

THE
ADMINISTRATOR
OF BAPTISM

Studies

in the

Particular Baptist Ecclesiology

of the 1600s.

**By One Who Has a Reason to Hope
He Is Walking in the New and Living Way with
Jesus Christ and His Spouse.**

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1994

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Introduction

When the Particular Baptists of London began issuing their Confessions of Faith, 1644-1652, they and their articles were under often and severe attacks. Pedobaptists and Seekers directed frequent criticism toward the article explaining the administrator of baptism.

The Particular Baptists wanted others to understand they didn't believe in a national system built upon administrators in office by a natural succession, neither a succession of Bishops, nor a succession of administrators maintained by the visible church, that is, the Roman Catholic Church. They did not believe baptism was valid due to the personal standing of the administrator. Most of Particular Baptist baptisms left no record of the administrator. The old brethren believed in a spiritual covenant built upon spiritual qualifications. Baptism is a spiritual ordinance administered by a spiritual gift, upon a spiritual subject to confirm spiritual seals in opposition to the national and natural systems of the Pedobaptists.

Some Baptist enemies maintained the Baptists were invalid churches because they had no traceable succession in England at that time. In addition, if people were going to leave the church of Antichrist or Babylon, and there was no traceable succession, the only way to take up new baptism or re baptism outside of Babylon, was by men God raised up in a special way. This special way would show itself by miracles and new tongues, the Seeker's position. Still later, the Quakers came along and denied water baptism, claiming it was only a carnal ordinance. The Particular Baptist believed in the succession of the gospel church. They didn't yet have the records of the succession of the Waldenses and Albigenses until the 1670s. They depended only upon the Scriptures to prove their position. Henry D' Anvers may be considered the first Particular Baptist historian. In his work, first issued in 1673, he traced the history of the Particular Baptists by the history of baptism. The Pedobaptist government of England promptly banished D'Anvers to Holland where he died in exile.

The administrator of baptism is set forth in a single statement trying to answer both the Pedobaptist Nationalists and the Seekers. When this article was first issued, it became the focus of constant and often attack. This is true now. The way to understand the meaning of the old Baptists is, as always, **go to the original sources.** I find it very strange that this has never been done. Those brethren were not responsible then or now for the various interpretations put on their articles of faith. Readers should always remember it was very difficult in one article to deny a Pedobaptist administrator of baptism and a Seeker administrator of baptism. This article is more of a denial rather than an explanation. In this, the misunderstandings arise. However, in other writings, these very signers, and others in these London churches, often explained in a positive way about the administrator of baptism.

Since the early 1800s the open membership and open communion Baptists have often quoted the 1644 article to justify their invalid immersions. Here are some of the historic and modern concepts urged from this article:

1. That any person who preaches the gospel can baptize, without any church connection or baptism whatsoever,
2. Any person who is saved can baptize, whether he is a preacher or not. Some have even argued that a woman can baptize if she is saved.
3. Any preacher of the true gospel is a well qualified administrator of baptism. This is suppose to validate pedobaptist immersions.

QUESTION?

**Do these views fairly represent the old Particular Baptists ?
The First London Confession stated:**

The Person designed by Christ to dispense this Ordinance, the Scriptures hold forth to be a preaching Disciple, it being no where tied to a particular Church, Officer, or person extraordinarily sent, the Commission enjoying the administration, being given to them under no other consideration, but as considered Disciples.

Article 41, The Confession of 1644

The person designed by Christ to dispense Baptism, the Scriptures hold forth to be a Disciple; it being no where tied to a particular Church officer, or person extraordinarily sent, the Commission enjoying the administration, being given to them as considered disciples, being men able to preach the Gospel. Isa. 8:16. Ephes. 3:7. Mat. 28:19. John 4:2. Acts 20:7. chap. 11:20. I Cor. 11:24. with I Cor. 10:16, 17. Rom. 16:2.

Article 40, The Confession of 1652

These are the first and last statements in the **First London Confession**.

After eight years of fighting various anti-Baptistic writers, 1644-1652, Particular Baptists were still stressing the following points:

1. **Baptism is not tied to a particular Church, such as succession through the Roman Catholic Church;**
2. **Officer; this was against the Pedobaptist Nationalist minister; or even a pastor only;**
3. **Nor was it tied to a person being extraordinarily sent; this was against the Seekers;**
4. **The Commission was given to those men as disciples and therefore, any preaching disciple is a proper administrator of baptism.**

This is a simple and Biblical summation explaining the spiritual qualifications for an administrator of baptism, **a preaching disciple**. They did not explain who or what a

preaching disciple is nor how anyone became a preaching disciple, that is, in the Confession of Faith, they did not.

Some of the men who wrote and signed these Confessions also defended them. Additional writers who didn't write or sign the Confessions, but who were gifts or members in the churches publishing these Confessions did explain how a person became an administrator of baptism, or a preaching disciple.

Here is an important fact, which, when understood properly, will explain how the old Baptists defended their position. **Many times they argued that baptism was not always a qualification for the administrator. This is because they included John the Baptist as a true administrator.** The Pedobaptists, Seekers and Quakers denied he was. Pedobaptists placed John's baptism before Christian baptism. The Seekers and Quakers placed John's baptism as something carnal and temporary and the true baptism is be by the Holy Spirit which is the only Christian baptism until apostolic men are raised up again.

These points are very important:

- 1. The Spiritual qualifications for an administrator of baptism;**
- 2. The Orderly qualifications for an administrator of baptism.**

The Protestant Pedobaptists

I. THE POSITION OF THE PEDOBAPTIST NATIONALISTS.

These are the infant sprinklers, pourers or dippers who believed in the union of church and state. A forced taxation and the power of the civil government maintained their church and ministry. Their ministerial succession was traced through the Church of Rome, called the Visible Church, by means of the Bishops. The Protestants denied that the Church of Rome was a valid church, and therefore affirmed that the succession of baptism and the true church was by means of Antichrist. The ordinances of Antichrist and its officers and ordinations were therefore valid until Protestants left them. The Protestants then took the true succession with them. The Anabaptists had no succession nor lawful administrators because they did not come from the succession of the Bishops of Rome and later, the Episcopacy.

Several Nationalists ministers wrote against the Baptists. Episcopal ministers joined Presbyterians and Independents in a paper persecution which later grew into real persecution after the Restoration in 1660. Here is an example:

ANABAPTIST.

That there ought to be distinction by the Word of God between the Clergy and the Laity, but that all who are gifted may preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments.

THE REFUTATION.

This prodigious error, which may be easily convinced not only by the clear light of Scripture, and the practice of the Christian Church from the beginning to this day: but also by the glimmering light of Reason and Custom of all Nations, a MONGREL sect of late between Brownists and Anabaptists have set abroach, and thereby after a sort justified the scandal laid upon some in the Reformed Churches, by Card: BELLARMINE, that Protestants have no order at all among them, but confusion; that among them all sorts of Tradesmen and Artificers handle the Word and Sacraments with foul and unwashed hands, to the great dishonor of God, and profanation of his holy Ordinances. But let the Cardinal and all Papists know, that we own none of these russet Rabbies, or Apron Levites, but detest and abominate them . . . This Heresy may be felled down at three blows of the ax (Saint John Baptist speaks of) laid to the root of the tree, after this manner:

Argument I.

No man may conjoin or confound them whom God has severed and distinguished:

But God in his Word has severed the Clergy from the Laity; & distinguished the Priests from the People, Num. 18:20; Hos. 4:4, 9; Mal. :7.

Ergo, None ought to confound them.

Argument III.

All that take upon them to execute the office of a Priest or Minister of the Gospel, ought to have a calling thereunto, Heb. 5:4, I Tim. 4:14.

But Lay persons, whether Merchants, or Artisans, or Husband men, or any the like, have no calling to execute the office of a Priest, or Minister of the Gospel.

Ergo, they may not assume, or arrogate it to themselves.

ANABAP: ANSWER.

God's conferring gifts upon any man, is a sufficient calling; as for the imposition of Episcopal hands, it is an Antichristian rite, and gives the party ordained no power at all.

REPLY.

There is a double calling necessary to a dispenser of the mysteries of salvation; Inward and Outward: The Inward enables them, the Outward authorizes them to discharge their sacred function. Where there are gifts, if God incline the heart of the party to enter into the Ministry, there is an inward calling: yet this alone enables not without an outward calling, either ordinary or extraordinary. . . And the Christian Church now knows no other sending, then by laying of hands by the successors of the Apostles, and commending them to particular charges; And if such Episcopal Ordination be an Antichristian Rite, we desire to learn from them what is the Christian form or manner of admitting men into holy Orders; for no other Ordination was heard of for 1500 years, or at least approved of, and more: during which time, if there were no lawful Calling, then where no Pastors feeding, and governing the flocks; if no lawful Pastors, no visible Churches. . . .

Fiftly, I except against the 41. Article, viz. "That persons designed by Christ to dispense this ordinance, the Scriptures hold forth to be a preaching Disciple, it being no

where tied to a particular Church, Officer, or Person." If the eye be darkness, how great is that darkness? If there be confusion in order itself, how great must the confusion needs be? If all be Pastors, where are their flocks? If all be teachers, where are their Scholars? A preaching Disciple sounds as harshly as a Scholar Master, or a Lecturing hearer; it is true, we grant that all who have received gifts from God, ought to make use of them for the benefit of others, and if any abound in knowledge, he ought to communicate to them that lack, and freely give, lumen de lumine. . . .If the calling of the Anabaptisticall teachers bee ordinary, let them demonstrate it by Scripture; if extraordinary, let them prove it by miracle.

Daniel Featley, **The Dippers Dip;** London: 1645, pps. 129-136; 224-226.

Featley charged the Baptists with:

1. No distinction between the clergy and the laity;
2. Being gifted alone, enough to preach and baptize without any official call or authority;
3. That Episcopal Ordination and succession of the Bishops was antichrist;
4. The main proof Feately and others urged was, the O. T. type of ministry or Priesthood was to continue into the church age.

II. THE POSITION OF THE PEDOBAPTIST DISSENTERS.

A. Even after some Pedobaptists left Romanism and Episcopacy, and became dissenters or independents, they still tried to trace their succession, their baptisms and ordinations, and their entire church constitution, through the Roman Catholic Church which they readily recognized as the Church of Antichrist.

One of the chief leaders among the Pedobaptist dissenters was Praisegod Barebones. He is important because he was the leader of what was known as the Barebones Parliament which conducted the affairs of England for a short time. Also, when the Blount mission to secure baptism by means of a true succession from the old Waldenses happened in 1641, the group that remained in the independent or Brownist church was pastored by Barebones. In order to attack the Baptists and to justify his own baptism, ordination and church state, Barebones issued several works against the Baptists and their new baptism or anabaptism as it was called then. One of his first was **A Discourse Tending to Prove the Baptism in, or Under the Defection of Antichrist to be the Ordinance of Jesus Christ; London: 1642.** This shows the entire issue between the Baptists and Pedobaptists, though not totally correct from the Baptist viewpoint. He wanted them to admit no existence before John Smith who was to have baptized himself, according to Barebones and others.

Barebones stated:

The defection and falling away under Antichrist was very general and marvelous universal, as appears by what is written, Rev. 13:8, 16. And unless the defection had bin so, how should those be the first fruits unto God, that first appeared in the dawn of the day (commonly accounted, and that not untruly, as I judge the Waldneses) if there had bin any that had remained pure and undefiled, as in a Church way. Indeed the Greek did not always subject to the Roman power, yet were very little short in defection. I suppose according to the measure whereby the Romanist in defection are measured, they will stand or fall

together. Truly it will be a piece of special service to the godly, and very thankfully accepted, if any could make it appear, such a continuance of the Church estate elsewhere in the world, then (as aforesaid) it would tend to the settling of things very much: and for my part, I should bless God for their discovery. If none be found able to make it appear, as to have continued elsewhere (as I believe they cannot) then it will be more than probable, that it has continued under the defection of Antichrist, according to that of the 2 Thess. 2:4. for some way, and some where it must continue. And as the Church that great Instituted Ordinance is to continue, and has continued, so likewise the Ordinance of Baptism, by which the matter of the Church is differenced.

Now if what is before said concerning the perpetuity of the visible Church shall be found a truth, and so esteemed, then that must needs be found an error, and so accounted, that supposes or takes that for a ground, which is the direct contrary, and flat denial of this truth, to wit, That the Church has ceased at some time, and bin utterly extinguish, and Christ a Widower for a good season, till by themselves, or some others it was revived, and so came to live again: Such as take this for a ground of their practices, they must needs err, and build upon the sands.

But the way of new Baptizing, largely began to be practiced by some, supposing themselves, and so others, not to have been Baptized with the baptism of Christ has no ground for this practice, but the succession of the Church, and baptism with it, as not remaining in the world. That they are utterly ceased where Antichrist prevailed to exalt himself, their practice doth truly declare and that it is so, they take for granted and indeed; so had they need, for to prove it they cannot; let that be minded, 2 Thess. 2:4, Math. 16:18. If it were so, that under the defection, the Ordinance of the Church, and Baptism ceased, yet that is no where remains in the world, may not be thought for the reverence of God's Word before declared. But till this also be believed that the estate of Christ's Church and baptism, by which the matter is differenced, is no where else to be found, remaining in the world: there is no ground for this practice of raising Baptism, by persons baptizing themselves: But rather there would be a seeking out the Church, where she were to be found, and there receiving the holy Ordinance of Christ's Baptism, as in a right line, and so be added to the Church, and from thence conveying the truth into these parts again, where it has cased. In Sion of old God appointed the blessing, and life for ever, and thither, from the utmost parts of the earth the godly repaired, as they were well known, (Acts 2:47; Psalm 133). But they doe not believe such a continuation, it is plain, and how shall they then seek there to light their Candle? They must seek, as they do, to do it some other way. To help their belief, or make it greater unbelief, I pray them to study that place, Heb. 13:8 and see how they can resolve the case, that Christ should not have bin a Widower, and a Head without a Body: if his visible Church had dyed, and left the world, till they, or other, a little sooner, came and make him one again, without this appointing, or leave, or consent asked; a very mean opinion, unworthy of our Lord, or any of his followers. And whether he will accept of this Spouse they make him, or reject her as a Harlot, may well be questioned; and the rather, seeing they have questioned it themselves once and the second time.

But I will know some are so filled with prejudice, that they have no patience to hear, or so much as to think of this matter of the Church estate remaining under Antichrists exaltation: I doe pray them setting aside prejudice, they would be pleased to assign and set forth the error of absurdity, the hurt or damage that comes of such an opinion, that the Captivity in Babylon, and there preserved by the power of God for a time, & c. and now by the same power brought out and restored to freedom and parity, God returning to build again his Tabernacle, broke down and ruined, but not destroyed, as sometime of old the Church and Vessels of the Lord were in Babylon, and from thence returned. When it shall please any to set down the error, or hurt, or damage, I do promise with Gods leave, to consider of it, and happily it may alter my belief in this point.

But now further Baptism being lost and fallen out of the world and an Idol, and likeness come in the room of it, the Church being ceased, to whom Christ gave his power; persons not having the Baptism of Jesus Christ, but being unbaptized, all which the opinion and practice of New beginning Baptism supposes to be most true and certain, and thereupon do ground their proceedings.

Praisegod Barebones, **A Discourse Tending to Prove the Baptism In or Under The Defection of Antichrist to be The Ordinance of Jesus Christ;**
London: 1642, pps. 2-5.

Barebones charged the Baptists with:

- A. Denying that Succession was valid under Antichrist. This was true.
- B. Denying the succession of the visible church as valid. This was true also when meaning the Roman Catholic Church.
- C. That Christ was a Widower and a bodiless head. This they denied because they believed in the succession of the true church which was hidden in the wilderness.
- D. That baptism did not differentiate the matter of the church. This is also true because baptism has no power in itself to cause the church to be different from all others and the world. Saintship professed and saints walking in all the ordinances is what differentiated the church from all others and the world.
- E. Because the succession of Antichrist was not valid, therefore, the Baptists started baptism by self-baptism. This was a tie up to John Smith. The Baptists denied this.

In summary to the Pedobaptist position:

- 1. The Pedobaptists made all depend upon baptism administered by a man who received his baptism and ordination from a succession through the Bishops of the Roman Catholic church.

The Baptists denied this, holding rather to a succession of the truth and the church recognizing the man with a gift as a proper administrator of baptism.

- 2. The Pedobaptists claimed that the Minister, with his powers of Apostolic succession, gave life and being to the church by baptism and his office received by succession from Rome.

The Baptists denied all this as Antichrist.

- 3. The Pedobaptists claimed that the clergy and laity should be separated citing the Old Testament as proof. They believed their ministers were the successors of Levi.

The Baptists denied this. There was no difference between the clergy and laity except by gift. All were disciples. Baptist ministers were made so by the calling and gifts of God. Then they were known and tried by the church. After this they were called to office and either sent to the world as a **begetting** ministry or remained in the church as a **feeding** ministry.

Baptist ministers were chosen out of the church. They were no different from the other members. This was an invalid ministry according to the Pedobaptists. They didn't come through Rome and had no authority from the Government.

THE POSITION OF THE SEEKERS.

John Saltmarsh was a most notable Seeker. He published **The Smoke in the Temple** in 1646, defining the Seeker's position and their attitudes towards all other churches, ordinances and ministers.

A. Definition of the Anabaptists:

ANABAPTISM

so called; What it is, or what they hold.

The Church of Christ are a company of Baptized believers; and whatsoever Disciple can teach the Word, or make out Christ, may Baptize or administer other Ordinances.

That the Church or Body, though but of two or three, yet may enjoy the Word and Ordinances, by way of Administrator, or one deputed to administer, though no Pastor.

That none are to be Baptized but believers.

That those commonly called Church Officers, as Pastors, &c. are such as the Church or Body may be without.

That none are to be called Brethren but Baptized believers.

All administration of Ordinances were given to the Apostles as Disciples; not so under the notion of Church-power as is pretended.

That none ought to communicate in the Ordinances of Christ till first baptized.

Page 14.

B. Saltmarsh's Exceptions Against the Grounds of the New Baptism.

8. That every common disciple cannot so baptize as the first disciples did, because not gifted or qualified as they were. And there is as much necessity to make out the truth in the same power and way of evidence to an Antichristian estate, as to a Jewish and Heathenish, and with a Word written as well as preached; speaking and writing lying both equally open to question and exceptions without a power gloriously working in the behalf and to the reputation of it. Nor is there any one Disciple in all the New Testament preaching and baptizing by way of authority, but he was able to make out the truth of his calling and dispensation either by miracle or gifts. There are but three Exceptions, and they have no weight in them.

1. Ananias was a Disciple.

I answer: Yea, but he restored sight to Saul, and had vision.

2. Philip did no miracle to the Eunuch.

I answer: We can neither conclude he did nor he did not, from the Word; for it is silent: but he did miracles in Samaria.

3. They that were scattered went every where preaching.

I answer: Who they were, or how they preached, or what power they manifested, is not laid down in the Word neither for nor against: The Word is silent.

9. That there is not such an Officer as Administrator in the whole Word; but Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Rulers, Deacons, &c. and therefore Administrator is an unwholesome word.

10. None ought to give the Baptism now, because there is none can give the gift of the holy Ghost with it, to make up that glorious supplement of gifts which is always had; and they are joined both in the Word and practice, as in Heb. 6:1. . . So as Baptism by water, and by the holy Ghost, being joined together both in Institution, Doctrine and Practice, are not to be separated, nor given in such a time wherein that of the holy Ghost it not given: For, what God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

11. That it is as unreasonable to take any such Ordinances of Jesus Christ from any that is not distinctly, specially, spiritually, powerfully enabled as the first dispensers, as it is to take the word of any common man charging us in the name of the Parliament, and cannot visibly make out a visible excellency and supremacy of power by Ordinance or Commission.

12. That these Churches who enjoy Christ's mind, as they think, most fully in the practice of Ordinances, yet have no greater gifts in their Churches then there are in those called Independents, or Brownists; Prayer, Teaching, Prophesying being as fully and powerfully performed in the one as the other. And being so, Whether must not the Churches of Christ be distinguished by some more visible glorious power and gifts as at first by which they may be discerned to excel all other Societies?

13. That the fullness of time is not yet come for Ordinances; For as there were several seasons for the giving out of Truth before, so now. Pgs. 16-18.

C. Saltmarsh's Definition of the Seekers:

SEEKING, or, SEEKERS,

So called;

What their Way is, and what they hold.

That there is no Church nor Ordinances yet.

That if they did not end with the Primitive or Apostles times, yet they are to begin as in the Primitive times, with gifts and miracles, and that there is as much reason for the like gifts to make out the Truth of any of the Gospel now to an Antichristian estate, as formerly to a Jewish or Heathenish.

That such a Believer as can dispense Ordinances, must be qualified as the Believers in Mark 16, and as the former disciples were.

That there is a time and fullness for the Spirit, and for the later pure Spiritual dispensations, as there was formerly for the first dispensations: And whether this shall be while the Angels are but pouring out their Vials or not, or when Babylon is fallen.

And whether there is now as much need for new Tongues to reveal the pure Original to us, it being conveyed with corruptions and additions in Translations; by which, Truth may be more purely discovered, and the waters of Life that now run muddily, may flow more clear and crystal-like from the Throne of God. Page 19.

John Saltmarsh, **The Smoke in the Temple;** London: 1646, pps. 16-19.

In summation to the Seeker's position note:

1. Ministers of the gospel should be able to give out both, the baptism of the Holy Spirit as well as water baptism.
2. This is just as necessary today as during the days of the Apostles because of the presence of Antichrist.
3. Because there have been no such men since the days of the Apostles, it must mean that the church and ordinances ceased with the age of the Apostles.
4. Therefore, the church is in the wilderness and men should not try to restore the church and its ordinances until they can give the Holy Spirit as did the men in apostolic days.
5. The Baptists, along with all others who are for a purity in religion, are invalid because they cannot give the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the visible gifts which existed with the Apostles.

Saltmarsh's definition of the Baptists was noteworthy even if not fully expressing their opinions about the administrator of baptism.

It maybe wise to quote again article 40 from the 1652 Confession:

The person designed by Christ to dispense Baptism, the Scripture hold forth to be a Disciple; it being no where tied to a particular Church-officer, or person extraordinarily sent, the Commission enjoying the administration, being given to them as considered disciples, being men able to preach the Gospel.

This seems to be an extraordinary answer to the Pedobaptists and the Seekers in one article.

The Particular Baptist Position

If any saint will take the **Confession of Faith** and read articles 33 to 46, in the 1652 edition or the related articles in the other editions, he will see a basic and as complete a statement of the gospel church, its constitution, officers and its ordinances as can be given in a Confession of Faith.

However, we are prepared to go beyond that. We are going to the original churches, their gifts and other writers, who issued these first confessions. We will consider the

PARTICULAR BAPTIST RESPONSES.

The Particular Baptist Church At Wapping, 1633 to the Present.

John Spilsbury gathered the oldest continuing Particular Baptist Church near or in London, at Wapping in 1633. Many English Dissenters fled into Holland to escape the religious persecution of the Anglicans during the early 1600s. Some of them returned in the 1630s. John Spilsbury, one of them, was baptized while in Holland, according to ***John Lewis***, Anglican. He returned to England as a Particular Baptist. John Norcott, according to ***John T. Christian***, was also an exile with Spilsbury and others. According to ***Able Morgan***, those who "restored" adult immersion in England, received it from the descendants of the old Waldneses.

- A. Here is a list of the signers of the first Confession: John Spilsbury, Samuel Richardson, and George Tipping.
- B. The additional Pastors who followed John Spilsbury were:
 - 1. John Norcott,
 - 2. Herecules Collins.

C. Henry Lawrance Esq., was one of the most celebrated Baptists of that era. He was not only a member of Parliament but was President of the Council of State under Oliver Cromwell. One of his known works was against the Pedobaptist controversy, **Baptism**; while his **Vindication of the Scriptures and the Ordinances**, dealt with the Seekers and Quakers.

The authors and their works in the Wapping Church.

I.

John Spilsbury.

(1) **Treatise of Baptism.** In this work, first published in 1643 and later in 1652, he answered the charges of the Pedobaptists in general and Praisegod Barebones in particular:

Secondly, the ordinance of baptism instituted by Christ is so essential to the constitution of the Church under the New Testament that none can be true in her constitution without it. Neither can that be a false Church where baptism is truly the Lord's ordinance in the administration thereof, as I Cor. 12:13. with Gal. 3:27. So that to approve of Antichrist's baptism to be God's ordinance, is to approve of his Church to be also the Church of God. For as the eaters of the sacrifice were of old partakers of the Alter, I Cor. 10. 17,18. and to receive him that is sent is a receiving also of him that sent him, Mat. 13.40, so it is with this essential ordinance of baptism in the Church of Antichrist, that whosoever approves of the one, by the same he approves of the others also. For the ground and pillar that bears up the truth, and that truth so born up, stands and falls together, as I Tim. 3:15. So that where there is not a true constituted Church, there is no true constituted Church-ordinance: and where there is a true Church ordinance in its constitution, there is at least presupposed a true Church also. And, therefore, to condemn a Church to be false, and altogether Antichristian, and yet baptism there, and by the same administered, to be the ordinance of God; this I can see no rule for in the Scripture: and therefore I dissent.

Thirdly, Christ has disclaimed and denied all communion with the man of sin, both in respect of himself and his subjects; and has also proclaimed open war against him and all his dominions: and therefore he calls home his subjects, as Jer. 51.6.45. Revel. 18:4. Christ refuses to be laid as a chief corner stone under Antichrists building, as he must be if he in his holy ordinance of baptism be granted to lie in his foundation: For baptism is no otherwise Christ's ordinance but as it depends upon him the ordainer. But Christ denies Antichrist any such privilege, and also forbids his people from taking a stone from Babylon to lay in the foundation of the Lords building, as Jer. 51.26. But if Antichrists church be of himself, and so false; then all the parts thereof must be of his own devising and false also. For if in opposition to a true Church of Christ, there is a false church of Antichrists: which thing cannot be, if there be not in opposition to true ordinances of the one, false ordinances of the other, that are essential to the same, as the ordinance of baptism is. And so the like ministry proportional to the same, as I Cor. 10. 21, 2 Cor. 11.13,14,15. Rev. 2.2. according to Mat. 24.24. with 2 Thes. 2.9,10.

Fourthly, I cannot approve of that baptism in the church of Antichrist to be God's ordinance, because in so doing I shall advance human testimony above the Word of God. For I have no way to satisfy my conscience whether I have that ordinance or no, but only Antichrist's Church-book, or my Godfathers, or Godmothers: which if the one be dead, and the other lost, then am I so seek my baptism. But as the best, if any should demand of me whether I were baptized or not: all that I can say is, that men tell me so; in all which Christ must have no voice, and the word of God put to silence, as knowing no such thing: and Antichrist's Church-book come in the place, as a ground of my faith in a truth so essential. Which thing I dare not approve of.

Fifthly, to justify baptism in the Church of Antichrist to be God's ordinance, is to force men to sin against conscience; for if any man comes unto such for fellowship in the truth, he must either justify the baptism he received of the man of sin, as Gods ordinance, or else continue in that sinful way in which he is, and desires to leave; I speak now in their sense whose practice it is, which I cannot at all assent unto for a truth.

Sixtly, I cannot justify Antichrist's baptism for God's ordinance, because it makes against Christ's baptism in these two respects. First, for the power by which the same was constituted, and so authorized in the hand of the Minister, being the power of the man of sin, rejected of God as an enemy to the Crown and Dignity of Christ the King of Saints. Secondly, in respect of that body into which the party was baptized, and also by the same made a visible member, that was in the body of Antichrist. In both which respects the baptism administered in the false Antichrist state, in my judgment cannot be the ordinance of God.

And lastly, I dare not go from that **RULE AND ORDER WHICH CHRIST LEFT IN HIS LAST TESTAMENT, FOR THE CONSTITUTING OF HIS CHURCH, AND TAKING MEMBERS INTO THE SAME, WHICH IS BY FAITH AND BAPTISM.** All which grounds being well considered, I cannot see by any rule of truth to approve of the baptism administered in a false Antichristian church to be God's ordinance, instituted by Christ in his New Testament. That being there administered under a **false power, by a false Ministry upon a wrong subject, in a false body,** and yet the same God's ordinance, this is more than I can find by the Word of God from which rule I dare not go.

Thus having showed my judgment, and some reasons why I so judge that the baptism administered in a false Antichristian estate, cannot be the ordinance of God, instituted by Christ in the Gospel.

Thirdly, I see not but that in a case of necessity a woman might lawfully circumcise, she being no where prohibited.

And, lastly, what of all this? say she did it unlawfully, and in so doing she was a false Minister, all which is more than God said, yet this was not done in a false Church, upon a wrong subject, authorized by a false power, as baptism administered by Antichrist is, and therefore at the worst it makes nothing at all for that which it is pretended, namely to prove baptism administered by Antichrist the ordinance of God, though the same be also administered by a false Minister. Pages 52-55.

Fourthly, I deny the form of words, with the use of water, in a false Antichristian Church, to be the form of the Lords baptism, instituted by Christ in the New Testament; for then every foolish using of them words with water, must be the true ordinance of God, as many ignorantly do affirm. **But for the form of Baptism, that is, an authorized**

person, baptizing the true matter into the true and orderly profession of Jesus Christ, as Mat. 28.19. I Cor. 12.13. Gal. 3.27. This being thus done by a true power and authority from Christ, is the form of baptism in the administration thereof; but this doth not Antichrist, and therefore his baptism is not God's Ordinance. p. 57.

But now for Antichrist to take the Scriptures, and according to his right of authority and spirit, from the same to compose a form of worship, with ordinances suitable thereunto, among which baptism must be one, **WITHOUT WHICH ALL THE REST ARE NOTHING WORTH.** Now though that baptism as a holy institution of Christ, contained in the Scriptures, be the ordinance of God, yet considered in Antichrist's constitution, and false administration, it is not the ordinance of God, no more than the Princes of Babylons drinking in the vessels of the Lord's house was his ordinance.

Now let the like be showed, wherever God is said to give or send his ordinance of baptism unto Antichrist, until then the vessels of God's house remaining his ordinance in Babylon, shall make nothing for them to prove Antichrist sprinkling of water on the face of an infant, to be Gods ordinance of Baptism, and for her being the **MOTHER OF HARLOTS IS TRUE, Rev. 17.5 WHO HAS ALL FOR HER DAUGHTERS THAT DERIVE HER BAPTISM FROM HER, AS DO ALL THAT UPHOLD HER DOCTRINE OF INFANT-BAPTISM, Page 58.**

(Addressing Praisegod Barebones and the rest of the Separatists Pedobaptists, John Spilsbury very lovingly and very carefully stated):

Arise therefore and obey the Lord, and think not within yourselves, we are baptized already, and that by Antichrist, for I tell you, that you are never able to prove yourselves to be under the Lords holy ordinance of baptism, by all the light in Scripture, and art in nature, in that way you go, namely to deny the state as false and Antichristian, and yet retain your baptism there administered by the same power as the Lord's ordinance, and assume a Church to yourselves upon the same baptism. I speak in subjection, I think THE LAST CHURCH OR CHURCHES, THAT IS, ALL THE REFORMED CHURCHES, STILL RETAINING INFANT'S BAPTISM, ARE AS MUCH AGAINST THE RULES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AS THE FORMER. (The Roman Catholic, R. E. P.) Page 61.

John Spilsbury, *A Treatise Concerning the Lawful Subject of Baptism;*
London: 1651

(2) **God's Ordinances the Saints Privilege,** (against Seekers):

Objection. 18.

If the administrations of the new Testament lie so open and free to all that believe, without condition or exception, then any that believe may administer all Ordinances; and so women, as well as any other.

Answer:

By pretended absurdities and false consequences, the truth of God is commonly opposed and obscured by the adversaries thereof: yet truth never brings upon itself any absurdity. But absurdities sometimes seem to follow through the subtlety of men opposing the truth; and sometimes through the ignorance of men, not knowing how to avoid them, and defend the truth from them.

Truth always lies within the bounds of order, whither true faith brings in a man, and there truth makes him free, Joh. 8:32. Truth and order are never apart, much less oppose each other, how ever men conceive: for God who is one, is the God both of truth, and of order, I Cor. 14. **So that wheresoever faith finds truth, there order also dwells. For as God is the God of order, so his Word which is truth, is the rule of order; and this Word is faith's foundation, whereon she builds: which Word is so far from being any exceptive condition of truth, as that it is truth itself. God calls no man to dispense his truth, whom he doth not fit and enable for the same: and whom God doth call and send, he so sends them that they go in faith. And faith ever attends at wisdom's gate, and bides not go other ways then Christ directs. So far is faith from leading any to any absurdity and disorder, that it keeps them in the hands of truth which guides them according to order, and reproveth the contrary.**

And for women's administering of Ordinances: God's free love and true faith never admits or gives way unto any unlawful or disorderly liberty. And I have endeavored to prove that the free use or ordinances is only to faith, not to the flesh, and so not in any unseemly way. God who is the God of order, has in his Word of truth taught women what their duty is: and namely in I Cor. 14: 34, 35. I Tim. 2:11, 12. This rule forbids unto them the administering of ordinances. And they which have faith, will believe the Lord, and obey his Word.

Again, ***I HAVE NOT SAID, THAT THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE FREE FOR ANY THAT BELIEVE TO ADMINISTER THEM. But I have proved that they are free for all that believe to submit unto them (or rather, to Christ in them, without any condition or exception against the same. Pps. 29, 30.***

The work to be done, is to call home the Elect of God, into the faith and fellowship of Christ. The Ministry, are men stirred up, and sent by Christ, which gifts and abilities fit for the work called unto. Which Ministry remains until all the Elect of God are brought unto one unity of faith and fullness of Christ, as Eph. 4. Mat. 28. But what gifts and abilities are of absolute necessity required by Christ unto this work, is well to be minded. To gather the Elect of God into the fellowship of Christ, and to edify them in the same, is the work. And God enlightening men in the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, in the principles of the Gospel, and the Spirit enabling them with gifts of utterance, to preach the same, for the convincing of sin, and to teach them their duty to God and man; here is to continue to the end of the world, Mat. 28. 19, 20. Page 4.

Objection 11

God ordained a Ministry in the Gospel which ever was in order first, namely, Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, by whom Churches were planted, and other Officers ordained for those Churches well being.

Answer.

This Ministry I confess, and own, and therefore I say still, that men must come from God with truth, and with ability to deliver the same for the converting of men to the faith. Now when God shall assist his Word with power, to bring over men's hearts to believe, and obey the same, such the Scriptures hold out to be true Messengers sent of Christ, declared by their work as it answers to the Rule. And this way men were convinced, and Churches planted that now stand under the profession of Christ. And thus came Churches to be planted, and other Officers ordained, by those that God made the first instruments to bring on the work, in

communion with the rest, as to direct and assist them in the same, Tit. 1:5, Act. 14:23. Page 13.

Take notice that this place in Revel. 15. doth hold forth unto us a Church, and a glorious one too. For here is a Temple out of which the seven Angels go with their seven golden vials full of the wrath of God against Antichrist, or the Beast. For this see Revel. 15:1.5, 6. Revel. 16.1 &c. Are not these the Ministers of Christ, which go forth of the Temple, which is the Church of Christ? *into which men must first come, or else they cannot go out thence: for no man can be said to go out of a place that he never came in.*

John Spilsbury, Gods Ordinance, The Saints Privilege; London: 1646; Page 31.

In conclusion, note the following points;

1. John Spilsbury did not believe than any common disciple could baptize anymore than a woman could;

2. John Spilsbury believed truth and order would go together when God dealt with His people. There were three types of order in his days: The Prelatical order of the Bishops in the Roman and Episcopal churches, The Presbyterian order of the Calvinists and other like-minded reformers; the Congregational order of the Brownists and the Baptists. The Baptists held the original position regarding congregational order as even Robert Bailie was forced to admit. John Spilsbury did not violate gospel order as laid down by the Scriptures and practiced by those of the Baptized Way.

3. *John Spilsbury's work showed that any believer had a right to Christ's ordinances, not that any believer could administer them.*

4. John Spilsbury confessed and maintained that the orderly ministry of Christ was in His gospel church, God's Holy Temple, that men must first go into before they came out.

5. John Spilsbury did not deal with the steps by which an administrator became an administrator, only what a believer should **LOOK FOR AND EXPECT WHEN SEEKING AN ADMINISTRATOR AND THE LIBERTY AND NECESSITY OF BELIEVERS TO RECEIVE AND ABIDE UNDER GOSPEL CHURCHES, MINISTERS AND ORDINANCES**. That is, in this work, he did not. You have already seen from his work on **Baptism** that he certainly and clearly did.

(3) The Bakewell-Spilsbury Debate.

Following the publication of the first edition of The London Confession, 1644, John Spilsbury defended that great document against others. He was one of several writers. His remarks are given to us from a debate he and Thomas Bakewell had in or near 1645. This debate was recorded by Bakewell in his **An Answer or Confutation Of Divers Errors Broached and Maintained by the Seven Churches of Anabapatists Contained in those Articles of their Confession of Faith...**London; 1646.

Article #33, Christ's Visible Kingdom on Earth:

A. Spilsbury's Position:

1. Christ's Spiritual Kingdom on the earth is His Church;
2. Every particular church has power to chose for themselves meet persons into office, p. 6;
3. None other but the church has power, p. 6.
4. Either the church or the world chooses the officers, p. 6.
5. Each church governs itself, p. 6.

B. Bakewell's Position:

1. Particular churches don't have power to chose into office;
2. The church representively or by Presbytery has the power;
3. No man gathered a church in the N. T.
 4. No church separated from the rest and claimed to have power to chose officers out of their own company; p. 6.
5. The Apostles ordained and appointed them to their office;
6. A common presbytery-no single congregation governed itself; p. 6.

Article # 37 The Pastor or Officer:

A. Spilsbury's Position:

1. Church may take one of the sheep and make it a shepherd; p. 6.
2. Pastor comes from among the church members;
3. Ordination is from the fellow-sheep; p. 6.

B. Bakewell's Position:

1. Should chose a Christian, not a Jew or a Turk; p. 6.
2. Take out of the Church of England;
3. Take from the Schools of the Prophets; the Universities;
4. No trades-man;
5. Man without human learning-not to meddle in God's things; p. 6.
6. No foundation to elect a sheep of the church and ordain him; p. 6.

Thomas Bakewell, **An Answer or Confutation of Divers Errors Broached and Maintained by the Seven Churches of Anabaptists Contained in those Articles of their Confession of Faith;** London: 1646.

In Conclusion to John Spilsbury's writings we note:

1. He held to all the essentials of the other Baptists, this we can see when we read all his remarks on a given subject from his own writings.
2. Except in the case of John the Baptist, he believed that an administrator and a church was to be made up of the baptized.
3. He placed all ordinances in the hands of the church as well as the power to chose out and ordain officers or administrators.
4. He placed baptism first in the list or order for the church to observe and then the remaining ordinances after baptism, including the Supper.
5. He did not deny church succession, but affirmed it as taught especially in the **Book of Revelation**. This church, known as the Temple of God in **Revelation**, showed that

even under Antichrist, the Temple or Church had a succession, and also had angels or ministers going into and coming out from it.

6. He did not believe in the baptism of those under antichrist, or that they were gospel ministers, but rather, of the Whore of Babylon. Both the Romanists or Protestants, all who practiced infant baptism were of Babylon. And, as such, were false churches with false ministers and false ordinances. They should all be considered as reprobates.

7. By reading and noting his reasons for rejecting Antichrist's baptism, you can see his essentials for Christ's baptism:

- a. A true power or authority;
- b. A proper subject;
- c. A true minister;
- d. A true body, or Church,

A Treatise Of Baptism; p. 54.

Before any false conclusions are drawn, in the **Bakewell-Spilsbury Debate**, page 7, John Spilsbury affirmed **dipping** for baptism. Thomas Bakewell, Presybterian, denied it was necessary. I feel it is necessary to show this before any modern writer can claim that as late as 1652, John Spilsbury and his church didn't hold to dipping because the mode of baptism was not listed as an objection against Praisegod Barebones. Some have suggested that John Spilsbury and his church at Wapping were not dipped until the early 1650s! If the conclusions of Gould of England, of Fox of Wm. Jewell College, and William Whitsitt, of the Southern Baptist Seminary, Lousiville, Ky., all of the last century, are true, then John Spilsobry was indeed a liar. His sound Biblical and Baptistic statements contradict all the speculation by the open communion, open membership, and anti-succession "wish historians."

In addition, consider these final statements from this old Baptist minister:

And lastly, I dare not go from that **RULE AND ORDER WHICH CHRIST LEFT IN HIS LAST TESTAMENT, FOR THE CONSTITUTING OF HIS CHURCH, AND TAKING MEMBERS INTO THE SAME, WHICH IS BY FAITH AND BAPTISM.** All which grounds being well considered, I cannot see by any rule of truth *to approve of the baptism administered in a false Antichristian church to be God's ordinance, instituted by Christ in his New Testament. That being there administered under a false power, by a false Ministry upon a wrong subject, in a false body, and yet the same God's ordinance, this is more than I can find by the Word of God from which rule I dare not go.*

In addition, *if* he and the Wapping Church were not under baptism until the 1650s, then what business did he have of writing 3 or 4 Confessions of Faith in which the articles dealing with the church all call for it to be made up of the baptized?

Here is the statement, mainly written by John Spilsbury which defines the concept of the church as he stated in it 1644:

That Christ has here on earth a spiritual Kingdom, which is the Church, which he has purchased and redeemed to himself, a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints, called & 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 other, by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King.

I Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Rom. 1:7; Acts 16:18; I Thess 1:9; 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:18; Acts 2:37 with Acts 10:17; Rom. 10:10; Acts 20:28; Mark 16:19, 20; Acts 2:41; I Pet. 2:5.

The Confession of Faith of Those Churches which are Commonly, though Falsely, called Anabaptists, London; 1644, article 33.

In 1652, he again stated his belief:

That Christ has here on earth a spiritual Kingdom, which is the Church, which he has purchased and redeemed to himself, a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints, called & 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 other, by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King.

I Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Rom. 1:7; Acts 16:18; I Thess 1:9; 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:18; Acts 2:37 with Acts 10:17; Rom.10:10; Acts 20:28; Mark 16:19, 20; Acts 2:41; I Pet. 2:5.

The Confession of Faith of Those Churches which are Commonly, though Falsely, called Anabaptists, London; 1652, article 33..

II.

Samuel Richardson

Samuel Richardson was an even more prolific writer than John Spilsbury or William Kiffen, and most earlier Particular Baptist writers. His works were theological and devotional leaving the ecclesiological subjects to others. He was the leading theologian among the Particular Baptists of that era. He justified Dr. Crisp's works, and was known as an Antinomian. William Kiffen justified Richardson's works. Along with Henry Laurance, Richardson was one of the leading statesmen and defenders of Cromwell among the early Particular Baptists.

After Featley published his **Dippers Dip.**, Samuel Richardson answered it with his work; **Some Brief Considerations on Doctor Featley His Book, entitled, The Dipper Dip**; London: Feb. 25, 1645. It became the representative work against Featley. And was so advertised in the edition of the **Confession** issued in 1646. In this work, which is mainly theological, Richardson shows WHY THE BAPTISTS DIDN'T HOLD TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY with other points. This caused him and them to be branded as antitrinitarians by the Presbyterian writer, Robert Bailie, who also called them all Arminians. The Presbyterians later apologized in public for Bailie and his false accusations.

1. **The Saint's Desire.** In this great work, Richardson deals with those from whom the Baptists dissent. First, he deals with the Arminians or Free-willers, the General Baptists, and then the reasons for dissent from all who practice infant baptism. Later he deals with dissent from the Seekers. We shall take up some of his comments on dissent from the Pedobaptists and then from the Seekers.

1. What if neither of my parents, nor their parents can be proved believers?

2. Nor any members of a true visible Church?

3. If I were baptized with god-fathers & god-mothers, Common-prayer-book, Cross, and Surplice, and by a Minister made by the Bishops, all which are now found out to be Antichristian, and the manner of Baptism was also by springing water upon my face; concerning which the Scriptures is silent: how may I be assured God will own such a baptizing for his Ordinance, seeing also themselves confess, that no man may lawfully baptize but a true Minister that has a lawful calling? And although we conceive men able to preach the Gospel may baptize, yet we do not believe God sends such to baptize, whom he has not informed of the manner how to do it, which is not by sprinkling water on the face, but by dipping in the River, as, Mat. 3.16. Acts 8.38. . . .

That the gifts of miracles is not essential in him that dispenses Baptism.

That some of those that did baptize, did miracles we grant, and that all that baptized did so, cannot be proved; John baptized, yet he did no miracle, Joh. 10.41. nor Apollo, %c. And seeing that the Scriptures do not declare that the gifts of tongues, or miracles, or laying on hands is to be in those that dispenses Baptism, we have no word to warrant such a restriction; men are to administer baptism by virtue of gifts.

1. Then, that gift and ministry which God in his word owns, is to be acknowledged sufficient for his ordinance; but some one or more of those gifts in I Cor. 12. 8,9,10,11.28,29 &c. still continue, as they confess; erga.

2. All the gifts of the Spirit are of the same nature, viz. spiritual, though divers in operation, and are of equal authority, and so to be esteemed by us, I Cor. 12.7, 8, 9, 24.

3. As in the natural body, we honor and put comeliness upon those parts which we think least honored, for our comely parts have no need; so ought we to doe the same in spiritual gifts, as, I Cor. 12.23,24. Do they so who tie the administration to one of the gifts of the Spirit, and not to another; and do not they who seek to honor one gift, to the dishonor of another, dishonor all the gifts of the Spirit? For as it is in the body, I Cor. 12.26. so it is in this case; and this was the Corinth's sin, as appears I Cor. 12.

4. We are all baptized by one Spirit, I Cor.12.13. He said not by the gift of miracles, &c., and he that is baptized by any gift of the Spirit, is baptized by the same Spirit, vers. 28, 29, 30.

5. If the administration of Baptism be not annexed to the operation of one gift of the Spirit, more than to another of the same Spirit, then we may not so annex them: but to the operation of any one gift of the Spirit, Baptism is not annexed: Ergo: for proof, see I Cor. 12:7 to 14.

6. If God works in all the operations of the Spirit, then to be baptized by any of the operations of the same Spirit, it must be acknowledged to be the Baptism of the same God: but the first is true also. I Cor. 12.6. Ergo, the latter is true also.

7. If the Apostles might baptize, because they were Apostles, then might they baptize in case they had not the gift of miracles and tongues, &c. For it is one thing to be an Apostle, and other to have the gift of tongues or miracles, as appears I Cor. 12.28, 29, 30. They were several gifts, & thought they might have the gift of miracles, it's not because they were Apostles; for they were given according to the good pleasure of his will; he divides to very man severally as he will, I Cor. 12.11.

8. If any affirm Baptism was to be administered by those who had such gifts of miracles, &c. because those gifts were greater in operation, and so the greater gifts: I answer, the gift of faith is greater then the gift of Miracles, for a man may perish with the latter. They confess, some of these gifts still continue, if the rest are not, then these are the

greatest now, and so Baptism may be dispensed by him that has any of them, and if they be ceased might not be, because they were Idolized above the rest of the same Spirit?

9. It is said, that Apollo conferred the gifts of the holy Spirit by laying on of hands, because he baptized not until he had learned the principles of Religion, and so understood the ministry of the Spirit. I answer, it follows not, Because it is one thing to understand the ministry of the Spirit, and another to work miracles, and confer the gifts of the holy Spirit, and speak with tongues, &c. As it is one thing to learn the doctrine of Baptism, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, as Heb. 6.2. and another thing to have the gifts, and to confer them by laying on of hands; it is one thing to learn and believe the resurrection of the dead, and another to raise the dead.

10. They affirm, that those that believe in truth, are of the body of which Christ is the head, and that they are of the Church, and that many now believe. **Whence I also infer, those who are of the Church of Christ, they have the power of Christ, because Christ is theirs, and Christ and his power are never separated, Mat. 28.20, Ergo, they have the power of Christ, as, I Cor. 3:21, 22. Therefore they have the authority to administer the Ordinance of Christ.**

They grant, many have right to Baptism by the free gift of God, and the blood of Christ.

Ans. Be it so. I cannot believe that God gives his a right to any thing that would do them no good; and if the enjoying the ordinance be good, how can we think that God so orders it, that they cannot come by it? Psal. 34. Christ purchased no privilege for his, which they may be as well without; it not God's power as great as his love? and as the Communion of Saints, Baptism, and the Supper, are the privileges of the Saints, given them in love, so God has appointed a way for them to enjoy them, and so to affirm, holds forth as much wisdom and love in God to them; as to say, God has given them a right to such privileges, but has not afforded them any way, or means for them to come by them, that they might enjoy them. But, this subject is handled at large in John Spilsberies' Book, entitled, **God's Ordinance**. It is foretold that Antichrist shall come with signs and wonders, as Mat. 24.23,24. and 2 Thes. 2.9, 10. We are not to look for Christ to come in this way, yet it may be said of some, Except you see signs and wonders (to sense) you will not believe, Joh. 4.48.

Samuel Richardson, **The Saints Desire; Or A Cordial for a fainting Soul. Declaring that in Christ's righteousness only, (and in nothing else) there is life, happiness, peace, strength, comfort, joy, and all fullness of perfection;** London: 1647, pps. 324-330.

(2) Samuel Richardson, in his grand work, **Divine Consolations; or A fountain of Life and Comfort, The Third Part. Declaring that the Elect were justified from the punishment of sin by Christ, when he was upon the cross, and the objections against it are answered. And that Christ Alone is our Life, Happiness, Peace, Strength, Comfort, Joy and all Perfection:** London, 1649; shows us his views about the unity of the church in the faith of Jesus Christ and his reasons for denying the Seekers' position this way:

And concerning the doubt which doth arise in many concerning Communion, whether we may have Communion in the Ordinance of the Supper with such as hold contrary to this truth (justification by Christ alone rather than by justification by faith in Christ- R. E. P. least any misunderstand let me add, he taught that Christ justified us and this produced faith in us, the faith of Christ, which evidenced, among other things, our justification by Christ alone..faith was not a condition for our justification.) so much contended for, I answer,

to the question, whether we may walk in communion with those that deny this doctrine. Can two walk together unless they be agreed, Amos 3.3

The Saints cannot walk together warrantably, and so not comfortably, without these two things.

1. An oneness of faith in the principles or doctrine of Christ, known, owned, and declared.
2. Love to the truth, and to each other, so as to desire to walk together.

For my part, I would not join to that Church, who denied any foundation-truth, and this is one; but being joined, if the Church do not deny it, I am not to deny communion with those that deny it, until sufficient means has been used to inform them: it appears to me, there is a necessity to put in any of these causes following; as,

1. If the state of beauty is broke, Zach. 11.10. Faith and Order, Col. 3.5.
2. Or the staff of bands is broke, Zech.11:14, Love is broke, so as each desires to part.
3. Or the brotherhood so broke, that the Church, the Candlestick is removed one part from another, that we cannot perform our duty one to another, Rev. 2:5. with 1.10.
4. Or many depart from the faith.
5. Or the worst overpower the best, that offenders cannot be cast out.
6. Or cannot agree about the doctrine and discipline in the Scriptures for the Church, when our staying cannot reclaim the rest, then can we not with honor to the truth, nor with comfort and peace of conscience, walk together. Such as love the Lord, who are of one mind and heart, in the principles of truth, are to cleave to the truth, and each to other, as Jer. 50.5. Only let each should consider well that his grounds be full and clear; let not any thing be done in strife, nor passion, but in love to the truth and then The Lord help and direct us all to know His will, and to do it.

Concerning the Ordinances of Christ, many shall slight them, and depart from the faith and the practice of them, and pretend want of Apostles, and of men to work miracles that all that did baptize, did work miracles, cannot be proved, but the contrary appears. John did baptize, yet he did no miracle, (Nor Apollo, Acts 19) Joh. 10. 41. He that is least in the kingdom of God is greater then he; therefore a preaching disciple may baptize, as well as he. The Scripture doth not declare, that he that baptizes must work miracles, %c therefore it may not be restrained to such; consider I Cor. 12.7 to 14. (By gift here he means a true minister who has one of these gifts, R. E. P.) The gifts of the Spirit are in nature one, though diverse in operation: therefore of equal authority, and so to be esteemed by us, I Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9. 24.

He that is baptized by any of the gifts of the Spirit, is baptized by the same Spirit; we are baptized by one Spirit; I Cor. 12:13. He said not by the gifts of miracles; see verse 28, 29, 30. (A gift is a minister given to the church by Christ, R. E. P.)

If God works in all the operations of the Spirit, the baptism by one gift of it is to be acknowledged the baptism of the same God: the first is true, I Cor. 12.6, therefore the latter is true also.

To tie Baptism to some of the gifts of the Spirit, and not to the rest, is to dishonor the Spirit, as I Cor. 12.23,24. This in effect was the Corinth's sin, I Cor. 12.26. The ceasing of

the gifts of tongues and miracles might be, because they might not be idolized above the other.

If the Apostles did baptize, because Apostles, then might they baptize, though they had not the gifts of miracles, &c. for it is one thing to be an Apostle, and another to work miracles, I Cor. 12. 28, 29, 30. Gifts are given to men severally as he will, I Cor. 12.11. The Disciples were not Apostles when they baptized, Joh. 3: 22,23, 24. & 4.2. At that time Christ had no Apostles, Mark. 1.14. After John was cast into prison, vers. 16. Simon and Andrew his brother were converted, and that Simon & Andrew were the first Apostles, appears, Mat. 10. 2. Luk. 13.14,15. Whence it will follow, that one that is not an Apostle nor a worker of miracles may baptize.

Obj. Apollo conferred the gifts of the Spirit, by laying on of hands, because its a principle in Religion, and he baptized not till he had learned the principles of Religion, Heb. 6. 2. Ans. It doth not follow, because it is one thing to understand the principles of Religion, and another to confer the gifts of the Spirit, by laying on of hands: as its one thing to understand, to believe the Resurrection of the dead, &ct. and another thing to raise the dead. Which holds forth most of God's wisdom &t. love: to say the Ordinances of Christ are not necessary, or to say they are useful, and God has appointed a way and means for such as believe to come by them, and enjoy them. Therefore, as in Moses time the children of Israel had miracles, yet obedience was required of the after ages, who saw no miracles: So in the Apostles days there were miracles, yet obedience is required of those who now believe although we see not such miracles. Its foretold that Antichrist shall come with signs and wonders, as Mat. 24. 23, 24. & 2 Thes. 2.9, 10. Christ is not to come in this way, yet many, except they see signs & wonders, they will not believe, Joh. 4. 48.

Preaching and baptism are to continue to the end of the world, as appears, Mat. 28. 19, 20. And breaking of bread until he come, I Cor. 11.26. And gifts to teach until he come, Luk. 19.13. I Cor. 14.3. So all things delivered unto the Saints are to be held fast till he come, Rev. 2.25, 16..

Pages 132-136.

In conclusion to Samuel Richardson's writings, we see again all the essentials of the Baptist faith and order. His recommendation of John Spilsbury's great work shows his union on the other points covered by Spilsbury. In addition, we will observe the following notes:

1. Richardson, also, considered the Pedobaptist ministers and churches as Antichristian;
2. Richardson, also, held that the power and presence of Christ was in His church, therefore His church had the authority or power to administer the ordinance of baptism.
3. Richardson, also, held to the true order of the gospel with the other brethren, that is:
 - a. Communion or fellowship;
 - b. baptism;
 - c. the Lord's Supper.

This meant, in the church at Wapping, they were received, then baptized and then admitted to the Lord's Supper.

III.

Henry Lawrance

Though he never signed any of the Confessions, yet President Henry Lawrance, issued three very important works, **Of Baptism; A Vindication of the Scriptures and the Ordinances;** and **Of our Communion and War with Angels.** **Of Baptism** was first printed in 1646 in Amsterdam. We will quote from the last edition, published in 1659:

We have found out the subject of Baptism to be a believer only, (that is) one professing faith in Christ, and subject to his ordinances; upon which consideration we have found cause to reject the Baptism of Infants as a vanity of men's invention, and our own received then, as void and null; we have also found in the order of Sacraments Baptism to be the first; the next thing we are to speak of is the Minister of this Sacrament, that we may know whence, and how to receive it. And here to omit many things which might be considered under this head more generally, and also not to trouble ourselves with the handling of this controversy, as it is stated between us and the Papists, who putting a more simple and absolute necessity upon this ordinance than is its due, expose it in case of such necessity, to the administration of all sorts of people, of what condition of sex soever they be, we shall on lie take those two things for granted, or least deny them not; first, That the error of the Minister does not enter the assent of Baptism, nor is of those things that can destroy it, and make it null: And secondly, that by the opinion of antiquity, and learned men, there were certain necessitous and extraordinary cases, wherein others might be used for Baptism, then such as were the ordinary Ministers of it.

But now because it is one thing to be, and another to be rightly, or well, in relation to ourselves, and the ordinary and orderly administration of Baptism, we shall consider whether Baptism be a thing of public or private cognizance, and to what predicament it belongs, and whether pretends, which will be the bounds of this discourse, and show us whence it is to be found and derived.

That it is a thing of public cognizance, appears to me both by the primitive commission, and primitive practice, the commission lies, Mats. 28. 19. Go you therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost.

In the 18 verse, Christ tells his Disciples, that all power is given to him in heaven and earth, these were his letters patents, by which he showed he did nothing without power and good warrant; now he goes into heaven as into one part of his Kingdom, which was quite and at peace, sitting there at the right hand of his Father, gives an Apostolic commission for all the earth, so Mark 16.15. Go into the whole world, preach the Gospel to every creature; here he opposes the whole earth to the bounds and limits of Judea (by which the Prophets of old were bounded in their administrations) That, he had by an hereditary right, he sent therefore to them, first with this caveat, that they should not go into the way of the Gentiles, nor enter into any City of the Samaritans, Mat. 10.5. But now by his death and resurrection, having acquired a right of reigning over all men, he gives a commission for all the world, this is Apostolic, for he bids them go forth into all the world, which is properly the world of Apostolic commission, whose Dioceses had no bounds, and if not here, where can any Apostolic commission be found And he tells then their great works, which was to preach and baptize, for although Paul says, I Cor. 1.17. That he was sent by Christ not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, that must be understood with a limitation, that he was not sent especially to baptize, because the administration of the Sacraments, which are the

appendixes and seals, though it need as much power, yet a less gift then the preaching of the word.

And behold I am with you to the end of the world. Here is a word of great encouragement and comfort, Christ had told them before, he was Lord of Heaven and Earth; he sends them to manage a great work, but says he, I will be with you, that is, whoever is publicly deputed for such a service, as they need more especial assistance, so they shall have it; and here he makes a plain difference between the makers of Disciples, and Disciples to be made: He will be with them, especially as they need it most, to whom the charge of teaching and baptizing is deputed. For the Apostles were not to continue always, as the world was to be gone through but once, and institutions to be set up but once; but a public power was still left, which succeeded this Apolitical, which in the next place we come to consider of, that so finding where the Commission rests, we may address ourselves thither for Ordinances, and expect the blessings of Christ's being wit it unto the end of the world; for this is a state continuing to the end of the world, to the change of all things.

Now this clearly is the Church, which is the subject of Ecclesiastical policy and power, as the Common-wealth is of civil power, so as Ecclesiastical and Church Power, is essentially and primarily in the Church as in the subject, Mat. 16. 18, 19. And I say unto you that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it: And I will give unto you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, &c. So as though the use of the keys be divers, according to the variety of calling and conditions in the Church, yet the power of the keys originally and primarily is given to the Church; for Peter here bears but the person of the Church, as in other places, in which he answers for others; and Christ also speaks to him, as addressing himself to the Church by him. This is a thing so commonly avowed and defended by Protestants against Papists, as I shall not need here to prove it. Also that other known place of Mat. 18.17. Tell the Church, where both Church-state and Church-power of admitting, receiving, and casting out is, there is the power of administering and communicating all Ordinances to the edification of the same body; and they which have power of administering the Kingdomly Office of Christ, consisting in casting out and receiving in, have also power of administering his prophetic Office, of which the Sacraments are a part, and therefore to the Christian Churches, as to the Jews of old, pertains the public dispensations and services of God, Rom. 9.4.

And hence it follows, that such as were deputed by the Church for their Ministers and Officers, were called Overseers, made by the holy Ghost, and were to be imitators of the Apostles, to whom ordinarily in the executive part they succeeded, Acts 20. 17, 18, 19, 28.

Hence, Peter calls himself a fellow Elder, with the ordinary Elders, I Pet. 5.1 The Elders which are among you I exhort, who also am an Elder, &c.

To conclude this head, a man becomes a Prophet, and able to teach, by virtue of a gift, namely of knowledge and utterance, I Cor. I. 5. But no gifts renders a Baptizer but a call, as being a thing of public cognifance and commission. Teaching out of a gift has its foundation in nature, which arises from a personal gift and grace of the Spirit: but Baptism, censures, ordination, and the like depend not upon a special gift, but are acts of power, conferred authoritatively upon a special person. And thus much for the primitive Commission for Baptism, which falls under a public cognizance, upon persons qualified by public authority, for the administration of it.

Next we consider in this discourse primitive practice and example; for according to this power and commission, you will find it run in the example.

The first Baptizer, who introduced that Ordinance, and from thence drew his name, John the Baptist, to be sure had commission for that, and all other parts of his Ministry, according to the Prophecies when on him in Isaiah and Malachi, He came in spirit and power of Elias, was the great restorer of Israel, this no man will deny. Then Christ is John 4. is said to baptize (but by his Disciples) who received commission for that administration from his person and presence, himself either intending to the greater workers of miracles, or teaching, or else might abstain purposely that those baptized by him, might not vaunt of a greater privilege than others. In the like manner it is probable Peter the Apostle communicated of his authority to those who were with him, for the baptizing of Cornelius and his family; for it is said, Acts 10. 48. He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord; unless it were either that of those brethren that were inferior Officers, or that by commanding is meant the warrant he gave to Cornelius and his company for Baptism, of which notwithstanding he himself might be the Minister.

Of the Apostles Commission you have heard already, you may find it in the execution in divers passages.

For others who baptized (saving those who drew their Commission from Church power, of whom we shall speak afterward) we read of Philip and Ananias; the one, to wit Philip, was an Evangelist, and order as it is taken of a public authority and commission, as the Apostles were: Besides he had an especial authority and provocation from the spirit at that time, for the Ministry he had to perform about the Eunuch, by which spirit also he was miraculously taken away after the word done, as you may read, Acts 8. And for Ananias, of whom we read in Acts. 9. that he baptized Paul, he was also deputed in an extraordinary manner to that ministry by the Lord, who spoke to him in a vision. And such extraordinary and peculiar manner of workings, where the ministry of conversion lay in a miracle, and the Ministers were men acted to it, as appears by divine revelation, must not be drawn into ordinary examples; and here we find also particular commission; but thus far in the example it makes clear for what we say, that the administration of Baptism is a thing of public cognizance and commission.

That it has been since the Apostolic times so, is as clear out of all story, of which the notion of the Catechumenists will give an assured witness. Christians in the Church were anciently distinguished by three degrees, Chatechumen, Fideles, and Paenitentes; the Catechumemni, or such as were principled in the Christian Religion, the faithful, and the penitents; the faithful were such as being past the form of Carechists, were admitted to all Ordinances; and the penitents were such as had fallen into some scandal and were under censure.

The Catechumeni were such (as Origen cont. Celsw. lib.3. says) who were newly admitted into some degree of Communion, but not yet baptized; of these mention is made in the most ancient writers, Ireneus, Clemens Slexand. Tertullian. Of these Clemens said, Sine Catechismo nulli datur credore, without catechizing nobody can believe.

Of this number some (as I have formerly had occasion to speak) were called Audientes, some Competentes. The Audientes were such as submitted themselves to teaching by the hearing of the Word, and being instructed in the principles of Religion, which by their submission and pretense to farther Ordinances, got the name of Catechists; for otherwise neither Jew nor Gentile, nor any were excluded from hearing the Word, Conc. 4. Carth. Can. 84.

The Competentes, or Competitors, were such as being well instructed in the Christian Religion, desired Baptism, and gave up their names; of these Austin says, Post Sermonem

fit missa Catechimenis, manebant fideles. Ser. de Temp. 137. After the Sermon the Catechumeni were dismissed, the faithful remained, to partake of the Supper and other Ordinances, which pertained to full membership.

Out of all this, besides the purpose for which I especially bring it, two things may be observed by the way.

First, That of old, men were not lightly admitted to the communion and fellowship of the Church, but after due instruction and examination.

Secondly, That it was usual of old to stand as competitor for Baptism. as a Candidate, as we call them, to seek and desire it before they had it.

But the end for which I especially bring this here, is to show that in all times of the Church, Baptism has been a thing of public cognisance, and the commission for the administration of it has rested, since the times of the Apostles, no where else sought, nor never by any otherwise pretended to it I know, saving of late years, by those upon whom the name of Anabaptists was primitively and properly fixed, (**referring to those of the John Smith fellowship-R. E. P.**) who erring greatly in many other things of as great consequence, might easily be mistaken in this.

These two things in a word I suppose out of this discourse is evidenced, which will directly point out the Minister of Baptism.

First, That Baptism is a thing of public cognisance and commission.

Secondly, That as of old since the Apostles times, so now, and always till Christ come, the Church is the dispenser of such commissions and administrations.

That which remains now therefore, is to find out what a Church is, wherein I hope we are now to seek.

A Church in a word may be said to be an assembly of Saints, knit together to a fellowship with Christ their head.

I intend not here a discourse of this subject, it is enough to my purpose that this be considered and allowed, that believing and saintship gives a qualification for Church fellowship, and Church fellowship for acts of power, and that Baptism doth no more enter the definition of a Church, as if a Church state could not be without Baptism, then the Communion of the Lords Supper doth, or Officers, Pastors, Elders, and Deacons. All these are but certain acts, by which they make good their fellowship with Christ, and one another, and are Church Ordinances and Church dues, things they have power for, and may justly pretend to. Though it will ordinarily be, that a Church will consist of Baptized persons, for what should hinder them who have assembled for the enjoying of Ordinances, and who have power for all Ordinances, from administering to themselves in a way of order that Ordinance, which is as it were the gate of the rest, and as we may call it (for ought I know, according to the old name) the Ordinance of initiation, since it is the first of Church Ordinances, the Church Covenant and assembling being more properly called the state for enjoying of Ordinances, and the subject of all Ordinances; **SO AS ORDINARILY A CHURCH WILL BE AN ASSEMBLY OF BAPTIZED SAINTS, THOUGH THE WORD BAPTISM BE NO PART OF THE DEFINITION, NOR DOTH BAPTISM CONTRIBUTE MORE TO THE BEING OF A CHURCH THAN OTHER ORDINANCES, WHICH FOR A TIME THEY MAY**

WANT, SO AS YOU SEE CLEARLY WHERE TO FETCH BAPTISM, NAMELY WHERE A COMPANY OF SAINTS ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN CHRIST'S NAME, THAT IS, IN HIS POWER AND THERE IS AUTHORITY AMONG THEM FOR ALL COMMISSIONS, FOR ACTS OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, FOR THE DEPUTIZING AND ORDAINING OF OFFICERS, AND FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ALL ORDINANCES.

But here it may be perhaps objected, to which I will speak a word, that Baptism not being the Ordinance of admission into the Church, not perhaps necessarily to follow after, but may be before it, how appertains it to the Church?

Answ. The rule will hold universally true, that all instituted Ordinances (of which Baptism is one) will fall under the cognizance and power of an instituted body; whether therefore Baptism be administered after admittance, which in an ordinary way seems better, or whether it may precede it, be all one in the issue, since it is in order to Church fellowship, and a full Church communion: now what ever is in order to it, as well as that follows it, falls under Church cognizance and power, and therefore catechizing, taking account of faith, yea, and preaching the word by way of power, in order to the conversion of others, especially if they offer and submit themselves, falls under Church power; now no man is baptized with a privilege to go about the world at large, but to live in all the Ordinances of Christ, and to receive nourishment as well as birth, and the seals of both from the Church: And therefore as before, I like well for Baptism the title of the Ordinance of initiation, as which in the order of Ordinances is the first, and pretends to further.

Lastly, This rightly stated and considered, it cannot reasonably be objected, that he that baptizes should necessarily be himself a baptized person; for though ordinarily it will be so, yet it is not necessary to the Ordinance, no more than it is simply necessary to a Church state, that the members be baptized; **for not the personal baptism of him that administers, but the due commission he has for baptizing, is alone considerable to make him a true Minister of Baptism:**

And here that expression holds not, one cannot give what he has not, as a man cannot teach me that wants knowledge himself, because no man gives his own Baptism, but conveys it as a public person, that which is given us by Christ. A poor man that has nothing of his own may give me gold, that is the many of another man, by virtue of being sent for that purpose; of if any man can show his commission, the writing and seal of him that sent him, it is enough here, else what would become the great Baptizer, John the Baptist, who had a fair commission to baptize, but was not himself baptized that we read of, or if he should be, which cannot be affirmed, yet the first baptizer, who ever he was, must at the time of his first administration of that ordinance be unbaptized.

To conclude in this discourse of the Minister of Baptism, we have showed especially these particulars.

1. That the due administration of Baptism, has been always and is an act of power and commission,

2. That the Churches of Christ are now the only subject of this power, and are betruſted with diſpenſing all commissions for the administrations of ordinances, of which Baptism is one, whether it be administered after admission into Church fellowship (which perhaps will be the usual way) or before (but as other things) in order to it.

3. That Baptism doth not enter the definition of a Church, as Saintship professed and manifested doth, nor is it simply necessary to the Minister of Baptism, that he be himself baptized, since his qualification for that work arises from his commission, not from His Baptism.

F I N I S H.

Of Baptism, London; 1659: pps. 174-187.

NOTE: In the Church at Wapping and the other churches and ministers gathered under the ministry of Spilsbury, which we call The First Generation of Particular Baptists, a difference of procedure existed from some of the other Particular Baptist Churches, which came into being from the Richard Blount mission, and still later from those following in the ways of the Keaches. John Spilsbury and the Church at Wapping placed a strong view on **SAINTSHIP**. They held that the elect would be brought out of Babylon by the power of the Holy Spirit using a true ministry of the gospel. Those who didn't leave Babylon were not of the true faith and order of saints, but rather reprobates. The power to cause a church to be a church was in a group of saints in Christ. His Word and Spirit was in them personally. As saints of God, living children of God, not natural seed of believers, they then would proceed:

1. To form themselves into a church, then take up baptism and the other ordinances;
2. They would then receive others into membership and baptize them and admit them unto the Supper and other ordinances. Holding Baptism to be an ordinance for and of the church, as well as the Supper and all other ordinances.
3. The manner by which they took up their baptism has been discussed under the section dealing with the Kiffen Manuscript, that is, their first succession of baptism came from the old Waldenses.
4. They **did not hold** that baptism made a church a church, but rather, saints who were walking in the order of Jesus Christ madd a church a church. Baptism was only a part of a church's being.
5. They **did hold** that when the saints of God came together to form themselves into a church, they entered into **COVENANT WITH THE LORD AND ONE ANOTHER**. This church covenant, which reflected their views of the eternal covenant, is the form of their church. The matter was saints, their first act as a church was to take up baptism and then call into office one out from among themselves and place him into office, and then receive the Supper and walk in all the other ordinances.
6. They **did not hold** that they were a regular or orderly gospel church in proper order until baptism. They simply entered into covenant as a church first as a **means** to take up or receive baptism in an orderly way. This is what they understood the first step to be in the order of becoming a true, orderly gospel church.

To them, a church origin was this way:

- a. Saints, in union with Christ and His word, enter into **COVENANT WITH THE LORD AND ONE ANOTHER**; to walk together in the fear of the Lord in all His holy ordinances;
- b. Saints, as saints in covenant, make a public profession of their faith and sonship in and by baptism, then, they take up the other acts of a gospel church in proper order;
- c. They called out from themselves, men into public office and commissioned them to administer all ordinances, and preach the gospel.
- d. They did not carry on as unbaptized, nor did they practice open communion or open church membership.

e. They did not take up baptism from the unbaptized in the ordinary and orderly manner, but simply affirmed that baptism did not make an administrator into an administrator. They included John the Baptist as a true gospel preacher and gospel administrator.

John Spilsbury said:

Secondly, the ordinance of baptism instituted by Christ is so essential to the constitution of the Church under the New Testament that none can be true in her constitution without it.

Page 52.

And, lastly, I dare not go from that rule and order which Christ left in His last Testament, for the constituting of His Church, and taking of members into the same, which is by faith and baptism. Page 53.

John Spilsbury, **A Treatise Concerning the Lawful Subjects of Baptism**; London: 1652.

Also, from Spilsbury's **God's Ordinances**, note the following:

1. The household of God is that composed order, and instituted state of Christ's Church of the New Testament;
2. With the subjects in that order and state according to the same testament;
3. The rule and order of Christ written in the N. T. is forever to be learned and obeyed;
4. There is no N. T. faith in Christ without a professed Subjection to Him;
5. Both which together do give unto man both a being, and a name in Christ's Testament;
6. Take away from man either faith or the profession of that faith and there is no place found for that man in Christ's testament;
7. **None are owned either of God or man, to be members of Christ, that are of no way under the profession of Christ;**
8. **And there is now no profession of Christ according to the rule of his word without baptism.**

Pages 22, 23.

The above are not direct quotes, but rather, points taken from those pages.

In summation to Lawrence's writings, we note:

- a. Baptism is to be recognized as a public act only properly and orderly done by one who has a public commission;
- b. Since the days of the Apostles, who delivered the ordinances to the churches, the churches alone have the power to call and commission the officers or the administrators of baptism;

This work by Lawrence is one of the most profound works of that era or any era, dealing with the spiritual side of baptism. He, along with others of Spilsbury's church, placed the being of the church in saintship professed and manifested. They placed the power

of the administrator in his commission, thus including John the Baptist. Lawrence felt that Paul did not rebaptize those in Acts 19. If Paul had done so this would downgrade John's baptism. The majority of brethren felt that Paul did rebaptize those in Acts 19. This did not downgrade John's baptism, as they were not baptized by John, but rather Apollos first.

From 1660 to as late as 1689, when the General Confessions from all of England and Wales were issued, the dissenters underwent horrible persecutions and were unable to sign the 1677 Confession, which was a new Confession (no one signed it due to persecution). Many died before the 1689 Confession was issued. However, the church at Wapping continued with two other sufferers and leaders, John Norcott, and Hercules Collins.

IV.

John Norcott

John Norcott followed John Spilsbury as Pastor of the church at Wapping. Christian alludes to his being involved earlier with John Smith and others who broke with the Church of England. He fled to Holland again to escape persecution in the 1660s-1680s era even as John Spilsbury had to flee to the Midlands in England during the same time period. John Norcott's work, **Baptism Discovered Plainly and Faithfully, According to the Word of God**, London, 1674, is a most blessed and spiritual work dealing with the devotional side of baptism. It is not a doctrinal nor an apologetical work, it simply brings you to Jesus Christ and points to Him and His baptism. Honey from the Rock, Jesus Christ, drips from every page of Norcott's work. An experienced saint who is being exercised about baptism will weep with joy and delight at Norcott's writing.

V.

Hercules Collins, Wapping, 1677 to 1702.

Collins was originally from the **Petty France Particular Baptist Church** founded by Thomas Kilcop. He was an often writer and produced many valuable works on doctrinal points. He spent much time in jail because of his stand for Jesus Christ. In 1691 Collins published his **Believers Baptism from Heaven and of Divine Institution**, which contains the following:

Object. 22

There are no fit Administrators; therefore, for the present, Sacraments and Church-Ordinations cease.

I Answer.

When Christ gave Commission to Preach, he gave Power in the same to Baptize, Mat. 28. How comes this to pass, that those very Persons which thus object, do Preach, which requires as great Ability and Sanctity to the due performance of the one as of the other.

I know some object that Commission (Mat. 28.) lasted no longer than to the end of that Age.

To which I Answer, Then Preaching ended too; Christ commands his Disciples to teach all Nations all things which he commanded them; Now Christ's Commands were, Holiness, Repentance, and Faith; was this to be no longer than to the end of that Age? was Christ's Promise of his Presence but to the end of that Age? This would be uncomfortable

Doctrine. The Promise is, I will be with you to the end of the World; the learned know it's the same original Word as in Matth. 13. 39,40. here it is said, The Harvest is the end of the World: As the Tares are gathered together, and burnt in the Fire, so shall it be in the end of the World. All conclude, (I think) or ought, that this has respect to the final end of all things; this being the same word in Mat. 28. We conclude, teaching the Gospel, baptizing them which are taught, and the gracious Presence of Christ, is to remain in his Church till the World's end, that is, till the final end of all things. Mover, Paul asserts, Ephes. 3:21. that Christ will have a Church, and glory in the Churches throughout all Ages, World without end. From whence I argue, if God have a Church in all Ages, he must have Ordinances here, because no Church of Christ can be constituted without them: If there be Ordinances in the Church in all Ages, there must be some to administer them, or else they would be insignificant. But that he has fit Administrators in the Church, and will have, Paul asserts, in Ephes 4. 12,13. He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, (For what end?) for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying the Body of Christ, (How long?) till we all come to the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the Fullness of Christ.

Let Men take heed how they put a slight upon the Ordinances of God in crying up the Spirit, with a secret Design to decry the Holy Scriptures; crying up the Power of Godliness in Word, to undermine the Form of Godliness; cry upon Faith, and Justification by Faith, to lessen Repentance and a holy Life, crying out against the Error of all Churches, and under that pretense, leave the true Church, and the Communion of Saints, until at last they have lost the Church in the Wilderness, the ready way to lose themselves too, if Grace prevent not, which I desire may.

Hercules Collins, **Believers Baptism From Heaven and of Divine Institution**; London: 1691, pps. 60-63.

Again:

Water-Baptism is to continue unto the End of the World, and the Sacrament of the Supper unto the second coming of Christ, I Cor. 11:26. Mat. 28:19,20.

If Christ will have Glory in the Churches thought out all Ages, World without end, then he must have a Church and Ordinances administered, which is the Essence of a Church-Constitution, and so cannot want Administrators, because Christ has given Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, edifying of the Body of Christ: How long? till we all come to the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the Stature of the Fullness of God, Ephes. 3:21; Chap. 4.11,12.

Then for any to neglect those Ordinances under an imagination those Commands ceased at the end of the Apostles Age, are under a delusion. If so, then the Church-State did not end with the Apostles, neither can Ordinances cease for want of Administrators.

Ibid., pps. 93, 94.

One of Collins last works was **The Temple Repaired** in 1702, showing the place of the church and the ministry and the responsibilities of the church to educate their young ministers and provide for the regular ministers. Here are some remarks:

4. Let the Churches be exhorted to go to the Lord of the Harvest to beseech him that he would send more Laborers into his Harvest; Mat. 8. 37, 38. What abundance of able Ministers has God removed out of this City those thirty years last past? And it is well if the Churches can say that their places are all filled up: Pray hard that God would send Joshua's and Elisha's in the room of those Moses's and Elijab's which he has removed.

5. Give that Honor and Respect to your Ministers and Pastors that God allows; God accounts it an honorable place. If Honor is to be given to a King, who is a Protector of the Body, shall they be denied it that watch for Men's Souls? It is the Apostle's Counsel to the Church at Thessalonica, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: And to esteem them very highly for their Works sake. Let the Elders (said Paul) that rule well, be counted worthy of double Honor, especially they who labor in the Word and Doctrine. So (said he) obey them who have the Rule over you, and submit your selves: not that they are Lords over God's Heritage, to be ruled in a Lordly way, and by Force and Rigor, seeing they are a voluntary People, and to be governed with their own Consent. Heb. 5:4, I Thess. 5:12,13; I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 3.17; 1 Pet. 5:3.

6. Bless God for those faithful Ministers he has given you; take heed you do not sin them away and the gospel together; provoke not God to send a Famine of the Word, and remove the Gospel from England and London, as he did from Jerusalem, and the Churches in Asia and Africa; even there where the Gospel did once gloriously shine, those very places are over spread with Heathenism and Mahometanism. Pray that the Word may have free course, and may run and be glorified in the Sinners Conversion, and Saints Perfection. God has promised to take away the Heart of Stone, and give a Heart of Flesh; but (said he) for these things I will be sought unto by the House of Israel, the Church of God. And if we find the Womb of Conversion much shut up, for the Church to set apart a day of Humiliation upon that account, and to pray that a Door of Faith may be open. Some speak by Experience that God has owned this Practice. Beg for greater degrees of his holy Spirit to be poured upon your Ministers, that God would give them a double Portion, that they may every way answer their honorable Titles, who are called the Salt of the Earth, and the Light of the World. Amos 8.11,12; Mat. 21.43; 2 Thess. 3:1,2; Ezek. 35.26,27; Acts 14.27; Mat. 5.13, 14, 15.

7. Be exhorted ever more to maintain, and not lose that blessed Ordinance of Ordination, and calling those to Office who are fit for it: Some have been Probationers all their days; and it is matter of Lamentation, that some Churches have employed Person in Preaching and Administering Ordinances then or twenty years, though fitly qualified, and yet never called them to Office. And though in my Epistle I have proved the lawfulness, yea and the necessity of preaching in ordinary before Ordination, yet I did never intend by that to destroy a Gospel-Ordinance, viz., a solemn Ordination to Office: Though it is most true that the Holy Ghost makes Men Overseers of the Church, and that Gifts and Graces are from Christ (which is his internal Call) yet he ought to have an external Call by the Church, to ordain him to Office: The inward Call does enable him to act regularly: Though a Gospel-Minister has Authority and Right, being qualified by Christ, to act, yet he has not a full formal Authority to act in a Church, but as by them called and ordained unto it. We ought to have a Zeal for all the Commandments of God, why should not we be as careful in this matter as the Apostles, who ordained Elders in every Church? And Paul exhorts Titus to ordain Elders in every City. We see by this it was the Apostles Judgment and great Care that every Church have an Elder: This is as much the Word of God, and to be practiced as there is occasion, as Baptism, and the Lord's-Supper; and therefore this looks severely upon all those Churches who live year after year without a Pastor, which is the great reason of the scattering of the Flock.

8. Ever retain and never part with that Rite and Ceremony in Ordination of Imposition of Hands, with Prayer, on the Person ordained. Some think that the Ceremony of laying on of Hands may be omitted. Sometimes we must be tied to Example in the least Gesture, though not prescribed and yet Men presume to dispense in a Circumstance expressly prescribed. Timothy was ordained by laying on of Hands, and enjoined by Paul to

lay Hands on others in their Ordination. This has been the ordinary way of the Ordination of Ministers in the Church of God. Thus were the seven Deacons in the Church at Jerusalem ordained. So of Paul and Barnabas it is said, When the Church had fasted and prayed and laid their Hands on them, they sent them away to preach, being called of God to that Work. . . . And show Imposition of Hands be not mentioned in the 14th Chapter of the Acts, where it is said they ordained them Elders in every City, yet we ought to conclude they were ordained by laying on of Hands, because we find in other places of Scripture it was the common Practice of the Apostles and Churches in Ordination of Ministers and Deacons. Pray mark, those Scriptures which speak more generally and indefinitely of any matter, are always to be governed by those that speak of the same thing more definitely, particularly, plainly and fully: as when Christ in Luke 6.20 said, Blessed be you Poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God; This indefinite word Poor is not to be understood of all Poor, because there are some Poor very wicked; therefore to be understood by a Text more ample, full and plain, as Mat. 5:3. Blessed are the poor in Spirit. So in Luke 6:21. Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be filled: this is to be governed and understood according to Mat. 5.6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness. So in like manner where Imposition of hands is not mentioned in Ordination, as Acts 14.23. it is to be governed by those Scriptures which speak of the same thing in a more ample, full and plain manner, Acts 6.6. Chapter 13.3. I Tim. 4.14. Chapter. 5.22. in all which places Imposition of Hands is mentioned in Ordination of Elders and Deacons.

Moreover, Persons were set apart to Ecclesiastical Service, and had Office-Power conferred upon them under the Old Testament by the Ceremony of Laying on of Hands: For 'this is expressly said by God to Moses, that he should lay his Hands on Joshua, Numb. 27.18. and that the Children of Israel should lay their Hands upon the Levities as they stood before the Tabernacle of the Congregation, Numb. 8.9. And to suppose that the Apostles did practice this Ceremony without God's Approbation, were to make them guilty of Will-worship. But whereas 'this is objected, that because extraordinary things do not follow that Practice, as in the Apostles time, therefore that Practice is ceased. I answer; by this way of arguing we shall lose most of the great Ordinances of the Gospel. What, because we cannot shake the Place in Prayer as Peter did, does Prayer cease? Because the Holy Ghost does not come down while we are preaching upon our Hearers in a miraculous manner, as it did upon Cornelius and his Household while Peter preached, is it therefor made void? Moreover, Baptism must cease too, because it is not miraculously confirmed as it was at Christ's Baptism, when the Holy Ghost came down upon him in the shape of a Dove, and a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. If it be said, those must remain because commanded, though such extraordinary things do not follow; then from the same Argument, Laying on of Hands must continue, unless you suppose the Apostles guilty of Will-worship, as we said before. This Rite and Ceremony of Imposition of Hands imports,

1. A Dedication, and devoting the Person to the Office of a Pastor and sacred Employment.
2. To let them know that the Hand of God is with them in all that they do in his Name, and by his Authority, to guide, strengthen and protect them.
3. And imploring the Gifts, Blessings, Protection, and Custody of the Holy Spirit upon them in a most plentiful manner, as being to take charge of the Souls of others.

Hercules Collins, **The Temple Repaired**; London: 1702. pps. 56-61.

Conclusion to the Wapping Church

The Church at Devonshire Square, 1639-1727.

This church was gathered by William Kiffen. Later Thomas Patient, Daniel Dike and Richard Adams assisted him. In 1727 it disbanded formally and joined with the Petty France Church gathered by Thomas Kilcop which later became known as the Stoke Newington Particular Baptist Church and it continues till this "present day" according to W. T. Whitley in his **Baptist Bibliography** issued in 1916, p. 234.

1) William Kiffin, 1639 till 1701, produced only a few works and did not deal directly with the administrator of baptism in opposition to the Seekers or Pedobaptists. However, his general remarks from these two works should show his views:

It is said, Acts 2. 41. They that gladly received his Word were Baptized. Here is the right Gospel Order, First, they that gladly received the Word; that is, they that believed, and no other, were immediately Baptized, (that is was immediately, appears by the Adverb then) which was the second Work, and the same day (viz., after they believed and were Baptized) there were added unto them, (that is, received into Church-Fellowship, by Faith and Baptism) about Three thousand Souls. ver. 42. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship (that is in the same Faith and Communion,) and in breaking of Bread and Prayers (that is in the enjoyment and Administration of Church Ordinances:) Is not here a famous Instance or President of their Practice, which answers those frequent and undercount Clamors of such, who call for Scripture to justify the Exclusion of our holy Brethren that have not been so Baptized. Whereas in the fore-going Pages, there is a Scripture cited, That justifies our withdrawing from disorderly walkers; and such as make this Out-cry own the practices of Infant Baptism in that particular to be such, and therefore our Separation for that Reason (pursuant to that Express Command) lawful; which they must Grant, or Deny Infant Baptism to be disorderly; or else must say, that there be some disorderly walkers, that we may and ought to have Communion with, notwithstanding that solemn Prohibition of it, 2 Thess. 3.6.

And whereas it is said, That Baptism was never Ordained of God to be a Wall of Division, between the holy, and the holy; the holy that are, and the holy that are not so Baptized with Water, as we, etc. It is answered,

1. The Phrase (Wall of Division) is ambiguous; It if be meant of a total Exclusion of other Christians from our Love, Charity, and Christian-Communion, as far as we agree; we do not look upon Baptism to be such a Wall of Division, neither do we so practice it.

2. If it be meant, of an Excluding from Immediate Church-fellowship, although we meet not with this Phrase, (viz., Wall of Division) in those very words, yet we find what is equivalent in 2 Thess. 3.6. and several other Texts: and it is remarkable, that the Word Translated DISORDERLY, is a metaphor borrowed from the Custom of War, wherein every Soldier has his station assigned him, from which, when he swerves, he becomes disorderly, which the Apostle Elegantly uses, to denote, that every Christian is a Soldier that's Listed under the Banner of Christ, and must keep his exact Station appointed him, without the least inclining to the right or left hand, backward or forward, without the Word of Command. . . . The Lord (who is a Jealous God with respect to his Worship, and positive Institutions) will call any, that presume to break the Order he has prescribed, to a severe account, as has been, and shall be further demonstrated.

3. This Assertion reaches any other Gospel-Ordinance as well as Baptism: For if it should be said, That the Supper was never Ordained of God to be a Wall of Division between the Holy and the Holy, that do not so receive it as we, it will as rationally follow with respect to this, as well as Baptism, that we should not exclude a person that doubts it, or positively asserts it to be needless, from our Communion, which may be likewise said of any Church-

Ordinance whatsoever; and consequently, the Rule of Communion must not be what we find written, but the Sanctity of the Part (whether pretended or real) that professes himself as a Member. For I would ask those that pretend tenderness, and for that cause admit Persons to the Lord's Supper that are Unbaptized, that if any person should desire to join to a Church, and yet declares, he wants Light to practice the Ordinance of the Supper, but in other things would be of their Communion, whether they would and it him upon those terms, he wanting Light in that Ordinance of Christ wherein the Communion of the Church does chiefly consist? If they would admit him, they open so wide a gap, that any Ordinance upon the like pretense may be dispensed with, and two or three, yea, all, as well as one, may be quite turned to an Anarchy. . . .

Did Christ himself Celebrate this Supper, as before? Why the same Lord Jesus before he entered upon his Public Ministry, was Baptized, Matt. 3.16,17 ... Here the whole Trinity appears, the Father by a Voice, the Son in his Body, and the Holy Ghost like a Dove: All Three make the Triumph, and Ratify the Affair; never was any Ordinance graced with such a presence, nor made Authentic by a more Illustrious example.

Does the Supper show forth the Lord's Death till he come? So Baptism is a lively symbol of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ, Rom. 6.4. Col. 2:12.

(Note this: William Kiffen, and the other Particular Baptists who were closed membership to the baptized, also believed in IN-CHURCH officers and as well as IN-CHURCH ordinances. That is, they believed the officers should be chosen out of the church membership. It follows then, that no person would be a qualified administrator, or officer, unless he was first a member of a church and then elected to the office. This is why they stressed "out from among yourselves." R. E. P.)

William Kiffen, **A Sober Discourse of Right of Church Communion**; London: 1681, pps. 17-24.

O it is a mighty Work to preach the Gospel, as we ought to Preach it; it is that by which Faith come, How shall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear, without a Preacher? And how shall they preach, except they are sent? Rom. 10. 14. i. e. Unless they have an extraordinary or ordinary Mission, i. e. either from God more immediately (Which call is long since ceased) or else, by the election of Church, and Ordination of the Elders, or Presbytery; this is necessary in all Regular Ministers: How else can they duly or profitably in the Name and Authority of Christ, preach the Word of Life? . . . How great is the charge of Christ's Ministers, that have many Souls committed to their Care and Trust? . . . They are not only Stewards of the Mysteries of God, I Cor. 4.1 But also Instructed with the charge and care of His Churches, and Holy Doctrine of the Gospel; Ministers are the Stewards of Christ's' House.

William Kiffen, et. el., **The Gospel Minister's Maintenance**; London: 1681, pps. 118-122.

. . . the Honor of Christ, the reputation of his Glorious Gospel in the World; as likewise, the Good and Well-being of the Church depends upon a regular and orderly Ministry, and the Continuation thereof: . . . Here our Lord Jesus Christ Himself did Institute and Lay the Foundation of the Gospel Ministry in His own Authority; and accordingly takes care for the continuance of it after His death and Resurrection, and actual Investiture in our Nature of all Power in Heaven and Earth, Matth. 28.18.19.20. . . . Also

after His Blessed and Glorious ascension, and sitting on the Throng of the Majesty in the Heavens. Heb. 8.1. Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made subject unto him. Pet. 3. & 22. Did by His Apostles give Commandment and Direction for the continuance hereof to the end of the World, and His Second Coming without Sin unto Salvation. Heb. 9.28. As Acts 14.21, 22,23. After they had by their Ministry been blest with the Conversion of many Souls, they took care to direct them into the Duty of Church Communion; and by their Suffrages, ordained them Elders in every Church. . . . When the Church has had a Trial of the meetness and Abilities of any Person, or Persons, for this work and service, they are by Election and Choice solemnly to set him, or then apart, by prayer. and laying of Hands. Acts 14.21, 22, 23. Acts 6. By which a new relation arise of an Elder, and a Church, a Pastor, and a Flock: This must be therefore by the mutual voluntary acts of each other, by which the Duties of each relation becomes binding upon them, according to the Laws of Christ. . . . As Christ has made this grant of power to the Church of choosing her own Officers for her Edification; so he has left Rules for her, who, and how to chose, as we said before.

Ibid., pps. 1-8.

How greatly then must those Churches be to blame, that unconcernedly live in the neglect of so great a Duty, upon which the Edification of the Church, and her Well- being so much depends, as well as Gospel Order: For although the essence and Being of a Church depends upon its Institution in respect both of Matter and Form: (A competent number of Believers may by mutual agreement lay the foundation of the being of a gospel church,) but they cannot be a Church Organic without Officers, WHICH THE LORD HAS PLACED THERE FOR THE ORDERLY EXERCISE OF HIS AUTHORITY COMMITTED TO HER; . .

Ibid., p. 9.

. . . in respect of all such that are called unto Office: The outward Call is an Act of the Church, the acceptance of the Person so called, is an obedient act of him to the will of God; but neither of these can be regular, where there is not a previous indication of the mind of God, in bestowing those spiritual gifts and qualifications, as may render him competently fit to the discharge of his office and work.

Ibid., pps. 10,11.

And hence 'this is that the same Apostle in another place exhorts Timothy and so all other Ministers (who the Church Calls forth to that great Work) to give himself up to Reading, to Exhortation; to Doctrine, and to the study of the Word.

Ibid., p. 26,

Dear Brethren, this is as far as I have gotten, there are about 10 more ministers and their works which I need to add and will in due time. Please let me know what you thing so far..rep..

