, Dalkeith, and Glasgow covers the period 1754 - 1793.<sup>8</sup> Among the interesting documents of later date the register of the chapels of Bairnie and Tillydesk, 1783-1801, are worthy of notice.<sup>9</sup> Others exist in MS. such as that of Bp. Forbes which begins in 1735.<sup>10</sup>

These records as a whole were commendably kept. Many of them deal with the work of itinerating ministers

1. Muthill Register of Baptisms, 1697-1847, printed 1887.
2. Mackay, Three Scottish Bishops.
3. Printed in Scot. Hist. Review, IV (N.S.), 1907, p.73f.
4. Ed. by Smith, New Spalding Club, Miscell. II.
5. Mill's Diary, S.H.S., Appendix. 6. Register...of St. Andrews, Ed. by Winter, S.R.S. 7. The Scot. Antiq., 1892, p.80f. 8. MS. at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, Glasgow. 9. Register...Bairnie and Tillydesk, S.R.S.
10. Forbes' Journals and Church in Ross, Ed. by Craven, p.11.



who are often referred to in Presbyterian records as baptising throughout the land. The same variations of style are present as have been commented on in connection with the parochial registers with the exception that both godfathers and godmothers are mentioned frequently. The terms, however, seem to be used as a variation on the term "witnesses" and not always expressive of the Prayer Book significance. All three terms are used in the Dundee register of Bp. Norie. The Old St. Paul's record sometimes gives sponsors or witnesses and sometimes neither, and is characterised by the fulness of the entries - date, day of the week, and hour of the day being listed, and occasionally accompanied by a note about the place of baptism e.g. "in the Advocate's Close". An entry in this register may also serve to illustrate the use of conditional baptism.

"At Inveresk I administered Hypothetical Baptism to Margaret Erskine, wife of Archd. Stirling of Keir, Mrs. Magdalene Stirling, witness".<sup>1</sup>

The baptisms of Bp. Forbes were often by the conditional formula, and hence it may be presumed that many of the entries in his lists would be duplicates of entries in the registers of the various parishes in which he laboured. In the same register, and in others, there are a number of entries which refer to soldiers and sailors from England who sought baptism for their children by the Prayer Book form. The Jacobite bias

1. The Scottish Antiquary, 1892, p.80; the date is August 3, 1761.

of this prelate is illustrated by the following entry:

"South Leith, May 29, 1737, being (Whitsunday) I baptized a son whom ( by reason of the day ) I named Charles Stewart, to John Stewart Taylor....."<sup>1</sup>.

One of the most interesting of the Episcopal registers inspected was found to be that of John Falconer, now lodged in his last charge, St. Andrews by the Green, Glasgow. It is carefully compiled. The entries give the name of the male parent and often add his occupation. No godparents or witnesses are mentioned except against important baptisms, perhaps owing to the difficulty of getting sponsors whose own baptism would ~~not~~ be recognised. In the case of an exceptional baptism an extended entry is made giving the godfathers or godmothers, together with the names of proxies for other witnesses or godparents, and a statement to the effect that the baptism was administered according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. Occasionally a note is added to an entry, "recommended by - ", and it is quite clear from such clues that this minister was not in the habit of baptising indiscriminately as may be alleged of one of his successors. The marriage certificate appears to have been requested from the parties presenting a child, and in one entry of 1790 it is noted after the parent's name, "he having a certificate from Mr. Walker, Session Clk., of children baptized before in Glasgow, and

1. Journal and Church in Ross, supra, p.11.

another from Wm. Taylor, minister, that nothing was known against him when he left the North Parish".

When sponsors are mentioned they are distinguished from witnesses:

"Paisley, 20th. April, 1775, baptized James L (lawful) son to James Spence, Merch<sup>t</sup> in Air and Anne Logan his spouse, John Wommersley, Sponsor, Mrs. Grove at the Glasshouse, Glasgow, and Loaren (?) Wilson, weaver, Paisley, witnesses."

It was not unknown for members of the Episcopal communion to take the precaution of having their children's baptisms recorded in the parochial register. The St. Andrews parochial register has three pages of baptisms by the Episcopal minister between 1712 and 1741. In an instance of this at Colinton, near Edinburgh, the request for the registration of a child by the son of Sir James Foulis, one of the heritors of the parish, was refused on account of the baptism having been performed by an Episcopal minister. The protest of the father took the form of strong action. He seized the register from the clerk and made the entry with his own hand, adding,

"I, the said Mr. Harry Foulis as above, with mine own hand in respect that Mr. Walker Allan, then incumbent at Collintoun alias Hailes, had discharged his session clerk to insert my childrens baptisms in the register because they were baptized by an Episcopal minister".<sup>1</sup>.

1. The date is 1716. This curiosity is also noted in Roger, Social Life in Scotland, I, p.137. This work has a short account of the baptismal registers.

## 2. Secession and others.

There developed a strong feeling among the Seceders and other groupings of Christian people against patronising the register of the Established Church of Scotland. The general antipathy was shown also by a refusal to accept poor relief or any other form of indebtedness to the Church against which a testimony had been lifted up. It was common for the protesting ministers of all non-established bodies to enjoin their members not to countenance in any way the parochial registers, and the effect of this was the subject of a complaint in the Stirling record at the close of 1742:

"What mistakes or neglects may be found in these last two years, is occasioned by the disorderliness of the Associats".

A note in similar terms is appended to the entries of 1743, but with an explanation added:

"If any names are wanting in this year it is by the disorderliness of the Associats, who will not pay their dues".

The last clause contains the bone of contention which became a Court of Session case in 1765. Some Seceders disputed the payment of dues to an employee of the Established kirk session. It was contended that they put the parish official to no trouble by way of attending the baptismal administration, and therefore no fee ought to be paid. The Lords found that the Seceders were due to pay the stipulated fee for this was based not only upon a decision of a local kirk session but upon immemorial usage. The position seems to have been that even though

a party having a child baptised did not wish the baptism to be entered in the parochial register, if in fact the clerk did register it on learning of the administration he could claim the fee.<sup>1</sup>

Thus whether the non-Established communions kept a register of their own or not there were records of their baptisms entered in some of the parish registers. The non-cooperation of the parents concerned made such registrations most unsatisfactory for the conditions were not present whereby the entries could either be complete or reliable. These baptisms are usually listed separately where they are found at all. The following are some of the registers where such entries were made.

St. Andrews, 1738-1757, irregular entries.

Logie, Perth, Children of Associates, 1744-1775.

Methven, Perth, Children of Associates, 1753-1783.

Tibbermore, Perth, Children of Seceders, 1751-1767.

Forgandenny, Perth, Seceders Children, 1749-1758.

Dunbar, 9 baptisms by a seceding minister, 1747-1765.

Westray, Orkney, irregular entries of the births of children among the Baptists, 1807-1844, and also some baptisms among the Baptists.

Rosemarkie, Ross and Cromarty, Register of Dissenters, 1814-1822.

A list of some of the extant registers of the component sections of the United Free Church is given in the Scottish Church History Society's Records, Vol.1, pp.92-93. The Relief Church registers in this group date back to those of Eastbarns, 1762-1827, and Strathearn, 1766-1816.

1. Morrison's Dictionary of Decisions, X, pp.8014-8016

## Parochial Registers and the Militia Act, 1797.

Great resentment was aroused by the use of the parochial baptismal registers in 1797 for the purpose of compiling lists of all male persons between nineteen and twenty-three years of age, inclusive, who were eligible for military service under the Militia Act. The French Revolution had brought the fear of invasion and it had been decided to conscript extra regiments against this threat. The clerks of the registers were authorised to extract appropriate information from their records. The feeling against this course of action was considerable and it led to disturbances in many parts of the country and the destruction of some of the registers.

The Laing MSS. may be used to illustrate the revolt. The clerk at Bishopbriggs reported in August 22, 1797, that his house had been surrounded by disguised and armed men, who had demanded "all the papers, lists, names I had collected concerning the militia, likewise the session book register..... not a scrap is left with me".<sup>1</sup> At Castle Douglas the Court Room was mobbed and the intruders "snatched up all the minutes and relative lists, tore them to pieces... .. and menaced the judges with personal violence".<sup>2</sup> In Lanark, "Some schoolmasters were deterred from taking up the lists by threats of violence against their persons and properties, and from others the lists and parish records were forcibly carried off".<sup>3</sup> On September 2, 1797, a communication to the Lord Advocate stated that the school-

1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Laing MSS. II, p.610.

2. Ibid., p.612.

3. Ibid., p.616.

master's house of Carstairs was set on fire and the mob would not allow it to be extinguished until they had forced him to produce and burn all that parish registers".<sup>1</sup> The clerk at Tranent complained, that "rioters had attacked his house and taken the lists and the parish registers".<sup>2</sup>

Other sources confirm the unpopularity of the Militia Act. Two cases involving individuals may be cited.

A feuer in the parish of Campsie visited the schoolmaster and requested a sight of the register of baptisms. Having inspected it he found that his son was liable to be balloted for military service. Thereupon he demanded that the name be expunged or the date altered; and on the demand being refused he seized the register and tore out the relevant page and destroyed it. The Crown agent was informed; legal proceedings were ordered; but the matter was settled out of court by the voluntary payment of a fine of twenty-one pounds sterling.<sup>3</sup>

One case was taken to the Court of Session. The accused was a session clerk in the parish of Dunnottar, and the charge was that of giving a false certificate, "by which the name of a person, who was within legal age to be balloted for a militia-man," was removed from the eligibility lists.<sup>4</sup>

It may be inferred that the use of the baptismal registers for the purposes of conscription would not assist their popularity in the years which followed.

1. Ibid., p. 620.

Ibid., p. 624.

3. Cameron, The Parish of Campsie, p. 243.

4. Dawson against Munro, November 18, 1801.

The collapse of the system.

Enough has been said to indicate that the parochial registers had lost all claim to that name. They had never been satisfactory and were in the main sectional, and hence untrustworthy for the purposes of either Church or State. Two additional sources of evidence may be adduced to confirm this judgment.

The source of comment which offers the widest conspectus is the Old Statistical Account of Scotland edited by Sir John Sinclair from reports on the parishes of the land written at his request by the parish ministers. This treasure store of information about Scotland circa 1796 provides a copious commentary on the state of the parochial registers of baptisms. The index to the twenty-one volumes requires to be consulted under this topic to assess its worth as a source. The difficulty which serves to produce the information is usually the inability to say what is the total population of a particular parish because the register was one of baptisms and not of births. "On this account", wrote the minister of Ormiston, "children who are not baptized ( as several are not ) are not registered. Children also whose parents are unable or unwilling to pay the dues to the clerk are generally not registered".<sup>1</sup> Again, from Auchterarder it is reported, "The average number of births cannot be ascertained with great exactness, owing to some of the dissenting parents neglecting to get their children's names inserted in

1. Old Stat. Acc. IV, p.168.



the parish register, or refusing to pay the clerk's dues."<sup>1</sup>. The Kinglassie minister wrote in the same strain, the number of births not being known " as few are inclined to have their names recorded in the parish register, which subjects them to a small expence".<sup>2</sup>.

From the non-ecclesiastical side there were strong protests against the existing system or the lack of one. In 1801 out of 850 parishes making returns to the Government in the Population Abstract of that year only 99 claimed to be in possession of anything like really parochial registers.<sup>3</sup>.

A "Report of the Deputy Clerk Register of Scotland to the Commissioners of Public Records", 1810, voiced official dissatisfaction in the strongest terms:

"It is a matter of great and general regret that the regular formation and safe custody of our local records have been so little attended to, and so imperfectly provided for.....in comparatively few parishes are the existing records of greater antiquity than the beginning of last century, and many of them of much less, it must be manifest that the present system of custody is altogether unsafe and improper." <sup>4</sup>.

The General Assembly of 1810 took notice of the position and appointed a committee to examine the matter. Its recommendations were issued in 1816 and they urged

1. Ibid., IV, p.35.
2. Ibid., IV, P.502.
3. Waters, Parochial Registers, p.91.
4. Fourth Annual Report to the Commissioners of Public Records, pp.46-48.

a more vigilant supervision. Like so many other Assembly proposals, however, this one fell on stony ground.

The most impressive evidence, because it was factual and exhaustive, was gathered by Dr. James Cleland of Glasgow in the years 1819 and 1829. With permission of the magistrates he began a survey of the population of the city. The Glasgow register had been in being since 1609 and was generally supposed to be reliable, and was certainly carefully kept so far as the actual registrations included were concerned. The results of Cleland's survey were published in what were known as "The Glasgow Bills". The work was done as systematically as the situation then existing allowed. All religious denominations were requested to submit an exact total of their baptisms on both occasions. The dissenters who did not baptise were asked to give a return of births. The results were as follows:

1820

Births and Baptisms : Reported total.  
Males      Females.

From Ministers and lay-pastors, etc.	2587	2444	5031.
Still-born.	135	112	247.
Total.	2722	2556	5278.
Of these there were registered.	1368	1293	2661
Number of unregistered exclusive of still-born.	1219	1151	2370.

1830

	Births and Baptisms :		Reported total.
	Male	Female.	
From Ministers, lay pastors, etc.	3281	3116	6397.
Still born	246	225	471.
Total	3527	3341	6868.
Of these there were registered.	1678	1547	3225
No. of unregistered exclusive of still born.	1603	1569	3175.

The baptisms in this period were divided into :

Church of Scotland,	3123.
Secession,	664.
Relief,	671.
Roman Catholic,	915.
Episcopal, Independents, Methodist, and births among Baptists, Jews, and Quakers,	1024.

These compilations and analyses dispelled illusions and provided undeniable proof that the parochial register of Glasgow was sectional and gravely inadequate as a public record.

Cleland also reported that a Committee of the Town Council of Edinburgh of date 3rd. December, 1833, had

estimated that the total number of registered baptisms was only a little more than a quarter of the births,<sup>1</sup> so that the position of the registers in Edinburgh was even more deplorable than those of Glasgow, thus confirming an estimate of Arnot in his "History of Edinburgh", 1779, who had said:

"As to the Registers....in Edinburgh, they have of late been kept in such a manner as to render them infallible sources of error.....As for the Register of Births, it does not deserve the name".<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction of civil registration.

On the basis of his statistics Cleland urged his plea for an "Act Improving the Parochial Registers of Scotland". One had been introduced by Lord Napier, but Parliament had been prorogued before it could be passed, if it had been considered as worthy of the Statute Book. If an Act could be passed in the near future dealing with the whole situation, Cleland suggested that in it the exaction of fees for registration from those, say, with less than £ 300 income from property of trade should be abolished and the loss to the clerks reimbursed from the poor's rates.

In 1838 the Member of Parliament for Haddington intimated his intention of introducing a Bill for the improvement of the Registers, but nothing came of the proposal.

1. Cleland, A Letter...respecting the Parochial Registers of Scotland, 1834. 2. p.332.

There had been developments in England which were a stimulus to the advocates of reform in Scotland. The same chaotic state of affairs had prevailed south of the border and the law courts were being harassed continually by a lack of acceptable evidence on matters affecting inheritances, titles, minorities and the like and it was suspected that grave injustices were being done, or in danger of being done, by a failure to find support for pleas from the parochial registers. Entries in these records were not acceptable in the law courts as evidence of birth and parentage for the registers were often made up from rough notes at an interval after the time of baptism, and in any case they were not in official custody and, hence, were open to fraudulent practice. Carelessness, inaccuracy, and inefficiency everywhere abounded. The Dissenters were especially disadvantaged for whatever make-weight might be got for a case by an extract from a parish register, the registers of the Dissenters, kept with scrupulous care at Dr. William's Library, London, were not in any way recognised for the purposes of legal decisions.<sup>1</sup>

In 1812 Parliament passed the Act commonly known as Rose's Act, after Sir Charles Rose, its sponsor. Its full title was, "An Act for the better regulating and preserving Parish and other Registers of Birth, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials in England".<sup>2</sup> There were defects in it but so far as it went it was an admirable and welcome advance. Unfortunately the machinery for its

1. Chester Waters, The Parish Registers of England, 1883, p. 89.

2. 52, Geo. III, c.14b.

operation was never attended to and the Act was ineffective. The Act which is the basis of the present system in England was passed in 1836, and additions were made to it in 1840 ( 3 & 4, Vict.,c.92 ) and in 1858 ( 21 Vict., c.25 ) in favour of the registers of the Dissenters. By this Act the principle was accepted that the State had a duty to operate public registers irrespective of the religious opinions of the citizens. The acceptance of civil registration was not won without a great struggle; but the need was so clamant that the reformers won the battle. The clergy, however, were allowed to retain the parochial registers they already possessed.

The merit of the new principle was not granted recognition for Scotland until 1854 when the Registration Act now in force was passed by Parliament ( 17 & 18 Vict. c.80 ). It possessed the same features in general as the Act for England of 1836, with such minor adjustments as were necessary to suit the Scottish situation. One major element of difference was that the plea of the Deputy Clerk Register in 1810 for the centralisation of the old parochial registers was accepted. The registers were taken into custody by the Registrar General in the following manner:

"All existing Parochial Registers, Minutes, and Documents of every description relating to the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages which shall have been kept in every Parish prior to 1st. January, 1855, shall,

as far as regards such Registers, Minutes, and Documents made and entered prior to the year 1820 be transmitted, under the Direction of the Sheriff, to the Registrar-General, for preservation in the General Registry Office at Edinburgh.....And the Registers, Minutes and Documents from 1820 to the said 1st. January, 1855,.....shall at the end of 30 years after the said 1st. January, be transmitted, under the direction of the Sheriff, to the Registrar-General for Preservation as aforesaid".

Provision was made for the extracting from the books of the sessions of any entries referring to registration, all such transcripts to be authenticated by the Sheriffs. When these session records were examined, however, it was found that in some cases these registrations were so mixed up with the minutes of session business that the Act had to be amended in 1860 ( 23&24 Vict., c.85 ) to authorise complete volumes which contained a large proportion of the necessary particulars to be deposited at Edinburgh.

The General Assembly was not opposed in principle to reformation. In 1853 a Committee of the Assembly had confessed "that the present Registers of Births (sic ), Deaths and Marriages were inadequate to the wants of society, and that nothing short of a legislative enactment could remedy the evil".

When Civil Registration arrived the Church of Scotland

had to adjust the parochial position. At Banff, and elsewhere, instructions were given to continue as before in the terms of the Act for the completing of registers in use. "Feby. 5, 1855; The Session instructed the Clerk to go on keeping a Register of all baptisms in the congregation in the same manner as before the New Registration Act came into operation on the 1st. day of January, this year".<sup>1</sup> In the General Assembly the Act VII, 1856, was passed directing that a Register of Baptisms must be kept in every parish, showing the name and designations of the parents, and of two witnesses, and the date of the administration. So far as the ministers were concerned they were now by law compelled to request a person desiring the baptism of a child to produce the certificate of registration of its birth, and should this not be produced, the minister concerned was required to acquaint the civil registrar with the fact and give all the information in his possession. Should the name of the child be altered at baptism from that on the certificate of birth this fact was also to be intimated to the registrar. Forms for such emergencies were provided by the State.

Another significant step was taken in 1867. In that year instructions were sent to the parishes that Communion Rolls were to be compiled and kept in good order by the kirk session of each parish. This completed the recognition of the fact which had existed for a



considerable time that the Church of Scotland was only one among the Christian Churches of the land, and that the parish churches were no longer necessarily the churches of the parishes. Multitudes were by this time either unbaptised in infancy, or not baptised by the parish minister, and owned no allegiance to the Established Church; and, in reverse, the Church of Scotland could claim no duties from them other than what was implied in the financial support of the stipend and the repair, or provision, of a church building. The latter also ceased to be a liability of the heritors in 1925.

## Chapter Nine.

### Baptismal Fees

## Baptismal Fees .

In pre-Reformation times the baptismal offering was one of the perquisites of the priest in charge of a baptismal church. He could claim the benefit of all baptisms in the area served by his church, and the privilege was defended against all who would usurp the right. The editor of the Book of Deer gives some references to support the argument that in the period of the Celtic Church this area of service began on a tribal basis, the sum to be exacted at each baptism being known as the "baptism penny".<sup>1</sup> Within the Roman system it was the general rule that to maintain the privileges of the clergy of the parish and cathedral churches, the conventual and collegiate chapels were not permitted to possess a font. The baptismal churches as based on the parish system - as against the clan or tribal system - date from not earlier than David I when the principle of parochial divisions was adopted in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

The devices used by the Roman clergy earned for the churchmen a reputation for rapacity. When the Lollard visitor, Quintin Folkhryde, made his tour of the country about 1410 he spoke out bluntly against the system of levies for sacramental privileges and held that the priests should "administer without price and freely the sacraments of God".<sup>3</sup> How far the sacrament of baptism was included in this and other denunciations

1. Book of Deer, Spalding Club, Preface cxxxii, note.

2. Cosmo Innes, Scotland in the Middle Ages, p. 132.

3. MacNab, MS., Scottish Lollardy, Glasgow University.

of ecclesiastical rapacity it is probably impossible to estimate. The matter did not receive the publicity awarded to other forms of exaction in money or in goods. If a clue in Luther's Babylonish Captivity is indicative of Roman usage in a general way baptism may not have been exploited to the same degree as other sacraments. If the sacrament of baptism, said the Saxon Reformer, "had had to be given to adults and those of full age, it seems as if it could have hardly preserved its efficacy and its glory, in the presence of that tyranny and avarice and superstition which has supplanted all Divine ordinances among us. In this case too, no doubt, fleshly wisdom would have invented its preparations, its worthiness, its reservations, its restrictions, and other like nets for catching money; so that the water of baptism would be sold no cheaper than parchments are now".<sup>1</sup>

All that can be said is that the right to administer baptism was worth something to the parish priests and provided adequate reason for the retention of baptismal churches.

The Reformers and sacramental fees.

The Reformation brought a significant change by linking baptism with the preaching of the Word and

1. Wace and Buchheim, Luther's Primary Works, p.340.

by making every church a preaching station. Hence every church was a proper place for the administration of this rite. In addition to the removal of a privileged position from the parish churches the Reformed ministers expressly repudiated everything which savoured of the principle of "selling the sacraments". The detested bounties and exactions of the Roman Church were pilloried and abjured in righteous wrath. "The uppermost Claithe, the Corps-present, the Clerk-maill, the Pasche offeringis, Teynd Aill, and all handlingis Upaland, can neathir be required nor resavit of godlie conscience".<sup>1.</sup>

The Reformed Church became extremely sensitive on this point of renou<sup>n</sup>cing clerical exactions for services rendered in such matters as the sacraments. The minister at Crail was deposed in 1577 on a charge, inter alia, of "selling of the sacraments"<sup>2.</sup>; and in 1613 the minister of Killallan was suspended from his office on a similar charge.<sup>3.</sup> The General Assembly in 1596 reviewed the whole matter of ministerial supply and obligations and resolved, that "if any be found ane seller of the sacraments, that he be deposit simpliciter".<sup>4.</sup> Much later, in 1650, the minister of Kilbryde in the Synod of Argyle was found guilty of some charges, among them "that he takes .....twelve pence (sterling) out of ilk baptisme" and appropriated the fines for discipline to his own use. He was deposed and the charge declared vacant.<sup>5.</sup>

1. I Book of Discipline, Laing K.W., II, p222.  
2. B.U.K., I, p.396. 3. Trans., Scot. Eccles. Soc., 1911, p.175. 4. B.U.K., III, p.865. 5. Minutes of the Synod of Argyle, S.H.S., I, p.160.

It is therefore a mistake to affirm that the baptismal fees of the Reformed Church were a heritage from the Roman Church as was stated by Lee when discussing these matters of finance. "Hence", he states, "arose the custom of exacting dues for the administration of baptism".<sup>1</sup> The same opinion found expression in legal decisions which will be quoted later in this chapter. The confusion seems to have arisen through a misunderstanding of the nature of the baptismal dues. There was never any authoritative decision of the Reformed Church in favour of a money or other payment to a minister for administering baptism. Immediately anything of the kind was requested by a minister he became a "seller of the sacraments" and subject to the highest censure.

The principle as thus stated is simple and straightforward. There were, however, certain monetary payments associated with baptism in the Reformed churches and the point at which they emerge is in connection with the employees of the kirk sessions. The church officer expected to be recompensed for his services and the clerk of the parochial register, where one existed, was allowed to make a charge for registration. By implication the 1616 Act anent registers contemplated a charge also for extracts from the records by holding out the inducement to ministers that should they introduce a parochial register they and their executors would have their extracts free of charge. It is on account of these perquisites that confusion arose as to the relationship between the fees and the administration.

1. Lee, History, I, p.40.

Theoretically there was no charge, and this was true so far as the minister was concerned, but in many parishes and at various times his services could not be obtained until the beadle and the clerk had been attended to. Thus arose the phrase "baptismal dues" which ought to have meant dues payable in connection with baptism, and not dues for baptism itself. To the presenter of a child the distinction might not seem important as dues had to be paid, normally, before baptism, though, no doubt, baptism was often obtained without any payment being made where the beadle and the clerk were ignored; but the necessity laid upon the sessions to make suitable and attractive financial provision for their employees generally led to the formulation of a rule which aimed at preventing anyone from receiving benefits for nothing.

In the first stages of the Reformation no fee of any kind seems to have been exacted. The reader who might keep the register where it existed was a salaried official and not dependent on perquisites. As for the beadle, at St. Andrews in October, 1569, a new session officer was appointed and he was directed to conform to certain rules on pain of dismissal. The first of these rules was, "That he nor his mane nather ask nor craif money fra na persoun that hes thair barnis baptizit, nor that ar contractit in mariage, onles it be gevin frelie and na forder".<sup>1</sup> This is a clear expression of the outlook of a group of Reformed

1. St. Andrews K. S. Reg., S.H.S., II, p.651.

churchmen in the earliest stage of usage.

The settlement of a fixed sum to be paid to the officers of the sessions soon begins to appear, however, no doubt as a sensible method of preventing extortions on the part of beadies or others who might be tempted to use their position to their own advantage. At Glasgow in 1591, two shillings Scots was allowed to the beadies for their services<sup>1</sup>, and the same sum was allowed to the clerk at Elgin in 1597," for registering of everie bairnes name to be baptest<sup>2</sup>.

It is at this stage, when the principle of a fee was conceded, that the whole matter of baptismal dues becomes involved. The situation is best explained from the point of view of the sessions. In the normal case this court was responsible for church management and discipline, the oversight of local education, poor relief, and parish affairs generally. They employed the beadie who might also be bellman, gravedigger and general servant of the session: and they appointed the schoolmaster who was also a multiple functionary, being usually also clerk of the session, keeper of the registers, reader of the Scripture, catechist, and precentor. Money had to be found to pay these employees and an obvious source of revenue was the baptismal dues which included the registration fee and the payment for the attendance of the beadie. The absence of any law in Church or State covering the levying of such dues left the sessions to work out their own arrangements. In the course of time three different situations seem to have developed

1. Wodrow Biog. Colls., II, 2, pp.61-62. . 2. Records of Elgin, Spalding Club, Nov.24, 1597.



all offering a different interpretation of the uses to which these dues might be put.

1. First in order of appearance seems to have been the recognition that these monies belonged to the clerk and the beadle in their own right, in virtue of their offices. The early arrival of this point of view is illustrated in the above quotations and in those of a following section listing samples of the dues authorised in various parishes. The rights of the beadle were strongly asserted by the Synod of Argyll in May, 1640, when that court was faced with an inability to obtain kirk officers. It was decided that " for the better maintenance ( Of the officers ) it has beine ane ancient custome that every kirk officer was in use of being payed of a halfe firlet of meall of everie four horse-ploughgang of land, half a mark out of every mareage, halfe a mark of every buriall, and fourtie pennies of every baptisme. And that the people for the most part now are refractory to make thankfull payment according to use and wont. Therefore it is ordained that the moderator represent the same to the Earle of Argyll, to the end that he may give charge and warrand to his bailzies and officers within his bounds to cause every tennent make thankfull payment to the kirk officers of the said accustomed fiall..."<sup>1</sup>.

Later, the Privy Council put out an Act in 1687 to safeguard the income of the parish employees when

1. Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, S.H.S., I, pp.171-2.

their perquisites were threatened by the setting up of congregational registers by the ministers who had accepted the Indulgence of that year. The Privy Council supported the claims of the existing system by the "Act of Privy Council in favours of the Clerks or Kirk-Sessions and other Church Officers of the Regular Established Clergie, Edinburgh, the first day of December, 1687". This Act stated :

"Forasmuch As the King's most Excellent Majesty hath signified it is His Royal Pleasure that the Clerks of Kirk Sessions, and other Church-Officers, such as Readers, Precenterers, Beddels, and others, who serve the regular established Clergie, should not be prejudged of their Rights and accustomed Fees and Casualties, arising to them by Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials ( the ordinar mean of their Subsistence ), but that they should have the same as bygones since the date of His Majestie's late Gracious Proclamation of Indulgence, and in tyme coming ( His Majesty in His said late Gracious Proclamation, having declared that he will maintain the regular Clergie in all their Rights and Possessions ) : Therefore the Lords of His Majestie's Privy Council, in pursuance of His Majestie's Royal Pleasure, Do hereby Declare that the said Clerks of Kirk Sessions, and other Officers of the regular Clergie, are not to be prejudged of their respective accustomed Dues, Casualties, and Benefits, arising to them by Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials; and Ordains the same to be payed to them for

bygones, since the date foresaid and in tyme coming, by the persons concerned as formerly; and hereby Requires the several Magistrates of Burgh and Land to see the ordinar Diligence put in Execution against the persons respective lyable as aforesaid.....".

This attempt to salvage the revenues of the parish officials from the confusion which the Indulgence had created may have adversely affected the clerks and officers of the Meeting Houses, but it was a necessary expedient to preserve the schoolmasters and parish officers from greater penury than they had hitherto experienced. Had the Revolution been later in arriving there was the genesis of a considerable amount of tension in such a decree, and the occasion of disputes such as arose when the eighteenth secessions created similar difficulties.

Two relevant disputes given in legal records may be cited. The first arose in December, 1740, and as it came up before the Court of Session the issue turned on whether the emoluments from marriages and baptisms belonged to the session clerk or to the precentor when these offices were held by different persons. The precentor abandoned the case because the session clerk had a much better title.<sup>1</sup>

The second is the action mentioned in the section on the registers of Seceders. In it the Seceders refused to pay the dues demanded for baptism and the decision went against them on the ground that these

1. Morrison, Dictionary of Decisions, p.7916. Vide also Supplement V, p.599.

fees were justified by "immemorial usage". The Encyclopedia of the Laws of Scotland also refers to the salary of beadles as coming from "fees immemorially in use to be paid on the occasion of marriages and baptisms".<sup>1.</sup>

2. Alongside this outlook there appears to have been an understanding in some quarters that the fees were at the disposal of the kirk sessions to be disbursed by them at their discretion. They might award them to the officials simpliciter or apportion them as they thought fit according to prevailing needs.

A situation at Old Aberdeen in 1646 illustrates this. The appointment of a new schoolmaster was being discussed and the following was the finding of the court :

"24 May, 1646. The sd day the sessiōne tacking it to ther consideratione the gryte burding of debt that lay on them by reasone off the extraordinarie chargs wared on thacking and sarking off the wholl Kirk Iles and too-fales find it expedient that the marradge silwer, baptisme, and buriall, and all such casualities qlk vsed before to be payed to the Scoolm<sup>r</sup> and Clark sould be frome this tyme furth so lang as the forsd sessione thought gud uplifted by ane in the name of the sessione to be imployed for the publict behoof and for defraying for the forsd debt and that certain modiefied stipend sould

1. Edn. 1927, III, p.346, par. 782f.

be condescendit upon to be given to the Schoolm<sup>r</sup> and clark at two termes in eakwall halffis proportionalie".<sup>1.</sup>

At Strathendrick in June, 1694, the session appointed a schoolmaster to keep the register of baptisms and marriages and as payment for his trouble they allowed him "halfe the benefete" and retained the other half for their other responsibilities, the explanation being given that the schoolmaster could not "praesent". Later it was agreed that he could have the whole fee if he found a presenter.<sup>2.</sup>

3. Yet a third view emerged, namely, that the heritors had an interest in the totality of revenues accruing to the session. There may have been parishes where this claim was not disputed, and it is certainly true that the fees were sometimes arranged at a meeting of the heritors; but when the point of sharing was resisted at law it was ruled that the heritors had not a title to any of the revenues arising out of registration.<sup>3</sup> A few notices will illustrate the suggestion that these fees, or a proportion of them, should be at the disposal of the heritors.

A attempt to pass a law on the matter is expressed in an "Act Anent the Poor" included in the Minutes of the Parliament dated January 31, 1701. The relevant section ran thus :

"And farder it is hereby statut and ordained that the half of the Collections at the Church Doors and of what

1. Records of Old Aberdeen, New Spalding Club, II, p.22.

2. Smith, History of Strathendrick, p.60.

3. In the eighteenth century the additional levies for the privilege of private baptism went into the poor's box.

arises from Baptismes, Burialls, or other wayes for the use of the Poor.....And the other half of these Collections and perquisites to be lyable to incident charges and other usual burdens at the disposeall of the Kirk Sessions provydeing that the superflus if any be shall be applyed together with the fors'd first moyetie toward the maintinance of the Poor...." <sup>1</sup>.

The notice terminates with the sentence "This Act read and Ordered to be marked a first reading". It seems to have been read only once in draft and never came up again before the dissolution of the Scottish Parliament in 1707.

An action was raised in the Court of Session in November, 1752, by some heritors to compel a Kirk Session to account for the management of the poor fund and in the course of the hearing it was pleaded successfully that it was a misappropriation of the clerk's dues to use them for that purpose.<sup>2</sup>

The use to which these dues ought to be put was again the cause of an action in December, 1797, when some heritors claimed a portion of the dues for the poor fund. The minister of the parish in question admitted that after paying the clerk and the beadle some of the money had been used for the poor, but claimed that this

1. Acts Parl. Scot., IX, appendix, p.99b.
2. Morrison, Decisions, p.10570; also in Synopsis p.1589.
3. Ibid., p.7630.

had been a misappropriation of the balance, though this balance might be used by the session for other purposes at their discretion, the heritors having no just claim upon it.

### Survey of the fees exacted.

The fees which were levied varied from parish to parish. The following table provides samples of some of the seventeenth century dues.

Parish.	Year.	Clerk :	Beadle.	Reference.
St. Andrews	1611	5/	1/8	Minutes of S. of Fife, p.29.
Glasgow	1613	3/4		Wodrow, Biog. Colls., II, pp.61-62.
Tynninghame	1618	3/4		Ritchie, Chs. of St. Baldred, p.169.
Stirling	1622	2/		Burns, Communion Plate p.484, note.
Leith	1638	6/		So. Leith Records, 28th. Feby.
Galston	1640	4/	4/	Edgar, Old Ch. Life, p.227.
Argyll (Synod)	1640		3/4	Minutes of S. of Argyll, I, p.12.
Ayr	1650	6/	2/	Pagan, Annals of Ayr, p.89.
Dumfermline	1650	4/	4/	Henderson, Extracts, p.33. Increased after 1650.
Alyth	1661	6/		Meikle, An Old Session Book, p.36.

Parish	Year	Clerk ;	Beadle	Reference.
Old Aberdeen	1663	6/	4/	Records of Old Aber., N. Spald. Cl., II
Kilmarnock	1670	4/	2/8	Edgar, supra, p.227.
Mauchline	1673	6/	2/	Edgar, ibid., p.227.
Elgin	1697	2/		Crammond, Elgin K. S. Records, Nov. 24.

The variations are astonishingly wide. In the case of the Edinburgh register the fee covered the services of the clerk and an assistant and has, on this account been omitted from the above table. The Council in the capital decided in 1650 that the clerk be allowed "allanerlie dureing all the dayis of his lyfetyme to exact the pecuniall soumes underwritten of everie baptisme and marriage viz. twelff shillings Scottis money of everie baptisme quhos parents are of minor degree, not exceeding twentie four shilling money forsaid to be exacted of the highest,,,,,"<sup>1</sup>

In the eighteenth century the reckoning is sometimes in Scots money and sometimes in sterling. In the latter, toward the end of the century, dues to the clerk ranged from fourpence, i.e. a groat, (Kilmarnock) to eightpence (West Kilbride) with many round about sixpence ( Liberton,  $\frac{1}{2}$  merk, Rynd and Dunrossness 6d.); and the the beadle about a groat ( Kilmarnock, Dunrossness, West Kilbride, Liberton ). These were considerable sums for the poorer classes to be asked to pay. A ploughman's wages about the same period worked out about 5/6d. per week,

<sup>1</sup>. Wood, Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, II, p.304.



an artisan about 1/- perday , and day labourers between 8d. and 10d. <sup>1.</sup> To give the sums expected for the registration of a baptism was more than many were prepared to sacrifice. The family Bible could be used for the purpose without charge, and its use was often considered to be all that was necessary. On the other hand as against the cost of the customary celebrations on the occasion of a birth the charge for registration may not have been such a large item.

These charges were for normal baptisms. Where private baptism was allowed as a privilege a levy was imposed for the benefit of the poor. At Aberdeen, May 1599, it was enacted "that no bairnes be baptezit heirefter bot in the preching dayes in tyme of preiching, without the barne be tryit be the minister and medwyff to be weak; and that bairnis be presented to baptisme be the father of the barne, or vtheris in his name, on the preiching day immediatlie efter the birth therof, vnder the paine of fywe pundis, to be payit befor the baptisme ". <sup>2.</sup> This statute was repealed in August, 1611.

During the Second Episcopacy the treasurer of South Leith was allowed to augment his funds in the same way.

"27, Nov. 1673. Ilk person of what degree or qualitie soever that craves the benefit of privat baptism to any child by opening the kirk door for that end at any tyme except at ordinar tym of sermon shall for the said opening of the door and benefit foresaid pay 30s. scots by and attour what formerly was in use to be payit". <sup>3.</sup>

1. Graham; Social Life in Scot., p.261. 2. Selections,p.76.  
3. Robertson, So. Leith Records, p.128.

The benefit could be got at a lower sum at Drymen in 1696 where the session decided that "quhoever sends for the minister to marry or baptise out of the church shall pay for each marriage 20 shillings and for each baptism 10 shillings, toties quoties." <sup>1.</sup>

An alternative way of dealing with the matter was for a collection to be taken on such occasions. It is difficult, however, to know whether the references to these collections would always be classified in contemporary thought as relating to private baptism, for the fact of a collection presumes an audience. If they may be so classified the following two samples are relevant.

12th. December, 1653, "Collected at Eglinton when Sir John Cunninghame's 2nd. son was baptised £25. 4. 0." <sup>2.</sup>

June 4, 1696, "Collected upon Tuesday after at a Baptism, oo. 13. 04." <sup>3.</sup>

By the eighteenth century these additional sources of revenue are commonly stated to be for the use of the hard pressed poor's box. The treasurer's book at Mauchline has twenty entries in 1748 of the sum of 12/- contributed from this source, and other ranging from 4/- to 16/-.<sup>4.</sup> Apparently imposition was made according to the social status of the persons involved. At Cockpen

1. Smith, Strathendrick, supra, p.84.

2. Lee, Kilwinning, p.223. 3. MS Pittenweem Session Records.

4. Edgar, Old Church Life, p.210.

in 1774 a heritor was assessed at £1. 1/-, a farmer at 3/-, and others at 1/6d.<sup>1</sup>. In other areas there was a flat rate. The Traquair parishioners were charged 1/- sterling for "private charity" in 1763.<sup>2</sup> The session at Campsie in 1794 operated a flat rate of 2/6d,<sup>3</sup> and at Stonehouse in 1801, the levy was 5/-<sup>4</sup>. The East Monkland session revised their fees at a heritors' meeting in October, 1802, and decided that the clerk and beadle would thereafter receive 8d. and 4d. respectively, and that the privilege of private baptism or marriage would cost the parties concerned 5/- "over and above the usual collections on such occasions".<sup>5</sup>

Baptism was indirectly a source of revenue through the fines imposed in the exercise of discipline. Securities for good conduct, or specifically for the learning of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed, were often taken before baptism was granted to the child of an erring parent, and there would be occasions when such fines were forfeited. There were also local rules to guard against the tendency on the part of some to unduly delay baptism. The kirk session at Kirkcaldy, for example, in November, 1622, stipulated the time limit to be two preaching days, or fourteen days, after birth, and those allowing their

1. Burns, Old Communion Plate, p.482, note.

2. Gunn, Book of the Church of Traquair, p.97.

3. Cameron, The Parish of Campsie, p.9.

4. Burns, supra, p.482 note. 5. MacArthur, New Monkland Parish, 1890, under date 25th. Oct., 1802.

children to remain unbaptised for a longer period were liable to a penalty of forty shillings. Three years later this was reduced to six shillings for the poor.<sup>1.</sup>

Another factor enters into the registration fees with the introduction by the Exchequer of the Stamp Act of 1783 which imposed a duty of 3d. on every entry into a parish register. The restriction of this tax to parochial registers was recognised to be unfair and two years later it was extended to the dissenting registers as well. This law is referred to in the following decision at Banff on June 1, 1787:

"All neglecting to put their childrens' names into the parish register and paying the dues to the Session Clerk, and also the tax imposed by the Act of Parliament, are to be prosecuted and for the failure the minister is not to baptize any child until he get a line from the Session Clerk certifying that all dues are paid. The Session appoint copies of this to be sent to the other clergymen residing in Banff, and hope that they will not baptize any children without a line from the Session Clerk."<sup>2.</sup>

This tax was extremely unpopular and, no doubt, accounts for the gap in the parochial register of Longrutton, Kirkcudbright, between 1783 and 1806. The protest, if such it was, need not have continued so long for the Act was repealed in 1793.

1. Burns, supra, p.488.

2. Annals of Banff, New Spalding Club, II, p.107.

The smaller non- Established Presbyterian groups were greatly disturbed. They were extremely sensitive on the matter of Church-State relations. The Societies with their Covenanting traditions discussed the question of the tax with much perturbation of spirit. A sample of the anxiety that was current may be taken from the MS. Letter Book of John Howie of Lochgorn. In a letter to Robert Craige, Paisley, dated February, 1787, he intimates the interest aroused and asks advice.

"As some correspondence has the new taxes, viz., on births, baptisms, marriages, and burials, under their consideration which some look upon as sin in themselves and we have done nothing as to that in our Societies. As to that matter I desire to know your mind anent that matter before our next correspondence".

The phrasing is not the best but the point being made is clear. It is noted in the same hand that no reply had been received to this query. Again, when writing to David Hackney on the death of his son, dated Lochgorn, July, 1788, he discusses the tax in relation to Scripture. Some taxes, he concluded are lawful and some are not. "Tax on birth," he suggests, " seems a tax on God's Providence". His final word was that nothing should be done precipitously "against the light the Lord gives you from his word and your own conscience".<sup>1</sup>

An illustration of how the matter worked out in an Episcopal congregation may be cited from the register

1. Coventanter MSS., Clagow University Library.

of John Falconer of St. Andrews by the Green Chapel, Glasgow. Since the entries on the tax occur from 1783 this minister apparently did not recognise himself to be a dissenting clergyman in the terms of the Act, but as Church of England, therefore liable to impose the tax. There is a mark opposite each baptism indicating that the duty had been paid, or in the case of pauper baptisms that nothing had been taken. Against February, 1784, there is the entry:

"Paid duty to Barrony Sess. Clk, At Aug. 24, 1784...  
Paid duty on Christenings from Oct., 1783 till this date - received Poundage at 2sh. per £, - 13/9 "

Another entry reads:

"Duty collected for Christenings by J. Falconer of the English Chapel in Glasgow from 24 Aug., 1784, till first October, 1785.....Collected at all Christenings, £00. 19. 3."

Again, against 1st. October, 1787:

"Paid duty till 1st. Oct, 1787".

Again:

"Duty paid till 1st. Oct., 1788, £00. 16. 9."

Other relevant notes occur. Sometimes it is stated that the duty was paid to the Barony clerk direct, or a date and signature is entered, e.g., "18th. Oct., 1791, W.W. Sess. Clk ", which must mean that the register was inspected to check the dues paid over.<sup>1</sup>

1. MS. Registers of John Falconer at St. Andrews by the Green, Episcopal, Glasgow.

In all this story of fees the ministers did not benefit financially. The Episcopal chaplain Morer, when contrasting conditions in Scotland with those in England, in 1702, wrote:

"They have no casual perquisites which we call Surplice-Fees: Christenings, Marriages and Burials are gratis, at least nothing is demanded but left to the Generosity of the Party, which seldom shews itself on these occasions".<sup>1</sup>

To the present day.

The absorption of the duty of caring for the poor and the education of the young by the civil administration, together with the scheme of civil registration, removed the bases on which the charges had generally been erected. All that remains of the dues is the small charge levied for the proclamation of the banns of marriage. No fee of any sort is now associated with baptism in the Church of Scotland, or, as a general rule, in other Churches. The laws and traditions of the Church of Scotland, however, at no time bound the conduct of other Churches or their ministers, and these congregations have always been free to make a charge for services rendered if they so desired. It is well known that in the nineteenth century, and less frequently in the twentieth, ~~that~~ certain ministers in non-Presbyterian charges did make a charge for the baptism of infants. The minister of Kilwinning when writing the history of his parish remarked on the practice and its repercussions

1. Morer, Short Account, p.51.

on baptismal usage. "These refusals ( of baptism by the parish ministers ) had to be abandoned early in the 19th. century on account of Baptism being easily procured from a non-presbyterian minister for 2/6 per child".<sup>1</sup>.

There was one Episcopal minister in the West of Scotland whose church registers show an enormous number of baptisms, an average of well over a thousand per annum between 1832 and 1861, and who levied a charge of 2/6d. per baptism without, apparently, making any investigation into the spiritual status of the parents. His church was known as "The Hauf Croon Kirk" , a designation not unknown elsewhere for the same reason. These perquisites must have been a considerable source of revenue. Fortunately for the prestige of the non-Presbyterian ministers as a whole the practice was very exceptional and was regarded as abnoxious. Within the Reformed tradition in Scotland there has been a sustained antipathy against "selling the sacraments" on the part of the ministers.

1. Lee Ker, Kilwinning, 1900, p.227.





## Church Discipline in Relation to Baptism.

No one can read through any section of an early kirk session minute book without being made aware of the prominence of church discipline and the frequency with which the correction of manners was bound up with the administration of infant baptism. A large proportion of the offences dealt with had to do with pre-marital or extra-marital sins and the baptism of the children of those who had disobeyed the general moral principles of the Christian Faith was a constantly recurring problem. There were other reasons also for the denying or postponing of the administration of baptism and these usually had the same frame of reference. Some of them have been already referred to for the purpose of illustrating particular points in baptismal usage. It is desirable, however, to gather up the various threads and present a review of the situation as a whole. In this section it is proposed to deal with the principle of discipline in its general relation to baptism and to introduce some considerations which have not been dealt with so far.

### Congregational Discipline.

The kirk session was responsible for interpreting the law of the Church in its immediate relation to the parishioners ; to it belonged the responsibility of saying who should be baptised and under what conditions. The minister in this was the servant of the session. In

the actuality of the local situations his counsel would probably decide most of the issues. The pattern, however, was that no child could be baptised without the consent of the session. "It pertains to the eldership to take heed," said the Second Book of Discipline, 1578, "that the word of God be purely preichit within their bounds, the sacraments rightly ministrat, the discipline rightly mantenit, and the ecclesiasticall gudes uncorruptlie distributit".<sup>1</sup>

There was uniformity of opinion at every stage of the Genevan tradition in affirming that baptism was not necessary to salvation. No opportunity was lost for the repudiation of the Roman doctrine on the damnation of infants, "his cruel Judgment against Infants departing without the Sacrament; his absolute Necessity of Baptism", as the National Covenant phrased it. This was the fundamental precept which permitted church discipline and infant baptism to be so closely associated. By implication it suggested that it was not cruel to withhold baptism; at least the salvation of the child was not at stake.

Had the proposition of Calvin, and its later formulation by Rutherford and his school, already discussed, been widely accepted and acted upon the link between infant baptism and church discipline would have been weakened if not dissolved. The two propositions that 1. baptism conferred some benefit on a child, and 2. a child's right to baptism did not depend upon its immediate parents, might have been argued to the conclusion that

1. Chap.VII, par.12.

baptism ought to have been administered to an infant whatever the status of the immediate parents in the eyes of the kirk session. The child ought to have been baptised on the basis of federal holiness interpreted in a national context. Not even the theologians who embraced this theory, however, opened themselves to the charge that they were weak in local discipline. Whatever the right of the child as belonging to a Christian society or descended from Christian parents, however remote, when baptism was requested for the child the immediate reply was to discover the moral quality of the parents in relation to Reformed Church standards and to refuse, postpone, or grant the request accordingly. In the earliest period the reader at St. Andrews was directed, before any child was baptised, to "pas and tak suir triall of sic barnis that are to be baptizit, and quha ar the barnis parentis, and quhidder thei be laidfull or nocht, and quhidder thair haif maid satisfaction or nocht that ar adulterous or fornicatouris parentis, and that barnis of sic be nocht baptizit without repentance preceid".<sup>1</sup> The salvation of the child did not depend on the conferring or withholding of the rite. It either was or was not saved from eternal wrath on other grounds, ultimately upon its being numbered among the elect. Baptism, on the other hand, was a sacrament of the visible Church, and admitted only to visible Church privileges. These visible Church privileges were controlled by the kirk session and hence the

1. St. Andrews K. S. Reg., II, p.537.

oversight of administration was the responsibility of that court.

Although the Roman doctrine of the necessity of baptism to salvation was rejected and the necessity of it for church privileges substituted, it is certain that the Reformed Church was indebted to the Roman Church for impregnating the mind and influencing the habits of the nation by the doctrine that somehow baptism was essential to the well-being of a child. The insistence, even desperation, with which infant baptism was sought by the majority of the people cannot be explained on any other basis than that the Reformed Church was benefiting from a Roman doctrine which she heartily renounced. In order to obtain baptism for a child many parents were willing to undergo what today would be regarded as the most humiliating acts of discipline, though these may not have appeared so humiliating in times that did not share the modern conception of human dignity. If the doctrine of the non-necessity of baptism to the salvation of a child had been seriously pressed, and its implications thoroughly grasped, it would have undermined the power of compelling obedience which the kirk sessions desired to retain.

Two other factors assisted the sessions in their difficult task of supervising morals.

The first was that the disapproval of the Church carried with it onerous religious consequences. The devil was a very real person, hell was a very real locality, and the wrath of the Almighty a very imminent possibility, all or any of which might bring disasters in this life as well as the next. A spiritual significance was read into every turn of fortune, and the world was alive with spiritual influences for good or evil to an extent which made the observance of religious conformity a most valuable factor in peace of mind.

In the second place, the displeasure of the kirk session could carry with it grave social consequences. A magistrate was present in the court to see that its decisions were obeyed. The contumacious could be put in ward to teach them a better disposition.

"It perteinis to the office of a Christian magistrat to assist and fortifie the godly proceidings of the kirk in all behalves.....To assist and manteine the discipline of the kirk, and to punish them civilly, that will not obey the censure of the same".<sup>1</sup>.

The claim that the magistrate was bound to cooperate in the task of discipline was prominent in Church life until the Church herself was compelled by the civil powers to tolerate the right of conscientious disagreement. This is not to say that it was believed that the action of the civil magistrate could compel religious belief, but the Christian magistrate, it was held, ought to compel citizens to an outward profession of the Faith in conformity to the Reformed standards which had been accepted by Parliament as the public profession of religion 1. Second Book of Discipline, X, pars.2 and 4.

within the nation. Rutherford, for example, is quite well aware that the magistrate "may command to use the means of Religion, though he cannot force Religion it self", and he makes a distinction between a Christian and a non-Christian nation. "Fire, sword, or warre, or the coactive power of the magistrate is not Gods way of planting the Gospell in a heathen nation, which never heard of the Gospell before", but "where a nation hath embraced the faith, and sworn thereunto in Baptisme, it is lawful for the magistrate to compell them that professe that truth to which they have sworne in Baptisme".<sup>1</sup> Such a distinction, and the argument as a whole, bristles with questionable statements, but the general position put forward is clear enough. Hooker made the same point when he wrote, "All who are born within the confines of the established church and are baptised into it, are bound to submit to its ecclesiastical laws".<sup>2</sup>

Two difficulties lie on the surface. 1. Where the established church is changed in character either on account of changes of opinion within the church or by decree of the State, is every citizen still obliged to obey every law, ecclesiastical or civil? 2. Where the baptism which is said to oblige the baptised to conformity is infant baptism, administered without the knowledge or consent of the party concerned, can it be held to be the basis of a contract of obedience? Have the baptised "sworne in Baptisme" to "professe that truth"?

1. Due Right of Presbyterie, 1644, pp.(2) 353-354, pagination faulty. 2. Eccles. Polity, Third Chapter, passim.

It may be suggested that these awkward questionings were not faced with the frankness they deserved and the dogmatic intolerance of the dominant party was considered to be amply justified by the argument, if it is an argument, put forward. The Presbytery of Kirkcudbright in a petition to Parliament, August 24, 1641, complained that they had not an "authorized magistrate in each congregation for holding hand to discipline".<sup>1</sup> Morer noted that in kirk sessions there were magistrates present "to awe saucy offenders". Many quotations might be cited to the same effect. The dilemma was presented to defaulters with unbaptised children either to risk the loss of whatever benefits baptism would have for the children or to face the disciplinary action of the magistrate and the kirk session. The complaints heard from time to time of numbers of children remaining unbaptised suggest, that in some instances at least, the wrath of the session was more to be feared than the displeasure of God.

There were methods, however, of bringing delinquents to obedience. The elders were often commissioned to make an investigation in their respective districts and to report on any children who were being withheld from baptism.<sup>2</sup> At St. Andrews in 1570 alms were refused to the poor who did not attend sermons or present their children to baptism.<sup>3</sup> The midwives were informed that it was their duty to apprise the sessions of anything suspicious which they may heard or noticed and failure in this respect would endanger their right to continue in their profession. In the case

1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Laing MSS., I, P.208.

2. St. Andrews K. S. Reg., II, p.662. Date 1590.

3. Ibid., I, p. 340, B.U.K., 1588, p.333. ~~3. Ibid., II, p.579.~~



of an illegitimate birth they were instructed to refuse to assist until the mother had confessed the paternity of the child.<sup>1</sup>

The Church demanded that every child should be presented for baptism to a lawful minister but, on the other hand, refused to baptise until discipline had been satisfied. Where a parent presented a child to meet the demand of the Church, if not of his own will, the Church used the situation to enforce discipline. There is only a thin line between this procedure and the use of baptism primarily as a device for the correction of manners in which the child was of secondary importance; though in justification it may be argued that a parent was not in a proper spiritual state to take the baptismal vow if he was a flagrant sinner or ignorant. Yet it might still be insisted that, given that some benefit was conferred on a child by its being baptised, by the use to which the situation was put the iniquity of the unrepenting parent was in part paid for by the penalty imposed on the child, a tenet explicitly supported in the First Book of Discipline.<sup>2</sup>

Even when a child had been lawfully begotten baptism was not granted until the father was able to satisfy the session on his religious knowledge. He was responsible for the religious education of his child and could not undertake a promise to impart something which he himself did not know. The normal mode of instruction for all parishioners was the weekly catechetical class conducted by the reader or schoolmaster, usually the same person, and all masters of households were enjoined to have their own

1. Ibid., II, p.579.      2. IX, par.10.

period of instruction. It is not uncommon, however, to read of a father who had not been reached by these methods and in such cases the session fixed a time limit within which he was to learn the rudiments of the Faith.

The Synod of Argyll, for example, in 1651, "ordained that none shall be baptized nor married except the parents and parties respective shall give some confession of faith in private".<sup>1</sup> At Glasgow in 1588, and at other times, stated: "The Session appoint that those who have Bairns to be baptised shall tell distinctly the 10 Commands, Articles of Faith, and Lords Prayer, or else that they be declared ignorant, and some other godly person present their child, with further punishment as the Kirk shall think fit".<sup>2</sup>

Often a time limit was settled for the learning of the prescribed rudiments; but the child was baptised immediately if the father was able to lay down some security money, or obtain the good offices of a friend to undertake that he would return for examination.<sup>3</sup> The positing of these sureties or "cautions" was a frequent item in treasurers' books.

Notices are not infrequent also of the neglect of baptism among the poor and the vagrants. An Act of

1. Minutes, S.H.S., I, p.210

2. Wodrow, Biog. Selections, Glasgow K.S. Records, part 2, p.31.

3. St. Andrews K.S. Reg., II, p.537.

Parliament, 1579, deplores the neglect of baptism among the poor.<sup>1</sup> A paper on "The Common Corruptions of all Estaites within this Realm", submitted to the General Assembly in 1596, speaks of "Ane great number of persones without lawfull calling.....having their children not baptized". In October, 1607, the Privy Council were concerned about those who commit "grite villaneis" and live without marriage or baptism of their children.<sup>2</sup> "Egiptians" were denounced on the same scores by the Kirkcaldy presbytery in December, 1631.<sup>3</sup> These complaints could be cited from every stage of history and the Church was never able to deal with this class of person to her satisfaction. Where the child of a vagrant was presented some of the usual rules about residence, testimonials, and so on, seem to have been suspended and the baptism dealt with by the Presbytery as one of a special class. At Kirkcaldy, for example, on March 14, 1633, "Michel Ramsay, ane tinkler, desyred of the Presbyterie that he might have ane bairne of his baptised, whilk is borre in Dysart be his maryt wyff (as he affirms)". The petition was granted. The same Presbytery, on the other hand, refused baptism to the children of strangers from Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Paisley.<sup>4</sup> These persons were directed to go home to their native parishes.

The discipline extended to the upper classes as well as the lower. The Countess of Argyll was called personally

1. Acts Parl. Scot., III, p.139b.

2. Reg. P.C., VII, 1604-1607.

3. The Presbyterie Book of Kirkcaldie, p.33.

4. Ibid., Nov.18, 1630, and Dec. 16, 1635.

before the General Assembly in 1567 for assisting in the baptism after the Roman fashion of the Prince, and "grantit that she had offended to the eternall God, and been ane sclander to the Kirk in committing the premises". She had represented Queen Elizabeth and had received for her trouble a ruby valued at 500 crowns. The Reformed Church, upon her signifying that she was willing to submit herself to discipline decreed that she should make her public repentance in the Chapel Royal at Stirling where the offence had been committed.<sup>1</sup> Lord Fleming of Cumbernauld was disciplined by the Glasgow Presbytery for a moral lapse in February, 1595, and the minister of Kirkintilloch was forbidden to baptise his child under a fine of £500.<sup>2</sup> The Privy Council in 1593 ordered the Earl of Huntly, a Romanist, to have his children baptised by a Reformed minister under penalty of £1000.<sup>3</sup> At Campsie in 1594 the kirk session decided that the laird's child would not be baptised unless he presented it himself.<sup>4</sup> It is undoubtedly true that in many instances the upper classes were able to ignore the rebukes of the Church, and this applies particularly to the Roman districts, but what the Church could do was done without respect of rich or poor, and action, such as the refusal to baptise, was often taken against heritors of weight.

For serious offences the Church used the weapon of

1. B.U.K.p.117.
2. Johnston, Old Kirkintilloch, p.100.
3. Reg. P. C. V, 1592-1599, p.329.
4. Cameron, The Parish of Campsie, p.200.

excommunication, lesser or greater, and once the sentence had been pronounced the male parent was not allowed to present his child for baptism. The sacrament might be granted, however, if the mother or a near friend presented the child. The General Assembly of 1569 enacted that "The children of the excommunicat persones to be receavit be ane faithfull member of the Kirk to baptisme".<sup>1</sup> If such could not be found the child was to be allowed to grow up without the ordinance until it should confess its own faith and on that basis receive the sacrament. A curious distinction was drawn at Elgin in 1698 between those excommunicated for moral reasons and those excommunicated for religious. In the latter case the children were to be debarred from baptism altogether.<sup>2</sup>

The common reason for the extreme penalty was continuance in, or reversion to, the Roman Church. By a Petition presented to Parliament in 1567, first article, all who refused to participate in the sacraments after the Reformed manner were declared to be "na memberis of the kirk within this realme".<sup>3</sup> This in substance had been previously received by the General Assembly in 1564.<sup>4</sup> The First Book of Discipline had called for the death penalty on all profaners of the sacraments. In extreme contrast to this a century later, in 1668, November 11, a woman was rebuked at Elgin for going to a priest for the baptism of a child,

1. B.U.K., p.170. 2. Crammond, Elgin K.S. Records, 1584-1779, under date 5 July, 1698.

3. Peterkin, Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland, 1839, p.84. 4. B.U.K., p.53.

and paid one dollar to the poor.<sup>1.</sup>

The principle of excommunication implied that it could only be inflicted on the baptised. The style included the phrase "who once was baptised in Thy name". Lawful excommunication, said the Order of Ecclesiastical Discipline of 1567, "...is the cutting off from the body of Jesus Christ, from participation in His Holy Sacraments". The absolution reversed this, the penitent being "received again to the society of Jesus Christ.....to the participation of His Sacraments".

Occasionally a notice of discipline is found for failing to have a child baptised before its death. At Perth action was taken on account of two children having been withheld, both of whom died, the children being the result of double adultery.<sup>2.</sup>

When the offence was simply that of neglecting baptism for an unduly long period the penalty exacted varied in different areas and periods, but it was always treated as a major offence. Two instances will serve as illustrations of the methods taken with this type of offence.

The first is from the session records of St. Andrews, December, 1594.

1. Crammond, Elgin K.S. Records, supra, under date.
2. The Book of Perth, K.S. Register, p.158.

"The quhilk day Robert Wilsoun plew wricht is discernit to mak publict humiliatioun in sek claith, to witt, to stand Sunday nixtocum fra the secund bell to sermone quhill the thrid bell be cessit at the kirk dur; and thaireftir to sitt on ane stail befor the pulpeit with ane papir about his heid bering his falt writin thairin, to witt, that he hes kepit his barn xiiij owkis on baptizit, quhill the same decessit without baptisme - The said Robert satisfeit this decret in al thingis".<sup>1</sup>.

The second is a century later when the offence was still thought to be grave. The parents in this case may have been Baptists or Quakers. It is taken from the MS. parochial register of Dunfermline against the date June 13, 1675. A lad and his sister were discovered to be unbaptised, the latter being twenty years of age and the former sixteen years. They gave testimony of their knowledge and professed faith in Christ and were thereafter solemnly baptised. The parents were recommended to the magistrates for punishment. What punishment was meted out is unknown, but the law of 1672 against those who left their children unbaptised for more than thirty days was severe.

Those who usurped the functions of the ministry and pretended to baptise opened themselves to stern correction. In the case of readers, who were ministerial assistants

1. St. Andrews K.S. Reg. II, p.792.

of a sort, a rebuke and order to desist seems to have been the ordinary course of discipline. For others who held no office in the Church considerably heavier penalties were imposed. There are not many instances occurring in the records, apart from the nuisance of baptisms by Roman priests or ex-priests, but two are listed at Elgin in 1626 and 1733.<sup>1</sup> At St. Andrews the punishment imposed for such an offence was as follows:

"To pay to the box of the pair three li money and to cum upon Sondag cum aucht dayis to the highest degre of the penitent stuill, cled in sek claith, beir heddit and bair futtit, and sit thair quhill the sermon and prayer be done befoir none, in presens of the peipill; and thaireftir cum down and humill him self on his kneis, ask God mercy and the hoill congregatioun quhome he hes sclanderit forgifness; and, if he failyeis heirin, that he sett cled as said is on the said penitent stuil ilk Sondag for half ane yeir to cum, as adulteraris usis to do for thair offences, under pane of excommunicatioun".<sup>1</sup>

Baptists ( or Anabaptists ) do not appear in Scottish records until the middle of the seventeenth century. The first to be excommunicated was Gilbert Gardin of Tilliefruskie in 1642.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter in the period of Cromwell's occupation of the land there

1. Ibid., II, p.572. 2. Pittillok, Tracts Legal and Historical, 1. The Hammer of Persecution, 1659, reprint Edin., 1827, p.9.



was considerable activity on the part of the Baptists and by their persuasions many renounced the baptism of their infancy and were baptised on confession of their faith. It is surprising that notices of discipline on this ground are so few. There is the most reliable evidence in Lamont's and Nicoll's Diaries, and elsewhere, that many were baptised in this way, especially in Edinburgh district. The explanation is to be found perhaps in the confusion of the times which prevented kirk sessions from exercising their usual vigilance and in the policy of toleration (which the visitors brought with them) which compelled the Church courts to step warily in matters affecting the army. The Baptists at Cupar-Fife, however, are fully reported in the presbytery and synod records, and one at least was excommunicated.

"July 11, 1658, Christin Myllar, anabaptist, is excommunicated this day, excommunicatione majore".<sup>1.</sup>

In the diocese of Aberdeen during the Episcopal period following upon the Restoration the Quakers were prominent and a special form of excommunication was drawn up for use against them.<sup>2.</sup> The period was so full of discipline and counter discipline between the main contestants on the matter of baptism that what has been already said on the period may be sufficient to indicate the extremes of displeasure which can be

1. Lamont, Diary, p.49f.  
p.288.

2. Selections, Spalding Club,

called by no other name than persecution. The Covenanters excommunicated the Episcopal party and the Episcopal the Covenanting in a spate of Declarations, Papers, Testimonies, Parliamentary and Privy Council Acts, Synod decrees, and the like.

### The Discipline of the Ministry.

The ministers of the Reformed Church were themselves open to disciplinary action on the part of the Church courts that had this right. Failure to observe ecclesiastical laws frequently led to rebuke, and in extreme cases, to ~~disposition~~. The latter was the penalty recommended by the Assembly in 1575 against a minister who baptised out of his parish <sup>1</sup>. on a Monday and not on a preaching day, and before the repentance of a gross offender. A little later, in 1581, the administrator of baptism in private, without the addition of any other cause of offence, was unanimously agreed to be worthy of deposition from the ministry.<sup>2</sup> This transgression became a virtue when necessity required the administration after 1616, until the reimposition of Presbyterian strictness in 1638. In some areas, for example Aberdeen, it was permitted from 1600.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter the practice revived in the Restoration era both among the Episcopal party and the Presbyterian, in

1. B.U.K., p.345. 2. Ibid., p.525. The minister of Tranent, on whose offence the matter had been raised, was, however, restored on repentance.  
3. Selections, Spalding Club, p.189.

the case of the former on principle, in the latter by the necessity of the times.

Baptising in the parish of another minister does not appear to have been a great nuisance before 1660, but thereafter, first by the unanchored Presbyterians and later by the itinerant Episcopalians, notices are frequent. In 1672 a scheme was given the authority of an Act of Parliament whereby parishioners in a vacant parish were to take children for baptism to the nearest resident parish minister.<sup>1</sup> This attempted to remove the excuse for neglecting the sacrament or having it administered by an outed minister. Where there was a minister in residence he was not even allowed to grant the liberty of baptising in the parish church to an indulged Presbyterian. Gilbert Rule was convicted of this transgression in 1679 and sent to the Bass although his baptising of two children in St. Giles had the full consent of the Episcopal incumbent.<sup>2</sup>

Respect for the parish boundaries within the Church of Scotland was always the general rule until the rise of denominationalism and the breakdown of discipline. When the congestion of the cities became a serious problem for the State Church, and the worshippers in a parish church did not of necessity live within the parish boundaries, the theory of the parish remained, but it was not always realised in practice. As early as 1761 in the comparatively simple situation in Ross and Sutherland, the presbytery had to take action against

1. Acts Parl. Scot., c.22, VII, pp.72-73.  
2. The Bass Rock, Edin., 1848, pp.296-297.

some of its ministers who were complained against, and it prohibited members from "dispensing sealing ordinances to people from other parishes on any pretext whatsoever, without a letter from the minister of these parishes wherein they reside". Three years later a minister was rebuked for baptising in another parish, and in 1765 another complaint was lodged.<sup>1</sup>.

The complications that arose may be illustrated by a situation in which the parish ministers strictly observed the etiquette of parochial areas yet their discipline was foiled by the incursion of a minister who acted, reluctantly, without their consent. At Colinsburgh, Fife, those who withdrew from the parish church on a patronage dispute were denied baptism to their children by the ministers of the neighbouring parishes if they were unable to bring a testimonial from the minister to whom they objected. On this account Thomas Gillespie of Carnoch was asked to visit and baptise. So strong was his objection to intruding into the area that he would not respond to the invitation until every minister in the presbytery had refused. Ultimately he did comply with the request and the breach between the Establishment and what became the third congregation of the Relief Church was completed.<sup>2</sup>.

Once the dissenting congregations had been formed it was a point of policy that baptism should not be sought by their members from the parish ministers, nor

1. MacNaughton, Ch. Life in Ross and Sutherland, pp.206, 244, 251. 2. Struthers, History of the Relief Church, 1848, p.281.

was a member expected to collaborate in or countenance such baptisms by being present at them. An item in the kirk session records of the Antiburgher Church at Dunniker, Kirkcaldy, reads:

"Compeared Christian Wallace who acknowledged her sin in attending the baptism of a child in the Established Church, contrary to the oath of God she is under for Reformation principles. She being removed the Session agreed that she be rebuked just now, and the affair dismissed".<sup>1</sup>.

What remained when a variety of ministers within a particular parish area undertook the administration of baptism was the situation in which members of each congregation made use of their own minister where it was possible or of another where it was not possible and the neighbouring minister was willing to serve; and if there was no congregational connection any of the ministers might be requested to baptise. All this meant a diminution of the importance of parish boundaries for the purposes of baptism, and the dependence upon the variable strength of professional etiquette for the recognition of their rights by the Established ministers.

#### The Remote Parts.

It is in the North, and particularly in the scattered communities of the Western Islands, that

1. Fairweather, Dunniker Church Memorials, K.S. extracts 1752-1755, p.241.

anomalies are mostly found to the discipline operated in more accessible parts. There were considerable sections where Roman loyalties had never been shaken by the Reformed Church, and in other districts Episcopal influence was strong from early times. Many parts of the Highlands were barbarous <sup>or</sup> and only semi-civilised until the break up of the clan system after the 1745 Rebellion and the development of roads and means of transport. The grossest superstitions prevailed to a degree scarcely imaginable in the present age. The language difficulty was always a problem and the Church was constantly seeking men "who had the Irish" as Gaelic was denominated. In these circumstances there was not even the possibility of either discipline or Reformed baptism, for many of the scattered and isolated communities for there were not sufficient ministers with suitable qualifications to undertake the oversight of the parishes.

In 1651 a system was put into operation in Argyll by which elders were appointed wherever possible in the districts lacking ministerial service, and instructions were drafted for their guidance when marriage or the sacrament of baptism was required. This plan is given in the Minutes of the Synod of Argyll as follows:

"Where there is no constant eldership no benefite is to be had either of baptisme or marriage but by appointment of the presbytery, and for getting baptism where constant elders are, the elders are to send their

testificate that the children are lawfull begotten, or in the case it be otherways, the elders is to send a testificate that the elders hes fund caution to be obedient unto the injunctions of the kirk".<sup>1</sup>.

*Corspairnie*  
The Assembly of 1638 considered the case of a community of five hundred persons who were furnished with a church building at the expense of local gentlemen. This "Kirk of Corspairnie, which church lyes in a very desolat wildernes" was described as being in the midst of "barbarous ignorant people who heirtofoir hes lived without the knowledge of God, their children unbaptized, their deid unburied, and could get no way for getting mentainance to a minister...."<sup>2</sup>.

It was reported of Jura in 1653 that the islanders had received marriage and baptism from some English person who had landed from a passing vessel, there being no Reformed minister attending to them.<sup>3</sup>

Special regulations were passed in 1654, and in other years, by the Synod of Argyll to facilitate the baptism of children in the vacant parishes "Because there are many places in their bounds", it was said, "destitut of the comfort of ordinance".<sup>4</sup>.

1. Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, S.H.S., April, 1651, I, p.210. 2. Peterkin, Records, p.184.  
3. Minutes, supra, II, p.28. 4. Ibid., p.52. It had been reported to the Assembly of 1596, that "above four hundred parochie kirks" were "destitute of the ministrie of the word, by and attour the kirks of Argyll and the Isles". "There is little authentic information with regard to the history of Presbyterianism in the Western Highlands from 1560 to 1638", writes the editor of the Minutes, I, p.xi.

Some of the ministers who were willing to serve the remote regions did not speak Gaelic, and it was necessary for them to administer the sacrament by the aid of an interpreter.<sup>1.</sup>

The presbytery of Lorne were directed to cite a shoemaker in Ulva before them for baptising, and to remind him of the "punishment due to such a sine even in this world, and much more in that which is to come".<sup>2.</sup> The presbytery did nothing about the direction and had themselves to be rebuked. Colonsay was without a minister, "and though willing to marie, ( the parishioners) cold not gett the benefete thereof, many children unbabtised".<sup>3.</sup> South Kintyre was so neglected in 1658 that some of the inhabitants had gone over to Ireland for marriage and baptism.<sup>4.</sup> An inspection of "Ardinmurchan, Swanairt, Mudairt, and Aresaig", in 1659 revealed that parents were refusing to hold up their own children at baptisms, obtaining baptism from private persons, or, failing that, baptising them themselves.<sup>5.</sup> These habits were unquestionably relics of Roman customs. The isolation of St. Kilda accounts for the curious custom related by Martin in 1703, of the baptism of children by neighbours with the formula, "A, I baptize you to your Father and Mother, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit".<sup>6.</sup>

There were thus corners in these remote parts that remained almost untouched by events in the more populated areas, and what may have been typical elsewhere was

1. Minutes, supra, p.160.
2. Ibid., May, 1656.
3. Ibid., p.128.
4. Ibid., p.178.
5. Ibid., p.201.
6. A Description of the West. Isles of Scot., 1703, p.287.



quite foreign to much of the Gaelic area.

### Testimonials.

Part of the system of discipline was the use of testimonials, or certificates of good character. A stranger arriving in a parish was expected to be able to furnish for inspection a testimonial from the church authorities of his previous place of residence. To be without such a document invited suspicion. There was an extraordinary traffic in these credentials. No one could obtain baptism for a child without being properly vouched for should the necessity for it arise when away from home. A testimonial to the effect that previous children had been baptised might also be requested.<sup>1</sup> When the certificate was for the purpose of obtaining baptism it usually amounted to a statement that the parties applying were lawfully married and were free from scandal. If it had to do with an illegitimate child it would attest the fact that discipline had been satisfied. Should there be any doubt about the matter the case was referred to the presbytery. An example of this style from the kirk session records of Tynninghame is as follows :

"Brother Maister Jhone, July 19, 1618, The beirer heiroyf ( Alex<sup>r</sup> Paterson, caution ) to produce ane testimonial of his lawfull mariadge - at leist, that the woman quhom he has maryit was ane singill quhen he tuik hir out of the Stow of Weddill; and to give you

1. St. Andrews K.S. Reg., I, pp.430,431,458. etc.

contentment anent his communicating and keeping gude order in tyme coming. Our Advyse is, this being done, or at the leist, sik order being takin as ye can best for warrand to yor awin consience, to baptise the bairne. Sic subscribitur Mr. Patrick Hamilton, clerk to the presbyterie for this day ".<sup>1</sup>.

With this particular application and counsel, however, the session was still not satisfied although a parishioner of good standing stood caution for the applicant. They ordained the father to produce further testimony and "to go to ye Stow of Weddell and bring ane testificat fra ye minister at ye kirk of Stow, both of his honestie and also of his wyfis; and this testificat to be brocht to the session betwixt this and the fyfteine day of August nixt to come " his caution being put under a penalty of £30 if there was any failure to perform the demand. On these conditions the child was to be baptised. The journey was undertaken and the following certificate produced:

"To the minister and session of ye kirk of Tynninghame - Loving brethren - Ye beirers called Jhone Kirsame and Isabell Lillie, his spouse, remainit heir with us, and we know nothing bot he was honest and his wyf baithe, for they ar lawfullie maryit. I remember they remainit in this towne ye space of four yeirs, and we knaw nothing bot honestie to them, of na claimis yt we knaw off, for he has shawin to me his testification yt he is maryit

1. Ritchie, The Churches of St. Baldred, p.173.

sen he came out of our parochin; and sa I know no impediment to them. No more; bot comitis you to his Majesteis protection this twentie-aucht of July. Sic subscribitur, your loving brother in Chryst, James Michelsone, minister at ye Stow."<sup>1</sup>.

Occasionally a supplication for baptism would be made in writing. The following sample is from the kirk session records of Dunblane, January 22, 1654.

"To the Ryt reverend the Min<sup>r</sup> and Elders of the Kirk Sessioune of Dunblane. These humblie entreat for the benefite of baptizine to my chyld procreat in laule<sup>e</sup> mariage. Being borne of hono<sup>ll</sup> parents, within the parochie of I have lived from the vombe and that not haveing given offence to any; baptizine conforme to the constitutiones of the Church. I hope will not be denyed upoun the humble and earnest desyre of their humble supplicant, A Cheisholme."

The session granted the request on condition that a caution be found for the Christian education of the child.

The shortest supplication known in Scottish records was that fastened to the dress of a foundling. On a scrap of paper was written the pathetic plea, "For Jesus Christes saik, Bap." The Canongate clerk retained the slip in his MS. register and recorded the baptism as follows:

1. Ibid., p.174.

"19th June, 1668, Baptized a child found on Sundaye the 16th June, 1668, named Theophilus". One of the gravediggers acted as presenter.<sup>1</sup>

Usually the clerk of a register contented himself with a brief reference to a testimonial thus :

June 29, 1675. "James Machrie and Margaret Lindsay, A SN George, witnesses George Graham, Robert Moore, and Robt. Bruce, which was done upon a testimonie from Dundie of the dait januar 11, 1676, writ be William Crawfoord, Session Clerk, and sub<sup>t</sup> be Mr. Rait, Mr. Guthrie, and Mr. Skringer ministers ther".<sup>2</sup>

Occasionally the full testimonial was transcribed, as was the custom at St. Ninians, Stirling. The two samples following may be taken as typical of the styles.

1. Request for baptism:

"Oct. 21, 1655. James Robertstone produced ane testificat the tenor qrof follows.

These are to testify unto the right reverend Mr. Geo. Bennet minister at St. Ninians yt this bearer James Robinsone a member of this congregat<sup>n</sup> of Stirling hath a child lawlie procreat in marriag to be baptized and in respect that we have no actual minister heer this day yrfor it is the desyr of our elders yt you will be pleased to conferre the benefit of bap<sup>t</sup>isme to his child upon

1. MS. Register, Canongate. 2. MS. Register, St. Cuthberts.

this testificat sub<sup>t</sup> by the Session clerk, At Stirling  
2j of Octob, 1655, W. Meiklejohne, Sess. Clerk." <sup>1</sup>.

## 2. General testimonial.

"This child was baptized by virtue of a testificat the  
tenor of follows: These are to testify That James  
Mylne and his wife Mar<sup>t</sup> Balgray dureing yr abode w<sup>tin</sup>  
the parish of King Edward behaved themselves Christianly  
and being remove from us They are free of publick  
scandall and Church censure for q<sup>t</sup> we know, Given at  
King Edward Kirk the fourteenth day of July, 1673,  
Alex<sup>r</sup> Jaffray, minister, Walter Forbes, elder and master  
to the said James, and And. Jaffray, Sess. Clerk." <sup>2</sup>.

## The eclipse of discipline.

The confusion which reigned in the administration of  
baptism throughout the twentieth century could scarcely  
have been greater. The different communions had their  
own traditions and each minister almost had his own  
rules. In a multitude of instances all the doctrine  
associated with the ordinance contained in the Subordinate  
Standards of the Presbyterian Churches, The Prayer Book  
and Art<sup>e</sup>icles of the Episcopal Church; and by the other  
Christian groups in so far as they declared their  
doctrine or borrowed from the Westminster documents;  
all became a serious misuse of devout language in the  
circumstances in which baptism was dispensed to all  
comers. There were not lacking attempts to instruct  
parents in the meaning of the rite, but these were more

1. MS. St. Ninian's. The two spellings "Robertsons" and  
"Robinsons" are in the MS. 2. Ibid.

than counter-balanced by the purely formal proceedings which went under the name of baptisms. In the cities in particular the social conditions were such that many children received the sacrament who had not the least chance of receiving a Christian education, and there was a real point in the opinion expressed that many were just baptised pagans. The most important part of the event so far as the family and friends of the child were concerned was too often the baptismal celebrations.

The return to public baptisms, or at least baptisms in a consecrated building, marked the upward trend in the significance of the rite; but with this reformation among a growing number of ministers, there was not, nor could there be, a return to the exercise of parish discipline. To have attempted a reversion would have brought the administration of the rite to a standstill and accelerated the presentation of children for baptism in the churches where embarrassment was reduced to invisibility.

The whole absurd position was not without its critics. There was a state of lawlessness without any understanding on the part of many as to what the law was on which a minister ought to act. Among the churches of the Congregational order there was no law other than that which every man found for himself. The Episcopal Church had its Canons which were revised from time to time and every incumbent was expected to

honour them; but even these allowed a measure of discretion on the part of the officiating priest, and from the information available, the discretion was used. In any case the post-Jacobite Episcopal communion was no more distinguished for its discipline than was the Established Church. Within the Presbyterian Churches almost every degree of discipline, or the lack of it, might be illustrated, with the exception of the extremer forms of the earlier days. All thought of exacting fines, sackcloth, testimonials, stools of repentance, and public penance was abandoned as undesirable, or, at least, impossible of realisation.

The attempt at clarification within the Church of Scotland came in its most authoritative form in 1915 when a Committee which had been appointed to investigate the Law and Practice of Baptism submitted its report. This has already been used in a previous chapter and may be referred to now simply to complete the material relevant to discipline.

This report emphasised the right of every child to baptism who had been born of professing Christian parents, or, in the case of foundlings, whose parentage was unknown. The phrase of the Act of 1712 "within the verge of the visible church" was stressed. There must be no question about the parent presenting being or not being on the Communion Roll, the reason being,

though it is not stated, that there were no Communion Rolls when the Act was accepted to be the law of the Church. The Committee's report, as distinct from the Procurator's summary of the law of the Church which was appended to it, makes the point, that "The right of the child to baptism is understood to depend on the parent's membership in the visible Church; and this, again, is constituted by the parent's baptism"<sup>1</sup>. This guidance is doubtful. There is not a word in the law as it then existed to make it necessary for the parent or other sponser to be baptised. It is conceivable that a parent might not be baptised and yet desire baptism for a child, and, provided that there was a profession of faith which would bring the parent within the verge of the Church, not even the parent's personal relation to baptism was necessarily involved. The parent's position might have been held to be inconsistent, but the text of the Act of 1712 does not legislate on the point, as the Procurator recognised by making no reference whatever to the parent's baptism in his analysis of the legal position. The Act was expressly framed to include every parent who did not deny the Faith, and, not even the interpretation placed on it by subsequent usage, if this be the purpose of the phrase in question, can establish the contrary as being of legal validity. "No satisfactory warrant can be found in the law of the Church," stated the Procurator, for narrowing the qualifying condition of "Christian parentage" beyond the requirement that one or both of

1. Report of the Committee to Investigate the Law and Practice of Baptism, 24th. May, 1915, p.885.



the parents professes Christianity and desires baptism for the child".<sup>1</sup>.

The results of this investigation established that no child could be denied baptism if one or both of the parents fulfilled the conditions, or if a sponsor was provided who fulfilled the conditions. Nor was there any ground for preferring the father to the mother as the presenter of the child unless in a situation where one was qualified and the other was not. Disciplinary action could be taken to remedy the position of a parent, but no refusal was legally possible if the child was presented by a professing Christian. This being so the conclusion is inevitable that the breaches of the law were without number.

It was thought desirable to restate the law of the Church of Scotland in 1933, in an Act Anent the Admission of Infants to Baptism.<sup>2</sup> This Act states:

"A child has a right to baptism 1. whose parents, one or both, having themselves been baptised profess the Christian religion; or 2. who, being of unknown parentage or otherwise separated from its parents, is under Christian care and guardianship".

The debate on this restatement produced the criticism that "a child has a right to" should be altered to "a child may be baptised", it being claimed to be

1. Ibid., p.900. 2. Reports 1933, p.999. Draft Act I.

intolerable that ministers should be forced to be machines and the sacrament reduced to worse than meaningless. The reply simply stated that this phrasing had been recognised as the form of words since 1712, and was even narrower than then enacted. A parent's right to present might be questioned, but not a child's right to be presented.<sup>1</sup> This was perfectly correct. What might have been questioned was the implication of the Clerk's reminder that the Act was narrower than had been the law of the Church since 1712 to that date. The difference was not specified, but no doubt what was meant was that now the Church defined a parent who might present a child for baptism as one who was himself or herself baptised as well as professing the Christian religion. This was a most important addition and it was passed over without explicit notice or discussion. Moreover it was inserted without specifying what ceremony was to be accepted as baptism for the purpose of the Act, and it seems to have been implied that any ceremony which was claimed to be baptism on the only testimony which might be available, namely, the statement of the parent concerned, was to be accepted. Where a parent was unable to say whether he or she had been baptised or not, the alternative was, presumably that a substitute would require to be provided. Nothing is mentioned in this Act about sponsorship in such cases. It may be argued, however, that since this Act professes to be a restatement of an older law, the older provisions covering such an eventuality would still be proper.

1. Acts, Proceedings, and Debates, 1933, pp.105-106.

If this is the correct interpretation then the old argument of Boston would require to be faced, that a vice-parent cannot properly take the baptismal vow to bring up a child in the Christian Faith, or words to that effect, unless he has the facilities and authority to do so. It is questionable if the Church of Scotland would support the assertion of such a right on the part of a sponsor. Without such a right being granted the promises taken from a sponsor other than the parent should be such as are within the possibilities of a friend of the child, and not such as only a parent could give.

In any case this statement of the law of the Church of Scotland was not what it professed to be in the preamble:

"Whereas it is expedient of new to declare the law of the Church concerning the admission of infants to baptism,"

It introduces an entirely new ruling and excludes from those who might present children to baptism a class of Christians who had hitherto been legally acceptable, namely all members of Christian communions which do not practice the sacraments generally received in Reformed Churches, in a word, all unbaptised but sincerely Christian persons. The merit of the new ruling was that it cleared away an inconsistency on the part of an unbaptised parent, and a Christian Church accepting infant baptism may with perfect

fairness request that a parent be consistent in this matter.

The decision of 1933, being the present law of the Church of Scotland, has removed the whole basis on which the conception of discipline had been operated since the Reformation, whether legal or otherwise. If the presenter of a child fulfils the conditions the child must be baptised. It is without the right of a minister to demand acceptance of any creed or confession, or conformity to a standard of doctrine or behaviour higher than that professed by those who are normally accepted. Nor may he demand that the parent have his or her name placed on a Communion Roll, then or at any future date, or make any conditions as to how the child shall be trained in the Christian Faith. The obligation to baptise every child presented by a person conforming to the law is absolute.

## Chapter Eleven

### Baptismal Customs.

There were few events in the life of a people which did not receive baptismal customs, heralds or harbingers. Nationality the time of birth was a highly important point of difference that major ceremonial rituals the same religious nature, both Christian and non-Christian, were always easy to distinguish between. Here baptismal customs for the two events are quite distinct, nor is it always possible to give the area in which a custom flourished, or to which it was merged. Different forms of the ritual localized in different districts are noted. The matter admits of so many variations that of the material facts presented the following discussion is not to be taken as a comprehensive survey of some of the material of mention.

The treatment may be divided into three parts: those customs which were part of the religion, those which may be classed as social customs, and that interesting material which might be included in this chapter.

The religious service.

This included an entire formal ceremony which

## Baptismal Customs.

There were few events in human life of a recurring nature which did not become associated with their own customs, harmless or dangerous, rational or superstitious. The fact of birth was a focal point round which it was inevitable that major and minor rituals should gather of a religious nature, both Christian and pagan. It is not always easy to distinguish between birth rituals and baptismal customs for the two events are so closely intertwined, nor is it always possible to prescribe the area in which a custom flourished, or the time when it first emerged. Different forms of the same type of ritual localised in different districts are sometimes found. The matter admits of so many variations and so much of the material lacks precision that the following discussion is not to be taken as exhaustive, but rather as a comprehensive survey of some items worthy of mention.

The treatment may be divided into three main sections,

1. those customs which were part of the religious service,
2. those which may be classed as social usages, and,
3. other interesting material which might be conveniently included in this chapter.

1.  
The religious service.

The ceremonies which formed such an elaborate setting for the baptismal usage of the Roman Church were the object of the most virulent scorn on the part of the

Scottish Reformers. Knox ransacked his extensive vocabulary for ever more condemnatory adjectives by which to castigate the system which had perpetuated them. The attitude was sustained at almost every stage in Scottish Church history. George Gillespie trounced those of his day who, he said, "carry a favourable eye to the pompous bravery of the Romish whore".<sup>1</sup> More recent times have refrained from repeating the extremes of indelicacy in earlier writers without jettisoning the main point of the antipathy.

In the Book of Common Order received at the Reformation the baptismal service was stripped of all its ceremonial embroidery and what remained was of an extremely simple form, though somewhat lengthy by the inclusion of exposition of doctrine. No Scriptural foundation could be found for the inclusion of the use of exorcism, salt, or anything else of that nature. "We acknowlege nothing to be used except the element of watter onlie, ( that the wourd and declaratioun of the promyses aucht to procéid we haif said befoir.) Quhairfoir, quhoso evir presumeth in baptisme to use oyle, salt, wax, spattill, conjuratioun, or croceing, accuseth the perfyte institutioun of Christ Jesus of imperfectioun; for it wes void of all suche inventionis devysed by men:"<sup>2</sup>

a.  
Presentation.

The duties of the person who presented the child were considerably simplified. The Reformed attitude was that the father of the child should present.

1. A Dispute Against the English-Popish Ceremonies, printed posthumously, 1660, p.137. 2. First Bk. of Dis., Laing, K.W., II, p.187.

At a Roman baptism the father was excluded and godparents presented the child and received it back from the priest after the immersion in the font. It is also probable that one at least of the godparents assisted in lifting the child from the water. This is now generally asserted to have been a duty of the godparents. It is doubtful, however, if the matter is free from obscurity. It is known from the Lord Treasurer's Accounts, for example, that "heving" (or heaving) the children at the font was a custom. The problem lies in the interpretation of this clue. It has been said to mean "that the child was lifted from the font" by the godparents.<sup>1</sup> The principal difficulty is to visualise how this transference of the child in the font from the priest's hands to those of one or more of the godparents was accomplished while the child was immersed in the water without adding an unnecessary element of danger. The rubrics of the Sarum Manual directed that the priest should take the child and dip three ~~three~~ times, he being the only person qualified to do the action, and there is no hint in the rubric that any other person could, or should, do anything to interfere with these motions. Nevertheless the following items occur in the Lord Treasurer's Accounts.

1489. "Item, to the King, quhen he hwfe Duncan, Forstaris sonnys barne to put in the caudil, xviijs."

1500. "Item, the xvij of Februar, giffin to the King to put in the caudil at the heving of the Erle of Buquhanis son, xiijs."<sup>2</sup>

1. Dowden, Medieval Church, p.262 ; McMillan, Worship of the Scottish Church, p.250. 2. Vol.1, p.120 ; II, p.97.



1505. "Item, the V day of December, to the King, to put in the caudil at the heving of Hary Bothuiles' barne, ix. " 1.

The Scottish Statutes refer to the custom thus:  
"Let three persons at most be admitted at baptism to lift the child from the font ( ad leuandum vero puerum de fonte tres and plus admittantur persone in baptismo); let two men and one woman receive a male child, but let a female child be received by two women and one man...."<sup>2</sup>.

Another reference elsewhere reads:  
"...because John Forret of Fingask, father of the said Marjory, putative spouse of the said David lifted the said David from the sacred font ( eundem Davidem de sacro fonte leuauit )."<sup>3</sup>.

It is possible that the term "lifting" or "heaving" is to be taken symbolically rather than literally, or that a token gesture of association with the action of the administrator rather than an actual transfer of the child from the priest to the godfather in the course of the immersions is referred to in these statements. What is clear is that the clues do not refer to the act of presentation, but to the act of receiving back the child.

1. Ibid., III, p.175. 2. Statuta, II, p.31. Statutes, S.H.S., p.32. 3. Liber Officialis Sancti Andree, Abbotsford Club, p.101, Dowden, Medieval Church, p.262. Illustrations of the action of baptism in carvings and cuts usually show the godparents standing by the font with the chrisom or cude in their hands. An occasional illustration had another figure, or other figures, apparently assisting the priest, whether lay or clergy is not clear. Vide illustration, Walker, English Fonts, p.3, etc.

It was a considerable change from this procedure to that of the father retaining the child in his arms throughout the service. There is no direction to this effect in the Book of Common Order, but Winzet accuses the Reformers of introducing it, and it may be deduced from disciplinary cases from time to time. Why it was not thought appropriate, as after the example of Jesus in the blessing of the children, for the minister to take the child in his arms is unexplained. If a reason were sought it might be found in the difficulties such a custom would raise where the minister did not leave the pulpit for the purpose of baptism.

b. The cude.

There is a lack of evidence on the subject of the preparation of the child for the Reformed service. Pre-Reformation usage was that the child was naked when presented for dipping in the font, and was covered after baptism by a wrap or garment known as the chrisom cloth, or in Scottish terminology, the cude. This was normally a piece of white linen cloth. The symbolism of it has already been given in the account of the Catechism of Archbishop Hamilton. An interpretation on similar lines was offered in the English Prayer Book of 1549. The rubric after baptism in that document instructed the priest to take a white vesture and say to the infant,

Take this white vesture for a token of innocency which,

by God's grace, in this holy sacrament of baptism is given unto thee; and for a sign whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou livest, to give thyself to innocency of living....."

No doubt other coverings were provided for the journey to and from the church, but the cude was the distinctive baptismal garment. In the case of persons of quality the cude seems to have been expensively embroidered. Two items in the Lord Treasurer's Accounts illustrate~~s~~ this.

1500, "Item, for ane elne quhit tartir to be ane cude to hir barne, xs.

"Item, for browding ( embroidering ) of the samyn cude, xxs." 1.

For this baptism the covering was not made of linen but of white Tartary silk, and the cost of ornamentation was exactly double the price of the silk.

This white chrisom cloth seems to have been a development from the period when the catechumens put on a white robe after their baptism and anointing or chrismatiation, a custom to which the term Whitsunday is witness.<sup>2</sup> This garment of the initiated seems to have become the cude of infant baptism. A chrisom child was one who had died within a month of baptism, the chrisom being then used as a shroud. If the child survived it was usual for the chrisom cloth to be gifted to the Church. At the Reformation it was still of ample size,

1. Lord Treasurer's Accounts, II, p.40.  
2. Also the term "candidate".

and a popular phrase, it would seem, for wishing that a troublesome person had been removed early in life was to suggest that he ought to have been smothered in his baptismal wrap.

"I pray God and his halie Rude,  
He had been smoird into his cude".<sup>1.</sup>

The retention of the cude was the only part of the Roman ceremonial that Knox was prepared to compromise upon, his reason being that it might serve "to keep the barne from cald".<sup>2.</sup> This was simply to say that some garment was necessary and the cude might very well serve the purpose. Whether the custom continued or not in some comparable form in the Reformed Church it is impossible to say with certainty. What is certain is that if the use of the modern baptismal robe is not continuous from the Reformation, it is certainly an ancient usage, and the indications are that, whatever the form of the garment, it has always been customary to dress the child in white.

The term "christening robes" as commonly used in Scotland today for baptismal robes has not a good title in Reformed nomenclature. A previous footnote drew attention to the almost total absence of the use of the term "christening" in connection with baptism. "To baptise" was not regarded as the equivalent of "to Christianise" or "to make a Christian" for in the covenant theology of the Genevan tradition baptism was not so much the making of children Christian as a recognition that, if they were born of parents who were themselves within the covenant, they were already Christians.

1. Common Thrift in "Ane Satyre of Thrie Estaitis."

2. Laing, K.W., I, p.197.

Baptism, said Boston, is "neither to be called nor accounted christening";<sup>1</sup> but about the same time as Boston was condemning the use of the term John Anderson of Dumbarton wrote of some of the Episcopal persuasion who disparaged certain doctrines after "having christened them Presbyterianism".<sup>2</sup> Such borrowing from the Anglican vocabulary, however, was exceedingly rare.

c. The minister.

There is very little information, also, about the dress of a Reformed minister while conducting Divine worship. A "gowning" with other black clothes were provided for Goodman by the people of Ayr in 1560.<sup>3</sup> The poverty of so many of the ministers would be against them possessing a gown for pulpit wear, though contemporary portraits indicate that where a gown was possessed it was worn apparently as a part of ordinary dress.<sup>4</sup> When the first regulation of the Assembly was made with regard to dress, in 1575, no mention was made of a gown for pulpit wear, although a gown was mentioned among the items of apparel. What was emphasised was that whatever the dress of the ministers and their wives it was to be plain and unadorned, and in some "grave collour as black, russet, sad gray, sad browne".<sup>5</sup> It was expressly enacted that the use of plaids by ministers or readers in the time of their ministry was forbidden. An Act

1. Body of Divinity, III, p.367.

2. A Defence of...the Presbyterians, 1714, p.219.

3. Paton, Annals of Ayr, p.7.

4. McMillan, Worship, Appendix II, p.365.

5. B.U.K., p.335.

"Of the Apparel of Judges, Magistrates, and Kirkmen" was passed in Parliament, June 24, 1609, which implied that the former Act of Assembly was not being uniformly kept; hence it was decreed again that " every preacher of God's word shall hereafter weare black, grave and comely apparell, beseeming men of their estate and profession", without specifying, however, what particular articles of dress were to be worn at any particular time.

Another piece of legislation on the matter may be referred to for its interest rather than its merit. "The ordour appoynted by his Ma<sup>tie</sup> for the apparrell off churchmen in Scotland" was enacted in 1633, and after dealing with the garments to be worn by archbishops and bishops, it continued,

"And for all Inferior clergymen we will that they preach in thair black gounes, bot when they reade dyvine service, christen, burye, or administer the Sacrament of the lords supper they sall weare there surplies".<sup>1</sup>

This anticipated the day when there would be a Prayer Book to read. It is scarcely necessary to observe that the Act was ignored by those who despised the "idolatrous geare".

The covering or uncovering the head in the act of receiving or administering the sacraments seems to have been a disputed matter. Furth of Scotland it would appear that some were strongly opposed to uncovering

1. Acta Parl., Scot., Caroli I, V, p.21b.

the head. Francis Johnston, the pastor of the Independent congregation at Amsterdam, stated, in 1617, that it was a sign of corruption to use the "signe of the cross in baptisme, uncovering of the head at the Lord's Supper in the act of receiving, of reading prayers out of a book, and so on.<sup>1</sup> It may be taken as implied in this that it was usual among those who scrupled the ceremonies to remain covered at all times other than praise and prayer to God. On the other hand, Philip Nye, the Independent, informed some at the time of the Westminster Assembly, as reported by Baillie, that in his private judgment the minister should be uncovered at the sacrament of the Supper, and the people covered, and vice versa for preaching.<sup>2</sup> From this again it may be inferred that the usual practice was for the minister to be covered during the administration of the sacraments. There were steps taken in the period of the Second Episcopacy to enforce decorum in worship by insisting that the congregation must uncover their heads during prayer and psalm singing, this custom <sup>having</sup> ~~having~~, apparently, slackened off.<sup>3</sup> No reference has been found which refers directly to baptism, and without this all inferences must be accepted with caution; but it seems possible to argue that there was no recognised necessity for the minister to be uncovered when dispensing this ordinance.

Again, in the eighteenth century at least, it was

1. A Christian Plea, 1617, p.285.
2. Baillie, Letters, II, p.149.
3. Act of the Synod of Edinburgh, April 29, 1663, Hist. MSS. Comm., Laing MSS., I, p.337.

it was the general custom of the preacher to wear black gloves in the pulpit.<sup>1</sup> Of this Petrie, in his "Rules of Good deportment", 1730, said :

" Some think it indecent to preach with the Hands uncovered. I look on it as a Matter of Indifferency. Indeed in Places where they read their Sermons, they may conveniently have on their Gloves; but it is not so convenient for those that do not read for they cannot so conveniently seek the Proofs of what they deliver, neither do they look so like their Work when their hands are muffled up ".<sup>2</sup>

Where gloves were worn they would require to be removed for the administration of baptism, unless perhaps this is an additional argument, so far unused, for the strengthening of the position of those who hold that the baptismal lavers were sometimes used for pouring the water on the child.

#### d. Naming.

Outstanding among the baptismal customs is the association of the rite with the naming of a child. The general idea behind this has its roots in the significance placed on baptism as marking a new beginning or a new nature in Christ. Changes of name are found in the Biblical narrative. There is evidence that very early in the history of Christianity the converts from the pagan world adopted a "Christian" name in place of one which had an association with a pagan cult. The reception of a convert into the fellowship of the Church was an obvious point at which such a new name

1. McMillan, Worship, Appendix II, p.365.

2. Petrie, Rules of Good Deportment for Church Officers, p.130.



might be given or adopted. This would be a new name and not a first name. When infant baptism became customary the transference of the naming part of the ceremony was a natural sequence. The name was intimated to the priest, who might change it if it was unsuitable, and the name was used in the baptismal formula. Prior to baptism the child was without a name, being merely the son or daughter of certain parents.

The custom continued in the Reformed Church. Where a register was kept the name was usually registered before the baptism; but this was merely incidental to the method of reception, as was also the question addressed to the presenter, to the effect, "What is this child's name?" The query presumed that the child had a name before the minister pronounced it.

The custom of asking the name of the child still survives despite the civil registration now in use, as does also the thought that somehow the child is not properly named until the minister has pronounced it.

The matter of naming at baptism was treated seriously in earlier days. If a child died before baptism it was buried without a Christian name, whatever the parents intended it to be called. To have a child named was an important reason for presenting it for baptism as soon as possible. In a case of discipline at St. Andrew's in 1586 concerning a private person who had baptised, or

who had pretended to baptise a child, it was said that the offending person had been told, that "thair wes ane pur woman in the town, quha hes ane barn to be baptizat and can nocht gait ane name for hir barn".<sup>1</sup> A curious occurrence happened at the baptism of the Old Pretender, styled by the Jacobites James III, or VIII, where it appears that something went wrong at his baptism and he was not named. His father stated, that he "forgot not the ceremony of nameing the Prince of Wales, which had not been done when he was christened, but on the 15 of October was performed in the King's Chapel at St. James', with great solemnity, the Pope being godfather, represented by the Nuncio, the Queen Dowager the godmother, who gave him the names of James Francis Edward". This mix-up has produced some speculation. Hay Fleming argued, for example, that this did not imply a second baptism, as against the biographers Shield and Lang, who held that "the King over the water" was baptised twice. Whatever be the truth - and a single baptism is the only possible theory on a Roman Church basis - it is certain that a public ceremony of some sort was held distinct from the rite performed on the day of the child's birth.<sup>2</sup> No doubt other extraordinary things happened from time to time in baptismal services, but it may be taken as indubitable that the common opinion was that it was at baptism that a child became a creature with a name. The degree of importance placed on this to the detriment of other matters is sometimes referred to in complaints about the underestimating of the sacrament on the part of parents. Boston voiced this when he told his people at Ettrick in 1710,

1. St. Andrew's K. S. Reg., II, p.569.

2. Hay Fleming, Critical Reviews, p.419.

"Weep over the slighting of the sacraments. That of baptism is dolefully slighted. If the child be like to die, without any regard to the congregation, or the strugglings of this church against private baptism, the minister must come and give the child a name, without any more".<sup>1.</sup>

It was an ancient usage not to permit certain names to be given at baptism, a custom in which the Reformed Church concurred. These were names against which there was some objection on religious grounds or for reasons of good taste. A dispute at Geneva caused the Council there to request Calvin to submit a list of names which were offensive to the Church as baptismal names. This list was published in an appendix to his "Ordonnances" as issued in November, 1546. It included names of pagan deities, names of Divine appointment, such as Angel, Baptist, Evangelist, names given to the Godhead, absurd or inept names, such as Sepulchre, Cross, Sunday, Easter, and colloquial forms of normal names which do not sound well, and so on.<sup>2.</sup> No formal statement on the matter was issued in Scotland, but Steuart of Pardovan quoted a section of the French Church Discipline which rejected names such as Calvin had listed.<sup>3.</sup> Nothing was known in Scotland of the symbolical names which appear elsewhere to have been either given at baptism or, more likely, adopted subsequently, such as Faintnot, Praisegod, Freegift, Redeemed, though ordinary Biblical names were

1. Memoirs, ed. by Morrison, p.484.

2. Reyburn, John Calvin, pp. 316-317

3. Title III, par. 2.

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common enough. The father of Abacuck Bissett, the author of "Rolment of Courtis", requested Mary, Queen of Scots, to choose a name for his son and she complied by opening a Bible and giving the first on which her eye lighted. This happened to be Habakkuk, which survived in the form of Abacuck.<sup>1</sup> Male names were sometimes given to female children probably owing to some error at baptism.<sup>2</sup> Or, on the other hand, a female name might be given to a male child, as in the Melrose register:

"Thomas Lythgow, a.s.n.( a son named ) Anna . . . ."<sup>3</sup>.

Foundling children, so far as has been observed, were given names in common use. In one instance, however, a kindly significance was reflected in the name given, that of the foundling already noted as having been entered in the Canongate register under the name "Theophilus". This is in contrast to the practice in England where it was commonplace to indicate the circumstances of origin in such absurd names as Nameless, Godsend, Porch, Job rakt out of the Asshes, and so on.<sup>4</sup> Occasionally the events of the moment guided a parent in the choice of a name. An extreme instance of this was the patriotic exuberance of Mr. Andrew Auchinleck, minister of Dundee, at the Restoration. In a letter to Lauderdale he gave the information:

"No sooner came his Majesty to his own and was reestablished but immediately thereafter the Lord bestowed on me a young sone, my twenty-sevent child, whom I named Charles,

1. Chambers, Domestic Annals, I, p.180.

2. Rogers, Social Life in Scotland, I, p.141.

4. Waters, Parish Registers in England, p.39.

3. Melrose Parish Registers, 1642-1820, Scottish Record Society, p.33.

that my little Charles new come into the wor~~ld~~ might salute in his capacity our great great Charles, new come to his oun~~e~~ part off the world. And when he was baptized we supplid the place of Carolus parvus by remembering our sacred sacred soveraigne....." 1.

Inspection of the parochial registers of Scotland does not produce many instances of eccentricity. On the whole the names appearing in the records are monotonous in the regularity of their repetition. Each child was given one name, and almost invariably it was chosen from among a comparatively small group, usually, apparently, following the names already borne by members of the parents' families.

So intimately was a Christian name associated with baptism that in ordinary speech the term "baptism"; or a derivitive, was used as an equivalent of the term "name". Knox, remarking on the fact that Beaton had called him a knave, said, "It was my lord's pleasure so to baptise a poor man". An artillery piece was "baptized Knox", chronicled Bannatyne in his Memorials, but it burst and wounded several persons; "This thei gat for thair mocking of Godis servantis", commented the narrator grimly. The same author related that John Row was called a railor, knave, and the rest of the Reformed ministers "were baptized with the lyke or worse names". The deposed Episcopal minister who satirized the General Assembly of

1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Laing MSS., I, p.313.

1638 with a parody of the Litany, penned the lines:

From peremptorie reprobations,  
From Henderson's rebaptizisation,  
From all such pracks  
Almighty God, deliver us ! 1.

Such illustrations might be multiplied, and this use of the term continues.

No instance has been observed of an adult baptism where a name was bestowed at baptism different from that by which the candidate was already known. It does not appear ever to have been the custom in the Reformed Churches to place any emphasis on the matter in such situations. The arrival of civil registration minimised also the significance of the name in infant baptisms. Normally the name used is that on the registration certificate. Should a parent wish a name to be used which does not appear on the birth certificate it may be used, and it is the responsibility of the minister to inform the registrar that such an alteration was made.

e. The baptismal seat.

A bench was provided in most churches for the use of men who had brought their children to be baptised. No mention was made of such an article of furniture in the suggestions offered for the reparation of churches in the First Book of Discipline. Notices appear early, however, in session and other records. The Edinburgh magistrates on 17th. December, 1600, gave,

1. Scottish Pasquils, 1578-1715, ed. by Maitland, p.33.

"commissoun to David Williamsone and Johnne Robertstone to tak ordour with the saittis in the plaiice of baptisme and mariage about the pulpitt in the hie Kirk...." <sup>1</sup>. Many of the churches were later in installing such conveniences, and when they were acquired they were often put to a variety of uses. This was a natural sequence of events for very few of the church buildings had any furniture for the comfort of worshippers, and those who had were not at liberty to use the seats or desks available for these were the possession of particular heritors. At Dunblane it was enacted in 1653 that the father and his witnesses " were to sit upon a seat provided for that purpose by the Treasurer". <sup>2</sup>. The bench was usurped by others in the course of time and a special resolution had to be passed to secure the seat for scholars and baptismal parties only. At Leith in 1648 it was to be used for persons desiring marriage as well as those with children to be baptised. <sup>3</sup>. The records at Ayr specified, in 1650, that the seat was for "the faithers of children quho are to baptise thair children, the collectors of the poor's monie, and visitors upon the Sabboth day, and old and infirme men". <sup>4</sup>. Later, at Dumfries in 1744, the elders were numbered among the privileged in the item: "To Baptism Seat and Elders Pew, being 9ft. long and 3ft. broad, etc., £3. 14. 10." <sup>5</sup>. The baptismal seat disappeared when the churches of the land were improved by pews, and it became unknown for the baptismal party to be present

1. Extracts from the Records, 1589-1603, p.278.

2. Barty, History of Dunblane, p.84.

3. So. Leith

Records, Ed. by Robertson, p.85.

4. Pagan, Annals of

Ayr, p.83.

5. Paton, St. Michaels, Dumfries, p.28

throughout the preceding service.

## 2. Social customs.

### a. Prior to baptism.

Spiritual influences in the way of fairies, evil spirits, witches, warlocks, and the like, were very much awake and interested in a new born infant according to the constitution of things in the imaginative universe of superstition. Where knowledge was limited and ignorance unlimited it was deemed essential to guard against every possibility of ill-fortune attending a child, and to this end appropriate action was taken by the parents or the family circle of the vulnerable infant. It is not easy to define the area within which one form of ritual or another operated and it must not be assumed that because a custom was in vogue in one part of the country it may be taken as typical of the nation as a whole. Again, some of these customs were birth rituals rather than baptismal customs, and their place in relation to baptism is simply that they illustrate the attitude of mind with which many parents regarded all activities which had their centre of interest in a new born baby. When it is understood how persistent and deep-seated in tradition were the fantastic beliefs of the average mind in bygone days - and not altogether removed in more enlightened times - some idea may be formed of the level of intelligence with which so many presented their children to the sacrament.



by Drake-Carnell as having been seen by him in recent years. The newly born infant was carried upstairs, or up a ladder, as a helpful gesture toward his rise to good fortune in later days.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most wide-spread of distinctively Scottish customs was that of carrying a "christening piece" on the journey to the church. This may be connected with the ancient bread and cheese ritual. It is still practised <sup>occasionally</sup> and H. V. Morton was the recipient of a "christening piece", an event which he describes in his "In Search of Scotland". To be lucky the gift should be presented to the first tall dark man the party meets, and this person should turn back and walk a few steps with the child and attendants. The custom varies a little. Sometimes the gift is presented to the first man encountered; sometimes it is bread and cheese; more often now it is a piece of cake; and it may be accompanied by a pin from the dress of the child.<sup>2</sup>

b. At baptism.

The matter of precedence in administration was regarded as important where there were two or more children to be baptised of different sexes. The male children were to be presented first for it was thought that should the order be reversed the female child would have a

1. Its an Old Scottish Custom, p.108.

2. Graham, Social Life in the 18th. Century, p.192, Cameron, The Parish of Campsie, p.113, The Book of Scottish Anecdote, p.84, etc.

growth of hair on the face in later years. This at least was the usual explanation given for the emphasis on order, though it is difficult to think of Knox accepting such a belief and, so far as the evidence of the "Livre des Anglois" indicates, the male children were baptised first in the English Congregation at Geneva. The method was that of the Roman Church and probably had no more serious origin than that male children were regarded as the more important in a patrilinear society. There can be no doubting of the fact, however, that other reasons were supplied by superstitious imaginations. Hewison in "The Isle of Bute in Olden Times" records the custom. In the Statistical Account of Scotland the minister of Burra and South Ronaldsay related that he was frequently interrupted in the baptismal service and gravely told that he was doing a very wrong thing in proposing to baptise a female child before a male child, for, it was said, when this happened "she would on coming to years of discretion most certainly have a strong beard, and the boy would have none". Cranna says, when describing the kirk session records at Fraserburgh, that in 1667 there was an uproar in the church because preference was not respected, and two parents were up before the session for their "scandalous and open struggling" together, although in this instance it would seem that it was not a preference of sexes, but an opinion that the first to be baptised would be luckier than the second.<sup>1</sup>

1. Cranna, Fraserburgh Past and Present, p.195.

The saddest custom of all was that in which the time of baptism was made the occasion of a contract which bound the infant to the miseries of serfdom in the coal mines, a custom which prevailed in the mining areas between about 1606 and 1775. This is one of the most unhappy episodes in all the history of baptismal customs. The master was present at the administration and as soon as the ecclesiastical service was over he produced, and the parent signed, a deed of life-long bondage on behalf of the child, the parent receiving arles or pledge money and the minister and witnesses appending their signatures in attestation. Whatever were the compensation of security of employment they were more than outweighed by the evils of thralldom from which the person bound could not escape; and at the last the master was obliged by law to provide a coffin for the burial. A most pitiful feature of this legalised slavery was that it was associated with the sacrament and countenanced by the minister,<sup>1</sup>.

c. After baptism.

In some parts of the Highlands the fire ritual was performed after the baptism as well as before, the parent taking the infant on his return from the church and passing it round or over the flames, saying the formula "Let the flames consume thee now or never".<sup>2</sup>.

1. Graham, Social Life, p.532.

2. Drake-Carnell, Its an Old Scottish Custom, p.130.

The baptismal feast, however, was the most deeply entrenched and widespread of the post-baptismal activities. The Caldwell Papers, referring to the period prior to 1750, give a detailed account of the celebrations which accompanied a birth and baptism, and there it is stated that a cummers' feast preceded the baptism as well as the elaborate feasting which followed it. Naturally these celebrations varied in magnitude according to the economic status of the parents. In all cases it was understood that the banquet should be worthy of the family; too often it was above their means and resulted in debt.

The prodigality of food and drink, and the excesses of revelry were so notoriously wasteful and disorderly that every generation since the Reformation saw an attempt being made to curtail these festivities. The seriousness of the issue produced an Act of Parliament in 1581 which ordered,

"That na banquettis salbe at onie upsitting eftir babtizing of bairnis in tyme cūing under pane of twentie pund to be payit be everie persone, doar in the contrair, alsweill of the maister of the houss, quhair the effect of this act is cōtravenit".<sup>1</sup>

The reasons given included not only the resulting disorders but also that money went out of the country to pay for the imported confections and encouragement was given to the less wealthy to incur heavy debts. Searchers were appointed to inspect all houses where such excesses were suspected, and these persons were stimulated to thoroughness

1. Act. Parl. Scot., 1581, c.19, p.221.

by a reward of half the fines which might be imposed on the guilty.

The Privy Council legislated in 1595 against all banquets because of the severe dearth, repeating the terms and fines of 1581.<sup>1</sup> Parliament again intervened in 1621 to stop the abuse, limiting the fare to be provided to that which was grown in Scotland. The Aberdeen Town Council dealt vigorously with the "makeing and haweing of superflous and costlie banquetting at the baptizeing of bairnes, and be convocating of great numberis of people, both men and wemen thairwnto" when "money poore anes dieing and starveing at dyikkes and under staires for cauld and hunger". The fine was raised to £40 per person found disobedient.<sup>2</sup>

From the side of the Church action was taken to control the number of witnesses allowed at baptisms. The numerical strength of the convoys accompanying the father to the church had become a serious nuisance, taking away all respect for the sacrament as such and making the event an occasion of scandal. Aberdeen set the limit at six men and six women in 1624<sup>3</sup> and the regulations were repeated with stern warnings in 1626.<sup>4</sup> Six gossips were permitted at Glasgow in 1646,<sup>5</sup> and the same number at St. Andrews in 1643.<sup>6</sup> A multitude of references might be cited to show the great effort made at various times

1. Reg. P.C., V, 1592-1599, p.243. 2. Burgh Council Register, pp. 390-391. 3. Ibid. 4. Aberdeen Burgh Records, pp.9-10. 5. Wodrow Biog. Colls., II, 2, p.32. 6. St. Andrew's Presbytery Records, p.11.

to curb the shocking conditions under which baptism was observed. These regulations seem to have been quickly forgotten or disregarded whenever the fear of pecuniary penalties had been removed. When it came to an open issue of law, civil or ecclesiastical, against custom the latter won the day. Nor was any respect paid to the Sabbath or a time of Fast, in many quarters. The Town Council of Edinburgh in November, 1648, received a memorandum from the kirk session anent "excessive banquetts at the baptizing of children on the Lord's Day...."<sup>1</sup>. They had taken what action lay in their power, but had had to admit failure. The people would not be denied these social occasions. In 1645 an example occurs of their action against those who had broken a Fast to make merry.

"Apr. 1. Ordains Alex. Horsbrook to pay to the Kirk treasurer 10 thalers ( £26l. 13. 4.) for transgressing the solemn fast in suffering a cook Jo. Black, to be hired for dressing a banquet for baptism of David Martin's bairn on Wednesday last. Given in by the said David Martin, master of the feast, 3 lib. 1. 4d., John Black, cook, to pay 2 thalers ( £5l. 6. 8d.)."<sup>2</sup>

More personal incidents of an unfavourable nature are sometimes read by the inquirer such as the action of Johnston of Wariston who had to take steps in 1654 to dismiss a servant who had forced a son of the house to drink at a baptism to the jeopardy of the reputation of the family.<sup>3</sup>

1. Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, II, p.121.
2. Lee, History, Appendix, p.395.
3. Diary, II, p.272.

Under the Episcopal rule after 1660 sharp action by the authorities continued. "It is recommended to the elders", said the session at Old Aberdeen, "to think of some convenient way of restraining the tumultuarie number of people which is ordinarily at Baptisms and marriages and other public meetings of that nature, which is many times the occasion of not a little riot and to report to the next dyet". The problem baffled the Church and State. Parliament legislated in 1681, "in order to restrain exorbitant expenses at b<sup>m</sup>s, not more than 4 witnesses to be present besides the members of the family".<sup>1</sup> At Peebles this Act was rigorously enforced and no less than 119 persons were fined on January 11, 1688, for having held, or been present at, baptismal feasts which were other than the law allowed. Leighton voiced the feelings of many when he told his people that they were "more busied to prepare their house for their friends, than to prepare their hearts for offering up their infants to God to be sealed".<sup>2</sup> The custom was never broken. Kirk sessions legislated in vain. Great companies still continued to assemble to toast the mother and child and make merry either in the home or at the nearest tavern. Hall in his account of his travels in Scotland listed the prodigious menu of a baptismal banquet, the fowls and other items for the main dishes being numbered in hundreds, and all else on the same extravagant scale.<sup>3</sup> The conditions in Ayrshire during the first half of the 19th. century are given in ~~Anderson's~~ <sup>Mitchell's</sup> "Memories of Ayrshire".<sup>4</sup> Only the

1. Act. Parl. Scot., 1681, c.80, p.350.
2. First Ep Epistle of Peter, chap. 3, v.21.
3. Hall, Travels in Scotland, 1807, II, p.430.
4. Miscellany VI, S.H.S.S. p.294.

arrival of more refined manners and the multiplication of other opportunities for social intercourse removed the unseemly excesses of former days and replaced them by the quieter celebrations of the present age.

### 3. Other relevant items.

#### a. Royal baptisms.

The Royal baptisms of Scotland deserve special mention as the most magnificent of all in the scale of their celebration. They served as State occasions when the actual baptism was only a small part of a tremendous arrangement of banquets and festivities. The first of these after the Reformation was the baptism of James VI in December, 1566. Spottiswoode was delegated by the General Assembly to approach the Queen and request that the baptism be administered by a minister of the Reformed Church.<sup>1</sup> The request was refused, and in the Chapel Royal at Stirling Castle the Prince was baptised by the Roman Archbishop, John Hamilton, according to the Roman form, but without the use of spittle. The Queen's order was to the effect, "That she would not have a pockie priest to spet in her child's mouth".<sup>2</sup> Difficulty was experienced in getting the Scottish nobility to take any part in the ceremony, and the most of them with the Earl of Bedford, the representative of England, kept out of the Chapel where the ceremony was performed; but all attended the banquet "in the said great

1. Spottiswoode, History, II, p.40.

2. The Works of James VI, 1615, p.301.



hall, where they wanted no prodigality", as Knox commented.<sup>1.</sup> As a gift to the infant Prince Queen Elizabeth presented a golden font, a similar gift being sent to Charles IX of France.<sup>2.</sup> It was not used, however, the baptism having been delayed on account of the tremendous preparations involved. The Earl of Bedford, attended by other forty gentlemen, was requested by Elizabeth to say pleasantly, "that it was made as soon as we heard of the prince's birth, and then it was big enough for him; but now he, being grown, is too big for it. Therefore it may be better used for the next child, provided it be christened before it outgrow the font".<sup>3.</sup> The succeeding years did not provide an occasion for this advice to be taken, and the gold font was melted down to provide money against a possible riot on the Queen's marriage to the Earl of Bothwell. The metal yielded 5000 crowns for the hire of mercenaries.<sup>4.</sup> The vessels used at the baptism were a basin and laver presented and carried by Lord Ross. Lord Darnley, the father of the child, was ignored by the Queen, and not allowed to be present at the baptism of his son. To meet the expenses of the great occasion the Privy Council generously granted £12,000 to be raised by taxation.<sup>5.</sup>

The children of James VI were baptised by Reformed ministers. The first baptism was that of Prince Frederick Henry on 30th. August, 1594. The Royal Chapel at Stirling was rebuilt for the event, and in the presence of a great

1. Laing, K.W., II, p.537. 2. Bond, Fonts and Font Covers, p.75, Diurnal of Remarkable Occurants, Dec.10, 1566.  
3. Keith, History, p.357, and II, p.479. 4. Tytler, History, V, p.409. The font weighed 333ounces and was valued at £1048. 13/- 5. Reg. P.C., II, p.485.

company of representatives of foreign monarchs, noblemen and other persons of quality, Cunningham, Bishop of Aberdeen, baptised the child. The sermon in French, though France was not represented, was preached by Lindsay, the minister of Leith. Gifts of gold and silver were strewn among the people, after which the company sat down to a banquet in which there was "nothing lacking that was required to such a triumph". The festivities continued for some days.<sup>1</sup> The purists were not enamoured of the display, but the presbyteries loyally assisted the King to raise the funds required to meet the cost of the entertainment of the guests.<sup>2</sup>

The baptisms of the Princesses Elizabeth, 1596<sup>3</sup>, and Margaret, 1598<sup>4</sup>, were not on the same scale, but they were not on a meagre scale. In the case of Princess Margaret the baptism was in April, and Lent was curtailed to suit the convenience of the celebrants! Having got the date settled to his satisfaction, the King had then to see to an adequate provision of victuals. This was a greater difficulty for the Royal purse was a perennial problem. Strategic dispositions had to be planned. Lord Pembroke, for example, acting no doubt on information received as to the state of the Royal pleasure, sent home for a particular sow which the King had admired, and instructed that it was to be sent to

1. Spotswood, History, pp.406-407, Moysis, Memoirs of the Affairs in Scotland, 1755, p.229f., Calderwood, History, V, pp.342-346, Fowler, The Works of, Ed. by Meikle, S.T.S., New Series, II, pp.165-195.

2. Calderwood, History, V, p.340, Reg. P.C., V, 1592-1599, p.xxvi, p.165 note.

3. Reg. P.C., p.317. 4. Ibid., p.542.

Edinburgh under the strictest secrecy in the dark and in a closed cart. One invitation card to the function was a curious missive. It read:

"Having appointed that baptism of our dearest daughter to be here at Holyrood house, upon Sunday, the fifteenth day of April next, in such honourable manner as that action craveth, we have therefore thought good right effectually to request and desire you to send us such offerings and presents against that day as is best then in season, and convenient for that action, as you regard our honour, and will merit our special thanks. So not doubting to find your greater willingness to pleasure us herein, since you are to be invited to take part of your own good cheer ....." 1.

The King resorted to the same devices in the arrangements for the baptism of Charles I. A letter to the Laird of Dundas on December 23, 1600, requested that victuals be gifted for the banquet.<sup>2</sup>

This baptism became a matter of erudite controversy in the 18th. century when the subject of lay baptism was exercising the minds of some Anglicans. If Presbyterian baptism was lay baptism, ran the argument, and if lay baptism was invalid, had Charles I, the Royal martyr, ever been baptised? Such was the problem posited, and its solution was found by proving that the minister who had

1. Arnot, History of Edinburgh, c.11, p.15.  
2. Chambers, Dom. Annals, p.321.

baptised the monarch had been episcopally ordained.<sup>1</sup>

The Royal Presence removed to London on his accession to the united throne in 1603, and thereafter the only baptism in the Royal household administered in Scotland by a Presbyterian was during the reign of Queen Victoria, when a daughter born to Princess Beatrice at Balmoral was baptised by Dr. Cameron Lees, who was summoned to Balmoral to perform the rite.<sup>2</sup>

b. Baptising of bells.

A Roman ceremony called in Reformed literature "the baptising of bells" was denounced as a piece of superstition. Such a denunciation was included, for example, in the King's Confession of 1580, and is frequently mentioned elsewhere. There can be no doubt that the phrase was current as descriptive of the consecration or blessing of bells, but it is also true that it was an analogous use of the term "baptism" and was not regarded by the Roman Church as strictly a baptism of inanimate objects. The naming, lustration and blessing of a new bell had features similar to a baptismal action and on this ground, no doubt, a transfer of the sacramental term originated.<sup>3</sup> There was no temptation on the part of people at large to continue this use for the dedication of ecclesiastical property was not only

1. Elwin, *The Minister of Baptism*, 1889, App. to c.XI.

2. *British Weekly*, March 8, 1945, p.329.

3. Robinson, *The History of Baptism*, 1790, p.406.

discontinued, but said to be unwarranted. George Gillespie affirmed that there was "no warrant for the dedication of churches as is thought to make them holy" <sup>1</sup>. and argued that the only difference between a church and a house, or articles used by the Church from all other articles, was a matter of convenience; and that a place or an article which had been used by the Church might be put to another use without any sacrilege.

c. The renunciation of baptism.

One of the grim phases of Scottish Church history, shared by other lands, was the sordid tale of the witch hunts. The subject of necromancy had its serious side which must be treated with respect, and all the terror of witches was not due absurd imaginations. At one period after the Reformation there appears to have been some organisation behind the gathering of witches, and had it not been suppressed one way or another it had the makings of a dangerous resurgence of paganism in the form of a secret movement. Whatever truth there may be in this interpretation, of the general story there is no dubiety. It was a cruel and heartless business, blessed by the Church and supported by the State. Only brutalised minds, themselves more full of the Satanic spirit than their victims, could have carried out the fearful torturings and burnings of countless old women whose only crime was that of growing old. Of the sickening

1. A Dispute Against the English-Popish Ceremonies obtruded upon the Church of Scotland.....1660, p.122.

tale of these legalised murders there is abundant information in the considerable literature associated with witchcraft. What falls to be noticed here is that it was a regular part of a witch's confession that he or she had renounced his or her baptism. One of the earliest trials, that of Bessie Dunlop in 1576, records the confession that her male accomplice had "promieist hir bayth geir and horsis and ky, and uthir graith, gif scho wald denye hir Christendome, and the faith sche tuke at the funt-stane".<sup>1</sup> The Demonologie of James VI, and other works of a similar type, took this feature for granted. A woman on trial before the presbytery of Lanark, August 22, 1644, "had renounced her baptisme".<sup>2</sup> The general opinion was expressed by Leighton. "You think the renouncing of baptism a horrible word", he told his congregation, "and that we would speak only so of witches", and continues to point the moral that all who do not renounce sin are in fact renouncing their baptism.<sup>3</sup>

Not only was baptism renounced, however, but a Satanic baptism was said to have been conferred both upon the initiated and upon any children she might offer to the Devil. The notable witch case at Auldearn in Nairnshire, 1662, that of Isobel Gowdie, as recorded in the evidence laid before the sheriff, the parish minister, and seven

1. Pitcairn, Criminal Trials, I, part 2, 1542-1584, p. 52.
2. Records of the Presbytery of Lanark, Abbotstord Club, p. 36.
3. First Epistle of Peter, c. 3, v. 21.

county gentlemen, contained the statement that the accused "had given herself over to the devil, and had been baptized by him in the parish church".<sup>1</sup> At Inverary in 1661, a trial elicited the tale that the accused had renounced her baptism, and the Devil had given her a new name, saying, "I baptize thee Mary".<sup>2</sup> The Forfar trial of the same year recorded that the presumed witches had "receaved new names fra the divell," and other trials illustrate the same point.<sup>3</sup>

A smaller number of notices refer to children being offered to the Devil, the popularity of the belief being reflected in a note of Johnston of Wariston on the baptism of one of his children, "I offered up my little daughter to the Lord.....I am sure mor heartily nor ever any witch offerd up hir chyld to hir master the divel when he gives them their second sight".<sup>4</sup>

The methods by which these confessions were extorted - the official pricker, the denial of sleep, the rack, and other horrible devices - make them unworthy of consideration as evidence of the truth. Nothing casts a general doubt on the reliability of the judgment of the Reformed ministry on many matters than the level of mentality shown in this morass of infamy. Bondage to Old Testament ethics on its lower levels blinded their vision of the more

1. Chambers, Dom. Annals, I, p.285.
2. Downie, Bute and the Cumbræes, p.84.
3. Reliquiæ Antiquiæ Scotica, p.114.
4. Diary, II, p.152.

excellent way. An insight into the gullibility of the minister and magistrates whenever this area of thought was being considered at a time when saner notions were dawning may be cited from the MS session records of Pittenweem. Fife had been notorious for its frenzied hunting down of suspected witches. The Pittenweem minister, elders and magistrates had before them in 1704 a group of women "who all did confess their compact with the Devil, renouncing their baptisms, and being at meetings with the Devil, and gave a circumstanciat account of these meetings as also delated others whom we here forbear to mention because they never confessed..." These confessions appear from a reading of the session minute to be straightforward, and as the clerk chronicled "freely" offered. Presumably the background of terror and torture was not thought worth mentioning. Fortunately the presbytery to whom the matter was referred seems to have been more humane than its predecessors, and the so-called witches, to the great grief of the session, escaped death. Six years elapsed before the truth came out. William Bell, an elder, who had been foremost in the convicting of the women and pleading for their just punishment before the presbytery, had a remorse of conscience and subscribed a paper which was placed before the session, declaring "that the whole affair of witchcraft here was nothing but a contrivance and trick". The plot to murder the women having thus been laid bare to the wounding of "the reputation and credit of the Minister here, therefore the session refers it to the presbytery for advice". The



advice of leading men in the presbytery, privately taken, was to hush the scandal up and do nothing more about it.<sup>1</sup>

If all the truth were known about the supposed renunciations of baptisms and pacts with the Devil, it is to be feared that the reputation of many a minister, elder and magistrate would vanish. Children of a credulous age they considered themselves to be doing God's service.

d. Unbaptised infants.

The Genevan tradition firmly held that baptism only recognised an existing status and did not confer regeneration in the sense that before baptism a child was damned and after it it was possessed of eternal life. The memorable phrase of the King's Confession made the matter clear when the signatories condemned in vigorous terms the religion of the Roman Antichrist " his cruel Judgment against Infants departing without the Sacrament; his absolute Necessity of Baptism. The sentiment was common to the Reformed Church. Hence a recent statement by Anderson in his "The Bible in Sixteenth Century Scottish Life and Literature" is completely in error. Dr. Anderson writes, "Since baptism was the gateway to salvation only one fate was possible for the infant that died unchristened...."<sup>2</sup>.

1. MS. Pittenweem session records.      2. p.87.

This is just what the Reformed Church denied with vehemence as the very dregs of Popery. The standard Genevan-type documents may have been hesitant and confused in some of their descriptions of the meaning of infant baptism; but they were perfectly unanimous in refusing to make the sacrament an instrument of salvation. It was a sacrament of the visible Church and as such did not determine any child's relation to the invisible Church. This is not to say that in the Calvinistic scheme all infants were assumed to be elect. Calvin spoke quite readily of Adam's sin condemning infants as well as others in eternal death.<sup>1</sup> The Synod of Dort only offered a hope to "pious parents",<sup>2</sup> and men of the status of Rutherford could envisage the torments of infants in hell.<sup>3</sup> The point which anti-Roman polemics made was that, whatever the fate of this or that infant, it was not baptism or the lack of it that determined the issue.

In the face of this cardinal theological tenet it comes as a surprise to find that, while an unbaptised child of Christian parentage was regarded as foederally holy and already a member of the Christian community ( though not formally recognised as such by the rite of baptism ), if death should intervene between birth or baptism, or if the child was still-born, it was buried apart as a nameless creature. In other words, whatever the

1. Institutes, III, c.23, sect.7.

2. "Pious parents ought not to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, of whom God hath called in infancy out of this life", Acta Synodi, Art.17.

3. Exam. Armin., pp.260-261.

theological position, there was a lingering hesitancy to act upon it, and a popular belief that somehow an unbaptised infant was not a Christian infant, but a strange unclassified being who could not be said to be damned ( should death intervene ), and yet was not deserving of the full rights of Christian burial. This practise of burying unbaptised children apart must have spoken louder than theory to the observers and sustained Roman ideas in a Reformed context.

The earliest reference to the burial of an unbaptised child that has been observed was at Perth in November 12, 1582, when an illegitimate child was secretly interred, and as a result, the mother was cited to appear before the session<sup>1</sup>. Nothing to the point can be inferred from this for obviously more was thought of the disposing of the body secretly than of the fact that the child had been unbaptised. At St. Andrews in 1591, the beadle and the bellman got into trouble for burying an illegitimate and unbaptised child "under silence of nycht". Again, the offence may have been more important than the time of internment.<sup>2</sup> Two cottars were cited to appear before the Elgin session in 1628 for privately burying the body of an unbaptised child outside the churchyard.<sup>3</sup> In 1627 a case was before the Perth session in which a woman who had abandoned her child said that she did it "because the child was not baptized", believing, apparently, that

1. The Book of Perth, p.150. 2. St. Andrews K.S. Reg., II, p.719. 3. Records of Elgin, II, p.206.

it could be got rid of as a creature who scarcely merited the status of a human being. The child was ordered to be baptised and handed back to the mother.<sup>1</sup>

Such children were widely believed to be somehow a special attraction to the Devil as at least not having the mark of a Christian. At the famous trial of the male witch, John Feane, in 1590, one of the accusations laid against him was that, on receiving instructions from the Evil One, "He dememberit the bodeis of deid corps and speciallie of bairnis unbaptisit".<sup>2</sup> A more gruesome tale was told at the trial of the Forfar witches in 1661, when at one of their alleged meetings, they were said to have made a pie of an unbaptised infant that had been buried apart in the churchyard, in order that it might give them strength to do the Devil's work and resist the Church.<sup>3</sup> It may have been a reason akin to this outlook that moved the provost and bailies of Aberdeen in 1672 to order the exhumation of a child of a Quaker after it had been buried three days in the Quakers' own burying ground, the corpse being carried to Foot of Dee and reburied after the coffin had been smashed open to see that it did not contain merely stones.<sup>4</sup> Nor was popular opinion far from the mind of Burns when he described the scene which met Tam o' Shanter's fuddled sight in Alloway kirkyard. There, presided over by

1. Book of Perth, p.308. 2. Pitcairn, Criminal Trials, I, part 3, p.213. 3. Reliquiae Antiquae Scoticae, p.114.  
4. Diary of Alexander Jaffray, ed. by Barclay, 2nd. Edit., Appendix, Memoirs of the Rise, Progress and Persecutions of the people called Quakers....., p.308.

Auld Nick in person, the witches and warlocks danced,  
and Tam,

" was able

To note upon the haly table

A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;

Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns; "

A resolution about the internment of these infants was passed by the Synod of Fife in 1641, which forbade their burial apart, the implication being that this was what was being done. The decision was in due course noted by the kirk sessions. At Culross on April 6, 1642, the entry was made in the session record, "The burying of unbaptised bairns apart be taken notice off".<sup>1</sup> In the Anstruther-Wester record it is entered rather late, August 27, 1650, "yt burying of unbaptised bairns apart to be takin notice off".<sup>2</sup> This may only mean, of course, that the internments were to be somewhere within the churchyard and not outside of it, without implying that these infants were to be interred among the other dead; but whether this be so or not, what was certainly implied was that the burials were to be in the same area as those of baptised people.

At Aberdeen in 1643 there was trouble about the baptising of children, the ministers having some scruples

1. The Scottish Antiquary, V, 1891, p.115.  
2. MS. session records, Anstruther-Wester.

about discipline, and strict rules were laid down about the times of presentation. Spalding relates the story of the difficulties which arose, and, in particular, tells of an infant in extremis who was refused baptism before the lecture was finished, "but before the lecture was done the silly ( weak ) infant deceasid in the comers arms at the pulpit foot without benefit of baptism..... Mr. John Oswald, who said the lecture, perceiving the bairn to be dead, said, since the bairn is dead in the kirk, cause bury it in the kirk, which was instantly done".<sup>1</sup> Burial in a church was expressly forbidden in 1638, but the extraordinary circumstances of this death were evidently thought to require it as appropriate. In another case baptism was refused because, although the minister was in the church, the child was not brought when others were being baptised. The infant was taken home again, whereupon the mother expired in grief. The child also died before the morning and the two were buried together.<sup>2</sup> Neither of these instances can be said to be typical, but in neither case was the burial of the child apart as an unhallowed creature observed.

The session at Inverness had reason to discipline a parent who had buried his dead child on the shore, "because it dyed unbaptised, and to this effect brought two witnesses yt saw the childe born and dy, and helped to burie it in the said place".<sup>3</sup>

1. Spalding, *Troubles*, II, 274.
2. *Ibid.*,
3. Inverness Kirk Session Records, 1661-1800, p.45.

At Iona before 1703, Martin found a piece of ground set apart for the internment of murderers and unbaptised children, and presumably also suicides.<sup>1</sup> One of the graveyards on Mull was reserved for unbaptised children, and the story is told of the death bed request of an old islander, who asked that her remains might be buried beside the little ones.<sup>2</sup> Steuart of Pardovan took occasion to condemn the practice on the basis that these children were foederally holy, "And therefore the practice of denying Burial among Christians unto Children unbaptised, is unagreeable to this doctrine, and is most unwarrantable".<sup>3</sup> He was unable, however, to quote any legislation for or against. The practice seems to have varied a great deal. In the case of the witches of Forfar, quoted above, the body of the child was found "by the church wall about the southeist doore", and Rogers in his "Social Life in Scotland" makes the statement, that "till recently bodies of unbaptised children were buried apart from the graves of the baptised. In some parishes the remains were deposited under the eaves of the church".<sup>4</sup> It has also been contended that the North side of a churchyard was often left to serve all extraordinary purposes by way of burials.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the sacrament of baptism was enveloped in an ideological universe considerably different from that

1. Description, Iona, p.258 2. Barnett, 'The Road to Rannoch, pp.36-37. 3. Title III, par.2. 4. Vol.1, p.168.  
5. McMillan, Worship, p.297.

of the Church standards. Popular notions whose origin was no higher than imagination or ancient pagan rites permeated the thought of the people. The advance of general education has cleared the average mind of the grosser forms of superstition, though it is surprising how some old customs keep alive in the form of half serious jests. It is not unknown for some special quality to have been thought to be associated with "Jordan water". The ever increasing absorption of medical knowledge has abolished the washing of weak infants in holy pools, wells, and other pseudo-sacred places, a custom of ancient lineage against which the Church had often to make war. Too often where the sacrament of infant baptism is observed it has not only been shorn of the unorthodox sub-Christian, but of almost any spiritual significance at all, and such baptisms themselves have become just another expression of custom, more social than religious.



Baptismal Hymns.

Chapter Twelve

Baptismal Hymns

Neither the Book of Common Prayer nor the Book of Praise for the Public Worship of God contain any hymns for singing in the baptismal service. There is, in fact, in the former that the Latin Mass, or the service of thanksgiving, should precede the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This difference in the order of service, explained by the fact that the baptismal service is designed to be appended to an ordinary service of the Lord's Supper and the latter is designed to be appended to an ordinary service of the Lord's Supper and the latter is designed to be appended to an ordinary service of the Lord's Supper.

On this account it is not to be expected that there would be any special baptismal hymns which are distinctive to congregational singing and the service of thanksgiving. The medieval Mass, in which the baptismal service, obviously did not contain any special hymns to precede the Lord's Supper or baptism, and the only medium of church service. If a hymn of thanksgiving, however, was thought appropriate in any case, there are no baptismal hymns which should be included in the order. It is common to find that a Psalm dirge follows the baptismal service, and was thought of as the conclusion of the baptismal service rather than belonging to the baptismal service.

## Baptismal Hymns.

Neither the Book of Common Order nor the Directory for the Public Worship of God contain any reference to singing in the baptismal service. There is an instruction in the former that the 103rd. Psalm, or some other form of thanksgiving, should conclude the service of the Lord's Supper. This difference in the two rites is, no doubt, explained by the fact that the baptismal service was designed to be appended to an ordinary preaching service, whereas the Lord's Supper was regarded as a complete service in itself. This, roughly, was the position and the tradition continues within Presbyterianism.

On this account it is not to be expected that there would be any special baptismal praise until the general attitude to congregational singing had developed in comprehensiveness. The metrical Psalms, in whatever version, obviously did not contain any direct reference to either the Lord's Supper or baptism, and this was the only medium of church praise. If a Psalm of thanksgiving, however, was thought appropriate in the one case, there was no intrinsic reason why it should be excluded in the other. It is extremely probable that a Psalm did follow the baptismal service, but was thought of as the conclusion of the principal service rather than belonging to the baptismal service itself.

The order suggested for an ordinary preaching service included a psalm after the sermon; then a prayer; then another psalm and the blessing. On the theory propounded by the Reformers, baptism could be properly administered at any point after the sermon, and if inserted after the psalm which followed the sermon then another psalm might follow the action of baptism. Henderson in 1641 does not make any mention of singing; but he does say that the minister concluded the service " with thanksgiving for the Word and Sacraments, and with prayer for a blessing, and with such Petitions as he useth at other times after Sermon, and in the end dismisseth the Congregation with the blessing".<sup>1</sup> There was a measure of discretion allowed which did not make for any fixed rule being observed.

An argument against the use of congregational praise in the part of the service devoted to baptism might be offered from the suggestive fact that when additions in the way of Scriptural songs were made to the Metrical Psalter - in 1634 these amounted to fourteen in number - a "Thanksgiving after receiving the Lord's Supper" was included but nothing was provided for baptismal thanksgiving.

There are not wanting notices of baptism being at the beginning of the service. At Aberdeen in 1562 it was

1. Government and Order, p.16. In 1639 the presbytery of Kirkcaldy expressed uncertainty as to whether baptisms should be before or after the blessing. The Presbyterie of Kirkcaldy, p.151.

enacted "that nane be baptised bot upone the preching day, and that befoir the preching fornone".<sup>1</sup> The Glasgow session records provide the information, "Jan. 10, 1600, its intimat that such as go away after mariage or baptism, and stay not sermons, shall be counted totally absent".<sup>2</sup>

At Leith in 1641 baptisms were administered before the sermon. The usual time, however, for baptisms on the Sabbath was, as Henderson states, after the sermon at the afternoon service. It cannot be held that there was any rule about the matter other than that appointed locally. A baptism might be on a weekday or a Sunday; or any day and at any time in certain periods; or before or after sermon; or, when private baptism was permitted, without any relation to a preaching service. Every possible combination of circumstances might be illustrated from different periods according to the oscillations of party or convenience or both.

In these circumstances anything might happen in the matter of psalm singing.

There was in circulation prior to, and no doubt immediately after, the Reformation the translations and compositions of the Wedderburns. These "Dundee Psalms" or "Gude and Godlie Balladis" included a hymn on baptism, "The Effect of the Sacrament of Baptism, the First Insitution thair of, delairing als wa quhat singular comfort we obtaine be the saming".

1. Eccles. Selections, p.11.  
II, 2, p.18.

2. Wodrow, Biog. Selections,

It consisted mainly of a translation of a poem by Luther with three stanzas added, expanding the meaning of the rite. There is no record of it ever having been sung in Scotland, though that is not to say that it was not. If it was sung it would in itself form an exposition of the doctrine of baptism of some length, more Lutheran than Calvinistic as its source would indicate. The treatment rather strains the parallel it presupposes between the baptism of John and that of the Apostles, for the former is only partially relevant to the latter, and the disparity is increased by the fact of infant baptism. One of the inserted stanzas may be offered as a sample of the doctrine set forth.

"Our Baptisme is not done all on ane day,  
Bot all our lyfe it lestitis Identilie.  
Remissicoun of our sin induris for ay;  
For thocht we fall throw greit fragylitie,  
The cunnand ( covenant ), anis contract faithfullie  
Be our greit God at Font, sall euer remaine,  
Als oft we repent, and sin refraine. 1.

The first piece of congregational praise which had a distinct reference to baptism came with the Paraphrases of 1781. In that year the General Assembly authorised the printing and circulation of the Paraphrases now in use in Scotland, and 1. permitted their use at the discretion of the minister, and 2. renewed the appointment of the committee dealing with them, with powers to amend where necessary, and generally supervise the distribution of the new additions to the praise available for the Church.

1. Gude and Godlie Balladis, ed. by Mitchell, S.R.S., Mitchell, The Wedderburns and their Work.

That committee never reported again to any Assembly, and the Paraphrases were left to make their own appeal.

The 47th. of the collection was stated to have been based on Romans 6, 1-7. The prolific Isaac Watts was the author of the original versification, and the improver is said to have been William Cameron, a licentiate, and later minister of Kirknewton. The relevant lines run :

"When to the sacred font we came,  
did not the rite proclaim,  
That wash'd from sin, and all its stains,  
new creatures we became ?

A poet may be allowed some licence both in thought and in the adaptation of words, but William Cameron undoubtedly committed a theological blunder when he permitted the sentiment of this stanza - particularly the last line - to appear in the praise of a Church of the Genevan group. The line might well have been taken as smacking "of that Roman Antichrist," when applied to infant baptism. To put it in its mildest form, the phrase was unfortunate in the setting of a baptismal rite which held as its justification the fact that a child of Christian parentage was already a child of God, in some sense, by virtue of the covenant between God and His people, and that baptism expressed this relationship, but did not create it.

The next stage in baptismal praise in Scotland came from the side of the Baptist churches. The first hymn collection of this body appeared at the surprisingly early date of 1750 from the pen of Sir William Sinclair of Dunbeath. More surprising still it did not contain

any baptismal hymns. These arrived with the publication of "A Collection of Christian Songs and Hymns in Three Books", Glasgow, 1786, sponsored by the Scots Baptist churches. The collection was enlarged from 275 to 358 items in 1792. The third section of this volume contained the baptismal hymns, all of them presuming the faith of an experient of the ordinance, and the mode of immersion. A short hymn of three stanzas may be quoted as typical of this selection.

- No. 267.
1. Jesus, mighty King of Zion,  
Thou alone our guide shalt be;  
Thy commission we rely on;  
We would follow none but Thee.
  2. As an emblem of Thy passion  
And Thy victr'y o'er the grave,  
We who know Thy great salvation,  
Are baptiz'd beneath the wave.
  3. Fearless of the world's despising,  
We the ancient path pursue;  
Bury'd with our Lord, and rising  
To a life divinely new

None of the hymns of this collection survive in the more modern Baptist hymnals.

Some of the smaller paedobaptist Churches were early on the field with hymns. One of the earliest compositions adopted in Scotland for infant baptismal services was Doddridge's "The Good Shepherd", which

attained a wide circulation in many collections, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Congregationalist, with varied emendations. The quality of this hymn may be assessed from two of its stanzas:

1. See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand  
With all-engaging charms;  
Hark how he calls the tender lambs,  
And folds them in his arms.
  
3. We bring them, Lord, by fervent prayer,  
And yield them up to thee;  
Joyful that we ourselves are thine,  
Thine let our offspring be.

After having survived from "Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Collected for a Christian Congregation, Glasgow, 1788," the Relief Hymnal of 1834, The Presbyterian Hymn Book of 1852, and The Church Hymnary of 1898, it was omitted from the Revised Church Hymnary of 1927.

The Synod of the Relief was the first Presbyterian Communion to accept the principle of hymn singing; but their selection printed in 1809 did not include any infant baptismal hymn. The only one for youth concludes with a stanza whose thought forms and quality was repeated frequently in the versifications of the period.

Soon shall thy heart the woes of age,  
In mournful groans deplore,  
And sadly muse on former joys,  
That now return no more.

Some hymns were included for Communion, one was to be



sung at a Fast; there were five for death, and others for the grave, but not one for birth or baptism.<sup>1</sup>.

This was altered in "Hymns adapted for the Worship of God, selected and sanctioned by the Synod of Relief, Glasgow, 1834". Three hymns were indexed as suitable for infant baptisms.

No. 230. Jesus ! How glorious is thy grace !  
When in thy name we trust.

The third stanza of this was simply that already quoted from the 47th. paraphrase, lifted out of its context and inserted into this hymn. Together with Dodderidge's "The Good Shepherd", another emphemal hymn was included;

Since thou art pleased thy saints to own,  
O Lord their children bless;  
This institution do thou crown  
With tokens of thy grace.

About this time numerous hymn books began to appear, some of them for the use of particular congregations. The baptismal hymns included were few, and distinguished more for their piety than their poetry.

Attention was given to the matter in the Episcopal Church in 1856, and a collection was printed, but not sanctioned, in 1857. As revised and sanctioned in 1858, this compilation had only a short life. Hymns Ancient and

1. Sacred Songs and Hymns on various passages of Scripture, Approved by the Synod of Relief, Glasgow, 1809.

Modern, as used in England, became the common hymnal. It was adopted in St. Andrew's Chapel, Glasgow, for example, in 1863. The hymns in this volume reflected the Anglican Prayer Book in phrase and thought. In the above edition, 1861, there are two items for infant baptism and one for adult, the latter being the only hymn of the kind circulating in Scotland, outside the Baptist collections. Two of the stanzas of the second hymn for infant baptism were:

Tis done that new and heavenly birth  
Which recreates the sons of earth  
And cleanses from the guilt of sin  
The souls whom Jesus died to win.

Tis done: the Cross upon the brow  
Is marked for weal or sorrow now,  
To shine with heavenly lustre bright  
Or burn in everlasting night.

There is no mistaking the theological tenets of the composer of the last line quoted. It could scarcely state more plainly the issues associated with baptism.

The uniqueness of a hymn for believers' baptism in which immersion is assumed occurring outwith the Baptist hymnals may justify its inclusion here.

With Christ we share a mystic grave  
With Christ we buried lie.  
But 'tis not in the darksome cave  
By mournful Calvary.

The pure and bright baptismal flood  
Entombs our nature's station.  
New creatures from the cleansing wave  
With Christ we rise again.

Thrice blest, if through this world of sin  
And lust and selfish care  
Our resurrection mantle white  
And undefiled we wear.

Thrice blest, if then the gates of death  
Glorious at last and free,  
We to our joyful rising pass  
O Risen Lord with Thee.

The first important hymnal among the Presbyterians was that put out by the United Presbyterian Church in 1852. Five items were listed for infant baptism. They were:

No.7. Four stanzas on the theme of the Abrahamic covenant.

How large a promise, how divine  
To Abraham and his seed !  
I'll be a God to thee and thine  
Supplying all your need.

No.242. Entitled "Infant Baptism, and taken from the Relief hymnal, 1834.

Since Thou art pleas'd thy saints to own,

No.261 Doddridge's "The Good Shepherd".

No.434. Great God! now condescend  
To bless the rising race:

This item is entitled "Hymn for Baptism", but the author would have objected to its use for infant baptism for John Fellows was a Baptist and composed it in 1773 under the title "Infants devoted to God, but not Baptised", and it was extensively used among Baptists in their

services for the presentation of infants to God.

No. 435. This child we dedicate to Thee.

This hymn included a stanza for the renewal of the baptismal vow.

We, too, before thy gracious sight,  
Once shar'd the bless'd baptismal rite;  
And would renew its solemn vow,  
With love, and thanks, and praises now.

The first collection of the Church of Scotland was entitled, "Hymns for Public Worship, selected by the Committee of the General Assembly on Psalmody, Edinburgh, 1862." It contained 89 pieces of which one was suitable for infant baptism.

A little child the Saviour came.

This was the first hymn of such a character from the pen of a Scottish writer to be recognised officially. The author was William Robertson, the minister of Monzievaird.

The privately circulated proof of this book, "Suggestion of Hymns for the consideration of the Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1853" contained two other items.

XL. Behold what condescending love  
Jesus on earth displays;  
To babes and sucklings He extends  
The riches of His grace.

and LXXII Lo Israel's gracious Shepherd stands,  
With all-engaging charms:

"The Scottish Hymnal" of 1870 was the first to receive authorisation from the General Assembly of the Established Church. There were four hymns for "Baptism and Childhood" in it.

- No. 181. A little child the Saviour came.
- .. 182. Blessed Jesus here we stand.
- .. 183. By cool Siloam's shady rill.
- .. 184. There's a Friend for little children.

The Free Church put out their authorised hymnary, "The Scottish Psalmody", in 1873, and followed it, in 1882, with the "Free Church Hymn Book". Another edition of "The Scottish Hymnal" with an appendix appeared in 1887 and listed four hymns in a section entitled "Baptism". This reproduced Nos. 181 and 182 above, and Bishop W.W. How's,

O Holy Lord, content to fill  
In lowly home, the lowliest place.

The fourth was a translation from the German which had appeared in Hymns Ancient and Modern.

O Father, Thou who hast created all.  
In wisest love, we pray  
Look on this babe,.....

All the main Presbyterian Churches combined to support "The Church Hymnary" of 1897. Six items for infant baptism were included.

- No. 397. A little child the Saviour came.
- .. 398. Blessed Jesus here we stand.
- .. 399. Saviour, who thy flock art feeding.

- No. 400, See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand.  
.. 401, O Father, Thou who hast created all.  
.. 402, Father, our children keep.

No. 399 was by an American Episcopal writer, W. M. Muhlenberg; and No. 402 was the second from a Scottish pen to be honoured by a place in infant baptismal praise. It was taken from the poems of Horaticus Bonar of the Free Church.

The Committee appointed to revise "The Church Hymnary" found difficulty in obtaining a range of hymns for this sacrament from which they might make their choice. The first draft, October, 1924, contained five items.

A little child the Saviour came.  
Father our children keep.  
By cool Siloam's shady rill.  
Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord most dear.  
Our children, Lord, in faith and prayer.

In the final revision they retained,

A little child the Saviour came.  
Blessed Jesus here we stand.  
O Father, Thou who hast created all.

They restored to this section,

By cool Siloam's shady rill.

Three others were added,

Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord most dear.  
Our children, Lord, in faith and prayer.  
Gracious Saviour, gentle Shepherd.

In all these hymns the emphasis is not on theology as in so many of the older hymns, but on the Fatherly care of God for little children. They are drawn from writers of various Communion, and all of them breathe the atmosphere of shepherding love in stanzas of merit. No hymn is suggested for a baptism on profession of faith. Hymns of consecration from other sections of the book are now used for this purpose when required. This is not often for most baptisms of this nature are administered in private.

In the "Baptist Church Hymnal", 1900, and Revised, 1933, among the hymns suggested for baptismal services are many on the general theme of consecration, such as :

O Jesus I have promised.  
Fight the good fight with all thy might.

With these are numbered the distinctively baptismal hymns, and one, of five short stanzas, is from the pen of a former minister of Cupar-Fife Baptist church, W. W. Sidey.

Buried with Christ ! Our glad hearts say,  
Come see the place where once He lay.

Risen with Him ! Allured by Love,  
Henceforth we seek the things above.

A matter of some interest is the fact that in this Baptist anthology some of the items listed under "Childhood and Youth", and widely used at the Baptist service for the presentation of children and the dedication of parents, are hymns listed as suitable for infant baptismal services in other collections; for example,

Gracious Saviour, gentle Shepherd.

Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord most dear.

It would be unwise to press the coincidence to mean more than it may be taken fairly to indicate, but at least it suggests that in these hymn books the two points of view about infants in relation to the Christian Faith have come very near to one another. If the same hymn can be sung with acceptance at the baptism of a child and at the presentation of a child it may be argued that in the actuality of the rites, as contrasted with the theoretical positions, the thoughts of the two witnessing congregations may not be very different.



## Chapter Thirteen

### The Vocabulary of Baptism

The first part of this chapter is devoted to a study of the vocabulary of baptism. It is a study of the words and phrases which are used in the baptismal service, and of their meaning and origin. The second part of the chapter is devoted to a study of the symbolism of baptism, and of the various ways in which it is used to represent the Christian life.

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## The Vocabulary of Baptism.

The baptismal action is wedded to a formula and accompanied by statements and prayers which are as much part of the usage as the procedure and utensils involved. This interplay of expression, interpretation and ritual is so constant that much has had to be said already which is relevant to a discussion on the terminology of the sacrament. The importance of the matter, however, merits further attention.

The task of gathering together the principal elements in the vocabulary of the rite is not easy of accomplishment for there are an embarrassing number of manuals, expositions, and statements of public authority in the literature relevant to Scotland. Theologians are not noted for their brevity of expression; nor can they be presumed to be either precise or dispassionate in their use of language. Moreover language in any area of thought is subject to fashions and being the instrument of minds that are themselves subject to change it is <sup>open</sup> ~~subject~~ to misinterpretation from at least two sources, failure to give due weight to contemporary usage, or failure to distinguish between a devotional and a dogmatic use of terms. Notwithstanding it should be possible to form clear and distinct ideas about the basal conceptions of a baptismal theory and to note its internal tensions or inconsistencies, and any departures from it in the course of historical development.

It is proposed, then, to attempt a digest of the terms and phrases associated with baptism and two reservations may be stated explicitly, 1. the discussion is not primarily intended to be an exposition of doctrine, but only of that in so far as it is necessary to elucidate usage, and 2. only what appear to be the principal items of language will be reviewed.

1. The baptismal formula.

The formula has never varied in authoritative documents. It is :

N, I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

It may be argued that the more expressive preposition would be " into" and not "in" on the ground that this is closer to the Greek "eis". A change might have assisted the meaning which was not considered to be merely an invocation or the assertion of a sanction, but as implying an admission, in some sense, into the fellowship and influence of Holy Trinity.

The Council of Trent entered into such subtle matters as to ask, How much of the formula need be uttered before the sacramental grace may be said to have been bestowed? Such questionings have never troubled the Reformed Church in Scotland.

## 2. The conception of the Church.

The infant baptismal service began with a query as to the desire of the parent or guardian that the presented child should be baptised and received into the Church. The Book of Common Order framed the question thus :

"Do you here present this child to be baptised, earnestly desiring that he may be ingrafted in the mystical body of Jesus Christ ? "

This question may be held to be unfortunate in so far as the Genevan theory taught that baptism was a sacrament of the visible Church and admitted only to visible Church privileges. Entry into the invisible Church, or "the mystical body of Jesus Christ ", was a privilege which had its source in other considerations. Presuming this question to have been answered in the affirmative the exposition of the meaning of the sacrament which follows asserts, in effect, that the desire is impossible of accomplishment by means of baptism, and will be realised only if the child is numbered among the elect.

The Westminster Directory did not copy this phrasing. The conception of the Church into which the baptised was received was that of the visible, organised, temporal corpus of Christian people. For baptismal services in general, however, the implied doctrine of the Church was related to the type of baptism administered. Where infants were baptised, the Church meant the visible

society of the faithful and their children ; where baptism was restricted to those who professed personal faith the visible Church was defined as the fellowship of all believers. This conception was usually accompanied by the belief the infants did not require any rite to bring them into a relationship with God, and that there was no sufficient warrant for introducing a rite to bring them into a relationship with the visible Church.

### 3. The terms " sacrament ", " ordinance ", "rite".

These three terms were associated with baptism at every stage of the Reformed Church. As part of the ritual of the Church it was a rite ; as an action ordained by Christ it was an ordinance. The meaning of the term "sacrament" was more complex and the definition of it was the occasion of controversy. What is obvious is that it was taken from the Latin " sacramentum", which again was used to translate the Greek "mysterion". As it appeared in the Vulgate the term was used in a wide variety of associations and for centuries this general use continued. After the twelfth century its stricter ecclesiastical sense became common and by the time the Reformation arrived it was limited to seven particulars. The Scottish Reformers, with others, limited its use still further by allowing only two items, baptism and the Lord's supper, to be denoted as sacraments. All the Reformed documents insist on this. The following sample is taken from a MS. bond in Glasgow University Library, subscribed circa 1575 by certain parties

during the minority of James VI.

"Item, we acknowledge onl twa sacramentis ( propirlie takin that name ) and common to all Christianis to wit baptisme and the suppir of the Lord. And thairfor think the other fyve falslie to have been callit sacramentis and mainteynit sa to be in the dayis of ignorance."

It seems clear that so far as the term itself was concerned that it was transferred simply as a convenient linguistic token. Its meaning was altered to the satisfaction of the Reformed theologians, according to their conceptions of the operations of Divine grace, The connotation was to be discovered in Reformed definition and not in previous historical or ecclesiastical relationships. To say, then, that baptism is a sacrament conveys no distinct idea of what baptism is until it is understood in what sense the term "sacrament" is used. In itself it is simply a piece of ecclesiastical currency whose value is determined by the school of thought in which it is being circulated.<sup>1</sup>.

If it is said against its use by the Reformers, and others since their time, that it is a non-Scriptural term, it may be replied that it is a Scriptural term in the sense that it occurs in the Latin Vulgate and has as good a title for a place in religious vocabularies as any other word which may appear in a translation of the New Testament. If by non-Scriptural is meant non-Greek

1. "Always, the word sacrament is very ambiguous in it self, and there raise about the ambiguitie of this word many tragedeis quhilke are not yit ceased, nor will not cease, quhil the world lasts". Bruce's Sermons, Wodrow Society, First Sermon on the Sacraments.

then the objection extends to every non-Greek term which has obtained currency in the Church, and this is presumably more than an objector would be prepared to defend.

#### 4. Baptism as a sign.

The simplest definition of baptism affirms that it is at least a sign, or significant action. When the further question is asked, Of what is it a sign? there are a variety of answers.

The Scots Confession avers that it makes "ane visible difference" between those who are and those who are not the people of the covenant of grace; the Book of Common Order closely followed the teaching of Calvin in the Institutes and offered a very comprehensive description of what baptism signified, namely, "our regeneration, which standeth chiefly in these two points, in mortification that is to say, a resisting of the rebellious lustes of the fleshe, and in newness of lyffe..." The Catechism of John Craig asked, in Question 60, "What signifieth Baptism unto us?" and answered, "That we are filthy by Nature, and are purged by the Blood of Christ". The Westminster documents described it as a sign of ingrafting into Christ, regeneration, remission of sins, adoption, resurrection unto everlasting life, admission to the visible Church, in brief, almost the whole range of Christian doctrine.

This generosity of signification obviously went far beyond what was observable in the sacramental action - the sacrament as an "external sign". As a sensible sign the action was limited to the sprinkling of a child with water, and the pronouncement of a formula. There appears, therefore, to be some disparity between the two sections of the definition contained in, for example, the Larger Catechism:

"The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified".

It might be asked, How far, or how much of, this inward grace signified by the the actual sign is given to the senses? More appears to be read into the outward sign than what it can justifiably be asked to bear as an outward sign.

To proceed a step further, it may be held that at least the sign is a sign of cleansing, or ought to be. "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament", said the Larger Catechism, "wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of....." The observable action is in the nature of a dramatic parable. If this be so, the method of using the water of baptism in order to make it a sign is not insignificant. Calvin, and the Genevan Reformers generally, denied this, and asserted that the element of water in itself was signification enough without raising any question of the method of



using it. In the light of the emphasis placed on baptism as a sign the arbitrary dogmatism of this contention does less than justice to the possibilities of the action. If baptism is a washing according to Christ's own appointment, it is scarcely compatible with loyalty to the appointment to reduce the quantity of water to an almost unobservable point, as has, unfortunately, been known. The Reformed usage is open to the charge that it has no higher authority than convenience and diminishes to an unnecessary low level the value of baptism as a sign. What began as clinical baptism, became justified as climatic baptism; and finally, when the quantity of water used could not even claim climatic justification, the only remaining plea must be that of convenience on the ground that the mode is indifferent. This again, it might be argued, is only another way of saying that baptism as a sign is indifferent, a conclusion which contradicts the original premiss. It may be claimed, therefore, that, accepting the fact allowed by the Reformers that baptism was at least a sign - outward and sensible, there are two weaknesses in their practice 1. that they claimed for the sign a great deal more than was outwardly signified, and 2. they declared by the outward sign a great deal less than than could be justified.

## 5. Baptism as a seal.

The terms "sign" and "seal" are usually found together in Reformed literature, and are both applied to the covenant of grace. Calvin's definition puts the definition of a sacrament thus;

"...an external sign, by which the Lord seals on our consciences his promise of goodwill towards us, in order to sustain the weakness of our faith, and we in turn testify our piety towards Him both before Himself and before angels as well as men ".<sup>1</sup>.

The conception of baptism as a "seal" contains two ideas, a seal as an instrument and a seal as an impress. Calvin speaks of the term in both ways, as a sealing instrument and as the impress made by the instrument of a document, and the Reformed documents use the term in both ways without attempting to distinguish them. If the distinction is applied to the sacrament it might be said that the Church holds the instrument in trust and the baptised hold the impressions. It is in this latter situation, however, that further ambiguities arise. The metaphor of "sealing" is taken from the Scripture reference to Abraham's circumcision being a seal to the righteousness of faith which the patriarch possessed before his circumcision. On this basis Calvin argued, "Baptism is, as it were, the appendix of faith, and, therefore, posterior in order; and then, if it

1. Institutes, IV, xiv, 1.

be administered without faith, of which it is a seal, it is both an impious and a gross profanation".<sup>1</sup>.

This line of reasoning could not be carried out with consistency, however, when in actual fact baptism was normally administered to infants, who by no observable criterion could be said to have active faith, and some alternative had to be found which could be said to be sealed by baptism. This alternative is stated variously to be God's word, the promises, the covenant of grace, ingrafting into Christ, and the like. The most common phrase was that as a sealing ordinance baptism was the Divine seal or signature on the covenant of grace. It was not persons who were sealed, but certain truths contained in a covenant. The security associated with the sealing was not guaranteed to those who were baptised, but to what was signified or symbolised in the sacrament. This radically changed the metaphor from which the subject had started; for now what was sealed was not actualised faith, but the principle of faith together with ~~the~~ what faith made available.

This adjustment brought with it difficulties which were neither few nor negligible. The principal problem was how to assert some relationship between this covenant of grace whose seal was renewed every time baptism was administered and the person baptised.

1. Comm. on Acts 8, 36.

## 6. The efficacy of baptism.

The efficacy of baptism, or its power to produce that which it signifies, covers a great many phrases which are catalogued among the benefits of baptism when it is rightly used. It is in this area of discussion that the greatest obscurity arises. This is the storm centre. The composers of the Scots Confession were at pains to declare that " whosoever sclanders us, as that we affirme or beleve Sacraments to be naked and bair Signes, do injurie unto us, and speaks against the manifest trueth". "No," they said, "wee assuredlie beleve that be Baptisme we ar ingrafted in Christ Jesus, to be made partakers of his justice, be quhilk our sinnes ar covered and remitted". That this is not to be taken literally, however, seems clear from other affirmations such as that in Article XXV, for example, which states that " remission of sinnes" can only be had by "faith in Christs blude". If the two statements be put together they provide a sample of what could be exemplified from other documents, i. that by baptism "our sinnes ar covered and remitted", and 2. the same is effected by faith.

Another illustration from the Westminster Confession of Faith may serve to mark the continuance of the obscurity. "The grace promised ( by the right use of the ordinance )" it is stated, " is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants ) as that grace belongeth

unto ". Against this may be put a sentence from Article XI, 2, "Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification".

The law of contradiction forbids the acceptance as equally true of these two positions. If justification, and other spiritual benefits, only come through faith, then they do not come through baptism as such; and if they are conferred in, or in some way the result of, baptism, then faith is not the operational factor. But is the question really an either-or? The solution of the apparent contradiction might be found by claiming that faith, as the subjective responsive to an objective Divine revelation, is the operational factor, the sine qua non of the efficacy of baptism. The truth to which faith responds is the covenant of grace declared and sealed in the sacrament. This sola fide principle was the very essence of the Reformed outlook and could not have been more emphatically presented than in the dictum of Calvin when he stated, "Let it be a fixed point that the office of the sacraments differs not from the word of God; and this is to hold forth and offer Christ to us, and, in him, the treasures of heavenly grace. They confer nothing, and avail nothing, if not received in faith".<sup>1</sup> Again, grace was not apprehended "save by those who receive the word and sacraments with firm faith".<sup>2</sup> In brief, "the benefits of baptism" is just another way of saying "the benefits of faith".

1. Institutes, IV, xiv, p.315.      2. Ibid., IV, xiv, p.305.

This appears to be clear enough and is one way out of the apparently conflicting positions; but it does not meet the peculiar difficulty of infant baptism, for what is undeniable in such a situation is that the candidate does not have "firm faith", hence, on the above terms, it cannot be the medium of grace, for the essential conditioning factor is absent.

This would reduce baptism in such cases to a declaratory sign beneficial in its immediate effects to the witnesses, and only potentially to the candidate - and potential only on a certain future condition being realised.

This is further supported by the affirmation so often found in Genevan documents that all the baptised are not regenerate. The Book of Common Order phrased it, "Many have been baptized yet not inwardly purged". Grace and salvation are not inseparably annexed to the sacrament, said the Westminster divines. More forcibly it was put by a rugged Calvinist, "A man may go to hell with the font-water on his face".

These sentiments had their basis in two convictions, 1. that the sacrament in itself was not a causal action; that there was no magic spiritual alchemy involved, and 2. that only the elect would be saved; they only were regenerate; and neither baptism nor any other factor could either effect or alter this status.

Despite the clarity and logic of this solution of the enigma, it was not acceptable simpliciter. There was the persistent groping after some positive effect which could be credited to the spiritual status of an infant who had been baptised. In order to maintain that baptism was in some way effective as a sacrament of immediate spiritual benefit to a child Luther, at one stage, toyed with the idea of an infused faith in infants, and by this means to affirm that what was given in the action was given to every baptised infant to whom the sacrament was administered. Calvin also dallied with this notion. It was so clustered round with difficulties; so incapable of proof; so contrary to observable fact; in itself such an arbitrary act of faith, that to have persisted in it would have been absurd. This fictional and imaginative semen fide was too obviously a desperate subterfuge, and something too far removed from habitas fide to serve as a substitute for it.

In order to make it plausible at all Calvin combined this idea with the possibility of future faith, and ventured to justify some immediate efficacy of infant baptism on this combination. "In fine", he wrote, "the objection is easily disposed of by the fact, that children are baptized for future repentance and faith. Though these are not yet formed in them yet the seed of both lies in them by the secret operation of the Spirit".<sup>1</sup>

1. Ibid., IV, xiv, p.369.

The Westminster Confession did not specify the doctrine in these terms, but simply stated, "The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered". This is too vague to be of service in determining what was the question at issue in infant baptism. What was wanted by those who questioned infant baptism was a clear answer to the question, What is tied to the moment wherein baptism is administered? Even Calvin would not have claimed that even the hope of future repentance and faith is tied to that moment in every infant baptism. The future contingencies were too unpredictable for even an assured hope to be based on them. A proleptic faith had an existence only in the uncertain realm of possibility, which is just another way of saying that it did not exist at all in any sense which was worth considering as a part of the sola fide principle. If it was to be taken seriously then it could be said that no child under heaven ought to have been excluded from the benefits of such a possibility, for if any could be baptised on the basis of it, all could be baptised without respect of parents. The cardinal pillar of Reformed doctrine just could not support infant baptism.

Together with these gyrations Calvin and the Reformed theologians generally developed the covenant idea in relation to infant baptism, and this formed the main



plank on the platform. Children had a right to baptism in virtue of their Christian parentage, for as circumcision was the sacrament of the covenant in Old Testament times so was baptism in the New Testament dispensation. Infants of Christian parents " are in that respect, within the Covenant, and are to be baptized", said the Westminster Confession. In this idea all notions of faith in infants is abandoned. The basis was birth, not faith - at least so far as the candidate was concerned. This was a complete somersaulting of the sacramental position in order to justify such baptisms. It, in effect, created a new sacrament, a third, the sacrament of covenant baptism, with a different basis than that of baptism on profession of faith, and the Lord's supper, admittance to which was granted on an examination of life. The only efficacy which could be claimed for covenant baptism was that it admitted the baptised to the visible Church, and, at such a level, nothing could be affirmed of it which could not be affirmed of all the members of the visible Church.

The attempted transference of the thought forms of the New Testament believer-baptism to the covenant baptism of infants could only end in confusion. The two moved on different planes of relationships.

The effect of the sola fide principle was grasped by some at the beginning of the Protestant Reformation

on the continent. Within a few months of Luther's repudiation of the Roman system his colleague and friend Carlstad had denied the presumed bestowal of baptismal grace in infant baptism and was baptising believers on the ground that they had never been baptised. About the same time Oecampadius of Basle and Zwingli of Zurich were heading for the same conclusion, but hesitated to take the drastic step of implementing their theological convictions. Luther remained thoroughly medieval on the issue and with Teutonic rigour advocated the annihilation of those who dared to draw such a simple conclusion from his central thesis. The ferocity of the slaughter of the Anabaptists created much of the political extremism with which their name became associated. Large sections of the Anabaptist movement repudiated these excesses of Biblical politics and desired only to be left to live in peaceful association with their fellows. The later Baptist movement was also characterised by peaceful intention and were militant only in their determination to secure the right to exist.

The efficacy of baptism within the area of actual faith, as the position was accepted by the Baptists, meant that the ordinance contributed to experience in proportion to the degree of personal dedication exercised by the candidate. At the same time it could become a real experience of union with Christ in newness of

life. It was certainly a self-determined act of obedience to the risen Lord, and a means of realising the Divine grace.

When Knox was faced with the question of baptism in relation to a man already regenerate but unbaptised, he accepted the possibility of such a situation, and gave his answer in "Answers to some Questions concerning Baptism, etc."<sup>1</sup>. He affirmed, that "Yf the regenerate man hath never ressavit the sacramental signe of baptisme, he is bound to ressave the same..... regeneration doith not sa exempt man, but that anis he aught to be baptisit". Baptism in this context is held to be an act of obedience which might confirm faith and increase it where it already existed. Its efficacy lay in that area.

#### 7. The term "regeneration".

It may serve a useful purpose to separate from the general review of the efficacy of baptism the conception of regeneration which is usually regarded as a watershed term in baptismal controversy. It has been argued in various treatises from time to time that,

1. Regeneration ought not to be associated with baptism,
2. That it may be predicated of the baptised only hypothetically.
3. That regeneration can be predicated of all baptisms categorically.

These positions as statements mean little until it is understood what is meant by the term regeneration, for

1. Laing, K.W., IV, p.115f.

it may very well be that the term is used in different senses. That it has so been used is beyond dispute. On the one hand regeneration has been thought of as referring to external status, an admission to the privileges of the visible Church; and on the other hand, as asserting an internal change of nature, which alters the status of the baptised before God. Again, thinking in terms of spiritual grace actually received by the candidate in baptism, the grace has been conceived as,

1. a complete change of nature, a character indelebilis, a re-creation which determines eternal destiny. In an adult this grace may be thwarted by unworthy reception; but a child can offer no obex gratiae;
2. the remission of sin, and the implantation of a seed of grace, but not a complete change of nature. The seed may not come to maturity and its effect is then neutralised.
3. the res sacramenti is a title, a present possession, but a title to something not actually possessed until personally claimed. On this view there is a distinction to be made between baptismally regenerated and actually regenerated.

There are variations of these positions and often the same form of words can be read in different ways. The famous Gorham Judgment of 1850, for example, sanctioned a view of the third type as a possible interpretation of the standards of the Church of England, without affirming that it was the only possible interpretation.

The positions of the first type are those usually associated with the Roman Catholic theory and a possible reading of the Anglican Articles and Formularies.

The second type finds support in Calvin and the Genevan school. In this context, however, every statement made must be qualified by the mental reservation that regeneration is confined to the elect, a most important consideration which is not always explicitly stated in the relevant passages of the Institutes.

There can be no doubt that Calvin frankly groups baptism and regeneration together. The obsignatory position by itself does not find favour. Baptism is instrumental in really conferring what it promises. "We teach", wrote Calvin, "that full remission is made, but that regeneration is only begun, and goes on making progress during the whole of life. Accordingly sin remains in us and is not instantly in one day extinguished by baptism, but as the guilt is effaced, it is null in regard to imputation".<sup>1</sup> Again, he wrote in the Institutes, "our first regeneration we receive by baptism alone".<sup>2</sup> In his Catechism which was bound with the Book of Common Order and was used as authoritative in Scotland, he taught, "It is certaine that remission of synnes and newnes of lyfe is offered unto us in baptyisme so that we receive the same there".<sup>3</sup>

1. Antidote to the Council of Trent, Tracts, III, p.86.

2. Institutes, IV, xv, p.330.

3. The Catechisme or Manner to teach children the Christian religion,.....1556.

The Genevan Bible, commenting on Mark 4, the story of the blind man who received his sight by stages, said, "A true image of our regeneration which Christ separating us from the world worketh and accomplisheth by little and little in us".

In this manner the New Testament conception of regeneration as the impartation of new life, a moral and radical change of heart, whereby the recipient became a new creature in Christ Jesus, was predicated of baptism. The doctrine of degrees of regeneration was coined to get round the obvious difficulty arising out of infant baptism. The doctrine was vulnerable from at least four sides:

1. It did not satisfy the New Testament conception of regeneration for that carried with it the idea of an actual experience known to the recipient.
2. It approximated to, if it did not in so many words present, a quasi-material conception of grace, something which was imparted *ex opere operato*.
3. It failed to grasp the fact that there was no difference in principle between affirming that full regeneration was given in baptism and saying that it was only begun. The principle being granted, the matter of degrees was a secondary question.
4. It postulated something which might never mature, or give any clue that it ever existed; which was so obscure that the recipient might never be aware that it was.

ever possessed; which might have been described as any quality of life under heaven for it might never be known by any any experience of its possessor, or by any observation on the part of a spectator. Anything can be affirmed of anything else under these conditions of secrecy for nothing is known.

Calvin has an answer to this last objection. It is an appeal to the fact that the work of God on the soul is beyond human understanding. He wrote :

"We confess indeed that the work of the Lord is the only seed of spiritual regeneration; but we deny the inference that therefore the power of God cannot regenerate infants. That is as possible and easy for Him as it is wondrous and incomprehensible to us. It were dangerous to deny that the Lord is able to furnish them with the knowledge of Himself in any way He pleases".<sup>1</sup>.

The argument never moves out of the realm of theory. It appears to accept a conception of regeneration which divorces it from moral experience and , hence, removes it to the region of the unknown; of that region, which in terms of the explanation is incomprehensible, the Reformer professes knowledge. The main weakness of the his appeal to the power of God is obviously that he takes for granted that what may be possible to an omnipotent Being, is what the Deity actually does. That this is what God actually does is just the point at issue and a mere assertion is not a rational argument.

A reader in the subject of the theology of baptism is constantly being presented with this assertion that the subjective experience is not the principle factor in the sacrament. The principle thing is the action of God, the objective activity of grace. In the sacrament the subject is passive and receptive; and hence infant baptism represents the ideal conditions in which the grace of the sacrament may be given. It is not difficult to perceive the flaw in all such reasoning. The whole argument moves on a theoretical plane and presumes to say something of a Divine activity which is not amenable to any inspection or examination by any known method of acquiring knowledge. There is no need to underestimate the operations of Divine grace in the sacrament of baptism, but there is every reason to protest against making affirmations about that activity of grace which are not supported by any evidence that the activity existed. Of the unknown nothing can be predicated.

The whittling away of the moral meaning of regeneration in order to give it some point of contact with infant baptism has done great disservice to apostolic Christianity. What had been reclaimed by way of emphasis on experiential faith was set aside in favour of an unnecessary mystery. The matter could scarcely be wrapped up in greater obscurity than in the studied ambiguities of the Book of Common Order which asserted :



"Our Saviour Christ, who commanded baptisme to be ministred, will, by the power of his Holy Spirite, effectually worke in the harts of his elect ( in tyme convenient ) all that is ment and sygnified by the same. And this the Scripture calleth our regeneration".

This regeneration is said to imply mortification and newness of life, but the meaning of these two factors is to be such that they can be thought of as garments by which the baptised are clothed. How they can be present but not as actual moral qualities is not explained. If taken as moral qualities effectually wrought in the heart, however, the composers of this exposition state that they do not know who will possess them ( election being the sphere of God's will ), or when they will be possessed, or what immediate persuasions will operate to their realisation, or even that they will be either temporally or necessarily related to the action of infant baptism. The whole context of the statement quoted is such a collection of assertions, denials, reservations, and circumlocutions, that it is difficult to understand what is being positively affirmed other than that God will keep his promise to his elect.

Calvin himself did not profess to be happy about the whole question of relating his sacramental theory to infant baptism and, in a moment of candour, wrote to his critic Westphal, "I admit that the difficulty is not yet solved." <sup>1</sup>.

1. A Second Defence, etc., 1556, p.337.

The care with which the Westminster divines attempted to guard against establishing a necessary connection between baptism and regeneration is nowhere better illustrated than in the unfinished revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles. In Article IX which read :

"And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized:"  
they substituted, "and are regenerate".<sup>1</sup> From this it may be concluded that all references to regeneration among the benefits of baptism in the later productions of the Westminster Assembly are to be understood as applicable only to the elect and not to all the baptised: or, it may be put another way, regeneration is predicated of the baptised hypothetically.

The opinions of the Scottish commissioners had been previously declared in their writings as when Baillie included in his objections to the Prayer Book of 1637 a vigorous condemnation of "His (Laud's) making all infants in baptisme to be regenerat, and all non-baptized to bee damned." <sup>2</sup> This complaint was common at the time. As a help to understanding the Westminster documents on the matter, George Gillespie's plain comment made in 1646, is relevant, "They ( the Presbyterians ) oppose all causality or working of the first grace of conversion and faith in or by the Sacraments".<sup>3</sup> Later, Sibbald of

1. Hardwick, History of the Articles, p.215.
2. Ladensium Autokatakrisis, 1640, p.62.
3. Aaron's Rod Blossoming, 1646, p.497.

Aberdeen, was opposed because when asked, "Did he believe all baptized children were regenerate ? " he answered, that he "should say with Augustine that all baptized children were regenerate." <sup>1</sup>.

The orthodox position in Scotland, among those who accepted the Westminster standards, remained limited by the doctrine of election. This affirmed that "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit."<sup>2</sup>. Of these only could the term regeneration be used in any sense which conveyed any predication of actuality.

1. Grub, History, I, p.73  
2. Westminster Confession, X, 1.

## Chapter Fourteen

### Some Recent Tendencies

The nature of the change in the cultural life of civilization has been marked by the appearance of a new world of influences that have made it now possible to perceive the movement of all the nations on the basis of a geographical basis. The culture of all nations are now in every respect, such as the thought-forms of Southern civilizations are made more other considerations than those which arise of national tradition. This spirit and import to him provided a setting for the ordinary can be seen in the report in which ecclesiastical and theological dogmas have had to be adjusted - or have been adjusted - to the principles of modern knowledge. Ideas and studies of the traditional world have assumed a new character. Investigations into the origins of things, the development of the human mind, the expansion of science and the growth of the social sciences - all these have made their contribution to the study of the world of humanity. Hence any attempt to estimate the phenomena in ecclesiastical usage has to look to a world than anything that can be explained in one's

Only the general ideas along which baptised

## Some Recent Tendencies .

The nature of the changes which have taken place in the cultural life of civilisation have brought to bear on all questions of human interest a vastly more comprehensive manifold of influences than ever before and it is not now possible to consider the sacrament of baptism on the basis of a geographical area. The cultural systems of all nations are now on every theologian's shelves and the thought-forms of Scottish churchmen are moulded by many other considerations than those which arise out of national tradition. This export and import traffic has provided a setting for the ordinary man as well as the expert in which ecclesiastical and theological ideas and practices have had to be adjusted - or have suggested ways in which they ought to be adjusted - to the amazing complex of modern knowledge. Tones and shades on the canvas of the traditional scene have assumed a different value. Investigations into the origins of things, the make-up of the human mind, the emphasis on scientific method, and the growth of the social sciences - all these and more have made their contribution to the study of the anatomy of divinity. Hence any attempt to estimate the recent tendencies in sacramental usage has to look to a wider field than anything that can be included in one tradition.

Only the general lines along which baptismal usage seems to be moving form the subject matter of this concluding section and particularly those that are

related to Scotland.

Outspoken dissatisfaction with baptismal practice began to be expressed by many about the middle of the last century. From that time onward an increasing sensitiveness to the rite may be traced. Literature on the subject began to circulate which argued the pros and cons of opposing positions. Various factors stimulated this. On the onehand, a greater interest was taken in church furnishings and in the development of worship as a whole. It took some time to command respect, and more time to issue in action, but gradually the apparatus for administering baptism in all the churches, including the Baptist, improved. This aroused a new interest in the purposes for which these furnishings were obtained. This set up a reflex action for the still further equipment of ecclesiastical fabrics and the land became better fitted to administer the Word and sacraments than ever it had been since the Reformation, or indeed in all its history. On the other hand, toleration and a freer movement of thought brought forth new theological perspectives and sharpened the awareness of the religious mind to the unsatisfactory nature of much that had passed good<sup>for</sup> coin. The predominant form of baptism was, of course, infant baptism and this came in for sharp opposition from the growing strength of the Baptists and their allied groups and frank review from some within the paedobaptist Churches.

A major event of the time was the Gorham Case of 1850 in England and this received the widest publicity. It could not fail to have its repercussions in Scotland. The Episcopal Church bishops issued a fervent protest against the judgment that the Prayer Book and Formularies of the Church of England could permit of the interpretation of infant baptism as only conferring grace hypothetically. They declared their full adherence to the defeated side and the theory, "that every child baptized according to that Office ( of the Prayer Book ) is then and there regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church". All under their charge were earnestly enjoined to teach this in the "plain, natural, and grammatical sense, without the intervention of any hypothesis - charitable or otherwise".<sup>1</sup>.

Various statements were made from the Presbyterian side all emphasising the tenet that regeneration ought not to be affirmed of all the baptised. Thomas M'Crie published his "Lectures on Christian Baptism" in 1851, and left no doubt in the minds of his readers about his opinion of baptismal regeneration. Another writer stated in 1856, "God may bestow his regenerating Spirit on any infant at the very moment of its baptism. We have no Scripture warrant to expect that He will do so. We have, perhaps, no ground for believing that He has ever, in any one instance, actually done so since the world began".<sup>2</sup>. Among the important theological works of slightly later date that of Cunningham, The Reformers

1. Neale, Life and Times of Bp. Torrey, pp. 354-362.

2. Lumsden, Infant Baptism, p.63.

and Theology of the Reformation ", was outstanding for its frank comments on baptism. The following is a sample of his outlook.

"Neither parents nor children, when the children come to be proper subjects of instruction, should regard the fact that they have been baptized as affording of itself even the slightest presumption that they have been regenerated; that nothing should ever be regarded as furnishing any evidence of regeneration, except the appropriate proofs of an actual renovation of the moral nature, exhibited in each case individually: and that, until these proofs appear, everyone whether baptized or not, should be treated and dealt with in all respects as if he were unregenerate, and still need to be born again of the Word of God through belief of the truth".<sup>1</sup>.

As the century drew to a close another school of thought appeared centred in the Church Service Society, which called for a re-affirmation of what was considered to be the true values of baptism. "The fact," as they said, "that no work dealing in any exhaustive manner with the subject has been published in Scotland", led them to devote almost a whole volume of their proceedings in 1895 to a treatise by Dr. John Macleod, entitled, "The Holy Sacrament of Baptism: the place assigned to it in the Economy of Grace; and the present need in Scotland of explicit teaching in regard to it". The

1. p.291.



volume did not lack critics and one of them - not without justice - declared that its "long sentences, parenth~~ises~~ upon parenthesis, baffled analysis by gram~~mer~~ or logic". The title of the spirited counter-blast just quoted conveyed the point of the controversy, "Baptismal Regeneration in the Church of Scotland, An Open Letter to Dr. John Macleod of Govan, by Dr. Theophilus". In his general attitude Dr. Macleod set himself to combat the teaching of Dr. Cunningham, whom he regarded as a subversive influence on Scottish minds, and argued in favour of the thesis that "No branch of the Christian Church contains more definite sacramental doctrine in its formularies than the Church of Scotland".<sup>1</sup>

The General Assembly stated the law of the Church of Scotland with regard to baptism in 1915, and again in 1933, but in neither enactment was there any attempt made to interpret the subordinate standards, or give any clue to what baptism ought to mean in point of doctrine. What this was thought to be could be found in the works of many individual interpreters such as the two small and popular volumes of an older generation, "The Christian Sacraments" by Candlish, 1881, and, "Church Ministry and Sacraments" by Norman Macleod, 1898. The Baird Lecture of 1903 by Donald Macleod was entitled, "The Ministry and Sacraments of the Church of Scotland", and the Kerr Lectures by Lambert in the same year were on "The Sacraments in the New Testament". Among the later books were Clow's, "The Church and the Sacraments",

1. Scottish Church Service Society Conferences, Second Series, I, The Divine Life in the Church, 1895, p.21.

1923, and the Croall Lectures, 1926-1927, by Wotherspoon, "Religious Values in the Sacraments". These were accompanied by other minor pieces and other volumes dealing in part with sacramental usage.

Official publications of the Church of Scotland included "A Short Statement of the Church's Faith", 1935, and the Book of Common Order, 1928 and 1940.

The former stated that the benefits of the sacraments "are received by faith, and by them faith is quickened and confirmed". On baptism it stated, that in this sacrament "the grace of God as cleansing from sin and imparting new life is visibly set forth and bestowed on believers and upon their children, according to His promise....." If this principle, <sup>is pressed</sup> that the benefits of the sacraments are received only by the response of the beneficiary called faith - the principle which implies that there is nothing mechanical in the reception - then there appears to be a plain contradiction in the literal meaning of the affirmation that cleansing from sin and new life are bestowed on the children of believing parents by baptism. These children, whatever their parentage, must be classed as non-believers, and whenever it is affirmed that they receive the benefits the principle of personal correspondence between believer and benefit is surrendered. Nor does it remove the perennial difficulty of this position to hold that the benefits are mediated by

believing parents.<sup>1</sup>. They are mediated by the faith of the recipient in terms of the definition, and all other factors - parents, friends, Sunday School and Church - are not valid substitutes for the personal correspondence relationship. In a word, the "Short Statement" reproduces the insuperable difficulty of trying to unite two opposing ideas 1. that grace is received by faith, and 2. that this grace can be received by infants in a state of non-faith.

Any attempt to discover what the sacrament means from the Service Books is hampered by at least two considerations.

1. These volumes were meant to guide, but not to bind, the ministry in the administration of the sacraments, and, hence, there is no assurance that any particular section was always used. In exposition of the meaning of the sacrament they simply restate the subordinate standards.

2. The language of the ministerial aids for the most part was not intended to be dogmatic, but devotional, and in that context a hypothetical statement may appear in categorical form. The prayers suggested, however, do make it clear that an inward and spiritual grace is not assumed. They petition that it may be granted.

An affirmation of belief in any creed or standard is not required of necessity from any parent, and the ministers are allowed "liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the substance of the Faith."

The pressure of social philosophies on every phase of thought has been responsible for a number of statements on the relationship between the Christian Faith and civilisation, and in some of these an attempt has been made to suggest adjustments in the use which has been made of the sacrament of baptism as expressive of Christian values. The disintegration of family life in the acids of secularism has been a potent stimulus in motivating a re-examination of the possibilities of the sacrament - so far as it applies to infants - and it is not infrequently averred that great gain would result from a deeper recognition of the strategic importance of the rite. Two expressions of opinion may be cited.

The first is the point of view of the Iona Community movement within the Church of Scotland as represented by Dr. George F. MacLeod. A manifesto of its aims is entitled "We shall Re-Build". This is not a formal theological exposition and it would not be fair to treat it as such. Nevertheless it is a responsible publication which asks to be treated seriously and on this basis it may be examined.

It claims to be " a small assertion of the full intended Catholic recovery of the Reformers, which our Church ( the Church of Scotland ) has largely lost". A major factor in this recovery, it is held, is a rebuilding of the significance of the sacrament of baptism. Four values are found in the rite.

1. Baptism must be thought of as involving the whole person. It is as an immersion, just as in fact baptism was in the Celtic Church.
2. The sacrament must be conceived as corporate. "It is into the mystic Body that we are baptized, in which all the congregation are fellow-members".
3. It must be related to the social pressures of the hour. In this way the sacrament is to be geared to the doctrine of the Incarnation which enshrines the truth, it is stated, that soul salvation and social salvation are inseparably linked. "In our Baptism we are united with Him who was born in a stable" - "To be baptized is to become political".
4. Each baptism is to be considered as an assertion of the truth of the infinite worth of each separate person.

The weakness of this re-evaluation of the sacrament, it may be suggested, is its lack of either New Testament, Westminster, or historical support. Each point has an affinity with, for example, the New Testament norm, but is adjusted to suit a social philosophy, and when the process of re-evaluation is completed a picture of what could be made of the sacrament rather than what the New Testament did make of it is presented. What would an apostle have made of the main contention that "we are baptized out of the sub-human individualism that is our solitary natural state" into "true humanity" ? Stripped

of its verbal garments this seems to imply that the principle thing in baptism is its social reference. It is indubitably true that baptism carries this implication that the baptised enter into the fellowship of the Church ( though to describe the pre-baptismal state as solitary sub-human individualism is surely exaggerated ), but to make this the res sacramenti is to substitute a resultant for the experience of union with the resurrected Lord, the testimony of an expressed faith, and the personal reference of the whole act of obedience.

Again, it would not be unfair to suggest that Dr. MacLeod's interpretation abounds in phrases which are doubtful if he is professing to state the full intentions of the Reformers. They showed no concern that baptism should be interpreted in the light of the Incarnation; that it should have meaning for "youth's most splendid bodily concern"; or that it should have a political message. No good purpose is served by obscuring that fact that such ideas were quite foreign to Reformed theology.

If a third point might be made it would be this that what has been claimed to be the meaning of baptism would be assured of realisation to a far greater extent by the baptism of persons at an age of self-determination than by the baptism of infants whose future appreciation of these values is subject to considerable uncertainty. The force of a conscious experience whose meaning is

appreciated by an instructed mind must always be greatly superior to an action which cannot even be remembered, in which the party concerned was not consulted, and in which the differentia which distinguish the personal mode of existence from any other part of the natural world were never expressed.

The other voice from Scotland that has been raised to claim a distinctively social value for the sacrament of baptism is that of Dr. John Baillie in the Riddell Memorial Lectures for 1945, "What is Christian Civilisation?" In the course of the discussion the extensions of the Roman Church in the West in the medieval period by compulsory mass baptisms are reviewed. A parallel to these on a voluntary basis is proposed as a means of asserting Christian values in the modern world. Initial justification for the proposition is found in the references in the New Testament to household baptism, which, it is stated, included children and slaves.<sup>1</sup> Taking these two ideas together 1. household baptism, and 2. medieval methods of Church extension, Dr. Baillie proposes to link corpus Christi and corpus Christianum by the use of infant baptism ( and adult baptism where necessary ) on as large a scale as possible. The achievement of a baptised community, it is suggested, will be a powerful factor in preserving Christian values for civilisation. "It has long seemed to me," he writes, "that the element of truth to which too little weight is given by the protesting movements is that contained in the Christian doctrine and practice of the baptism of

families - a doctrine and practice which, very suggestively, was the main target of criticism of some of the more extreme of these movements from Montanism to Anabaptism".<sup>1</sup> It is frankly admitted that an assessment of the value of the historical pattern from which the idea is drawn will depend on the measure of wisdom credited to the medieval Church - "the question ultimately turns", it is said, "on the measure in which we believe the Church to have been justified in the principles governing its admission to baptism in the various periods".<sup>2</sup>

The concern for the establishment of Christian values firmly at the centre of any praiseworthy social order may be fully appreciated, while expressing doubt about the scheme of Dr. Baillie for their rediscovery and reassertion.

His interpretation of the two historical items is open to challenge. On the one hand, the household baptisms of the New Testament may not have included non-believers and the impossibility of proving that they did makes any argument for comprehensive baptism so far precarious. It is admitted in the lectures, that inclusiveness to the extent required for the analogy cannot be claimed for the pre-imperial stage of Christian usage. If this is so it may be argued that household baptism may not even have contained the principle on which later developments moved; and, in fact, the mass baptisms operated on a basis which would have shocked the apostles! On the other hand, the medieval baptisms, accepted as an alternative to death, were surely not the instrument which created the Christian community permeated by Christian values? They

1. pp.34-35.                      2. p.34.



were only a part of a change the whole of which was imposed by the sword in many areas. The acceptance or appearance of Christian standards did not arise out of mass baptism, but was demanded in addition to baptism. To think of baptism as instrumental in the extension of Christian values is to make an abstraction and give it a value which it never possessed. The lever used to raise heathendom to Christendom was the enforcement of the rule of the Church through the Christian prince.

This factor is expressed by Dr. Baillie in the recognition that "the constitutive element of Christian civilisation" was "the fact that the population as a whole believed what the Church taught".<sup>1</sup> Clearly this was the operative condition. This is where the emphasis has to be placed and for infant baptism to mean anything at all as a social value this condition must be present. Mass baptism without this would be a purely nominal matter without any potential. Translating this into the conditions of an "open" civilisation - which is the term used to describe the opposite of "compulsory" civilisation - it can be argued that until there is a guarantee that the population as a whole will believe the teaching of the Church - until an effective alternative is provided for the Christian prince and his sword - mass baptism has been isolated from that which provided some justification for it. It is altogether fallacious to contend that somehow these baptisms themselves will supply the deficiency.

1. p.44.

Again, a question of some importance is touched when it is suggested that baptism, mass or otherwise, may be decided by reference to the policy of the Church at some particular period of her history. The authority of the Church to guide without a supporting warrant from Holy Scripture was just what the Reformers opposed. The fact that the Reformers themselves were not always true to their declared principle by their attempt to erect a Christian community on the basis of infant baptism does not afford any ground for improving upon their example. The correction of the error rather than the extension and complication of it would seem to be a task more fitted to Reformed policy.

A considerable practical difficulty lies on the surface of any scheme for a more extensive use of family or group baptism in the modern world. If the matter has to be operated on a voluntary basis the possibility of its realisation depends on the willingness of families and other groups to be baptised, and it is not easy to see how this will come about until these families have already accepted Christian values. Even when the group does make some profession of faith, however nominal, group baptisms on the scale necessary to effect social values may well appear to be a difficult custom to popularise. In a word, the proposition about group baptism in an increasingly secular society breathes the rarefied air of high theory. Against it may be put the factual data of the existing situation which is simply that baptisms on a large, almost a national scale, have not prevented the declension which it is proposed to remedy by more baptisms. Baptised nations fight one another just as

readily as unbaptised nations. More baptisms of the quality of those already administered, or of poorer quality by being more promiscuous, can hardly appear to be a serious contribution to the vivification of Christian standards in the modern setting. The pragmatic test does not encourage the hope that civilisation will be re-Christianised by this means. What has failed in more favourable conditions is hardly likely to succeed in less favourable.

If these criticisms are valid they point to a revision of ecclesiastical usage radically different from the traditional Reformed attitude to the sacrament. It is nothing less than a frank admission that at the Reformation the sacrament of baptism was not subjected to the same degree of revision of the Lord's Supper and was taken over in the form of infant baptism despite the awkward fact that it could not be squared with the sola fide principle, and had an extremely hazardous claim to apostolic usage. The desperate shifts that had to be made to give it some show of justification should have made it obvious that there was something wrong with a rite which necessitated such a display of theological agility to defend it. It was gratuitous to believe that the limitation of this sacrament to those who were moral agents and professed faith would lead to the excesses of some groups of the Anabaptists, or bring any other dire peril on the Church. Exactly the same reasons as led

1. The percentage of the population baptised by the Church of Scotland alone in recent years is given in Crisis and Challenge, Riddell and Dryburgh, as follows :

1901 - 45% ; 1911 - 39% ; 1921 - 39% ; 1931 - 42% ; 1939 - 41% ;  
1940 - 39%.

the Reformers to repudiate infant communion were valid for the sacrament of baptism. Craig's Catechism posed the question, "Why is not the Supper ministred to Infants ? " and supplied the only proper answer, " Because they cannot examine themselves." Had the same clarity of thought characterised the attitude to baptism the whole position would have been simplified and made consistent.

It may also be suggested that the thorough reformation of the sacrament of baptism would not have lost those values in it which were associated with the Christian education of the young, the hallowing of parenthood, and the encouragement of Christian family and home life. These values are not disputed by any and might well have been secured by a rite based on the Gospel narrative of Christ blessing the children. Such a service for the presentation of children would not have conflicted with any theological principle and would have cut away all the entanglement of soteriological terminology that has opened the door to so much superstition and non-ethical conceptions of Divine grace.

Events took a different course, however, and they have left a problem which still awaits solution. What is incontestable is that when the modern investigator in the field of child and educational psychology examines the factors which contribute to the growth of character he never dreams of taking infant baptism into account as an

important fact to be chronicled as formative. The reader in this department of knowledge will find few textbooks which even consider the matter worth mentioning. It is surely humiliating to know that after all the argumentation of the centuries about baptismal grace and the benefits of baptism the impartial investigator of factual knowledge ignores the whole action for which the Church has claimed so much and brought all its means of persuasion to enforce. Due attention to this consideration should be a healthy corrective to theological theorising. Should this be ignored the discussion of the meaning of the rite will move in the realm of imagination and deserve the silence of those who prefer to confine their observations to what can be verified by factual data and what can reasonably be claimed to be true.

This note of realism is being sounded by those theologians who maintain that infant baptism should be interpreted on the principle of symbolism. Noteworthy among the interpreters of Reformed thought are the frank admissions of Barth and Brunner, for example, who affirm that infant baptism is irreconcilable with the fundamental positions of the Reformation, and the former has gone so far as to suggest that it be abandoned.<sup>1</sup> Others frankly fall back on the authority of the Church to support the practice. "Those who do not trust the instincts of the historic Church to the extent which this argument requires," writes Dr. N. P. Williams, "should in logic either abandon the

1. Brunner, *Divine Human Encounter*, 1944, p.128f.  
Barth, *Die Kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe*, Zurich, 1943.

custom altogether, or interpret it as a picturesque and dramatic method of registering the name of an infant as an honorary member of the Christian Society".<sup>1</sup>.

These considerations are relevant only to non-experiential subjects. The sacrament as administered to responsive persons can also have its difficulties, but it has never been widely accepted as such in Scotland. Whatever may be said for or against its mode of administration and meaning, however, it at least can be affirmed to be a means of grace to those who accept it in faith, and it offers good ground for being justified as an ordinance of Jesus Christ; and it may be fitting to conclude the discussion with the crisp phrases of the Shorter Catechism which say all that can be said in support of this opinion.

"The Sacraments become effectual Means of Salvation, not from any Virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the Blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by Faith receive them".

1. Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, 1927, Additional note G, Infant Baptism.

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or woman suld misknaw : set furth be ye maist reuerend father  
in God Johne Archbischof of sanct Androus Legatnait and  
primat of ye kirk of Scotland, in his prouincial counsale  
haldin at Edinburgh the XXVI day of Januarie, the zeir of  
our Lord 1551, with the aduise and counsale of the bischoppis  
and uthir prelatiis with the doctours of Theologie and Canon  
law of the said realme of Scotland present for the tyme.....  
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