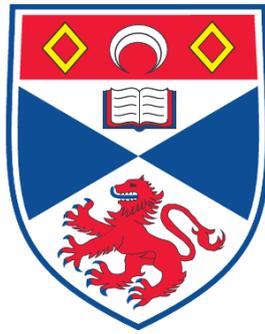


**PUBLIC WORSHIP AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN THE WORK
OF BENJAMIN KEACH (1640-1704)**

James Barry Vaughn

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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PUBLIC WORSHIP AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN THE WORK OF

BENJAMIN KEACH (1640-1704)

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of St. Mary's College

University of St. Andrews

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

James Barry Vaughn

May 1989



"Public Worship and Practical Theology in the Work of
Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)"

Abstract

The late seventeenth century was a critical and fruitful period for the Particular Baptists of England. Severely persecuted following the Restoration, toleration in 1689 brought its own perils. Particular Baptists were fortunate in having several strong leaders, especially the London trio of Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, and Benjamin Keach. Such a small and severely persecuted group as the Baptists could afford little time for academic pursuits, thus of necessity most of their theology was practical in nature.

Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) was the most outstanding practical theologian among the English Particular Baptists of the late seventeenth century. This dissertation is a study of Keach, in particular his writings on public worship and practical theology. Although Keach was a prolific author, he has been almost completely neglected by scholars.

After a biographical sketch of Keach, this study considers his writings on public worship and practical theology. In the area of worship, Keach made two outstanding contributions: First, he was the most vocal apologist for Baptist views on Baptism of his period. Secondly, and more importantly, his hymn writing and defense of hymn singing broke new ground, not just for Baptists, but for English Protestantism, in general. In addition to his contributions in these areas, he also dealt with the laying on of hands and the sabbath day worship controversy.

Keach's contributions to practical theology fall into two main groups: his writings that concern religious education and those that deal with polity. In addition to these, Keach's vigorous advocacy of a high Calvinist soteriology are also considered under the rubric of practical theology. Keach's most important (although not his most positive) contribution in this area were his soteriological writings. Although well within the bounds of orthodoxy, some of the tendencies in Keach's soteriology were taken up by the following generation of Baptist leaders and developed into a stultifying hyper-Calvinism that handicapped Baptist evangelism and missions.

In the conclusion, Keach's contributions to a theory of practical theology are considered.

I certify that James Barry Vaughn has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1, and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Signature of supervisor

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on 1st October, 1984 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 on 3 October 1985.


Signature of candidate

The following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St Andrews under the supervision of Prof. Whyte.


Signature of candidate

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For exceptional assistance as I was finishing my dissertation, I am grateful to the Revd Michael Keeling.

Although a scholar is at the mercy of libraries and their staffs, if my experience is reliable, the "quality of mercy" possessed by librarians is exceptionally high. I can report with enthusiasm that I met with unfailing helpfulness from all the libraries and librarians I consulted. The list is long: I want to thank the staff of the University Library of St. Andrews, the British Library, the Houghton Library of Harvard University, the American Antiquarian Society Library, the Huntington Library of Pasadena, California, and the library of Samford University (especially Diane McArthur and Elizabeth Wells) in Birmingham, Alabama. For help offered by the Public Records Office in London and the county records office in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, I am grateful. Finally, I must offer special thanks to the staffs of the Bodleian Library of Oxford University and to the Angus Library of Regent's Park College, Oxford. The Revd Dr. Paul Fiddes, librarian (now principal) of Regent's Park, and his assistant, Sue Mills, offered help far beyond that normally extended to scholars from outside Regent's Park.

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would like to single out Prof. George Lindbeck.

Kevin and Maria Price of Gainesville, Georgia, have been staunch friends throughout this process. I offer them thanks.

Spiritual, as well as financial, support made it possible for me to complete this dissertation. The two elements came together in a generous grant from the Board of Aid of the Alabama Baptist Convention. I am grateful to them. Aware that none of us stands alone, I must acknowledge the support, both financial and spiritual, offered during this process by my church, Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, and its pastor, the Revd C. Otis Brooks.

Finally, I offer this dissertation to the glory of God and dedicate it to my parents, Henry and Vera Vaughn.

Abbreviations.

<u>Baptist Quarterly.</u>	BQ.
Thomas Crosby, <u>The History of the English Baptists, from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I.</u> Four volumes (1738-1740).	Crosby.
<u>Dictionary of National Biography.</u>	DNB.
William L. Lumpkin, <u>Baptist Confessions of Faith.</u>	Lumpkin.
Maze Pond Church Book.	MPCB
<u>A Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers and Ministering Brethren of the Baptized Churches, met together in London, from Sep. 3-12 1689, from Divers Parts of England and Wales: Owning the Doctrine of Personal Election, and Final Perseverance. Sent from, and concerned for, more than one hundred congregations of the same faith with themselves (1689).</u>	<u>Narrative of the Proceedings (1689).</u> *
<u>Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society.</u>	TBHS.
B.R. White, <u>The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century.</u>	<u>English Baptists.</u>
B.R. White, ed. <u>Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales, and Ireland to 1660.</u> 3 parts.	<u>Association Records.</u>

*Proceedings for the general assemblies of 1690, 1691, and 1692 are identified in similar fashion.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

This study of Benjamin Keach is both an historical and a practical study. Keach's theology was manifestly practical; the list of topics about which he wrote touches on almost every aspect of the minister's task and the Christian life.

This dissertation is a study of the practical theology of a prominent late seventeenth century English Nonconformist. As such, it must address questions of ecclesiastical history as well as practical theology. But as Professor James A. Whyte reminds us "[t]he question to which Practical Theology must address itself is not, or not primarily, the question 'How?' but the question 'What?' or 'Why?'"¹ Keach's theology was pre-eminently practical, thus a thorough analysis of his theology, which must take account of the historical factors which shaped it and which it shaped, is of necessity a study of practical theology. This study of Keach's theology is an attempt to understand the "What?" and "Why?" of Baptist practice in the seventeenth century.

One of the most puzzling questions raised in studying Keach is his almost complete neglect by scholars. Only one dissertation has attempted to set Keach's work as a whole in the light of history.² One

¹James A. Whyte, "New Directions in Practical Theology", Theology, 76 (May 1973), p. 234.

²W.E. Spears, "The Baptist Movement in England in the late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704" (Ph.d. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1953).

other dissertation is concerned with Keach's impact on the development of hymnody.³ Most strange is his almost complete absence from a recent source book on Baptist history.⁴ Keach's published output furnishes a rich mine of resources for understanding Baptists in the seventeenth century and has been almost completely neglected for over two hundred years. This dissertation aims to rescue Benjamin Keach from near oblivion and show that he was the most important practical theologian among the Calvinistic Baptists of the seventeenth century.

The scholars who have investigated Keach have returned conflicting reports. W.T. Whitley had a decidedly unfavourable opinion of him, and wrote that Keach was "intolerant of meeting others as equals" and "stood aloof from other churches".⁵ Murdina MacDonald, on the other hand, more fairly noted that Keach was "the single most important apologist for Calvinistic Baptist views in the period 1689-1704" and noted that "neither the scope nor extent" of any of his Baptist contemporaries "matched Keach's production".⁶

An investigation of Keach's writings reveals that the vast majority of the literature he produced falls into three categories:

³James P. Carnes, "The Famous Mr. Keach: Benjamin Keach and his Influence on Congregational Singing in Seventeenth Century England" (M.A. thesis, University of North Texas, 1984).

⁴William H. Brackney, ed. Baptist Life and Thought: 1600-1980. A Source Book (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1983).

⁵W.T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1932), p. 178.

⁶Murdina MacDonald, "London Calvinistic Baptists 1689-1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration" (D.Phil. dissertation, Regent's Park College, Oxford University, 1982), p. 77.

First, he was an enthusiastic proponent of unconditional justification and opponent of Arminianism, Baxterianism, and all systems which (in Keach's view) made justification in any way contingent on human initiative.⁷ Keach not only wrote five books defending unconditional justification, he touched on it in most of his sermons. Secondly, Keach was deeply concerned about religious education. His first book, The Child's Instructor (1664), which was destroyed by the authorities, was a primer and included some sort of catechism advocating Baptist views. Not only The Child's Instructor and its successors, but Keach's hymns, religious allegories, and of course, catechism were instruments of religious education. Thirdly, Keach was deeply concerned about worship. He not only defended Baptist views of Baptism, but also the laying of of hands for confirmation and advocated hymn singing.

This dissertation is divided into three sections: There is an introductory essay on Keach's life. Following this are "Christian Worship" and "Practical Theology". The division is somewhat arbitrary; the hymns are considered under the "worship" rubric although they are instruments of religious education. Church polity

⁷Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., in his Puritans and Predestination, reminds us that soteriology has profound practical consequences: "Puritan concern with discipline and church polity was a way of realizing in community the consequences of a gracious election and the joys and demands of holiness. The Puritan emphasis upon the moral and spiritual welfare of individuals and of the whole English nation was an aspect of their insistence upon making God's transforming grace triumphant in society". (Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525-1695 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. xi.)

is considered as part of "practical theology", although it is a topic directly relevant to worship. Nevertheless, "Christian Worship" deals with those writings of Keach that concern themselves with what is actually done when Christians assemble for worship Sunday by Sunday. This section includes five chapters: baptism, laying on of hands, the seventh day sabbath, the sermons and Tropologia, and the hymns. "Practical Theology" deals with matters that affect Christian life from day to day and contains four chapters: justification, religious education, church polity, and the church's support of the minister. Although the doctrine of justification is not commonly thought of as a topic of "practical theology", Keach's writings on justification have been included in this chapter. Justification may be the doctrine with the greatest practical impact on the Christian life. The chapter on religious education is divided into two parts: the primer, catechism, and articles of faith are considered first and then the religious allegories are shown to be instruments of religious education, as well.

For the purposes of this study a small handful of books have been excluded from direct consideration. A major topic of concern to Keach that has not been addressed here is his polemic against Roman Catholicism. In 1666 Keach published Zion in Distress (republished and almost completely re-written in 1682), and in 1689 a sequel followed, Distressed Sion Relieved. He also published Antichrist Stormed (1689), a direct attack on Rome, aimed at proving that the Roman church was the entity referred to as Babylon in Revelation. Three other books, Beams of Divine Light (1700) (on the doctrine of

the Trinity), The Grand Impostor Discovered (1675) (an attack on the Quakers), and The French and English Impostours Detected (1702) (a vindication of the immortality of the soul against an attack by Zachary Housel) fall outside the limits of this study. However, all of Keach's extant books⁸ have been consulted and referred to when they relate to the main topic of this dissertation: Keach's writings on worship and practical theology.y

⁸Three have disappeared: A Pillar Set Up (a poem about his first wife), The Victorious Christian, and The Phoenix of the World.

SECTION II:

BENJAMIN KEACH (1640-1704): A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

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i. Introduction.

Born as England prepared to fight the Civil War, Benjamin Keach's life spanned a tumultuous half century. He witnessed events that shaped English politics and religion for the next three hundred years: the outbreak of fighting between Crown and Parliament (1642), the execution of Charles I (1649), the restoration of Charles II (1660), the restoration of the episcopacy (1662), the "Glorious Revolution" (1688), the toleration of religious dissenters (1689), and the accession of Queen Anne (1702). More important for the purposes of this dissertation, however, Keach's life coincided almost exactly with the rise and decline of the Calvinistic (or Particular) Baptists. In 1644 the Calvinistic Baptists emerged as a distinct group with the publication of the "First London Confession" and in 1692 the Particular Baptists of London split over the singing issue.

Keach was no mere bystander during these events. At the heart of this dissertation is the conviction that Keach not only expounded Baptist views on worship and practical theology more fully than any other Baptist writer of his generation, but exercised profound influence on Baptist thinking on two issues: the doctrine of justification and the rise and development of hymn singing. He also addressed himself to baptism, the laying on of hands, religious

allegories, the seventh day sabbath, religious (and "secular") education, and biblical exegesis. Among Baptists, Keach's published sermons alone should qualify him for fame; the more than one thousand pages of sermons that Keach published far exceeds the output of any other Calvinistic Baptist of seventeenth century England.

As will be seen in the following pages many questions about Keach's life cannot be answered, but the one of the most puzzling is the question of his neglect by Baptist scholars. Only one dissertation has attempted to set Keach's work as a whole in the light of history.¹ One other dissertation is concerned with Keach's impact on the development of hymnody.² Most strange is his almost complete absence from a recent source book on Baptist history.³ Keach's published output furnishes a rich mine of resources for understanding Baptists in the seventeenth century and has been almost completely neglected for over two hundred years. This dissertation aims to rescue Benjamin Keach from near oblivion and show that he was the most important practical theologian among the Calvinistic Baptists of the seventeenth century.

¹W.E. Spears, "The Baptist Movement in England in the late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704" (Ph.d. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1953).

²James P. Carnes, "The Famous Mr. Keach: Benjamin Keach and his Influence on Congregational Singing in Seventeenth Century England" (M.A. thesis, University of North Texas, 1984).

³Brackney, William H., ed. Baptist Life and Thought: 1600-1980. A Source Book (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1983).

ii. Background: Origins of the English Baptists.

In 1608 John Smyth (1570-1612?) fled with his small Separatist congregation to Amsterdam. While there he came to the conclusion that not only was the baptism of the Church of England invalid, but that all infant baptism was invalid. Believing that there was no church which could administer valid baptism, Smyth baptized himself and then the rest of his congregation. Later, deciding that there was a legitimate church in existence (the Dutch Mennonites), Smyth sought a third baptism from them and urged his congregation to do the same. Thomas Helwys (d. 1616) and several members of the congregation dissented and returned to England in 1612.

Helwys' congregation settled in London. After his death they were led consecutively by John Murton (1583-1630) and Elias Tookey. It is not certain that this congregation survived the 1630s, but B.R. White writes: "...it seems reasonable to believe that the Bell Alley congregation of the 1640s was in the direct succession of those who had returned with Thomas Helwys".⁴

The Smyth-Helwys' group become known as General Baptists. The source of this name is the fact that they denied the Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement. Smyth believed that "1. Christ's redemption stretcheth to all men. [and] 2. Man hath not lost the faculty of willing any good thing that is showed him".⁵ It was this

⁴B.R. White, The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1983), p. 29.

⁵Ibid., p. 24.

branch of the Baptists with whom Keach came in contact initially and by whom he was baptized.

A different group of Baptists emerged in the 1640s when the political environment was more tolerant of religious diversity. In 1644, a group of Calvinistic Baptists in London issued "the Confession of Faith, of those Churches which are commonly (though falsly) called Anabaptists...".⁶ This confession is commonly referred to as the First London Confession.

At least five of the signers of the 1644 confession were associated with a family of congregations associated with Henry Jacob: William Kiffin, John Spilsbury, Thomas Shepherd, Thomas Munden, and Thomas Killcop.⁷ Several members of these churches had gradually come to the conclusion (as Smyth had before them, but independent of him) that not only was the baptism of the Church of England a false baptism, but also that the New Testament did not teach *infant baptism*. In contrast to the Smyth group, these later English Baptists did not reject the Reformed teaching of limited atonement. They made an effort to distinguish themselves on this point from the Anabaptists of the Continent. The preface to the 1644 confession complains that other Protestants charge them

with holding Free-will, Falling away from grace, denying Originall sinne, disclaiming of Magistracy, denying to assist them either in persons or purse in any of their lawfull Commands, doing acts unseemly in the dispensing the Ordinance of Baptism, not to be named among Christians: All

⁶The confession is given in pp. 143-171 of William L. Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions of Faith (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1969).

⁷B.R. White, English Baptists, p. 58.

which Charges wee disclaime as notoriously untrue...⁸

During the Commonwealth Baptists, both General and Particular, flourished, but with the return of Charles II in 1660, all changed. Although Baptists had not been prominent in the affairs of Cromwell's administration, they were tainted by their peculiar views and by their resemblance to the radicals of Munster. B.R. White writes:

It is still widely believed that most Baptists, both Arminians and Calvinists of this period were committed to extreme left wing views. In fact, while the majority of the leading Calvinistic Baptists were probably republican in their political sentiments there must have been many who hardly had any political opinions at all. Revolutionary militancy was most likely to be found among those who held Fifth Monarchy views and who looked forward to the coming reign of Christ upon earth as the fulfillment of the prophecies in Daniel 2.⁹

Actually, very few Baptists were associated with the Fifth Monarchy fanatics, although Hanserd Knollys may have been sympathetic to their views.¹⁰ Nevertheless, a dark cloud hung over Baptists and Nonconformists in general during the Restoration period.

iii. Keach's birth and early years.

The earliest years of Keach's life are beyond historical recovery. He was born in the village of Stoke Hammond in

⁸Lumpkin, p. 154.

⁹B.R. White, English Baptists, pp. 84-85.

¹⁰For Hanserd Knollys, see Richard Greaves and R. Zaller, Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century (1982-84), pp. 160-162; Crosby, vol. I, pp. 334-344; and DNB, vol. 11, pp. 279-281.

Buckinghamshire. The parish records show that Henry Keach, son of John and Joice [sic] Keach was baptized in 1624. Two further children, Anne and Josiah Keach were baptised in 1630 and 1633 respectively, but John is the only parent named. It is likely that Joice died, because the mother of the remainder of the Keach children is given as "Fodora". The baptisms of four other children are recorded: Maria in 1636, Joseph in 1637, Benjamin in 1640,¹¹ and another Maria (the other having died in infancy) in 1643. The records also show that a John Keach was warden of the Stoke Hammond parish church in 1627 and again in 1640.¹² John and Fodora Keach probably moved from Stoke Hammond, because the parish records contain no entry for their burial.¹³

There is no evidence that Benjamin had any formal education, but his son-in-law Thomas Crosby¹⁴ writes, "He applied himself very early

¹¹It is given as February 29, 1639 (1640 by modern reckoning).

¹²See the Stoke Hammond Parish register of nativities, marriages, and burials on deposit in the public records office in Aylesbury, Bucks,

¹³Thomas Crosby also records Keach's date of birth. (Thomas Crosby, The History of the English Baptists, from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I (1740), vol. 4, p. 269.)

¹⁴Thomas Crosby (1685?-1752), mathematician and schoolmaster, is the principal source of information about his father-in-law. His The History of the English Baptists (four volumes, 1738-1740) was based on the work of another Keach son-in-law, Benjamin Stinton (1676-1719), who succeeded Keach as pastor of the Horsleydown church. Stinton's work was never published because of his untimely death. Crosby's work was based on manuscripts, as well as his personal access to some of the persons about whom he wrote, and is generally considered an accurate and reliable source. Throughout the dissertation reference is made to Crosby's History. See also B.R. White, "Thomas Crosby, Baptist Historian: (I) The First Forty Years, 1683-1723", BQ 21 (1965-66), pp. 154-168 and "Thomas Crosby, Baptist Historian: (II) Later

to the study of Scripture, and the attainments of divine knowledge".¹⁵ From the fact that his father was a church warden, one can guess that Keach's family was part of the tradesmen and artisan class. However, church wardens were not drawn exclusively from the elite in Stoke Hammond; at one time or another most of the householders served as church wardens.

Although not formally schooled, Keach was trained to be a tailor. Crosby records: "He was at first designed for a trade, and employed in one a little time; but his capacious soul soon aspired after higher things".¹⁶ What trade this was Crosby never reveals. The only record of Keach's employment is in the Calendar of State Papers' account of his first arrest. This document notes that Keach was a tailor and "a teacher in their new-fangled way".¹⁷

Keach presented himself for believer's baptism at the age of 15. Again, Crosby:

...observing the Scripture to be entirely silent concerning the baptism of infants, he began to suspect the validity of the Baptism he had received in his infancy, and after he had deliberated upon this matter, was in the fifteenth year of his age baptized upon the profession of his faith, by Mr. John Russel, and then joined himself to a congregation of that persuasion in that country.¹⁸

Years", BQ 21, (1965-66), pp. 219-234.

¹⁵Crosby, vol. 4, p. 269.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Calendar of State Papers, Domestic (1663-64), p. 595.

¹⁸Crosby, vol. 4, p. 269.

The congregation to which Keach joined himself seems to have been a General Baptist church. John Russel signed the "Orthodox Confession".¹⁹ Where Keach was baptized and to what church he affiliated himself, Crosby does not tell us, but the fact that Keach's first wife was from Winslow provides a possible link with the Baptist community in that town. The seventeenth century Baptist chapel in Winslow did not exist in 1655, but Baptists must have been meeting for some time in Winslow before the construction of the chapel (commonly, but incorrectly, referred to as "Keach's Meeting-House") in 1695.¹⁸ Nowhere does Crosby tell us that Keach worshiped with the Baptists of Winslow. It is probable but not certain that Keach was a member of the Winslow Baptists. It is much less likely that he was their pastor. Crosby tells us that Keach's first wife, "Jane Grove, a woman of great piety and prudence...dwelt at Winslow in Buckinghamshire..."¹⁹ There

¹⁹Arnold H.J. Baines, "The Signatories of the Orthodox Confession of 1679", BQ 17, (1957-58), p. 171. Whitley offers the unsupported claim that Keach was converted by John Griffiths, another General Baptist, possibly because both Keach and Griffiths championed the laying on of hands. (W.T. Whitley, The Baptists of London 1612-1928 (London: The Kingsgate Press, n.d.), p. 110.)

¹⁸"A General Baptist church was in existence in Winslow by 1654 in which year John Hartnoll was sent as messenger to the General Assembly of that denomination....The meeting-house, which stands concealed behind other property close to the cattle market, and variously described as in Pillar's Ditch, Bell Alley, or Market Walk, was built in 1695. A deed of 5 July 1696 refers to the building as 'lately erected and built...'" (from "Keach's Meeting-House", Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in Central England. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (1986), pp. 27-29.)

¹⁹See also "A Perfect and Compleat Regester [sic] of all Marrages, [sic] Nativities, and Burials, belonging to the Congregation that Meeteth on Horsly-downe, over whom Benjamen [sic] Keach is Overseer", Public Records Office, Chancery Lane, London, p. 3: An entry for 1660 reads, "Benjamin Keach and [indecipher.] his wife were married in may at

were Baptists in Winslow at this time, and the General Baptists were fiercely endogamous. Keach, as a faithful member of a General Baptist church, would not have married outside the community. However, this does not settle the question of which church Keach actually belonged to. Furthermore, although a plaque above the pulpit in the Winslow chapel in Winslow proudly claims that Keach was pastor there, it is not clear that Keach was pastor of any church or even ordained before he moved to London. Crosby tells us that

...the society of Christians with whom he joined, thought fit, when he was but eighteen years of age, to call him to the work of the ministry among them; and from that time he continued to preach publicly to the great comfort and edification of them that heard him.²⁰

But Crosby does not say that Keach was ordained, that he was a pastor, or that it was the Winslow church that called him to the ministry.²¹

winslow in ye county of Bucks by Mr. John Har--- on ye day called holy thursday".

²⁰Crosby, vol. 4, p. 270.

²¹W.T. Whitley claims that the Stony Stratford congregation in Buckinghamshire had a pastor whose initials were "B.K." ("Stony Stratford", BQ, V. 3, 1926-27, p. 35.) Whitley does not identify his source, but most likely it was James Slye's A Brief Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Independent Church at Potterspury...including some Account of the Congregations in Towcester, Stony Stratford and Harslope (1831). Slye's book lists the ministers of the Stony Stratford book in a note on p. 16. His source must have been the "Records of Stony Stratford Baptist Church" (Bucks Record Office ref: NB/18.) However, the list of ministers in those records was written in 1892 and appears to be a copy of an earlier list. The first minister on the list, George Martin, is identified as having been pastor of the church in 1662; "B.K." is the fourth minister. The next date, 1736, is attached to the fourth minister after "B.K.". Thus, because Keach left Buckinghamshire in 1663, it seems unlikely that "B.K." could be Benjamin Keach, unless the dates are wrong.

Keach married Jane Grove in 1660. She died in 1670, but in those ten years, she bore her husband five children, of whom three survived, Mary, Elias, and Hannah. Crosby tells us that Hannah became a Quaker and that when her father was in his last illness, she visited him:

..when he saw, he endeavoured to talk with [her] and shewed a great eagerness and desire so to do, but his speech failing, prevented him...²²

Elias, the son his first wife bore him, must have given his father cause to worry, as well. Elias emigrated to America, but his motivation is very unclear. Morgan Edwards recorded the story of Elias's conversion:

He was the son of the famous Benj. Keach, of London. Arrived in this country a very wild spark about the year 1686. On his landing he dressed in black and wore a band in order to pass for a minister. The project succeeded to his wishes, and many people resorted to hear the young London divine. He performed well enough till he had advanced pretty far in the sermon. Then, stopping short, looked like a man astonished. The audience concluded he had been seized with a sudden disorder; but, on asking what the matter was, received from him a confession of the imposture with tears in his eyes and much trembling. Great was his distress though it ended happily; for from this time dated he his conversion. He heard there was a Baptist minister at Coldspring in Bucks county between Bristol and Trentown. To him did he repair to seek counsel [sic] and comfort; and by him was he baptized and ordained. The minister's name was Thomas Dungan.²³

Edwards went on to relate that Keach assisted Dungan and gathered several churches; he refers to Elias as "the chief apostle of the

²²Crosby, vol. 4, pp. 308-309. Cf. "An Account of the Estate of Mary Hall", TBHS 3 (1912-13), p. 94, where the claim is made that Hannah Keach was a Seventh Day Baptist.

²³Morgan Edwards, Materials toward a History of Baptists in Pennsylvania (1770), pp. 9-10. See also Whitley, "Baptists in the Colonies till 1750", TBHS 7, (1920-21), pp. 31-48,

Baptists in these parts of America". Benjamin Keach, whose published writings occasionally contain autobiographical references, never referred to his son's dramatic conversion. Elias died five years before his father in 1699.

iv. Keach and the "Great Persecution".

Keach's long and productive literary years began in Buckinghamshire. In 1664 he published The Child's Instructor and in the "Fatal Year", probably 1666, he published Zion in Distress (later republished and largely rewritten as Sion in Distress (1681)).

It was also while still living in Buckinghamshire that Keach began to experience the persecution which came to Dissenters under the Clarendon Code. In his sermon, "The Fan in Christ's Hand",²⁴ Keach writes, "So the Lord Jesus with his spiritual Fan tosses the Godly and Hypocritical Professor, by the same Afflictions, Trials, Persecutions and Temptations. And O what hurrying, tossings and tumblings to and fro in their Spirits, have some Christians met with in the late times and still daily meet withal?" In the same volume Keach wrote of the saints thriving "in the times of the Ten hot Persecutions".²⁵ Like many others among the Nonconformists, Keach experienced the penalties imposed upon those whose religious views deviated from the doctrine of the Established Church. Keach was arrested at least three times, and

²⁴Benjamin Keach, Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd, (1701), Bk I, p. 251.

²⁵Ibid., p. 131.

the first episode seems to have gained him at least a little notoriety in his own time.

Buckinghamshire was a dangerous place for Baptists. In 1664, twelve General Baptists were sentenced to death under the terms of the Act of 1593, "For Retaining the Queen's Subjects in their Due Obedience". They were saved only by the direct intervention of King Charles II, to whose attention this case was brought by William Kiffin.²⁶

Crosby relates that Keach "had no small share in the sufferings of these times. He was often seized while preaching, and committed to prison, sometimes bound...and sometimes his life was threatened". On one occasion Keach had a very close call. Some soldiers seized him while he was preaching and "declared their resolution to trample him to death with their horses; and laying him bound on the ground, prepared themselves for the fact". Keach was only saved by the intervention of the Soldiers' superior officer.²⁷ There is evidence

²⁶Michael Watts, The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution (Oxford: OUP, 1982), p. 224. Also, Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 114, and Crosby, vol. 2, p. 184.

²⁷Crosby, vol. 2, pp. 185-86. Cf. Gerald Cragg, Puritanism in the Period of the Great Persecution (Cambridge: CUP, 1957), p. 34:

With the more boisterous elements in the community the Puritan had never been a popular figure, and the mob was all the more willing to vent on him the irrational cruelty which so often marks the reactions of a crowd. People who were ignorant of the law and indifferent to its actual intention would respond quickly enough when incited by those whose lead they normally followed; a word of encouragement from the magistrate or the clergyman sufficed, but what began in sport could not always be checked before it had ended in tragedy.

for two imprisonments: the Calendar of State Papers, Domestic records that Keach was arrested and imprisoned in 1664 and 1666.²⁸

In 1664, the year of the death sentence passed on the "Aylesbury Twelve", Keach published The Child's Instructor. This book no longer exists; all copies were ordered destroyed. However, Crosby tells us that Keach rewrote it from memory, and it is reasonable to assume that it is nearly identical with The Child's Delight or Instructions for Children and Youth, which went through several editions.

The authorities noted Keach's book, seized it because of the religious views it expressed, and bound Keach over to the Assizes. Keach was challenged for his views on infant baptism and for his eschatology. The court clerk asked Keach to plead guilty or not guilty after the indictment had been read to him, but Keach declined to plead until he had had a chance to read the indictment himself. The judge viewed this as a delaying tactic and insisted that Keach enter a plea. Keach pleaded not guilty. The judge then offered Keach a copy of the indictment to read:

J.R. Jones suggests that the country was a more dangerous place for Nonconformists than the city:

There can be no mistaking the mood of the country. It was violently Anglican....The country was moving in a quite contrary ecclesiastical direction from that advocated by the Court. In doing so it responded very largely to its innate Conservatism and to the stimulus of unofficial Cavalier leadership. Lay intolerance, the joint product of experience and indoctrination, was the decisive factor in restoring the Church of England to its old form and its old ascendancy. (The Restored Monarchy, 1660-1688 (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1979), pp. 161, 164-165).

²⁸Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, vol. 98, p. 116 and vol. 187, p. 427.

Judge. Now you may have a copy of your Indictment; and I will give you an hour's time to consider of it.

Keach. If I may have no longer time, I don't desire one.

Judge. I have something else to do than to wait upon you, you are not a fit person to go abroad 'till the next Assizes, and you would think it hard if I should commit you to Goal [sic] till then; but because you shall not say, but that you were offered fair, if you will find sufficient sureties for your appearance at the next Assize and for your good behaviour till then, you shall not be tried till then.

But Mr. Keach knowing, that his appearing at any dissenting meeting, would be deemed in those evil times a breach of his good behaviour, dared not to accept of this proposal, and said, I am willing to be tried now.²⁹

Keach was given a summary trial, found guilty, and sentenced to be impilloried on successive Saturdays at Aylesbury and Winslow for two hours each Saturday. The fact that Keach stood in the pillory at Winslow points convincingly to his membership in the Baptist church there. At Aylesbury Keach was verbally abused by a clergyman of the Church of England but was defended by the crowd. They silenced the clergyman by reminding him that he had been found drunk twice: once in a ditch and once under a haystack. In spite of the gaoler's interruptions, Keach managed to preach to the crowd from the pillory. At Winslow Keach suffered the additional indignity of having his book burned before him as stood in the pillory.³⁰

Crosby was of the opinion that Keach's encounters with the State's rough treatment of Dissenters made him look toward London:

His publick trial and suffering rendering him more acceptable to informers than others, so that it was unlikely he could enjoy any quiet settlement in those parts for the service of the church of Christ; and he, having not then

²⁹Crosby, vol. 2, pp. 194-95.

³⁰Ibid., p. 185-209 for a full account of Keach's trial which Crosby ascribes to an eye witness.

taken upon him the charge of any people, thought of removing to London, where he might have an opportunity of doing more good.³¹

Whitley argues that "Londoners had their eye on Bucks because of the death sentence passed there on conventiclers", and that Keach was virtually "summoned" to London where "he considered the points of difference and declared himself a Calvinist" after discussions with the two Baptist "patriarchs" Hanserd Knollys (1599?-1691) and William Kiffin (1616-1701).³² One inducement for a move to London would have been the relative safety that that city seems to have offered Baptists. Kiffin's financial support of Charles II may have won a measure of toleration for Baptists. However, if Keach moved to London expecting more freedom than he had in Bucks, he was to be disappointed. As for the other motivation that Whitley offers, i.e., that Keach had already come into contact with London Baptists, this is possible. Wealthy Baptist leader William Kiffin may have been in touch with Baptists in Buckinghamshire. His efforts on behalf of the General Baptists sentenced to death demonstrate that this is a real possibility. However, there is no evidence that Keach knew either Kiffin or Hanserd Knollys before he moved to London.

Between the Child's Instructor incident (1664) and his move to London (1668), Keach seems to have been an itinerant preacher. Crosby records that the congregation to which Keach belonged called him to

³¹Crosby, vol. 3, pp. 143-44.

³²Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 132. For William Kiffin, see Richard Greaves and R. Zaller, Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century (1982-84), pp. 155-156 and DNB, vol. 11, pp. 98-100.

the work of the ministry amongst them; and from that time he continued to preach publicly to the great comfort and edification of them that heard him".³³ But Crosby also notes that Keach, at the time of the Child's Instructor episode, "had not taken upon him the charge of any people".³⁴ This is further evidence that Keach did not serve as the pastor of a church in Winslow or anywhere else before he moved to London.

v. Keach moves: London and the Particular Baptists.

It seems most likely that Keach's chief motivation in moving from Bucks was in order to escape persecution. Perhaps he also sensed that there were greater opportunities in London. So in 1668 Keach, his wife, and their children set out for the capital. The move was not without incident, however:

...he turned his effects into money, and set out with his wife and children for London, in the year 1668. But in his journey up, the coach was beset with highwaymen, who compelled all the passengers to come out, and took from them all they could find of any value....Thus he came to London, without any money, and almost without acquaintance....the Baptists, who are as ready to acts of charity as any others, took care to supply his present necessities...³⁵

³³Crosby, vol. 4, p. 270.

³⁴Ibid., vol. 3, p. 144.

³⁵Ibid. Raymond Brown describes the danger of travel in the latter seventeenth century:

In many parts of the country travel was exceptionally difficult. Poorly maintained highways, virtually impassable in bad weather, hindered communication, whilst such roads as were kept in reasonable condition were constantly frequented by highwaymen. People with business or professional

Keach's arrival in London raises a host of questions: Crosby relates that Keach succeeded William Rider as pastor at the Tooly Street church. According to Whitley, Rider was a General Baptist.³⁶ Also, Whitley gives the location of the church as Borough Road. Crosby notes that Keach was "solemnly ordained, with prayer, and laying on of hands, in the year 1688 [sic]; being the 28th year of his age..."³⁷ How is it that Keach was ordained so soon after his arrival? Was the Tooly St./Borough Rd. church the one that reimbursed Keach for the money he had lost in the robbery? Whitley writes that Keach split the church, but Crosby omits the fact. If Whitley is right, then Crosby's omission can be explained by his own personal circumstances. Crosby must have regarded John Gill as a "church splitter" and would have wanted to avoid having to portray Keach as a schismatic, as well. However, Keach did acquire Calvinist views at some point, and these must have split the London congregation, who had been a group of General Baptists before Keach's arrival. Crosby only tells us that the church built a new edifice and moved to Horsleydown under the toleration granted by Charles II. Crosby gives no date, but this must have been 1672. So the split probably occurred prior to 1672. One

interests naturally made long journeys, increasingly so as the century progressed, but travel was never an enviable experience. In London's Hyde Park, a gunman shot at Horace Walpole, who later maintained that "one is forced to travel, even at noon, as if one was going to battle". (The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), p. 10.)

³⁶Whitley, "Index to Notable Baptists", TBHS 7, (1920-21), p. 226.

³⁷Crosby, vol. 4, p. 272.

further note: William Rider was an advocate of the laying on of hands. Keach's advocacy of "confirmation" was part of his General Baptist background, but it must have been accepted by his Horsleydown congregation because of Rider's preparatory work. What is surprising is that a group of former General Baptists accepted corporate hymn singing with relatively little fuss.

Keach's first wife died in 1670. This was the occasion for Keach's second extensive essay into poetry, A Pillar Set Up (a reference to Jacob's memorial to Rachel). No copies of this work can now be found, but Crosby offers a lengthy prose synopsis.³⁸

The date and circumstances of Benjamin Keach's acceptance of Calvinism is the greatest puzzle of his life. We know that he had worshipped with the General Baptists in Buckinghamshire; John Russell, the minister who baptized Keach, signed the "Orthodox Confession" (1679).³⁹ However, we have no literature from Keach's pen which expresses General Baptist sentiments. On the contrary, Keach's recorded opinions verge on hyper-Calvinism. So it has been assumed that between 1655 (the date of his baptism) and 1672 (the establishment of the Horsleydown church), Keach developed from a General Baptist into a Particular Baptist. There is no good reason to doubt that Keach had been a General Baptist. Note Crosby's account of Keach's trial: Keach was accused of holding that "infants that die are members of the kingdom of glory, tho' they be not members of the

³⁸Ibid., pp. 273-75.

³⁹Crosby, vol. 4, p. 269.

visible church".⁴⁰ This opinion is consonant with General Baptist principles and perhaps slightly less agreeable to Particular Baptist views (who, presumably, would hold that only elect infants are members of the "kingdom of glory"). So, Keach did change, but why?

Crosby does not go into detail about Keach's change. The Baptists who nurtured his faith "were generally, tho' not all, such as held the Remonstrants scheme...and went under the name of Arminians".⁴¹

Crosby tells us that

when he came to London, where he had a greater opportunity of consulting both men and books, and found that the different opinions in this article gave a denomination to two parties of the Baptists, he examined the point more closely, and in a few years came to such a determination as fixed his judgment in this point for his whole life-time afterwards.⁴²

If only we were certain that Crosby is completely reliable when he writes that the Baptists whom Keach knew in Bucks "were generally, tho' not all such as held the Remonstrants scheme..." Who were these Calvinistic Baptist whom Keach knew in Bucks?

Whitley implies that Keach's encounter with Kiffin and Knollys were the catalyst in his theological development: "...coming into contact with Kiffin and Knollys, he considered the points of difference and declared himself a Calvinist".⁴³ But Whitley offers no evidence for this claim. W.E. Spears offers two reasons for Keach's

⁴⁰Crosby, vol. 2, p. 190.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 270.

⁴²Ibid., p. 271.

⁴³Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 132.

development into a Calvinist: First, "the form of doctrine which seemed best to withstand the attacks of Rome was Calvinism", and second, "...he wished to share the views of the great mass of Protestants of his day".⁴⁴ As to the first point, Spears appears to be wrong about Keach believing that Calvinism was a particularly effective defense against Rome. There is no record of Roman Catholic missionaries having conspicuous success in converting General Baptists. However, Keach was very exercised about the Quakers, and the Quakers were successful in converting General Baptists. Calvinism's efficacy as a defense against the Quakers may have been a point in its favour for Keach. As to the second point, if Keach had wanted to share the views of the "great mass of Protestants of his day", he would have become a pedo-baptist, as well as a Calvinist.

Keach's second wife was the widow Susannah Partridge of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire. Crosby regarded Susannah Keach as a remarkable woman and spoke of her in glowing terms. The Keachs' marriage lasted 32 years, and she lived another 23 years (until 1727). Two of their daughters married Baptist leaders (Stinton and Crosby), and Susannah may have been involved in the Gill-Crosby dispute.⁴⁵ Keach's second marriage points to one source of Calvinist influence: the minister who performed the ceremony was Hanserd Knollys.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁴W.E. Spears, "The Baptist Movement in England in the late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704", p. 47.

⁴⁵B.R. White, "John Gill in London, 1719-1729: A Biographical Fragment", BQ 22 (1967), p. 85.

⁴⁶"A perfect and Compleat Register of all Marriages, Nativites, and Burials belonging to the Congregation that meeteth on Horsly-

wedding took place on 22 April 1672, so Keach must have known Knollys for some time before that. It has been argued that Keach's adoption of Calvinist views and the split in the Tooly St./Borough Rd. congregation must have taken place before 1672. Keach's "conversion" to Calvinism was probably complete by the time of his second marriage.

This lends partial support to Whitley's view; Knollys certainly, if not Kiffin, as well, influenced Keach in favour of Calvinism. One additional point: it may be that Keach was swayed by the dominance of Calvinism among London Baptists. The General Baptists had no intellect as well-trained as Knollys, nor any such wealthy merchants as Kiffin. To Keach, on coming to London, it may have seemed as though the Baptist future lay with his Calvinist brothers and sisters.

Keach did not escape persecution by his move to London. Crosby relates that the authorities harassed him and his congregation and eventually arrested him for his new edition of The Child's Instructor:

When the indulgence granted to protestant dissenters was removed, he was again very much harassed by his persecutors...and tho' the congregation, of which he was pastor, were very careful to conceal themselves, yet they were twice disturbed.⁴⁷

On one occasion six members of Keach's congregation were arrested after worship, and another time, one worshipper was seized after a celebration of the Lord's Supper. Crosby tells us that this

downe, over whom Benjamin Keach is Overseer", MS, Public Records Office, London, p. 3. An entry for 1672 reads, "Benjamin Keach and Susannah Partridge his wife were married [sic] the two and twentyth [sic] of April by Mr. han: knowles".

⁴⁷Crosby, vol. 3, p. 145.

celebration of the sacrament took place in "the widow Colfe's house" and that "the king's messenger was sent to apprehend the widow, but being informed she was nurse to one who lay sick of the small pox, he departed with an oath, and sought no more after her".⁴⁸ The congregation was betrayed by a man named Cook who was also Keach's landlord "but was not known to him by that name". Cook, however, tried to protect Keach when the king's messengers were seeking to arrest him because of the new edition of The Child's Instructor. Cook failed; Keach was rearrested and in due course fined 20 pounds. A member of Keach's congregation, John Roberts, a physician, stood bail for Keach.⁴⁹

It was in London that Keach's literary career flourished. The 1670s and early '80s were the years of the allegories. He produced his four allegories by 1684: War with the Devil (1673), The Glorious Lover (1679), The Travels of True Godliness (1683), and The Progress of Sin (1684). However, the most important publication of this period was his catalogue of biblical metaphors, Tropologia (1681).

The 1680s were a productive decade in Keach's life. The first clear sign that he had become accepted by the Particular Baptist community is their endorsement of his The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated in 1689. However, the Calvinistic Baptists made use of Keach's skill in controversial debate. In 1689, the General Assembly sent "Brother Benjamin Keach and one more...to visit

⁴⁸Crosby, vol. 3, p. 146.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 146-147.

our friends at Colchester, Suffolk, Norfolk, etc."⁵⁰ As a result of this journey a Baptist church was established at Lavenham. The rector of Milden, William Burkit, was well-known as an expositor of scripture. Crosby describes him in this way:

Another author Mr. Keach engaged upon this subject, was the famous Mr. Burkit rector of Malden in Suffolk, a gentleman of great esteem, as well for his preaching, as his excellent practical exposition on the New Testament, which has met with so general an acceptance.⁵¹

On at least one occasion, Keach had to defend himself from the charge of "uncleanness". David Russen published a book entitled Fundamentals without a Foundation; or a True Picture of the Anabaptists. Among other calumnies, he wrote that "Benjamin Keach, another noted writer and teacher of theirs, has been lately accused as guilty of the same, that is, of uncleanness". Crosby tells us that Keach was defended by some of his neighbours and friends, including two members of parliament, who signed their names to a letter vindicating his character.⁵²

In one of the disputes about which Keach wrote, the Seventh Day worship controversy, his literary activity won him recognition in high circles. Crosby writes that Keach presented a copy of his The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated (1700) into the hands of the Archbishop of

⁵⁰A Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly (1690), p. 5. See also A.J. Klaiber, "Early Baptist Movements in Suffolk", BQ 4, (1928-29), pp. 116-120.

⁵¹Crosby, vol. 4, p. 282. For a fuller account, see Sect. III, chapter I.

⁵²Crosby, vol. 4, pp. 287-290.

Canterbury himself, "who highly approved of his performance, and received him into his favour and conversation".⁵³

The most significant and best known controversy in which Keach took part had to do with the introduction of corporate hymn singing into his Horsleydown congregation. He introduced the singing of a hymn (as opposed to a psalm or a canticle) into the worship of the Horsleydown church between 1673 and 1675.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Keach went on to introduce singing "in mixt Assemblies, on Days of Thanksgiving..."

The singing controversy was a long and involved affair which eventually involved just about every Particular Baptist minister in London and may have been responsible for the cessation of the yearly general assemblies of Particular Baptists in London. It is recounted in detail in section III, chapter four.

vi. Other events in 1689-1704.

The 1680s and '90s were also marked by another controversy, this time with non-Baptists. Keach engaged in a lengthy printed defense of

⁵³Ibid., p. 302. Joseph Ivimey identified the archbishop as Tillotson. (A History of the English Baptists, London (1814), vol. 2, p. 375.) However, this is not possible; Tillotson died in 1694. It is still possible that Crosby's story is true and Keach met Archbishop Tenison (1636-1715). Lambeth Palace library holds an 18th century copy of The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated, and although there are no markings to indicate its provenance, it may be the copy Keach presented to the archbishop.

⁵⁴Benjamin Keach, The Breach Repaired in Gods Worship (1691), "Epistle Dedicatory", p. viii.

Baptist views of baptism. From 1689 to 1696 Keach published five books challenging pedobaptism: Gold Refin'd (1689); Paedobaptism Disproved (1691); The Rector Rectified (1692); The Ax Laid to the Root (1693); A Counter-Antidote (1694); and Light Broke forth in Wales (1696).⁵⁵ The other controversy concerned justification. Keach was greatly troubled about the soteriology associated with Richard Baxter and the "Middle Way" men. From 1692 to 1698 Keach published five books dealing with justification: The Marrow of True Justification (1692); The Everlasting Covenant (1693); Christ Alone the Way to Heaven (1698); The Display of Glorious Grace (1698); and A Medium betwixt Two Extremes (1698).

Throughout this period, Keach was first and foremost pastor of church. Crosby tells us that his father-in-law's church had to be enlarged more than once, and eventually held "near a thousand people".⁵⁶ Also, Keach established "mission" or "satellite" churches. In 1682, a spy reported that "Mr. Ceah" had two houses, three ministers, and about 350 members.⁵⁷ These two buildings were the Goat St. and Rotherhithe churches; one of the three ministers was George Barrett. E.P. Winter also claims that the Watford church was a "sub-congregation" of Horsleydown.⁵⁸ Crosby writes that Keach was

⁵⁵Believers Baptism (1705) is identical to Light Broke forth in Wales. Keach's apology for believers' baptism is discussed in section III, chapter one.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 273.

⁵⁷Whitley, "London Churches in 1682", BQ 1, (1922-23), p. 82.

⁵⁸E.P. Winter, "The Administration of the Lord's Supper among the Baptists of the Seventeenth Century", BQ 18, (1959-60), pp. 196-204.

successful in "getting several meeting houses erected for the public worship of God; as, one at Limehouse, another at Rotherhithe; one in White-street, Southwark, and another at Barkin in Essex".⁵⁹ There is no record that Keach ever registered as a Nonconformist minister either during the false toleration of 1672 or the real toleration of 1689.

Keach also did a good deal of preaching outside his own congregation, some of it controversial. In 1697, the General Baptists charged him with having helped to make a "division" in the High Wycombe church.⁶⁰ The General Baptists addressed a letter to the Particular assembly asking them to concern themselves "so as yt [there?] may be a fair hearing of this mater [sic] by parties of both sides in order to be a loving & friendly reconciliation at a convenient time & place".⁶¹ However, the assembly did not meet again after 1693, so there was no formal authority that could have responded to the General Baptists' charge.⁶²

⁵⁹Crosby, vol. 4, p. 306.

⁶⁰W.T. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, (London: Kingsgate Press, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 46-47.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²However, MacDonald suggests that there was an informal "assembly" of Calvinistic Baptist leaders in London and that the General Baptist request might have been made to them. She writes that Keach "had been scheduled to be examined by the elders at Jones' coffee house over a matter of difference between himself and some others." Her reference is to Isaac Marlow's Answer to a Deceitful Book (1698), p. 6. She believes that Marlow was referring to the complaint lodged by the General Baptists. W.T. Whitley alleges that Keach was responsible for the conversion of Richard Adams from General Baptist views to Calvinistic views, but he offers no evidence for this. See Whitley, "Records of the Jacob-Lathorp-Jessey Church, 1616-

In 1689, Keach came close to death. Crosby tells us that Knollys visited Keach on what appeared to be his death bed, prayed for him, and said, "Brother Keach, I shall be in heaven before you..." Knollys' prayer included the petition that God would add to Keach's life the years he added to Hezekiah's. Knollys (born in 1599) was making a fairly reliable prophecy and preceded Keach to the grave by 13 years. (He died in 1691.) This story illustrates Crosby's point that Keach was prone to sickness. This may explain Keach's frequent use of medicine as a metaphor for grace in his hymns.⁶³ On the other hand, Keach's interest in medicine may stem from the fact that he bought the right to manufacture a "tincture of sugar plumbs" from the physician who bailed him out after the second Child's Instructor episode.⁶⁴

1641", TBHS 1, pp. 204-225.

⁶³See Spiritual Melody, Hymn 22 ("They that are whole, need not a Physician..."):

The second Part.

1. But it is true, no medicin's found
Which, Lord, can do us good,
So as to make us whole and sound,
But our Physician's Blood;

Also, Hymn 155, "A Hymn of Praise after the Sacrament":

1. Lord, thou our bless'd Physician art,
Who for our Souls didst die;
Thou dost thy precious Blood impart,
Our Souls to purifie.
2. When sin and sickness did appear,
And nought could do us good,
A Med'cine then thou didst prepare,
To heal us with thy Blood.

⁶⁴Crosby, vol. 3, p. 147.

Benjamin Keach died on 18 July 1704. He had requested Joseph Stennet to preach his funeral sermon, but Stennet was too ill. Crosby tells us that Stennet subsequently published it, but there is no record of such a sermon by Stennet.

SECTION III: PUBLIC WORSHIP IN THE THOUGHT OF BENJAMIN KEACH

CHAPTER ONE. "A LAMP WITHOUT OIL":

KEACH'S CASE AGAINST INFANT BAPTISM

i. Introduction.

John Tombes¹ (1603?-1676) and Richard Baxter clearly occupy the centre stage of the first generation of the debate between Baptists and pedobaptists. Their debate was conducted on a sophisticated theological level and was sharpened by the proximity of their parishes.² There was no clear successor to Baxter in the second generation of the debate. However, Benjamin Keach followed Tombes as the chief spokesman for Baptist views in the second generation. The quantity of his output on the subject and his clarity of expression make him the outstanding champion of Baptist views on baptism in his generation.

Between 1689 (the year of Keach's first book challenging pedobaptist views) and 1696³ (the year of his last book on the subject) Keach was the most vigorous champion of anti-pedobaptist views. This was a critical period for the Particular Baptists; 1689 was the year of their first general assembly, and it was also the year that they

¹DNB, vol. 19, pp. 929-931.

²For an account of the Tombes-Baxter debate, see E. Brooks Holifield, The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 87-98.

³Believers Baptism appeared in 1705, but it was identical to Light Broke forth in Wales (1696).

republished the Second London Confession, a Baptist version of the Westminster Confession. The choice of the Westminster Confession was an attempt to prove their doctrinal solidarity with other English Protestants. Also in that year, the general assembly established a fund for the training of Particular Baptist ministers, another move calculated to gain respectability. The polemics against pedobaptism were part of Keach's contribution to this movement to gain public acceptance for his community and to demonstrate the intellectual foundations for a Baptist doctrine which non-Baptists found highly objectionable. However, part of Keach's motivation to challenge the pedobaptist doctrine came from his understanding of justification. The following section will show that Keach viewed the baptism of infants as inferring a doctrine of conditional justification.

Much of Keach's output is a reworking of themes already sounded by earlier Baptist writers, particularly the anti-pedobaptist John Tombes. The distinctiveness of Keach's contribution was in the emphasis he placed on the soteriological implications of infant baptism. Keach, like those whom he followed, believed that infant baptism implied conditional justification. That was not a new theme, but the extent to which it dominated Keach's polemic against pedobaptism was unique. He believed that a covenant of conditional justification followed directly from infant baptism and that infant baptism was a product of such a faulty (in his opinion) soteriology. References to this relationship abound in his anti-pedobaptist writings, and many of his opponents openly affirmed a conditionalist doctrine of justification, i.e., that justification is not a matter of

having Christ's righteousness imputed to the sinner, but rather of having the sinner's faith and evangelical good works imputed to be righteousness for the sake of Christ. (See Section IV, chapter one.)

To put the matter briefly in a form characteristic of the seventeenth century debate, Keach denied that the covenant sealed by circumcision was the antitype of the covenant sealed by baptism. Thus, it follows that circumcision was not the antitype of baptism. According to Tombes, these were the two "pillars" of pedobaptism: that baptism and the baptismal covenant were to circumcision and the covenant of circumcision as type to antitype.⁴

ii. The baptism debate: Keach and his opponents.

Keach published six books and one broadsheet attacking pedobaptism: The broadsheet, Mr. Baxter's Arguments for Believers Baptism (1674), was Keach's first foray into the baptism debate and is no longer extant. It was based on Baxter's arguments for confirmation in Confirmation and Restauration. The six books are Gold Refin'd (1689), Paedobaptism Disproved (1691), The Rector Rectified (1692), The Ax Laid to the Root (1693), A Counter-Antidote (1694), and Light Broke forth in Wales (1696). Believers Baptism (1705) is identical to Light Broke forth in Wales. Each of the books was a response to one or more theological opponents. The following section outlines background of

⁴John Tombes, Examen, in Two Treatises, pp.29-30 quoted in Holifield, The Covenant Sealed, p. 90.

each of Keach's books on baptism.

In its title, Gold Refin'd mentions The Unworthy Non-communicant by Anglican priest, William Smythies, rector of St. Giles, Cripplegate.⁵ However, it is also a polemic against the Quakers. Keach condemns "those deceived People who cry up the Light within to be the True Christ" and affirms that baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Word are given by the graciousness of Christ.⁶ Smythies' arguments belong more to the group that defended infant baptism on the basis of its relationship to circumcision, than to those who believed that grace was objectively conveyed. His first argument is "Children were members of the Jewish Church as well as Adult Persons..."⁷

The preface gives the impression that the Anglicans had a great deal to do with inciting Keach to write Gold Refin'd:

...this Treatise was wrote [sic] the last Summer, altho it had no Birth till now, and many know what Provocations I had about that time to write in behalf of our Practice in respect of Baptism: having heard how a worthy Minister (whom I respect and honour) who liveth not far off from me, had publickly preach'd up the baptizing of little Babes, bearing very hard upon those of our Perswasion...⁸

Keach went on to say that although he was challenged to a debate by some ministers of the Church of England, the clergymen who offered the

⁵Alumni Cantabrigienses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), vol. 4.

⁶Benjamin Keach, Gold Refin'd; or, Baptism in its Primitive Purity, (1689), p. 44. (Hereafter referred to as Gold Refin'd.)

⁷William Smythies, The Unworthy Non-Communicant (1683), p. 88.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. i.

challenge did not appear at the debate.⁹

Pedobaptism Disproved was occasioned by an issue of the Athenian Mercury, a popular journal of opinion published by John Dunton (also publisher of Keach's Travels of True Godliness and Progress of Sin). Initially called the Athenian Gazette, the first issue stated its purpose:

The Design is briefly, to satisfy all ingenious and curious Enquirers into Speculations, Divine, Moral, and Natural, &c. and to remove those Difficulties and Dissatisfactions, that shame or fear of appearing ridiculous by asking questions, may cause several Persons to labour under who now have opportunities of being resolv'd in any Question without knowing their Informer.¹⁰

Three issues of the Mercury were devoted to the baptism question: Vol. 4, no. 14 and no. 18 and vol. 5, no. 19. The first issue raised eight questions about the justifiability of infant baptism which appear to have been put to the paper by a Baptist minister; the writer refers to "another Letter" received just as the paper was going to press "from (as We believe) a Teacher of the Anabaptists..." The questions are all answered with standard pedobaptist replies to Baptist objections to infant baptism. The second issue discussed the question further, particularly with regard to the nature of the grace conveyed by baptism:

...you put a Dilemma upon us, to know...whether Remission or Salvation is sealed to the Infant...As to the latter, whether Children receive Remission of Sins and Salvation by Baptism, We answer, Yes, as sure as adult Persons, viz. both

⁹Ibid. For a lengthy description of the incident, see Crosby, vol. 4, p. 302.

¹⁰The Athenian Gazette: or Casuistical Mercury, Resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions proposed by the Ingenious, vol. 1, no. 1, 17 March 1690.

of 'em Conditionally...¹¹

The third issue included the syllogisms found in the second edition of Pedo-Baptism Disproved and mentioned Keach by name. It also referred to "H.C.", a Baptist, obviously Hercules Collins.¹²

The Rector Rectified was the product of an acrimonious encounter between John Treadwell, Baptist minister at Lavenham, and William Burkit (1650-1703),¹³ Rector of Milden, Suffolk. The proceedings of the General Assembly of 1690 give an account of Baptist evangelists making a tour of Essex and Suffolk in 1689 and implies that they were very successful:

Some at the cost of the Fund were sent out to preach the Gospel, with which the People were so affected, that they were forced to ride from place to place, and preach every day till they were even spent; and divers were baptized, and two Churches are like to be gathered; and the People have sent again for their help; their Meetings were very great, and a great Door is open in those Eastern Parts...¹⁴

The Assembly of 1690 sent "Brother Benj. Keach, and one Brother more"¹⁵ to visit the new churches in Suffolk and Norfolk. Apparently Keach and Burkit never met, but Burkit published a defense of infant baptism and Keach responded with a lively attack. The occasion for the printed debate was the publication of Burkit's An Argumentative and Practical Discourse Infant-Baptism, which claims to be the substance

¹¹Athenian Mercury, vol. 4, no. 18.

¹²In 1692 Collins published Animadversions upon the Responses of the Athenian Mercury.

¹³DNB, vol. 3, pp. 371-372.

¹⁴Narrative of the Proceedings, (1690), p. 5.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 7.

of remarks Burkit made at the Baptist church in Lavenham. Burkit was certainly exercised about the Baptists: "Since the late General Liberty, the Anabaptists (thinking themselves thereby let loose upon us) have disperst themselves into several Counties".¹⁶ According to Crosby, Burkit was disturbed by the success of the Baptists in converting his parishioners to their beliefs.¹⁷ In his "Epistle to Mr. William Burkit", John Treadwell accuses Burkit of interrupting the Baptists' service in an "unexpected and unseemly manner" and of causing "an Uproar and Disturbance in our Meeting-place".¹⁸ Burkit accused Treadwell of baptizing his "Proselites" in a "nasty Horse-pond...out of which his deluded Converts come forth with so much Mudd and Filthiness upon them, that they rather resembled Creatures arising out of the Bottomless Pit, than the Candidates of Holy Baptism".¹⁹

Other than the "nasty Horse-pond" charge, Burkit's book contains little that is offensive, although the tone is certainly severe. It opens with a prayer which Burkit used when he delivered the remarks in the Baptists' church, which invokes the aid of God "who shewest to them that be in Error the Light of thy Truth...that they may obey from the Heart the form of Doctrine delivered to them, how contradictory

¹⁶Burkit, Argumentative and Practical Discourse, London (1695) (2nd edition), p. i.

¹⁷Crosby, vol. 4, p. 282.

¹⁸Benjamin Keach, The Rector Rectified and Corrected, London (1692), p. i. (Hereafter referred to as Rector.)

¹⁹Burkit, Argumentative and Practical Discourse, p. i.

soever it may be to their Private Opinions, or secular Interests".²⁰

The heart of Burkit's argument is that baptism is the antitype of circumcision and the covenant of grace is merely the covenant made with Abraham in another form:

...Baptism now signifies the same thing to us which Circumcision did to the Jews of old, and serves for the same end to us, which Circumcision did to them; Therefore Baptism under the Gospel succeeds Circumcision under the Law, and consequently as the Jewish Infants were Circumcised, so may ours be Baptised.²¹

Keach responded not only to Burkit's arguments, but to John Flavel's Vindiciae Legis et Foederis: or, a Reply to Mr. Philip Cary's Solemn Call, in which Flavel, like Burkit, argued that baptism is circumcision's antitype. Flavel (1630?-1691), a Nonconformist minister, also published the popular books Husbandry Spiritualized and Navigation Spiritualized. In both cases, Keach was troubled about the implications for the covenant of grace and discerned in Flavel, in particular, an advocate of the conditional covenant.

Keach answered Flavel at greater length in his next assault on infant baptism, The Ax Laid to the Root:

The Truth is, that great Author [John Flavell] hath not missed the Mark, only in asserting Paedo-Baptism, and in his dark Notions, about the Covenant of Circumcision, but also in a Point of far greater Moment, viz. In asserting in this very Book, the Conditionality of the Covenant of Grace...²²

²⁰Ibid., p. ii.

²¹Burkit, An Argumentative and Practical Discourse, p. 3.

²²Benjamin Keach, The Ax laid to the Root, London (1693), p. i. (Hereafter referred to as Ax.)

Other targets at which Keach aimed in this work were John Rothwell's Paedobaptismus Vindicatus (1693)²³ and Joshua Exell's A Serious Enquiry into, and Certain Producing of Plain and Express Proofs, that John Baptist, did as certainly Baptize Infants as the Adult (1693). Rothwell, an Anglican priest, defends infant baptism from a fairly "high church" position²⁴ and uses many of the arguments put forward by Jeremy Taylor in A Discourse of the Liberty of Propheying. Exell was aware that Baptists such as Keach believed that two covenants had been made with Abraham²⁵ and that circumcision was only the seal of a re-affirmation of the covenant of works:

Some do acknowledge the Covenant made with Abraham, Gen. 12.1,2,3,4, &c. to be a Covenant of Grace; but the Covenant mentioned Gen. 17.7,8, &c. they will needs have to be a Covenant of Works only for the Land of Canaan...this is devised and brought forth to be an Engine to pull all Infants out of the Covenant of Grace, and to exclude Baptism from being by God appointed to be a Seal and Sign of the Covenant of Grace, in the Room and Stead of Circumcision.²⁶

In 1693, Gyles Shute anonymously published a reply to Hercules

²³DNB attributes Paedobaptismus Vindicatus to Edward Rothwell, a Nonconformist minister, but this is almost certainly a mistake. The title page identifies the author as "J" not "E" Rothwell and asserts that it is written by "a presbyter of the Church of England."

²⁴J. Rothwell, Paedobaptismus Vindicatus: or, Infant-Baptism Stated, London (1693), p. 20: "...in Baptism, the chief thing is the Divine Grace, which consists, and stands in the Remission, Pardon, and Forgiveness of Sins; in Regeneration, or the New-birth; in Adoption, or Son-ship; and in a Right and Title to the Inheritance of Eternal Life; of which Grace Infants stand in need, and are as capable as the Adult, and full-grown Persons".

²⁵See Ax, p. 14.

²⁶Joshua Exell, A Serious Enquiry into, and Certain Producing of Plain and Express Scripture Proofs, that John Baptist did as certainly Baptize Infants when he administred Baptism to the Church of the Jews, as the Adult (1693), p. 66.

Collins' Believers Baptism from Heaven and of Divine Institution: Infants Baptism from Earth and Human Invention entitled An Antidote to prevent the Prevalency of Anabaptism (1693). Collins responded with The Antidote proved a Counterfeit (1693) and so did Keach with A Counter-Antidote to Purge out the Malignant Effects of a late Counterfeit, Prepared by Mr. Gyles Shute, an Unskilful Person (1694). Shute does appear to have been an "unskilful Person", and his book has little of substance in it. His chief complaint was that Baptists take away the assurance that dying infants can be redeemed. The first of eight queries which begin the book is, "Whether it is possible for any Children that dye in their Infancy to be saved?"²⁷

Keach's last opponent on the issue was the Welsh Nonconformist minister, James Owen (1654-1706).²⁸ "It is probably fair to say that there existed in late seventeenth century Wales no more able an advocate nor more learned a disputant than Owen".²⁹ The Dictionary of Welsh Biography accurately points out that he "agreed with Richard Baxter in his low-Calvinist theology"³⁰. In his preface, Keach observes that the "Spring or Rise of this grand Baxterian Error [i.e.,

²⁷[Gyles Shute], An Antidote to prevent the Prevalency of Anabaptism, p. i.

²⁸See Dictionary of Welsh Biography (1959), pp. 708-709 and DNB, vol. 14, 1313-1314.

²⁹Geraint Jenkins, "James Owen versus Benjamin Keach: A Controversy over Infant Baptism", Bulletin of the National Library of Wales 19, p. 59.

³⁰Dictionary of Welsh Biography, p. 708.

the conditional covenant] is from Infants-Baptismal Covenant".³¹

iii. Early defenders of believers' baptism.

To understand Keach's distinctive contribution to the baptism debate, it is necessary to survey the attacks on pedobaptism and defenses of believers' baptism published before Keach began his work.

One of the earliest defenses of believers' baptism by Particular Baptists was issued by Benjamin Coxe, Hanserd Knollys, and William Kiffin in 1645. This document sounded the themes that all subsequent Baptist apologists went on to elaborate. The authors vehemently denied that the new covenant is an extension of the Abrahamic covenant:

...the Apostle witnesseth that there are two Covenants, which GOD made with ABRAHAM and his seed; to wit, a covenant of Workes with Abrahams fleshly seed, and a covenant of Grace with Abrahams spirituall seed...³²

Oddly, the most outstanding exponent of Baptist views was not, strictly speaking, a Baptist. John Tombes, vicar of Bewdley, was an anti-pedobaptist, but never joined a Baptist church. As pointed out above, Tombes identified the two "pillars" of infant baptism as the

³¹Benjamin Keach, Believers Baptism: or, Love to the Antient Britains Displayed (1705), p. xvii. (Hereafter referred to as Believers Baptism.)

³²Benjamin Coxe, Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffen, &c. A Declaration concerning the Publike Dispute which Should have been in the Publike Meeting-House of Alderman-bury, the 3d. of this Instant Moneth of December; concerning Infants-Baptisme (1645).

Abrahamic covenant and circumcision. Tombes and those who followed were on strong ground in asserting that to make the new covenant in Christ an extension of the old Abrahamic covenant entailed the conclusion that believers were made by natural generation rather than supernatural regeneration:

...if this were truth, that the Covenant of grace is a birth-right privilege, then the children of believers are children of grace by nature ... then Christians are born Christians, not made Christians, and how are they then children of wrath by nature?³³

This argument was also picked up by Henry Danvers (d. 1687), who was, before Keach, the most prolific Baptist defender of believers' baptism.³⁴ Danvers published his Treatise of Baptism in 1673 which called forth replies from Obadiah Wills (Infant-baptisme Asserted (1674)) and Richard Baxter (More Proof of Infants Church-membership (1675)). Danvers replied to Wills in Innocency and Truth Vindicated (1675), and Wills rejoined with Vindiciae vindiciarum (1675). Knollys, Kiffin, and other key leaders of the Particular Baptist community in London lent their support to Danvers in his argument against Wills by issuing The Baptists Answer, to Mr. Obed. Wills

³³John Tombes, Two Treatises and an Appendix to them concerning Infant-Baptisme (1645), p. 53.

³⁴DNB For an article that goes into Danvers' political activities in detail, see Richard Greaves, "The Tangled Careers of Two Stuart Radicals: Henry and Robert Danvers", BQ 29 (1981), pp. 32-43. Greaves asserts that Danvers was a General Baptist, but this is unlikely. Although he may have begun as a General Baptist, by the time of the Treatise of Baptism (1673), Danvers was espousing ideas more characteristic of the Particular Baptists. For example, he opposed the idea that saints could "fall away" from grace, and the opposition to the laying on of hands expressed in his Treatise of Laying on of Hands was also at odds with General Baptist doctrine.

(1675). Although heated, Danvers' defense of believers' baptism was less sophisticated than Keach's. Nevertheless, Danvers sounded the key themes which Keach expanded upon.

Danvers was concerned to show the unsoundness of the "two pillars" of infant baptism that Tombes had identified: the Abrahamic covenant and circumcision. Danvers insisted that the new covenant symbolized by baptism was not identical with the covenant made with Abraham and symbolized by circumcision. The new covenant did not convey grace by natural generation but by supernatural regeneration:

Under the Law, Ceremony, Shadow, Letter, and carnal Seed suited to Carnal Ordinances: But when the Substance and Spirit was come (and under the Gospel) then only a Spiritual Seed...must attend the Spiritual Worship and Spiritual Ordinances.³⁵

All of these writers went on to argue that the baptism of infants was a challenge to the doctrine of final perseverance. Coxe, Knollys, and Kiffin believed that infant baptism put its recipients in "a worse condition; to wit, into a condition of falling away from grace".³⁶ Tombes argued that it followed from infant baptism that there might be "Apostasie of persons in the Covenant of grace..."³⁷ Danvers thought that infant baptism necessitated "an owning the Doctrine of Falling from Grace".³⁸

³⁵Henry Danvers, A Treatise of Baptism: Wherein, that of Believers and that of Infants, is examined by the Scriptures, (second edition) (1674), p. 28.

³⁶Coxe, Knollys, and Kiffin, A Declaration, p. 18.

³⁷Tombes, Two Treatises, p. 52.

³⁸Danvers, Treatise, p. 162.

iv. Infant baptism: A "Yoke of Bondage".

Like Coxe, Knollys, and Kiffin before him, Keach believed that infant baptism actually put children into a "worse condition" not a better one. Keach reasoned that if circumcision was a type of infant baptism, then infant baptism was a "yoke of bondage". The stock case for pedo-baptism was based on the belief that circumcision was the type that foreshadowed baptism. But Keach believed that transferring the characteristics of the old covenant to the new led to dubious, if not doctrinally dangerous, conclusions.

To Keach it followed that if baptism is truly the antitype of circumcision and the new covenant is the antitype of the old covenant, then membership in the new covenant is by birthright as it was in the old. But this, he argued, cannot be the case, for members of the new covenant are made by spiritual regeneration, not physical generation:

...if Infants are any of them regenerated in the Womb, then Regeneration in them is the first birth but Regeneration is a being born again, or a second Generation which is wrought by the Holy Spirit, therefore it can't proceed from believing Parents in any wise, they can by their Faith contribute nothing to the second Birth....³⁹

³⁹Counter Antidote, p. 19. Compare the following references Believers Baptism, p. 275: "Is not that an absurd Doctrine and Practice that renders the fruitful Womb of a godly Woman, more advantageous to increase the Church of Christ, then a fruitful Gospel"; Rector, p. 31: "'Tis not the first Birth that brings us into the Covenant of Grace, but the Second; not Generation, but Regeneration; not being born of Believers, but by our being born of God..."; Believers Baptism, p. viii: "Grace, nor gracious Privileges, in the New Covenant, come to be the Inheritance of our Children, in a Natural way, as they are our Off-spring..."; Counter-Antidote, p. 20: "... 'tis grace and not the natural Birth that makes any difference between the Children of Believers, and the Children of unbelievers..."

If the good characteristics of the old covenant and its symbol (circumcision) are transferred to the new covenant and its symbol (baptism), then the bad characteristics must be transferred, as well. If circumcision was the antitype of baptism, Keach reasoned, then baptism would oblige all those who received it to keep the Law as circumcision had:

That Covenant or Precept that profited none, unless they kept the Law, could not belong to the Covenant of Grace... 'Tis strange to me that Circumcision should be a Gospel Covenant, and yet not profit any, unless they perfectly kept the Law, and also obliged them so to do... O see how the Law and Circumcision agree, and comport together in their nature, end, use and design, and never plead for it as a Gospel Precept any more, unless you have a mind to bring your Selves and Children under the Old Covenant, and the Curse thereof...⁴⁰

Keach's most strenuous objection to infant baptism sprang from his belief that a necessary consequence of pedo-baptism must be the concept of conditional justification.⁴¹ If baptism was the initiation into the new covenant as circumcision had been into the old, rather than a sign that one had received justifying grace, then baptizands were obliged to keep the conditions of the new covenant. Burkit's

⁴⁰ Ax, p. 23; See also Rector Rectified, p. 6: "Circumcision bound those who came under that Rite, to keep the whole Law of Moses: Baptism signifies we are delivered from that Yoke of Bondage".

⁴¹In his article, "The Rise and Division of Covenant Divinity in Elizabethan Puritanism", Michael McGiffert implies that baptism came to be seen as the seal of a conditional covenant as a result of the development of the idea that there was a distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. (Harvard Theological Review 75 (1982), p. 485.)

language leads to this conclusion:

...Baptism Administred in Infancy, is...an Act of Restipulation...the Child at Baptism, enters into Covenant with God, takes (as it were) Christs Press-money in its hand, and its Name is entred into the Muster-roll of the great Captain of our Salvation, the Child takes an Oath of Fidelity to him, and obliges it self to fight Christs Battels against Sin, the World and the Devil.⁴²

Keach believed that the erroneous doctrine of the conditional covenant must be a necessary conclusion from infant baptism:

...it appears that the Spring or Rise of this grand Baxterian Error is from Infants-Baptismal Covenant; therefore, Brethren, 'tis time to consider the danger of this unwarrantable Practice and evil Innovation.⁴³

This was certainly Baxter's opinion; he explicitly stated that the covenant into which believers' children were born was a conditional covenant:

...Remission and Justification are given by a Morall Act of God, even by the promise or grant of the New Covenant, which Covenant is conditionall and universall: when any performeth the condition (as Infants do by their parents faith) the Covenant presently pardoneth and Justifieth them without any new Act of God...and if this person do by unbelief deprive himself afterward of the benefit, the Covenant which still remaineth Conditionall, will condemn

⁴²Burkit, p. 37.

⁴³Believers Baptism, p. xvii. Compare the following: Rector, p. 144: "Is this indeed the Love you Pedo-baptists have to your poor Infants? What, bring them into such a Covenant, without their knowledg or Consent, or God's Appointment, and then threaten them, if they break it, with Hell and Damnation, and what not!"; Believers Baptism, p. xx: "Nothing can be more clear than this, viz. that Infant's Baptismal-Covenant is of the same nature with the Covenant of Circumcision, viz. a conditional legal Covenant, Do this, and thou shalt live; perform the Obligation, and thou shalt be justified, but do it not, and you shall be damned or be cut off...."; Believers Baptism, p. 84. "O cruel Parents! you lift your Infants into the Spiritual War by your pretended Baptism, and arm them not".

him, as before it did justify him..."⁴⁴

John Flavel agreed with Baxter that the covenant initiated by infant baptism was conditional: "...the New Covenant is not absolutely and wholly unconditional, though notwithstanding a most free and gracious Covenant..."⁴⁵

⁴⁴Baxter, Plain Proof, p. 315.

⁴⁵Ibid.

v. Baptism as a vehicle of regeneration.

A central element in Keach's attack on pedo-baptism was to show that the act of baptism itself, either upon an infant or upon an adult, does not convey regenerating or justifying grace as an efficacious instrument. One of the authorities to whom Keach refers frequently is Stephen Charnock. In his books on baptism, he quotes the following passage from Charnock twice: "How can water, a material thing, work upon the soul in a material manner?"⁴⁶ Plainly, Keach shared Charnock's opinion that the use of water could not have a spiritual effect, even in baptism.

In showing that baptism did not have an "automatic" spiritual effect, Keach had to defend Baptists against the charge that they did not regard infants as capable of receiving regenerating grace. Secondly, he showed that pedo-baptists could demonstrate that baptism effectively conveyed justifying grace. Thirdly, against the charge that Baptists consigned dying infants to hell because they refused them baptism, Keach responded that this was to limit the mercy and omnipotence of God.

Some of the pedo-baptists concluded that if the Baptists denied baptism to children, then they must believe that infants were not capable of receiving justifying grace.

⁴⁶Stephen Charnock, Discourses on Regeneration, vol. 5 of The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock, Vol. 5 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), p. 93. Quoted in Keach, Rector, p. 80 and Ax, Part II, p. 30.

Burkit contended that the Baptists affronted the "Omnipotency of the Holy Spirit" by affirming that it was as "vain a thing, to hope and pray that Almighty God should Regenerate an Infant with his Holy Spirit; as to expect that he should illuminate a Stone or a Tree".⁴⁷ Burkit's charge that pedo-baptists regarded infants as incapable of receiving regenerating grace as a "Stone or a Tree" was not entirely inapplicable to Keach, who did affirm that "Ordinances have no more Virtue in them to an Infant, than if you should water a dead Tree".⁴⁸ Fortunately, Keach did not maintain the theologically indefensible position that infants, per se, are as incapable of receiving grace as a dead tree, only that ordinances are as incapable of delivering grace to them as to a tree or a stone. Although believing infants to be irrational, he regarded them to be possessors of rational souls.⁴⁹ He readily acknowledged that they are capable of receiving justifying grace:

Do we deny the Omnipotency of the holy Spirit? none of us never [sic] doubted of the Power of the Spirit in regenerating an Infant, if he pleases so to do..."⁵⁰

The more important question to Keach was, do infants (or adults, for that matter) receive justifying grace in and through the sacrament of baptism? This all Nonconformists denied. Even for Burkit, an Anglican, baptism was a "Token" and "Illustration", symbolizing

⁴⁷Burkit, p. 16.

⁴⁸Believers Baptism, p. 6.

⁴⁹Counter-antidote, p. 13.

⁵⁰Rector, p. 76.

regeneration, not a means effecting it.⁵¹

However, to Keach it seemed that the baptism of infants led inevitably to the conclusion that the rite itself was a vehicle of justification:

'Tis very true, [God] can if he please infuse grace into a Babe in the Womb or Cradle, nay of Stones raise up Children to Abraham; but the question is not what God can do, but what God doth do: Though we do believe the creature is passive in the first reception of Grace, yet how do you prove God doth regenerate Infants in the Womb or Cradle? Gods Grace is infused into fit and proper subjects; and tho' the Grace by which we believe is from God; yet 'tis the Creature that doth believe.⁵²

Because they were unable to show that baptism conveyed justifying grace to infants, Keach regarded the pedo-baptists' arguments for infant baptism with a great deal of suspicion. It seemed to Keach that the kind of grace that would issue in justification would be evident, but that even children baptized in infancy showed clear indications of original sin later in life:

...therefore...as certain as any derive a New Covenant Rite from Christ for Pardon, they also receive a vital Influence from him, for the renovation of their Natures, and

⁵¹Burkit, p. 15. Baxter allowed that he could acknowledge that baptism was a regenerating ordinance in a very limited sense. "It may be the Laver of Regeneration as signifying our New State, though it effect it not". (Plain Proof of Infants Church-membership (1649), p. 317.)

⁵²Counter-Antidote, p. 13-14. Cf. Rector, pp. 82-83: "...you are to prove God doth do it, and that by Baptism too; for that's the thing you seem to contend for, which we deny....We do affirm, you have as much ground of Faith from any Promise of God, to pray that God would illuminate a Stone or a Tree, as you have to pray God by Baptism he would regenerate one Infant. If you pray not in Faith, you sin; and if you have no Promise of God to ground your Faith upon, when you pray God by Baptism to regenerate an Infant, then you cannot pray in Faith".

conforming their Souls to his Image: Therefore, to assert, That the Grace of Christ, is applied to some, for remission of Sins only, or that the guilt of any Sin, can be pardoned to any Person, and yet that Sin retains its Dominion over them, is a Doctrine, I understand not to be sound...⁵³

Not only did pedo-baptists argue that Baptists denied the possibility that infants could receive justifying grace; they also reasoned that the Baptists must believe that dying infants were condemned to hell.⁵⁴

Baxter was scandalized at the thought that Baptists would not allow Christian parents any more hope for their infants' salvation than heathen parents. If the Baptists were correct, then we cannot "know that any more of the Children of the Faithful are saved, than of the heathens or Infidels; of those that love God and keep his

⁵³Ax, "...an Exposition", p. 13. Cf. Ax, p. 39 and Rector, p. 145. Cf. Believers Baptism, p. 6: "There can be no increase in Holiness without the Grace of Holiness in the Habit be first infused; and if the Seed of Holiness be first infused in Infants before Baptism, or in Baptism, that Seed would remain in them, and appear as soon as they come to Understanding...But that any such Seed or vital Principle is either way in Infants as such, whether Infants of Believers, or others appears not; but contrary-wise, nothing appears in them when grown up, but the cursed Seed of Sin, and so it will until their Natures be changed by Divine Grace".

⁵⁴Of all the Baptists' opponents, Jeremy Taylor gave the fairest consideration to their views. He recognized that Baptists did not believe that all dying infants were condemned: "Many thousand ways there are by which God can bring any reasonable soul to Himself...God hath as great care of infants as of others...God will by His own immediate mercy bring them thither where He hath intended them..." (Liberty of Prophesying in The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Jeremy Taylor, Reginald Heber, ed. (Revised and corrected by Charles P. Eden.) London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853), p. 546). However, to Taylor, this was not an argument against baptizing infants but an argument in favour of infant baptism: "...if God hath other ways of bringing them to heaven who yet cannot believe, if they can go to heaven without faith, why not to the font?" (p. 567)

Commandments, than of those that hate him".⁵⁵ He instructed parents to hope that their infants were saved on the basis of their incorporation into the covenant (of which baptism was the visible sign),⁵⁶ rather than upon the hope that they were elect:

...Some will lay all the right of Infants to the pardon of sin, and salvation, upon secret election only; as if all that we knew of Infants Salvation were that God will save some whom he hath elected....Election gave Paul...no right to pardon or salvation: Else elect Pagans and Infidels are justified...if this be so, we have no assurance that God will save ten or three Infants in all the world....⁵⁷

John Rothwell's opinion that "the Holy Ordinance of Baptism is the Instrument that sues out and purchases, through Christ's Blood, a Pardon to our selves and our Infants" was typical of the Anglican position. From their point of view it was foolish to neglect to baptize infants, even if baptism was not regarded as an efficacious instrument of regeneration: "How far Heaven extends its mercy to those that are without Means and cannot use them, is a Mystery hid from us and known only to God".⁵⁸

Unlike Rothwell and Baxter, Keach directed parents not toward the infants' incorporation into a visible covenant but toward the hope

⁵⁵Richard Baxter, More Proof of Infants Church-membership and Consequently their Right to Baptism (1675), pp. 204-205.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 206: Christian children are in "a state of Grace" and have "pardon and right to life eternal...upon their Parents Consent and Heart-devoting them to God in Christ" of which "baptism is the solemnizing and investiture, which openly coram Ecclesia delivereth them possession of their visible Church-state with a sealed pardon and gift of life".

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 204-205.

⁵⁸Rothwell, Paedobaptismus Vindicatus, p. 108.

that they were elect:

...we have ground to hope our children that Die are as happy as yours, tho' never baptized; and that from Gods word. Hath not Christ said, Of such are the Kingdom of Heaven, no doubt God hath comprehended Infants in his eternal electing Love that Die, for whom he also gave his Son, and in some secret way doth Sanctifie them, or makes them meet for glory above; and we have as much ground to hope, that God will give Grace to those Children of ours that live, as you have to hope he will give Grace to yours.⁵⁹

Although Keach acknowledged not only the possibility but the likelihood that at least some dying infants received justifying grace, he denied that such infants should be baptized, even if the minister were capable of distinguishing between elect and non-elect infants:

But if we did know which Infants would dye, who do belong to the Election of Grace, or are in Covenant with God, yet we ought not to Baptize them, because we have no Command from Jesus Christ, so to do...⁶⁰

vi. Faith: Pre-requisite or product of baptism?

⁵⁹Believers Baptism, p. 243. Cf. Ax, p. 25: "God hath many ways (as Dr. Taylor observes) to save dying Infants, which we know not; he can apply the benefit, and merits of Christ's Blood to them, in ways we are wholly Ignorant of, and ought not to trouble our Selves with it..." (This is a paraphrase of the Taylor quotation found in footnote 37.) Also Counter-Antidote, p. 12: "We do believe, that no dying Infant can be saved that is not in the Covenant of Grace, for 'tis (through or) by the Grace, Mercy and Inconceivable Love of God, as 'tis containd [sic] in the Covenant of Grace, that Christ, and all Blessings of Christ, are made over to all the Elect, whether Adult or little Infants. We therefore never asserted, That no Infants of Believers, or of unbelievers either, are in the Covenant of Grace; but we do assert, all Elect Infants are in it; Yet we do deny, that the Infants of Believers as such, or as so considered, as being their Natural Offspring, are in the Covenant of Grace". And Rector, p. 7: "...no doubt elect Infants that die have Union with Christ in a way we are ignorant of, but what is this to the Infants of Believers as such?"

⁶⁰Ax, p. 25.

If infants are capable of receiving justifying grace, then why not bestow upon them the sign of that grace? The short answer is that they do not possess personal and actual faith. Keach stressed this link, although it is not true that the pedo-baptists separated faith and baptism. Burkit believed that "Children have not actual, yet they have habitual Faith, Faith in Semine..." Yet, the difficulty involved in showing that infants have some kind of faith forced Burkit to divorce faith and salvation: "...tho' no Child is saveable by its Parents Faith, yet the Child of a Believer is Baptizable by vertue of its Parents Faith".⁶¹ Baxter did not believe that personal faith was any more necessary for baptism than it had been for circumcision:

Tell me what operation Circumcision had on all the Infants of Church-members formerly? It was a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith; Rom. 4.11. And yet they had no more Faith nor Knowledge of the significancy then [sic] ours have now.⁶²

However, in another place he asserts that infants are baptized on the condition of their parents' faith: "Infants have that faith which is the condition of the Covenant in their parents".⁶³ Taylor, who otherwise did not rely on circumcision to prove the permissibility of pedo-baptism, argued that "...if want of faith hindered not the Jewish babes from entering into the covenant of faith, then neither shall it

⁶¹Burkit, p. 19. Cf. Rothwell, p. 101.

⁶²Baxter, Plain Proof, p. 112.

⁶³Ibid., p. 301.

hinder the christian babes".⁶⁴

Giles Shute tried to show that making personal faith absolutely necessary for baptism led inescapably to the conclusion that dying infants were damned. Noting that "Anabaptists" frequently cited Mark 16.16 ("He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved"), Shute observed, "...you shall very seldom, or never, hear them quote the Remainder of the Verse, which is this, but he that believeth not shall be damned".⁶⁵ Shute pointed to a genuine weakness in the argument against infant baptism; the Baptists would not allow baptism to precede faith in any cases but in the case of dying infants would allow an exception to the rule that justification must precede faith. If an exception in one case, why not an exception in the other?

Shute also believed that denying that Christian infants possessed faith meant that they were under the covenant of works:

...this Author [Hercules Collins] very unchristianly by his Opinion, hath left all young Children that dye in their Infancy to be justified and saved by the Covenant of Works...where there is none of the Grace of Faith to change their Natures, there can be no other Grace of the Spirit; for where the Grace of Faith is wanting, all other Graces of the Spirit are wanting: Then if ever Infants are saved that dye in their Infancy, it must be by the Covenant of Works, for there is no medium or middle way between Faith and Works...⁶⁶

Shute's argument is peculiar but not without force. For Baxter and the "Middle Way" theologians, faith was the pre-condition of

⁶⁴Taylor, Liberty of Prophesying, p. 564.

⁶⁵Shute, An Antidote, p. 7. Cf. Rothwell, Paedobaptismus Vindicatus, p. 32.

⁶⁶Shute, p. 46.

incorporation into the covenant of grace; therefore, it followed that those who denied that infants possessed faith were excluding children from not only the visible covenant community, but from the invisible community of the truly elect, as well.

Keach was not moved by such arguments. For him, infants were both incapable of showing signs of faith and also incapable of having the kind of faith that he believed to be *present in the justified*. Faith and understanding (or knowledge) were as closely connected in Keach's mind as were baptism and faith, and he denied the propriety of baptising infants not only because Christ had not commanded their baptism, but also because of the intrinsic connection between baptism and faith. Keach asserted that only those who demonstrated apparently genuine faith should be baptized:

...Baptism doth not by God's appointment, belong all to them who are capable of the Benefits or Blessings signified thereby, as Remission of Sin and Regeneration, &c. but only to such who are capable to repent and profess Faith in Christ.⁶⁷

For Keach, the faith which should be present in baptizands involves the restoration of the image of God and the restoration of the image of God involves the enlightenment of the understanding. Plainly, this is impossible in infants:

...Infants are not capable Subjects of Baptism: for this Sacrament calls for Understanding, and Judgment, and Senses to be exercised in all that partake thereof, or else the whole work will be altogether insignificant. Therefore, saith one, to carry a poor Babe to Baptism, is as much as to carry it to hear a Sermon.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Rector, p. 77-78.

⁶⁸Gold Refin'd, p. 80.

One problem in Keach's baptismal theology is that he affirmed both that the Spirit can regenerate infants and that the regenerated possess enlightened understandings.⁶⁹ Infants, according to Keach, are "Irrational creatures" (although possessing rational souls),⁷⁰ however dying infants (if elect) do experience regeneration. This exception seriously weakens Keach's case against pedo-baptism.⁷¹ If the Spirit can bestow regeneration without faith, why may not faith also be bestowed without understanding? Keach never acknowledged this tension in his theology, but may have thought that he chose the lesser of two evils in allowing that "Infants are not in an ordinary way capable of the Image of God, tho' they may be capable of Grace and Salvation by

⁶⁹Counter Antidote, p. 19: "Now shew at what time 'tis that regeneration is wrought in your Infants. O take heed; for tho' God doth regenerate the Souls of dying Infants, that are saved. Yet what is this to the Infants of Believers as such?"

⁷⁰Counter-antidote, p. 13.

⁷¹Taylor recognized that this was a weakness in the Baptist case. Baptists and pedo-baptists both, he wrote, believed that "a man by Adam or any way of nature cannot go to heaven, neither men nor infants without the addition of some instrument or means of God's appointing; but this is to be understood to be true only ordinarily and regularly, but the case of infants is extraordinary, for they are not within the rule and the way of ordinary dispensation; and therefore there being no command for them to be baptized, there will be some other way to supply it extraordinarily..." To argue that infants are neither naturally qualified for heaven nor capable of being baptized, Taylor said, was "a plain begging of the question". If it is not clear that an extraordinary way of receiving justifying grace has been appointed for infants and if they are in need of such grace, then they must receive it in the ordinary, i.e., by baptism: "...wherever there is no extraordinary way appointed, there we must all go the ordinary..." (Liberty of Prophesying, p. 568.)

Christ".⁷² The keyword in this text is "ordinary"; there can be extraordinary regeneration without faith, but there can never be faith without understanding. Giles Shute pointed out the same problem in Hercules Collins' The Antidote Proved Counterfeit:

In Pages 113 and 114, there saith he, We can tell you a better way of washing away of Original Sin, namely, by the Imputation of Christs Righteousness to Infants dying in their Infancy.

...he hath subtilly left out the grace of Faith...the onely instrumental cause of Justification...for without Faith it is impossible to please [God].⁷³

Although maintaining a close connection between faith and baptism, Keach separated faith and regeneration. Separating faith and regeneration was risky for it moved in the direction of antinomianism; if faith is not necessary in a regenerated infant, is it necessary in a regenerated adult? However, the separation did extricate him from the dilemma of the pedo-baptists who acknowledged the connection between faith and baptism and therefore had to show that infants had some kind of faith.

The tension involved in allowing regeneration without understanding must have seemed preferably to allowing faith without understanding.

vii. The hermeneutics of baptism.

To Keach it seemed as though the case for baptising infants

⁷²Counter-Antidote, p. 13.

⁷³Shute, p. 18.

involved a deliberate, or at least seriously misguided, misreading of scripture. He insisted first that an issue as important as baptism could be proved only on the basis of very clear scriptural teaching and secondly, that the pedo-baptists method of reading scripture would result in the introduction of clearly unscriptural doctrines.

The pedo-baptists attempted to show that Christ's blessing of the children implied that infants might be baptized.⁷⁴ However, Keach pointed out the obvious fact that the text nowhere mentions that the children were baptized by either Christ or the apostles:

Doth Christ receive all sorts of Persons into his Arms of Mercy, to heal their bodily Distempers, of which some were wicked and ungodly? and shall the Church refuse to receive all such into her Embraces? Besides, all those pretended Consequences make no more for Infants to be baptized, than for their receiving the *Lord's Supper*, and all other Privileges that belong, as well as Baptism, to Adult Persons who believe or are Disciples.⁷⁵

Keach insisted that scripture teaches plainly not obscurely. If pedo-baptism were the will of God, then surely scripture would teach it explicitly, not implicitly:

...Consequences that are genuine, or are naturally deduced from the Scripture, to prove and demonstrate Matter of Faith...and Consequences brought to prove a Positive Law or Institutions are another thing. Pray, did God by Moses give forth any Law, or positive Rite or Precept so darkly, that it could not be proved but by Consequences?...Moses delivered every Law, Statute and Ordinance so plainly to the

⁷⁴Burkit, An Argumentative and Practical Discourse, pp. 21ff; Shute, An Antidote, pp. 4ff.

⁷⁵Rector, p. 101. Cf. Gold Refin'd, p. 125-126: "That the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to little Children we have no cause to doubt: but that they have a right to Baptism therefore, is deny'd...sure we are, that those who are fit Subjects of Baptism ought not to be deny'd the Sacrament of Bread and Wine...."

People of Israel, that he that ran might read it....⁷⁶

Secondly, if we may do whatever is not forbidden by scripture, then rites and ceremonies may proliferate ad infinitum. The final result will be a return to Roman Catholic practices:

If therefore any thing may be done in God's Worship, which you suppose is not forbid, and bears also some proportion in Signification with Jewish Rites; all Popish Rites and Ceremonies may be let in at the same Door...⁷⁷

Of course, other Nonconformists insisted that their one and only rule in determining the form and content of worship was holy scripture. For example, Richard Baxter:

If the Scriptures be Gods perfect Law, it sure determines of all material parts of worship, or else it was not made for a perfect Rule concerning worship, and positive Ordinances....

Baxter, as well as Keach, believed that determining worship by tradition was a short-cut back to the errors of the Roman Catholic church: "...what a multitude of Ceremonies will this admit into the Church, to the burthening of mens Consciences, and the pollution of Gods worship?"⁷⁸

viii. The significance of baptismal form.

Keach and his opponents spilled much ink in arguing about the correct form of baptism, i.e., should the baptismal water be sprinkled, poured, or in sufficient quantities for immersion? The

⁷⁶Rector, p. 33.

⁷⁷Rector Rectified, p. 7.

⁷⁸Baxter, Plain Proof, p. 302.

issue seems trivial but was fiercely debated. Only one of Keach's opponents devoted an entire volume to proving sprinkling was the correct form (Exell's Plain and Exquisite Scripture-Proof, That St. John Baptist and the blessed Apostles, and all the Primitive Baptizers, did baptize by sprinkling, or pouring water upon the person or persons they baptized, and not by dipping the persons into water (1693)), but all of them discussed the issue.

One common argument against "dipping" was that immersion was immodest. William Burkit considered immersion to be dangerous, both physically and morally: "Whatsoever has a tendency towards the breach of the sixth and seventh Commandment by endangering our Own or our Neighbours Life, Health or Chastity, is not safe, but sinful".⁷⁹ Richard Baxter also believed that immersion was morally suspect and charged Baptists with "dipping persons naked" or "next to naked".⁸⁰ However, most pedobaptists were in agreement with Burkit who acknowledged that the amount of water and the way it was applied was essentially irrelevant: "...we do not oppose the Lawfulness of Dipping in some case [sic], but the necessity of Dipping in all cases".⁸¹

To Keach the form of the rite was far from irrelevant, and his reasons for asserting immersion were far from trivial.⁸² He gave two

⁷⁹Burkit, p. 55.

⁸⁰Baxter, Scripture Proof, p. 137.

⁸¹Burkit, p. 50.

⁸²Jeremy Taylor also insisted on the importance of immersion: "[Taylor] points out that it is plainly the law of the Church of England that children are to be dipped in the water when baptized,

reasons for the importance of the form. First, the church is not at liberty to change a form clearly given in scripture:

...how dare you say, the Church hath power to dispense with Dipping, and change it into Sprinkling?...Suppose the Jews should have changed Circumcision...to the paring the Nails of their Children, or to cut off a little Skin off of the Finger Ends; would that have been Circumcision? no doubt a better Circumcision than Sprinkling is Baptism.⁸³

Secondly, for Keach, baptism was a "visual sermon". Baptism is one more of the long catalogue of earthly vehicles of divine truths which fill Tropologia:

The Form of Baptism, viz. External and Essential, is no other than an Analogical Proportion, which the Signs keep with the Thing signified thereby...dipping into Water, in a most lively Similitude sets forth the Mortification of the old Man, and rising out of the Water the Vivification of the new Man....plunging into the Water...holds forth to us that horrible Gulph of Divine Justice, in which Christ, for our sakes, for a while was in a manner swallowed up; abiding under the Water, (how little time soever) denotes his Descent into Hell...Rising out of the Water, holds forth to us a lively Similitude of that Conquest which this dead Man got over Death.⁸⁴

unless illness or other special circumstance required otherwise. Yet the custom of sprinkling had become widespread. Taylor cites both abundant testimony of antiquity, and the symbolic suitability of the ceremony itself, to show that dipping is better. Hence the law should be followed and the custom to the contrary disregarded. Similarly, triple, rather than single, immersion expresses the trinitarian meaning of the sacrament and is supported by ancient tradition. Hence it should be practised". (H.B. Porter, Jeremy Taylor, Liturgist (1613-1667), p. 32.)

⁸³Keach, Pedo-Baptism disproved (1691), p. 11. Cf. Believers Baptism, p. 19. He was also aware that the Book of Common Prayer expressed a preference for immersion: "...the Church of England doth acknowledg, I must confess, that Baptism is Dipping, but I never heard they have of late times so practised". (Pedo-Baptism disproved, p. 11.)

⁸⁴Keach, Believers Baptism (1705), p. 30.

ix. The meaning and significance of baptism.

Other than being a "visual aid" to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ did baptism have any significance for Keach? It would be easier to say what it did not mean to him: The ritual was not a way of entering the covenant for those who did not possess personal faith; it was not an engagement to follow the Law for those who had not yet been converted; and it did not convey the grace of justification of regeneration objectively. Nevertheless, baptism was more than a "mere sign" to Keach. Its significance is four-fold: First, God's promises are associated with it:

God hath also promised to assist, stand by, help and enable all Believers Baptized, with farther supplies of Grace, nay, they being actually United to Christ, have his blessed influences flowing to them...⁸⁵

Second, Christ's baptism shows that each person of the Trinity is involved in baptism:

...No Ordinance in all the New-Testament was ever so grac'd, nor honoured with such a Presence as this was at the Baptism of Christ; the three Persons manifest their Presence at this Solemnity... 1. The Father seals it and honours it. 2. The Son is there, and subjects to it, shewing what an honourable respect he has to it; nay and came many Miles upon no other Business but to be baptized... 3. The Spirit also descended like a Dove, and rested upon him; the Holy Ghost puts his Seal upon it, and in a glorious manner owns it.⁸⁶

And thirdly, it affects the religious emotions:

...we cannot but be much affected with the great Love and

⁸⁵Keach, Believers Baptism, p. 270. Cf. p. 173: "...Consider the great Promises made to those who are obedient to it, amongst other things, Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the World. And again, He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved".

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 172.

Goodness of our Blessed Saviour in the Institution of these two great Ordinances, it being his gracious Design and Condescention, [sic] hereby to hold forth, or preach, as I may say, to the very light of our visible Eyes, by these fit and proper Mediums, the glorious Doctrine of his Death, Burial, and Resurrection, which in the Ministration of the Word, is preached or held forth to the hearing of our Ears, that so we might the better and more effectually be established and grounded in the sure and steadfast belief thereof...⁸⁷

Fourthly, baptism is a form of communion with Christ:

We have Fellowship with Christ in his Death in Baptism, or the Efficacy of his Death evidenced to us, as the outward Symbol of it is held forth in the external Administration of it.⁸⁸

Even after Keach has explained the significance of baptism, there remains the feeling that he feared to attribute too much significance to it. He was not anti-sacramental, and although he denied objective efficacy to the baptismal ritual, he held to a high degree of objectivity about the grace of the Lord's Supper:

...What sweet Food, or how good a Pasture isthe Ordinance of the Lord's Supper...A Crucified Christ is the Bread of Life; and by Faith in this Ordinance we feed upon this Bread...⁸⁹

Doubtless, the high degree of efficacy attributed to baptism by the pedobaptists made it impossible for Keach to attribute much significance to the grace of baptism.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 43

⁸⁸Golden Mine, p. 133.

⁸⁹Ibid.

x. Conclusion.

Keach's polemics against "Baxterianism", the doctrine of conditional justification, and his polemics against pedobaptism are two parts of the same theological war. In showing that justifying grace is absolute, not conditional, Keach was attacking one of the foundations of infant baptism. For conditionalists such as Baxter it was very important to show that baptism engaged infants to have faith, because without that faith, they could not be saved. Keach's unconditionalist doctrine of justification changed the way that baptism and faith were connected: baptism becomes not a promise to be faithful, but a sign that one has faith.

In attacking pedobaptism, Keach was also carrying on his polemic against the conditionalists. The new covenant is absolute and is not sealed by baptism as the old covenant was sealed by circumcision. Keach substantiated his objection to the practice from his uncompromising commitment to unconditional justification.

From the premise that circumcision is the antitype of baptism, Keach reasoned that such a baptism would be as conditional as the covenant of circumcision had been. To him the baptism founded on such a typology implied a conditional covenant. God's gracious covenant fully displayed and confirmed by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is not the antitype of the old covenant, the covenant of works. Keach showed that Baptists regarded infants as capable of receiving justifying grace, but not proper subjects of baptism. They were not proper subjects of baptism because of the indissoluble connection

between faith and baptism, a connection on which Keach insisted. Finally, it seemed absurd to Keach to insist on a straightforward reading of the New Testament on every issue but baptism. To derive infant baptism from the New Testament seemed to him to set a precedent for other errors.

Keach's achievement was more than merely negative, however; he found a way to maintain the sacramentality of baptism while denying that it was literally a "laver of regeneration". It is a vehicle of the divine promise; it is a nexus in which the work of each person of the Trinity is involved; it is an object of religious devotion; and it is a place of meeting between the believer and Christ.

It is to be wished that Keach had constructed a more positive case for believers' baptism. However, he was the chief (although unofficial) spokesman for the most criticized and misunderstood doctrine of the Baptists, who, in the seventeenth century, were a criticized and misunderstood group. It is not surprising that he adopted an attitude that was defensive and conservative. What is remarkable is that he achieved so much from such a position.

CHAPTER TWO: TWO CONTROVERSIES: THE LAYING ON OF HANDS AND THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH

I. THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

i. Introduction.

In 1674 Henry Danvers attacked the practice of some Baptists who administered the laying on of hands on the newly baptized. His book, A Treatise of Laying on of Hands. With the History thereof, Both from the Scripture and Antiquity, called forth two direct responses, Thomas Grantham's The Fourth Principle of Christs Doctrine Vindicated Being a Brief Answer to Mr. H. Danvers Book, Intituled, A Treatise of Laying on of Hands (1674) and Benjamin Keach's Darkness Vanquished (1675) (which was republished in a slightly modified form in 1698 as Laying on of Hands upon Baptized Believers, as such, Proved an Ordinance of Christ. In Answer to Mr. Danvers's former Book, Intituled, A Treatise of Laying on of Hands. All references are to this second edition which differs from the first only in the inclusion of a brief response to the anonymous A Treatise Concerning Laying on of Hands, which is no longer extant.).

It is slightly misleading to speak of the laying on of hands' controversy. Among Particular Baptists there was little disagreement;

few churches practiced laying on of hands for "confirmation".¹ Only the General Baptists enshrined confirmation in a confessional document.² Where the hands issue did come up, however, it aroused opposition. The churches meeting at Wells (8 and 9 November 1653) also found that "there is no precept nor president [sic] in the Gospel of Christ for the imposition of hands on all baptized believers", but urged their churches not to make confirmation or the lack of it a "term" of communion.³ The Abingdon association, meeting at Tetsworth, 20-22 May 1657, sent a letter to their member churches reporting their finding that "laying on of hands on everie baptized disciple was never an ordinance of the Lord".⁴

¹Instead of using the historically accurate but cumbersome phrase "the laying on of hands on baptized believers as such", this rite will be referred to as "confirmation" to distinguish laying on of hands for the strengthening grace of the Spirit from laying on of hands for ordination or healing. See J.G. Davies, ed., Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship (London: SCM Pres, Ltd., 1972), pp. 145-149.

²See Article XII of the "Standard Confession", (1660), in Lumpkin, p. 229 and Article XXXII of the "Orthodox Creed", p. 320. To understand the wider context of the laying on of hands among the General Baptists, see English Baptists, pp. 41-46.

³Association Records (Part 2), pp. 54, 70-71.

⁴Association Records (Part 3), pp. 175-176.

ii. Keach's theology of the laying on of hands.

The Baptists understood themselves to be carrying forward the Reformation that had begun with Luther and Calvin. It was being carried a step further, Keach believed, by those Baptists who administered the laying on of hands on the newly baptized. According to Keach confirmation had been a part of the worship of the primitive church, and the aim of the Reformation, as he saw it, was to restore the church as closely as possible to the pattern of the primitive church:

...tho the Light is come, yet the Glory of the Lord is but rising upon us; ours is but the Morning of that longed for Day...hence are so many Divisions amongst us...God gradually discovers Himself, and true Order and Form of his House and worship unto us.⁵

The laying on of hands for confirmation was most likely an inheritance from Keach's days as a General Baptist. Like the General Baptists, Keach thought that confirmation was among the foundation principles of Christianity taught in Heb. 6.1-2.⁶ General Baptist defenders of confirmation routinely turned to this text as a support

⁵Benjamin Keach, Laying on of Hands upon Baptized Believers, as such, Proved an Ordinance of Christ. In Answer to Mr. Danvers's former Book, Intituled, A Treatise of Laying on of Hands (1698), p. i. (Hereafter referred to as Laying on of Hands.)

⁶Ibid., p. 48.

for their practice.⁷ When Keach moved to London in 1668, he joined the church of William Rider, another apologist for confirmation.⁸ However, by 1672, Keach, by then the pastor of Rider's church, had moved to accept Calvinist principles.⁹ There is no reason to think that Rider induced Keach to accept confirmation; Keach makes no reference to Rider in his book on the subject.

Keach held that to every ordinance or sacrament "there is some special and peculiar Blessing annexed; and 'tis ordained as God's ordinary way for the conveyance of it..."¹⁰ Preaching was the "gate" admitting Christians to Christ's "pasture", the church; Baptism was a means of "Fellowship with Christ in his Death"; and the Lord's Supper a means of "Communion with Christ".¹¹ Confirmation was God's ordinance for bestowing the Spirit on believers.¹²

⁷For example, Thomas Grantham's The Fourth Principle, p. 15 and William Rider's Layings on of Hands asserted, "Epistle Dedicatory", p. ii. See also Ernest Payne, "Baptists and Christian Initiation", BQ 26, (1975-76), p. 151.

⁸See Rider's Layings on of Hands asserted: Or, A plain discovery of the truth thereof, under those several considerations minded in the New Testament (1656).

⁹In April of 1672, Calvinist Hanserd Knollys married Keach to his second wife, Susannah Partridge. The fact that Keach and Knollys were on such good terms implies strongly that Keach had become a Calvinist.

¹⁰Keach, Laying on of Hands, p. 98.

¹¹Keach, Golden Mine, pp. 131-133.

¹²Ibid., pp. 16-17 and pp. 77-78. John Gosnold, pastor of the Barbican church, disputed this point: "This fair Pretext to obtaine more of the Spirit hath beguiled many a poore, weake unstable soul....could they but shew one place where ever Laying on of Hands was practised upon all Baptized Believers, upon such an Accompt, we would in great measure suddenly become their Proselytes". (Laying on of Hands (1656), p. 12.)

Anticipating that some of his colleagues would take issue with him and argue that they had already received the Spirit without the imposition of hands, Keach allowed that this could and sometimes did happen: "If God be better than his Word, we will not complain; he hath many ways to convey his Spirit into our hearts; yet this is the great Ordinance for distributing it to baptized Believers..."¹³ Furthermore, Keach went on to point out that the argument that confirmation was not necessary for the reception of the Spirit could be raised against the Lord's Supper:

Now probably some who are against the Lord's Supper, may say, they feed upon Christ, and have as much Communion with him, and Faith in him, as many of us who often partake thereof; and may be can say as much on this account, as you on the other: will you therefore neglect your Duty concerning the breaking of Bread?¹⁴

Although clearly regarding confirmation as extremely important, Keach did not regard it as essential for communion:

I am not of the opinion that such Members in a Church, who are convinced of it, ought to separate themselves from the Church, because the other Members of the said Church see it not: no, but they ought to bear one with another, until God shall please to open their eyes.---We all see but in part, and know but in part...¹⁵

Thus Keach regarded laying on of hands "on baptized believers as such" as an ordinance and as the ordinance by which God normally granted the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. However, he did not regard it as the sine qua non of communion and was prepared to

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 111.

maintain fellowship with those who did not practice confirmation.¹⁶

iii. Danvers' case against the laying on of hands.

Danvers recognized four uses of the laying on of hands in the New Testament: benediction, healing, "conferring the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit", and ordination.¹⁷ He did not believe that the laying on of hands for the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, i.e., confirmation, was a New Testament practice. Danvers' book outlined the practices of the Church of Rome, the Church of England, and the "baptized churches". It was his opinion that confirmation had been introduced into the Baptist churches by Francis Cornwell, an Anglican priest turned Baptist minister.¹⁸ The implication is that the practice is a carry-over from Anglicanism. However, not all ex-Anglican priests were in favor of the practice. The Coleman Street church, whose

¹⁶Raymond Brown incorrectly assumes that Keach regarded "hands" as a "term of communion": "It seems that Keach held these views so strongly that he was unwilling to welcome into the membership of his church any but those whose baptism had been accompanied by the imposition of hands..." (The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century, p. 45. With regard to the hands' and singing issues, Keach urged members of his church (in the preface to the Articles of Faith) to exercise "Tenderness, Charity and Moderation to such as differ from you in those Cases... [do] not refuse Communion with them..." (Keach, Articles, "Epistle Dedicatory".)

¹⁷Henry Danvers, A Treatise of Laying on of Hands. With the History thereof, Both from Scripture and Antiquity, (1674), pp. 2-3. Cf. John Gosnold, Of Laying on of Hands (1656), p. 1, where the three uses of "hands" are (1) healing; (2) conferring "extraordinary" gifts of the Holy Spirit; and (3) ordination.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 58-59. For Francis Cornwell, see Whitley, "Index to Notable Baptists", TBHS 7, (1920-21), p. 194.

pastor was ex-Anglican priest Hanserd Knollys, disowned pro-hands' author Thomas Tillam and "and all that are in the practice of the laying on of hands".¹⁹ Knollys himself never addressed the issue, but it seems unlikely that he would he have allowed the practice to be condemned by his church if he had been in favor of it. John Gosnold, pastor of the Barbican church, shared Danvers' opinion that there was a connection between confirmation and the Church of England:

Some would have the Laying on of Hands, for Confirmation as they call it, and though they shroud themselves under the forementioned Scriptures, yet to speak truth, their best argument is the Common Prayer book...²⁰

Danvers' principal objection to confirmation was that it was not expressly taught in scripture:

If it was indeed said, Let all Baptized Believers have hands laid upon them; with as much plainness, as Let all Believers be baptized...It was something to the purpose...²¹

To practice anything in the worship of Christ not so taught was, according to Danvers, "Will-Worship and Superstition".²² The danger of engaging in practices with a dubious basis in scripture was that it could open the door to all kinds of abuses:

...to set up a practice in God's Worship, without a warranty from his Word by some plain positive Rule and Direction, [(]the thing pleaded for by you) is no less (in my Judgment) than to give countenance to all the Antichristian Innovations, to let go at once the strongest Hold of Protestantism, reproach the Wisdom of Christ, and slight the

¹⁹E.B. Underhill, Records of the Churches of Christ, gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham. 1644-1720 (London: Hanserd Knollys Society, 1854), p. 295.

²⁰Gosnold, Laying on of Hands, p. 12.

²¹Danvers, Treatise of Laying on of Hands, p. 41. Cf. p. 40.

²²Ibid., p. 40.

Authority of the Holy Scriptures, as though we had not a sufficient direction, therein in all parts of God's worship.²³

However, like Keach, Danvers did not object to the practice as long as it was not a barrier preventing communion between those who practiced it and those who did not: "...we are not offended at a practice of that kind, be it lifting up or laying on of hands, provided it be not urged as a thing of absolute necessity..."²⁴

To Danvers' argument that confirmation is not plainly taught in the New Testament, Keach replied that to insist that a practice be spelled out in literal terms was to raise an argument against baptism and the Lord's Supper:

But is it in Mat. 28.19. or Acts 10.48. said in so many plain words, Let all Believers be baptized? 'tis not so read in my Bible. I affirm, that from Mat. 28.19, 20. none can prove that all Believers ought to be baptized in water, without making use of some Inference, or some other Text...Is it said in I Cor. 11.24. in so many plain words, Let all Believers eat the Lord's Supper...²⁵

In affirming that a practice could be employed which the New Testament merely implied rather than plainly affirmed Keach was building on a shaky foundation. His strongest argument against infant baptism was that it was not specifically commanded in the New Testament. In the case of confirmation, Keach went to the New Testament with a bias in favor of laying on of hands (probably developed during his days as a General Baptist). In the case of

²³Ibid., p. 54.

²⁴Ibid., p. 51.

²⁵Keach, Laying on of Hands, p. 42.

baptism, he came to the New Testament with a bias against infant baptism. Pedobaptists could argue that Keach did more to destroy the foundation for the Lord's Supper than Danvers did.

II. SABBATH OR LORD'S DAY? KEACH ON THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH

i. Introduction.

In 1700 Keach published The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated: or, the Saturday Sabbatarians confuted. He begins by informing his readers that he is writing in response to a pastoral problem in his church. A person of "unsettled and wavering Spirit" had "suck'd in the Notion of the Jewish Sabbath, and laboured to corrupt many others of the younger sort". This troublemaker induced some of the apprentices in Keach's church not to work on Saturdays. Keach believed that the erroneous opinion might infect the entire church, and thus, decided to address a series of sermons to the issue.²⁶ He also expressed his hope that his opponents on the sabbath question would treat him better than his opponents in the hymn singing controversy did.²⁷

Although addressing a concrete pastoral situation in his own church, Keach's main theological opponent was the erratic Thomas Tillam.²⁸ References to Tillam's The Seventh Day Sabbath Sought out and Celebrated (1657) abound. Evidently Keach regarded Tillam as the most eloquent expounder of the doctrine of the seventh day sabbath. Tillam had been a member of Hanserd Knollys' church in Coleman Street

²⁶Benjamin Keach, The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated: or, the Saturday Sabbatarians confuted, (1700), p. i. (Hereafter referred to as Jewish Sabbath.)

²⁷Keach, Jewish Sabbath, p. v and p. 2.

²⁸See Ernest Payne's "Thomas Tillam", BQ, pp. 61-66.

which had authorised him to preach and baptise. During the Commonwealth Tillam was appointed to a lectureship at Hexham Abbey. At Hexham, Tillam began to practice the laying on of hands on all baptized believers. This brought him into conflict with the Coleman Street church which was convinced by Thomas Gower to disown him.²⁹ Tillam also became acquainted with the Seventh Day Baptist Peter Chamberlin, and perhaps it was through Chamberlin's influence that Tillam was converted to his point of view on this issue. Although Keach disagreed vigorously with Tillam on the seventh day sabbath question, he probably approved of Tillam's opinions on the laying on of hands as expressed in The Fourth Principle (1655). Also, Tillam preceded Keach as a hymn writers; The Seventh Day Sabbath contains two hymns and a paraphrase of Psalm 92.

Keach was not the only Baptist to defend first day worship. Isaac Marlow, his main opponent in the hymn singing controversy, published A Tract on the Sabbath-Day in 1694 in defence of worshipping on the first day of the week.

ii. Keach's argument in The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated.

Keach's argument in The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated falls into two distinct parts: First, he argues that the seventh day sabbath was not

²⁹At Gower's instigation the Coleman St. church disowned Tillam "and all that are in the practice of the laying on of hands". E.B. Underhill, Records of the Churches of Christ, gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham. 1644-1720 (London: Hanserd Knollys Society, 1854), p. 295. See also the letters the Newcastle and Hexham churches exchanged regarding Tillam (pp. 294-365).

a perpetual divine institution. Secondly, he shows that under the new dispensation Christians are bound to worship God on the first day of the week.

Keach's case against the seventh day sabbath has three parts: First, he argued that the fourth commandment is really not one commandment but two. The command to observe one day in seven as a day of worship is part of the moral or natural law and is perpetually obligatory, but the command to observe the seventh day specifically is part of the ceremonial law and has been abrogated. Keach did this by showing that the seventh day sabbath was not observed by Adam in Paradise and is not part of the new law written on the hearts of believers. Secondly, Keach showed that Christ himself did not keep the seventh day sabbath. Thirdly, he argued that the purpose of the seventh day sabbath was two-fold: To commemorate God's act of creation and to foreshadow the coming of Christ. Both parts of its purpose are now redundant; Christ has come, the shadows have disappeared, and Christians should commemorate the new creation, not the old.

Keach and other defenders of first day worship were faced first by the task of showing that the fourth commandment bound Christians only to setting aside one day out of seven to worship God and did not mandate worship exclusively on the seventh day for all time. Keach argued that the command to keep the sabbath day contained two kinds of law, moral (or natural) and ceremonial. To show this he points to the example of unfallen human nature:

No doubt but the substance of all the ten Precepts was wrote [sic] in Adam's Heart; yet it appears the knowledg of the

Seventh-day to be kept as a Sabbath was not written there, tho that which was simply and naturally moral of the fourth Commandment was.³⁰

Thus, Adam kept a sabbath but not necessarily on the seventh day. Furthermore, the hearts of the regenerate did not lead them to renew the practice of worshipping on the seventh day:

...if the Seventh-day Sabbath had been a simple, or pure moral Precept, and written in Adam's Heart, it would have been written in the Hearts of all God's New-Covenant Children, as he promised he would write his Law there, in Gospel-times.³¹

The example of the new Adam, Christ, also taught that the old sabbath had come to an end. If the sabbath was meant to be perpetual, then Christ would have shown this by his example:

...how could our Saviour then be without Sin, who made Clay on that day, and did many other Works, and commanded a Burden to be born, and also commended Acts of Mercy (which was but a moral Duty) above keeping of the Seventh-day Sabbath...³²

Keach's most telling argument was that there was no longer any need for the seventh day sabbath; its usefulness had come to an end. The old sabbath, he reasoned, had been instituted to be a memorial for

³⁰Keach, Jewish Sabbath, p. 31. Note also p. 34: "If the Law of the Seventh-day Sabbath was wrote in Adam's Heart, some Remainders of the knowledg of that day would have been left in the Hearts of his Offspring, as there is of all other Precepts that are simply moral". And p. 59: "If the Command of God to observe the seventh day was not wrote in Adam's Heart, then it is not written in the Hearts of any of his Offspring by Nature: For as I have said, the muddy Stream cannot be clearer than the Chrystal Fountain". Isaac Marlow agreed that the Ten Commandments were a summary of the moral law "implanted in our innocent Parents" which has been obscured by the fall. (Isaac Marlow, A Tract on the Sabbath-Day (1694), p. 2.)

³¹Ibid., pp. 34-35.

³²Ibid., p. 37.

God's creation of the world:

...that we should commemorate the glorious Work of the New Creation, or Redemption on the old Day, which was partly appointed for remembrance of the Work of the first Creation, is very strange: for the Prophet tells us, that upon the creating of the new Heaven and the new Earth, the former shall be no more remembred; that is...not in such a way of remembrance, i.e. by the observation of that former Day appointed in part on that very account.³³

The old sabbath, Keach believed, had been, like much of the other ceremonial law,

a shadow or a sign...and so was only a Law to the Israelites during the Typical Dispensation, and their Political Church-state, which Christ nailed to his Cross, and buried with all other Shadows and Legal Ceremonies.³⁴

It had also been instituted to point toward Christ's coming. Christ had kept the sabbath and all other laws perfectly "that we might enter into his Rest, or into the Antitypical Sabbath".³⁵ Quoting John Owen, Keach points out that "the seventh Day as such is a Token of the Rest promised in the Covenant of Works".³⁶ Thus, he shows that the old sabbath was a mere "token" or "antitype" and that it has been superceded by the coming of Christ.

One of Keach's characteristic concerns surfaced when he cautioned that those who urged the keeping of the seventh day sabbath must logically urge the keeping of the entire law and that by inference they are preaching a "gospel of works" rather than grace:

And from hence let such as keep the Seventh-day Sabbath, take heed lest they are brought into Bondage, by obliging

³³Ibid., p. 183.

³⁴Ibid., p. 83.

³⁵Ibid., p. 136.

³⁶Ibid., p. 105.

themselves to observe the whole Law; since I have prov'd it was appointed as a sign or pledg of the Covenant of Works, binding them to universal and perfect Obedience...which none ever did, or could do, save Jesus Christ...³⁷

He even mentions some of the seventh day sabbatarians who renewed the rite of circumcision:

...some of the chief of them [seventh day sabbatarians] formerly were led to Circumcision, and to worse than that also. I saw a Book published many years ago by two of them, in which they called themselves the Ministers of the Circumcision.³⁸

Although convinced that the old sabbath had been abolished, Keach was equally certain that God intended his people to set aside one day in seven for worship and that God had prescribed which day should be set apart:

That Notion therefore, that every day is alike, is most hateful to God no doubt: for as soon as he established a visible Church, giving a stinted, stated Worship, Laws and Ordinances, he appointed himself the precise time of Worship under the Law; and the equitableness, as well as the Divine Authority of one day in seven, is, as I have proved, perpetually obligatory upon all his People.³⁹

To show that the day for Christian worship should be the first day of the week, Keach advanced three arguments.⁴⁰ First, he showed

³⁷Ibid., p. 136.

³⁸Ibid., p. 163.

³⁹Ibid., p. 179. Cf. Marlow, A Tract, p. 3: "...the light of Adams Nature told him that it was most meet for him to divide his time like his Creator, and so it became the Moral Duty of Men as Men to have no more nor less than six working or common days to one Sabbath". Compare Chap. XXII, "Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day", of the "Second London Confession". Paragraph 7 reads: "...by his Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandement, binding all men, in all Ages, [God] hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him..." (Lumpkin, p. 282.)

⁴⁰The first General Assembly of the Particular Baptists discussed the issue of worship on the Lord's Day at length. See Narrative of

that the Christian sabbath was a commemoration of the new creation in Christ as the Jewish sabbath had been a commemoration of the creation of the world:

...that we should commemorate the glorious Work of the New Creation, or Redemption on the old Day, which was partly appointed for remembrance of the Work of the first Creation, is very strange: for the Prophet tells us, that upon the creating of the new Heaven and the new Earth, the former shall be no more remembred; that is...not in such a way of remembrance, i.e. by the observation of that former Day appointed in part on that very account.⁴¹

Secondly, he argued that apostolic example proved that the Christian sabbath should be the first day:

1. Let this be considered, That that day which the Saints and Churches in the Apostles time observ'd, must be the precise day in every week, which ought to be kept till our Lord comes again. And,

2. That an Apostolical Precedent or Example is equivalent, or of like Authority with an Apostolical Precept: so that had we no more than this, it would be a sufficient warrant for the observation of this day.⁴²

Thirdly, Keach found support in the New Testament phrase "Lord's day". What day is more appropriately called the "Lord's day" than the day of the resurrection?

The Work of Creation is commonly ascribed to God the Father, and so the old Seventh-day Sabbath is properly the Father's Day, not Christ's, tho all the three Persons created the World.

This day is called the Lord's Day, in a like sense as the Holy Supper is in some places called the Lord's Supper; in which places is meant the Lord Christ, God and Man.⁴³

the Proceedings (1689), pp. 16-17.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 183.

⁴²Ibid., p. 215.

⁴³Ibid., p. 236.

How, then, should the Christian sabbath be celebrated? Keach granted that the severity with which the Jewish sabbath had been kept should be mitigated:

I am perswaded some good Men in the last Century have by an overheated Zeal, stumbled many godly Christians, by pressing the Lord's Day observance just after the manner of the old Jewish Sabbath; as if one precise Day of Worship was a pure moral Precept....should we press the observance of the Lord's Day with that severity and strictness the Seventh-day Sabbath was to be observed, we should bring our People into equal bondage with the Jews of old.⁴⁴

Keach particularly cautioned "Masters of Families...to take heed they do not put their Servants upon greater Labour on that day than needs must, so as to hinder them from a due attendance as often as possible on God's publick Worship".⁴⁵ Still, he believed that the Christian sabbath should be strictly kept. The day should be kept free from "worldly" business and self-gratification:

Certainly it is a horrid shame in any to take more liberty for Sleep, or otherwise to gratify the Flesh on this day than they do on other days of the week, when imploy'd in doing their own Business.⁴⁶

Keach also cautioned against "doing servile Work on this day out of a covetous mind", "walking in the Fields for...carnal pleasure and recreation" ("O this is an abominable Evil"), "gaming, and playing, or sporting on the Lord's Day", "taking upon them needless Journeys to visit their Friends, because they cannot, they pretend, spare any other day to do it, for fear of outward loss to themselves and

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 271.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 275.

Families", and "such as spend more time on the Morning of the Lord's Day, to dress and trim their Bodies, than they take in Prayer, Reading, and Meditation, to prepare their Souls for God's holy Worship".⁴⁷

Keach also prescribed duties which should be performed on the Lord's day:

[Christians should] close the Lord's-day in reading, instructing our Families, and in repeating what we have heard, or in meditating thereon, and in Prayer, and singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs. Thus the Primitive Christians kept the Lord's Day.

Preparation for the Publick Worship is very necessary; therefore besure [sic] you always come into the Church from your Closets, bearing your Ministers upon your Hearts, that so the Word of God may run and be glorified, and your own Souls secretly fed and edified together....

As to the Publick Worship, that consists in reading God's Word, Preaching, Prayer, and singing of Psalms, with a free and charitable contribution for the poor Saints on every First-day of the Week...⁴⁸

iii. Conclusion: Keach's attitude toward worship.

The laying on of hands and the seventh day sabbath issues raise the question of the proper ordering of Christian worship: Are Christians free to conduct worship in any manner as long as it is consistent with the spirit of scripture? Or are they bound to include

⁴⁷Cf. the Second London Confession ("Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day", Chap. XXII, para. 8): "The Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts, about their worldly employment, and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the publick and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy".

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 275-276.

no element in worship which is not explicitly mandated by scripture? On the seventh day sabbath question Keach is quite rigid; God has set aside one day in seven to be devoted to his worship, and the New Testament makes it abundantly clear which day it is to be.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, on this point Keach was willing to be tolerant towards those who differed. He did not believe that those who kept the seventh day should be censured, provided they kept the first day, as well:

...provided also they are such as have the command of their own time, and can do it without wronging their Families, or are not by the Observation of the seventh day necessitated to violate Precepts that all agree are Moral Duties.⁵⁰

Keach demonstrated this by remaining on good terms with Seventh Day Baptist Joseph Stennett whom he designated to deliver the address at his funeral. On the seventh day sabbath issue Keach was much more flexible than were Isaac Marlow and his fellow anti-singers on the singing issue.⁵¹ The dispute over the laying on of hands also demonstrates that Keach tried to steer a middle course between

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 179.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁵¹William Russel put Marlow's position succinctly in Some Brief Animadversions upon Mr. Allen's Essay (1696): "But the matters of divinely instituted worship being spiritual, and depending only upon the will of the Law-giver...the Persons and Services of the Worshipers are not capable of any humane Variations whatsoever: They have no respect to Climate, Customs, Forms of Civil Government, or any other thing of the like nature: For the worship of God under the Gospel is...the same at all times, in all places, amongst all People, in all Nations: And the order of it is fix'd and determined in all particulars that belong unto it". (pp. 62-63)

rigidity and weakness.⁵² As in the dispute over singing and the seventh day sabbath, so in the dispute over the laying on of hands, Keach was willing to tolerate those who differed; differences of opinion on these issues did not constitute sufficient reason to separate from a church. The picture of Keach that emerges is one of a tolerant, broad-minded person. Most important, however, the evidence shows that he leaned away from the Calvinist view that worship must be exclusively regulated by the principles of the New Testament toward a more liberal view that worship might include elements not explicitly mandated by the New Testament, provided they were in accord with its spirit.

⁵²See Keach, Laying on of Hands, p. 111.

CHAPTER THREE. BENJAMIN KEACH AS PREACHER AND EXEGETE

i. Introduction.

Thomas Crosby offered this comment on Benjamin Keach's preaching:

...if his sermons had not all the embellishments of language, which some boast of, they had this peculiar advantage, to be full of solid divinity; which is much better character for pulpit discourses, than to say, they are full of pompous eloquence, and flights of wit.¹

In spite of the somewhat defensive tone with which Crosby described his father-in-law's sermons, Keach seems to have been a successful preacher; Crosby went on to record that Keach's Horsleydown church was enlarged several times and seated one thousand people by the time of his death. One of Keach's publishers, John Dunton,² also recorded that Keach was a successful preacher: "This War-like Author is much admir'd amongst the Anabaptists, and to do him right, his Thoughts are easy, just, and pertinent--He's a popular Preacher, and (as appears by his awakening Sermons) understands the Humour and Necessity of his Audience..."³

There are several reasons for regarding Keach's published sermons as important: First, they are the largest group of sermons published by a seventeenth century Calvinistic Baptist. Neither Kiffin nor Knollys, for example, nor even Thomas Collier, produced a comparable

¹Crosby, vol. 4, p. 305.

²For John Dunton, see Henry Plomer, A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1668-1725, ed. Arundell Esdaile (Oxford: OUP, 1922), pp. 108-110 and DNB, vol. 6, pp. 236-238.

³John Dunton, The Life and Errors of John Dunton (1705), p. 237.

body of material. Knollys published a slender volume, Christ Exalted, but its 38 pages contain only three sermons. Keach's two volumes, A Golden Mine Opened and Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd, contain 180 sermons. Thus Keach's sermons are unique. Secondly, his sermons are important in relation to the rest of his literary corpus, because they show that most of the themes on which he published polemics (excluding baptism) were also issues which he raised from the pulpit. Thirdly, the sermons also show that Keach possessed genuine (if limited) poetic sensibilities. Fourthly, the calls to conversion demonstrate that Keach's high Calvinism did not dampen his evangelistic fervour. Finally, the sermons (and Tropologia) offer important insights into the way Keach interpreted the Bible.

ii. Keach's published sermons.

The principal collections of Keach's sermons are A Golden Mine Opened: or the Glory of God's Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers (1694) and Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: or an Exposition of all the Parables (1701). Most of Keach's output was in the form of sermons, for example, The Counterfeit Christian (1691), The Marrow of True Justification (1692), The Everlasting Covenant (1693), Christ Alone the Way to Heaven, or Jacob's Ladder Improved (1698), A Medium betwixt two Extremes (1698), and The Display of Glorious Grace (1698). Marrow, Everlasting Covenant, and Medium stand out because they were published for explicitly polemical purposes. The Everlasting Covenant was published to show that God has established only two covenants,

that of works and the new covenant in Christ; Medium argues against eternal justification; and Marrow is a polemic against the Baxterians. Justification is also the principal topic in The Display of Glorious Grace. The Counterfeit Christian contains two sermons on Matthew 3.16 and served as the model for Keach's volume on the parables, Gospel Mysteries. He also published individual sermons, The Everlasting Covenant (1693) and God Acknowledged (1696). The Everlasting Covenant was a funeral sermon for Henry Forty, "late pastor of a Church of Christ at Abingdon", but Keach uses the occasion to address his favorite topic, unconditional justification. God Acknowledged was preached on 11 December 1695, a day appointed by the king as a day for "publick prayer and humiliation".

iii. A Golden Mine and Gospel Mysteries: Contrasts and similarities.

A Golden Mine and Gospel Mysteries are set apart from Keach's other volumes of published sermons by their length; A Golden Mine contains 34 sermons and Gospel Mysteries 146. However, they are quite different books. Gospel Mysteries touches on some controversial topics with which Keach dealt extensively elsewhere, but its primary purpose is biblical exposition for the title describes it as "an exposition of all the parables". On the other hand, A Golden Mine has a more polemical tone. It is in four sections: "A Trumpet Blown in Zion" (also published as a separate book in the same year, 1694); "The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep", "The Trial of the False Professor", and "The Great Salvation: or, the Salvation of the Gospel Great and

Glorious". The two main themes of A Golden Mine are topics of which Keach never tires: unconditional election and the perseverance of the saints.

In the introduction to Gospel Mysteries ("To the Impartial Reader"), Keach claimed that this is a unique volume:

...when we consider that almost all which our Lord spake to the multitudes he spake in Parables...it may seem strange that none of our learned Modern Divines, nor others, have been stirred up to write an Exposition upon all the Parables and Similitudes spoken by our blessed Lord in the four Evangelists...what is here presented hath not been done before...⁴

Compare the opening statement of A Golden Mine:

It's like some may object, I do not well to meddle with Controversies at this time. I answer, that I have, it is true, touched upon several controvertable [sic] Points; but not as they are Matters of Controversy, but to clear up the Truths of Christ for the Establishment and Comfort of the People committed to my Care. Besides, I being misrepresented as touching my Judgment in some great Points...I thought it was my Duty to rectify such Mistakes. The grand Controversy here insisted upon, is that about Election and the Saints Final Perseverance, which I hope the Reader will find to his satisfaction confirmed.⁵

Thus the plan of Gospel Mysteries is quite different from that of A Golden Mine.

The sermons in A Golden Mine and Gospel Mysteries are examples of

⁴Benjamin Keach, Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd: Or an Exposition of all the Parables and many Express Similitudes Contained in the Four Evangelists Spoken by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Wherein also Many things are Doctrinally handled, and Practically improved, by way of Application (1701), p. i. (Hereafter referred to as Gospel Mysteries.)

⁵Benjamin Keach, A Golden Mine Opened: or, The Glory of God's Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers: and his Direful Wrath against impenitent Sinners. Containing the Substance of near Forty Sermons Upon several Subjects (1694), p. i. (Hereafter referred to as A Golden Mine.)

different homiletical styles. However, there are similarities as well as differences. Both volumes include sermons on Matthew 3.12 ("Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire".) Both explain the main idea of the text in identical terms, e.g., the "floor" refers to the Jewish "church", the "fan" is Christ' word. However, in A Golden Mine, unlike Gospel Mysteries, Keach explicitly stated that the floor is any "nation" (as opposed to "gathered") church and lists the kind of sinners who can be found in the "floor" of the Church of England: "prophane Swearers", "Blasphemers", "Drunkards", "Whores" and "Whoremongers", "Atheists", "Carnal Worldlings", etc.⁶ Nonconformist Pedobaptists come in for a share of criticism, too: "...There is also another Heap, that may be called Christ's Floor...and tho' they seem to be more refined...what abundance of Chaff is here also..."⁷ The doctrines in each volume's treatment of the text are identical. Also, in this instance Keach employed a technique in A Golden Mine which can be found on nearly every page of Gospel Mysteries; he takes an image, e.g., "wheat" and shows its spiritual significance. Wheat "hath much pains used with it", "will endure cold", "hath its Chaff cleaving oft-times close to it", is useful, etc. As it is with wheat, so it is with believers.

Thus far the similarities between A Golden Mine and Gospel Mysteries. In contrast, note "The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep",

⁶Keach, A Golden Mine, pp. 5 & 6.

⁷Ibid., p. 7.

Keach's series on John 10.27-28 ("My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand".) The series consists of sixteen sermons (the same length as the longest series in Gospel Mysteries, "The Parable of the Marriage Supper"). As in Gospel Mysteries, Keach explicated the images found in the text from John. However, the first three sermons deal with a single doctrine: "All true believers are the Sheep and Lambs of Jesus Christ; they hear his voice and they follow him". The first sermon gives seven doctrinal reasons for thinking of believers as Christ's sheep: 1. They are his by election; 2. by virtue of the Father's gift; 3. by purchase, etc. Then there are six doctrines which Christ's sheep will believe because they hear his voice. The second sermon gives nine ways that Christ's sheep hear his voice: affectionately, attentively, believingly, and so on. Sermon III tells us how Christ knows his sheep (thirteen points). Not until Sermon IV do we come across a passage similar to the style of Gospel Mysteries. Here Keach drew out the characteristics of sheep that make them suitable symbols for those who follow Christ: Among them he points out that sheep are innocent, patient, profitable to others, and obedient (the full list includes fifteen points). Unlike Gospel Mysteries, in A Golden Mine, Keach seems to begin with the doctrine and then he moves to the image, rather than beginning with the image and moving to the doctrine as he usually does in Gospel Mysteries.⁸

⁸For this series, see A Golden Mine, pp. 75-318.

When Keach's series on Christ's sheep in A Golden Mine is compared with the series on "The Parable of the Lost Sheep" in Gospel Mysteries, the difference of style can be seen. After "opening" the text (in the Gospel Mysteries series), he begins with the image of the wilderness and gives twelve reasons for thinking of the world as a wilderness. The second sermon deals with the concept "lostness" and shows how unbelievers can be thought of as lost. The fourth sermon deals with the difficulties that Christ met with in finding his lost sheep. Sermon VI shows that sinners must be found by Christ; they cannot find him unaided by grace. The seventh sermon returns to the text and picks up the image "friends" ("When he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me...") Noting that "all Expositors agree...that by Friends and Neighbours are meant the Saints and Angels", Keach offers ten reasons for thinking of the saints as Christ's friends.

The sermons in A Golden Mine are further distinguished from those in Gospel Mysteries by their polemical purpose. In the series, "The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep", Keach devotes sermons VI-XVI entirely to showing that the elect cannot finally "fall away". . (The third section of A Golden Mine, "The Trial of the False Professor" is exclusively concerned with this issue, as well.)

iv. The origins of Gospel Mysteries.

As noted above Keach claimed to be writing a unique book, for no other "modern divine" has written on "all the Parables and Similitudes

spoken by our blessed Lord". The preface to The Counterfeit Christian gives us more details of the project which became Gospel Mysteries:

It is more than a Year since I began a Morning-Exercise on the Lord's-Day at seven a Clock, when I entred [sic] upon an Exposition of all the Parables and express Similitudes contained in the four Evangelists...though by reason of a journey into the Countrey it has not been continued. the Explication of this Parabolical Speech of our Saviour, I have been prevailed with to make publick. And if this meets with Acceptance, I may in a short time publish Proposals for printing the whole...⁹

Thus, Keach claimed to have begun his series on the "Parables and express Similitudes" of the gospels in 1698 (The Counterfeit Christian was published in 1691.) However, a comparison of the material in Gospel Mysteries and Tropologia reveals that some of the material in the former book is based on material published in 1681.

Keach's catalogue of biblical metaphors is commonly referred to as Tropologia (the title of the original is in Greek characters). Strictly speaking, however, Tropologia is the work of Irish Baptist Thomas Delaune (d. 1685).¹⁰ Crosby relates the tragic life of Delaune and tells us that when he came to London, he and Keach "fell into an intimacy and strict friendship".¹¹ In 1682 Delaune published a

⁹Benjamin Keach, The Counterfeit Christian, London (1691), p. i.

¹⁰Gordon Wakefield erroneously assumes that Tropologia was Keach's work alone: "...in 1681, Benjamin Keach...issued a redaction in three books of Salomon Glassius's Philologia Sacra...under the title Tropologia: A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors and Types". (Puritan Devotion: Its Place in the Development of Christian Piety (London: Epworth Press, 1957), p. 16). Actually, only the first book was Delaune's translation of Glassius; the remaining three books (the catalogue of biblical metaphors) appears to be original work by Keach.

¹¹Crosby, vol. II, p. 366. See also, DNB, vol. 5, p. 765.

translation of Solomon Glassius's Philologia Sacra.¹² However, the largest portion of Tropologia is a catalogue of biblical metaphors by Keach, but this section is entitled, Troposchematologia (also in Greek characters).

Tropologia, published in 1682, contains several outlines which are the basis for sermons in Gospel Mysteries. For example, if "Christ the Pearl of great price" (that is, the parallel columns in Tropologia showing how Christ may be compared to a pearl) is compared to "The Parable of the Pearl of great Price", a similar theme emerges; Keach explains how Christ is the pearl of great price the same way in both volumes.¹³ The same sermon explains the use of the metaphor

¹²A 1725 edition of Philologia Sacra asserts that Glassius was born May 20, 1593 and died July 17, 1656.

¹³Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 163:

- I. Pearls, Naturalists tell us, have a strange Birth and Original...
Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Birth according to the Flesh was marvelous...
- III. Pearls have a hidden Vertue in them, tho' but small in bigness, yet great in Efficacy...
Jesus Christ hath a hidden Vertue in him...
- V. Pearls, nay, one Pearl of great price enriches him that finds it: he that meets with such a Pearl needs no other Riches...
So they that find...Jesus Christ...are Spiritually rich...

Tropologia, Bk II, pp. 187-189:

- I. Pearls (as Naturalists tell us) have a strange Birth and Original...[2nd col.: The Original and Birth of Christ is wonderful...]
- VI. Pearls have a hidden Virtue in them; tho for bulk but small, yet in Efficacy they are very great. [VI. Christ hath an hidden Virtue, most excellent in Nature....]
- X. They need no other Riches, that find a Pearl of great Price and

"merchants" for saints; again, it reworks material from Tropologia (under the heading "Saints Merchants").¹⁴ The sermon, "Saints compared to Salt"¹⁵ takes material from "Saints compared to Salt" in Tropologia.¹⁶ Also "The Parable of the Net Cast into the Sea" is based on "The Word of God compared to a Net".¹⁷

A more striking re-use of old material is revealed by the parallel between the first sermon in The Counterfeit Christian and Sermon VII in the "Supplement" to Gospel Mysteries. Both are treatments of Matthew 12.43-45. Pages 25 to 30 of the "Supplement" are identical to pages 1 to 16 of The Counterfeit Christian. The second sermon in The Counterfeit Christian follows the outline of Sermon VIII in the "Supplement" point for point but expands it greatly. However, Keach noted at the beginning of The Counterfeit Christian that the second sermon in that volume is much longer than the sermon he actually preached: "...The second Sermon I have much enlarged, scarcely half of it was delivered when preach'd..."¹⁸

It is worthwhile noting at this point that the re-use of material is a regular phenomenon in Keach's work. Another "spin-off" of

Value...[X. They that find Christ...need no more Riches...]

¹⁴Tropologia, Bk IV, p. 168.

¹⁵Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, pp. 50-51.

¹⁶Tropologia, Bk IV, pp. 166-167.

¹⁷Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, pp. 234-235 and Tropologia, Bk I, pp. 45-46.

¹⁸The Counterfeit Christian, p. i.

Tropologia is Keach's first hymnal, Spiritual Melody. For many sections of Tropologia there is a hymn in Spiritual Melody which follows it paragraph by paragraph. Keach notes that many of these hymns were sung in public ("a multitude of godly Friends have desired to have me write them out several of those Hymns that have upon divers occasions been sung in some particular congregations").¹⁹ Several of these hymns must have been sung following the preaching of the sermons contained in Gospel Mysteries. For example, see Hymn 4 in Spiritual Melody ("God a Husbandman"); Gospel Mysteries, "Supplement", pp. 138-144 ("The Parable of God being an Husband-man"); and Tropologia, Bk I, p. 14 ("God an Husbandman").

v. The organization of Gospel Mysteries.

The organization of sermons in Gospel Mysteries does not appear to be thematic. Although several sermons in the first book have to do with hearing and responding to the Gospel (e.g., the sermons on the wise man who built his house upon a rock and the parable of the sower), this grouping does not seem to be deliberate. The most likely plan of organization is simply that Keach began with the first parable and preached through to the last. For example, the order of sermons on parables of Matthew in Book I is Mt. 3.10, 3.12, 5.13, 5.25-26, 7.24-27, 9.16-17, 13.3-7, 13.45-46, 13.44, 13.24, 13.31-32, 13.33, 13.47-50, and 13.52. Apart from the re-arrangement of the parables in

¹⁹Spiritual Melody, p. iv.

Matthew 13, the parables follow in order. There is no explanation for the digressions into Luke or for the order which the Lukan parables follow (Lk 6.39, 14.28-30, 14.31-33, 12.16, and 7.31-34). The "Supplement" to Gospel Mysteries contains sermons that have been omitted from the order and also contains the only two sermons on texts from John.

vi. Keach's choice of texts.

Why did Keach choose to preach and publish so extensively on the parables? Not only did he publish sermons on the parables in Gospel Mysteries, the largest part of A Golden Mine is a series of sermons on John 10.27 ("My sheep hear my voice..."), a text Keach treats as a parable in Gospel Mysteries. As will be evident by now, Keach's usual homiletical method was to comment and expand upon the images used in the parable. He remarked on the suitability of the parables for this kind of interpretation: "...Parables, &c. in their main Scope and Design, intend not Matter of Fact (as Types do) but are principally Doctrinal, and are brought to open the Mind of God better to our weak Capacities, move upon our Affections, and convince the Conscience..."²⁰ In other words, the decision to use the parables was a pastoral one. The parables were uniquely capable of reaching people intellectually and, more importantly, emotionally.

²⁰Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 2.

Although Keach did not say so, the parables also had the advantage of not being straight-forward historical narrative, and therefore did not require the preacher to supply extensive background details. Nevertheless, he stated that his aim was to supply background detail where the parables require it:

I know...such that handle the Parables of our Saviour, ought to have the Knowledge of Natural, Moral, and Civil Histories; and consult Classick Authors, &c. which so far as I am capable, I have endeavoured; together with the Customs and practice of the Jews and the Eastern Countries, and also their Plants, Seeds, &c. some of which differ from ours.²¹

However Keach's references to the historical milieu of the parables are infrequent.

Keach was not the only preacher in the Puritan tradition to realize that parables represent God's condescension to our "weak capacities". For that matter, the sermon itself is a parable in that it represents a divine concession to human limitations: "...by preaching God is pleased to sow that Seed, by which your Hearts may be renewed...there is, my Brethren, a Divine Power that goes along with the Gospel..."²² Quoting an anonymous Puritan preacher, Perry Miller observes:

The intention of the parables...was "to explicate and clear up a Truth to the understanding by the help of the senses", to appeal to the sensible faculties by means of "sensible things, such as are obvious to our eyes, ears, &c. and to lead us to a conception of spiritual things".²³

²¹Ibid., p. 3.

²²Ibid., p. iii.

²³Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 343.

Paradoxically, the parables not only illuminate difficult points ("They inform the Judgment of the Weak; indeed what could any of us do if they were not thus opened and explained to us".²⁴), they also conceal the deep mysteries of the faith (hence the title: Gospel Mysteries). Keach asks the rhetorical question: "Why did our Blessed Saviour speak in Parables", and concludes:

...because some Persons...were so averse to Divine Knowledge, and they having contemned the Means of Grace, God in Judgment gave them up to Blindness of Mind....There is a Two-fold Knowledge of Divine Things: One Notional, the other and Effective and Experimental Knowledge. Now some Men only hear the Mysteries of the Gospel, out of Curiosity to fill their Heads with Knowledge...they do not improve to their Spiritual profit what they hear...²⁵

Religious education was much on Keach's mind. Another pastoral use of the parables is catechesis:

[Parables] greatly tend to help the Memory; we are apt to remember Stories, than other Things delivered in a Sermon; besides, People when they see these Natural Things before their Eyes, which the Holy Ghost makes use of to explain Heavenly Things by; they presently are the better enabled to call the Remembrance what they have heard: as when they see a Sower sow his Seed, and the like.²⁶

Parables reveal the mysteries of the gospel to the faithful and conceal them from the impious, but Keach also saw them as an opportunity to improve the gifts God has given us:

Christ might speak often in Parables, because he would have Men be studious and industrious to search out profound Wisdom...A Parable is like a Golden Mine, you must dig and search with all Pains and Diligence; that would find the

²⁴Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 3.

²⁵Ibid., p. 4.

²⁶Ibid., p. 3. Cf. Spiritual Melody, p. i: "...these Hymns being short, children will soon get them by Heart..."

true Vein thereof.²⁷

A final advantage that parables have (this point will receive more elaboration later) is that they help us to "improve all Natural Things unto their Spiritual Advantage":

When you see Wine, remember Christ's Blood...when you see Oil, remember the nature of the Oil of the Spirit and Grace thereof, and ascribe your Health and Cure to Jesus Christ.²⁸

To Keach human society and nature were parables communicating the "deep things of God"; this is the message expressed by the method, as well as the content of his sermons.

So much for the texts on which Keach preached. However, it is worthwhile making a few observations about the texts on which Keach did not preach. The greatest number of sermons in Gospel Mysteries are based on parables from Matthew and Luke. Only three sermons are based on a Markan passage (Mk 9.49 and 50), and only two are taken from John (Jn 10.1 and 15.1 & 2). This is not too surprising; Matthew and Luke are much richer in parabolic material than Mark and John. One parable conspicuous by its absence is Matthew 25.31-46, the judgment of the "sheep" and the "goats". This is all the more surprising in light of the subtitle of Gospel Mysteries: "...an Exposition of all the Parables..." There is a possible clue in one of Keach's sources. The most frequent reference in the margins of Gospel Mysteries is to Poole's Annotations. Poole exegetes the parable in terms of conditional justification:

The Recompences of the last Judgment, are according to the

²⁷Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 5.

²⁸Ibid., Bk II, pp. 37-38.

Tenour of our good Works, and the desert of evil Works....This does not imply any desert, much less any Worthiness of Equality between the Work and the Reward; but that Evangelical Works and the products of unfained Faith and Love, qualifie us by the Covenant of Grace to receive it....the good Works here recited, are infallible signs that the Performers of them, are the Objects of the Divine Favour in Predesti-nation...Evangelical Works are the condition of our Title, that qualifies us to obtain the Kingdom of Glory, freely promised for Christs sake to obedient Believers.²⁹

Poole's soteriology was Baxterian, i.e., he believed in a conditional covenant much like Richard Baxter. Keach regarded Baxterian soteriology as anathema and disputed it vigorously.³⁰ However, it hardly seems likely that Keach lacked the wit to reconcile Christ's parable of the Last Judgment with his severely unconditional doctrine of justification without the aid of Poole's Annotations. Why he omitted such a well-known parable is likely to remain a mystery.

Keach's other published sermons include texts from the Old Testament and the Epistles. However, a survey of the marginal references in Gospel Mysteries reveals an overwhelming preference for the New Testament. Only about 15 percent of the references are to Old Testament texts. Of those references, Isaiah is the book most often referred to.³¹

²⁹Matthew Poole, Annotations upon the Holy Bible. Wherein the Sacred Text is inserted and various Readings Annex'd together with the Parallel Scriptures (1688), vol. 2, the commentary on Matthew 25.40 (no page numbers).

³⁰See section IV, chapter 1.

³¹C. John Sommerville believes that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century writers began to quote the New Testament more and the Old Testament less. He relates this change to "religious retrenchment, as men found less use for the drama of God's intervention in history and more need of the lessons of spiritual inwardness. Such a climate would foster the growth of pietism within established religious and social forms, which is indeed the story of

vii. Keach's style: Poetic language and the appeal to the "affections".

The word "affection" above is used in its seventeenth century sense meaning "emotion". The two chief keynotes of Keach's style are his metaphorical imagination and his appeal to the affections. A Golden Mine and Keach's other published sermons show us that he could and did preach other kinds of sermons, but these two aspects feature prominently in Keach's longest and most important sermon collection, Gospel Mysteries.

Keach noted that the parables are "profitable to stir up or excite the Affections, and to awaken the Conscience".³² Keach's aim in most sermons was to move his unconverted listeners to repentance. According to Raymond Brown, "Benjamin Keach regularly and effectively pleaded with his congregation to put their trust in Christ".³³ Keach's means to this end was to employ vivid images intended to stir up the emotions. Although he vigorously opposed Baxter's views on baptism and justification, Keach would have endorsed Baxter's judgment that

eighteenth century religion in England, including the birth of Methodism". (Popular Religion in Restoration England (Gainesville, Florida: The University Presses of Florida, 1977), pp. 64-65.) However, Keach's religion was not a purely inward affair; his opposition to Baxterianism is evidence resistance to the tendencies of the times.

³²Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 4.

³³Raymond Brown, The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century, p. 73.

"he is no true Minister of Christ whose heart is not set on the winning, and sanctifying, and saving of souls".³⁴

Keach's metaphorical imagination was in evidence from his very first publication. His first book, The Child's Instructor, contained doctrinal verse. Over the years he added to his poetic output two volumes of hymns, three religious allegorical poems, and an epic poem modelled on Paradise Lost. Only the epic poem, The Glorious Lover, has any hint of poetic merit. Although a poor poet, Keach nevertheless thought metaphorically. That is to say, many of his sermons reveal that images, not propositions, were the basic units of his way of thinking. Nothing demonstrates this better than Gospel Mysteries. Keach recognized the intrinsically appealing nature of the parables; the images "stir up, or excite the Affections".³⁵ He employed the homiletic method which the parables exemplify by making exciting images the vehicle of his message. Keach did not tell stories in his sermons, but he did try to let the parables tell their own stories; the images used in the parables became the substance of his sermons.

Observe Keach's use of vivid images in a sermon on the "Parable of the lost Sheep":

there was a high and fiery mountain for him to level, which stood betwixt God and his lost Sheep, over which it was impossible for him to bring them home to God.

Perhaps you will ask what Hill or fiery Mountain was this.

I answer the Hill or Mount of divine Justice signified by Sinai.

...the Law and Justice of God was such a Bar or Mount

³⁴N.H. Keeble, "Richard Baxter's Preaching Ministry: Its History and Texts", Journal of Ecclesiastical History 35, (1984), p. 540.

³⁵Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 4.

of difficulty to the return of Christ's Sheep, that unless Christ satisfy both, he could not bring one lost Sheep over this high and Soul-amazing Mountain...

...there was a dreadful Lake into which his lost Sheep were fallen.

...Now this Lake was God's divine Wrath, which in the Scripture is often compared unto Fire.³⁶

In the sermon on the lost sheep, Keach fills in the details of the parable's geography of which the text offers only a sketch. In the next parable, the "lost Groat", he makes imaginative use of the image of the coin. After noting that the woman in the parable is a Christ figure ("who is often in the Scripture set forth by the Feminine Gender, by the name of Wisdom"), Keach explains that Christ does not leave the coin as he found it:

...its being lost denotes its natural pollution and corrupt state, but he changes the State, the nature and the hearts of Sinners, and makes them more pure than Gold, and also stamps his own Image again upon every piece which he finds.³⁷

Under Keach's treatment the image of the coin unfolds: Fallen human nature is debased coinage; redemption is the re-minting of this debased coinage. The image of God, scoured by sin's abrasiveness, is replaced with a fresh, crisp image.

Some of Keach's images are clearly drawn from the life of his congregation. In the "Parable of the Sower", he asked, "How may it be known that a Man is in a withering, decaying and dying condition?"

When a Man doth not love, nay, he cannot bear a trying, nor a searching Doctrine, it is another sign of withering; he is like to a Tradesman, that fears he runs behind in the World, but he is loath to cast up his Books, least he should find

³⁶Ibid., Bk II, pp. 55-56.

³⁷Ibid., p. 87.

things worse than he perhaps hopes they are...³⁸

Doubtless, this example was taken from the daily life and work of Keach's congregation.

An even more vivid and engaging use of a metaphor drawn from the daily life work of members of his congregation is found in The Display of Glorious Grace. There Keach offered suggestions on how to "trade" with heaven:

...Christ's Treasures of Grace and Glory are free to all Believers, to all Spiritual Merchants, and Holy Traders; but you must set out with full Sails of Faith, and with a sweet Gale of the Spirit, and then you will return well freighted, your Ship shall be loaden [sic] with the rich Merchandise of Heaven, being filled with Peace, Joy, and Consolation.³⁹

Some of Keach's images will hardly bear the weight he places on them. In Sermon XXI of Book II ("The Parable of planting a Vineyard opened"), he compared ministers to builders:

A Builder prepares his Material first...(1.) Ministers must not lay Stones into the Building, as they come out of the Quarry, or as they come into the World...(2.) They must lay no unconverted Persons into God's Temple...Our Lord would have his Ministers to build with such Materials, that there might be no need of the Ax to hew them...[As it was in Solomon's Temple, so must it be in the Church,] there was neither Hammer, nor Ax, nor any Tool of Iron heard in the House, while it was in building...But can this be expected by some Builders now, who build with Materials, or Subjects incapable of being either hewed or squared, I mean Infants, or such who only are once born...⁴⁰

In one sermon Keach created a crescendo by piling image upon image:

God in giving himself to us, gives all that he is, and all

³⁸Ibid., Bk I, p. 138.

³⁹Display, p. 290.

⁴⁰Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, pp. 181-182.

that he hath so far as he is communicable to Creatures; his Love to delight in us, his Mercy to pity us, his Power to uphold and strengthen us, his Faithfulness to preserve us, his Word to direct us, his Promises to comfort us, and his Angels to guard us, and to minister to us, Grace to adorn us, and Heaven to crown us.⁴¹

In the same sermon he used the titles of Jesus Christ in a similar fashion:

...it appears that Jesus Christ is our Hire, or the Reward of all God's chosen Servants...Ours as a Redeemer, or to be a Ransom for us, a Priest to atone for our Sins, and to make our Peace; a King to subdue our Enemies, and rule in and over us; a Prophet to teach, to guide, and lead us, and a Physician to heal us, a Fountain to wash us from our Uncleaness, a Sun to enlighten [sic] us, and a Shield to defend us, and a Bridegroom to espouse us...⁴²

Keach's sermons were also full of evangelistic fervor. The main goal of his literary techniques is conversion, and his means to that end is to excite the affections. Keach urged ministers "to seek after Christ's lost Sheep"⁴³ and most of his sermons end with a call to conversion. In the "Parable of the Householder, that hired Servants into his Vineyard", Keach turned the householder's offer of employment into a call to conversion:

Are you willing to be hired this day?...What, not one Soul cleave to my great Master? What, none accept of Jesus Christ, not one? O that one, tho it be but one would say, I can stand here idle no longer! What do you say, what answer shall I return? Shall I tell Jesus Christ, that there is not one in this great Assembly that either loves him, or cares for his Service, who is not yet come into his Vineyard? Young men, are you willing to renounce the service of Sin? I fear you are hired already, but is it not pity Sin and the Devil should have the Morning and Flower of your Days, and you put off Christ until you are old? What

⁴¹Ibid., Bk I, p. 214.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 214-215.

⁴³Ibid., p. 61.

do you old Sinners say? What is your Purpose and Resolution? Will you forsake your old Masters, your Sins and Folly, and cleave to Christ? You will repent it one day, if you refuse thus to do.⁴⁴

Raymond Brown observes that although Keach was a "deeply convinced Calvinist", this was not an obstacle to his evangelistic appeal: "With all his emphasis on election, particular redemption, human impotence, and the divine initiative, preachers like Keach could still appeal and did so".⁴⁵

John Wilson points out that the Puritans believed in the "intellectual priesthood of all believers".⁴⁶ By this he means that Puritan sermons were an uncompromising diet, heavy on scholarly arguments for Calvinistic doctrine. Yet sermons could never be merely an intellectual exercise; the barebones of Perkins' structure (text, doctrines, reasons, and uses) would never be sufficient to convert alone. Perry Miller shows that the Puritans understood that human nature is a matter of the heart as well as the head. Vivid, "affectionate" passages must accompany doctrinal propositions or the propositions will never find their way to the human heart, much less

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 215. Cf. A Summons to the Grave (1676), p. 41: "Labour to get an interest in Jesus Christ....Soul, never rest and be satisfied, till thou canst say with Thomas, My Lord and my God...Can you still stand it out against such precious patience and offers of grace? Will you not yet open to Christ? Shall he call and cry to you and will you give him no entertainment? Can you close in with a better friend?"

⁴⁵Raymond Brown, "Baptist Preaching in England in the Early Eighteenth Century", BQ 31, (1986), p. 15.

⁴⁶John Wilson, Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 139.

take root and flourish there:

...[God's] ministers must proceed upon the assumption that if they can drive images of doctrine deep enough into the mind, and embellish them with sufficient eloquence to call out an affection, they can then, and only then, become a means of election, and only then fulfil God's will.⁴⁷

In Keach the affectionate images almost take precedence over the doctrine. Keach was more poet than theologian and delighted more in image and metaphor than in philosophical discussion.

viii. Keach's place in the Puritan/Nonconformist tradition.

In The Display of Glorious Grace Keach wrote: "I am...for that plain Way of Preaching used by the Holy Apostles, and our Worthy Modern Divines".⁴⁸ The "plain Way of Preaching" to which Keach referred is the "plain style" of the Puritans whose tradition Keach inherited. His sermons follow the pattern set out by William Perkins in The Art of Prophecyng. According to Perkins, a sermon has four parts:

1. To reade the Text distinctly out of the Canonickall Scriptures.
2. To give the sense and understanding of it being read, by the Scripture itself.
3. To collect a few profitable points.
4. To apply...the doctrines rightly collected, to the life and manners of men in a simple and plaine speech.

⁴⁷Miller, The New England Mind, p. 296. Also, p. 300: "...scholastic psychology...required that the agents of conversion be addressed simultaneously to both the rational and sensible souls".

⁴⁸Display, p. iii.

In Keach's first sermon on the "Parable of the Pearl of great price", he draws out two points under the rubric, "The Design and Scope of the Parable opened": "(1.) To set forth the Excellency of the Gospel Dispensation...(2.) To set forth the transcendent Worth and Excellency of the Pearle of great price." The first doctrine Keach examined is this: "That a man in seeking after heavenly things, viz. Grace and Glory, may be compared to a merchant". Characteristically, Keach elaborated this point by listing the similarities and differences between merchants and believers. (This must have been based on the parallel section in Tropologia; Keach's list of similarities and differences in the two sections are identical.) Although he did not list a second doctrine, another discrete section begins with a list of similarities between the merchandise in which a merchant trades and the grace which a believer seeks. (As I will show, the sermons in Gospel Mysteries are short-hand versions of what Keach actually said.) Finally, Keach concluded (as he does most of his sermons) with a section headed "Application" (sometimes "Use").

It must be noted that Keach's ministry began at the end of the Commonwealth and that he belongs to the first generation of Nonconformists, rather than to the last generation of the Puritans. With the Puritans, Keach shared the structure which Perkins imparted to the "plain style", but Keach's style was distinctive and bore the mark of an age that was growing away from the Puritans. W. Fraser Mitchell argues that the "later Puritan sermon...presented peculiar features of its own":

It was homely and vivid in a way which the City Puritans of a more rhetorical period hardly had been, for the men who

produced it were in a good many instances of limited if not slight education, and their pulpit addresses were frequently in more than doubtful taste.⁴⁹

The rhythms and rhymes of Keach's hymns certainly show a lack of skill and his sermons were "homely and vivid", but whether he transgressed the canons of good taste current in his milieu, is not at all clear. Nevertheless, Keach seems to have been a fairly typical example of the kind of preacher Mitchell is describing.

ix. Themes of Keach's sermons.

The themes of Keach's sermons can be divided into three categories: doctrinal, pastoral, and controversial. The greatest number of sermons belong in the doctrinal category. Keach expected his hearers to digest a tough diet of doctrinal propositions (although he sweetened it with his embellishments of biblical metaphors). However, most sermons fall into at least two categories, usually both doctrinal and pastoral. One theme dominates Keach's sermons: Justification by grace alone, by faith alone. There are more references to Baxter and "Baxterianism" (or "Baxterism") (a code word which Keach always uses to mean conditional justification) than to Arminianism.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Mitchell, W. Fraser. English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson: A Study of its Literary Aspects (London: SPCK, 1932), p. 371.

⁵⁰Note especially Bk I, p. 24, p. 135, and p. 192; Bk III, p. 48.

Keach was also concerned by antinomianism, but he was far less concerned about lawlessness than he was about Arminianism and Baxterianism. However, when the subject came up, he dealt vehemently with those who believed that God's wrath was turned away from the elect before they were actually converted.⁵¹

There are other themes dealt with extensively in some sermons which are not strictly speaking doctrinal, pastoral, or controversial.

For example: (1) his deep devotion to the person of Christ:

If a man hath tasted how good and gracious the Lord is, and of Christ's love and his Merits, he will never totally wither and fade away...If you experience how sweet the savour of God is, the love of Christ is, you will find it stronger than death; no waters can quench it, nor can the floods drown it...⁵²

And (2) his belief that England would play a special role in the divine plan for human history:⁵³

⁵¹Ibid., Bk I, p. 62.

⁵²Ibid., Bk I, p. 140. Also Supplement, p. 84, Bk II, p. 135, and Bk III, p. 46.

⁵³Cf. Wilson, Pulpit in Parliament: "The Puritans were English patriots who construed their nation's historical destiny in terms of the biblical drama....they believed it would be the fountainhead of a purified Europe delivered from the incarnation of Roman antichristian power. Englishmen generally cherished their native land and held it to be unique. This Reformed Protestant movement elaborated these strong sentiments in theological images which led to a vision of England as instrumental in the regeneration of the Christian world". (p. 20)

Also, p. 173: "It became a cardinal assumption that the English were a nascent people of God who fundamentally lacked only the full presence of God's church in their midst....A basic framework was at hand, of course, in John Foxe's Book of Martyrs, where England's election had been charted".

The glory of England lies in the Gospel, in this it excels all Nations of the Earth.⁵⁴

Frequently, Keach offers practical advice. This advice falls into three categories:

(1) moral exhortation:

...Was ever Swearing, Blasphemy, Whoring, Drunkenness, Gluttony, Self-love, and cursed Covetousness at such a Height...

In a word, was any People ever known to be so unholy, unfruitful, and barren, who had such fruitful Showers, and fruitful Seasons, and so long together as we, who live in and about this City and Nation, have had, and still have.⁵⁵

(2) advice for church members:

This may serve to...stir up all such Churches, who have faithful and able Pastors...this thankfulness of theirs should be shewed by their great love to, and care of their painful Pastors, in providing chearfully a comfortable Maintenance for them...⁵⁶

And (3) advice for ministers:

Ministers may also from hence know, that it is their indispensable Duty to give out Food to God's People always...Tho' trouble arises, or persecution...yet Ministers must not cease preaching; if they cannot preach publicly, they must preach in private Families, and so from House to House...⁵⁷

Along with the topics on which Keach dwelt at length are several topics which are conspicuous by their absence, principally baptism and politics. It is not difficult to understand the absence of politics;

⁵⁴Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, p. 205. See also Bk II, p. 211 and Bk III, p. 156.

⁵⁵Ibid., Bk II, p. 204.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 252.

⁵⁷Ibid., Bk I, p. 252. Also p. 265, and Ibid., Bk II, p. 61.

the Civil War rendered all Puritans suspect, and Nonconformists continued to be regarded suspiciously until long after the Restoration. However, the sermons in Gospel Mysteries were preached in the period 1689-1701, a period of religious toleration and political stability, so it is unlikely that fear of being regarded as a potential revolutionary deterred Keach from commenting on politics. It is more likely that (1) Keach had little interest in politics; it is clear that his primary interests were pastoral and evangelistic, and (2) he surely approved of the political situation under William and Mary because of the policy of religious toleration. Keach commented: "...why do some then hate his present Majesty, our gracious King? Is it not because he is a friend to and favourer of God's People?"⁵⁸ Keach was concerned about popery and regarded it as a threat to English liberty, but it is not a prominent theme in his sermons. However, he did make the following remarks:

...such we have in our bowels, who had rather Popery was let in among us, than part with their Errors and false ways...⁵⁹

We have the old Popish Doctrine in a new disguise, lying in our way, about Justification..The Popish Constitution of the visible Church, and many Popish Ceremonies, and Stones of Babylon also lie in our way.⁶⁰

Did not God some few Years ago shew us what he could do? and was not the Gospel in our own apprehension near gone...Consider what hath befallen our Neighbour Nation, I mean the People of God there: Have you not heard...what carnality, deadness, and formality was among our Protestant

⁵⁸Ibid., Bk II, p. 134. Keach dedicated Distressed Sion Relieved (1689) "To their Most Excellent Majesties William and Mary, by the Grace of God, King and Queen of England".

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 206.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 181.

Brethren in France, just before God took away the Gospel from them, and gave them up to the Wild-bore [sic] of the Forest?⁶¹

Another topic Keach hardly touched on in Gospel Mysteries is baptism. Baptism was much on Keach's mind, but it is practically absent from his sermons. His only discussion of baptism in Gospel Mysteries is in a sermon on the "Parable of planting a Vineyard".⁶² The absence of baptism from Gospel Mysteries, even though pedo-baptism was one of his favourite targets, is surely an indication that he hoped to sell his book to pedo-baptists as well as Baptists.

The relative absence of personal examples is another striking feature of Keach's sermons. Caroline Richardson observes that seventeenth century English sermons differ from those of preceding centuries in their relative neglect of personal "exempla":

There are many brief quotations from classical authorities, there are definite citations of authors who do not agree with the preacher, but the informal, colloquial "I knew a man who.." or "There was a woman that..." is strikingly rare.⁶³

⁶¹Ibid., p. 204. Raymond Brown sees anti-Roman Catholicism as part of "Dissenting patriotism" in the eighteenth century and remarks that "Louis XIV's revocation (1685) of the Edict of Nantes [by which French Protestants lost their civil liberties] had confirmed the average Englishman's worst suspicion that Catholicism and freedom were incompatible partners". (The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century, pp. 3-4.)

⁶²Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, p. 181.

⁶³Caroline F. Richardson, English Preachers and Preaching, 1640-1670: A Secular Study (London: SPCK, 1928), p. 80. Also, p. 81: "The excision of the anecdote is not to be explained by the austerity of the froward generation that argued and scolded from 1640 to 1670, but instead by the fact that the literary fashion of the day emphasised not narration, but analysis and unexpected figures".

Unlike other seventeenth century preachers Keach cited few classical authorities, but he resembled them in that he made few anecdotal, personal references. Occasionally there are references to events in his life or lives of other contemporaries:

So the Lord Jesus with his spiritual Fan tosses the Godly and Hypocritical Professor, by the same Afflictions...O what hurryings, tossings and tumblings to and fro...have some Christians met with in the late times, and still daily meet withal?⁶⁴

In the "Parable of the Treasure hid in a field", Keach referred to Christians who are generous with their wealth:

It is wonderful indeed to think what Abundance of Good some men in this City to my Knowledge have done, who are not only enriched with this Treasure, but also with earthly Riches; may be one man or two have done more than forty who pretend to Religion and Godliness as well as they, and perhaps as rich in the World as they are also.⁶⁵

Keach referred to his own experience of grace as a young man:

Brethren, I have told you what choice Experiences I had of the love of Jesus Christ unto my own Soul, when first in my youthful Days he manifested himself unto me; I was so raised and consoled with sweet tastes of God's love to me, that by the strength of those Cordials I have been supported unto this very Day.⁶⁶

Keach seems to have been referring very pointedly to his own experience when he writes about ministers being "vilified in these Evil Days we live in":

...if some live a retired, or a reserved kind of Life...then they are charged to be proud...
...If others are more free and affable...then they are charged to waste their Time...

⁶⁴Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 45.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 197. Could it be that Keach had wealthy merchant and Baptist minister William Kiffin in mind?

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 251.

If they Preach upon the Threatnings of God, or press Men to Duties of Religion and Sancti-fication...then they are censured to be legal Preachers...⁶⁷

x. Keach's hermeneutical principles.

Insight into Keach's hermeneutical principles can be gleaned from his published sermons, especially Gospel Mysteries and A Golden Mine. However, Tropologia provides a more systematic statement of those principles. The heart of this method is the "trope" or "figure", but there are other features of Keach's approach to biblical interpretation: (1) Keach was a literalist; (2) in spite of his literalism, he took a certain amount of poetic license with Christ's parables; (3) there is an aspect of his interpretation of and commentary on scripture which can legitimately be referred to as sacramental.

Keach regarded the Bible as a result of the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

Mysteries which God proposes to be believed in his holy word, as they are in themselves [are?] most true and best...their Eloquence...is to be esteemed best and most elegant by the faithful unless we suppose that God who immediately dictated them to his Amanuensis, spoke nonsense, and is inferior to his Creatures in that qualification, which is down right Blasphemy...⁶⁸

Keach not only adheres to what has become known as the "dictation theory" of inspiration, he actually uses the verb "to dictate".

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 266.

⁶⁸A Golden Mine, pp. iv-v.

Although believing that each word of the Bible was dictated and that its writers were no more than the Holy Spirit's "amanuenses", Keach allegorised the parables quite freely. For example, in his sermon on Luke 3.5,6 ("Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low...") the valleys are "desponding Sinners" and the mountains are "Self-Righteous Persons". Keach felt free to treat the parables imaginatively because they were full of "tropes". In Tropologia, "tropes" are defined as words drawn from their "proper and genuine signification to that which is different or Contrary".⁶⁹ Unlike medieval preachers, Keach could not feel free to embellish the miracle stories from the gospels the way that he could embellish the parables. For Keach, the pallet in the healing of the paralytic could never be a figure of the church, because it was not a "trope"; it was manifestly a pallet. He saw every detail of the scripture as pregnant with divine truth, but only scriptures rich in tropes and figures lent themselves easily to his distinctive method of exegesis. Note Keach's comment on the "Parable of the lost Groat":

...let me caution all not to think or speak lightly of these Parables, or think our Lord used needless Representations, Expressions, or Allusions herein, nor that this Parable has but little in it, or that we ought not particularly attempt to open the several Parts thereof, but only mind the chief Scope thereof...certainly he foresaw that the Parable of the lost Sheep could not fully hold forth some things about the state of lost Sinners...⁷⁰

An example of the way Keach wrested every drop of significance from a

⁶⁹Keach and Delaune, Tropologia, Bk I, p. 1.

⁷⁰Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, p. 84.

parable is his treatment of the "Parable of the Net":

A Net takes Fish of every kind...some good and some bad...so they are not all true Christians that seem to be taken by the net of the Gospel...

A Fisherman taketh commonly more small Fish than great; so a Minister finds that more of the poorer sort are converted than the rich...

It is not known what Fish are caught in the Net, until the Net be pulled up to the Shore; so it is not known what sort of Persons the Net of the Gospel hath taken until the last Day...

My Brethren, I prosecute this and some other Parables according to the Analogy of Faith, though perhaps farther than the main scope will bear; which Tropical Writers are allowed to do.⁷¹

What were the limitations on this kind of exegesis? Keach said little about how far is too far other than to say that interpretation must be according to the "analogy of faith":

I would know whether he that draws Propositions from a Parabolical Text may not be allowed the same liberty others take in preaching upon any other Scriptures (that may not be Tropical or Parabolical) provided he keeps to the true Analogy of Faith?⁷²

Unfortunately, Keach never explained exactly what he meant by "analogy of faith". What it certainly meant is that there are dissimilarities, as well as similarities, between the parabolic figure and the object symbolized:

...all Authors agree, that Parables run not always upon all four; that is there are in Parables some great Disparities, some things being brought in or mentioned for illustration sake, which cannot be spiritually applyed parallelwise ... as when Christ's Coming is compared to a Thief, not like a Thief unrighteously to rob and steal, &c.⁷³

⁷¹Ibid., Bk I, pp. 236-238.

⁷²Ibid., p. i.

⁷³Gospel Mysteries, p. i.

Keach gave a list of his rules of interpretation at the beginning of Gospel Mysteries:

...I shall add here some Rules, how you may know Tropical and Paraboliical Scriptures, from Scriptures that are to be taken Literally...

1. When it is directly called a Parable...
2. Know and be assured that all Scriptures are to be taken Figuratively or Parabolically, when the Literal Sense would be absurd; as when Christ says This is my Body...
3. When the Literal Sence [sic] would not reach to the great Design of Edification, as when Christ speaks of Sowing; certainly none can suppose, our Lord went about to instruct them in Husbandry, but in higher Matters.
4. Those Scriptures must be taken Figuratively, when the Literal Sense would obtrude clear Falsities upon the Sacred Texts: As for Example, Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up again...
5. When the Literal Sense would not agree with, but be repugnant unto other Scriptures; as when we are bid to Heap Coals of Fire on the Heads of our Enemies...⁷⁴

This brings us to the sacramental aspect of Keach's handling of the Bible. He used both "sacrament" and "ordinance" to refer to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, but only "ordinance" to speak of prayer, preaching, hymn singing, etc. However, Keach regarded all "ordinances" as vehicles of grace. This is certainly the case with preaching:

The Ordinance of Preaching, or Administration of the Gospel, is a rich Pasture especially when it is preached powerfully by the Influence and Demonstration of the Spirit; the opening and explaining the Word of the Gospel, is like the opening the Pasture-Gate, and so letting the Sheep into it. Did not our Hearts burn within us, while he talked with us, and opened the Scriptures? 'Tis like the opening of the Box of precious Ointment, causing a sweet Perfume in the Soul...the Work of the Ministry is to open the Scripture...The Preaching the Gospel, is the feeding of the Soul.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 4.

⁷⁵A Golden Mine, p. 131.

Furthermore, Keach's view of the Lord's Supper (and that of the Second London Confession which he endorsed) was a "high" view. Keach writes:

What sweet Food, or how good a Pasture is the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, to a hungry Soul who longs after the Bread of Life; and by Faith in this Ordinance we feed on this Bread...⁷⁶

About Baptism, Keach writes:

The Mystery of the Gospel is preached or held forth in a lively Figure in Baptism to the very sight of the natural Eye; which being understood, conveys much Light and Knowledge to the Understanding.⁷⁷

Thus Keach held that matter could be a vehicle for spiritual truths. In the case of the Lord's Supper, it seems that he held that that sacrament/ordinance would transmit grace to a believing recipient.

Keach's use of natural images as vehicles for divine truth in Tropologia and his sermons is another instance of his

⁷⁶A Golden Mine, p. 133. Cf. the Second London Confession, Chap. XXX, "Of the Lord's Supper": [Art. 1] "The Supper of the Lord Jesus, was instituted by him...for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice in his death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further ingagement in, and to, all duties which they owe unto him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other...."

[Art. 7] "Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible Elements in this Ordinance, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally, and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified & all the benefits of his death: the Body and Blood of Christ, being then not corporally, or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of Believers, in that Ordinance, as the Elements themselves are to their outward senses". (Lumpkin, pp. 291-293.)

⁷⁷Ibid. Cf. the Second London Confession, Chap. XXIX, "On Baptism": [Art. 1] "Baptism is an Ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party Baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death, and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of Life". (Lumpkin, pp. 290-291.)

"sacramentalism". This is most evident in Tropologia in which page after page is filled with columns relating spiritual truths to earthly symbols, for example, the parallel columns under "Christ a Bridegroom".⁷⁸ In Gospel Mysteries Keach showed how he intends this method to be used:

...when you Light a Candle, and put it into a Candlestick;
say within thy self, Thus must God by his Word and Spirit,
light my dark Heart...⁷⁹

In Keach's sermons earthly objects became charged with divine meaning. The Bible became a commentary on the world, e.g., as above, the candle is there not just to light up a dark room, but it has a spiritual significance which takes precedence over its earthly use. For Keach, the candle was a tangible sermon preaching the truth, "Our dark hearts need God's light". But the world also becomes a commentary on the Bible: When we see a husband and wife we learn something about Christ's relationship to the Church.

⁷⁸Tropologia, Bk II, pp. 97-105:

I. A Man that intends or is disposed to marry is not contented...to abide in a single Condition how happy soever he is otherwise... [Parallel column: I. Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all the Glory he had with the Father, being the Joy and Delight of his Heart...yet thought upon a Spouse, and judged it meet to enter a Marriage Relation.]

VII. A Man propounds Questions to the Person he loves, to discover whether she be preinagaged to any other... [VII. Jesus Christ propounds Questions in his Word to poor Sinners, thereby to discover how it is with their Souls, shewing the Danger of being in love with Sin...]

XXVI. A Bridegroom, if he be a Prince, or noble Person, raises his Bride to great Honour... [XXVI. Jesus Christ confers great Honour on those that are espoused to him....]

⁷⁹Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 5.

"Spiritualizing nature" was a common feature of seventeenth century preaching. Gordon Wakefield writes:

A familiar feature of the guides to godliness is the suggestion of serious and profitable thought to accompany the simple tasks of daily life. The bed is always to remind the sleeper of his grave, his rising of the resurrection from the dead...⁸⁰

However, was this a sacramental way of seeing nature or something quite different, i.e., a didactic use of nature? For Keach, the distinction may not have existed. Although he may have said that the objects of nature (and human society, as well) offered a useful collection of symbols for teaching divine truths, the fact is that the pre-eminent pedagogical instrument, the sermon, had sacramental significance.⁸¹ Keach's treatment of the candle (See note 102.) makes it a tangible sermon, and the sermon was a vehicle of divine power: "[The preaching of the] Gospel is the instrumental means, through the Spirits Operations of the Sinner's Reconciliation to God...Where the Word of a King is, there is Power".⁸² By being a vehicle of divine truth, a candle (or any other object Keach spiritualized) was more than merely a didactic or mnemonic device. Vehicles of divine truth enlightened the mind, and the enlightenment of the mind could effect

⁸⁰Gordon Wakefield, Puritan Devotion: Its Place in the Development of Christian Piety (London: Epworth Press, 1957), p. 85.

⁸¹Harry Stout observes that "...since scripture viewed all creation as a direct emanation of the divine mind, Puritan preachers also embraced nature as a means for clarifying and vivifying divine truth". (The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England (New York: OUP, 1986), p. 43.)

⁸²Display, pp. 121 & 124.

reconciliation with God.⁸³ If the word "sacrament" is very carefully qualified, then Keach did have a "sacramental" view of the world:

The Puritans did not believe that nature was sacramental, for they understood a sacrament as an arbitrary divine institution, different from all other signs by virtue of divine appointment. Not every sign was a sacrament, but every sacrament was a seal and a sign. Any widespread religious interest in visible signification therefore had sacramental implications.⁸⁴

Keach's homiletic/sacramental view of the world was part of a near-scientific interest in natural phenomena:

Because God alone is the only good and proper Object of the Soul; he is the Soul's center, like as a Stone flung out of a Sling, rests not until it comes to its proper Center, nor the Needle till it comes to its Center, the Load-stone [sic]...so the Soul of Man can find no rest nor satisfaction in any thing, until it returns to God.⁸⁵

Elsewhere, Keach says that Christ's love is a physical force:

...[Christ's] love to us, hath a Physical Cause in it...it operates on us as the Sun by its near approach in the

⁸³Keach's nemesis, Richard Baxter, taught a similar kind of spiritualizing of natural objects: "You can open your Bible, and read there of God and of Glory, oh learn to open the creatures and to open the several passages of providence and to read of God and glory there. Certainly by such a skilful industrious improvement, we might have a fuller taste of Christ and heaven in every bit of bread that we eat and in every draught of beer we drink, than most men have in the use of the Sacrament....Thus you may see, what advantage to a heavenly life every condition and creature doth afford us, if we had but hearts to apprehend them". (Works, Vol. 23, pp. 300-301. Quoted in Wakefield, Puritan Devotion, p. 86.)

Brooks Holifield points out that Cotton Mather shared Keach and Baxter's interest in spiritualizing nature. Mather wrote books on "spiritualizing the most earthly objects" and believed "that a fruitful heart could "make the whole Creation fruitful and fetch fine Lectures and Lessons from all the Creatures of God". (The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 194)

⁸⁴ Holifield, The Covenant Sealed, p. 196.

⁸⁵Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, p. 100.

Spring, causes the Grass to grow and Flowers to put forth. Christ's Love to us, hath the same Effect on us, as the Sun hath, by shining on the Moon, i.e., the Sun shines on the Moon, and the Moon reflects great Light on the Earth.⁸⁶

xi. Conclusion.

Keach's sermons are a unique treasure. Other Calvinistic Baptists may have preached more or better sermons, but none published as many sermons as Keach. Consequently, they offer us a unique insight into Calvinistic Baptist life in late 17th century England. Most important, however, Keach's Gospel Mysteries are an integral part of Keach's programme of "spiritualizing" creation. The metaphors catalogued in Tropologia were versified in Spiritual Melody and formed the basis of many of the sermons in Gospel Mysteries. Keach's method of using things earthly to provide images of things heavenly also furnishes insight into his spirituality and shows it to have been world- and life-affirming. There is a legitimate sense in which such spirituality can be called "sacramental".

⁸⁶Ibid., Bk III, p. 18. Keach was not the only seventeenth century clergyman to relate the phenomena of nature to religious truth. John Ray, Anglican priest and naturalist, regarded "'the objects of his study, the order of the universe, the life of plants and animals, the structure and functioning of nature, as the manifestation of the mind of God.' The joy and wonder which accompanied his work were 'essentially religious' in character, and his discoveries bore for him 'a profound religious and indeed Christian significance'." (From C.E. Raven, John Ray, Naturalist (Cambridge, 1942), p. 455, quoted in G.R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason: A Study in Changes of Religious Thought within the Church of England, 1660 to 1700 (Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 101.)

CHAPTER FOUR. THE HYMNS OF BENJAMIN KEACH.

i. Introduction.

Benjamin Keach has been chiefly celebrated as a pioneer of corporate hymn singing among English Protestants. Undoubtedly he deserves his fame in this matter. However, both the quality and extent of his contribution has consistently been either over- or under-estimated. Horton Davies once claimed that Keach composed "the first modern hymn".¹ Erik Routley wrote that Keach "published the first English Church hymns".² Neither statement is true. On the other hand, his hymns do not quite deserve all the opprobrium heaped upon them.³ C.H. Spurgeon's judgment that the less said about Keach's poetry, the better, is not entirely fair. Keach never wrote anything as good as Mason, Barton, or Wither at their best, but neither did he write anything worse than his predecessors at their literary nadir. The fairest statement about Keach the hymn writer was made by Hugh Martin: "...he was the first to introduce the regular singing of

¹Horton Davies, The English Free Churches (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 120.

²Erik Routley, Hymns and Human Life, New York: Philosophical Library Inc., (1952), p. 148.

³When considering Keach's hymns, it is well to keep in mind Bernard Manning's cautionary note that "reverence is due to hymns as to any sacred object. The hymn that revolts me, if it has been a means of grace to Christian men, I must respect as I should respect a communion cup, however scratched its surface, however vulgar its decoration". (Bernard L. Manning, The Hymns of Wesley and Watts: Five Informal Papers, London: Epworth Press (1942), p. 109.)

hymns into the normal worship of an English congregation".⁴ If the emphasis is placed firmly on "regular" and "normal", Martin's statement is almost certainly true. Hymns (and psalms, too, it goes without saying) were sung by English Protestants before Keach, but Keach was the first, (of whom we know) in spite of vehement opposition, to lead his congregation to sing a hymn every Sunday as a part of the normal course of worship.

Crosby related that Keach's church was the first among the Baptists, at least to practice hymn singing: "[Keach's church]...if I am not mistaken, was the first church of the Baptists that thus practised this holy ordinance".⁵ Although Keach's hymns were soon forgotten, his precedent had an impact. Isaac Watts was aware of Keach, and his brother Enoch urged him to clear the Dissenters from the "scandal" that lay upon them because of "their imagined aversion to poetry":

...you cannot be ignorant what a load of scandal lies on the Dissenters, only for their imagined aversion to poetry. You remember what Dr Speed says:

So far hath schism prevailed they hate to see.
Our lines and words in couplings to agree,
It looks too like abhorred conformity:
A hymn so soft, so smooth, so neatly drest,
Savours of human learning and the beast.

And, perhaps, it has been thought there were some grounds for his aspersion from the admired poems of Ben. Keach, John Bunyan, etc., all flat and dull as they are; nay, I am much out if the latter has not formerly made more ravishing music

⁴Hugh Martin, "The Baptist Contribution to Early English Hymnody", BQ 19 (1962), p. 199.

⁵Crosby, vol. IV, p. 299.

with his hammer and brass kettle.⁶

The following essay is in six sections: first, a review of the events of the hymn singing controversy; secondly, the sources of Keach's hymns; thirdly, the organization and style of the hymns; fourthly, Baptist attitudes to hymn singing before Keach; fifthly, a consideration of the arguments for and against hymn singing, particularly Keach's apology and Marlow's attack; sixthly, the conclusion.

ii. The hymn singing controversy.⁷

The hymn singing controversy consisted of three components: there was a struggle between Keach and a group in his congregation who opposed corporate singing; a battle among the leaders of the Particular Baptist community in London (and elsewhere); and a vitriolic printed debate.

The printed debate began and ended with books by Isaac Marlow (1649-1719): A Brief Discourse appeared in 1690 and An Answer to a Deceitful Book in 1698. Marlow had been a representative of the Mile End Green Church at the 1689 assembly and was appointed by that

⁶Letter from Enoch Watts to Isaac, March 1700, quoted in E. Paxton Hood, Isaac Watts: His Life and Writings, His Homes and Friends (London: The Religious Tract Soc., 1875), p. 86.

⁷The best account of the hymn singing controversy is given in Murdina MacDonald's "London Calvinistic Baptists, 1689-1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration", (D.Phil. dissertation, Regent's Park College, Oxford, 1983). Throughout the following section I have drawn heavily on her account.

assembly to be one of the treasurers of the Particular Baptist Fund.⁸ His wife and children are listed as members of the Horsleydown church.⁹ Following the singing controversy, Marlow became a member of the Leominster church.¹⁰

Keach published two books having to do with the singing controversy: The Breach Repaired in Gods Worship (1691) and A Sober Reply to Mr. Steed's Epistle concerning Singing (1691).¹¹ The printed debate tells us much about the struggle among the leaders of the Particular Baptists. About the battle between Keach and the anti-singing members of his church, we can know little.

It is possible that the conflict was born long before Marlow published A Brief Discourse. Marlow was sensitive to the charge that he had started the singing controversy. At the end of Truth Soberly Defended, Marlow added "Some short observations made on...The Breach Repaired..." and pointed out that not only had Collins defended corporate singing in 1680, but Keach had defended it in two books

⁸Narrative of the Proceedings (1689).

⁹"A perfect and Compleat Register of all Marriages, Nativities, and Burials belonging to the Congregation that meeteth on Horsly-downe, over whom Benjamin Keach is Overseer", MS, Public Records Office, London.

¹⁰W.T. Whitley, "An Index to Notable Baptists", TBHS 7, (1920-1921), p. 218.

¹¹A Sober Reply to Mr. Steed's Epistle concerning Singing (1691) was printed anonymously. However, the general assembly censured Keach as though he were the writer, and the discussion of ministerial maintenance is characteristic of Keach. I conclude that Keach wrote it. (A Narrative of the Proceedings (1692), pp. 9-10.)

prior to The Breach Repaired, Tropologia, and Gold Refin'd.¹²

Keach claimed to have introduced the singing of a hymn following the administration of the Lord's Supper in 1673, eighteen years before the publication of The Breach Repaired. Next, Keach moved on to introduce hymn singing into services of thanksgiving or fasting.¹³ Another category of service at which hymns were sung must be noted: Spiritual Melody and Spiritual Songs include several funeral hymns. These three categories of services at which hymns were sung indicate a high degree of acceptance of hymn singing prior to the congregational meeting on 1 March 1691 at which a majority of members present voted to allow singing following the sermon each Lord's Day. However, the bitterness with which not only Marlow and the anti-singers, but Keach as well, conducted the debate makes it seem likely that the issue had been simmering long before 1690.

The hymn book Keach published in 1691, Spiritual Melody, is a collection of over 300 hymns, not all of them by Keach. Its preface touches on the introduction of hymns into the Horsleydown congregation. The hymns in Spiritual Melody were probably tied to a series of sermons. A comparison of Spiritual Melody and Tropologia (Keach's catalogue of Biblical metaphors) shows that there is a hymn

¹²Isaac Marlow, Truth Soberly Defended, London (1692), "Some Short Observation...", p. 3. Tropologia also contains some hymnic verses: "An Epithalamy on the Soul's Marriage with Christ. By E.D." (Bk. II, p. 107); "On the Rose of Sharon" (Bk. II, p. 202); "You gentle Youths whose chaster Breasts do beat" (Bk. III, p. 16-17); and "Mr. John Flavel's Poem upon the Plough" (Bk. III, p. 66).

¹³Benjamin Keach, The Breach Repaired in Gods Worship (1691), p. viii. (Hereafter referred to as Breach.)

for nearly every section of the latter book. Very likely Keach wrote a hymn to accompany his sermon every week.¹⁴ Keach wrote:

...many Christians had rather have those Hymns we sing in our publick Assemblies printed, that so they might the better know them...And 'tis not unknown what a multitude of godly Friends have desired to have me write them out several of those Hymns that have upon divers occasions have been sung in some particular Congregations.¹⁵

"Lining out" Keach's hymns would have been a dreary task in most instances.

Keach's statement raises a puzzling question: Tropologia (1682) appears to be a series of sermon outlines. For nearly every outline there is a corresponding hymn in Spiritual Melody. Had Keach already preached the sermons outlined in Tropologia, and if so, had he composed a hymn for each sermon and used it in congregational worship? Keach implied that many of the hymns in Spiritual Melody have already been sung. If so, it is difficult to accept that regular congregational hymn singing did not begin at Horsleydown until 1691.

¹⁴I am led to this conclusion by the similarity between the tables of contents of Tropologia and Spiritual Melody. (See below, pp. 23 & 24.) Phillip Doddridge is an example of another preacher/hymnwriter who used hymns to reinforce the lessons of his sermons: "These hymns being composed to be sung, after the Author had been preaching on the Texts prefixed to them, it was his Design, that they should bring over again the leading Thoughts in the Sermon, and naturally express and warmly enforce those devout Sentiments, which he hoped were then rising in the Minds of his Hearers, and help to fix them on the Memory and Heart..." (Preface to Doddridge's hymns (1755, ed. Job Orton). Quoted in Erik Routley, I'll Praise my Maker: A Study of the Hymns of certain Authors who stand in or near the Tradition of English Calvinism, 1700-1850 (London: Independent Press, Ltd, 1951), pp. 18-19.)

¹⁵Benjamin Keach, Spiritual Melody (1691), pp. vii-viii.

The motion in favour of singing did not go uncontested. There was a small but significant group who opposed corporate singing. After the motion passed, they petitioned for withdrawal from the church. Keach, who believed that he had conceded enough in allowing those opposed to leave the church during singing, lost his temper when a church member, Samuel Bagwell, spoke in favour of the anti-singers' request for withdrawal:

...Mr Samuel Bagwel spake in favour of us that seeing it was a Scruple of Contience he did not see why we might not be born with all to which Mr Keach replyed saying brother doe you know what you doe, you had as good take a knife and stab me to the Heart.¹⁶

The anti-singers also objected that the motion had not been discussed thoroughly, although by their own record, Keach had announced the meeting and its subject one week before it took place.¹⁷ Furthermore, the issue of singing had been before the people of Keach's church since he introduced singing following the Lord's Supper 18 years before, and Isaac Marlow had published an anti-singing tract in 1690, thus providing another occasion for discussion of the matter.¹⁸

¹⁶Maze Pond Church Book, MS, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, vol. I, p. 32 (hereafter referred to as MPCB). The most extensive first hand records of this meeting are in the Maze Pond book, although it must be noted that this is the record of the anti-singers and is bound to show Keach in the worst light. Keach and Bagwell must have been reconciled, because Bagwell added his name to the list of those who endorsed A Sober Reply.

¹⁷MPCB, Vol. I, p. 31: "...the 22 day of the 12 Month 1690 [22 February 1691] Mr. Benjamin Keach on the Lords day imeadatly after the Church had broke Bread moved for publick singing in the Church...

"Agreed to discour the point of Singing next first Day afternoon, after the publick Worship is over".

¹⁸Marlow, who represented the Mile End Green church at the 1689 assembly, may never have been a member of Keach's church and is not mentioned in the Maze Pond records as a member of the group who

The next episode in the singing controversy took place at the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in June. It seems as though Thomas Whinnel of Taunton asked the assembly to censure persons who wished to withdraw from their churches because of corporate singing, although the assembly had renounced this kind of oversight.¹⁹ The Maze Pond records include the testimony of three persons, Nathaniel Crabb, Robert Steed, and Isaac Marlow, who assert that Whinnel was also out of order because he proposed it on the last day of the assembly when many members had gone home and no new business was to be discussed. Crabb insisted that the meeting on 8 June was "only to ratify what had gone before and not to discuss new business".²⁰ Marlow concurred:

As to what was proposed to advise such persons that were not for the common way of Singing in Gods Worship to keep their Communion with those Churches that were in the practise of it there arose a long debate among the Brethren, and it being put to the voate it was strongly oposed and protested against as new matter...and after a long dispute it was as I and others desired put aside but I accedentially understanding that some who were for Singing did think otherwise I moved for Sattisfaction whether it was pas't or not upon which severall that were for Singing said that it was pas't others immeadiately protested against it as not being fairly past, and as fresh matter which was not then to be brought before us, and in this confution the matter was

withdrew over the singing issue. However, his wife and children are mentioned in "A Perfect and Compleat Regester of all Marrages, Nativites, and Burials, belonging to the Congregation that meeteth on Horsly-downe, over whom Benjamen Keach is Overseer" (on deposit in the Public Records Office) as members. Furthermore, Marlow and the Horsleydowne dissidents shared virtually identical beliefs about singing.

¹⁹Narrative of Proceedings (1689), p. 10: "...we disclaim all manner of Superiority, Superintendency, over the Churches; and that we have no Authority or Power, to prescribe or impose any thing upon the Faith or Practice of any of the Churches of Christ".

²⁰MPCB, vol. I, p. 35.

left...²¹

The printed records of the 1691 assembly buttress the account given in the Maze Pond records, in that they contain no mention of Whinnel's motion.²²

Although his books are the principal vehicles for expounding the anti-singers' views, it appears that Marlow was not a formal member of their group. In An Account of the Unjust Proceedings, (n.d., but probably 1697), he wrote:

I desire it may be noted, what a persecuting Spirit is like to follow me, if I should joyn myself to any Church, and how troublesome my Adversaries would be to the Peace and Union of any People that should receive me into Communion...²³

Thus, he was at that time a member of none of the "baptized" churches. Nevertheless, the reasons given by the Maze Pond group for their opposition to singing are virtually identical to the reasons given by Marlow in his various writings:

1. ...you make a constant standing Ordinance which is indeed an extraordinary sperituall gift I Corenthians 14.
2. ...you make that formall which is in its right performance sperituall and ought to be managed and left to the management of the Sperit...
3. ...you use plurality of voices in that which ought to be performed by a single voice, there being noe Scripture proof for using plurality of voices in singing more than in Prayer.
4. ...you joyne in such close communion with the World in your Singing as to speake to God with your voices together, contrary to 2 Cor. 6.14,15.

²¹Ibid., p. 37.

²²See MacDonald "London Calvinistic Baptists", p. 56.

²³Marlow, An Account of the Unjust Proceedings in Some Matters of Difference Between Mr. William Collins and Isaac Marlow (n.d.), p. 21.

5. ...you suffer Women to Speake and Sing, to teach and admonish in the Worshipp and Servis of God in his Church, contrary to the word of God...²⁴

Member or not, Marlow and the Maze Pond group must have discussed the singing issue at length, for they were of one mind about it.

Keach issued "A Sober Appeal for Right and Justice" on 30 May 1691 which Marlow printed in his volume, Truth Cleared, in which he suggested that a committee, half the members to be chosen by Keach and half by Marlow, be formed to mediate the conflict. Marlow reported that the assembly endorsed Keach's suggestion.²⁵

The members of the committee chosen by Keach were Joseph Maisters, William Collins, Leonard Harrison, and Samuel Bagwell. Marlow's choices were Edward Man, George Barret, Robert Steed, and Richard Halliwell. However, this group never fulfilled their mandate. Marlow withdrew from the project sometime after 9 November 1691, because of a disagreement with Keach over the ground rules of the committee. Marlow wanted the rules to be agreed upon in advance; Keach wanted the committee to begin their examination and work out the rules as they proceeded.²⁶

On another level, the conflict between Keach and his dissatisfied members continued. At a church meeting on 2 October 1691, 22 members of the anti-singing faction were called upon to give an account of why they could not remain in communion with the Horsleydown church.

²⁴MPCB, vol. I, p. 44.

²⁵Marlow, Truth Cleared (n.d.), pp. 5-6.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 15-21.

According to the Maze Pond records, Keach lost his temper when Mary Leader explained why she could not in good conscience join in or tolerate corporate singing:

...then he replied quick upon her, and looking earnestly at her, saying you have learnt a fine piece of Religion ha'nt you, I confess I am troubled to see you that are but a Babe should pretend to such knowlidge above others or to that effect, and then turning to her husband Bro: Luke Leader he said you have finely dragg'd her up. to which he replied that God was his witness and she also whether he had perswaded her to that minde or to that effect, and further said to Mr Keach he thought he did verry ill to reflect after that manner upon the Sisters and overaw them. and Bro: Sandford spake to the same effect at which Mr Keach broak out into a wonderful passion, and in that strange unbecomming Sperit break out into Prayer without any notis thereof to the People...and in his Prayer called upon God to judge these men...

Finally, on 21 October, the Horsleydown church excommunicated nine of the men who had withdrawn over singing. Although the anti-singers met with the Baptist church at Winchester House temporarily, they wanted to establish their own church. In order to work out the details about "settling" themselves in a "church estate", they met with George Barret, Robert Steed, Edward Man, David Towler, Richard Halliwell, and Isaac Marlow to discuss it.²⁷

In the context of this tension, the Particular Baptist churches assembled in London in June of 1692 and among other business, took up the singing issue. Murdina MacDonald emphasises the seriousness of the situation:

The singing issue ultimately involved, on one level or another, virtually the entire leadership of the London Calvinistic Baptist community. Those who wrote in favour of singing 1690-1692 included Benjamin Keach, William Collins and Hanserd Knollys. Others who demonstrated approval of

²⁷MPCB, vol. I, pp. 65f.

the singing position were Joseph Maisters, Richard Adams, James Jones, Hercules Collins, Leonard Harrison, Benjamin Dennis and Richard Allen. Those who opposed singing in print 1690-1691 included Isaac Marlow, Robert Steed, William Kiffin, Richard Halliwell, George Barret and Edward Man. Others who became involved in the controversy due to their sympathetic assistance of the anti-singers in their settlement were John Scot, Richard Baxter, David Towler and John Ward, while Nathaniel Crabb had added his protest to the events of 8 June 1691 by writing a testimony for the Horsleydown dissidents.²⁸

The result of 1692 assembly's investigation was a ruling that both pro-singers and anti-singers had engaged in "unbrotherly Censures", "unsavoury Expressions" and a "great wrong to the first Baptized Churches".²⁹ The parties in the dispute were asked to "call in and bring all their books hereafter mentioned into the assembly, or to whom they shall appoint, and leave them to their dispose....Moreover, we entreat and determine...that none of the members of the churches do buy, give, or disperse any of these books aforesaid underwrit..." The books "underwrit" are A Sober Reply, Truth Soberly Defended, A Serious Answer, and Truth Cleared.³⁰ Keach was singled out for having endorsed (if not written) the anonymous pamphlet A Sober Reply which implied that Baptist churches in the past had been reluctant to provide their ministers with an adequate salary. Evidently, the Particular Baptist leaders were eager not to convey the impression that Calvinistic Baptists were reluctant to provide their

²⁸MacDonald, "London Calvinistic Baptists", pp. 62-63.

²⁹Narrative of Proceedings (1692), pp. 9-10.

³⁰Crosby, vol. 3, pp. 269-270.

ministers with an adequate stipend.³¹ Keach agreed to abide by the Assembly's ruling; Marlow did not and neither did the pro-singer, Thomas Whinnel. Marlow immediately issued the book Some Brief Remarks (1692).

A lull in the printed debate followed, until 1694 when Marlow published The Purity of Gospel Communion. Keach did not enter the second phase of the printed debate, and corporate singing did not have a new champion in print until Richard Allen issued An Essay to Prove Singing of Psalms with conjoined voices a Christian Duty in 1696.

In addition to all the arguments against singing produced in the first phase of the printed debate (which Marlow rehearsed yet again in its second phase), one new issue and one old issue dominated the second phase: First, Richard Allen attempted to demonstrate that Hebrew poetry rhymed and was written in metre. Second, Marlow resurrected the issue of William Collins' mistranslation of a Latin phrase in the appendix to Keach's Breach Repaired.³² Keach claimed first that a printer's error was responsible for the mistranslation, and later that he himself was responsible. The phrase, Graecum verbum laudem quidem, maxime quae Deo debetur, includit; non autem necessario evincit, quod cecinerint, was Augustine Marlorate's comment on Matthew 26.30 (a key text for singers and anti-singers alike). Collins' translation was accurate but not his comment on Marlorate; his comment

³¹MacDonald, p. 65.

³²See Keach, An Answer to Mr. Marlow's Appendix (1691), p. 55; Marlow, The Controversy of Singing (1696), postscript, and A Just Vindication of mr. William Collins, (n.d.), pp. 20-24.

seems like a non sequitur:

...the Greek word indeed includes Praise, chiefly that which is due to God; but doth it not necessarily evince that they sang. Hence I infer, that in the opinion of this author it doth probably evince that they did sing; and to me the probability seems next to an absolute certainty.³³

It could not have been a printer's error, and Marlow suspected that Keach changed his story because Collins was protecting him. MacDonald writes:

...Marlow...claimed the reason Keach had been willing to protect Collins was that he had been scheduled to be examined by the elders at Jones' coffee house over a matter of difference between himself and some others. This was possibly a reference to the complaint lodged by the general association of General Baptists on 12 May 1697 against Keach and Richard Robbins for interference in the internal affairs of the General Baptist church at High Wycombe....The General Baptists requested that the elders intervene and guarantee a fair hearing on both sides.³⁴

The London elders acquitted Collins of wrongdoing and censured Marlow:

That a Man of no more Learning, Parts and Judgment than Mr. Marlow, a Man never in Office in any Church, should set up to guide the Chariot of the Sun, and to drive over the Stars that are amongst us, as if they were Glow-worms, neither regarding the Office of Eldership, nor their Persons that are amongst us, but treating them with a Contempt, we believe, hardly to be parallel'd; and not only so, but that we have an odd sort of Government amongst us, or at least a strange sort of Men, who countenance ignorant Men in putting their hand to the Helm of Controversy, tho they run the Ship aground: For no Man that sees Mr. Marlow's Writings, will think that he put his hand to his Pen without some Encouragers.³⁵

³³Keach, Breach, Appendix, p. 55.

³⁴MacDonald, pp. 74-75.

³⁵Anon., A Just Vindication of Mr. William Collins (n.d.), pp. 8-

Marlow replied to the elders' charge with An Answer to a Deceitful Book (1698) and published no more on singing. He left London about 1700 and died in Leominster in 1719.³⁶

The hymn singing conflict left the Particular Baptists of London divided and disorganized. There were no more assemblies after 1693. Particular Baptist organization withered, but hymn singing prospered. Although the printed debate ended in 1698, it is not too extravagant to suggest 1736 as the year in which the drama finally came to an end. In that year the Maze Pond church, the church established by the anti-singers of Horsleydown, called Abraham West to be their pastor. West made it a condition of his accepting their call that the church should sing hymns. The church agreed.³⁷

iii. Keach's hymns: The sources.

Nowhere did Keach claim that the over 400 hymns he published were completely original. Nevertheless, the one attribution (a psalm by John Patrick) leads one to expect that Keach would give credit where it was due.³⁸ However, Keach owed debts to John Mason, William Kethe,

³⁶MacDonald, p. 76.

³⁷Crosby, vol. IV, p. 301: "...after the death of the reverend Mr. Edward Wallin, they chose Mr. West to be their pastor, who made it one condition of his acceptance, that they should sing the praises of God in the assembly for public worship; with which they complied, and do now practise accordingly".

³⁸Apparently this attribution led Robert Young to anticipate that all the hymns were by Keach: "Spiritual Melody contains one hundred forty-seven hymns...They are all from the pen of Keach save the curious insertion of one hymn taken from Dr. Patrick's Century of Select Psalms..." ("The History of Baptist Hymnody in England from

John Patrick, William Barton, and perhaps to Sternhold and Hopkins' "Old Version" that he did not acknowledge.

John Mason's Spiritual Songs or Songs of Praise to Almighty God upon several Occasions (first edition, 1683) seems to have been quite popular among Nonconformists. Mason (c. 1646-1694)³⁹ was, according to Harry Escott, "the most powerful single Anglican influence upon Watts and the Dissenting School of Hymn-writers...Baxter called him 'the glory of the Church of England'..."⁴⁰ Although an Anglican priest, Mason was admired by Baxter and another Nonconformist clergyman, Thomas Shepherd wrote a collection of hymns (much inferior to Mason's), Penitential Cries, which were added to Mason's Songs of Praise in 1693. Mason's hymns were important models for Keach. Like Mason, Keach wrote most of his hymns in the Common Metre of the Old Version. Furthermore, Mason was one of only three hymn-writers before Keach to produce a collection of hymns which appears to have been framed with the liturgical needs of a congregation in mind.⁴¹ Most important, however, Mason's verses are not paraphrases of psalms or other scriptural passages; they are completely original hymns. They

1612 to 1800", (D.M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1959), p. 57.)

³⁹DNB, vol. 12, pp. 1315-1316.

⁴⁰Harry Escott, Isaac Watts, Hymnographer: A Study of the Beginnings, Development, and Philosophy of the English Hymn, (London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1962), p. 78.

⁴¹Note Louis Benson's comment: [Mason's] "songs are in the C.M. of the psalm book, and numbered as in a hymn book". (The English Hymn, p. 79.) Keach's other predecessors who appear to have written for congregational singing are Barton and Wither.

may not have been the model on which Keach relied, but they were certainly an influence. That Keach knew Mason's work and admired it is evident from the fact that he borrowed from five of Mason's hymns:

1. "Blest be my God that I was born"
2. "My Soul doth magnify the Lord"
3. "Christ is the way, the truth and life"
4. "How shall I sing that majesty"
5. "Away dark thoughts, awake my joy"⁴²

Keach also borrowed from John Patrick (1632-1695).⁴³ Strictly speaking, Patrick was not a hymn writer; he wrote metrical psalms and scripture canticles, not hymns. According to Baxter, Patrick's metrical psalter was very popular among the Nonconformists.

Mr. Patrike of the Charterhouse hath with pious Skill and Seriousness turned into a new Metre many of David's Psalms, and the Advantage for holy Affections and Harmony, hath so far reconciled the Nonconformists, that divers of them use his Psalms in their Congregations, though they have their old ones, Rouse's, Bishop King's, Mr. White's, the New England's [sic], Davison's, the Scots, (agreed on by two Nations) in competition with it.⁴⁴

In 1679, Patrick published A Century of select Psalms and portions of the Psalms of David, especially those of praise, and in 1691, this was expanded into The Psalms of David in Metre. Keach attributes one of his hymns to Patrick: Hymn 205 in Spiritual melody is said to be "A Hymn of Dr. P. taken out of his Century of select Psalms, p. 20".

⁴²(1) Mason, Songs of Praise, p. 24 and Spiritual Melody, p. 235; (2) Mason, p. 33 and Spiritual Melody, p. 188; (3) Mason, p. 20 and Spiritual Melody, p. 162; (4) Mason, p. 1 and Spiritual Songs, p. 6; (5) Mason, p. 19 and Feast, p. 18.

⁴³DNB, vol. 15, pp. 488-489.

⁴⁴Richard Baxter, Poetical Fragments, "The Epistle to the Reader" (1681).

However, Keach also based his versions of the Benedictus, Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis, and "A Song of the Lamb" on Patrick's versions, as well as his versions of Psalm 2, 14, and 95. Keach took seven paraphrases from Patrick:

1. "Let Isr'el's pow'rful God and King"
2. "My soul doth magnify the Lord"
3. "I now can leave this world and die"
4. "All ye that serve the Lord"
5. "Why do the heathen nations rage"
6. "Lord, let me know that happy man"
7. "Come let us all unite our joys"⁴⁵

⁴⁵(1) John Patrick, The Psalms of David in Metre: Fitted to the Tunes used in Parish Churches, London (1694), p. 351 and Keach, Spiritual Songs, p. 6; (2) Patrick, p. 352 and Keach, p. 7; (3) Patrick, p. 353 and Keach, p. 8; (4) Patrick, A Century of Select Psalms, London (1679), p. 171 and Keach, p. 9; (5) Patrick, Century, p. 2 and Keach, Spiritual Melody, p. 371; (6) Patrick, Century, p. 14 and Keach, Spiritual Melody, p. 374; (7) Patrick Century, p. 91 and Keach, Spiritual Melody, p. 378.

Keach referred to William Barton⁴⁶ (c.1603-1678) in The Breach Repaired.⁴⁷ Barton published hundreds of hymns based on passages of scripture beginning with A Century of Select Hymns in 1659. He also borrowed from ten of Barton's hymns:

1. "The Man is Bless'd that Shuns the Snare"
2. "God is a Righteous Judge Be Sure"
3. "Thou Wilt Arise in Mercy Yet"
4. "Mark and Behold the Perfect Man"
5. "The Lord is Just in All His Ways"
6. "How Amiable are the Bless'd Tents"
7. "Give Laud unto the Lord"
8. "Return, O Lord, How Long a Space"
9. "My Soul Now Bless with Readiness"
10. "Let those life-breathing lips of thine"⁴⁸

Several of Keach's psalms have much in common with the versions found in the Old Version (Sternhold and Hopkins, second edition, 1549), especially Psalms 1, 4, 7, 23, 84, and 102 (Spiritual Melody, pp. 370, 372, 373, 375, 379, and 376). However, the resemblances are not overwhelming, and it is impossible to be certain that Keach relied on Sternhold and Hopkins. The resemblances, in any case, are not as great as the ones already remarked on between Keach's hymns and those of Mason, Patrick, and Barton. Keach certainly leaned heavily on William Kethe's (?-1593?) rendering of Psalm 100 (included in the Old

⁴⁶DNB, vol. 1, p. 1269.

⁴⁷Keach, The Breach Repaired, p. 95.

⁴⁸(1) William Barton, Four Centuries of Select Hymns, London (1668), p. 199 and Keach, Spiritual Melody, p. 370; (2) Barton, p. 204 and Keach, p. 373; (3) Barton, p. 224 and Keach, p. 376; (4) Barton, p. 273 and Keach, p. 377; (5) Barton, p. 192 and Keach, p. 378; (6) Barton, p. 250 and Keach, p. 379; (7) Barton, p. 251 and Keach, p. 381; (8) Barton, p. 288 and Keach, p. 382; (9) Barton, p. 216 and Keach, p. 382; (10) William Barton, A Century of Select Hymns Collected out of Scripture London (1659), p. 83 and Keach, Spiritual Melody, p. 349.

Version) for two of his hymns. The two hymns Keach based on Kethe's 100th Psalm are followed by the version found in Sternhold and Hopkins:

Spiritual Melody, Psalm 100, p. 380:

Spiritual Melody, Hymn 62, p. 159:

The Sixth Part.

1. Make a joyful noise unto
the Lord,
O all ye Nations on the Earth,
Serve him with joy, his praise
record,
Come in his sight with Songs
of Mirth.

1. Now let all the People on
the Earth
Sing to the Lord with chearful
voice,
Whose love was such to bring
thee forth,
But chiefly let the Saints
rejoyce.

2. Know that the Lord is God
alone,
We are the Flock which he doth
keep;
His workmanship, and not our
own,
His People and his Pasture-
Sheep.

2. The Lord to us is good
indeed,
'Tis he new Creatures did us
make;
We are his flock, he doth us
feed,
And for his sheep he doth us
take.

3. Enter his Gates with
thankfulness,
And come with joy into his
Courts;
Great gratitude to him
express,
And bless his Name in full
resorts;

3. O enter now his House with
praise,
Approach with joy his Courts
likewise,
Praise, laud and bless his
Name always,
For this is comely in his
Eyes.

4. For lo, the Lord is good
and kind,
His Mercy everlasting is;
His Truth all generations find
For evermore assur'd to his.

4. For why the Lord our God
is good,
His Covenant it standeth sure,
'Tis ratify'd by Christ's own
Blood,
And shall from age to age
endure.

Sternhold and Hopkins, Psalm 100:

1. All People that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,
come ye before him and rejoice.

2. The Lord ye know is God indeed,
without our aid he did us make;
We are his flock, he doth us feed,
and for his sheep he doth us take.

3. O enter then his gates with praise,
approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless his Name always,
for it is seemly so to do.

4. For why? the Lord our God is good,
his mercy is for ever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure.

Keach's version of the 100th Psalm is also a remarkable anticipation of Watts' project of "Christianizing" the psalter.

Keach also borrowed at least the idea for another hymn from one of Francis Quarles' (1592-1644)⁴⁹ Emblems (first edition 1634):

The World's a sea; my flesh a ship that's mann'd
With lab'ring thoughts,
Repentance is the bucket, and mine eye
The pump unused...⁵⁰

Spiritual Melody, Hymn 104, p. 254:

1. This World's a Sea, our Soul's a Ship
With raging Tempest tost;
And if she should her Anchor slip,
She doubtless will be lost....

4. Repentance like a Bucket is
To pump the water out;
For leaky is our Ship, alas,
Which makes us look about.

⁴⁹DNB, vol. 16, pp. 535-539.

⁵⁰Crashaw, Richard and Francis Quarles, The Poetical Works of Richard Crashaw and Quarles' Emblems, ed. George Gilfillan (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1857), p. 290, Bk III, No. XI, ll. 9-12.

There is no pattern in Keach's adaptations. The one obvious doctrinal change Keach made was in Mason's "Blest be my God that I was born". Seizing a unique opportunity, Keach turned an Anglican hymn into Baptist propaganda (while retaining the English nationalism of the original):

Spiritual Melody, p. 235:

1. Blessed be God that we were
born,
Under the joyful sound,
And rightly have Baptized been,
And bred on English ground...

Songs of Praise, p. 24:

1. Blest be my God that I was
born
To hear the Joyful Sound;
That I was born to be
Baptiz'd,
And bred on Holy Ground;

4. England at first an Egypt
was;
Since that, proud Babel's
slave;
At last a Canaan it became,
And then my Birth it gave.

Having looked at the influence which other hymn writers had on Keach, it is appropriate to consider what (if any) impact Keach had on others. Keach died only three years before Watts published Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1707). Although it is noted above that Watts was aware of Keach, it appears that none of Keach's hymns found their way into Watts' hymn books.

One of Keach's hymns found its way into an eighteenth century American hymnal. "Repentance is wrought in my soul" (from Spiritual Melody) was published in Hymns and Spiritual Songs (Newport, Rhode

Island, 1766), the first Baptist hymn book published in the Colonies.⁵¹ However, virtually none of Keach's hymns were republished after his death. In 1707, Samuel Bury published a compendium of hymns, A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Fitted for Morning and Evening Worship in a Private Family. Bury included a list of authors from whom he had taken hymns. The list names virtually every author who had written hymns before Watts; Keach is not mentioned.⁵²

iv. Keach's hymns: Organization and style.

Spiritual Melody (1691) and Spiritual Songs (1700) contain over 400 hymns. Spiritual Songs is in two parts: first there is a collection of metrical paraphrases of ten canticles from the Bible, plus a hymn "For the marvelous deliverance of our sovereign...King William". The second part is a collection of one hundred hymns originally published in 1696 as A Feast of Fat Things. A Feast of Fat Things will be dealt with as part of Spiritual Songs.

Spiritual Melody was Keach's most important hymn book and really did represent something new in English Protestant hymnody. William Barton published more hymns than Keach; his collected hymns (published

⁵¹Carnes, "The Famous Mr. Keach", p. 118.

⁵²The complete list is as follows: Barton's Centuries, Barton's Hymns, Baxter, Boyse's Sacramental Hymns, Crashaw's Sacred Poems, Clarke's Annotations, Dorrington's Hymns, Divine Hymns, Daniel Burgess, Foxton's Hymns, Guide to Glory, Herbert (Common Metre Version), Milbourn's Version of the Psalms, Patrick, Penitential Cries, Scotch Psalms, Mason's Songs of Praise, Tate and Brady, Vincent's Sacramental Hymns, Woodford's Paraphrase.

in 1688) totalled six hundred. However, between Spiritual Melody and Spiritual Songs, Keach probably had the second largest collection of English hymns. Although he published fewer hymns than Barton, the quantity of Keach's output is a minor distinguishing characteristic. More important are the style and organization of his hymns.

The most important feature of Keach's style is that it is "homiletical" or "doctrinal". Harry Escott regarded Keach as a forerunner of Isaac Watts in pioneering the "homiletical" or "doctrinal" hymn:

[Keach's hymns] ...despite their amateurishness these compositions have some historical importance as early examples of the homiletical hymn, a genre in which Watts and especially Doddridge were later to excel.⁵³

The homiletical and doctrinal aspects of Keach's hymns are most evident in Spiritual Melody. A comparison between the hymns and the table of contents of Tropologia, Keach's catalogue of biblical metaphors, reveals that the hymns are a metrical summary of his magnum opus:

⁵³Escott, Isaac Watts, p. 98. Also on p. 98: "[Keach] was the first dissenter to publish a hymn-book which was no longer mainly a literary effort, but compiled to meet the liturgical needs of a definite congregation....Secondly, Keach has affinity with Watts in his conception of the purpose of a hymn-book as a sung liturgy. He shows us Watts's doctrinal hymn in embryo. The Baptist hymn-writer...grasped the truth, if roughly, that a hymn-book is not only a book of praises or a vade-mecum of the devotional life, but also a medium for the conveyance of moral and religious teaching". And chapter 3, note 138 (p. 272):

"Keach's Spiritual Melody is probably our first evangelical Hymn-book. The hymns in it are for the most part not literal paraphrases but versified homilies on some specific Scripture text. The hymns are no longer a supplement to metrical psalmody...."

Tropologia (1681), table of contents for Book II, "The First of Metaphors, respecting God the Father".

God a Father.
God a Portion.
God a Habitation.
God an Husbandman.
God a Builder.
God a Man of War.
God a Strong-Tower.
God compared to a Giant.
God compared to a Lion.
God as Leopard.
God compared to a Bear.
God compared to a Moth.
God a Refuge.
God an Housholder.
God compared to a Potter.
God to the Wicked is a
 Consuming Fire.
The Arm of God.
God compared to a Travailing
 Woman.
God a Shield.
God a Wall of Fire.
God a Judge.
God an Hiding-Place.

Spiritual Melody (1691):

God a Father.
God a Portion.
God the Saints Dwelling.
Storm a coming.
God a Husbandman.
God the chief Builder.
God a Man of War.
God a strong Tower
God like a Giant.
God compared to a Potter.
God compared to a Lyon.
God like a Moth.
God as a travelling Woman.
God a consuming Fire.
The everlasting Arms.
God a sun and Shield.
God our Refuge.

Keach also clarified the connection between Tropologia and Spiritual Melody in the latter's preface: "Now in this small tract I can assure you is contained a great part of the principal things under divers metaphors opened in that book [Tropologia], though they are there more largely insisted on".⁵⁴

When Escott referred to Keach's hymns as homiletical, he meant more than that they were sung commentary on the sermon. The hymns are virtually sermons on their own and represent a radical break with

⁵⁴Keach, Spiritual Melody, "To the Reader".

psalm and scripture paraphrases, anticipated only by Wither and Mason. Barton's output is entirely made up of such paraphrases. Of the great seventeenth century hymn writers, only Wither and Mason resemble Keach in breaking loose from the requirement to paraphrase scripture, and their output is small by any standard, but even more so by comparison to Keach's 400 hymns. Thus, in quantity of hymns and originality of concept, though certainly not in quality, Keach was the true ancestor of Watts.

Keach's distinctiveness also stands out when the organization of Spiritual Melody is considered. Barton's Six Centuries is organized haphazardly, as is Mason's Songs of Praise. Keach was tied to a logical form of organization by his intention to make Spiritual Melody a metrical summary of Tropologia. Tropologia outlines the metaphors for God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, followed by the metaphors for the Word of God, grace, hope, angels, the church, and so on. The organization of Spiritual Melody breaks down after the section paraphrasing Tropologia, and there is no longer a discernible pattern. Keach's second hymn book, Spiritual Songs, is not organized as carefully but still follows a basically Trinitarian pattern. The Trinitarian pattern, followed in Tropologia, Spiritual Melody, and to a lesser extent in Spiritual Songs, must have appealed to Keach. It was one of the only patterns Keach could have followed in organizing his hymns; it would not have occurred to him to organize according to the liturgical year. Liturgical time was completely absent from his thought (although Spiritual Songs contains one Christmas hymn borrowed from John Mason).

In addition to hymns of praise to the Trinity, Keach's two hymn books contain hymns for baptism, the Lord's Supper, and funerals. There are far fewer hymns for the Lord's Supper than one would expect, however, if as Keach said, he began introducing hymn singing at the administration of the Lord's Supper eighteen years before the publication of Spiritual Melody. Between his two hymn books there are only eight hymns explicitly annotated "to be sung at the Lord's Supper". So, with the hymns for the ordinances (Baptism, Lord's Supper, and burial) and the paraphrases of biblical metaphors, Keach's hymns cover almost all the themes of Christian doctrine; Spiritual Melody and its supplement, Spiritual Songs, constitute a liturgically complete collection of hymns and are much more nearly complete than any of their predecessors, with the possible exception of Barton's Six Centuries.

There are two major types of hymns in Keach's hymn books and two sub-types. The major types are hymns of praise and sermonic or doctrinal hymns, and the sub-types are hymns for occasions and ordinances (Baptism, Lord's Supper, and burial) and psalm and scripture paraphrases. The various types overlap, of course; a hymn of praise can be doctrinal and a doctrinal hymn can be directed toward God in praise.

By and large, Keach's hymns are hymns of praise; they sound the objective note of praise, rather than the subjective note of Christian experience. His faith looked outward in adoration rather than inward in examination. There are two reasons for this: First, Keach was a Calvinist; he shared the Calvinist conviction that the true purpose of

human life is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever". Secondly, he lived before one of the great watersheds in Christian history, the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century. A glance at Wesley's hymns reveals that the founder of Methodism was, if not less conscious of the glory of God, at least more conscious of the human heart. Louis Benson writes:

The work of the Wesleys...greatly affected the Hymn of Christian Experience...Methodist Hymnody developed into something more than a body of Church Song. As finally gathered into the Collection of 1780, it constituted what John Wesley called the fullest account of Scriptural Christianity in existence. The whole area of the operations of the Spirit in the heart is there charted out with firmness and precision.⁵⁵

This is not to say that Keach completely neglected the subjective aspect of faith. Keach could also sing

What e'er discouragement you find,
our Christ can answer all;
His Arms are ready to lift up
when you are near to fall.

You have had a sweet taste of God,
he is to you most dear;
You feel the power of his Word,
be therefore of good Chear!⁵⁶

And Keach frequently exhorted sinners to "fall in love with Christ". However, his hymns are long on objective praise and doctrine and short on inwardness.

Even in praise, however, Keach emphasised doctrine. His hymns logically (if woodenly) adumbrate doctrine as a sermon would. The

⁵⁵Benson, The English Hymn, pp. 248-249.

⁵⁶Keach, Spiritual Songs, pp. 38-39. Also hymn 86 in Spiritual Melody.

special status of Spiritual Melody has already been noted; it contains the kernel of Tropologia reduced to verse. The method of the hymns based on Tropologia is identical to the method followed in Keach's catalogue of biblical metaphors: First, a resemblance between a divine truth and its earthly symbol is noted, then the divine truth is explained in earthly terms. For example, hymn 1 in Spiritual Melody:

1. A Father doth his Child beget,
So we begotten are,
By thy own Word and Spirit Lord,
And do thine Image bear.
2. He likewise doth his Children cloath,
And doth them also love;
So thou most richly cloaths all such
That are born from above.
3. A Father feeds and does protect
Such who his Children be:
So thou dost feed and save all those
Who do belong to thee.
4. And also doth delight in them
Who him resemble do:
To such who are most like to thee,
Thou dost chief favour show.

Most of the hymns in Spiritual Melody are like this. Each verse is a complete thought. Keach did not intend these hymns to be great poetry; he intended them to be exactly what they are, i.e., metrical doctrine.⁵⁷ Nor did he intend all of them to be sung:

⁵⁷Manning points out that hymnody and poetry are distinctly different kinds of things: "...I think it improper to criticize hymns as if they were ordinary verses: to say of any hymn, it is "not poetry" or it is "poor poetry" is to say nothing. A hymn--a good hymn-- is not necessarily poetry of any sort, good or bad: just as poetry, good or bad, is not necessarily a hymn. A hymn like "Jesu, Lover of my Soul", may be poor religious poetry, but, on face of its place in English religion, only imbecility will declare it a poor hymn. George Herbert wrote much excellent religious poetry, but it may be doubted if he wrote one tolerable hymn. Hymns do not form a subdivision of poetry. They are a distinct kind of composition,

I do not judge all those hymns I have taken from metaphorical or tropical scriptures, are proper to be sung; nor are they here recommended to that end, some of them being historical...and some others, containing matter of controversie; nor do I think those concerning Hell so suitable to be sung...⁵⁸

However, even with wooden paraphrases of Tropologia, Keach frequently includes a doxology, thus combining praise and doctrine. For example, the hymn quoted above concludes:

All praise and glory unto God
Our Father, be therefore:
And unto Christ that ransom'd us,
Be Praise for evermore.

There is nothing distinctive about Keach's psalm and scripture paraphrases, except for the scriptures he chooses to paraphrase. Before Keach, most paraphrasers had neglected Old Testament canticles. The Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis appear in most collections of paraphrases, however Keach also included the following Old Testament canticles: "I to the Lord, will sing" (Ex. 15), "Give Ear, O Heavens, I will speak" (Deut. 32), "I to my Well-beloved, now" (Isa. 5), "Jehovah I will give thee Praise" (Isa. 12), and "My heart doth in Jehovah joy" (I Sam. 2). George Wither (Hymns and Songs of the Church, 1623), George Sandys (A Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David and upon the Hymns dispersed throughout the Old and New Testaments, 1636), and William Barton (Six Centuries of Select Hymns and Spiritual songs collected out of the Holy Bible (1688) were the

neither prose nor poetry: they are, in a word, hymns...A hymn may be poetry as it may be theology. It is not, of necessity, either". (Manning, The Hymns of Watts and Wesley, p. 109.)

⁵⁸Keach, Spiritual Melody, "To the Reader".

only paraphrasers to include Old Testament canticles. The standard hymn book for most English Protestants, Sternhold and Hopkins' Old Version, included only the New Testament canticles.

It would be odd if Keach's characteristic themes did not enter into his hymn writing. His insistence on unconditional justification is certainly present:

Spiritual Melody, Hymn 161:

The Restoration of the Soul
It is the work alone
Of thy own Grace, O God most high,
Which to us is made known.

Hymn 165:

1. How weak, O Lord, is sinful Man,
O how unable's he
To act or do, much less to run,
Until he's drawn by thee.
2. We, Lord, have no sufficiency,
Nor power of our own,
To think so much as one good thought,
As of our selves alone;
3. But all our whole sufficiency
Doth from the Lord proceed,
Who works in us most graciously
Both the will and the deed.

Spiritual Songs, hymn 23:

1. What was thy End, O holy God,
in our Salvation;
But thy own Glory? therefore we
will praise thee every one:
2. Shall Man assume some part of it?
let him ashamed be;
All is of God, all is of Grace,

All glory be to Thee.⁵⁹

As in the sermons, so in the hymns, there is a de-emphasis of Keach's polemic against pedo-baptism. It is likely that he hoped to have a wider audience (and wider sales) by not alienating pedo-baptists.

Although Keach's hymns reflect his soteriology and its emphasis on divine sovereignty, he also wrote hymns that appealed to sinners to convert:

Spiritual Melody, hymn 59, fourth part:

5. O then poor Sinners lay to heart
Your folly, to Christ fly;
And leave thy sins, whoe're thou art,
For that day draweth nigh.

Spiritual Songs, hymn 21:

2. Salvation is brought very near,
your Saviour also stands
Now, now, O Soul, ev'n at thy door,
O yield to his Commands!

3. Open to him, before his Wrath
is kindled in his Heart,
And he from you, with angry Frowns,
for ever doth depart.⁶⁰

Another aspect of Keach's hymnody is his fondness for paradox or "metaphysical conceits". He shared this characteristic with many other seventeenth century poets. Note the following examples:

Spiritual Melody, hymn 22, "Thou, Lord, the good Physician art", second part:

⁵⁹See also Spiritual Melody, hymns 196, 197, and 198, and Spiritual Songs, hymns 43 and 51.

⁶⁰See also Spiritual Melody, hymns 22 and 43 and Spiritual Songs, Hymn 23 and 40.

1. But it is true, no medicin's found
Which, Lord, can do us good,
So as to make us whole and sound,
But our Physician's Blood;

Hymn 38, first part:

1. We naked once were all, O Lord,
And loathsome were to see;
Our shame was seen, and vile within,
Till cloathed were by thee.

Third part:

3. The longer we these Garments wear,
The better they would be;
For the long use of godliness
Makes us shine splendentlie.

Hymn 74:

1. Behold, and Wonder now,
in a most sacred Song;
O let's Exalt the Name of Christ,
to him doth Praise belong.

2. A Wonder sure it was,
and that in every part;
For while he lay ith' Virgins Womb
he lay in her own Heart.

3. That Son the Mother bore,
the Mother did Create;
Both perfect God, and perfect Man,
a Wonder to Relate.

4. Lord Christ, thou art the Priest,
and yet the Sacrifice:
The Altar too art thou likewise,
and Gift that Sanctifies.

5. Thou God-Man, King, and Priest,
Almighty art yet Meek;
Thou art most Just yet Merciful,
the guilty cam'st to seek.

6. Thou never any fail'd,
that sought thee in their need;
Thou never quencht the smoking Flax,
nor broke the bruised Reed.

7. Thy Life a wonder was;
but here's a wonder more,
That thou that didst all Kingdoms make,

shouldst make thy self so Poor.
8. And wonderful it is,
that we this thing do see,
That thou who art all Life and Love,
yet few, alas! Love Thee.⁶¹

In the past most attention has been focussed on Keach's lack of skill as a poet. It is beyond doubt that his hymns are full of painfully bad rhymes and lines that do not scan. However, in his hymns, Keach was not writing poetry; he was producing metrical sermons. At his best, he never came up to the standard of Mason or Watts at their best. But when Mason and Watts were at their worst, they were guilty of lapses as bad as anything in Keach. Keach borrowed the first hymn in Mason's Songs of Praise, but thankfully omitted Mason's concluding stanza:

Thy bright Back-parts, O God of Grace,
I Humbly here Adore;
Shew me thy Glory and Thy Face,
That I may praise Thee more....⁶²

⁶¹Keach uses similar ideas in Spiritual Melody, hymn 47. In his sonnet, "Salvation to all that will is nigh", John Donne ponders similar paradoxes:

...That All, which always is All every where,
Which cannot sinne, and yet all sinnes must beare,
Which cannot die, yet cannot chuse but die,
Loe, faithfull Virgin, yeelds himselfe to lye
In prison, in thy wombe...

Ere by the spheares time was created, thou
Was in his minde, who is thy Sonne, and Brother;
Whom thou conceiv'st, conceiv'd; yea thou art now
Thy Makers maker, and thy Fathers mother;
Thou hast light in darke; and shutst in little roome,
Immensity cloysterd in thy deare wombe.

(John Donne, The Poems of John Donne, vol. I, ed. Herbert J.C. Grierson, (Oxford: OUP, 1912), p. 319.)

⁶²Mason, Songs of Praise, p. 4.

v. Baptist views on hymn singing before Keach.

In the seventeenth century Baptists, both General and Calvinistic, adopted a cautious attitude toward corporate singing. It seems as though the weight of Baptist opinion during Keach's career was against corporate singing, although the fact that the General Baptists felt that they had to condemn singing at their assembly in 1689 and that Marlow published the anti-singing tract A Brief Discourse in 1690 suggests that the movement to introduce corporate psalmody and hymnody may have been gathering momentum in the late 1680s.⁶³ The Particular Baptists adopted a cautious attitude toward singing in the Second London Confession (1677/88): Under the heading "Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day" (Chapter XXII) "teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual songs, singing with grace in our Hearts to the Lord" is urged as part of "Religious worship of God".⁶⁴ Whether this is corporate or individual singing is not specified.

⁶³It is worth noting that Bunyan's church in Bedford moved to adopt singing in 1690, although they appear to have restricted singing to believers only. (H.G. Tibbutt, ed. The Minutes of the First Independent Church (now Bunyan Meeting) at Bedford, 1656-1766, (Bedfordshire Historical Record Soc., 1976), pp. 91-92.) Perhaps in seeking to restrict singing to believers only they were following the advice Bunyan gave in Solomon's Temple Spiritualized (1688): "Sion-songs, temple-songs, must be sung by Sion's sons, and temple-worshippers". (Works, vol. 3, George Offor, ed., (1855), p. 496.)

⁶⁴Lumpkin, p. 281.

Keach became a Baptist through the General Baptists. This group was staunchly opposed to corporate singing, and their General Assembly condemned it in 1689. The singing of psalms by "ye whole Church together", they ruled, "appeared strangely foreign to the Evangellicall worship...", and "it was not conceived anyways safe for the Churches to admit to such Carnall formalities". The General Baptists, however, would allow one person to sing at a time in worship: "...as Prayer of one in the Church is the Prayer of the whole Church so the singing of one in the Church is the singing of the whole Church..."⁶⁵ The General Baptist apologist, Thomas Grantham, dealt with singing at length in Christianismus Primitivus (1678) and came to the same conclusion as the assembly (whose minutes he reported eleven years later). Grantham opposed corporate singing with many of the same points Isaac Marlow was to use. Singing "by meer Art", Grantham reasoned, and singing by the Spirit were completely different things, for the "Matter of spiritual Songs" is "not as it may be read unto them out of a Book only, and then repeated by them...".⁶⁶ Formal singing would surely lead to formal prayer.⁶⁷ Grantham acknowledged that singing was a "standing Ordinance in the Church" but only singing

⁶⁵Whitley, W.T., ed. Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, (London: Kingsgate Press, 1908), vol. I, (1654-1728), pp. 27 & 28.

⁶⁶Thomas Grantham, Christianismus Primitivus; or, the Ancient Christian Religion, in its Nature, Certainty, Excellency, and Beauty, (Internal and External)..., (1678), p. 99 & 109

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 105.

by one person at a time.⁶⁸ Curiously, one of Grantham's arguments for proving that singing is an ordinance was also used by Keach; singing, Grantham thought, was "part of that natural Religion, which obligeth all man-kind".⁶⁹

The Particular Baptist churches in south Wales condemned the singing of psalms in 1654: In addressing the Abergavenny church's practice of psalm singing, the association ruled that "it was desired that they would forbear to sing Psalms in the manner they now practice..." The issue seems to have been the danger of "pollution" by non-believers joining in with the church in offering praise.⁷⁰ The association meeting at Bridgwater, 17 to 19 April, 1655, also took a dim view of corporate singing. Although they acknowledged that "singing of psalms is an ordinance of Christ", it was "to be performed in the church of Christ by the saints..." Furthermore, they seem to have leaned toward the view that singing should be by one at a time: Singing "is performed in the church, first, in speaking to the Lord to his praise, and in this for one to speak and that so as that the rest may say, Amen."⁷¹

The most enthusiastic Baptist proponent of corporate singing before Keach was Hercules Collins. Collins' Orthodox Catechism (1680)

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 108 & 112.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 108.

⁷⁰Association Records, (Part 1), p. 8. As part of the exhortation to the Abergavenny church, the association warned them to "take heed of mixed communion with unbaptized persons, or any others walking disorderly".

⁷¹Association Records (Part 2), p. 58.

concludes with an appendix devoted to the issue of singing. Collins' views are nearly identical with Keach's. He argued that singing is an ordinance and both a moral and a supernatural precept;⁷² that we may sing because the Bible tells us that saints and angels sing;⁷³ that the early Christians sang (he cites Basil, Augustine, Ambrose, and Athanasius);⁷⁴ that singing with unbelievers is not a hindrance;⁷⁵ that a "special spiritual Gift" is not required for singing;⁷⁶ and that it is as lawful to compose a hymn as a sermon.⁷⁷ Collins argued particularly for the singing of a hymn after the *Lord's Supper* but also for other occasions, as well, and believed "that it is heartily desired by many Officers, and other particular Members of some Churches of Christ, that they could agree together to perform this Ordinance of God, especially at the Lord's Table..."⁷⁸ Collins and Keach were both ministers in London, and it may be that Collins had Keach in mind when he wrote of church officers who advocated singing.

At least one of the pro-singers in the 1691 singing controversy was a convert from the opinion that singing should be by one at a time

⁷²Hercules Collins, An Orthodox Catechism: Being the Sum of Christian Religion, Contained in the Law and Gospel (1680), pp. 75 & 76.

⁷³Ibid., p. 78.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 77.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 80.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 82.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 75.

and by an extraordinary gift. Hanserd Knollys wrote a book supporting Keach's position which has been lost (An Answer to J.M.'s A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing (1691)), but he advocated some of Marlow's points in his preface to Katherine Sutton's A Christian Woman's Experiences of the Glorious Working of Gods free Grace (Rotterdam, 1663). Sutton believed that she had a gift for producing songs and in her memoir, published some of the songs which, in her opinion, had come to her through divine inspiration. Knollys, in commending her book, went on at some length about his opinions on singing in Christian worship. Singing, he believed, "ought to be performed by a gift, and the assistance of the Spirit" and explicitly distinguished truly spiritual singing from singing psalms and hymns from a book.⁷⁹ Knollys did not say that only one should sing at a time, but this is the logical conclusion of his reasoning. He appears to endorse charismatic, spontaneous singing:

I have known some other Godly and gracious Christians (besides this grave and holy Matron) who have this gift of Singing: and I myself have some experience of this kinde of Anoynting of the Spirit of praise...The Holy Spirit can dictate the Matter, yea and words of praise and singing, as well as the matter and words of prayer: And why may not the Lord assist a poor gracious humble soul to sing in the Spirit, as well as to pray in the Spirit: seeing there is nothing too hard for God, to do? And yet the gracious experience of many Godly persons doth testify that there is such a gift of the Spirit, called a spirit of supplication, which is powred forth upon the Lords people. And although many nay most Godly Christians do not believe there is any such spiritual gift of singing as I have here intimated, yet some few poor gracious humble souls have good Experience, that there is sometimes a measure of the holy Spirit powred upon them, where by they are so filled with the Spirit, that

⁷⁹Katherine Sutton, A Christian Womans Experiences of the Glorious Working of Gods free Grace (Rotterdam, 1663). From the "Preface" by Hanserd Knollys, p. ii.

they may break forth into Singing.⁸⁰

Knollys' conversion to pro-corporate singing views was not that unusual; Keach made the same transition. What is puzzling is to find former General Baptist Benjamin Keach advocating singing with such vigor, while still holding to the laying on of hands on baptizands (a part of General Baptist doctrine).

vi. Keach's apology for hymn singing.

Keach's apology for hymn singing is in two parts: he argued both for the usefulness of hymn singing and for its permissibility, i.e., that it is enjoined by scripture as a perpetual Gospel ordinance.

First, Keach reasoned that hymn singing has three uses: (1.) To inculcate doctrine; (2.) to replace "profane ballads"; and (3.) as a way to stir up the religious "affections" and as an outlet for Christian joy. The preface to Spiritual Melody is principally concerned with the usefulness of corporate hymnody. Keach quoted an "ancient" authority (Augustine, Preface to the Psalms) who observes that

the Holy Ghost seeing the souls of mankind struggling in the way of godliness, and being inclined to the delights of this life, hath mixed the power of his doctrine with sweet singing, that whilst the soul was melted with the sweetness of the verse, the divine word might the better be grafted with profit.⁸¹

⁸⁰Ibid., p. iii.

⁸¹Keach, Spiritual Melody, "Epistle to the Reader", p. i.

Furthermore, Keach went on to point out that hymns are easily committed to memory: "...these hymns being short, children will soon get them by heart..."⁸²

Secondly, godly "hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs" are useful replacements for secular songs and ballads:

...this book [Spiritual Melody] may prove of great advantage to their children, who generally are taken with verse, and are much addicted to learn such songs and ballads which generally tend to corrupt youth; and 'tis a shame to godly Christians they should suffer their children to learn many of them...⁸³

Thirdly, hymns and psalms are useful for stirring up the "affections" and as an outlet for the joy of the Christian life:

...when any Man naturally is filled with Joy and Gladness, or sees extraordinary cause of rejoicing, he by a natural Instinct falls into singing, all the World knows this is so. Now who is he on such occasion bound to rejoice in, and sing to, but the Lord only, who gave him those good things he possesseth, or delivered him from those evil things he feared? and so upon one account or other filled his Soul with Joy and Gladness?⁸⁴

Keach's rationale for hymn singing had much in common with other hymn-writers of his period. Virtually all hymn writers noted that doctrine put into meter and rhyme was easily committed to memory.

Note George Wither's opinion:

Songs were adjudged, even by the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, the fittest means to convey to many persons, and through many generations, those...considerations which ought seriously to be minded...yea, our own experience assures us,

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid. Cf. Breach, p. 184: " 'tis so natural for all, especially in Youth, to learn to sing, and so easily attained, ought not Parents to instruct their Children about what they should sing, and what not..."

⁸⁴Breach, p. 32. Cf. pp. 176-177.

that by song matters of moment may not only be committed to memory with more ease, but be more delightfully preserved unforgotten than by any other means.⁸⁵

Also, William Barton:

...certainly the most pressing passages of holy Scripture being put into smooth and familiar Verse...will fix good Lessons in our mind and memory, so as to edify the understanding, and kindle the affections...⁸⁶

Barton also offered the following metrical catalog of hymnody's

uses:

To fix choice Scriptures firmly in our mind,
And shew us where we shall those Scriptures find:
To move the mind to meditate and pray,
And train up Children in a Godly way.
To plant the Doctrine of our Catechism,
And root up Errors, Heresie, and Schism.
To purge prophaneness, and create an Ocean
Of Love and Loyalty and due Devotion.⁸⁷

The influence of "profane ballads" seems to have been of special concern to seventeenth century hymn writers. Note the title page of the Old Version:

Set forth and allowed to be sung in all Churches, of all the people together, before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, as also before and after Sermons: and moreover in private houses, for their godly solace and comfort, laying apart all ungodly songs, and Ballads, which tend onely to the nourishing of vice, and corrupting of youth.⁸⁸

⁸⁵George Wither, Hallelujah, or Britain's Second Remembrancer, Edward Farr, ed., (London: John Russell Smith, 1857), p. xxix.

⁸⁶William Barton, Six Centuries of Select Hymns and Spiritual Songs Collected out of the Holy Bible (1688), p. iv-v.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. vi-vii.

⁸⁸Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others, The Whole Booke of Psalmes Collected into English Meeter (1640). Title page.

And Wither:

We see the flesh and the Devil having for their service thousands of vain songs and profane ballads stored up in the stationers' warehouses...to the building up of the kingdom of sin and Satan....Yet there having been for divers ages together, but so many Hymns composed and published, as make in some impressions not above two sheets and a half of paper."⁸⁹

Margaret Spufford writes that the "Puritans were quick to recognize the potential propaganda value of the medium [popular ballads], as well as concerned by the way it was being used for, in their eyes, frivolous purposes". She cites John Rhodes, The Countrie Man's Comfort (1588), a collection of edifying songs intended to supplant "vain ballads", a book written for the lower echelons of society and intended to "please their merrie minds a little, for that they are naturally given to sing". Rhodes hoped to "winne them to sing good things and forsake evill".⁹⁰ Keach's purpose, a century later, was much the same.

Keach's arch-opponent Richard Baxter shared this concern about the influence of secular songs on youth:

[Poetry] as it expresseth affections, so doth it raise them. The Tempter knowing this, hath made great use of lascivious, vain, and foolish Poetry...to corrupt more the minds that are already corrupt and vain...And God knowing it, hath by his Spirit indited sacred Hymns and Psalms, both for his Publick and Private Worship, and excitation of holy

⁸⁹George Wither, The Scholar's Purgatory. Quoted in Escott, Isaac Watts, Hymnographer, p. 71.

⁹⁰Margaret Spufford, Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1981), p. 10.

desires and delights....⁹¹

Baxter was particularly fond of psalm singing and dwells on the joy that Christian hymnody awoke in him:

...I confess that Harmony and Melody are the pleasure and elevation of my Soul, and have made a Psalm of Praise in the holy Assembly the chief delightful Exercise of my Religion and my Life....⁹²

Unlike his Anglican, Presbyterian, and Independent colleagues, Keach had to prove to the satisfaction of other Baptists that corporate singing was allowed by scripture. The second part of his apology for hymn singing, i.e., showing that it is permissible, can be further divided: First, Keach showed that singing is a moral duty, i.e., taught by natural law, and second, that singing is a positive duty, i.e., commanded by God in scripture.

Keach distinguished between these two kinds of precepts:

...we must distinguish between Precepts that are purely Moral, and meerly positive. Breaking of Bread, and Holy Baptism, are meer positive Ordinances: and had they never been known nor practiced, if there had not been a positive Institution to give being to them; but to fear God, to love God, to pray to God, and divers other Precepts of the same Nature, had been the Duty of all Mankind, if there had been no written Law or Prescription positively to injoin them on the Creature...and so is Singing no doubt: for as all the Heathen invoke their Gods, pray to them, so they sing their Praises; as might abundantly be demonstrated.⁹³

⁹¹Richard Baxter. Mr. Richard Baxter's Paraphrases on the Psalms of David in Metre with other Hymns (1692), p. v-vi. Compare Baxter's A Christian Directory, Part I, Direction 16: "As for play-books and romances and idle tales...how pernicious they are...They are powerful baits of the devil, to keep more necessary things out of their minds, and better books out of their hands".

⁹²Richard Baxter, Poetical Fragments (1681), p. vi.

⁹³Keach, Breach, pp. 28 and 30.

He went on to show that singing was a moral precept before it became a divine injunction:

And what is more clear...than that Passage of the Children of Israel's Singing after their great Deliverance at the Red Sea...Plain it is, this was before the Law was given forth; which clearly shews...it was no Levitical Ceremony (as some are ready to assent) but a Duty it was, and it has been practiced by Multitudes that never had any knowledge of the Scripture or positive Precepts.⁹⁴

Thus, Keach showed that singing is part of God's law written on the human heart and did not require divine revelation. However, he believed that singing was also commanded by God:

...'tis evident there are more Precepts that injoin all Men to sing the Praises of God in the Old Testament, than there are for them to pray unto him...⁹⁵

Keach's argument that praise of God is a natural duty has three parts: First, human beings possess a "tunable and musical Tongue"⁹⁶; thus, Keach drew the conclusion that this faculty, like all others, should be devoted to God's service. Secondly, that the "Heathen invoke their Gods, pray to them, so they sing their Praises...",⁹⁷ demonstrates that command to praise God by singing is written on the human heart. Thirdly, God made "even the Tongue of little Birds to warble forth with their pleasant Notes the Praises of their Creator amongst the Branches of the Trees...";⁹⁸ that is to say, even non-human

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 34.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 34.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 30.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 34.

creation teaches us that God desires his praise to be sung.

Keach and Marlow found themselves at odds because they differed about a fundamental principal of Reformed worship, namely, may the church worship God in any and all appropriate ways, as long as those ways are consistent with the spirit of scripture? or must the church do nothing in its worship which is not explicitly commanded by the letter of scripture? To put it another way, must the church be silent where scripture is silent? Of course, Keach believed that scripture commanded corporate singing, so he could not be silent. And Marlow believed that scripture was silent, so he would not shut up. Nevertheless, Keach took the more permissive view and Marlow the more restrictive.⁹⁹

Although Keach believed that corporate singing was a scriptural ordinance, he leaned toward the view that worship need not be explicitly given in scripture; it is sufficient if it is taught by the "light of nature" and is in accord with scripture's principles. This is evident from his lengthy defense of singing as a moral or natural precept:

Divers Ordinances, in their original and proper Nature, are Moral, and part of natural Worship: Is not Prayer in particular by all acknowledged so to be? And may not Prayer be carnally performed too, as well as Singing?...Another Man

⁹⁹William Russel put Marlow's position succinctly in Some Brief Animadversions upon Mr. Allen's Essay (1696): "But the matters of divinely instituted worship being spiritual, and depending only upon the will of the Law-giver...the Persons and Services of the Worshipers are not capable of any humane Variations whatsoever: They have no respect to Climate, Customs, Forms of Civil Government, or any other thing of the like nature: For the worship of God under the Gospel is...the same at all times, in all places, amongst all People, in all Nations: And the order of it is fix'd and determined in all particulars that belong unto it". (pp. 62-63)

will tell you, whilst you plead for Prayer, you plead for a Moral Duty, and a Branch of natural Worship: But doth that detract from its Glory? No sure, all wise Men know it adds greatly to it.¹⁰⁰

As it was with confirmation, so it was with corporate hymn singing. Keach could not point to a single text in the New Testament which affirmed either corporate singing or confirmation unambiguously. Although he based his arguments for these ordinances on inference, he firmly opposed those who inferred infant baptism from the New Testament. This sort of argument was more associated with the Anglican tradition than with that of the Puritans and Separatists. It was defended with particular eloquence by Richard Hooker in The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1593). So, Marlow was not entirely wrong when he argued that Keach was opening a door through which the Book of Common Prayer could enter:

...I think you have said so much as to lay the Foundation of formal Prayer also; for you say in Answer to this Objection, viz. Singing is a piece of Art...Also there is an Art in Preaching, and all young Men, when they begin to take upon them that Work, need Instruction how to handle a Doctrine. And so I may say in Prayer too. Now is not this a forward Step for you or others, that may (if the Lord of his Mercy does not prevent) hereafter build upon this Foundation, to bring into Use a pre-stinted Form of Prayer for Gospel-Worship?...your Discourses have a great Tendency to turn the Performance of all Divine Worship into artificial Forms.¹⁰¹

Keach was not entirely wrong, either, when he argued that Marlow was doing much to advance the Quaker's cause. With regard to Marlow's assertion that the "essence" of singing is "spiritual", Keach argued

¹⁰⁰Breach, p. 39.

¹⁰¹Marlow, Brief Discourse, pp. 17-18.

that to offer God "Heart-service only without the Bodily Organs" makes one nothing but "a mere Enthusiast". The consequence, Keach feared, was "to overthrow all External Acts of Religion". Just because the heart alone can perform some religious services silently, e.g., prayer, does not mean that all religious services can be performed in that manner: "The Quakers have not only got a Spiritual or Heart Baptism...and a Spiritual or Heart Breaking of Bread, but an assembling together for Heart Preaching also..."¹⁰²

Keach went on:

...let me tell you, you have said more to justify the Quakers Silent Meetings than you are aware of: Nay, 'tis an Argument, as far as I know, they may thank you for..."¹⁰³

He was not far off the mark; Marlow's drastic opposition of spirit and nature and his extreme literalism had much in common with the Quakers, more than it did with Keach's moderate Puritanism. It is worth noting that one of the contributors to the anti-singing literature, Richard Claridge (An Answer to Richard Allen's Essay... (1697)), became a Quaker.¹⁰⁴

Marlow and the "anti-singers" based their objections on

¹⁰²Breach, pp. 123-124. Richard Allen added that "figurative singing" could lead to "figurative preaching". (An Essay to prove Singing..., pp. 38-39.) Marlow attempted to turn the argument that his principles prepared the way for Quakerism back upon Keach: "To supply the want of Scripture Authority for their common way of Singing, they flee to the Light of Nature, which is the same as the Light within..." (The Controversie of Singing Brought to an End (1696), p. 25.)

¹⁰³Breach, p. 13.

¹⁰⁴H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Value of Denominational History", BQ 2, p. 109.

six points: First, the "essence" of singing is spiritual; secondly, corporate singing results in confusion, thus violating St. Paul's directive in I Cor. 14.30; thirdly, St. Paul's instruction to women to be silent means that women may not sing; fourthly, singing may be an ordinance, but only one should sing at a time and only by "extraordinary" inspiration; fifthly, singing is no longer an ordinance (as it was under the old covenant) because it involves the use of musical instruments; sixthly, the church may not sing corporately because unbelievers might participate.

First, the objection that corporate singing is not spiritual: By "spiritual" Marlow and the anti-singers meant two things: of the heart and spontaneous. Only such, so they reasoned, could be vehicles of God's Spirit. Hence they were opposed to all forms, for forms, in their view, "stinted" the Spirit. Marlow argues these views with monotonous consistency throughout his writings: "...the Essence or Being of Singing consists of an inward spiritual Exercise of the Soul or Mind of Man...." Prayer, he goes on to argue, "may be made in our Hearts to God without the use of our Voice..."¹⁰⁵

Marlow seems to have regarded "nature" and "spirit" as irreconcilable opposites: "Have you not been for many years a Preacher up of spiritual Worship? how is it then that you are now so zealous for that which is asserted to be Natural?"¹⁰⁶ Thus, if forms

¹⁰⁵J.M. [Isaac Marlow], A Brief Discourse concerning Singing... (1690), pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁶Isaac Marlow, Prelimited Forms, "The Author's Epistle to Mr. Benjamin Keach", p. 14.

were "natural", they could not be instruments of the Spirit:

...if there be a spiritual Power, it refuses and denies the invented Form; for then there is no need of a prescribed nor pre-composed humane Form: and if we use such a Form we deny the Power, and reject the sufficient successive Gifts of the Holy Spirit, by relying on that Form.¹⁰⁷

A stock weapon in Marlow's armory was that if forms of singing were permissible then so were forms of prayer. He referred to Keach's hymn book (Spiritual Melody) as a "common Praise-Book"¹⁰⁸ and argued that forms of praise open "a wide door for Forms of Prayer..."¹⁰⁹

Secondly, corporate singing results in confusion and violates St. Paul's rules for worship in I Cor. 14: In A Brief Discourse, under the rubric, "Of the Order of Singing", Marlow wrote:

This we have plainly and clearly delivered to us in I Cor. 14.26 to 34....Here is the Rule for our Practice, one by one, or one after another, by course or turns, they may speak with Tongues, and prophesy. And though only these two Gifts are particularized in the Rule, yet the Order stands for all the rest...¹¹⁰

Thirdly, although not an argument against singing as such, Marlow argued that singing by women in the church was forbidden:

That Women ought neither to teach nor pray vocally in the Church of Christ, is generally believed by all Orthodox Christians...I therefore greatly marvel that any Man should

¹⁰⁷Marlow, A Brief Discourse, p. 18. Also, Purity of Gospel Communion, p. 53: "...Mr. Keach has pleaded so much for Art in Divine Worship that if the Spirit of the Lord does not lift up a spirituall standard against it, we may fear the increase of Artificial Worship in our Churches..."

¹⁰⁸Marlow, Truth Soberly Defended, p. xiv. Also, Isaac Marlow, The Purity of Gospel Communion (1694), p. 46.

¹⁰⁹Marlow, Prelimited Forms, p. 19. Cf. J.M. [Isaac Marlow], A Brief Discourse concerning Singing in the Publick Worship of God in the Gospel Church (1690), p. 20.

¹¹⁰Marlow, A Brief Discourse, p. 22.

assert and admit of such a Practice as Womens Singing; and that any Woman should presume to sing vocally in the Church of Christ, when he positively and plainly forbids them in his Word....¹¹¹

Fourthly, Marlow admitted that a kind of singing might be an ordinance, namely, "extraordinary" singing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He believed singing as mentioned in the New Testament was a spiritual gift such as "tongues": "...such Spiritual Singing as was used in the Primitive Apostolical Church was from a special Gift of the Holy Spirit....The Gifts of the Holy Spirit were not given alike to every particular Member of the Church of Christ for Publick Worship".¹¹² Marlow went on to argue that the command to sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" was no more possible for the "average" Christian than Christ's command to "be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect...therefore the nature of this Command for Singing, is no more absolute than the others are..."¹¹³

Fifthly, Marlow and Keach agreed that musical instruments should not be part of worship under the new covenant, but Marlow argued that David's psalms were expressly intended to be sung with the accompaniment of instruments, and hence, were unsuitable for Christian worship: "David's Psalms were instituted, appointed, and appropriated, not only to vocal Singing, but to divers kinds of

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 14. Also, p. 18: "Singing, is a special Gift of the holy Spirit, because it is annexed to the fillings of it as his Fruits and Effects". Marlow cites Eph. 5.18-19 ("Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to you selves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs") to buttress his argument.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 22.

musical Instruments..."¹¹⁴

Sixthly, Marlow feared that corporate hymnody might result in "a promiscuous Assembly of Professors and profane Men and Women, with united Voices together".¹¹⁵ In other words, if congregations adopted singing, then it was altogether possible that non-believers might profane Christian worship by adding their voices to corporate praise, thus compounding their already reprobate state by adding hypocrisy to their sins:

...for such to use a Form of Prayer or Singing, when they have no Sense nor Understanding of what they pray for...is to mock God with their Lips with that which they have not in their Hearts.¹¹⁶

Keach answered Marlow point for point. First, the Spirit can work in and through nature. To say otherwise is to open the door to silent worship as the Quakers had. Keach reduced Marlow's argument that the essence of singing is spiritual (i.e., non-physical) to absurdity:

...Is not the Essence of Preaching in our Spirits, as much as the Essence of Singing is there? And are we not as capable in our Spirits to worship God, in all other Ordinances, without the Verbal or Vocal Instruments of the Body, as well as in Singing without Voice, by your Argument?¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹⁵Marlow, The Controversie of Singing brought to an End, (1696), p. iii.

¹¹⁶Marlow, Brief Discourse, p. 37.

¹¹⁷Breach, pp. 13-14. Richard Allen concurred in An Essay to prove Singing of Psalms with Conjoin'd Voices, a Christian Duty, p. 8: 'Tis a moral Duty for Men to praise God with all the Faculties wherewith he has endowed them. To glorify him, not only with the Faculties of their Souls, but also with all the members of their Bodies...."

Secondly, corporate singing does not violate the New Testament rules for worship; it is not confusion: "I hope our Brethren do not think there is confusion in Heaven, where the Heavenly Host with one Voice celebrate the Praises of God by singing to him".¹¹⁸

Thirdly, even Marlow would have to admit that on certain occasions, it is permissible for women to speak and even teach in church:

...if Women may not speak nor teach in no [sic] sense in the Church, they must not be admitted to give an account of their Conversion in the Church, or how God was pleased to work upon their Souls: for that Practice is full of Teaching and Instruction, and has been blessed to the Conversion of some other Persons...¹¹⁹

Fourthly, Keach pointed out that if the "extraordinary" and immediate inspiration of the Spirit were necessary for an ordinance to be valid, then none of the ordinances could be observed:

...if Singing must be rejected or thrown away, by virtue of this Argument...all Ordinances are gone, or must be cast off....'tis evident, none of those Duties and Gospel Administrations were tied up to such who had those extraordinary Gifts, but that others who had but the ordinary Gifts, might and ought to attend upon the Administration of the same Duties and Ordinances, as well as those so miraculously endowed...¹²⁰

Fifthly, in The Breach Repaired, Keach granted that singing in the Old Testament made use of musical instruments. However, he argued

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 11.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 139.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 63. Keach hints again that Marlow has done the Quakers a service: "Nay, and 'tis not unknown to many, there are some have lately made use of this Argument against all Ordinances...."

that instruments were not an essential part of singing, nor were they mentioned in the New Testament. Keach noted that singing without instrumental accompaniment was mentioned in the Old Testament and implied that singing in the New Testament never included the use of instruments:

...in vain is it for any to object against Singing, because musical Instruments were used under the Old Testament, since the one is given forth in the New, viz. singing Psalms, without any mention made of Instruments of Musick, and so practiced also.¹²¹

Sixthly, as to Marlow's fear that unbelievers would profane Christian worship by joining in sung praise, Keach made short work of it:

Object. But what ground is there for the Church to joyn in singing of Psalms, &c. with Unbelievers?

Answ. 1. Unbelievers joyning with them is one thing, and their joyning with Unbelievers is another....there may be Unbelievers in the Church, and there may be Believers out of the Church.¹²²

Keach turned one of Marlow's arguments against singing into an instrument for demolishing his objection to "promiscuous" singing. Marlow argued that since singing was a form of prayer, then only one

¹²¹Ibid., p. 88.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 105-106. Richard Allen points to Marlow's deep-rooted pessimism: Marlow fears that unbelievers may join their voices with believers, but Allen says that we may hope that all offer an acceptable sacrifice and that "we know not the Hearts of any". (An Essay to prove Singing of Psalms..., pp. 54-55.) The anonymous author of The Singing of Psalms Vindicated (1698) joins in and pours scorn on objection that none but "saints" should sing: "Do none but Saints participate in the Sacramental Bread and Wine with them? Or has [sic] the Doctor [William Russel] and his Friends the faculty of judging Mens Estates by their Countenances, as the Quakers pretend to..." (p. 36)

(if any) should sing at a time; if all could be said to pray when one prayed, then all could be said to sing when one sang. If so, said Keach, then

What ground hath the Church to pray with Unbelievers? Certainly the Communion together in Spirit is more close and intimate than that of uniting the Voice; so that if it be unlawful to let them sing with us, 'tis unlawful to let them in their Hearts joyn in Prayer with us.

Must not the Children have their Bread, because Strangers will get some of it?¹²³

One issue was conspicuous because of its relative absence in the singing controversy; there was little discussion of the matter of Christian hymnody. The prevailing view among English Protestants was that only the words of scripture (albeit paraphrased) should be sung. Keach rejected this. A minor point in Marlow's polemic against Keach was that his hymns included words not found in scripture. However, in The Breach Repaired, Keach argued that if this were a defect in hymns, then it was a defect in sermons, as well: "So we do in preaching; but if those words agree with the Text, 'tis still the same Word, and may be opened thereby the better to the understandings of the People".¹²⁴

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Breach, p. 94. That Keach was in disagreement with most other Protestant divines is beyond doubt. Note the following comment: "...I think there is little doubt, but that Hymns taken out of the Holy Scriptures are most unexceptionable in our Publique Worship, and far preferable to any whose matter, as well as Form, is only human". (John Boyse. Sacramental Hymns Collected chiefly out of such Passages of the New Testament as contain the most sutable Matter of Divine Praises, (Dublin, 1693), p. lvi.) Calvin has been widely regarded as opposed to hymns and in favour of singing the psalms alone, however this is not the case; Calvin himself contributed a hymn to the Strasbourg Psalter. Nevertheless, English Protestants sang virtually nothing but the psalms until the late 17th century. Deep-seated prejudice against hymns of "human composure" was a major factor in the

The differences between Keach and Marlow stemmed from radically different views of the Christian life. Marlow seems to have lived in fear lest he violate a divine rule. One of his objections to singing is that false worship is a particularly heinous crime in the eyes of God. For Marlow, corporate singing was "strange fire" and would be punished with the same harshness with which God punished the sons of Aaron:

...have we not divers instances of his sore Displeasure for breaking his Rule of Worship, as in Nadab and Abihu, who for offering of strange Fire, died before the Lord?...Notwithstanding these Old Testament Examples, and the Word of Christ which saith, In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men; yet some there are amongst us, that dare adventure to break the Commands of Christ in their Vocal-singing together in the Worship of God, contrary to the Rule of Worship and Institution of Jesus Christ.¹²⁵

Furthermore, Marlow's most unusual objection to corporate singing is that Christians in these gloomy times may not sing because singing implies that one is joyful:

I do acknowledg and assert that we should not neglect Prayer, till we have an extraordinary Gift or Impulse of Spirit unto Prayer...But Singing proceeds from a Fulness of Injoyment, and is called a Breaking forth...when I consider the present State and Frame of the Churches of Jesus Christ, I much wonder that so many should be for Singing, when their Hearts are so much below Prayer: for if we should go from Saint to Saint, we should find that this is the general Cry, I have a dead and stony Heart...Now if thus it be, then

failure of Wither's Hymns and Songs of the Church (1623), (see Louis Benson's discussion, The English Hymn, p. 66) and the hegemony of the Psalms was not destroyed until Watts' Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1707). Keach's attitude was at variance with most contemporary opinion, a striking fact for one so zealous for orthodoxy, and played a part in preparing the way for Watts.

¹²⁵Marlow, Prelimited Forms, pp. 9-10.

where is the Spirit of Singing?¹²⁶

The church as Marlow saw it did not live in joyful anticipation of the parousia; it lived in fear before a God of wrath:

So then if Singing be the expressing of Joy, Gladness, and Mirth of Spirit, and the Church of Christ be now in a Wilderness, Mourning, Sackcloth-State; why should we imagine that Christ should appoint such an Ordinance for her constant universal Practice, while she is in such Estate that is so improper and contrary to her State and Spirit...¹²⁷

The impression one receives is that Marlow lived a dreary, dour, and lifeless Christian faith.

Keach, on the other hand, was just as concerned as Marlow not to offer "strange fire", but there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his belief that corporate singing was a standing ordinance. Keach even believed that the lack of corporate singing had contributed to the decline of the churches:

I am perswaded for several reasons, since this is so clear an Ordinance in God's Word, that the Baptized Churches who lie short of the Practice of singing Psalms, &c. will never thrive to such a degree as our Souls long to see them, to the Honour of the Holy God, and Credit of our Sacred Profession, and Joy and Comfort of those who are truly spiritual among us: for tho many things as the causes of our sad witherings, have been inquired into; yet I fear this, and the neglect of the Ministry, are the two chief, which are both Holy Ordinances of Jesus Christ; and yet our People (that is, some of them) do not love to hear of either

¹²⁶Marlow, Brief Discourse, p. 46. Also, p. 42:" Every true Christian, nor the Church of Christ in general, is not capable to sing Praises to the Lord in his publick and constant Worship; because the greatest number of Christians...especially in our Day, have not attained to a sufficient Faith of Assurance of the Love of God in Christ Jesus unto their Souls...but have their doubtings between Hope and Fear of what shall become of them to all Eternity..."

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 12.

of them.¹²⁸

Like Marlow, Keach observed that many believers experienced more fear and sadness than joy, however Keach believed that this was all the more reason to sing:

And truly that want of God's Presence, or liveliness of Spirit, or that cause of Complainings that are in our Churches...may partly arise from hence, i.e. from the general neglect of this great Duty, in which God of old appeared amongst his People like a Cloud, to fill his House with his glorious Presence, 2. Chron. 5.13. owned also by God's gracious Testimony in giving his People of old such eminent Victories over their Enemies...Israel's success...follows Israel's Singing. If the Lord's People will be found in their Duty, they shall not want God's Presence...There may be, 'tis true, a natural Joy, or false Rapture, by an erring Spirit: but that Joy and Presence of God we meet with in his own Way and Ordinance, nay in the same Ordinance in which he met with his People of old, we may be sure is to be prized, and esteemed as no natural or counterfeit Joy, say you what you please.¹²⁹

That Keach experienced genuine, not "counterfeit Joy", is evident from his hymns; they are full of an authentic joyful note.

vii. Conclusion.

Keach's hymn writing and related activities may have been his most enduring contribution. This aspect of Keach's work is paradigmatic in that it shows that in conflict Keach could be bad-tempered and inconsiderate. It also illustrates Keach's tendency to rely on other writers, in this case all non-Baptists. Positively, this shows that Keach's vision was not narrowly restricted to the

¹²⁸Breach, p. 99.

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 176-177.

Baptist fold. It also appears that his apology for hymn singing owes much to contemporary writing on hymn and psalm singing. In any estimate of the significance of Keach and his work, his hymns must have an important place. The error of the past has been to exaggerate or denigrate his hymns and his role in the singing controversy, and more importantly, to concentrate on this aspect of Keach to the neglect of the other aspects of this many-sided man.

SECTION IV:

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN THE THOUGHT OF BENJAMIN KEACH

CHAPTER ONE. BENJAMIN KEACH AND AN AUTHENTIC "MIDDLE WAY"

SOTERIOLOGY

i. The theological milieu.

Among the topics that dominated theological discussion in England in the seventeenth century, none was debated more hotly than justification. Indeed, for Keach, justification was "that great Truth, in which mainly the Reformation consisted..."¹ Theological enemies castigated each other as "Arminian" and "Antinomian", although the reality very seldom corresponded to the name.² Most persons found themselves somewhere in between the two extremes, and persons branded with both labels claimed that their point of view was an authentic expression of Calvinism.

Calvinism was the common theological language of English Protestants at the beginning of the seventeenth century.³

¹Benjamin Keach, A Medium betwixt two Extremes (1698), p. 36. (Hereafter referred to as Medium.)

²Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), a Dutch theologian, has given his name to a school of theology which emphasises human freedom and is perceived as the opposite of Calvinism (although Arminius regarded himself as a faithful interpreter of Calvin). Arminius' theology was condemned at the Synod of Dort. In the seventeenth century, Arminianism was the name given to many groups and movements (usually by their opponents (e.g., the Anabaptists, although they held general atonement and freedom of the will before Arminius)). The groups and individuals accused of holding Arminian principles almost invariably denied it (e.g., Richard Baxter).

³See Nicholas Tyacke's Anti-Calvinism: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 7-8, in which he argues that the standard theology of the Church of England until the 1620s was Calvinism and only thereafter was there a

Nevertheless, one should be cautious in referring to English Calvinism. Dewey D. Wallace, Jr. points out that it is more accurate to refer to English Protestantism as Reformed than to refer to it as Calvinistic because of the often underestimated influence of other reformers (e.g., Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr, and especially Heinrich Bullinger).⁴ Any investigation of English Protestant theology in the seventeenth century reveals that it was too multiform to be characterized as the product of a single theologian, even a theologian as comprehensive and compelling as Calvin.

Many have argued that English Calvinism was a theology of which Calvin would not have approved. Basil Hall maintains that English Calvinism was altered and perhaps betrayed by Theodore Beza and William Perkins on two points: First, their theology was "more speculative and less biblical" than that of Calvin, and secondly, their doctrine of assurance pointed not outward toward Christ, scripture, and the sacraments, but inward toward the individual's feelings and his or her "works of piety".⁵

distinctive "Puritan" (i.e., Calvinist) theology as opposed to an Arminian theology.

⁴Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525-1695 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. x-xi.

⁵He goes on: "...under the title The Christian Warfare Perkins shows the personal struggle for the assurance of grace characteristic of Puritan individualism and concludes with a long discussion on the divine decrees and the state of the elect and the reprobate. What Calvin had described as a profound mystery, a labyrinth, to be avoided in ordinary pastoral oversight, Perkins has made into a commonplace of the religious life". (Basil Hall, "Calvin against the Calvinists", in John Calvin in G.E. Duffield, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 29-30.) See also Jens Moller, "The Beginnings of Puritan Covenant Theology" (Journal of Ecclesiastical History 14 (1963), pp.

The most controversial case against English Calvinism has been made by R.T. Kendall. Much like Hall, he believes that the greatest monument of English Calvinism, the Westminster Confession, varies significantly from Calvin's theology in its article on assurance in that it "holds out the promise of salvation to those who can discover inward graces in themselves".⁶ There is the risk of legalism; justification becomes a reward of faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience generated by the human will, and the Reformed ordo salutis is reversed.⁷

This landmark of Calvinism bears a resemblance to Arminius' theology on this point: Arminius declared that in justification the believer's faith is accepted as righteousness: "Sinful man is justified by faith, then, not because faith is the righteousness which man opposes to the rigid and severe judgment of God, but 'because it

46-67), who argues that federal theology was at odds with Calvinism.

⁶R.T. Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649 (Oxford: OUP, 1979). pp. 203-204. The Westminster Confession's article on assurance (Chap. XVIII, para. II) reads:

This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

⁷See Kendall, English Calvinism, pp. 207-208, where he argues that the Westminster Confession's "insurance to protect the Church from Antinomianism" has a high price attached ... endless introspection, the constant checking of the spiritual pulse for the right 'effects', and, possibly, legalism".

obtains absolution from sins and is graciously imputed for righteousness'."⁸ The Westminster Confession does not make faith the material cause of justification, but if salvation is promised to the graces that are in us, then it is not difficult to conclude that justification is promised to faith, not faith to the justified.

A betrayal of Calvinism or not, the Westminster Confession became the doctrinal keystone for English and American Puritanism. Most important for understanding Keach's soteriology, it also served as the basis for the Particular Baptists' Second London Confession.

The theology of Westminster did not go unchallenged, however. Although the Westminster Confession served as the basis for the Savoy Declaration (Congregationalist) and the Second London Confession (Baptist) (which incorporated some of the changes made to Westminster by Savoy) and remained largely unchanged, these two groups seem to have been uneasy with the article on assurance.⁹ The Savoy Declaration¹⁰ modified the Confession's article on assurance and made

⁸Carl Bangs, Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), p. 344.

⁹Wallace identifies the question of assurance as the heart of the dispute between moderate and high Calvinists: "The controversy over Antinomianism eventually resolved itself into the question of assurance and thus became an issue of pastoral care. Gataker objected that Saltmarsh 'describes the dealing of our Ministers with men, for the bringing of them to repentance, as if he were painting out some Popish Priest, pressing men to shrift' [Gataker, Mistake, p. 40.]. An old refrain of the spiritual writers, that assurance must be found by looking to one's sanctification, was frequently repeated by those who warned against the teachings of the Antinomians". (Puritans and Predestination, p. 135.)

¹⁰Peter Toon identifies the Savoy Declaration as a possible source of hyper-Calvinism: "...it does seem to be the case that the Declaration of Faith contains an unbalanced presentation of the doctrines of the gospel. Perhaps this unbalance may be seen as one

it a much stronger assertion. Chapter XVIII, article II, reads:

II. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel, and also upon the inward evidence of those graces unto which promises are made, and on the immediate witness of the Spirit, testifying our Adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy.¹¹

Promises are still made to the "inward evidence" of "graces", but the nature of the promises is not specified. The possibility exists that the promises are of assurance, not of salvation. The Second London Confession (to which Keach set his hand) strengthens this statement further in a small but significant way:

This certainty is...an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the Blood and Righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those **graces of the Spirit** unto which promises are made...¹²

In the Baptist document, the promise of salvation is made to the "graces of the Spirit". In the Second London Confession, unlike the Westminster Confession, it is impossible to assume that salvation is

root of that hyper-Calvinism which infected both Congregational and Baptist churches in the early eighteenth century. In the hands and minds of less able men than Goodwin and Owen, this great stress on federal theology became the basis of a gospel that had within it no missionary endeavour". (Puritans and Calvinism (Swengel, Pennsylvania: Reimer Publications, 1973), pp. 82-83.) The problem, however, was not federal theology, per se. Baxterian soteriology was more federalistic than hyper-Calvinistic soteriology.

¹¹Keach was aware that he was more in agreement with the Congregationalists (who wrote the Savoy Declaration) than with the Presbyterians (Williams, Clark, etc.): "...let us bless and praise the Lord for raising up so many brave Champions in the mean time, of our Brethren of the Congregational Way, to defend the Gospel of God's Grace, and the Truth as it is in Jesus...." (A Golden Mine, p. 315.)

¹²Lumpkin, p. 274.

promised to faith and repentance generated by the human will; the Baptist divines of 1688 made it clear that justification and faith are the gifts of God.

What motivated the Westminster divines to locate assurance in the evidence of sanctification? It appears that they perceived a greater threat antinomianism than from Arminianism.¹³ The Westminster divines feared that doctrinal antinomianism would spawn practical antinomianism. Christopher Hill points out that the doctrine that "the elect are saved from all eternity" undermines "what conservatives saw as the main social function of religion, the maintenance of standards of conduct by fear of penalties or hope of rewards in the after life".¹⁴

The Congregationalist and Baptist revisions of the Westminster Confession demonstrate that there were tensions within the English Reformed tradition. Some emphasised justification's unconditionality; others insisted that a holy life is the necessary result of justification. Few erred in the extreme by denying either that justification is a completely free divine act or that a holy life is a characteristic mark of the justified. However, many were accused of holding one of these two errors. In seventeenth century England the names of two men were wedded inseparably to the two sides of the justification debate. Richard Baxter (1615-1691) gave his name to the

¹³See Kendall, p. 185.

¹⁴Christopher Hill, "Antinomianism in Seventeenth Century England" in The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, vol. 2, Religion and Politics in Seventeenth Century England (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986), p. 165.

party emphasising holiness of life as a necessary fruit of justification. Richard Baxter was probably the most influential thinker among the first generation of Nonconformist divines.¹⁵ This indefatigable man was concerned with justification and the nature of justifying faith from his first book, Aphorisms of Justification (1649), to his last, An End of Doctrinal Controversies (published in 1691, the year of his death). Like the Westminster divines, Baxter appears to have been motivated by a fear of practical antinomianism. Baxter's Aphorisms created a stir by its rejection of the unconditional covenant,¹⁶ and appears to have been occasioned by licentious behaviour he witnessed while an Army chaplain during the Civil Wars:

As a young chaplain he warns that the army is "...falling in with Saltmarsh, that Christ hath repented and believed for us, and that we must no more question our faith and Repentance, than Christ. This awakened me better to study these points being young, and not furnished with sufficient reading of the Controversie, and also being where were no libraries, I was put to study only the naked matter in itself. Whereupon I shortly wrote a small book called Aphorisms of Justification..."¹⁷

¹⁵This is the view of C.F. Allison in The Rise of Moralism, (London: SPCK, 1966) p. 194.

¹⁶See Allison, Rise of Moralism, p. 154, who lists the following divines as objecting to Baxter's Aphorisms: Anthony Burgess, John Wallis, Christopher Cartwright, George Lawson, John Crandon, John Warner, Thomas Tully, John Tombes, and William Eyre.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 144. Quoting The Practical Works of Richard Baxter, William Orme, ed., "Life of Richard Baxter" (London, 1830), I, p. 448. N.H. Keeble also points out that Baxter's soteriology grew out of his experience: "His modification of Calvinism was formulated not as part of a comprehensive program in dogmatics but to meet the immediate moral danger of antinomianism." ("Richard Baxter's Preaching Ministry: Its History and Texts", Journal of Ecclesiastical History 35 (1984), p. 540.)

Although this book provoked fierce criticism, Baxter never withdrew it, and his views at the end of his life were not substantially different. Baxter attracted a considerable number of disciples who were known as "Baxterians" or "Middle Way" men. For sharing Baxter's soteriology and his fear of antinomianism, "Baxterians" were accused of holding Arminian principles, or even of being crypto-papists.¹⁸ The prevalence of Baxter's views later in the century caused Isaac Chauncy to remark that "according to some of our modern divines", Luther "was an Antinomian himself, and Calvin but a little better."¹⁹

The name of Anglican priest Tobias Crisp (1600-1643) was closely associated with the opposite pole of the debate. His Christ Alone Exalted (1643) was condemned for its antinomianism by the Westminster Assembly.²⁰ "Crisprians" were accused of libertinism and licentiousness

¹⁸For a defense of the "Middle Way" men, see James T. Spivey, "Middle Way Men, Edmund Calamy, and the Crises of Moderate Nonconformity (1688-1732)" (D.Phil. dissertation, Regent's Park College, Oxford, 1986), p. 70.

¹⁹Quoted by Christopher Hill in "Dr. Tobias Crisp, 1600-1643" in The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, vol. 2 in Religion and Politics in Seventeenth Century England (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986), p. 154.

²⁰H. Leon McBeth comments on Crisp's influence on the Baptists of Keach's generation: "In 1690 Crisp's son published Christ Alone Exalted: Being the Compleat Works of Tobias Crisp. Several Baptists, including Hanserd Knollys [the only Baptist minister to add his name to the list of ministers who commended the republication of Crisp's sermons], helped sponsor this edition of Crisp, and Crisp's views greatly shaped the Baptist mind-set of the time. The Baptist John Gill later reissued the works of Crisp, with a highly complimentary memoir of his life. This ultraconservative Anglican became the fountain of much of the hyper-Calvinism that marked Baptists later. Much of the later works of John Gill read like a baptized version of Crisp".

(The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), pp. 173-174.) Keach and Hanserd Knollys were colleagues and friends, so it may be that Knollys was the person who

for their views on the absolutely unconditional nature of justification. Although neither as prolific a writer nor as gifted a thinker as Baxter, nevertheless Crisp's name is wedded as inseparably to the absolute unconditionalist view of justification as Baxter's is to the conditionalist view. His opinions were as controversial as Baxter's, and publication of his books seems to have been the cause of two major outbreaks of the Arminian/Antinomian controversy. As mentioned above, Crisp's publication of Christ Alone Exalted in 1643 attracted unfavourable notice from the Westminster Assembly. Its republication in 1690 set in motion another long series of responses and counter-responses:

...the external history of the second outbreak of the controversy was precipitated by Samuel Crisp's republication of his father's sermons, and the addition of some new ones, in the winter of 1689-90.²¹

Although Crisp certainly rejected anything like Baxter's soteriology, there is no evidence that he was a practical antinomian. Possibly the fairest statement about Crisp came from Keach's pen: "Dr. Crisp...is

introduced Keach to Crisp's writings. For Knollys' "antinomianism", see B. R. White, Hanserd Knollys and Radical Dissent in the 17th Century (London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 1977), pp. 6-7. See also Christopher Hill, "Dr. Tobias Crisp, 1600-1643", and DNB, vol. 5, pp. 99-100.

²¹Ernest F. Kevan, The Grace of Law (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1964), p. 37. Also, Hill, "Dr. Tobias Crisp", p. 154: "In 1690, when the press was again freer, Crisp's sermons were reprinted by his son. They caused a great scandal. Crisp's main critics now were Presbyterians, anxious to disavow antinomianism lest it bring discredit on the reputation of dissent. Daniel Williams's Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated: Wherein some of Dr. Crisp's Opinions are Considered and the Opposite Truths are Plainly Stated and Confirmed (1692) led to fierce controversies with Congregationalists. The furore ultimately broke up the recently-formed union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians".

abused both by his Friends and Enemies..."²²

Keach was squarely on the side of Crisp and indeed defended Crisp. However, he quarrelled with Richard Baxter and with his disciples, the "Middle Way" men or "Baxterians". Baxter was Keach's bete noire, not just for his views on justification, but for his views on infant baptism, as well; references to "Baxterianism" abound in Keach's books. A study of the aspects of Baxter's theology to which Keach objected will follow. Briefly, however, Baxter has been said to hold the "lowered market" doctrine of justification. Allison argues that Baxter believed that the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross bought salvation on new and easier terms. This doctrine was christened the "lowered market" theory of the atonement.²³

Two ideas run consistently through Baxterian soteriology: that believers are justified by having their faith (for Christ's sake) imputed to be righteous (rather than by having Christ's righteousness imputed to them) and that under the conditions of the new covenant, God accepts imperfect degrees of faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience and rewards them with justification.

In the spectrum of seventeenth century theology, Benjamin Keach certainly belongs with those who emphasised justification's absolute unconditionality, yet there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his

²²Keach, Medium, p. 31. He is referring to the charge that Crisp taught eternal justification. Keach refutes this accusation with a quotation from Crisp.

²³This name may have come from a remark made by Bishop Henry Hammond who once said that "Christ has brought down the market". (Allison, Rise of Moralism, p. 157.)

belief that practical antinomianism need not follow from that doctrine.

In the following study, I hope to show that the main point on which Keach dissented from the Baxterian tradition was on the person and work of Christ. The Baxterians emphasized two aspects of Christ's work: First, they believed that he had established a new covenant (the covenant of grace) under which salvation could be had at an "easier rate" than it could under the old covenant of works. Second, it followed that Christ's kingship took precedence over his priesthood. For the Baxterians, Christ reigns over a kingdom in which salvation is by evangelical works, i.e., believers are justified by their faith (including repentance and obedience) being regarded as righteous for the sake of Christ. It follows that assurance is to be had by examining one's self for signs of sanctification. Keach, on the contrary, emphasized Christ's priestly office. For him, the heart of Christ's saving work was to represent the elect before the Father and make atonement for their sins. Therefore, believers are justified through union with Christ. Faith is the instrument of this union, but it is the "cause" of justification only as it is an instrument and an instrument in the divine hand, not the human hand. Faith's saving significance is entirely in its object: Christ himself. Thus, when Keach and his main theological opponents are examined below, their views of Christ and his offices are considered first, followed by the covenant, justification, faith, and assurance.

ii. Keach's writings on justification.

Keach wrote five books which have the defense of unconditional justification and related doctrines as their primary object: The Marrow of True Justification (1692); The Everlasting Covenant (1693); Christ Alone the Way to Heaven (1698); The Display of Glorious Grace (1698); and A Medium betwixt Two Extremes²⁴ (1698). In addition to these, there are extensive references to unconditional justification in his collections of sermons: A Golden Mine Opened (1694) and Gospel Mysteries Unveil'd (1701). The second section of A Golden Mine, "The Blessedness of Christ's Sheep", is entirely concerned with showing that true believers cannot finally fall away. The last section, "The Great Salvation", is an extended warning of the danger of neglecting the means of salvation.

The dates of Keach's books on justification are all in the last decade of the seventeenth century (except for Gospel Mysteries in 1701); thus it seems likely that Keach's contribution to the justification debate was occasioned by the second outbreak of the Antinomian/Arminian controversy (which was brought on by the republication of Crisp's sermons). The sermons in Gospel Mysteries were written between 1689 and 1701.²⁵ The frequent references to

²⁴Keach may have had in mind Baxter's claim "I stand between two extremes, and therefore must speak against both." Baxter, Treatise of Justifying Righteousness (1676).

²⁵Keach, Gospel Mysteries, p. iii. "Reader, thou art here presented with the Labours of near Twelve Years..."

unconditional justification and attacks on theological opponents suggest that this topic was much on Keach's mind during the decade, or at least that he was concerned enough about the issue to insert references at the time of publication.

All five books are collections of sermons. One, The Everlasting Covenant, was a funeral sermon, "preached January the 29th at the funeral of Mr. Henry Forty, late pastor of a church of Christ, at Abingdon..." Two books, Christ Alone the Way to Heaven and A Medium betwixt Two Extremes name a specific theological opponent in their titles: Samuel Clark, the author of a defense of the Baxterian doctrine of justification, entitled Scripture Justification.²⁶

²⁶Keach also refers to Clark as an example of "Baxterism" on p. 24 of Book I of Gospel Mysteries.

iii. Keach's soteriology.²⁷

There is a systematic statement of Keach's soteriology in his Articles of Faith, though many elements in it are taken from the Larger and Shorter Westminster catechisms. However, references to soteriological issues abound in all his writings. It is also significant to note that Keach was in virtually complete agreement with Crisp; throughout the following section, Keach's statements will be compared to Crisp's.

The person and offices of Christ: Central to Keach's soteriology is a high view of the person of Christ and his offices.²⁸ He implied that that the Baxterians tend to have a low view of Christ which tends toward Socinianism. Union with Christ is the source of justification:

Quest. But methinks I hear some poor sinner crying out, How

²⁷The only scholar who has written about Keach's soteriology is Thomas J. Nettles (By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House (1986), pp. 62-65). Unfortunately, Dr. Nettles limits his discussion to the sermons contained in Gospel Mysteries and neglects the five books identified in section ii which contain the fullest and most carefully organized presentation of Keach's understanding of the subject of justification.

Dewey D. Wallace refers to the Calvinism of Keach as "if anything stricter than that of the Congregationalists and certainly less fearful of Antinomianism". (Wallace, Puritans and Predestination, p. 161.)

²⁸The Second London Confession also emphasizes the union between Christ and the elect. In Chapter VIII, "Of Christ the Mediator", the Baptist confession modifies the Savoy and Westminster confessions by adding these words to article 8: "...uniting them to himself by his spirit..." (Lumpkin, p. 262.) Furthermore, the Baptist document adds two articles, 9 and 10, stressing the offices of Christ and outlining the work of each office.

may I come to be in this Covenant?

Answ. Soul, it is by thy being united to Christ, or by Union with him through the Spirit, 'tis by Faith: O close with Christ, cry to God for his Spirit, attend on the means of Grace, see if thou canst find in thy heart to love Christ, to espouse him, enter into an Holy Contract with him...²⁹

The preceding quotation also demonstrates that although union with Christ is the source of justification and the stress belongs there most emphatically, still faith and the "means of grace" have a place in the process by which the elect come to be justified.

Keach used the union between the elect and Christ to prove that they cannot finally fall away: "...it is impossible for any Believer that hath Union with Christ to perish eternally".³⁰

²⁹Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p. 44. Also note the following statements: "You must first have Union with him, before you can bring forth Fruit to God; you must act from Life, and not for Life". (Keach, Marrow, p. 37.) Gordon Wakefield observes that it is a common error to assume that the Puritans made salvation entirely a matter of election. Noting that Yves Congar and E.L. Mascall complain that the Puritans did not believe "in the real and actual gift of the divine life to human nature", Wakefield responds that the Puritans actually laid much stress on the Church as the Bride and Body of Christ, he writes, "The Puritans have as much to say about Mystical Union as about Divine Election in their doctrine of the Church". (Puritan Devotion (Epworth Press, 1957), p. 32). This is particularly true of Keach.

³⁰Keach, Golden Mine, pp. 231-232. Union with Christ is a frequent theme of Keach's writings. He spoke of it as though it were the "goal" of the Incarnation (as far as human salvation is concerned):

What can exalt Man more than this? O what greater Honour could be conferred on our Nature then, for the Son of God to assume it into Personal Union with the Godhead....This speaks great comfort to Believers; Christ who is Mediator, is near unto God, and as near unto us...he knows our Infirmities, and he hath always God's Ear, and God's Heart, and represents us, and our Cause to the Father.

The contrast with the Baxterians is great; they emphasise faith, repentance, and the means of grace but not union with Christ.

Keach's writings contain numerous references to John Owen.³¹ It seems likely that he was influenced by Owen's doctrine of justification. Owen, too, makes justification the result of the believer's union with Christ:

Our actual Interest in the satisfaction of Christ, depends on our actual Insertion into his mystical Body by Faith, according to the Appointment of God.³²

Keach buttressed his own argument that Christ's righteousness is imputed to the elect by referring to Owen's Doctrine of Justification (1677) on p. 41 of his Marrow of True Justification.

Keach quoted Calvin (one of a very small handful of such quotations) to show that union with Christ precedes justification. In a sermon on the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22.1ff), Keach wrote:

Consider, That he hath Espoused us Vertually before he offers his Love unto us: He Espoused us, when he Espoused our Nature"...Calvin understood this chiefly to be meant by this Marriage in my Text.³³

For Keach, union with Christ is the effective cause of justification because Christ, as a priest, represents believers before the Father. Christ's priesthood is effective both toward the Father

³¹For Owen's involvement with "high Calvinist" soteriology, see Wallace, Puritans and Predestination, pp. 149-157.

³²John Owen, The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated, (1677), pp. 307 and also 302.

³³Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk III, p. 17.

and toward the elect. In the following passage, Keach alleged that Daniel Williams believed that Christ reconciled God to humans but not humans to God:

Some Men intimate, that although God on his part in Christ is reconciled, yet Man is to reconcile himself to God, or make his own Peace as well as he can, and that he is to enter into a Covenant himself with God, and labour to perform these things upon the pain of Damnation, but this Gospel I understand not...he that saith it is in the Power of Man's Will to make his Peace, or to lay hold of the Covenant, takes the Work of Christ's Mediation out of his Hand, and Crown from off his Head.³⁴

Justification, then, is a result of a divine, not a human, initiative.

Keach feared that making the individual's faith in any sense a part the means of his justification would lead to a de-emphasis of the centrality of Christ. In chapter XVIII of his Articles, he stressed that faith was not "part of the Payment or Satisfaction unto God". To make it such he feared would "lessen the Merits of Christ, as if they were defective or insufficient". The heart of the error of the Baxterian party, according to Keach, was that they regarded justification as the act of Christ the King, not Christ the Priest: "Christ doth not reconcile God to us as a King, but as a Priest, and it is not done by what he works in us, but by what he hath done for us".³⁵ Keach did not deny that Christ does, in fact, work "in us", as

³⁴Keach, Display, pp. 54-55. A marginal note reads: "See Mr. Dan. William's [sic] Book."

³⁵Ibid., pp. 68-69. Also Keach, Medium, pp. 17-18.

Calvin also emphasised priestly work of Christ. See Kendall, p. 13: "The decree of election however is not rendered effectual by the death of Christ....The ascension was the event that 'opened the way into the Heavenly Kingdom, which had been closed through Adam'. [Inst., III:i:1]...Therefore Christ the priest "has entered heaven

well as "for us". However, he denied that justification is a human act, even a human act assisted by divine grace.

This is not to say that Christ is not a king, as well:

...as he is Mediator, he is our Law-giver...Christ is a Priest, yet he is more than a Priest, viz. a Surety also, but he gives us Laws as we are his Free-born Subjects, whom he Redeemed by his Blood, that we might know how to Honour, and Live under him that died for us and rose again.³⁶

Unlike the Baxterians, however, Keach maintained that Christ's kingly work saves the elect by changing their natures, not merely by giving them new laws by which to live:

Christ's Work and Office as King is to subdue all the Elect unto himself; I mean, to work Grace in them, and to change their Hearts, and vanquish the Power of Sin, and Satan, for this is and must be done by that Almighty Power which he exerts by his Spirit in their Souls and so takes possession of them as King and Supreme Ruler, whom as a Priest he purchased by his Blood; and all this as he is Mediator of this Covenant of Peace, That Christ may dwell in our Hearts by Faith, or sway the Scepter there.³⁷

The covenant: Keach dealt with the covenant concept most extensively in The Everlasting Covenant. Here he acknowledged a development in his thinking with regard to the covenant:

I must confess, I have formerly been inclined to believe the Covenant...between the Father and the Son, was distinct from the Covenant of Grace; but upon farther search, by means of some great Errors sprang up among us, arising (as I conceive) from that Notion, I cannot see that they are Two distinct Covenants, but both one and the same glorious Covenant of Grace, only consisting of Two Parts...God entered into that Covenant with him, for us, as our Head, Surety and Representative...it cannot be any thing else but

through His own body because He now sits on the right hand of the Father'. [Comm. Heb. 9.11] This act, then, carries out the decree of election".

³⁶Ibid., p. 70.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 70-71.

the Covenant of Grace, as well as the Foundation, or primary Spring of all that Grace, and divine Goodness, that the Elect had, or ever shall partake of, or receive from God...³⁸

Sometimes Keach referred to the covenant as a covenant of peace:

"...this Covenant of Peace was entered into between the Father and Son before the World began".³⁹ Most frequently, however, he spoke of the covenant of grace: "I know not of any other Covenant of Grace made with Christ for us about our Salvation, but that which they call the Covenant of Redemption..."⁴⁰

Keach argued that the Baxterians were wrong in believing that salvation under the covenant of grace can be had at an "easier rate";

³⁸Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p. 6. This division of the covenants was also a feature of Crisp's theology:

There are two main general covenants God enters into with men; the one is called...the covenant of works...The other is called...a covenant of grace. (Christ Alone Exalted, vol. 1, John Gill, ed. (London: L.I. Higham, 1816), p. 175. All references to Crisp will be from this edition.)

For the development of the theology of the covenant in the later seventeenth century, see Peter Toon's The Development of Hyper-Calvinism, p. 112.

Holmes Rolston speaks of the bifurcation of the covenant of grace into two parts as a development of federal theology: "The federalists usually proceeded to greater elaboration of this second covenant. A distinction is drawn between a "covenant of redemption" enacted between God and Christ in eternity, and a "covenant of grace" made between God and man through Christ. The covenanting parties were at times differently stated. But these developments do not occur in the Westminster Confession..." (Holmes Rolston III, John Calvin versus the Westminster Confession (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1972), p. 21.)

³⁹Keach, Display, p. 10.

⁴⁰Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p. 14. For a discussion of the development of covenant thought in English theology, see Michael McGiffert, "The Rise and Division of Covenant Divinity in Elizabethan Puritanism", Harvard Theological Review 75, (1982), pp. 463-502.

he believed that human credibility before God was utterly lost in the Fall. Now, God needs someone to act as a "surety" for the human race. The Baxterians were wrong about the covenant of grace, because God does not enter into a new covenant with the elect in themselves but with the elect as they are in Christ:

I would know whether in the Covenant of Grace God is said to enter into Covenant with Man, simply considered as in himself; or whether 'tis not with Christ, and so in him with us...certainly, our credit was so lost and gone with God, that he would not trust us, with any Covenant-Transaction any more without a Surety...⁴¹

The covenant of grace was revealed first to Adam and Eve: "...it was first revealed...to our First Parents as soon as they fell, and broke the Covenant of Works." ⁴² However, the Incarnation was its temporal manifestation:

...it was executed by Christ as our Head, when he came into the World, in part, i.e. in his Life, and ratified and confirmed by his Blood: and the rise or beginning of the outward Dispensation of it, was at his Death and Resurrection, when the Old Covenant ceas'd or was abrogated.⁴³

Justification: Keach defined justification in his rebuttal of Samuel Clark in Medium:

Justification [is] by the imputation of Christ's active and passive Obedience, through the free Grace of God, apprehended and received by Faith alone, without any thing wrought in us, or done by us; not by imputing Faith or any other act of Evangelical Obedience, but the imputing of Christ's Obedience and Satisfaction exclusively of all

⁴¹Ibid., p. 10. Like Keach, Bunyan affirms that the new covenant is made with the elect-in-Christ, not the elect-in-themselves: "...the covenant is not immediately with man, but with him that will be the Mediator betwixt God and man". (p. 326)

⁴²Ibid., p. 17.

⁴³Ibid.

things else whatsoever. And that Faith is only said to justify us objectively, or in respect had to the Object Jesus Christ, which it taketh hold of.⁴⁴

A significant aspect of this definition is that Keach held that justification is an effect of having both Christ's active and passive obedience imputed to the believer. (Christ's active obedience meant his complete fulfillment of the precepts of the Law; his passive obedience was his suffering the penalty due to the sins of the elect.) Baxterians held that only Christ's passive obedience played a part in justification.

Calvin located the material cause of justification in Christ's death, but the efficient cause in Christ's priestly intercession in heaven. However, Keach was in agreement with the mainstream of English Reformed thought in limiting the soteriological significance of the Cross:

If Christ died for all, why is not the Gospel preached to all? or why have not all the same Love manifested to them?...If therefore God delivered up his Son to die for all, or every individual Person in the World; how shall not he freely give to them his Gospel, his Spirit, and Faith to believe, and whatsoever else is necessary to their

⁴⁴Keach, Medium, p. 36. Compare Crisp:

The new covenant is without any conditions whatsoever on man's part. Man is tied to no condition that he must perform, which if he does not perform, the covenant is made void by him.

God doth not propose conditions beforehand, but gives his gifts without respect to any condition....God delivers, and then we serve; and the tenor of the gospel in this is contrary to the tenor of the law...(Christ Alone Exalted, p. 178 and p. 321.)

The Second London Confession joins the Savoy Declaration in asserting that both Christ's active and passive obedience are imputed to believers. (Lumpkin, p. 266.)

Salvation? Will a Man give the greatest Gift, and withhold the lesser, without which the greater can never accomplish the end for which he gave it?⁴⁵

Faith: In spite of Keach's absolutist views of justification, there is a sense in which there are "causes" of justification other than divine grace. Within Keach's soteriology, faith could be a cause of justification, but only in an instrumental and very limited sense. He quoted Bishop George Downham's A Treatise of Justification (1633) to underscore his point:

Manus accipientis, saith Dr. Downham, the hand of the Receiver is the Grace of justifying Faith: 'Tis not Faith, but the Object and Righteousness Faith apprehends or takes hold of, that justifies the ungodly.⁴⁶

Faith is not a material cause of the believer's justification:

...Faith...is said to justify us only in respect of the Object Jesus Christ, whom it apprehended; and it is no part of the matter which doth justify us (the Righteousness of Christ being alone the material cause of our justification)...⁴⁷

Keach expressed the paradox of justification in the following quotation:

⁴⁵Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk III, pp. 75-76.

⁴⁶Keach, Marrow, p. 6.

⁴⁷Keach, Medium, pp. 23-24. In outlining the causes of justification, Elias Keach explains in what sense faith is a "cause" of justification:

1. Cause is the undeserved Grace and Favour of God.
2. The meritorious Cause is the Redemption and Reconciliation purchased by Christ.
3. The Instrumental Cause, or rather that which evidences, that it is imputed is Faith.
4. The Final Cause, is the Glory of God, and the Salvation of his Chosen. (A Plain and Familiar Discourse on Justification (1693), p. 1.)

Tho' Faith be required of them that are saved, yea, and Repentance, Regeneration, Holiness, and a new Heart also; yet these Blessings are all promised in the Covenant, as part thereof: But Faith it self is no foederal Condition, but only serves to shew what God will do for, and work in such that he as an Act of free Grace will save.⁴⁸

Faith is "required of them that are saved", but it is "promised in the Covenant, as part thereof". Here Keach is reminiscent of Augustine's prayer, "Demand what Thou wilt, and give what Thou demandest". The "condition" of justification (faith) is given by God and becomes a source of assurance to the believer.

Faith is an instrumental cause of salvation, but its entire significance comes from its object, i.e., Jesus Christ. The following quotation is an extreme statement of that belief:

...Faith is the way prescribed in the Gospel in order to Justification; not Love, not Charity, nor Works of Mercy, but Faith: Now why is Faith rather than any Grace mentioned as the way to be justified...In respect of the Object it flies unto...Faith...carries the Soul out of himself to Christ...Do this and Live; or, The Man that doth these things shall live in them...These are the Terms of the Law...But the Terms of the Gospel are quite different; Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved...This Confession...has more in it 'tis true than some believe; 'tis not a verbal Confession only, or a bare believing Christ was raised from the dead; 'Tis a believing with all the heart...'⁴⁹

This could be taken as a statement of extreme antinomianism ("...Faith is the way prescribed ... in order to Justification ... not ... Works of Mercy ..."); however, the extremeness of Keach's position resulted entirely from his exalted view of the Christ's sacrifice, not from a devaluation of "Works of Mercy":

⁴⁸Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 192-194.

⁴⁹Keach, Marrow, p. 21.

My Brethren, Faith, Regeneration, Conversion [sic], or Holiness, do not reconcile us to God; no, no, nothing doth that but the Blood of Christ.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Keach allowed that true faith is recognized by its fruits:

What Love to God hath thy Faith wrought in thee? True Faith works by Love. Mary believed, and loved much....

What Alteration in the Course of thy Life hath Faith wrought? Faith made Jordan go back. There is a Turning the whole Man to God, a glorious Change in every Faculty, in Heart, and also in Life...

What Peace hath Faith brought to thy Soul?...⁵¹

Faith justifies because it is an instrument of union with Christ:

There is in that Soul where true Faith is wrought, or where the Seed of it is sowed, a desire after Christ, not simply after his Merits, but also after Union, and intimate Acquaintance with him....A true enlightned Soul looks first to Christ's Person, as being affected with his Beauty, and Sweetness of his Love; and then to the Goods and Riches he possesseth....⁵²

The Law: In a sense, Keach was an antinomian; he did not regard the Law (natural or Mosaic) to be any longer a path to justification before God. However, he regarded the Law as still very much in effect as a rule of life:

We affirm, that the Law of Perfect Obedience results from the Holiness, Purity, and Rectitude of God's Nature; and therefore it stands as a perpetual Law, and can never be abolished as a Rule of Life, tho it be taken away...as a Law of Works to be fulfilled...in our own Persons in point of Justification...My Brethren, Is it not our Duty still, and as much as ever it was, To love the Lord our God with all our Hearts, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength, and our Neighbour as our selves...Tho we are not able to do it, yet the Moral Law still remains, and requires us thus to do; true, we shall not be Damned for want of this perfect

⁵⁰Keach, Display, p. 121.

⁵¹Keach, Tropologia, Bk IV, p. 18.

⁵²Ibid.

Obedience, because Christ hath in our Nature, and stead, kept the Law perfectly for us...⁵³

Keach asked if there were any scriptural support for Clark's (and the other Baxterians') assertion that the old Law has been replaced with a new law:

This Man [Clark] contends for a mild Law; certainly the Moral Law remains a perpetual Rule of perfect Obedience: let this Man shew us where and how he can prove that God in the Gospel only commands sincere imperfect Obedience to the Moral Law: the Law surely loses no part of its sanction by the Gospel; that is as holy, just and good as ever.⁵⁴

Keach held that the Law was no longer a means to justification, but he insisted that the moral (and natural) law was still to be followed:

2. Yet let none conclude, that I hereby discourage any Persons from indeavouring after a Reformation of Life...no, God forbid; the Light of natural Conscience doth excite all who hearken unto it, to cast off all acts of Sin...

3. We also infer, that new Obedience, and holy Conversation, tho'it be part of our Sanctification, yet it is no part of our Justification...⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid., p. 77.

⁵⁴Keach, Medium, p. 50. The Second London Confession adds a significant remark in Chapter XIX, "Of the Law of God": "Neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation [i.e., to obey the moral law]" (Lumpkin, p. 276-277.) This seems to be a direct reference to the "lowered market" doctrine.

⁵⁵Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 106. The language which Crisp uses to speak of the Law is far from Antinomianism. His view of the Law is even more exalted than Keach's:

Our righteousness is appointed for excellent uses...

First. It serves as a way to manifest our thankfulness to God...

Secondly. That we may serve our generation...

Thirdly. It is the **ordinance of God, wherein the Lord hath appointed us to meet with him**...this is the very end and ground of our fasting, praying, and mourning...there he will pour out himself in grace and love according to his promise, not according to our performances. (Christ Alone)

Assurance: Keach's doctrine of assurance had two parts: With the Baxterians he believed that sanctification was evidence of justification. However, he also believed that the "Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are children of God".⁵⁶

Keach seems to have been more aware than the Baxterians that basing assurance on sanctification is dangerous and can lead to despair for "weak Saints":

...divers weak Saints are ready to judge of their Justification according to the degree and measure of their Sanctification; and can hardly be brought to believe, such vile Creatures as they are, who find such evil and deceitful Hearts...can be Justified in the sight of God...⁵⁷

He believed that the Baxterian soteriology led to a doctrine of assurance which led believers into a morass of self-doubt:

...for all your Faith and constant trusting in God, you have much Unbelief, and many Fears and Doubtings arising in your Spirits: tho' you have prayed often, and have not fainted; yet with what Deadness, with what Coolness, with what Wanderings of Heart and Vanity of Thoughts; and tho' you have done much good, will not your Consciences tell you, you might have done much more? you gave a Shilling may be to this poor, and that poor and distressed Object, when may be you ought to have given a Pound. O Sirs! your Relief lies in Christ, and in the Covenant of Grace...or you have none, nor ever will.⁵⁸

Exalted, pp. 260-261.)

⁵⁶See p. 2 for a discussion of the doctrine of assurance in the Westminster, Savoy, and Second London Confessions.

⁵⁷Keach, Marrow, p. 3. Crisp speaks little of assurance and leaves the wavering believer only cold comfort: "...you may be sure that God hath reconciled you in his Son, that your falls (being believers) shall not break peace between God and you; this peace is everlasting, it is unchangeable..."(Christ Alone Exalted, p. 279.)

⁵⁸Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p. 37.

The preceding quotation implies that Keach believed in the Reformed doctrine simul justus et peccator, a realistic, pastoral doctrine which should caution against making assurance entirely a matter of seeking evidence of sanctification. The Baxterians were not as cautious.

However, Keach did allow that evidence of sanctification may be evidence of justification:

No Mans Faith is known to be true, but by its fruits or good Works, tho' Holiness and good Works cannot justifie our Persons, yet they justifie our Faith, and render us justified Persons before men, and to our own Consciences also. ⁵⁹

The fruits of regeneration also "justify" our faith to non-believers:

...we constantly affirm, That that Faith which unites us to Christ...doth purify both the Heart and Life; and though inherent Grace, Holiness, and good Works, do not justify our Persons before God, yet they do justify our Faith, and declare us to be in a justified State before Men, and to our own Consciences also...⁶⁰

The danger of Keach's doctrine of assurance is that assurance could come to be nothing but a feeling:

The Holy Spirit witnesses by it self, by an inward and secretd [sic] Persuasion or Suggestion, that God is our Father, and we his Children, and also by the Testimony of his Graces and powerful Operations, tho' not in the like Degree and Clearness to all Believers...⁶¹

⁵⁹Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, pp. 156-157.

⁶⁰Keach, A Golden Mine, p. 95.

⁶¹Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p. 34.

But he did stress that assurance comes from being directed toward Christ:

Quest. How may I know that I have Christ, or an Interest in him?

Answ. 1. If thou hast Christ, thou hast Life, thou art spiritually quickned...

2. Thou canst remember the time when thou hadst no God, no Christ, or wast without Christ.

3. If Christ be thine, he is very precious to thee.

4. Doth Jesus Christ rule and reign in thee by his Spirit? He that hath Christ in him, may feel his ruling Power...

5. ...if Christ is in thee, and thou by Faith art in him, then thou art a new Creature.⁶²

Sanctification: The Baxterians' insistence that the believers' repentance and evangelical obedience must be somehow a part of his justification seemed to Keach a reversal of the ordo salutis in which sanctification follows justification. He reaffirmed the traditional order:

Now because we say Sanctification is not necessary, as antecedent to Justification, but is the Fruit or Product of Union with Christ...Must we be look'd upon as Promoters of a Licentious Doctrine?⁶³

Although in the ordo salutis sanctification follows justification, Keach realized that there is really no separating them; the gift of sanctification is given with the gift of justification:

...where Justification is, there is also Sanctification; a Man is not Sanctified that is not Justified, nor are any actually Justified that are not Sanctified; tho it is true,

⁶²Keach, Golden Mine, p. 499.

⁶³Keach, Marrow, p. i. It would be very strange if Crisp had reversed the Reformed ordo salutis and put sanctification before justification: "...it is true, God saith, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts", &c....[God] will bestow these things upon us as fruits and effects of the covenant..." (Christ Alone Exalted, p. 179.)

God Justifieth the ungodly, i.e. They are ungodly just at the time when God first Justified them, they are not Holy and Sanctified Persons before they are Justified...⁶⁴

Furthermore, Keach asserted that God elects persons to sanctification as well as election:

...they are under a strong Delusion, who suppose Election only refers to the End, and not to the Means; or that Men that are elected, shall be saved, let them live how they please...we are elected to be Holy, as well as to be Happy...⁶⁵

Justification and sanctification (particularly sanctification) involved a real (not merely forensic) change in the believer:

...as the Sun communicates its Light to all the Earth, even so Christ communicates his Righteousness to all the Elect...by the Spirit an Inherent Righteousness is also infused into the whole Body (to whom is a Head of Influence) to their Sanctification.⁶⁶

Means of grace: Although justification is unconditional, Keach held out hope to those who make diligent use of the "means" of grace:

If any Soul believes in Christ, thirsteth for Christ, looketh to Christ, or cometh to Christ, and yet Christ rejecteth him, then charge him with injustice: But where lives that Man, tho he was never so Vile and Ungodly that did thus, but he found Mercy? O see how Free and Universal the Proclamation is!⁶⁷

Similarly, those who do not "thirst after Christ" should not presume

⁶⁴Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk III, p. 5. The Second London Confession is even more emphatic about sanctification than Westminster and Savoy, adding: "...pressing after an heavenly life, in Evangelical Obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in his Word hath prescribed to them". (Lumpkin, p. 268.)

⁶⁵Keach, A Golden Mine, pp. 295-296.

⁶⁶Keach, Display, p. 195.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 166.

upon God's mercy by hoping that they may be saved in spite of their unreformed lives:

...He that leads an ungodly Life, and pursues his filthy Lusts, may assure himself...he shall be damned for ever...Men ought to endeavour to believe and repent, and close with Christ upon a Peradventure.⁶⁸

The primary "building block" of the spiritual life is faith:

Your first Business is to labour after true Faith, to believe in Jesus Christ, and to obtain Union with him...all Works of Obedience before Faith and Regeneration, please not God, nor profit the Creature...⁶⁹

And the primary means of awakening faith is preaching:

[The preaching of the] Gospel is the instrumental means, through the Spirits Operations of the Sinner's Reconciliation to God...

...the Gospel is that which Sin-convicted, and Self-condemned Sinners, and Stubborn Rebels against God, take hold of; and it is this that breaks and melts their hard Hearts...Where the Word of a King is, there is Power.⁷⁰

All the "Ordinances of the Gospel...are as golden Pipes to convey Heavenly Riches, or Sacred Treasure to our Souls".⁷¹

⁶⁸Keach, Golden Mine, pp. 174-175.

⁶⁹Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, pp. 75 and also 93.

⁷⁰Keach, Display, pp. 121 & 124. The Second London Confession, unlike the Savoy Declaration, specifies that Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and prayer have been particularly appointed by God to strengthen faith. (Lumpkin, p. 268.)

⁷¹Keach, A Golden Mine, p. 412. Also note the following passage: "Sirs, Men will not be condemned for not doing that which they had not Power to do, but for neglecting that which they might have done; their Destruction is of themselves, though their Salvation is wholly of God, and of the free Grace of God in Jesus Christ...They who say we put the Creature to do nothing, falsely charge us; we press Men to leave their wicked Practices upon a right foot of Account, and to wait upon God in his blessed Ordinances, which he has appointed for the begetting of

Election. Logically, election should be the first topic in a consideration of Reformed soteriology. Keach and the Baxterians were in agreement about election to eternal life; their disagreement was about the way election is manifested under the aspect of time. However, Keach departed substantially from the Calvinist heritage in denying double predestination:

No decree of God necessitates Men to sin: for though the Free Grace of God is the absolute Cause of Election, and no foreseen Faith or Holiness; yet foreseen Wickedness, Unbelief, and Disobedience, is the procuring Cause of the Reprobation and of the Damnation of them that perish.⁷²

The Fall: It is worthwhile noting what Keach had to say about the Fall the resulting depravity of human nature:

If Election and Salvation was not alone of God's sovereign Grace, it would be uncertain, depending wholly upon the unconstant and wavering Principles of the Creature. My Brethren, had it stood upon Adam's Will and Obedience, it had been more firm than to stand upon our depraved Wills, Power, and Obedience, distinct from Almighty sovereign and irresistible [sic] Grace in Christ, to secure our standing.⁷³

He went on to add that post-lapsarian humanity has even less reason to think that it can refrain from sinning than Adam did, "tho he had no depraved Nature, and but a young Devil to incounter withal!"

Faith". (Keach, A Golden Mine, p. 448.)

⁷²Keach, A Golden Mine, p. 174. Keach was following the Second London Confession in rejecting double predestination. The Confession reads: "...others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice." (Lumpkin, p. 254.) Unlike Keach, the Confession is careful to avoid saying that God condemns the reprobate because he foresees their wickedness, but that conclusion can be drawn from it.

⁷³Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, p. 238.

iv. High Calvinism and hyper-Calvinism.

In an attack on the Baxterians, Robert Trail remarked, "usually such Men, that are for the middle way in points of Doctrine, have greater kindness for that extreme they go half way to, than for that which they go half way from".⁷⁴ This could as easily apply to former General Baptist Benjamin Keach as it could to the Arminianizing Richard Baxter. Keach and Crisp were in agreement on all major points, thus if Crisp was the arch-Antinomian, then Keach was one of his disciples. However, neither Crisp nor Keach believed that the Law as a rule of life had been abolished. Both insisted that the Law was no longer in any sense a means of justification. An important difference between Crisp and Keach was that Keach used much more judicious language than his Anglican colleague. Crisp made several statements with which his theological opponents attempted to show that he tacitly (if not openly) approved of practical antinomianism:

...righteousness is that which puts a man away from Christ...upon the doing of duty and service, to expect acceptance with Christ, or participation in Christ, this kind of righteousness is the only separation between Christ and a people; and whereas no sinfulness in the world can debar a people, their righteousness may debar them.⁷⁵

One of Crisp's most infamous statements is that "to be called a libertine, is the most glorious title under heaven; take it for one that is truly free by Christ". However, immediately following this

⁷⁴Robert Trail, A Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine concerning Justification... (1692), p. 2. Quoted in Spivey, "Middle Way Men", p. 53.

⁷⁵Christ Alone Exalted in Works, p. 201.

statement Crisp wrote:

A licentious liberty is nothing else but this, namely, when men turn the grace of God into wantonness, and abusing the gospel of Christ, continue in sin, that grace might abound.⁷⁶

In the strictest sense of the word, then, neither Keach nor Crisp was an antinomian. However, both heavily emphasised the unconditionality of justification, and this emphasis on absolutely unconditional justification was frequently taken to be fertile ground for the breeding of antinomianism, if not an encouragement of practical antinomianism.

Some high Calvinists drifted into antinomianism, but there was another serious consequence of the high Calvinism espoused in the late seventeenth century by Crisp, Keach, and others: In the eighteenth century it became hyper-Calvinism. The relationship between high Calvinism is strong and runs directly through Baptist theologian John Gill (1696-1771). Both Crisp and Keach were related to Gill; John Gill was the next pastor but one of the Horselydown church after Keach. Also, Gill edited and re-published Crisp's writings. High Calvinism and hyper-Calvinism were not identical, but hyper-Calvinism was a development of some of the tendencies found in high Calvinism.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 224-225. Crisp did not have a monopoly on injudicious statements. John Bunyan shared Crisp's and Keach's aversion to Baxterianism, and went further than Keach in his attacks on legalism: "...the law and the works thereof, as to this, must by us be cast away; not only because they here are useless, but also they being retained are a hinderance [sic]...the very adhering to the law, though it be but a little, or in a little part, prevents justification by the righteousness of Christ". (John Bunyan, Justification by an Imputed Righteousness; or, No Way to Heaven but by Jesus Christ in Works, vol. 1, George Offor, ed. (London: Blackie and Son, 1862), p. 303.)

Peter Toon identifies three characteristic marks of hyper-Calvinism: (1) eternal justification, i.e., believing that the elect are justified from eternity; (2) as a consequence of the first point, hyper-Calvinists did not issue calls to conversion; and (3) evidence of sanctification was excluded as grounds of assurance; believers were to rely on the inner voice of the Spirit alone.⁷⁷

On points one and two Keach was definitely not a hyper-Calvinist. There is some affinity between Keach and the hyper-Calvinists on point three. First, Keach denied eternal justification. This is the main point of his book, A Medium betwixt Two Extremes (1698):

...do we not all preach to all out of Christ as unto ungodly ones, to such that are under Wrath and Condemnation in their own Persons, and so remain until they believe or have Union with Christ. Our Lord came not to call the Righteous, as such...but Sinners to Repentance; to such that were really lost in the first Adam...⁷⁸

It also seems to be the point of his chapter "On Justification" in the Articles of Faith:

We do believe Justification is a free act of God's grace, through that Redemption which is in Christ...and when

⁷⁷Peter Toon, The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity. 1689-1765 (London: The Olive Tree, 1967), pp. 144-145.

⁷⁸Keach, Medium, p. 31.Cf. John Gill, A Body of Doctrinal Divinity, vol. 1 (1769), p. 335: "It is objected, that men, cannot be justified before they exist; they must be, before they can be justified...whatever is in this objection, lies as strongly against eternal election, as against eternal justification; for it may as well be said, how can a man be elected before he exists?"

Also: "It is asserted, that justification cannot be from eternity, but only in time, when a man actually believes and repents; otherwise it would follow, that he who is justified, and consequently has passed from death to life, and is become a child of God, and an heir of eternal life, abides still in sin, abides in death...and in a state of damnation...but this latter especially cannot be admitted of, with respect to God's elect, even while unconverted". (p. 339)

applied to us, we in our own Persons are actually justified..."⁷⁹

Nevertheless, Keach insisted that election is eternal: "I ... grant a federal Union of the Elect with Christ, as our Surety and blessed Sponsor, from Eternity..."⁸⁰ His theology was orthodox even by Baxterian standards: eternal election but not eternal justification.

Secondly, Keach did issue appeals to conversion:

Is not this Good News? Do you believe it? And is it in your Hearts to take hold of the Promises of the Gospel? What Answer shall I return to him that sent me?...What do you say, Sinners? Will you strive to take hold of Jesus Christ? Believe in him, cry to him for Faith, resolve to lay down your Arms: What Answer shall I return to my Great Master? Do not make a Pause, but speedily come to a Resolution, your Lives are uncertain.⁸¹

Thirdly, Keach most nearly resembles the hyper-Calvinists in his doctrine of assurance. He came very close to making assurance entirely a matter of the inner voice of the Spirit:

The Holy Spirit witnesses by it self, by an inward and secretd [sic] Persuasion or Suggestion, that God is our Father, and we his Children, and also by the Testimony of his Graces and powerful Operations, tho' not in the like Degree and Clearness to all Believers...⁸²

Nevertheless, Keach also regarded sanctification as evidence of justification.

⁷⁹Keach, Articles of Faith (1697), Chapter XIII (emph. added).

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 28. Also, in Chapter XIII of the Articles (quoted in the previous note), Keach adds these words: "...he was as fully reconciled and satisfied for his Elect in Christ by his Death before Faith as after..."

⁸¹Keach, Display, pp. 128, 149-150.

⁸²Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p. 34.

v. Keach's theological opponents.

As mentioned above, Richard Baxter was Keach's bete noire. All other objects of Keach's theological attacks (on the subject of justification) were followers of Baxter. Samuel Clark, the author of Scripture Justification (1698), was strongly urged by Baxter to publish his work. In explaining how he had come to publish a book that "had lain almost Twenty years in Obscurity", he remarks that "Mr. Baxter" had "expressed his desire in Print long ago of the Publication of it".⁸³ Keach regarded Clark's theology as a frontal assault on the Reformation itself:

Reader, just as this Sermon was going into the Press, I met with Mr. Samuel Clark's new Book, intituled Scripture-Justification, and have made short Remarks on some things he hath said: In a time of common Invasion every Man should take to his Arms; they need not wait for Orders, as one notes; for by this Man's Doctrine all is struck at.⁸⁴

Daniel Williams, Presbyterian "bishop",⁸⁵ successor to Baxter as leader of the "Middle Way" men, and author of Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated (1692), is mentioned in The Display of Glorious Grace⁸⁶ and in The Marrow of True Justification.⁸⁷ Keach offered the opinion that

⁸³Samuel Clark, Scripture Justification, p. 114.

⁸⁴Keach, Medium, p. iv.

⁸⁵For an account of Williams' significance, see Roger Thomas, Daniel Williams, "Presbyterian Bishop" (London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 1964), p. 3.

⁸⁶Keach, Display, p. 54.

⁸⁷Keach, Marrow, p. 33 and p. 36.

the divines who had signed a recommendatory preface would regret their deed:

I hope some of those Ministers that have set their Hands to Mr. William's [sic] late Book, will see Cause to repent of their rash Act, and great Inadvertency; for we cannot see but that the said Book brings in another Gospel...and 'tis full of hard, and uncouth, or unintelligible Terms, Notions, and Expressions, not formerly known to the Christian World...⁸⁸

William Allen's Glass of Justification (1658) is also an object of Keach's attack in the latter book.⁸⁹ Although Allen's theology met with Baxter's approval (Baxter wrote a preface for Allen's book, A Discourse of the Nature, Ends, and Difference of the Two Covenants (1673)), Allen's theology and Keach's objections to it will not be considered because they do not belong to the second Antinomian/Arminian crisis with which Keach was concerned.

1. Daniel Williams. Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated (1692).

⁸⁸Keach, Display, p. 36. Ironically, eight years after Keach's death, Williams believed that the Baptists were less affected by Antinomianism than the Congregationalists: "The London Baptists, according to Williams, were less tainted with Antinomianism than the Congregationals had been, and this may possibly have had something to do with their invitation to join with the other two denominations at this time". The reference is to D.W.L. MS 12.56 (6), letter of Williams to Robert Nelson, dated 28 October 1712, "The number of the Antinomians were so reduced that...most of the Independents and Anabaptists in this city (especially the last) preach against Antinomianism". (Roger Thomas, Daniel Williams, "Presbyterian Bishop", p. 23.)

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 9 & 10. "These are his Words, viz. It is no where, neither in Words nor Sence, said, but he that loveth not, but believeth on him that Justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith, is counted to him for Righteousness. Sure this Man forgot that Love to God was one great thing the Law commanded: Were not the Israelites, or the People of the Jews under the Law, to do all they did in Love to God."

The full title of Williams' book to which Keach objected was Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated: Wherein some of Dr Crisp's Opinions are Considered; and the Opposite Truths are Plainly Stated and Confirmed.⁹⁰ Like the Westminster divines, Williams had a deep fear of antinomianism:

I believe many abettors of these mistakes, are honestly zealous for the Honour of Free Grace...antinomianism so corrupted Germany; it bid fair to overthrow Church and State in New-England; and by its Stroke at the Vitals of Religion, it allarm'd most of the Pulpits in England. Many of our ablest Pens were engaged against these Errors...whose Labours God was pleased to bless to the stopping of the attempts of Dr.Crisp ... Saltmarsh, Denne, Eaton, Hobson, &c.⁹¹

Although Williams did not use these terms precisely, he believed that Crisp's essential error was belief in eternal justification:

...by God's meer Electing Decree, all Saving Blessings are by Divine Obligation made ours, and nothing more is needful to our Title to these Blessings. That on the Cross, all the Sins of the Elect were transferred to Christ, and ceased ever after to be theirs. That at the first moment of Conception, a Title to all those decreed Blessings is personally applied to the Elect, and they invested actually therein. Hence the Elect have nothing to do in order to an Interest in any of these Blessings...Sin can do them no harm, because it is none of theirs...⁹²

The person and offices of Christ: Williams believed that the salvation of the elect was not accomplished on Calvary; Calvary was

⁹⁰For Williams' crusade against Crispianism, see Roger Thomas, Daniel Williams, 'Presbyterian Bishop', pp. 13-16.

⁹¹Daniel Williams, Gospel-Truth Stated and Vindicated: Wherein some of Dr. Crisp's Opinions are Considered; and the Opposite Truths are Plainly Stated and Confirmed (1692), p. ii.

⁹²Ibid., p. iii.

the foundation but not the fulfillment:

..Christ's sufferings were the Foundation of our Pardon, but not formally our Pardon; For them our Sins are forgiven whenever they be forgiven; without them Sin cannot be forgiven...⁹³

Williams based the new covenant not on Christ's work as a priest but on his work as a king:

...I disown any Free Grace to be the Free Grace of God which overturns his Benefits from being Motives to Duty; denies the total neglect of Duties, with their contrary Evils from being a Barr [sic] to our interest in those Benefits which by the Gospel he promiseth to those Duties; and requires those Duties, **in order to this Rectoral Distribution of Blessings**, it being wisely provided for in the Dispensation of this Grace, **that he may Rule and Judge** us according to his Relation to us...⁹⁴

The covenant: Like Baxter, Williams regarded the covenant of redemption (between the Father and the Son) and the covenant of grace (between the Son and the elect) as separate transactions:

Quest. 1. What is the Covenant of Grace?

A.1. It is not the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Spirit as one Party, and the...Lord Jesus, as the other Party...By Covenant of Grace, I mean, the way that God hath ordained to apply to Sinners that Salvation which is prepared by Christ...⁹⁵

Bishop Henry Hammond's statement, "Christ has brought down the market"⁹⁶ applies to Williams' soteriology:

⁹³Ibid., p. iv.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 224.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 44-45.

⁹⁶Allison, p. 157. Keach ridiculed the "lowered market" doctrine: "...though Obedience to the Law was Dogs meat; yet imperfect Obedience to the Rule of the Gospel or Promise thereof, if sincere, is the Children's Bread." (Marrow, p. 28.)

...Blessings are promised to lower Degrees of Duty; and a continuance in a state of Death, with a Bar to the Blessing, are not threatned against every Degree of Sin, as the Covenant of Works did. Can any doubt this to be the Grace of the Gospel-Promise?⁹⁷

Justification: The purchase price of justification within the new covenant is "faith unfeigned":

This Gospel-Sanction determines as certain a Rule of Happiness and Misery, as the Law of Works did, though it be not the same...it fixeth true Repentance and Faith unfeigned to be the Terms of Pardon...⁹⁸

Justification is the result of our faith (not Christ's righteousness) being taken for righteousness:

Our applying Christ's Righteousness, and relying on it, would no more Justifie us, than our sincere Holiness would save us, were it not for this Gospel-Promise, That God will Justifie, for Christ's sake, all such as believe.⁹⁹

Faith: Justifying faith is more than mere belief:

True Holiness, sincere Obedience, or good Works, and Perseverance, are the Way to Heaven, and so necessary to the Salvation of a Believer, that without them he cannot be saved, and continuing in them he shall be saved.

...It is not saving Faith which is not operative to these Effects. It ceaseth to be true, whenever it wholly fails of purifying the Heart, and working by Love.¹⁰⁰

This quotation also demonstrates that Williams believed that for believers to remain within the new covenant it is necessary for them to continue to perform the conditions of the covenant, i.e., "true

⁹⁷Ibid., p. vi.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. vii.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 132.

holiness, sincere obedience,...good works, and perseverance..."

Assurance: Williams did not point the believer in need of assurance to Christ on the Cross:

1. This is the way which God appoints to attain Assurance. 2 Cor. 13.5. Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith; prove your own selves; know ye not that Christ is in you, except you be Reprobates? Here we are to try: What's our great Enquiry to be about? Are we in the Faith...

2. This is the way whereby the Scripture-Saints were assured: They concluded their Justification by Sanctification; and a State of Peace by the Truth of Grace.¹⁰¹

2. Samuel Clark. Scripture Justification (1698).

The person and offices of Christ: The purpose of Christ's saving activity was to secure more favourable terms for the elect under the new covenant:

...Christ by bearing the punishment of our iniquities, has rendered God more favourable to us, and procured a new way of Justification for us; so that now he may account us righteous upon more easie and gentle terms than formerly...¹⁰²

The covenant: Clark did not deal with the covenant extensively and does not distinguish between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace. Nevertheless, for him the covenant in and by which believers are justified is conditional: "...we are first Righteous and then pardon'd, and not on the contrary, first pardon'd, and then Righteous."¹⁰³ The new covenant is also an arrangement under which

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 165.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰³Samuel Clark, Scripture-Justification, (1698), p. 19.

grace can be had at a lower cost than under the old covenant:
"...subordinate Gospel-Righteousness is an imperfect Righteousness,
consistent with manifold Failings and Infirmities..."¹⁰⁴

Justification and Faith: Believers are justified not by Christ's
righteousness, but by their faith being regarded as righteousness:

...by the Merit of his Death and Sufferings, he has
purchased this Priviledge for us among others, that sincere
Faith should be accounted for Righteousness...¹⁰⁵

Assurance: Believers can never be sure that they will be finally
justified:

...our Justification at present, while we are in this World
is but Partial, Imperfect, and Incompleat, and that we shall
not obtain compleat, intire, and final Justification from
all the Effects of Sin, till the Day of Judgment.¹⁰⁶

Assurance is acquired by looking into one's own heart, not by
looking toward the Redeemer:

...if any Mists or Fogs of Doubts arise at any Time in our
Hearts, concerning our Interest in Christ, we can satisfie
our selves no other Way possibly, but by making enquiry into
our Sincerity, and if we can discern and discover that, then
we may rejoice and take Comfort in it...¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 66.

3. Richard Baxter.

Baxter was the intellectual leader of the "Middle Way" Calvinists. From the beginning to the end of his work, he taught a soteriology that was based on conditional justification. Baxter was not afraid of the phrase "justification by works":

...as the Blood and Merits of Christ...must be the matter of our justification from the guilt of all other sins...so must our own personal Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience be the matter of our Justification from the particular false Accusation...of final non-performance of these conditions of the Gospel...this is the Justification by works...which I do assert and defend...¹⁰⁸

The person and offices of Christ: Baxter's soteriology is based on two points: First, for Baxter, the most important aspect of Christ's saving activity was his kingship:

They that in peevish opposition to others, tell us, That Christ made no Law, and that the Gospel is not a Law, if they strive not about equivocal Words, but mean that Christ is not a Legislator, nor hath a Law and Covenant by which he will govern and judge the World, so deny all our Christianity at once: For Christ is not Christ if he be not King of the Church; nor is he King, if he be not Lawgiver...¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸Richard Baxter, Richard Baxter's Confession of his Faith, Especially concerning the Interest of Repentance and sincere Obedience to Christ, in our Justification & Salvation, (1655), pp. ix-x. Baxter uses "works" ambiguously. In his preface to Allen's A Discourse of the Nature, Ends, and Difference of the Two Covenants (1673), he writes: "...we shall be all judged according to our Works, by the Rule of the Covenant of Grace, though not for our Works by way of...Legal proper Merit." (p. 9) and on the next page writes: "...no Works of Mans are to be trusted in, or pleaded..."

¹⁰⁹Richard Baxter, An End of Doctrinal Controversies (1691), p. 149.

In Baxter's soteriology, Christ as king was more important than Christ as priest (or prophet), and for Baxter, Christ the king must be Christ the law-giver.

The Covenant: Secondly, the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace are separate and distinct:

They therefore that look upon Justification or Righteousness, as coming to us immediately by Imputation of Christs Righteousness to us, without the Instrumental Intervention...by this Deed of Gift or Covenant, do confound themselves by...overlooking the Causes of our Justification. **That which Christ did by his merits was to procure the new Covenant.**¹¹⁰

Justification: Salvation under the new covenant is a result of fulfilling the conditions that Christ has laid down:

...by this Covenant he requireth of us Repentance and true Faith to our first Justification, and sincere Obedience, Holiness and Perseverance to our Glorification, to be wrought by his Grace and our Wills excited and enabled by it.¹¹¹

The following passage shows the applicability of the phrase "lowered market" to Baxter's soteriology. Perfection was required under the covenant of works; sincerity will suffice under the new covenant.

The degree of obedience, which is your duty, is indeed perfection without further sin: but your daily infirmities have a pardon; and therefore the degree of obedience necessary to your salvation is but that it be sincere, that is, that as to the predominant bent of your heart and life, you truly obey your Creator and Redeemer, and make this the chief trade or business which you live for and manage in the

¹¹⁰Baxter, A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness (1676), p. 66. Allison argues that Baxter makes the new covenant the cause of our justification (Allison, Rise of Morality, p. 158).

¹¹¹Richard Baxter, A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness (1676), p. 103.

world.¹¹²

Faith: Baxter consistently joined faith and repentance as the conditions which must be fulfilled for justification under the new covenant. For Christ's sake, the Father regards our faith and repentance (and the accompanying fruits of sanctification) to be our righteousness: our own righteousness is reckoned (for Christ's sake) to be sufficient for salvation:

...as God reputeth Christ's righteousness to be the prime meritorious Cause for which we are justified by the Law of Grace...so he truly reputeth our own Faith and Repentance (or Covenant-consent) to be our moral Qualification for the gift, and our Holiness and Perseverance to be our moral Qualification for final Justification and Glory...

Therefore God may in this Sence be truly said, both to impute Righteousness to us, and to impute our Faith for righteousness...¹¹³

Assurance: The believer holding Baxter's views could never be certain of his eschatological destination:

Quest. VIII. Is pardon or justification perfect before death?

Answ. ...1. The pardon which you have this year, extendeth not to the sin which you commit the next year or hour; but there must be a renewed act of pardon for renewed sins...¹¹⁴

Again, assurance comes not from faith focusing on the Cross but from introspective analysis of one's own heart:

Quest. IV. May we be certain of pardon of sin in this life?

¹¹²Richard Baxter, The Catechising of Families in The Practical Works of Richard Baxter, William Orme, ed. (London: James Duncan, 1830), pp. 339-340.

¹¹³Baxter, An End of Doctrinal Controversies, pp. 257-258.

¹¹⁴Richard Baxter, The Christian Directory in Works, vol. VI, William Orme, ed. (London, 1830), p. 522.

Answ. Yes: every man that understandeth the covenant of grace may be certain of pardon, so far as he is certain of the sincerity of his faith and repentance, and no farther.¹¹⁵

vi. Keach's critique of Baxterian soteriology.

The heart of Keach's protest against Baxterian soteriology appears to be that he regarded their doctrine as a new legalism, potentially as dangerous as Tridentinism.¹¹⁶ To Keach, it seemed that the Baxterians denied that God saves the elect freely, but rather that men and women force God's hand by their own faith and repentance. A careful reading of Clark reveals that he did, in fact, make faith a condition, not a consequence of justification. Williams and Baxter, on the other hand, qualify their doctrine of conditional justification with a strong doctrine of election.

Clark did reverse the Reformed pattern of redemption. God's grace precedes effectual calling but not justification:

Neither does [God] call any, because they have Faith, or good Works, or Obedience, or Righteousness, or Holiness, but that they may have 'em. His Favour is antecedent to any good in us....He does not choose or call us because we are Holy, but that we may be so. But now the case is otherwise, in reference to those Priviledges which follow upon Vocation: For God Justifies and Glorifies us because we are Holy...Because we are found walking in such a way, and are so and so qualified, therefore God of his free Grace and Mercy does Reward us...In the former Case, Holiness is a Fruit of Consequent of Election and Vocation: But here,

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 520.

¹¹⁶Keach came close to accusing Baxter of being a "crypto-Catholic" and a Tridentinist. "Conditional justification", according to Keach, was "Popish": "We have the old Popish Doctrine in a new disguise, lying in our way, about Justification...(Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk. II, p. 181.)

'tis a necessary Antecedent to Justification and Salvation.¹¹⁷

It is difficult to know what Clark meant when he says "God of his free Grace and Mercy does Reward us". Keach's criticism seems to be right on the mark:

This is much like Bellarmino... 'Tis not, according to Mr. Clark, the Object of Faith, not Jesus Christ that Faith apprehends, and we alone trust in, but it is Faith that justifieth us...¹¹⁸

In the following quotation Keach charged that Williams also reversed the Reformed ordo salutis:

Doth he not mean a Man must be holy, sincere, or a New Creature, before he ventures on the Promise of the Gospel, or can be justified...as if the free Promise of the Grace of God in laying hold on Christ and his Righteousness justifies us not, but that we must get some inherent Qualifications of Holiness...before we ...throw our selves upon Jesus Christ...The Papists say, a Man must be inherently righteous before he can be declared just...And this Man says but little else, if I understand him...¹¹⁹

It is possible to conclude that Williams has much in common with the "Papists", however Williams qualifies his doctrine of conditional justification:

The Conditions are not uncertain; for Christ hath undertaken that the Elect shall perform them. They are performed by

¹¹⁷Clark, Scripture Justification, p. 41.

¹¹⁸Keach, Medium, p. 37. Wallace also asserts that Baxter's own theology was not too far from Trent: "...Baxter employed phrases that must be regarded as quite close to the contemporary expressions of Anglican moralism or even Tridentine theology, for example, God 'regenerateth us, that he may Pardon us'." [Baxter, Confession, pp. 34-35, sig. A4.] (Wallace, Puritans and Predestination, p. 138.)

¹¹⁹Keach, Marrow, p. 36.

Grace, and not by Natural Power.¹²⁰

A strong doctrine of election saves Williams' soteriology from grave error.

What of Baxter, the leader of the movement? In a sermon on the parable of the wedding feast, Keach compared the Baxterian doctrine of conditional justification to mixing the "King's Wine" with "muddy water"

Let those who are tainted with the Errors of Arminianism, or Baxterianism; think of this, who strive to mix the King's Wine with their muddy Water, or mix their polluted Works with God's Free Grace...¹²¹

Actually, Baxter, like Williams, mitigated his doctrine of conditional justification with a high doctrine of election:

I do fully believe, that when a true Believer is actually Justified, from all his sins past, yet that all the continuance or non-omission of that Justified state, and also the pardon of all following sins and also his final Absolution in Judgement are still Conditional. Though I believe that they are certainly and infallibly future, and the event foretold in Scripture, and God, as it were, engaged to accomplish it, and that God hath actually and absolutely Decreed it, (I mean, there is no Condition of the act of his Decree, and also that he hath Decreed immutably the infallible futurity of the event).¹²²

Nevertheless, there is a great deal in Baxter and Williams about God rewarding the imperfect faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience of believers with justification for the sake of Christ. There is less about the absolute certainty of the divine decree of eternal life for the elect. Keach's critique of the doctrine of justification of

¹²⁰Williams, Gospel-Truth Vindicated, p. 45.

¹²¹Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk III, p. 49.

¹²²Baxter, Treatise of Justifying Righteousness, p. 116.

Baxter and the Middle Way men caricatured their position, but his caricature was correct in that it did highlight the Baxterian emphases.

Keach always balanced his insistence on the absolute unconditionality of justification by insisting that the saved owe God holy lives, will be motivated by gratitude to lead holy lives, and enabled by the Spirit to perform holy deeds. In commenting on the Father putting shoes on the Prodigal Son's feet, Keach implied that the holy lives of the regenerate are at least as much a delight as a duty:

They that have these Shoes on their Feet walk in an heavenly and spiritual course of Life...Before their Feet carried them perhaps to Play-houses, to Musick-houses, and to Tipling-houses; but now their Feet carry them into the Courts of God's House, and they delight more in praying than they did in playing.¹²³

This note of delight is muted in the writings of the Baxterians. Daniel Williams' grim objection to Crisp's theology was that it removed fear and hope as motivations for behaviour.¹²⁴

There is a sense in which the Baxterians were the true antinomians, not Keach. For Keach, the Law was a permanent phenomenon, because it "results from the Holiness, Purity, and

¹²³Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, p. 119.

¹²⁴"...the Elect are not governed by Fear or Hope; for the Laws of Christ have no Promises or Threats to rule them by; nor are they under the Impressions of Rewards or Punishments, as Motives to Duty..." (Williams, Gospel-Truth Vindicated, p. ii.) To his credit, he also cautioned preachers not to "extinguish just Hopes or Joy", however "we ought to preach so, as to beget a fear of Caution from the due Sense of Danger...Without this Fear in sense of Danger, many of the great Duties of Religion are excluded. What's a Tender Heart, but a heart impressed by a Mixture of Fear and Love?" (p. 228)

Rectitude of God's Nature..."¹²⁵ Baxter, on the other hand, argues that the Mosaic Law has been completely abolished:

...Christ did not fulfill the Law of Moses in the person of all them that were never bound themselves to fulfill it; so as that they are reputed fulfillers of it in and by Christ: For since his Ascension it is abrogated even to the Jews themselves, and now bindeth none in the World (as Mosaical).¹²⁶

Baxter was characteristically ambiguous here, but seems to have been saying that although the natural law is still in force, the Mosaic law is not. This is a drastic departure from Reformed theology, indeed. Baxter and his doctrine of justification on "easier terms", opened the way for moral laxity, for now all that is required is that one be sincere. For Baxter the impossibility of human nature being able to fulfill the Law's requirements led to the conclusion that the Law's requirements must have been relaxed. Keach observed the same phenomenon and came to a completely different conclusion. He believed that (1) the Law abides forever; and even though (2) human nature is unable to fulfil it; (3) no "easier terms" have been provided; (4) therefore salvation must be by unconditional grace.

¹²⁵Keach, Display, p. 77.

¹²⁶Baxter, An End of Doctrinal Controversies, p. 123.

vii. Conclusion.

There were two main streams in English Reformed thought: First, the Baxterians, or "Middle Way" men, developed the implications of Westminster theology in an Arminian direction. By their doctrine of the covenant of grace (the conditions of which were established, but not fulfilled, by Christ), they placed the emphasis on the individual's faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience. There were three dangers of this school: First, believers could be driven to despair by their inability to produce enough evidences of sanctification to convince themselves that they were objects of God's favour. Second, it was also possible that the fruits of sanctification could be seen as payment for justification with the result that the Gospel becomes legalism. Thirdly, the failure to emphasise Christ's mediatorial, priestly work (from which the division between the covenants of grace and redemption springs, and thus the insistence that an individual's faith and evangelical obedience are material causes of justification) could lead to Socinianism.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ H. John McLachlan, Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England (Oxford: OUP, 1951), p. 50: "Arminianism and Socinianism had close affinities and were born of a similar tendency of mind. The difference between them was more one of emphasis than radical departure. Arminianism was more the dictate of moral sentiment, Socinianism the product of reason. The opponents of one system found themselves at loggerheads also with the other, and did not often discriminate between them. 'One egge is no liker another, neither doth milk more resemble milk than the Remonstrants do the Socinians', wrote Nicholas Chewney in 1656".

According to Geoffrey Nuttall there were two kinds of Arminianism: the theoretical Arminianism of the General Baptists and the "practical" Arminianism of Baxter's. Theoretical Arminianism could (and frequently did) develop into Socinianism. Baxter's Arminianism (and later Wesley's) was tempered by an urgent sense of

The second current in English Reformed thought was characterized by a high Calvinist insistence on God's absolute freedom in electing and justifying sinners. This could degenerate into an insistence on the absolute passivity of sinners not only in regeneration, but in conversion, as well, and an accompanying de-emphasis of the fruits of justification (sanctification) and the importance of a holy life. The result of these latter tendencies carried too far was hyper-Calvinism which turned its adherents in on themselves and away from others. Peter Toon writes that the hyper-Calvinists "believed that God was more glorified in the exaltation of free grace in the pulpit and on the printed page, than in the evangelism and conversion of men".¹²⁸

Keach tried to steer a middle course between these two tendencies, and largely succeeded. In contrast to the Baxterians, Keach was wary of allowing any of the fruits of justification to be thought of as "causes" of justification (although he did allow for faith to be an instrumental cause in a restricted sense). In contrast to the antinomians, he never lost sight of the importance of a holy life, and unlike the hyper-Calvinists, Keach was vigorously evangelistic. Consequently, he deserves the title "Middle Way" man more than Baxter and his followers.

mission: "One of the few Puritans who both put missionary enterprise high among the objects of his prayers and gave ardent support to John Eliot's isolated mission to the American Indians was Richard Baxter..." ("The Influence of Arminianism in England" in The Puritan Spirit: Essays and Addresses (The Epworth Press, 1967), pp. 77-78.)

¹²⁸Toon, Hyper-Calvinism, p. 146.

CHAPTER TWO. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: THE PRIMER, THE CATECHISM,
THE ARTICLES, AND THE IMAGINATIVE WRITINGS.

I. The Child's Delight and Instructions for Youth:
Keach's Primers.

i. Introduction.

It could be argued that the touchstone by which to understand Keach's entire published output is religious education. His first book, The Child's Instructor (1664), was a primer.¹ Nearly every other book which he published can be read as an instrument of catechesis. The various editions of the primer and the catechism were the only formal instruments of religious education which Keach issued, but the

¹This is not a title Keach applies to his work, although Crosby describes The Child's Instructor as "a new and easy primer". Nevertheless, Keach's Child's Delight and Instructions for Children will be described as primers. There are two possible origins of the word "primer". It could have been derived from "prime", the first office of the monastic day. On the other hand, it could simply mean "first", as in a child's first book (liber primarius). Early English primers used religious material in order to teach children to read and made no distinction between "religious" and "secular" education. Chaucer makes an early reference to the "prymer":

This litel child, his litel book lernynge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
he Alma redemptoris herde synge
As children lerned hir antiphoner... ("The Prioress's Tale" in Canterbury Tales.)

For English primers, see Charles C. Butterworth, The English Primers (1529-1545): Their Publication and Connection with the English Bible and the Reformation in England (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953).

hymns and allegories were clearly intended for use as means of religious nurture.

ii. Extant editions of the primer.

The precise nature of the 1664 primer will never be known. It was burned before Keach as he hung in the stocks in Aylesbury, but Crosby tells us that he later rewrote it from memory. The reason for the destruction of the primer was that it "contain'd by way of question and answer, these damnable positions, contrary to the several Things contrary to the book of Common Prayer, and the Liturgy of the Church of England..."²

Although Keach did not entirely omit Baptist views from later editions, he did soft pedal his sectarian zeal. Later extant editions contain his staunchly anti-pedobaptist views but omit the other disputed points. Even this is somewhat unusual; in other books which Keach published for a general audience, he scarcely even mentioned the distinctive Baptist position on baptism. His largest collection of hymns, Spiritual Melody (1691), contains only a few references to baptism, and Gospel Mysteries (1701) omits anything having to do with baptism altogether. It seems a little strange that Keach would have included a doctrine so objectionable to other Protestants in a book intended for instruction in reading and arithmetic.

²Crosby, Vol. 2, p. 189. "Things contrary ... to the Church of England" included denying the validity of infant baptism, the millennium, the propriety of allowing laymen to preach.

The first book in Crosby's list of Keach's works is The Child's Instructor (1664). However, Crosby also lists Instructions for Children but provides no date for it. No book bearing the title The Child's Instructor is extant. This study is based on the third edition of The Child's Delight: Or Instructions for Children and Youth, and the ninth edition of Instructions for Children.³ Unfortunately, neither book gives a date of publication.⁴ The Child's Delight includes a "[f]orm of a *Bond, or Obligation*" and is dated "...the 26th of April, 1703. in the Second Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady ANNE...".⁵ So, it is likely that it was printed in 1703 or shortly thereafter.

There are two principal differences between the books. First, Instructions for Children is almost twice as long as The Child's Delight. The Child's Delight (third edition) contains 83 pages; the ninth edition of Instructions for Children contains 152 pages. Secondly, the two books approach the catechism differently. Instructions for Children differentiates among four groups of children. "The Little Child's Catechism", "The Youth's Catechism", instructions for daughters, and again "The Youth's Catechism"

³Benjamin Keach, The Child's Delight (3rd edition) [1703?] (hereafter referred to as Delight) and Instructions for Children (9th edition) [1710] (hereafter referred to as Instructions). All references are to these two editions.

⁴The British Library holds a third edition of The Child's Delight [1702?]. There are four copies of Instructions for Children: the ninth edition [1710]; fifteenth edition (1723); an edition believed to have been issued in 1745; and the thirtieth edition (1763).

⁵Keach, Delight, p. 75.

(intended for young adults). The more extensive treatment of the catechism suggests that Instructions is an expansion of The Child's Delight.

Both versions of the primer include extensive instructional tools. They begin with the alphabet in both Roman and Italic forms. Then, they proceed to explain vowels and consonants and words of one and several syllables. The "secular" instruction is interrupted for religious education. At the end of the catechism in each, there is a section of particular value for young men entering apprenticeships. The heading in Instructions for Children is "Here follows some Necessary Instructions for Youth, to fit them for following those Lawful Callings which God may place them in".⁶ The material in each book is identical: "Of Time",⁷ "Of Coyn",⁸ "A Bond",⁹ weights,¹⁰ and punctuation.¹¹

Instructions for Children begins with a recommendatory preface by "H. Knowls",¹² who identifies himself as having "taught Scholars above Forty Years in London".¹³

⁶Ibid., p. 103.

⁷P. 52 and p. 103 in Delight and Instructions respectively.

⁸Ibid., p. 53 and p. 122.

⁹Ibid., p. 69 and p. 103.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 80 and p. 122

¹¹Ibid., p. 56 and p. 117.

¹²Instructions, title page: "Recommended to the Use of all Parents and Schoolmasters, by H. Knowls".

¹³Ibid., p. A2.

iii. Purposes of the primers.

Keach had several reasons for producing The Child's Delight and Instructions for Children. First, they were instruments of religious education. Secondly, they were intended to instruct children in reading and other basic skills. Thirdly, they were almost certainly profitable financial enterprises.

The primary purpose of the primers seems to have been religious. The largest section in each is devoted to a catechism or catechisms. H. Foreman writes: "Religion is the prime motive for the publication of these books: Keach's work...aims to teach its readers the main tenets of the Christian faith..."¹⁴ However, a large amount of space is devoted to teaching reading and practical skills. The amount of space in both The Child's Delight (third edition, n.d.) and Instructions for Children (ninth edition, n.d.) given to practical instruction is approximately the same.

The section teaching the alphabet and rudimentary reading must have been commonplace in books of the period. A similar section appears at the beginning of Bunyan's A Book for Boys and Girls: Or, Country Rhimes for Children (1686). In both Delight and Instructions the section on the rudiments of reading occupies about seven pages.

Keach intended his primers to do more than teach the ABCs; at the conclusion of each he furnishes information particularly useful for

¹⁴H. Foreman, "Some Seventeenth Century Baptist Educational Textbooks", BQ, p. 113.

young men entering trades. This section occupies between 24 and 28 pages in each book, and explains units of time and money; bonds, bills, receipts, and wills; interest; and weights and measures. H. Foreman is almost certainly correct when he writes that

[t]he inclusion of these documents [bond, will, etc.] is an indication of the type of career which the young Baptist, along with other Nonconformists, now found open to him after the English universities had been closed to him with the Act of Uniformity in 1662. The learned professions were debarred as far as he was concerned: the worlds of business and commerce were now his main avenue for a career.¹⁵

Keach's program was certainly more ambitious than Bunyan's in A Book for Boys and Girls: "I shall forbear to add more, being perswaded this is enough for little Children to prepare themselves for Psalter, or Bible."¹⁶

The ability to write a legal document such as a bond, receipt, or will was an essential skill for a wide range of people in Keach's day. Margaret Spufford argues that instruments of credit were widely used in rural England in the late 17th century: "...the ability to 'cast an accompte' was included as a basic skill with reading and writing in the curricula of many schools which set out to teach the humblest village child. Simple accounting must have been a very necessary skill in the farming community if credit was so generously used".¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁶John Bunyan, A Book for Boys and Girls: Or, Country Rhimes for Children (1686), p. 3.

¹⁷Margaret Spufford, "The Schooling of the Peasantry in Cambridgeshire, 1575-1700", in Land, Church, and People: Essays Presented to Prof. H.P.R. Finberg, ed. Joan Thirsk (Welwyn Garden City, Herts: British Agricultural History Soc., 1970), p. 144.

Information about the teaching of reading in late 17th century England is difficult to obtain, however the printing trade was expanding and that suggests the expansion of literacy.¹⁸ Spufford argues that basic literacy was quite widespread and that most boys went to some sort of school for at least a year or two. Thus, there may have been quite a large market for the kind of primer which Keach produced.¹⁹ Instructions for Youth was certainly popular; it was into its ninth edition by 1710.²⁰ Keach may have been motivated to produce his primer both as a financially profitable enterprise and as a means

¹⁸In Lawson and Silver's A Social History of Education in England, the authors claim that as a result of the expansion of the printing trade "informal self-education became possible as never before" and go on to speculate that "...the dissemination of reading ability among lower social groups must partly explain the change in English prose, from the sophistication and allusiveness of the Elizabethans to the direct, simple, unadorned style of Bunyan and Defoe". So, Keach profited from his books which helped children learn to read and when those children had gotten older he profited by selling (to a market he had helped to create) among the lower classes books such as his War with the Devil and Travels of True Godliness. (John Lawson and Harold Silver, A Social History of Education in England (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1973), pp. 93 and 143.)

¹⁹"The general impression given by the autobiographers is that boys from non-yeoman backgrounds quite frequently had a year or two's sporadic education, but it was often broken off before seven either by family needs or demographic mishap. Those boys who were fortunate enough to be supported at school until fourteen divided into two groups. Some went into apprenticeships; some to the universities as an apprenticeship to the Church, or to teaching. The latter almost all came from yeomen, or more prosperous families". (Margaret Spufford, "First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Spiritual Autobiographers", Social History 4, no. 3 (1979), pp. 433-434.)

²⁰"In the 17th c. the number of editions a book enjoyed was a good indication of its popularity, since editions were of certain standard sizes...." (C. John. Sommerville, Popular Religion in Restoration England (Gainesville, FL: The University Presses of Florida, 1977), p. 9.)

for promulgating his religious views.

Of course, it is impossible to draw a distinct line between the secular and religious purpose of the primers. Keach uses religious material to teach children to read. One of the first precepts in both primers is:

To learn to Read, good Child, give heed,
For 'tis a precious Thing:
What may compare with Learning rare!
From hence doth Virtue spring.²¹

The line between the sacred and the secular is further blurred because of Keach's conviction that the ability to read is one of the best defenses against false religion. In The Progress of Sin, Sin attempts to persuade parents not to send their children to school:

He represented to many parents, the great charge of putting their offspring to school; persuading them, they being poor and low in the world, they could not be at the cost, though they bestowed a great deal more needlessly upon clothing and feeding of them, than their learning would have come to.

Now, the reason why the enemy is so greatly set against learning, is this, lest, by their attaining to the knowledge of letters, they should take to read the Holy Bible...²²

iv. Seventeenth century educational theory in Keach's primers.

²¹Keach, Instructions, p. 6 and Delight, p. 8. Keach's verse was borrowed by Manasseh King on pp. v-vi of his A New and Useful Catechism; Very necessary and Teachable, both for Young Children and Young Christians. 4th ed. (1699).

²²Benjamin Keach, The Progress of Sin: or, the Travels of Ungodliness. Wherein the Pedigree, Rise, and Antiquity of Sin is fully discovered; in an apt and Pleasant Allegory (1684), p. 72.

Probably the most significant influence on English education in the 17th century was the publication of Jan Comenius's Orbis Pictus, which was translated and published in England in 1659 as The Visible World.²³ The heart of Comenius's revolutionary theory was that children should learn from experience, and he advised teachers to associate Latin words with pictures of the things for which they stood. Comenius carried out this program himself in his Orbis Pictus.

This theory may have appealed to Keach. His imagination was highly visual as can be seen by noting the use of the visible to express the invisible in the metaphors of Tropologia, the hymns, the sermons in Gospel Mysteries, and most of all in the allegories. It would be odd if his primers did not make use of the same theory. The Child's Delight (third edition) contains three pages of crude engravings illustrating Bible history.²⁴ These pictures were omitted from Instructions for Children, possibly because of the expense of reproducing them, but pp. 10-11 catechetically teach the same facts conveyed by the engravings in The Child's Delight: "Who was the first Man? Adam. Who was a Man after Gods one [sic] Heart? David. Who killed his Brother? Cain", etc.

Keach was not the only educator to use pictures. Thomas Lye's The Child's Delight (1671) contains eight pages of pictures that teach

²³Irene Parker, Dissenting Academies in England: Their Rise and Progress and their Place among the Educational Systems of the Country (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), p. 37.

²⁴Keach, Delight, pp. 12-14.

the alphabet, vowels, diphthongs, and double consonants.²⁵

v. Doctrinal content of Keach's primers.

The main purpose of both The Child's Delight and Instructions for Children was to inculcate religious teaching. Combining practical and sacred learning in a simple book for children was not unusual. Bunyan combined both in his A Book for Boys and Girls, and primers usually contained a catechism.²⁶ The content of religious teaching in the primers is virtually identical with the faith of the other English Protestants who adopted the Westminster Confession or the Savoy Declaration with the addition of the distinctive Baptist understanding of baptism.

One of the main points of each book is the superiority of Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. The title of The Child's Delight asserts that a purpose of the book is to "Establish young People in God's Truth, in opposition to Error in these perilous Times". The *frontispiece* portrays a priest with two boys. To one of the boys, the priest says: "Young heretick your Bible burn,/And unto Mother Church return,/Or we'l [sic] burn you, your Bible too". And the boy replies,

²⁵Thomas Lye, The Child's Delight, (first edition 1671) facs. ed., (Menston, Yorks: The Scholar Press, Ltd., 1968). (No pagination.)

²⁶W.J. Frank Davies, Teaching Reading in Early England (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 105: "Together with the Primer went the Catechism. Whereas the Primer was basically a book of devotions for use by Christians of any age, the Catechism was a plain summary of Christian principles which had to be learned by Christians from an early age".

"In my heart Gods word He lay,/The Bible burn too true you may/But you can't take Gods word away". The boy's companion is kneeling in prayer and saying, "Lord save England from Popery".²⁷ The catechism drives home the anti-Catholic message:

Qu. Are there any who partake of Christ's Priesthood, and Minister under him as his Successors or Vicars?

Ans. No verily; the work of Christ's Priesthood doth not pass from him to any other: He has no Successor nor Vicar, because he abides himself a Priest for ever, to discharge the whole work of his Priestly Office...

Qu. What think you then of the Sacrifices of the Mass Priests in the Popish Church?

Ans. The Sacrifices of the Popish Mass Priests, 'tis clear, from hence are Erroneous, Blasphemous, and Idolatrous, and to be abhorred by all true Christians; for it renders the Sacrifice of Christ weak and imperfect...²⁸

Keach's anti-Catholicism was taken up and expanded in The Protestant Tutor, an anonymous book published by Benjamin Harris. Harris, who published several of Keach's books, was obviously *under Keach's* influence. The Protestant Tutor contains some of the verses from The Child's Delight, and Harris used some of Keach's verses in compiling it.²⁹

Other than *the anti-popery message*, there is no other special doctrinal emphasis in The Child's Delight. The doctrinal content is derived from Keach's catechism, which in turn is derived from the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly. For

²⁷Keach, Delight, frontispiece.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 27 and 28. Paralleled in Instructions, pp. 79-80.

²⁹For the authorship of The Protestant Tutor, see W.E. Spears, "The Baptist Movement in England in the late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704", pp. 266-271.

example, justification is explained this way in The Child's Delight:

Qu. What is Justification?

Ans. Justification is an act of God's rich Grace, through the Redemption which is in Christ, wherein he freely pardoneth and acquitteth us of all our Sins, and accepteth us as Righteous, only for the sake of Christ and his Righteousness, which is imputed to us, Eph. 1. Rom. 5.1. Gal. 2.16.³⁰

Compare with the catechism:

Justification is an act of God's free Grace, wherein he pardoneth all our Sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his Sight, only for the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by Faith alone.³¹

The Child's Delight soft-pedals the Baptist doctrine of baptism:

Qu. What is Baptism?

Ans. Baptism is an Ordinance of the New Testament instituted by Jesus Christ, to be unto the Party baptized, a Sign of his Fellowship with him, in his Death, Burial, and Resurrection; of his being ingrafted into him; of Remission of Sins; and of his giving up himself unto God thro' Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of Life.³²

But Instructions for Children is emphatic:

Fa. Who are the proper Subjects of Babtism [sic]?

Son. Only such who believe, and are actually capable to enter into a Visible Covenant [sic] with Jesus Christ, for it is an Ordinance of the Solemnization of the Souls

³⁰Keach, Delight, p. 32. Instructions explains justification in identical terms (p. 91).

³¹[Benjamin Keach], The Baptist Catechism: or, A Brief Instruction in the Principles of the Christian Religion, (17th edition) [1765?], p. 9. Cf. the Larger Catechism: "Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for any things wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone". (The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1973), p. 66.)

³²Keach, Delight, p. 38. Identical to Baptist Catechism, p. 21, question 20.

Marriage with Christ...³³

Fa. May it not be done by spinkling [sic] also?

Son. No, by no means, because the Word Baptizo, or Baptism, doth not at all signifie Sprinkling; the Greeks have another peculiar Word to express Sprinkling, viz....Rantizo.³⁴

Instructions also instructs children on one point on which Keach differed from many of his colleagues:

Fa. What Ordinance follows Baptism?

Son. Laying on of Hands...³⁵

Why did Keach emphasize believers' baptism more in this later edition of the primer? It would be more logical if he had moved from a dogmatic emphasis on the subject toward an ambiguous statement which Baptists and pedobaptists alike could have agreed with. Perhaps the somewhat ambiguous statement in The Child's Delight attracted criticism from Keach's Baptist colleagues. It may be significant that Instructions for Children is introduced by a recommendation from fellow Baptist leader Hanserd Knollys while The Child's Delight has no such recommendatory preface.

The major difference between The Child's Delight and Instructions for Children is the way in which the catechism is presented. The catechism is divided into four parts. First, the "Little Child" is addressed:

Father. Child, how old art thou?

³³Keach, Instructions, p. 101.

³⁴Ibid., p. 99.

³⁵Ibid., p. 107.

Child. I am told, Father, that I am between three and four Years old.³⁶

In general, the smallest child is not expected to understand fine doctrinal points. For the most part what is expected is knowledge of the main characters of the Bible: Adam, Cain, Methuselah, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samson, David, Peter, etc. Nevertheless, even the youngest child is expected to pray for justifying grace:

Fa. What must you do to obtain Gods special Grace?

Ch. I must pray to him for Christ's sake to give me his Grace that I may believe.³⁷

Secondly, the "Youth" is catechized:

Father. Child, how Old art thou?

Child. I am, most honour'd Father, about Ten Years Old.³⁸

In some ways this older child is less well-versed than his younger sibling:

Fa. Who is God?

Ch. I do not know very well. Is he not an old Man?

Fa. Thy little Brother answered better....³⁹

This older boy enters into more of a two-way dialogue with his father than his younger brother did, and asks several stagey, pertinent questions: For example, "What shall I do if I am by Nature a Child of Wrath..." and "Father, what is it to be born again?"⁴⁰ This older child is less interested in the state of his soul than his younger

³⁶Keach, Instructions, p. 11.

³⁷Ibid., p. 16.

³⁸Ibid., p. 19.

³⁹Ibid., p. 20.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 19 and 20.

brother was:

...Father, do not some People find Mercy with God when they are old, who never minded to seek after God whilst they were young?

...I find such Thoughts arise in my Heart, that tend to keep me from closing in with your Advice at presentI am too young, and...I may live many Years in the World, and...hereafter it will be time enough; and 'twill be more proper for me to mind such things when I am older and of riper Age.⁴¹

Thirdly, the Father warns his daughters against vanity:

'Tis a shame that Parents professing Godliness, should be allured by the Devil to please their Childrens natural and pernicious Appetites...by sending their little Daughters to School to learn to Dance (as Herodias did) where they are taught the hellish Mode of naked Brest [sic] and Soulders, [sic] Antick and Fantastick Garbs, Spotting, Patchings, and Paintings, Towers, Bulls, Shades, Curlings and Crispings, and other Curiosities of the Devil's devising...⁴²

The Father's advice to his daughters contains no doctrinal instruction.

Fourthly, the Father addresses his oldest son:

Father. Come, Son, thou art grown up to a mature Age...⁴³

The oldest child is extremely well-versed in doctrinal matters, and this section of Instructions for Children is virtually identical to the Baptist Catechism. At the conclusion, the young man gives a confession of his faith which is a paraphrase of the Nicene Creed.⁴⁴

It seems likely that there were two sources for Keach's

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 29 and 35-36.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 51-52.

⁴³Ibid., p. 64.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 119-120.

innovative division of the catechism into sections appropriate for different ages: First, he must have had a good deal of experience catechizing his own children and perhaps the children in his congregation, as well. Secondly, the catechism in Instructions for Children breaks away from the stilted question-and-answer format of standard catechisms of the seventeenth century. The dialogue is occasionally lively and humorous. By the time that Keach published Instructions for Children he had already begun to experiment with dramatizing conversations about spiritual matters in his allegories.⁴⁵ The skill that he gained in these allegories is evident in his four-part catechism.

vi. Conclusion.

From the beginning to the end of his life Keach was concerned about education, primarily religious, but secular, as well. The two surviving forms of his primer, The Child's Delight and Instructions for Children are substantially the same, differing only in the way they present catechetical material. That the primers were popular and possibly profitable is witnessed to by the number of editions published within Keach's own lifetime. The use of pictures to teach Bible characters may indicate that Keach was aware of Comenius' educational reforms. Expanding the catechism and formulating it in different levels of difficulty for different age groups was innovative

⁴⁵The title page of Instructions identifies Keach as "Author of War with the Devil".

and gives evidence of Keach's experience with children, as well as of his ability to write dialogue.

II. The Baptist Catechism and the Articles of Faith.

i. Introduction.

Having declared their mind on doctrinal matters in the Second London Confession, the Particular Baptists needed a vehicle for inculcating those doctrines in the faithful. As he and his colleagues had turned to the Westminster Confession as a model for the Second London Confession, so Keach turned to another document of the Assembly as a model for his catechism: the Shorter Westminster Catechism.

The catechisms issued by the Westminster Assembly served not only as the basis for Keach's catechism; they also became the basis for the Articles of Faith issued by Keach and his church in 1697.¹ Unlike the catechism, however, which is almost a verbatim transcript of the Shorter Catechism, the Articles uses material from both the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as well as some material from the Second London Confession and original material.

Keach's catechism was still in use in 1813 when the Baptist association of Charleston, South Carolina, re-issued it as an

¹Elias Keach published an identical set of articles as The Articles of the Faith of the Church of Christ, or Congregation meeting at Tallow-Chandlers-Hall, Elias Keach, Pastor, as asserted this 2d of the 7th Month, 1697 (1697). This set of articles was adopted as the first Calvinistic Baptist confession in America; the Baptist church at Middletown, New Jersey, subscribed to Keach's confession in 1712. Twelve years later the Philadelphia association endorsed the Second London Confession (with the addition of Keach's articles on the laying on of hands and singing) as their standard of faith. Lumpkin incorrectly identifies Keach's Articles as a precis of the Second London Confession, plus his distinctive hands and singing articles. (See Lumpkin, pp. 348-349.)

appendix to the Philadelphia Confession (including Keach's articles on the laying on of hands and corporate singing).²

The two documents must be dealt with together. Combined, the catechism and the Articles furnish the most systematic statement of Keach's faith.

The following section considers the catechisms published by other Baptists and then turns to the purpose, organization, and doctrinal content of both the catechism and the Articles.

ii. Other Baptist catechisms.

Keach was not the first Particular Baptist to produce a catechism. In 1652 Henry Jessey³ produced A Catechisme for Babes, or, Little Ones.⁴ Jessey's work, however, unlike Keach's, was not intended to teach the Baptist understanding of the Christian faith. The Catechisme for Babes is simply what it says it is: a rudimentary introduction to the Christian faith for children.

Although not properly speaking a Particular Baptist, John Bunyan was at least a fellow traveller. He produced Instruction for the

²A Confession of faith, put forth by the Elders and Brethren of many Congregations of Christians, (baptized upon their profession of faith,) in London and the Country. Adopted by the Baptist Association of Philadelphia, September 25, 1742. And by Charleston, in 1767 (2nd ed.) (Charleston, South Carolina, 1813).

³For Henry Jessey, see Crosby, vol. I, pp. 307-323 and DNB vol. 10, pp. 807-809.

⁴For the text of Jessey's work, see Thomas J. Nettles, Baptist Catechisms: "To Make Thee Wise unto Salvation" (Thomas J. Nettles, 1983), pp. 14-25.

Ignorant in 1675.⁵ Bunyan seems to have intended Instruction for the Ignorant for older inquirers. It is a thorough introduction to basic Christianity and not a document that becomes sidetracked by polemics or soteriological subtleties. Nettles writes: "Earnest pleas for sinners to apply to Christ for salvation permeate the catechism".⁶ Characteristically, Bunyan, who personally believed in adult baptism, but did not regard it as a term of communion, omitted all discussion of baptism.

Strictly speaking, the first Baptist catechism (as opposed to a catechism by a Baptist) was The Orthodox Catechism (1680) by Hercules Collins. Unlike Jessey and Bunyan before him, *Collins' work* was not entirely original; it was the Heidelberg Catechism, with the addition of a section on the Baptist understanding of baptism. Collins' catechism includes an appendix dealing with the issue of singing in public worship that may have influenced Keach's thinking on the subject.⁷

The "teacher" of the Horsleydown congregation (also Keach's son-in-law and successor as pastor) Benjamin Stinton issued A Short Catechism, wherein the Principles of the Christian Religion are taught in the words of the Sacred Scriptures Themselves. Oddly, Stinton's

⁵Nettles, Baptist Catechisms, pp. 30-68.

⁶Ibid., p. 29.

⁷See section II, chapter 4, p. . Collins' The Marrow of Gospel History (1696), a metrical account of the life of Christ, was almost certainly influenced by Keach's The Glorious Lover.

catechism allows that infant baptism is not unbiblical.⁸

iii. Authorship of The Baptist Catechism.

Thomas Crosby does not attribute any catechism to Keach's pen, and it is not clear when the so-called "Baptist catechism" began to be attributed to Keach.⁹ Nettles remarks that "William Collins had at least as much to do with the catechism as Keach did".¹⁰ However, Nettles' comment appears to be based on the assumption that the catechism is a precis of the Second London Confession, but it is not. Two facts suggest that the "Baptist Catechism" was largely, if not entirely the work of Keach. The close agreement between the catechism and the Second London Confession makes this seem likely. First, Keach adapted the Shorter Catechism for use in The Child's Delight and Instructions for Children.¹¹ Much of the material of the two catechisms is found in his primers. Secondly, the order of the

⁸B. Stinton, A Short Catechism, wherein the Principles of the Christian Religion are taught in the Words of the Sacred Scriptures Themselves (2nd ed.) (1730), p. 14: "Quest. 41. Doth Baptism, and the Blessing thereof belong to those that descend from Christian Parents, being pious, as well as Converts to Christianity from other Religions? Answ. Yes; for the Promise is unto you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call".

⁹W.T. Whitley erroneously attributes the Covenant and Catechism of the church of Christ meeting at Horsley Down in Southwark to Keach, but this was actually by Independent divine Joseph Jacob.

¹⁰Thomas J. Nettles, Baptist Catechisms, p. 76.

¹¹The third edition of The Child's Delight was probably published in 1703 and the ninth edition of Instructions for Children was published in 1710.

subjects in the catechism is the order Keach used in the Articles of Faith. Unlike the Westminster Confession and the Second London Confession, Keach's articles begin with the doctrine of God and move to the doctrine of scripture. Keach followed the same order in the catechisms he included in Instructions for Children, as well. William Collins was undoubtedly responsible for the Second London Confession, so if he had also been responsible for the Baptist Catechism, it seems unlikely that he would have changed the order he found acceptable in the confession.

iv. Organization and doctrinal content of Keach's catechism.

Although Keach's catechism is based on the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, it differs from it in two important respects. First, Keach changed the order of the questions at the beginning of his catechism.¹²

Keach. Baptist Catechism.

Shorter Catechism.

Q. 1. Who is the first and chiefest Being?

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

Q. 2. Ought every one to believe there is a God?

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

¹²Keach, The Baptist Catechism: or, A Brief Instruction in the Principles of the Christian Religion (17th ed.) [1765?], p. 3; Shorter Catechism, p. 115. (All references are to the Confession of Faith and Subordinate Standards and other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd., 1973).

Q. 3. How may we know there is a God?

Q. 3. What do the scriptures principally teach.

Q. 4. What is God?

Keach's first three questions have to do with God.¹³ In contrast, the Assembly's catechism turns immediately to the scriptures.

Keach followed the Second London Confession in not referring to baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments:¹⁴

Keach's catechism

Shorter Catechism.

Q. 96. How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become effectual means of Salvation?

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

Another characteristic distinguishing Keach's catechism from the Shorter Catechism is the inclusion of the distinctive Baptist understanding of baptism:¹⁵

Keach's catechism:

Shorter Catechism:

Q. 97. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is an Ordinance of the New Testament instituted by Jesus Christ, to be unto the Party baptized, a Sign of his Fellowship with him; of Remission of Sins, and of his giving up himself unto God thro' Jesus Christ, to live and walk in Newness of Life.

Q. 94. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

¹³Similarly, Keach's Articles begin with God and move to the scriptures.

¹⁴Second London Confession, Chap. XXVIII, art. 1: "Baptism and the Lords Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign [sic] institution..." (Lumpkin, p. 290.)

¹⁵Keach, Catechism, pp. 21-22; Shorter Catechism, p. 128.

Q. 98. To whom is Baptism to be administred?

A. Baptism is to be administred to all those, who actually profess Repentance towards God, Faith in, and Obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other.

Q. 99. Are the Infants of such as are professing Believers to be baptized?

A. The Infants of such as are professing Believers are not to be baptized, because there is neither Command or Example in the Holy Scriptures or certain Consequences from them to baptize such.

Q. 100. How is Baptism rightly administred?

A. Baptism is rightly administred, by Immersion, or dipping the whole Body of the Party in Water, into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's Institution, and the Practice of the Apostles, and not by sprinkling or pouring of Water, or dipping some Part of the Body, after the Tradition of Men.

Q. 101. What is the Duty of such who are rightly baptized?

A. It is the Duty of such who are rightly baptized to give up themselves to some particular and orderly Church of Jesus Christ, that they may walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Q. 95. To whom is baptism to be administered?

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

There were two important omissions from the catechism. The Articles contain two articles embodying distinctive and somewhat controversial beliefs: the laying on of hands and corporate singing.¹⁶ Keach omitted these doctrines from the catechism, probably because of their potential for divisiveness.

¹⁶Keach, The Articles of Faith of the Church of Christ meeting at Horsley-Down (1697), Article XXIII (p. 23) and article XXVII (p. 27).

v. Purpose of the catechism.

The catechism appears to have been part of the Particular Baptist attempt to rehabilitate their image in the popular mind. The choice of the Westminster Confession as the basis for the Second London Confession and the Shorter Catechism as the basis for Keach's catechism suggest a desire on the part of the Calvinistic Baptists to display their doctrinal solidarity with other English Protestants.

The apologetic purpose of Keach's catechism distinguishes it from the catechisms produced by Jessey, Bunyan, and Collins. Jessey directed his catechism to children, and Bunyan directed his to new converts. Collins, in choosing the Heidelberg Catechism as a model, came closest to Keach's intention. However, the relative unfamiliarity of the Heidelberg Catechism made it a poorer choice than the familiar Shorter Catechism. Choosing familiar words which were routinely taught to children was an ideal way to demonstrate that the Particular Baptists were in conformity with other English Protestants.

vi. Purpose of the Articles of Faith.

The intention behind the Articles seems to have been quite different from that behind the catechism. First, the catechism was intended for use by the wider Particular Baptist community, and secondly, it was also directed outward on an apologetic mission toward other English Protestants. The Articles had a particular, parochial, and inward-directed purpose; it was a statement of faith by Keach's

own church, and thus, shows the unique impact of his intellect.

My Brethren, I here present you with that which you have so long waited for, and desired me to endeavour to do, viz. to state an account of the most concerning Articles of your Faith, which you have heard read, and have approved of...¹⁷

Keach indicated that it was a statement of "your" (i.e., his congregation's faith), not merely his own.

That it was a statement of faith made by Keach's church and not by Keach alone is evident from the signatures affixed to it. In addition to the signatures of the pastor, teacher (Benjamin Stinton), and deacons, forty-one men signed the statement.

Why did Keach choose the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as the basis for his confession rather than abridging the Second London Confession? One of the reasons he gives for issuing this confession is that the "Large Confession of the Faith of our Churches, is now out of Print; but that is not all, for that being 12 d. price, some cannot well purchase it".¹⁸ But that is not all, Keach went on to say that the Articles were issued

that they may discern the difference between you and some that bear the same Name with you....Tho you agree in the general with all other Churches of the same Faith, in all those Articles there inserted, yet therein your whole Faith is not comprehended, viz. that of Imposition of Hands upon baptized Believers as such, and singing of God's Praise, &c.¹⁹

vii. Organization and doctrinal content of the Articles.

¹⁷Keach, Articles, a verso and a2.

¹⁸Ibid., a2.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. a2 and a2 verso.

There are three main points of doctrinal significance in the Articles: First, Keach changed the order of articles at the beginning in order to indicate the subordination of scripture. Secondly, he included articles on two of his doctrinal distinctives: laying on of hands and corporate singing. Thirdly, Keach emphasised unconditional justification even more strongly than the Second London Confession.

The order of topics in both the Second London Confession and Keach's Articles is much the same. However, there is one striking departure, that is, Keach's reversal at the very beginning of the articles dealing with the scripture and those dealing with God. The most important doctrinal shift emphasis occurs at the very beginning of the Articles; here Keach is even more emphatic about placing God before the scriptures than in the catechism. The first five articles are "Of God, and of the Holy Trinity" (I and II), "Of the Decrees of God", "Of Creation", and "Of God's Providence".²⁰ In subordinating scripture to God Keach was departing not only from the Westminster Confession and catechisms, but also from the Second London Confession which followed the order of the Assembly's confession.²¹ Keach had no hesitation about the full, complete, and literal truth of the Bible and identified the Bible as the primary source of redemptive

²⁰Keach, Articles, pp. 3-4.

²¹W.R. Estep traces the "innerrancy controversy" to the priority given the Bible in the Westminster, Savoy, and Second London Confessions. ("Baptists and Authority: The Bible, Confessions, and Conscience in the Development of Baptist Identity", Review and Expositor 84, no. 4 (Fall, 1987), p. 613.)

knowledge, yet he wisely moved away from bibliolatry and put the holy scriptures in their proper place: in subordination to God.

Another important change of order is perhaps due to second thoughts. The last ten articles come out of sequence. After dealing with the sacraments, ordinances, and polity, Keach returned to some ideas dealt with briefly earlier on. The last four topics are: "Of the First Covenant", "Of the New and Second Covenant", "Of Election", "Of final Perseverance", "Of the Resurrection", "Of Eternal Judgment", "Of Marriages", "Of Civil Magistrates", "Of lawful Oaths", "Of Personal Propriety [sic]". These articles contain more material from the Second London Confession than the other articles, and suggest that Keach may have felt somewhat vulnerable in not having relied enough on the standard Particular Baptist confession of faith.

As indicated above, one of Keach's aims in publishing the Articles was to highlight the difference between his congregation and other Particular Baptists. Thus, he included two controversial items: Articles XXIII and XXVII: "Of Laying on of Hands" and "Of singing of Psalms". However, one of Keach's characteristics was tolerance for those who differed from him on points he did not consider to be of the essence of the faith. He displayed this by conceding to the anti-singers in his church that they could leave the church after the sermon and before the hymn. Similarly, with regard to laying on of hands, Keach urged church members on both sides of the issue not to let it become a reason for division.²² In the Articles Keach also

²²Keach, Laying on of Hands, p. 111.

urged "Tenderness, Charity and Moderation to such as differ from you in those Cases, [i.e., laying on of hands and singing] and not refuse Communion with them..."²³

One of the main purposes of the Articles is to underscore Keach's commitment to unconditional justification. In this they go somewhat farther than the Second London Confession. Compare Keach's article on justification²⁴ to that of the Second London Confession. Keach is much more emphatic about the fact that justification is gratuitous and that faith does not in any sense "merit" justification:²⁵

²³Keach, Articles, "Epistle Dedicatory".

²⁴The ideas in this article are parallel to a passage from Keach's A Medium betwixt Two Extremes (1698), p. 36: "Justification [is] by the imputation of Christ's active and passive Obedience, through the free Grace of God, apprehended and received by Faith alone, without any thing wrought in us, or done by us; not by imputing Faith or any other act of Evangelical Obedience, but the imputing of Christ's Obedience and Satisfaction exclusively of all things else whatsoever. And that Faith is only said to justify us objectively, or in respect had to the Object Jesus Christ, which it taketh hold of".

²⁵Keach, Article XIII (Articles, p. 12); Second London Confession, Chap. XI, para. I (Lumpkin, p. 265).

Keach's Articles.

[Justification] is receiv'd by Faith alone. And that our Sanctification, Righteousness, is the alone nor Faith it self, is any part of our Justification before God; it not being either the Habit, or Act of Believing, or any Act of Evangelical Obedience imputed to us, but Christ, and his active and passive Obedience only, apprehended by Faith: and that Faith in no sense tends to make Christ's Merits more satisfactory unto God; but that he was as fully reconciled and satisfied for his Elect in Christ by his Death before Faith as after; otherwise it would render God only reconcileable, (not reconciled) and make Faith part of the Payment or Satisfaction unto God, and so lessen the Merits of Christ...

Second London Confession.

[God justifies the elect by] accepting their Persons as Righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone, not by imputing faith it self, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their Righteousness; but by imputing Christs active obedience...and passive obedience...for their whole and sole Righteousness...

Also note the differences between the Second London Confession and Keach's Articles on "the New and Second Covenant". Keach characteristically emphasised that Christ bore all the sin and guilt of the elect:²⁶

²⁶Keach, Article XXXI, "Of the New and Second Covenant" (Articles, p. 31); Second London Confession, Chapter VII, "Of Gods Covenant" (Lumpkin, p. 259).

Keach's Articles:

We believe the Covenant of Grace was primarily made with the second Adam, and in him with all the Elect...who freely obliged or ingaged himself to the Father for them, perfectly to keep the whole Law in their Nature that had sinned, and to satisfy Divine Justice by bearing their Sins upon his own Body, i.e. the Guilt of all their Sins, which were laid upon him: and that he sustain'd that Wrath and Curse in his Body and Soul, that was due to them for all their Transgressions....

Second London Confession:

...it pleased the Lord to make a Covenant of Grace wherein he freely offereth unto Sinners Life and Salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them Faith in him...

The Second London Confession does not allude at all to the suffering Christ bore on behalf of the elect.²⁷

Apparently, Keach felt somewhat uneasy about his stress on unconditional justification. There is a "Postscript" to the Articles which insists that although the elect are pardoned of all their sins, past, present, and to come, when they are justified, yet nevertheless they should continue to pray for God's forgiveness:

Object. What do Believers then pray for, when they pray for the Pardon of Sin?

Answ. ...that God would continue, and never revoke his most gracious Pardon, till he pronounceth the final Sentence of it at the day of Judgment, [and]...for a renewed

²⁷Dewey D. Wallace asserts that one of the characteristics of hyper-Calvinism was the stress it put upon the sufferings Christ underwent on behalf of the elect. Remarking on John Eaton's theology, he writes: "For Eaton...Christ suffered not only the punishment due the elect for their sins, but was himself made a sinner and suffered the curse and wrath of God against sinners. The heightening of what Christ suffered on behalf of the elect was a feature of the high Calvinism that was developing in this period and will be seen later to have been prominent in the theology of John Owen and others". (Puritans and Predestination, p. 116.)

sense and assurance of its grant...²⁸

viii. Conclusion.

The catechism and the Articles were superficially similar documents produced for quite different reasons. The catechism was part of the Particular Baptist attempt to win acceptance; the Articles was the statement of Keach's "party" and as such served to set Keach and his church members slightly apart from other Calvinistic Baptists. Two features were common to both documents: First, Keach reversed the Westminster Assembly's pattern of putting knowledge of scripture before knowledge of God. Secondly, he defended the Baptist view of Baptism. Unique to the Articles was Keach's belief in the laying on of hands and corporate singing. An emphasis on unconditional justification also distinguishes the Articles from the Second London Confession.

²⁸Keach, Articles, "Postscript", pp. 39-40.

III. Keach's imaginative writings.

i. Introduction.

The Nonconformist imagination flowered in the late seventeenth century; not only did Bunyan publish The Pilgrim's Progress, parts 1 and 2, The Life and Death of Mr. Badman, and The Holy War, but General Baptist Thomas Sherman "improved" on part 1 of The Pilgrim's Progress, and published his own imaginative accounts of salvation and damnation, Youth's Comedy (1680) and Youth's Tragedy (1671). Keach's colleague, London pastor Hercules Collins, published The Marrow of Gospel History, a metrical account of the life of Christ, in 1696.

Benjamin Keach was one of the most popular writers in this school of Nonconformist literature. F.J.H. Darton refers to Keach as a "professional" children's writer.¹ John Dunton, publisher of The Travels of True Godliness, offered the opinion that "War with the Devil, and Travels of True Godliness (of which I printed Ten Thousand) will sell to the end of Time".² In spite of Dunton's praise, Keach has come in for a large amount of criticism, especially in comparison with his competitor, John Bunyan. U. Milo Kaufman writes:

...Bunyan wholly transcends the host of pamphleteering tinkers and typologizing Benjamin Keaches who were his contemporaries. Who would deny that they have only survived in the half-light on the periphery of the circle of his

¹F.J.H. Darton, Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 59.

²John Dunton, The Life and Errors of John Dunton (1705), p. 237.

enduring popularity?³

And Roger Sharrock offers this opinion:

One has only to examine the allegorical tracts of his rival, Benjamin Keach, to realize the unbridgeable gap between original genius and pedestrian application, even when the same literary form and same subject is treated by either writer, and when Bunyan is just as limited by didactic intention as his fellow-Baptist.⁴

Certainly, Keach was inferior to Bunyan in his ability to create dramatic situations, draw characters, and write dialogue. However, the two Baptists were both engaged in conveying heavenly truths through earthly symbols, and Keach carried out this programme far more thoroughly than did Bunyan.

Keach published four books which portray the Christian life imaginatively: War with the Devil (1674), The Glorious Lover (1679), The Travels of True Godliness (1683), and The Progress of Sin (1684). Keach produced other poetry, especially Zion in Distress (1666) and Distressed Sion Relieved (1689), as well as the anti-Quaker pamphlet The Grand Impostor Discovered (1675). However War with the Devil, The Glorious Lover, Travels of True Godliness, and The Progress of Sin belong together as books in which the Christian experience is portrayed in dramatic terms.

The following essay looks at these four books and assesses the sources on which Keach drew, their style, the cultural and religious

³U. Milo Kaufmann, The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 22.

⁴Roger Sharrock, John Bunyan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), p. 157.

milieu in which they appeared, and their function.

ii. The sources of Keach's imaginative works.

Like his hymns, Keach's imaginative writings bear witness to his indebtedness to several other authors. Keach was influenced particularly by Richard Bernard, Thomas Sherman, John Milton, and, of course, John Bunyan.⁵ His writings also show the influence of his own experiences and his pastoral concerns. Furthermore, it is clear that techniques developed in his first lengthy poem, Zion in Distress,⁶ are used later, particularly in War with the Devil and The Glorious Lover.

The most obvious influence on Keach's imaginative writings is his own Zion in Distress. In Zion Keach experimented for the first time with personifying and allegorizing qualities, a technique he uses

⁵Bunyan's influence upon Keach may have been personal, as well as literary. Toward the end of his life Bunyan preached frequently in several Southwark churches. (See Roger Sharrock's John Bunyan, p. 47.) Furthermore, Keach, as well as Bunyan, offered counsel and guidance to the unfortunate John Child, a member of Bunyan's church who conformed, engaged in a controversy with the Baptists, and finally hanged himself. (Keach's conversations with Child are recounted in The English Spira (1693), pp. 11-13.) Furthermore, Keach refers to Bunyan, along with Luther and John Owen, as one of the "stars" of the Christian firmament: "...I think Bunyan [sic] should not be thought a very small Star, he having not those humane Improvements, in respect of Learning, &c. as others have, yet shone very bright, and outdid many others". (Gospel Mysteries (1701), Bk I, p. 55.) However, a personal meeting between the two men, although an extremely strong possibility, is not beyond doubt; neither of them mentions it.

⁶The first edition of this work (published in the "Fatal Year", presumably 1666) is Zion in Distress; Keach almost completely rewrote the book and republished it in 1682 as Sion in Distress.

in all of his imaginative writings. Zion in Distress is an anti-Roman Catholic polemic in which Keach speaks through several characters, Zion, Zion's Friend, the Church, and Jesus. This is precisely the method he uses in War with the Devil.

War with the Devil: or, the Young-Man's Conflict with the Powers of Darkness⁷ portrays the conversion of a young man. The frontispiece of the 1676 edition shows "The youth in his converted state" in the plain attire of a Puritan and "The youth in his naturall state" in the regalia of a young dandy. The characters are "Youth" or the "Young Man", the devil, Conscience, Truth, and a narrator, Vicinus. In later editions Keach added an appendix, "A Dialogue between an old Apostate and a young Professor".⁸

⁷War with the Devil, although far from being Keach's most successful imaginative work, was the only one to inspire another author to write a companionwork, Mentis Humanae Metamorphosis: sive Conversio. The History of the Young Converted Gallant. Or Directions to the Readers of the Divine Poem, written by Benjamin Keach intituled Warre with the Devil (1676), by J. Mason ("Gent. of Fordham in Cambridgeshire"). Mason's book has little to do with Keach's and is mainly an exposition of the virtues characteristic of the converted.

⁸It is tempting to believe that War with the Devil, published four years before Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, influenced the latter book. However, apart from the obvious fact that neither plot nor characters of Keach's War can be shown to have influenced Bunyan, there is also the evidence that Bunyan began his first allegory in 1666 during his first imprisonment and completed it by 1672: "...the seventeenth-century biographers of Bunyan were aware of the six months' imprisonment, and yet state that the book was written during the one that ended in 1672" (See The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come, ed. by James Blanton Wharey and Roger Sharrock (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960), p. xxii) and Sharrock concurs: "The balance of evidence, then, would suggest that Bunyan began to write his Pilgrim after 1666 and before his release in 1672..." (John Bunyan, p. 73.)

Other than Keach's own writings, the most obvious influence on War with the Devil is Thomas Sherman's Youth's Tragedy (1671). Both open with young men comparing youth with the springtime:

Youth: How pleasant is it, when the Sun displayes,
From ARIES's Golden Fleece his Golden Rayes,
How do the Creatures triumph for to see,
Imprison'd NATURE set at libertie.
How doth the EARTH rejoyce, that she is seen
Cloath'd in a rich imbroider'd VEST of Green.⁹

Keach's comparison between youth and springtime shows that he was familiar with Youth's Tragedy:

Youth: The Naturalists most aptly do compare,
My age unto the Spring, whose beauty's rare,
When sprightly Sol enters the Golden Sign,
Which is call'd Aries, his glorious shine,
And splendent Rays do cause the Earth to spring,
And Trees to bud, and quicken every thing.¹⁰

Furthermore, the central conflict in both books is the same; a young man struggles against converting grace. In Youth's Tragedy the youth (as the name implies) remains unconverted. In War he is converted. Perhaps Thomas Sherman learned from Keach that happy endings are more popular, for in his sequel, Youth's Comedy (1680), the youth becomes a believer. It is also possibly that Arthur Dent's The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heaven (1601) influenced War; Dent also tells the tale of a young man converted to Christianity, although there are two important differences: his characters are all mortal (Keach's characters include the devil and Conscience) and he writes in prose,

⁹T.S. [Thomas Sherman], Youth's Tragedy, A Poem: Drawn up by way of Dialogue between Youth. The Devil. Wisdome. The Nunciuss. Time. Death. The Soul. For the Caution, and Direction, of the Younger Sort (1671), p. 1.

¹⁰Keach, War with the Devil (1676), p. 1.

not poetry, but Keach and Dent use the same form: the dialogue.

After Youth compares youthfulness to the spring-time, he proclaims that his attitude is completely carefree:

No Sorrow shall whilst I do live come near me,
Nor shall the Preacher with his Fancies scare me,
At Cards and Dice, and such brave Games I'll play,
And like a Courtier deck myself most gay.¹¹

Conscience reproves him and explains the source of its authority:

I am a Servant to a mighty King,
Who rules and reigns, and governs ev'ry Thing.¹²

At first, the Youth scorns Conscience:

Speak not another Word; Don't you perceive,
There's scarce a Man or Woman will believe
What you do say, you're grown so out of date?
Be silent then, and do not longer prate.¹³

But Truth appears, announces that he is Conscience's guide, and delivers an evangelistic appeal to the Youth:

I with poor Conscience must witness bear;
I am his Guide, his Rule, 'tis by my Light
He acts and does, and saith the Thing that's right.

Let me persuade you for to taste and try
How good Christ is, and then assuredly
You will admire him, yea, and praise the Lord,
That ever he did to thy Soul afford
Such a dear Saviour, and such good Advice,
To lead thy Soul into sweet Paradice [sic]:

Come then and taste of Christ's coelestial Springs,
To which all outward Joys are trifling Things.
If Heaven's Sweetness thou but once hadst caught,

¹¹Benjamin Keach, War with the Devil: or, the Young-Man's Conflict with the Powers of Darkness (1728), p. 6.

¹²Ibid., p. 8.

¹³Ibid., p. 15.

Thou'lt freely own Earth's best Enjoyments naught.¹⁴

As a result of Truth's appeal, the Youth is "awakened":

Thy Ways, O Truth! I am resolved to run,
And never more to Sin and Folly turn.¹⁵

However, Vicinus tells us that the Youth's conversion is superficial:

He from this Day became a great Professor,
Though far from being yet a true Possessor:
Christ he has got into his Mouth, and Head,
And not internally rais'd from the Dead...¹⁶

Oddly, in spite of the title, the devil plays very little part in the narrative. The chief actors are the Youth and Conscience. After Conscience convinces the Youth that he is not truly converted, the Youth prays for the second birth and is granted regeneration. He responds with a hymn of praise:

My Soul mounts up with Eagle's Wings,
And unto thee, dear Lord, she sings,
Since thou art on my Side,
My Enemies are forced to fly
As soon as they do thee espy,
Thy Name be glorify'd.¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 19, 22, and 26.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 92. There are four "hymns" in War with the Devil: "My Soul mounts up", "Repentance is wrought in my Soul", "The Sun doth now begin to shine", and "Let not the Sun eclipsed be". "Repentance is wrought in my Soul" appears in Spiritual Melody as "Repentance, when wrought in the Soul" (p. 259) and Keach also reworked the Youth's announcement of reconciliation with his conscience, and it appeared in Spiritual Melody as "If Conscience is become my Friend" (p. 276). It may be that Keach's General Baptist heritage shows itself in the hymn "Repentance is wrought in my Soul", entitled "On the Six Principles of Christ's Doctrine".

One result of regeneration is that the Youth's conflict with his Conscience is now resolved:

My Conscience is become my Friend,
And chearfully doth speak to me;
And I will to his Motions bend,
Though that I should reproached be.¹⁸

The Glorious Lover was Keach's most ambitious literary composition. It is an epic poem and shows that Keach was familiar with epic form, probably through reading Milton's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained.

In classic epic form Keach began with a plea for divine assistance in the telling of his tale:

My muse is rais'd beyond a vulgar flight:
For cherubs boast to sing of what I write.
I write--But 'tis, alas, with trembling hand:
For who those boundless depths can understand?
...
Thou glorious Being, from whose bounty flows
All good that man, or does, or speaks, or knows;
...
Purge with thy beams my over-clouded mind;
Direct my pen, my intellect refine,
That I thy matchless triumphs may indite,
And live in due sense of what I write.¹⁹

Milton began:

Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, who first taught the chosen Seed,

¹⁸Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁹Benjamin Keach, The Glorious Lover, London (1679), Part I, pp. i-ii, ll. 16-29. Keach begins part II with a similar invocation:

...teach me, O Lord, the skill
T'extract the spirit of grief, O let my quill,
Like Moses' rod, make adamants to fly,
That tears may gush like rivers from each eye.

(Part II, p. 152, ll. 49-52.)

In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos....

...I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th'Aonian Mount, while it persues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rime.²⁰

Keach borrowed not only the form but also the claim that he intends to soar above other writers, although he did not quite suggest, as does Milton, that he would vault over the Muses' home ("th' Aonian mount") itself. One distinct and crucial change in the form is obvious in Keach's epic: Rather than invoking the Muses, Keach invoked God himself. Doubtless, his Nonconformist sensitivities would not let him invoke pagan deities.²¹

The similarities between Paradise Lost and The Glorious Lover do not come to an end after the invocation of God's help. Nevertheless, the substance of Keach's epic is more reminiscent of Paradise Regained; it is a narrative of Christ's life in which the temptations in the wilderness play a central role.

²⁰John Milton, The Works of John Milton, Vol. 2, Part I, ed. Frank Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 8, ll. 6-10 & 12-16.

²¹Francis Quarles also produced a poetic account of the Fall and also invoked the aid of the Christian deity rather than the Muses:

Rouse thee, my soul, and drain thee from the dregs
Of vulgar thoughts.
...let Heaven be thine Apollo;
And let his sacred influences hallow
Thy high bred strains....

(Richard Crashaw and Francis Quarles. The Poetical Works of Richard Crashaw and Quarles' Emblems, George Gilfillan, ed. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1857), p. 201.)

The Glorious Lover is really two poems. One is an epic rendering of the life of Christ; the other is a portrayal of an individual soul's struggle with conversion and is very similar to War with the Devil.

Unlike Milton, Keach was not concerned primarily with the Fall. He dwelt on the Incarnation:

...this great king had a most lovely son,
And had indeed no more save only one,
Who was begotten by him, and brought forth
E're heav'ns blue curtains did surround the earth;
Before the world's foundations yet were laid,
Time's glass turn'd up, or the sun's course display'd,
This prince was brought up with him, and did lie,
In his dear bosom from eternity.²²

To th' stable then goes he contentedly,
Without the least reflection or reply.
The silly ass, and labouring ox must be
Companions to sacred royalty;
Expos'd by greater brutes, he must, alas!
Take up with the dull ox, and painful ass,
Who their great maker and preserver was...²³

The focus then changes to Christ's struggle with the Tempter in the wilderness:

...knowing well the prince of light had fasted
Full forty days, then presently he hasted
To give him battle, and a challenge makes,
Which no less cheerfully Christ undertakes.
The king of darkness the first onset gave,
Thinking his foe to startle, or out-brave:
He flung at him a very cruel dart,
And aim'd to hit him just upon the heart.
He'd have him doubt or question, if 'twere so,
Whether he were the Son of God or no?²⁴

²²Glorious Lover, chap. 1, pp. 2-3, ll. 56-62.

²³Ibid., chap. 2, p. 14, ll. 41-47.

²⁴Ibid., chap. 3, p. 23, ll. 215-224.

Keach awkwardly interrupted the narrative of Christ's life to portray the soul's encounter with Christ. Prince Jesus attempts to show "Soul" her dreadful condition:

...push the window back, let in some light,
And I will shew thee a most dismal sight:
Thyself I'll shew thee, which could'st thou behold,
Thoud'st see thou art undone, betray'd and sold
To slavery...

The Soul is deaf or certainly she's dead,
Or by some pow'rful magic charms misled:
For she no answer in the least doth give:
Sad 'tis with them whom Satan doth deceive.²⁵

Finding that the direct approach does not work, Jesus commissions his friend Theologue to speak to the Soul:

I from the great and mighty Prince am sent,
To see, vile Soul, if thou wilt yet repent,
And ope thy eyes to view what thou hast done,
In piercing the dear heart of such an one...²⁶

However, the Soul does not respond:

He whom you call the glorious Prince of Light,
Is not a person lovely in my sight;
He's not so modish, pleasant, debonair,
As those brisk gallants, whom my fancy share.
I must have other eyes wherewith to see,
Before he can be countenanc'd by me.²⁷

Theologue also appears in Arthur Dent's The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heaven (1601). Both Keach and Dent give the name to a character who is a godly preacher.

In Milton the fallen angels take counsel about how to bring about the fall of man, but in Keach's epic they conspire to destroy Christ.

²⁵Ibid., chap. 5, p. 48, ll. 142-153.

²⁶Ibid., p. 49, ll. 175-178.

²⁷Ibid., p. 51, ll. 245-250.

However, the impressive speech he gives to Lucifer is clearly modelled on the speeches of the devils in Book II of Paradise Lost:

Dominions, Pow'rs, and Principalities,
You all in danger are; awake and rise
From off your seats, and lazy beds of down:
Sleep you secure, or fear not the dread frown
Of him who cast you down, and joys to see
Your abject state confess his victory?
Shall all our infernal reg'ments yield,
And basely quit the ev'n yet doubtful field?²⁸

Milton gives similar words to Beelzebub in Book II of Paradise Lost:

Thrones and Imperial Powers, offspring of Heav'n,
Ethereal Vertues; or these Titles now
Must we renounce, and changing style be calld
Princes of Hell?...
...while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heav'n hath doomd
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond his Potent arm, to live exempt
From Heav'ns high jurisdiction...²⁹

Keach's first prose romance was The Travels of True Godliness (1683). The word "travels" implies the kind of pilgrimage Bunyan portrayed, but the structure of Keach's book is quite different from Pilgrim's Progress. There are obvious similarities between Bunyan's Progress and Keach's Travels. Perhaps the most obvious is the use of names in the two books. However, this is complicated by the fact that many of the names in the books of both authors are also found in Richard Bernard's Isle of Man (1668). In Travels, Godliness's first call is on Riches. Riches' friends, Dr. Self-Love and Sir Worldly-Wisdom attempt to persuade him not to admit Godliness. A character similar to Worldly-Wisdom is found in both Isle of Man ("Sir Worldly-

²⁸Ibid., chap. 7, p. 76, ll. 68-75.

²⁹Milton, Paradise Lost, p. 49, ll. 310-319.

Wise") and Pilgrim's Progress ("Mr. Worldly Wiseman"). Other characters in Travels that appear in Bernard are Outside,³⁰ Ignorance,³¹ and Wilful.³² Keach also borrows Bunyan's Mr. Legality.³³ When Keach's Thoughtful begins to believe, he is "almost knocked down" by "a melancholy and very dangerous Fellow (called Despond)..."³⁴ who seems to be Bunyan's Giant Despair endowed with the function of the Slough of Despond. Furthermore, the demon Apollyon from Pilgrim's Progress³⁵ appears in The Glorious Lover, The Travels of True Godliness, and The Progress of Sin.

"True Godliness" is commissioned by God to go throughout the earth to "visit the Children of Men". First, he visits Riches. Conscience forces Fearful to admit Godliness, but he is evicted by

³⁰Benjamin Keach, The Travels of True Godliness, from the Beginning of the World to this present Day, in an apt and pleasant Allegory (3rd ed.) (1683), p. 36; Richard Bernard, The Isle of Man, or The Legal proceeding in Man-shire against Sinne. Wherein by Way of a continued Allegory, the chief Malefactors disturbing both Church and Commonwealth, are detected and Attached; with their Arraignment and Judicial Trial, according to the Laws of England (14th ed.) (1668), p. 11. (Mr. Outside is "a fellow that will come to his Church, keep his Sundays and Holydays: But yet in the Congregation while he sitteth among others, some times he is nodding, and sometimes fast asleep...")

³¹Keach, p. 36; Bernard, "Grandsire Ignorance", p. 17.

³²Keach, *ibid.*; Bernard, Sir Willful, *ibid.*

³³Keach, *ibid.* and p. 82; John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, p. 19.

³⁴Keach, *ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁵Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, pp. 184ff. Bunyan found Apollyon in Revelation 9.11 and possibly in Bevis of Southampton (Cf. p. 10 of The Romance of Sir Beves of Hamtoun, newly done into English prose from the Metrical version. (by Eustace Hinton Jones) (Southampton, n.d.). Although Milton's list of diabolic names is long, Apollyon is found nowhere in his poetry.

Presumption. Sir Worldly-Wisdom and Dr. Self-Love debate about whether or not to re-admit Godliness. Finally, Worldly Wisdom comes up with an alternative to admitting True Godliness:

...pray get another Servant into your House, keep a Reader in your family...you will be taken by all your Servants, and others too, for a very Godly Man.³⁶

The "Reader", Counterfeit Godliness,

proved a sad Fellow, for tho' he was a good Scholar, being brought up in some Foreign University, yet he never cared to read the Bible...[he loved to] read Romances and Song-books...he could Bowl, Drink Healths, be Drunk and cry Damn him with any of them; and there was indeed, never a One in all the Family, that hated True Godliness more than he...³⁷

Self-Love also advises Riches and his advice is similar to that which Mr. Worldly Wiseman gives to Christian in Progress:

World. How camest thou by the burden at first?
Chr. By reading this book in my hand.
World. I thought so; and it is happened unto thee as to other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions...³⁸

[Self-Love's advice to Riches.] Sir, your great Fault hath been this...you have Read too much of late, why should you concern yourself with the Bible? I think it had been well if it had never been Translated into our Mother-Tongue...³⁹

Bernard's Sir Worldly-Wise is simply identified as an enemy of godliness.⁴⁰

³⁶Keach, Travels, p. 27.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, p. 18.

³⁹Keach, Travels, p. 25.

⁴⁰Bernard, The Isle of Man, p. 13.

True and Counterfeit Godliness engage in a debate and True Godliness, of course, gets the better of his false brother. As a result, Riches has True Godliness chased out of town:

...Riches perceiving his Chaplain was worsted...raised all the Rabble of the Town upon him; among which were the following viz. Pride, Ignorance, Wilful, Hate-Good, Toss-pot, Outside, Riot, Wasteful, Hard-heart, Belly-god, Giddy-head, Pick-thank, Rob-saint, and more of such Rustical and Ill-bred Fellows. And moreover, he swore if he would not be gone soon, he would send for the Two Constables, Oppression and Cruelty, to lay him fast enough; which poor Godliness was fain to get away and hide himself, or else for certain he had been knock'd o' th' Head, or basely put to Death.⁴¹

Godliness next visits Poverty. Poverty is beset with "divers base and lazy Companions" who hinder his conversion. His chief problems seem to be laziness and dishonesty:

...Sloth and Idleness would not let him rise out of his Bed of Security, to call upon God..

Wasteful told him, That True Godliness, if entertained, would not suffer him to Buy such good Pieces of Beef, Mutton, &c. as he was used to on Trust, unless he knew he was able to pay for 'em...⁴²

Poverty is also afflicted with Carping-cares who

filled his Head so full of *distracting Thoughts*, that he had *not Time to think of God, Christ*, nor his own Soul, from one Week's End to another; but his great Study was either to think where to borrow Money, and so get more in Debt, or else how to pay what he owed, to go out of Debt, or what he should do for Work, Trade being grown...very dead...⁴³

After being rejected by Riches and Poverty, Godliness travels to "a great City, where dwelt a brave Young Gallant, with whom he had a

⁴¹Keach, Travels, p. 50.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 43-44.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 44-45.

Mind to be acquainted". But the young gallant is too distracted by his worldly companions to take heed of Godliness's warnings. As with Riches, Godliness is threatened by the crowd:

...Scoffer and Scornful loll'd out their Tongues at Godliness, jeering and deriding him shamefully: Nay, and not only so, but made base Songs of him, crying, Hey Boys, up go we! And Hate-good commanded them all to fall upon him, and rid him out of the World; and had it not been for fear of some Neighbours...he had doubtless been utterly trod down under their Feet.⁴⁴

Old-age is the next to reject Godliness:

...all the Waies and Means Godliness could use, signified nothing, he was settled so on his Lees, and had such an Abundance of stubborn and rebellious Servants and Children, that they would not suffer him to shew Godliness the least Favour...The Names of some of them were...Weary-limbs, Dim-eyes, and Peevish hard-heart, Impenitency, Self-conceit, Enmity, Unbelief, and Ignorance...⁴⁵

Next, Godliness visits "a certain Island, where he met with a great Number of cursed Enemies..." This chapter portrays "the present State of the Church among us, and Abroad in neighboring Nations at this Present Time",⁴⁶ and is a thinly veiled account of recent British history.⁴⁷ Keach wrote that Godliness "had been for some considerable

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 63-64.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁶Some editions have here "1688".

⁴⁷W.Y. Tindall charges that Keach's Travels was propaganda for the Fifth Monarchists: "Benjamin Keach combined in The Travels of True Godliness an open profession of loyalty with an allegorical attack upon the government. His complaint about charges of sedition and his insistence upon the patriotism of the saints were invalidated both by the preceding story of a visit to an imaginary island where lords and princes, one of whom had been deprived of his head, conspired against true godliness, and by the subsequent account of this fall of Babylon and the approach of Jesus. (John Bunyan: Mechanick Preacher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 139.) Tindall seems to be implying that the lord who has been executed is intended to represent

time in the said Island, and had through his sweet and Heavenly and peaceable carriage, got himself many Friends and Favourites..."⁴⁸ The island was the subject of an invasion by "divers strange and ridiculous Orders of Men", the most pernicious of whom were followers "of one Ignatius [sic]".⁴⁹

In spite of the defeat of the Babylonians, Godliness is threatened by the wickedness of society: "...he being...brought into great Contempt, began to be very sad, considering what a brave Isle for Grace and Holiness it had formerly been..."⁵⁰

Godliness encounters Legalist whose theology is identical to that of Richard Baxter:

Legal. I know I cannot perfectly keep the Law...but I will do (by the help of God) what I can; and wherein I through weakness do transgress, the Lord is merciful, and I trust he will forgive me...

Godli. ...Thou art a wretched creature, and therefore look to Christ, or thou art undone.

Legal. Why do you tell me of Christ? do you take me to be a sinner like other men?⁵¹

Charles I, but what Keach actually says is that one of the conspirators against the monarchy was beheaded: "...divers great Lords who had been poysoned with their [the Jesuits] bloody and detestable principles were found in the Conspiracy, and were attainted for High Treason...in the conclusion, one of the Lords in the Conspiracy had his Head cut off..." (pp. 73-74) Travels is anti-Stuart but not anti-monarchy.

⁴⁸Travels, p. 72.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 72.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 74.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 84-85.

Finally, Godliness meets a man who heeds his message:

...at last he met a Man Travelling into the Town of Religion, being not very Rich nor very Poor, but in a middling State, between both, and he looked as if he had a Mind to take up his Dwelling in this Place ... Godliness was much pleased with this Person...⁵²

Keach's narrative breaks down at this point. When he meets Godliness, Thoughtful, the man whom Godliness is pleased with, is travelling into the town of Religion and planning to take up residence there. Suddenly, he is occupying a house and Godliness is knocking at his door. A great struggle commences when Thoughtful attempts to admit Godliness to his house. One of the enemies preventing Thoughtful from admitting Godliness is Apollyon who calls on his diabolic colleagues with a speech modelled on Lucifer's in The Glorious Lover:

Most mighty Pow'rs, who once from Heav'n fell
To raise this Throne and Monarchy in Hell,
Bestir yourselves with Speed, or all is gone,
For Thoughtful hath almost the Battel won.⁵³

Godliness's friend "Endeavour, alias Laborious"⁵⁴ helps Thoughtful to lead a reformed life, but Thoughtful is not truly converted until the Holy Spirit gives him the ability to open his door to Godliness.

⁵²Ibid., p. 106.

⁵³Ibid., p. 131.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 135.

The Progress of Sin⁵⁵ was the last of Keach's prose romances and shows more influence from Bunyan and particularly Bernard. The structure of The Progress of Sin resembles Bernard's Isle of Man far more than it does any of Bunyan's books. In both Bernard's Isle and Keach's Progress Sin is a hunted criminal who is brought to trial eventually. The climax of Progress occurs in chap. XIII, "wherein you have a hue and cry after Tyrant Sin....Together with the manner of his apprehension, arraignment, trial, sentence, and condemnation".⁵⁶

Keach portrayed Sin as Apollyon's agent in the world. Apollyon, giving Sin his marching orders, warns him of several enemies, including the Bible ("a paper-enemy") and prayer ("an engine of war").⁵⁷ Also, True Godliness makes a return appearance, as well as Consideration. Oddly, Sin's travels do not begin with the fall; he goes first to Cain. Following Cain's murder of Abel, Keach leaves biblical history behind. Apollyon tells Sin to visit "a country called Nonage" and instruct the inhabitants in his ways: "...those which I now send thee to, thou must train up from the cradle...It is

⁵⁵Quaker James Park took exception to Keach's portrayal of the Quakers in this book in his False Fictions and Romances Rebuked: In Answer to Pretended Matter Charged against the Quaker, in a Book, Intituled, The Progress of Sin, &c. Written by B.K. His Lies and Slanders therein returned back upon him, and the Speakers of YEA and NAY to Truth Vindicated (1684). Park answered none of Keach's charges directly and contented himself with merely calling down the wrath of heaven upon his Baptist opponent.

⁵⁶Benjamin Keach, The Progress of Sin: or, the Travels of Ungodliness. Wherein the Pedigree, Rise, and Antiquity of Sin is fully discovered; in an apt and Pleasant Allegory (1684), p. 224.

⁵⁷Keach, Progress, pp. 22 & 25. Note that Keach again draws on the idea that the Bible is the devil's great enemy as he did in Travels and as Bunyan does in Progress.

good to sow our seed timely..."⁵⁸ Sin sets "Mrs. Ignorance" to work as a tutor. Keach exhibits his concern with religious education by allowing Sin to persuade parents not to send their children to school:

He represented to many parents, the great charge of putting their offspring to school; persuading them, they being poor and low in the world, they could not be at the cost, though they bestowed a great deal more needlessly upon clothing and feeding of them, than their learning would have come to.

Now, the reason why the enemy is so greatly set against learning, is this, lest, by their attaining to the knowledge of letters, they should take to read the Holy Bible...⁵⁹

Other tutors are Madam Wanton, who teaches "how to make set-faces, to cringe a-la-mode de France...to cast amorous glances...and frequent playhouses..."⁶⁰ and False-faith, who draws the children of Nonage "aside from the true faith...and...into the by-ways of schism, heresy, and error...by which means they become Papists, Atheists, Ranters, Arrians, Socinians, Quakers, Shakers, and Muggletonians".⁶¹

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 68.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 72. Keach shared the general Puritan/ Nonconformist abhorrence of ignorance. Edmund S. Morgan relates that "in 1647 the General Court of Massachusetts provided for the establishment of reading schools, because it was 'one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to kep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures'" and adds, "[The Puritans] retained throughout the 17th c. a sublime confidence that man's chief enemy was ignorance, especially ignorance of the Scripture". (The Puritan Family: Essays on Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England (Boston, Massachusetts: Trustees of the Public Library, 1956), (quoting The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts. Reprinted from the Copy of the 1648 Edition in the Henry E. Huntington Library, Max Farrand, ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1929), p. 11), pp. 45-46.)

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 86. Cf. Keach's Instructions for Children (9th edition, n.d.), pp. 52-53 where Keach inveighs against parents who allow their daughters "to cringe Alamode de France...to get rowling Eyes, to cast amorous Glances...and frequent Play-Houses..."

⁶¹Ibid., p. 92.

Sin's next visit is to Youthshire. One of the young men who shows an interest in what Sin has to say is drawn aside and given secret counsel:

...by his after carriage and behaviour it was guessed at; for he became a sneaking, lean, ill-faced, lank-bellied rascal; grudging himself every bit he ate, and fed much upon bread and cheese, red-herrings, &c., and oftentimes was seen to go to the pump to drink his morning-draught: And in his trading, he pinched every body in his weights and measures, and would not give or lend a penny scarcely, though it was to keep his father out of prison.⁶²

In the country of Sensuality ("this country is very large (it is indeed the biggest continent in the whole world)"⁶³), Sin has his only failures. Three persons escape and find their way out via a gate called Repentance. This is reminiscent of the wicket gate through which Christian must pass.⁶⁴ However, on the other side of the gate they find another barrier, Presumption.⁶⁵ Between the two barriers, "lay large green fields (these green fields are the pleasures and honours of the world)".⁶⁶ One of the three escapees from Sensuality is nearly overcome by his "notorious, evil, and debauched life, he having lived a long time in the city of Sensuality".⁶⁷ However, Grace and her daughter, Faith, help the three carry on toward the New Jerusalem.

Sin goes on to the country of Commerce and its capital,

⁶²Ibid., p. 104.

⁶³Ibid., p. 103.

⁶⁴Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, p. 19.

⁶⁵Keach, Progress, p. 156.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 157.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 158-159.

Morality.⁶⁸ Bunyan introduced this town in Pilgrim's Progress.⁶⁹ Although this is clearly a concept which Keach has borrowed from Bunyan, his judgment on Morality does not seem as negative as Bunyan's. Bunyan's Mr. Worldly Wiseman succeeds in diverting Christian from the straight and narrow to go in search of Mr. Legality of the village of Morality. Keach, on the other hand, writes:

Now, this town, [Morality]...hath formerly been in great esteem, being a place of good trade; and many honest and well-meaning people dwelt in it: But this cursed traveller [Sin], it appears, had been in it of latter times, and by his subtilty had made it a poor and despised village, and very thin also of inhabitants...⁷⁰

One of the tricks Sin teaches the dwellers of Morality (in the country of Commerce) is to

...shut up their shops, to make people think they were undone by the badness of the times and trade; and so were forced to call their creditors together, being willing, forsooth, to pay as far as they have, and that not above eight or ten shillings in the pound, when in truth, at the same time, they were worth some hundreds.⁷¹

Mr. Badman employs the same ruse:

...when Mr. Badman had well feathered his nest with other men's goods and money, after a little time he breaks. And by and by it was noised abroad that Mr. Badman had shut up shop, was gone, and could trade no longer...when he had done, he sends his mournful sugared letters to his creditors, to let them understand what had happened unto him, and desired them not to be severe with him...and would pay so far as he was able...⁷²

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 163ff.

⁶⁹Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, p. 19.

⁷⁰Keach, Progress, pp. 163-164.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 166.

⁷²John Bunyan, Grace Abounding and the Life and Death of Mr. Badman (London: Dent, 1928), p. 222. Henri Talon also notes the

Nevertheless, Keach directed some of his most severe criticisms at the dwellers in the town of Morality:

[Sin] meets with one person, that is very rich, and him he entices to augment his substance; to grind the face of the poor, by forcing them to sell their commodities under the market-price...

...he stirred up another, not to lend money to any, though in never such distress, without extortion, or unconscionable interest...

...some he enticeth to monopolize, or engross commodities so into their own hands, that none might sell of that, to gain any thing by them but themselves.⁷³

The poor also come in for some criticism:

...many that were poor, he teaches to break their word and promises; and, at last, their bonds and covenants...

Many he provoked to borrow money, and live high, when they know in their consciences they are not able to pay it.⁷⁴

Sin also paid a visit to Babylon, alias Rome: "As to its foundation, it is, as they say, built upon St. Peter, not upon Christ..." Keach allows that Babylon may indeed be founded on Peter, that is, "upon his defection: You know he denied his master. O! there the foundation was laid..."⁷⁵

The town of Religion, "called Sion, or the city of God" is actually taken, for a time, by sin. In besieging the city, Sin is warned again of the power of prayer: "...above all things, if

similarity between Badman and Progress. (John Bunyan: The Man and his Works (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 288.)

⁷³Ibid., p. 164.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 105.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 174.

possible, spoil that plaguy engine that mauls us so fearfully, I mean prayer and fasting".⁷⁶ This is the second time Keach has referred to prayer as an "engine", and it also appears in Bunyan's Holy War. Both appear to be using an image common to other writers.⁷⁷

Finally, Theologue and Enlightened Conscience go in search of Sin. Sin, under various disguises, is found in the house of "Mrs. Gay Clothes, alias Haughty Heart",⁷⁸ the house of "Mrs. Superstitious", and even in Mount Zion ("there he was found in the house of Formality").⁷⁹

A jury is summoned, witnesses called, and Sin is tried. One of the rare moments of humour occurs in the trial when Ancient and Modern Records is summoned to witness against Sin:

Judge. Come, Sir, what is it you can testify against Sin, &c.

Ancient Records. Waggoners, whip on.

Judge. What do you mean? Is this a fit answer for one of your years, in such a place?

Ancient. Most reverend Judge, I have here at hand more than a hundred waggon loads of books, which are of good credit, that are filled full of the horrid deeds of this bloody villain at the bar, if you will be pleased to have them read.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 195.

⁷⁷Cf. John Bunyan, The Holy War made by Shaddai upon Diabolus, Roger Sharrock and James F. Forrest, eds. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980) (first ed., 1681), p. 117. Keach, Tropologia, p. 161. Note especially George Herbert's poem, "Prayer", in which prayer is "an engine 'gainst the Almighty". (The Works of George Herbert, F.E. Hutchinson, ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 51.)

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 25. Cf. Bernard, p. 39: They find sin in a "common Inne, an Harlots house, called Mistriss Heart..."

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 240.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 264-265.

In Bernard's book Sin attempts to escape prosecution by pretending that his name is incorrectly entered in the indictment: "My Lord, I am indited by a wrong name, my name (my Lord) is Thrift, and not Covetousness..."⁸¹ Keach does not employ this technique, but does have Sin assume a false identity when he is being sought: "The house of Mrs. Superstitious they searched for him; but there he was hid under the cloak of Good Order and Decency...."⁸²

iii. Autobiography and pastoral experience in the imaginative writings.

Thus far I have dealt with the literary influences on Keach. The greatest influence on his imaginative works, however, was his own life, particularly his experience as a pastor. One theme runs through all his imaginative works: the individual's relationship to Christ. Each of his books tells the story of the acceptance or rejection of Christ as Redeemer by one or more individuals.

The Youth in War with the Devil probably does not represent a single young man whom Keach had met. Rather, he is a representative

⁸¹Bernard, p. 154. See also Roger Sharrock's article, "The Trial of Vices in Puritan Fiction", BQ, 14 (1951-52), pp. 3-12: "...it can be shown : (a) that the trick of morality technique by which the vices disguise themselves as the corresponding virtues was adopted in trial scenes by seventeenth century Puritan allegorists and pamphleteers: thus the vices could plead that they were wrongfully accused, since they were not the persons named in the indictment. (b) that Bunyan and Richard Bernard develop this with a high degree of legal realism..." (pp. 3-4)

⁸²Keach, Progress, p. 239.

figure. But Keach surely must have encountered many young men who offered the same kinds of excuses for not becoming believers. This book appeared six years after Keach's move to London in 1668. Perhaps the fear of appearing to be "Country Clowns" was peculiar to the young men of London:

The Fabrick of our Joy you would pull donw,
And make our Youth like to a Country Clown;
We half Fanaticks should be made...⁸³

Another evidence of the influence of Keach's pastoral experience on the narrative is that the Youth thinks that he is converted after he is merely "awakened". This also features in The Glorious Lover and Travels.⁸⁴

Keach's pastoral experience is most evident in The Travels of True Godliness and The Progress of Sin. In Travels Godliness visits six persons, Riches, Poverty, a Young Gallant, Formalist, Old Age, and Thoughtful. These seem to be six categories of persons with whom Keach was familiar. Thoughtful is the most interesting of the six as an example of the kind of person with whom Keach was most familiar. He is "not very Rich nor very Poor, but in a middling State, between both".⁸⁵ It seems likely that Keach was most familiar with the sort of person who was "in a middling State" and that his congregation was largely made up of such persons. This would account for the extensive section in The Progress of Sin which takes place in the "town of

⁸³Keach, War, p. 15, ll. 15-17.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 41-42 and Travels, p. 153.

⁸⁵Keach, Travels, p. 106.

Morality in the country of Commerce".⁸⁶ The people of this place appear to be "in a middling State", too. Sin devises a series of temptations for them, including the temptation to lend at an extortionate rate of interest, to monopolize, and to force the poor "to sell their commodities under the market-price".⁸⁷ The poorer sort are tempted to "live high, when they know in their consciences they are not able to pay it".⁸⁸ There are clues in Keach's sermons that may indicate that his congregation contained many middle-class merchants. For example, in The Display of Glorious Grace (1698), Keach gave a series of "Directions to Trade to Heaven".⁸⁹ And in Gospel Mysteries Keach showed a good deal of fondness for the metaphor of "trade with heaven".⁹⁰

In The Travels of True Godliness Godliness is twice threatened with severe beatings. First, after Riches' chaplain is bested in a

⁸⁶Keach, Progress, p. 111.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 112.

⁸⁹Benjamin Keach, The Display of Glorious Grace (1698), p. 278.

⁹⁰See especially, "The Parable of the Pearl of great price", Bk I, Sermon XXX, p. 161. Perry Miller remarks on the interplay of theology and sociology that led Puritan preachers to choose such metaphors:

Puritan use of the tropes and figures of rhetoric was further delimited by an important sociological consideration: Puritan literature was addressed to the people, the common people, and therefore was always dominated by a principle of utility. A sermon or a tract was to be, God willing, a "means of grace".

(Perry Miller, "Introduction" to Images or Shadows of Divine Things, Perry Miller, ed. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 4.)

debate, Riches incites the "Rabble of the Town" to teach Godliness a lesson. This may reflect Keach's personal experience. Crosby related that Keach engaged in debates, particularly about infant baptism, but does not indicate that he was ever threatened with a beating as a result. The incident in Travels may be a combination of several incidents, including Keach's first arrest for publishing The Child's Delight. On this occasion Keach was taunted by a clergyman of the Church of England who, like Riches' chaplain, was known to be a far too regular visitor at the local pub.⁹¹ Another episode in Travels even more closely resembles an incident in Keach's own life. Godliness is also threatened by the Young Gallant's friends, and we are told that "had it not been for fear of some Neighbours...he had doubtless been utterly trod down under their feet". Crosby recorded that Keach was once threatened by a group of soldiers on horseback who would have trampled him to death if they had not been restrained by their officer.⁹²

When Keach and his family moved to London in 1668, they were robbed by highwaymen.⁹³ Much like the Keach family, the "three worthies" who escape from Sensuality are on their way to a city when they encounter thieves:

After this, they hasted away as fast as they could go, towards a little town called Religion, which lies in the direct way to New Jerusalem...on a sudden they were beset with thieves, who threatened to knock them on the head, but they were restrained: yet they robbed them of their

⁹¹Crosby, vol. 2, pp. 185-209.

⁹²Crosby, vol II, p. 185.

⁹³Crosby, vol. 3, p. 144.

clothes, and part of their money.⁹⁴

The trial scene in Progress of Sin does not seem to be modelled directly on one of Keach's own trials. First, the defendant in Progress, Sin, is clearly guilty, unlike Keach. Second, Keach had a model to hand in Bernard's Isle and did not need to draw on his own experience.

iv. The style of Keach's imaginative works.

The most consistent feature of Keach's style is the lack of action and dramatic tension. Unlike Bunyan, Keach was unable to create excitement, tension, and interest in his dramatic situations because his characters never succeed in being real individuals; they are never more than abstract concepts, divine attributes, or aspects of human personality. In War with the Devil only "Youth" has any claim to be a real person, and consequently, he is the only character in War who interests the reader at all. Even then, interest is limited because Youth is not a real person. Bunyan's characters in Pilgrim's Progress are vivid in contrast to Keach's lifeless creations. Although it is evident from the beginning that Bunyan's Christian is a construct of the author's imagination and not a real person, he engages the reader's interest because Bunyan paints him with realistic colours: "...I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place...a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back...as he

⁹⁴Keach, Progress, pp. 161-162. This could be taken from Little-faith's encounter with thieves in Pilgrim's Progress, pp. 240-241.

read, he wept, and trembled...he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, "What shall I do?"⁹⁵ Keach puts sentiments into Youth's mouth which were doubtless characteristic of the young men of 1674, but they are composite statements, not the sort of thing that a real person would say:

The Fabrick of our Joy you would pull down
And make our Youth like to a Country Clown;
We half Fanaticks should be made ('tis clear)
If unto thee we once inclined were.
But this among the rest doth chear my Heart,
There's very few in London take thy Part...⁹⁶

Keach's Youth, unlike Bunyan's Christian, does not stand "in a certain place"; rather, he stands everywhere and therefore stands nowhere.⁹⁷ Keach's personifications of Godliness and Sin are notable failures. His best characters are Self-love, Worldly-Wisdom, and Riches' chaplain, Counterfeit Godliness, in Travels. Their dialogues show some skill.

Poetry was Keach's favourite literary medium, and he returns to it again and again. Unfortunately, most of his poetry is disastrously bad. Glorious Lover, however, displays some skill. Nevertheless, he is betrayed by an inability to create interesting characters and situations. This is complicated by his choice of the epic form. The form demands that he deal more with immortals than mortals. Consequently, the characters have little more life than did the

⁹⁵Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, p. 8.

⁹⁶Keach, War, p. 17. Youth is speaking to Conscience.

⁹⁷Henri Talon remarks that Bunyan's "pilgrims are real men--villagers on whom their neighbours have bestowed nicknames..." (John Bunyan: The Man and his Works, p. 215).

dramatis personae of War with the Devil and less life than those of Travels and Progress of Sin. The drama of part one is completely absent in the second part for precisely the same reason that it was absent in War with the Devil; Keach shifted from the intensely dramatic story of the struggle between Christ and the Tempter to the story of the "Glorious Lover's" attempt to woo the Soul. Once again, Keach returned to his favorite theme: the operation of divine grace upon the human heart.

In Glorious Lover Keach chose a level of poetic discourse which is neither Bunyan's earthy simplicity nor Milton's latinate grandeur. Because Keach was not consistently simple and home-spun nor grandiose, the combination of the two frequently spoils otherwise good passages. For example, note his meditation on Christ's ministry:

He rais'd, said some, the Dead again to Life:
Gave sight unto the Blind, who from their Birth
Had never seen the light that gilds the earth:
The Dumb, the Deaf, the Lepers, and the Lame,
In all Distempers, whosoever came,
Had perfect cure in every dire Disease;
Nay, he could hush the Winds, and calm the Seas
Could dispossess the black Infernal Rout,
And cast whole Legions of fierce Devils out.⁹⁸

If Keach had stopped there, these lines would be memorable.

Unfortunately, he added two more lines:

Of five mean Barley loaves, and two small Fishes,
He made above five thousand plenteous Dishes.

Keach's ability to create an interesting and dramatic narrative improved a great deal between War with the Devil and The Travels of True Godliness. One of the reasons for this improvement, obviously,

⁹⁸Keach, Glorious Lover, chap. 7, pp. 91-92, ll. 650-658.

was his reading of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Mr. Badman (1680), and The Holy War (1682). Keach learned many of his techniques from Bunyan. Nevertheless, Travels and Progress of Sin show some originality of invention which Keach did not borrow.

Travels also (and to some extent Progress of Sin) also shows that Keach possessed a sense of humour, although he displays it far too sparingly. In Travels, Worldly-Wisdom's alternative to admitting True Godliness elicits a smile, although the fun is at the expense of the upper classes and the Church of England:

...I have just now thought of a Way that will do: You having a great Estate, pray get another Servant into your House, keep a Reader in your Family; this done, you will find all will be well...you will be taken by all your Servants, and others too, for a very Godly Man.⁹⁹

Also humorous is the trial scene in Progress of Sin.¹⁰⁰

There are other appealing moments, especially in the dialogue. Covetousness cautions Riches not to admit True Godliness lest he be importuned by penniless saints: "...though you are not put upon the selling all you have presently, yet you will be forced by him to give to the poor Saints (as they call them)...Nay, 'tis a Thousand to One if he do not put you to Build an Hospital for them".¹⁰¹ Carping-care's warning to Poverty is genuinely touching and certainly must have reflected the real concerns of some poor souls whom Keach knew: "Carping-cares filled his Head so full of distracting Thoughts, that

⁹⁹Keach, Travels, pp. 26-27.

¹⁰⁰Discussed in the previous section.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 22.

he had not Time to think of God, Christ, nor his own Soul...he was filled with sad Thoughts, not knowing how he should get more Bread..."¹⁰²

Ultimately, Travels fails for the same reason as War with the Devil; the characters have too little personality. Travels has the additional problem of having far too many characters. Every house at which Godliness calls is packed to the ceiling with demonic aspects of the human heart, most of whom do no more than walk on and off the stage. Poverty is host to "Idleness, Wasteful, Light-fingers, Faint-heart, Carping-care, and Fear-man".¹⁰³ When Thoughtful tries to invite Godliness in, he is restrained by "Difficulty, Sloth, Deficiency, Security, Danger, Worldly-cares, and Carnal-Company".¹⁰⁴ Two other features contribute to Travels' failure: First, Keach does not vary his method enough. Godliness knocks at the door of the heart three times. Each time there is a struggle in which Conscience tries to induce the occupant (Riches, Poverty, or Thoughtful) to open the door, and the forces of sin try to keep it closed. Secondly, his allegorical account of seventeenth English history in chapter seven is a pointless interruption of the narrative. Bunyan is more successful than Keach partly because of his choice of the pilgrimage as controlling metaphor. Bunyan's pilgrim has to take real risks and encounter enemies who can do him great harm. A narrative such as

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 44-45.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 113.

Pilgrim's Progress is far more exciting than Keach's story of Godliness making polite house calls on representative mortals.

v. Nonconformist attitudes toward imaginative literature.

Keach's imaginative writings hint at a good deal of uneasiness with the very form in which he chose to express his thoughts. One of the commendatory poems at the beginning of War with the Devil apologetically notes, "Verse has exprest as Sacred Things as Prose".¹⁰⁵ The other poem castigates poets who "strive to affect the Fancy, not *the Heart*".¹⁰⁶ In The Glorious Lover, Keach announced that his method was to use poetry as an evangelistic instrument:

Paul became all to all: and I would try
By this essay of mystic poesy,
To win their fancies, whose harmonious brains
Are better pleas'd with soft and measur'd strains.
A verse may catch a wand'ring soul, that flies
Profounder tracts, and by a bless'd surprize --
Convert delight into a sacrifice.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵Keach, War, the poem is by "E.B."

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. i. Arthur Dent, writing in The Plaine Mans Path-way, published 73 years before Keach's first imaginative book, displayed a similar uneasiness: "Let none therefore stumble at it. But if any do let them remember I am in a Dialogue, not in a Sermon. I write to all sorts: I speake not to some fewe of one sort. But that which is done heerein, is not much more than that of the Apostle. As some of your owne Poets have said. Act 17. Which is warrantable". (Plaine Mans Path-way (Amsterdam, 1974), p. v.)

¹⁰⁷Keach, Glorious Lover, p. ii, ll. 28-34. These lines include a quotation from Herbert's poem "The Church-Porch":

"A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice".

(George Herbert, The Works of George Herbert, p. 6, ll. 5 & 6.) In this poem, Herbert declares that his intention, too, is to use poetry

However, Keach criticized secular poets who only celebrate "trifling fables" and "romances vain":

Which only tend to nourish rampant vice,
And to prophaneness easy youth entice...¹⁰⁸

In The Travels of True Godliness Self-love advises Riches to avoid reading the Bible: "...be sure at no Time you Read any Book besides your Books of Accompts, and Romances..."¹⁰⁹

Bunyan related in his "Apology" for part one of Pilgrim's Progress that some friends objected to his imaginative creation:

"Well, yet I am not fully satisfied,
That this your book will stand, when soundly tried".
Why, what's the matter? "It is dark". What though?
"But it is feigned". What of that? I trow
Some men, by feigned words, as dark as mine,
Make truth to spangle and its rays to shine."¹¹⁰

Arthur Dent's Plaine Man's Path-way to Heaven (1601) argues that most imaginative writings are snares of the devil. Antilegon ("a caviller") tries to dissuade Asunetus from following Theologue's

as a *means of grace*:

"Hearken unto a verser, who may chance
Ryme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure".

¹⁰⁸Glorious Lover, ll. 39-40.

¹⁰⁹Keach, Travels, p. 36.

¹¹⁰Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, p. 3 & 4. Lawrence A. Sasek writes: "...the word "feigned" appears regularly as a pejorative term indicating that the puritans thought of fiction not as an imaginative view of reality, but as simple falsehood....The same attitude shows up more clearly in the use of the words "poet" and "poetical" as though they had unfavourable connotations. For instance, Joseph Caryl speaks of "poetical raptures" and "feigned romances" as synonymous with falsehood, as distortions of and antitheses to the reality of history. [Caryl, Englands Plus Ultra, sig. A2.]" (The Literary Temper of the English Puritans (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: LSU Press, 1961), p. 64.)

puritan advice:

Tush, tush. Now I see you are in a melancholicke humour. If you will goe home with me, I can give you a speedy remedy: for I have many pleasant and merry bookes, which if you should heare them read, would soone remedy you of this melancholy. I haue the Court of Venus, the Pallace of Pleasure, Beuis of Southhampton, Ellen of Rummin: The mery Jest of the Friar and the Boy: The pleasant story of Clem the Clough, Adam Bell, and William of Cloudesley. The odde Tale of William, Richard and Homfrey. The pretie Conceit of Iohn Splinters last will and Testament: which al are excellent and singular bookes against hart-quames: and to remove such *dumpishness*, as I see you are now fallen into.¹¹¹

Theologue's colleague, Philagathus, believes that all such books are instruments of the devil and his lackey, the Pope:

...they were deuised by the diuel: seene, and allowed by the Pope: Printed in hel: bound up by Hobgoblin [sic]: and first published and disperced in Rome, Italy, and Spaine. And all to this ende, that thereby men might be kept from the reading of the scriptures.¹¹²

William Perkins condemned "ballads, books of love, and idle discourses and histories" for "being nothing else but vain enticements and baits unto manifold sins". Baxter's Christian Directory proscribed "idle tales, and playbooks, and romances or love-books, and false bewitching stories".¹¹³

The Puritans were not merely insensitive to literary values; they were expressing a point of view held by some of the most sophisticated non-Puritans, as well:

In their censure of the romances, especially, the puritans followed the most respectable humanistic authorities. Erasmus, with typical moderation and classical orientation,

¹¹¹Arthur Dent. The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heaven (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Inc., 1974) (facs. of 1rst ed., 1601), p. 408.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Quoted in Sasek, p. 59.

found it distressing to "see many a one taking delight in the tales of Arthur and Lancelot, and other tales of similar nature which are not only about tyrants, but also very poorly done, stupid, and fit to be 'old wives' tales'.¹¹⁴

Why did "romances and idle tales" seem so pernicious to the Puritans and, later, Nonconformists? Keach gave the answer in *Self-love's advice to Riches*; reading romances was a substitute for reading the Bible. Keach was not opposed to literature as such, much less to learning. In *The Progress of Sin*, Sin tries to keep the children of the land of Nonage uneducated.

The case against romances is much like the case against "ballads". The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter regarded itself as a replacement for "ungodly songs, and Ballads which tend onely to the nourishing of vice, and corrupting of youth".¹¹⁵ Hymn-writer George Wither complained that the "flesh and the Devil" made use of "thousands of vain songs and profane ballads stored up in the stationers' warehouses".¹¹⁶

In creating Christian romances and composing sacred hymns Keach's intent was the same: One was a substitute for secular romances, the other for profane songs. In the preface to *Spiritual Melody*, Keach

¹¹⁴Sasek, p. 62. Quoting *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. Born (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p. 200.

¹¹⁵Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Collected into English Meeter* (1640), title page.

¹¹⁶George Wither, *The Scholar's Purgatory*. Quoted in Escott, *Isaac Watts, Hymnographer*, p. 71. Richard Baxter also regarded "lascivious, vain, and foolish Poetry" as the Devil's vehicles "to corrupt more the minds that are already corrupt and vain..." and "sacred Hymns and Psalms" as God's substitutes. (Baxter, *Mr. Richard Baxter's Paraphrases on the Psalms of David in Metre with other Hymns* (1692), p. v-vi.)

notes that children "are much addicted to learn such songs and ballads which generally tend to corrupt youth..."¹¹⁷ Hence, he claimed in The Glorious Lover that his purpose is "to win their fancies, whose harmonious brains/Are better pleas'd with soft and measur'd strains".¹¹⁸

There was a deep suspicion of the kind of imaginative writing in which Keach engaged. Not only did Puritans and Nonconformists regard books which stimulated the imagination as dangerous, but such imaginative productions competed for attention with the Bible. Nevertheless, some Nonconformist writers, especially Bunyan and Keach, saw their imaginative creations as an attempt to win back the hearts and minds that had been lost to "romances and idle tales".

vi. The function of Keach's imaginative writings.

¹¹⁷Keach, Spiritual Melody, "Epistle to the Reader", p. i.

¹¹⁸Keach, Glorious Lover, p. ii, ll. 30-31. Bunyan, too, regarded Pilgrim's Progress as an evangelistic tool:

You see the ways the Fisher-man doth take
To catch the Fish; what Engins doth he make?

...

This Book is writ in such a Dialect
As may the minds of listless men affect

(pp. 141-145) Also, Thomas Sherman hoped that his Youth's Comedy would "be a means to divert the Mind of Youth from such Poems and Books, as tend onely to the idle expence of Time, and the corruption of good Manners". (T.S., Youth's Comedy (1680), "To the Reader", p. 1.) Margaret Spufford notes that others were as aware as Keach of the utility of such popular cultural media: "Puritans were quick to recognize the potential propaganda value of the medium [popular ballads], as well as concerned by the way it was being used for, in their eyes, frivolous purposes". (Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1981), p. 10.)

The thought of creating "art for art's sake" never occurred to Benjamin Keach. His imaginative writings were created for a purpose, and that purpose, as with a great amount of Keach's writing, was to be an instrument of religious instruction. Keach never stated that War with the Devil, The Glorious Lover, The Travels of True Godliness, or The Progress of Sin were intended to inculcate religious beliefs or values, but their form and their resemblance to other books by Keach which were intended to be catechetical prove with certainty that this was their purpose.

First, Keach thought of poetry as an eminently useful tool for religious education. In the "Epistle to the Reader" in Spiritual Melody, he wrote that

by learning Sacred Hymns [children] may be taken, before their Parents are aware, with the Matter therein contained (as divers have, through the Blessing of God, as I have been oft inform'd, by reading that small Poem, called War with the Devill,) ... Youth are generally inclin'd to Poetry...¹¹⁹

It is plain that the hymns were an extension of the catechetical program which began with War with the Devil. Verse has an obvious advantage as an instrument of religious indoctrination: it is easy to remember. Keach notes this a few lines farther on: "...these Hymns being short, Children will soon get them by heart..."¹²⁰

Secondly, Keach's method was designed to engage the reader emotionally, another excellent way to drive home doctrinal points.

¹¹⁹Benjamin Keach, Spiritual Melody (1691), pp. iv-v.

¹²⁰Ibid.

Keach regarded the stirring up of the affections as another vital factor in religious instruction: "...Parables...are brought to open the Mind of God the better to our Weak Capacities, move upon our Affections, and convince the Conscience..."¹²¹ He made this purpose explicit in the "Proem" of The Glorious Lover. It portrays, Keach wrote

A love most fit by saints to be embrac'd:
A love 'bove that of women: beauty, such,
As none can be enamour'd with too much.
Read then, and learn to love truly by this,
Until thy soul can sing, raptur'd in bliss,
"My well-beloved's mine, and I am his".¹²²

Although half of Keach's imaginative output is in verse, the prose works (Travels and Progress) share a crucial characteristic with War and Glorious Lover; they communicate truth via narrative rather than via propositions. Keach regarded narrative as an excellent vehicle for touching the heart. In Gospel Mysteries, he remarks that parables are "profitable to stir up or excite the Affections, and to awaken the Conscience".¹²³ Each of Keach's imaginative works can be regarded as a parable.

The twin factors of memorability and emotional impact are the characteristic features of Keach's program of religious instruction.¹²⁴

¹²¹Benjamin Keach, Gospel Mysteries (1701), p. 2.

¹²²Keach, Glorious Lover, p. 26, ll. 44-49.

¹²³Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk I, p. 4.

¹²⁴Lawrence A. Sasek identifies precisely these two factors, memorability and emotional impact, as features the Puritans valued for their usefulness in religious education: "Poetry, they believed, could, by working on the affections, help the preacher or catechizer deliver his message with greater impact; and the mnemonic advantages

His imaginative works share them with the hymns, sermons, Tropologia, and The Child's Instructor, thus they belong in the category of material intended for religious instruction.

of rhythm and rhyme made verse more efficacious didactically, than prose". (The Literary Temper of the English Puritans, p. 58.)

vii. Theological significance of the imaginative writings.

Keach's imaginative writings were a part of his programme of religious education which included not only his catechism and primer, but his hymns and sermons, as well. The imaginative writings are additional examples of a controlling feature of Keach's way of looking at the world; they show that he was concerned to communicate the invisible things of heaven by using the visible things of earth. The Glorious Lover is intended to convey "heavenly manna, though but homely drest".¹²⁵ Farther on in his epic, Keach speculated about why the passion took place in a garden:

Was it because there first began our woe?
Or, was it Lord, to have us call to mind
When we in walks and gardens pleasures find,
What thou didst for us in a garden bear,
To take our hearts from fleeting pleasure here?¹²⁶

Of Keach's imaginative writings only The Glorious Lover is explicit about presenting heavenly truths in earthly symbols. However, that is plainly what Keach was doing by portraying Godliness as a messenger knocking on the door of each heart and Counterfeit Godliness as the chaplain to a greedy country squire. Unlike Bunyan, Keach did not take his characters through a gallery of emblems,¹²⁷ but his stories (as his sermons, Biblical commentary, and hymns) are

¹²⁵Keach, Glorious Lover, p. 26, l. 27.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 110, ll. 375-379.

¹²⁷Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, pp. 161-169 and 302-306.

emblematic.

Bunyan was explicit about presenting "heavenly manna" in "homely dress":

Put by the Curtains, look within my Vail,
Turn up my Metaphors...¹²⁸

But Keach used the same method and uses it more systematically. He not only used it in his own books, but he also recommended its use by others. For example, his prefatory poem to William Balmford's The Seamen's Companion:

Faith is the Cable-Rope, to which make fast
The Anchor, Hope; which rightly thou must cast
Into the Rock of Ages, in the Vail,
And you'll be safe in time of strongest Gale...

Hast thou a Mind to traffick for Salvation?
Then learn the Art of Sacred Navigation:
This Art well learnt and also understood,
Thou may'st ride safely o're the Mighty Flood.¹²⁹

Other writers have noticed a tendency in seventeenth century Puritan and Nonconformist writers to portray theological concepts visually. In his discussion of Paradise Lost and Pilgrim's Progress Roland Frye identifies this tendency as an example of Calvin's doctrine of accommodation.¹³⁰ U. Milo Kaufmann identifies the same

¹²⁸Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, p. 272.

¹²⁹William Balmford, The Seaman's Spiritual Companion: or, Navigation Spiritualized. Being a New Compass for Seamen. Consisting of Thirty-two POints; Directing every Christian how to steer the Course of his Life, through all Storms and Tempests; Fit to be Read and seriously Perused by all such as desire their Eternal Welfare (1678), p. vi.

¹³⁰Calvin repeatedly insists that at every point of revelation the principle of accommodation always intervenes between God and man. In this, he and the leading Reformers generally are supported by the great mainstream of Christian interpretation: God's truth is

tendency as part of the Puritan method of meditation.¹³¹ In a discussion of the theology of Jonathan Edwards, Perry Miller argues that the use of visual symbols arose from a tendency to seek God's purpose in every event.¹³² "Technometria" is the source of the Puritan / Nonconformist use of visual symbols according to Keith L. Sprunger.¹³³

Keach's magnum opus in the area of using earthly "shadows" to convey divine realities was, of course, Tropologia, in which every

accommodated to human understanding through events and symbols, and primarily through the Incarnation". (Roland M. Frye, God, Man, and Satan: Patterns of Christian Thought and Life in Paradise Lost, Pilgrim's Progress, and the Great Theologians (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 11.)

¹³¹"Puritan hermeneutics regarded Biblical metaphor as a circumlocutory expression of doctrine, while heavenly meditation elaborated a discipline of Bible reading and devotion which accepted the Word as the source of affective images to be used in bringing scriptural reality within the purview of the senses. The Pilgrim's Progress offers abundant evidence of the latter approach to scriptural metaphor". (U. Milo Kaufmann, The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 165.)

¹³²"...[The Puritan] was obliged to ask himself, What does this signify? What is God saying to me at this moment? And as for furnishing significances, any event or object would do as well as any other, a pot or a pan, a rose or a lark-- whatever made the meaning clearer was the better. The result in Puritan writing was an insistent literalness that sometimes, to our eyes, verges on the pedantic, but at its best, as in John Bunyan, achieves a realism that is at the same time an implicit symbolism, because the plain statement of fact vibrates with symbolic overtones". (Perry Miller, "Introduction" to Edwards' Images and Shadows, p. 3.)

¹³³"Not trusting words and concepts alone, XVIIth-century Puritanism showed a tendency to make its theology visible and concrete to the mind and to the eye through technometria, methodical theology, and (finally) John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. The intellect took the strait gate and narrow way by using technometria and methodical theology, while the Puritan heart at another level of experience pressed on toward the Wicket-gate". (Keith L. Sprunger, "Technometria: A Prologue to Puritan Theology", Journal of the History of Ideas 29, no. 1 (Jan.-March, 1968), p. 122.)

page was divided, the left hand column containing mundane symbols and the right hand column the divine reality symbolised. The allegories do the same thing, although in them Keach attempted to convey heavenly truth via narrative. Roger Sharrock comments on Bunyan's attempt in The Pilgrim's Progress to do the same thing:

...one could say that what we have is a work in reversible parallel columns. If we lean over towards the side of doctrine, then the story is a human commentary on that greater story which is seen as the Scriptures setting out the way of salvation; this is in the spirit of Bunyan's initial verses, "...Look within my Vail, Turn up my Metaphors": the allegory becomes a commentary and the marginalia become the text, a particular evangelical thesaurus or collocation of the Old and New Testaments in their application from God to man.¹³⁴

In Tropologia, the hymns, sermons, and allegories, Keach pulled back the curtain and showed us how minds such as his and Bunyan worked. Tropologia actually gives us the "reversible parallel columns" which Sharrock perceived lurking behind *Bunyan's text*.

Ultimately, Christian symbolism is founded upon the Incarnation, the great instance of divine "accommodation" to human capacities. The Puritan and, later, the Nonconformist, mined scripture (and nature) for symbols with which to "raise the affections" and thus drive home doctrinal points. It is also certain that the Puritan was intent on perceiving the working of God in the world, in his own heart, and in the hearts of others, and this habit may have made the Puritan more aware of the world around him and its capacity to symbolize the world beyond. The tradition which Keach inherited saw the world as a mirror

¹³⁴Roger Sharrock, Life and Story in The Pilgrim's Progress (London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 1978), p. 21.

of divine reality. Although an inheritor of this tradition, Keach did not leave it as he found it, but through his sermons, hymns, exegetical tools (i.e., Tropologia), and religious allegories provided us with what is perhaps the most systematic exposition of the way Puritans and Nonconformists used symbols.

viii. Conclusion.

As with the hymns, so with the allegories, Keach freely used the ideas of others. He was deeply indebted to Bunyan and Milton, heavily dependent on Dent and Bernard, and relied somewhat on Thomas Sherman. Keach also drew on his own experience, particularly his experience of persecution, for dramatic materials. However, just how much of the religious allegories reflects Keach's own life cannot be determined. His style never equalled the best in Bunyan and was flat and wooden. Nevertheless, in view of the Nonconformist hostility toward imaginative literature, it is remarkable that Keach and Bunyan wrote their religious allegories at all. Keach's motivation in writing the allegories was to provide religious education in an attractive and entertaining form. Finally, the allegories are another element in Keach's systematic use of the visible mundane world as a window on the invisible heavenly world.

CHAPTER THREE. "THE GLORY OF A TRUE CHURCH":

KEACH ON POLITY AND MINISTERIAL MAINTENANCE.

I. The Glory of a True Church and its Discipline display'd.¹

i. Introduction.

Keach was the first Particular Baptist to write a book exclusively concerned with ecclesiastical polity:

...our Brethren the Baptists have not written (as I can gather) on this Subject by it self. Therefore I have been earnestly desired by our Members, and also by one of our Pastors, to write a small and plain Tract concerning the Rules and the Discipline of a Gospel-Church, that all Men may not only know our Faith, but see our Order in this case also.²

Obviously, there was an apologetic component to Keach's motivation, but the focus of Keach's work was not so much outward toward critics of the Baptists as inward toward the internal needs of his church and its fellow churches. He was writing on a crucial subject at a decisive moment in Baptist history. Hanserd Knollys, patriarch of the Particular Baptists, had died in 1691, and the last Particular Baptist

¹In writing The Glory of a true Church Keach drew upon Congregationalist divine Isaac Chauncy's The Doctrine which is According to Godliness (1694). Elias Keach reproduced his father's book verbatim as The Glory and Ornament of a True Gospel-constituted Church. Being a brief Display of the Discipline of the Church of Christ, formerly meeting at Curriers Hall near Cripplegate, and now meeting at Tallow-Chandlers-Hall upon Dowgate-Hill, London, Elias Keach, Pastor (1697).

²Benjamin Keach, The Glory of a True Church and its Discipline display'd (1697), p. iv. (Hereafter referred to as Glory.)

general assembly had been in 1693. Keach had written of "our sad witherings" in The Breach Repaired and had attributed them to the neglect of corporate hymnody and indifference to the ministry.³ It may have seemed to Keach that if the primitive Christian faith (as he and his fellow Calvinistic Baptists understood it) was to endure, then the saints must have a strategy for survival. However, The Glory of a true Church is not the document of a threatened sect. It seems to reflect the concerns of a once-despised group which has become more or less "established". The Glory of a true Church was an attempt to meet the perceived need to supply the Particular Baptists with discipline and direction.

The following section examines The Glory of a true Church to discover what it teaches about the nature of the church, the work and status of its ministers, its discipline, and the duties of lay members.

ii. The nature of the church.

Keach faced several tasks in writing about the "glory of a true church". Most important, he had to define what he meant by "church". There were two important subsidiary questions to the question, "What is a church?" First, what are the signs (notae) of a church, and secondly, is the ministry essential (of the esse) to the church?

³Benjamin Keach, The Breach Repaired (1691), p. 99.

First, Keach made it clear that the church is a community of "gathered saints":

A Church of Christ, according to the Gospel-Institution, is a Congregation of Godly Christians, who as a Stated-Assembly (being first baptized upon the Profession of Faith) do by mutual agreement and consent give themselves up to the Lord, and one to another, according to the Will of God; and do ordinarily meet together in one Place, for the Publick Service and Worship of God; among whom the Word of God and Sacraments are duly administred, according to Christ's Institution.⁴

Furthermore, the church is not "national": "...Now some Men, because the Typical Church of the Jews was National, and took in their Carnal Seed (as such) therefore the same Matter and Form they would have under the Gospel".⁵

Secondly, a community of the saints will be a place where "the Word of God and Sacraments are duly administred, according to Christ's Institution". In Keach's scheme, a true church of Christ had three characteristics: First, it was made up of "Converted Persons" (in contrast to the national church); secondly, it must rightly administer the Word and sacraments; thirdly, it must have discipline: "But tho a

⁴Keach, Glory, pp. 5-6. Cf. "To the Baptized Churches, particularly to that under my Care", p.iii.: "The Matter or Materials with which it is built are Lively Stones, i.e., Converted Persons". Cf. Articles of Faith, Article XXII ("Of a true Church"), pp. 22-23: "We believe a true Church of Christ is not National, nor Parochial, but doth consist of a number of godly Persons, who upon the Profession of their Faith and Repentance have been baptized, and in a solemn manner have in a Holy Covenant given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another, to live in Love, and to endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace: Among whom the Word of God is duly and truly preach'd; and Holy Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and all other Ordinances are duly administred, according to the Word of God, and the Institution of Christ in the Primitive Church...."

⁵Ibid., p. iii.

Church be rightly built in both these respects, i.e. of fit Matter and right Form, yet without a regular and orderly Discipline, it will soon lose its Beauty, and be polluted".⁶ Thus Keach combined the two Reformed signs of a true church, the Word and the sacraments ("...among whom the Word of God and Sacraments are duly administred..."),⁷ with the two Separatist distinctives: the church is a community of "visible saints" in which gospel discipline is administered.⁸

Thirdly, the complex issue of the relationship between church officers and church members must be considered. No Particular Baptist argued that the ministry was necessary to constitute a church nor that ministry was of the esse of a church. Neither did any argue that officers were irrelevant to the church. Between these two extremes there were several important alternatives. Keach's attitude toward the ministry can be discerned by examining what he taught about the proper administrator of the sacraments.

Although not believing that the ministry was of the esse of the church, Keach believed that church officers were necessary to administer the sacraments. Under normal circumstances, only a pastor

⁶Ibid., p. iv.

⁷Keach, Glory, pp. 5-6.

⁸Keach seems to imply that although there may be true churches without proper discipline, they will not last long: "...without a regular and orderly Discipline, it will soon lose its Beauty, and be polluted". For a discussion of discipline in the English Separatist tradition, see Timothy George, John Robinson and the English Separatist Tradition (Mercer, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1982), pp. 136-139.

or elder could administer the sacraments and could do so only in the church within which he was called and ordained. Keach prohibited ministers of one congregation from administering the sacraments in another: "...we find no warrant for any such Practice, he being only ordained Pastor or Elder of that particular Church that chose him, &c. and hath no Right or Authority to administer as an Elder in any other where he is not so much as a Member".⁹ In the case of a church without a pastor, he posed the rhetorical question, "May a Church call out a Teacher that is no ordained Elder to administer all Ordinances to them?" and replied: "You may as well ask, May a Church act disorderly".¹⁰ Administering the sacraments, Keach believed, was one of the reasons ministers were ordained: "Why were Ministers to be ordained, if others unordained might warrantably do all their Work?"¹¹ With an air of reluctance, he allowed that in extreme cases the "Teacher" might administer the sacraments. "Yet...Necessity has no Law; provided therefore they can't do either, it is better their Teacher be called to do it, than that the Church should be without their Food, and Church-Ordinances neglected..."¹² Keach differed sharply from the general assembly on this question:

Q. Whether an Elder of one Church may administer the Ordinance in other Churches of the same Faith?

A. That an Elder of one Church, may administer the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper to another of the same Faith, being called so to do by the said Church; tho not as

⁹Keach, Glory, p. 16.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 16.

¹²Ibid., pp. 16-17.

Pastor, but as a Minister, necessity being only considered in this Case.¹³

The Second London Confession implies that only ordained persons may administer the sacraments:

These holy appointments [i.e., baptism and the Lord's Supper] are to be administered by those only, who are qualified and thereunto called according to the commission of Christ.¹⁴

Writing in 1655 the Particular Baptist churches meeting at Tiverton took a position closer to the Second London Confession than to the first. They urged churches to call and ordain an officer if none was at hand to administer the ordinances:

...a church of Christ having no officers settled [sic] among them may, with the assistance of those that have been instrumental in the hand of God in their gathering, set apart such brethren to the work of the ministry as are in some good measure, qualified and gifted according to the scripture upon trial in order to further establishment...But, to appoint a person for the administration of ordinances in the church, not being in order to office, we finde not clear in scripture, yet we conclude it not unlawfull in all cases.¹⁵

The Abingdon association of Particular Baptists took a position directly contrary to Keach's:

Query 3. Whether a church of Christ may call forth a brother to administer the ordinance of baptisme that is not in some measure gifted to preach the Gospell, they having a brother or brethren gifted to preach but unfree or by reason of some distemper of body disabled to baptize.

Answer. We judge that it is not warrantable. But in case of necessitie either by the absence of the gifted brother or brethren or such weaknesse of body as doth disable [him to] performe that service the church may call

¹³Narrative of Proceedings (1689), p. 18.

¹⁴Lumpkin, p. 290.

¹⁵Association Records, Part 1, p. 58.

for help from the next adjacent church that may be furnished to supply them....¹⁶

Yet, Keach made it clear that the ministry was not of the esse of the church: "A Church thus constituted ought forthwith to choose them a Pastor, Elder or Elders, and Deacons, (we reading of no other Officers, or Offices abiding in the Church)..."¹⁷ But it seems that he did regard the ministry to be of the bene esse of the church, because proper discipline could not be administered without ordained leadership. Paradoxically, Keach wrote that the pastor should give new members "the right Hand of Fellowship", and then wrote that a newly constituted church should choose officers. It is not clear how a church was to constitute itself without the presence of ordained officers.

Keach seems to differ somewhat from other Baptists in the stress he places on the role of the ministry in the church. B.R. White has pointed out that in the 1644 Confession "the ministry was considered necessary only for the 'better' well-being of the church".¹⁸ The Second London Confession (1677/88) also implies that the ministry is not of the esse of the church: "A particular Church gathered, and compleatly Organized, according to the mind of Christ, consists of Officers, and Members..."¹⁹ If the word "compleatly" is emphasised,

¹⁶Association Records (Part 3), p. 158.

¹⁷Keach, Glory, p. 7.

¹⁸B.R. White, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644", Journal of Theological Studies 19, Pt. 2 (Oct. 1968), p. 581.

¹⁹Lumpkin, p. 287.

then one could argue that the 1677/88 Confession allowed that a church could be gathered and organized, but not quite "compleat" without officers. The next sentence makes it clear that the church constitutes the officers and not the officers the church: "...the Officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church..."²⁰ Keach also allowed that the *ministry* was for the well-being of the church and not essential to the esse, yet it is not clear how Keach imagined that a church could be constituted in the absence of officers.

iii. The work and status of the minister.

The work and status of the minister involves three issues: First, what officers should each Baptist congregation have? Secondly, what are the duties of the pastor/elder? Thirdly, what is the pastor/elder's role in discipline?

According to Keach, each Baptist church should have two offices: "A Church...ought...forthwith to choose them a Pastor, Elder or Elders, and Deacons, (we reading of no other Officers, or Offices abiding in the Church)..."²¹ Probably, Keach regarded pastor and elder as equivalent terms. Elders and deacons are the only two offices referred to in the Articles.²² The first edition of the First London

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Keach, Glory, p. 7.

²²Keach, Articles, p. 25.

Confession refers to "Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons", but "pastors" and "teachers" were omitted in subsequent editions.²³ The Second London Confession (1677/88) speaks of "Bishops or Elders".²⁴

Keach was not entirely consistent in writing about the officers of a church. Elsewhere, he spoke of the church's "Teacher".²⁵ The Glory of a True Church does not list "teacher" among the officers of the church, and Keach nowhere explained what the duties of a "teacher" were. However, among the names authorizing Keach's Articles of Faith (1697), Keach's son-in-law and successor-to-be, Benjamin Stinton, is identified as the "Teacher" of the Horsleydown congregation. Apparently, Keach believed that any properly organized church would have pastors or elders and deacons, but that some churches might have a teacher or teachers, as well.

During the Commonwealth, the Particular Baptists of South Wales drew up the following list of church officers:

Now there are to continue in the Church these officers:

1. Pastors.
2. Teachers.
3. Helps, or those who rule.

These three are called Elders, Bishops, Watchmen,
etc....²⁶

Although not included in the list, they also mentioned deacons, widows, and "ordinary prophets".²⁷ This list suggests that "teacher"

²³Lumpkin, p. 166.

²⁴Ibid., p. 287.

²⁵Keach, Glory, pp. 16-17.

²⁶Association Records (Part 1), pp. 10-11.

²⁷Ibid.

may have been a fairly common office in Particular Baptist churches of the period and also shows that the list of offices was quite fluid and varied from one place to another.

By addressing polity alone apart from doctrine, Keach was able to dwell on the duties of pastors and deacons in more detail than either the 1644 Confession or the 1677/88 Confession. In the 1644 document pastors were enjoined "to prophesie, according to the proportion of faith, and so teach publickly the Word of God, for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the Church".²⁸ The Second London Confession directed pastors "...constantly to attend the Service of Christ, in his Churches, in the Ministry of the Word, and Prayer, with watching for their Souls, as they that must give an account to him; it is incumbent on the Churches to whom they Minister..."²⁹

Keach, while he gave due weight to the prophetic and sacramental aspect of the ministerial task, laid more stress on pastoral duties:

1. ...The work of a Pastor is to preach the Word of Christ, or to feed the Flock, and to administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel which belong to his Sacred Office, and to be faithful and laborious therein...

2. A Pastor is to visit his Flock, to know their state, and to watch over them...

3. To pray for them at all times and with them also when sent for, and desired, and as Opportunity serves; and to sympathize with them in every State and condition, with all Love and Compassion.³⁰

Keach was the first Particular Baptist to outline the duties of deacons. Both the first and second London confessions neglect this

²⁸Lumpkin, p. 168.

²⁹Ibid., p. 287.

³⁰Keach, Glory, pp. 8-9.

point completely:

The Work of Deacons is to serve Tables, viz. to see to provide for the Lord's Table, the Minister's Table, and the Poor's Table. (1) They should provide Bread and Wine for the Lord's Table. (2) See that every Member contributes to the Maintenance of the Ministry, according to their Ability, and their own voluntary Subscription or Obligation. (3) That each Member do give weekly to the Poor, as God has blessed him. (4) Also visit the Poor, and know their Condition as much as in them lies; that none, especially the aged Widows, be neglected.³¹

As pointed out in the previous section, Keach believed that a pastor or elder was necessary for the administration of the sacraments. This implies a very high evaluation of the status and authority of the ministry. Keach made a sharp distinction between lay and ordained and implied that the ordained have a higher status than lay church members: "...how severely did God deal of old with such that meddled with the Priests Work and Office, who were not of the Priesthood, not called by him to administer in holy things!"³²

This was at odds with the First London Confession (1644). With regard to this document, B.R. White wrote that "...there can be little doubt that among these early Particular Baptists the position accorded to the ministry was measurably less significant than it had been among the Separatists...." and as evidence pointed out that under its terms any "preaching disciple" could administer the sacraments.³³ If we use the issue of who may administer the sacraments as a way of judging the

³¹Ibid., pp. 10-11.

³²Keach, Glory, p. 17.

³³B.R. White, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644", Journal of Theological Studies 19, Pt. 2, (Oct. 1968), p. 581.

status of the ministry, then Keach evaluated the ministry in a significantly higher way than did the 1644 Confession. In the section "What tends to the Glory and Beauty of a true Gospel-Church", Keach wrote that "[t]he Glory and Beauty of a Congregation is the more manifest, when the Authority of the Church, and the Dignity of the Pastoral Office is maintained".³⁴

Finally, Keach believed that the pastor/elder had an essential role in discipline; according to The Glory of a true Church, only a pastor could exercise discipline against a pastor: Q. How ought a Pastor to be dealt withal, if he to the knowledge of the Church, or any Members thereof, walketh disorderly, and unworthily of his Sacred Office, and Membership?

Answ. ...intreat him as a Father, and not rebuke him as there [sic] Equal, much less as their Inferiour...But before he be dealt with they must appoint one from among themselves, qualifyd for the work of a Pastor, to execute the Church's Censure against him...³⁵

Keeping in mind the issue of sacramental administration, and weighing Keach's other comments on the authority and dignity of the presbyteral office, it appears that the Particular Baptists more or less steadily increased the emphasis they placed upon the status and authority of the minister. The First London Confession (1644) would allow any "preaching disciple". The Second London Confession (1677/88) does not actually say that only elders or deacons could administer the sacraments, but implies that sacramental duties belong to the churches' ordained officers. However, writing in 1697, Keach regarded the administration of the sacraments as "Priests Work" and

³⁴Keach, Glory, p. 62.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 37-38.

recommended that lay persons not "meddle" with "holy things".

iv. Discipline and duties.

Having dealt quite briefly with the nature of the church, and the duties of pastors and deacons, Keach turned his attention to church members' duties and discipline. The section dealing with discipline and lay members' duties is remarkable for its length. One of the justifiable assumptions to be drawn from the comparative length of the sections of The Glory of a True Church is that it is more a document for lay persons than ministers, or at least shows that Keach's interest was more in what lay persons should and should not do than in what their leaders should and should not do. The "work of a Pastor, Bishop or Overseer" is dealt with in two pages; the "Office and Work of Deacons" in one page; "Of the Duty of Church-Members to their Pastor" takes seven pages.

It is likely that Keach's concern with the duties of lay persons and church discipline was much influenced by his pastoral experience. Three experiences in particular reverberate through the pages of The Glory of a True Church. Most important was the hymn singing controversy, but Keach also alluded to a time when he was accused of wrong-doing and to the issue of ministerial maintenance.

When Keach wrote of the duty of church members to "vindicate" their pastor "from the unjust Charges of evil Men",³⁶ he appears to

³⁶Ibid., p. 13: "It is their Duty to take care to vindicate them from the unjust Charges of evil Men, or Tongue of Infamy, and not to take up a Reproach against them by report, nor to grieve their

have been echoing an occasion on which he was charged of uncleanness. He was vindicated on this occasion when some of his neighbors and friends, including two members of Parliament, signed a letter clearing him of the charge.³⁷

Keach also dealt with the issue of ministerial maintenance: "It is their Duty to provide a comfortable Maintenance for them and their Families, sutable [sic] to their State and Condition".³⁸

When Keach spoke of "such who refuse to adhere to what the Pastor commands and exhorts to", it is difficult not to believe that he was thinking of the singing controversy.³⁹ He was of one mind with the general assembly about the means which an excommunicated church member could use to seek redress from his church. The aggrieved party was directed to a sister church for help but not to the general assembly:

Q. Suppose a Member should think himself Oppressed by the Church; or should be Unjustly dealt with; either Withdrawn from, or Excommunicated, has he no Relief left him?

Answ. We believe he hath Relief...the way proposed, and

Spirits, or weaken their Hands".

³⁷Crosby gives a full account of this incident (vol. 4, pp. 287-290).

³⁸Keach, Glory, p. 13.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 24-25: "It appears that such who refuse to adhere to what the Pastor commands and exhorts to, in the Name of Christ, are to be deemed disorderly Persons, as such are who meet not with the Church when assembled together to worship God, or that neglect private or family Prayer, or neglect their attendance on the Lord's Supper, or to contribute to the necessary Charges of the Church, or suffer any Evils unreproved in their Children; all such may be lookt upon disorderly Walkers, and ought to be proceeded against according to this Rule, or divulge the private Resolves of the Church, as well as in many like cases".

agreed to, in a general Assembly, held in London, 1692. of the Elders, Ministers and Messengers of our Churches, we approve of, which is this; viz. The grieved or injured Person may make his Application to a Sister-Church for Communion...⁴⁰

Actually, the 1692 assembly did not address this issue. Keach may have been thinking of the 1691 assembly:

Query 1. Whether a Person Excommunicated, or withdrawn from by the Church he is in Fellowship with, and judgeth himself wronged therein, may not have Relief in that Case?

Carried in the Affirmative.

Query 2. What then is the Regular way such a Person ought to take for Relief?

1. Such a Person ought (after all due endeavours in Humility and Love to satisfy the Church so dealing with him, of the wrong done him therein, and if not relieved thereby) to address himself to some other Church for Communion.

The assembly went on to suggest that in such a case the church to whom the excommunicated member applied for membership should "enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of the Church's dealing with the said Person" and that the church which issued the sentence of excommunication should "give a full and true Account...from the Mutual Obligation that one Church stands in to another". Finally, if it were determined that the person had been wrongfully excommunicated, then the church to which he applied for membership (after his excommunication) "ought...to endeavour to restore the Person dealt with to his former Communion, if he shall desire it, or else to receive him into Communion with themselves".⁴¹ However, the assembly erected no judicial machinery which could have overseen and enforced such a procedure. Such machinery would have wholly inconsistent with the

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 38-39.

⁴¹Narrative of Proceedings (1691), pp. 11-12.

implications of Chapter XXVI, "Of the Church" of the Second London Confession:

...it is according to the mind of Christ, that many Churches holding communion together, do by their messengers meet to consider, and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the Churches concerned; howbeit these messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any Church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any Churches, or Persons: or to impose their determination on the Churches, or Officers.⁴²

Keach appears to have been inconsistent about the role of sister churches in the business of discipline. He had tried to use the apparatus of the general assembly to condemn the anti-singers in his church. The anti-singers accused Keach of having Thomas Whinnel introduce a motion condemning them on the last day of the 1690 assembly.⁴³ Not only had nearly all the members left for home by then, but the previous assembly had specifically forsworn such "superintendency".⁴⁴ Thus, it seems that Keach wanted the assembly to use its authority to back up his disciplinary decisions but did not believe that the assembly had a role in hearing the case of an unjustly excommunicated church member.

There is one conspicuous omission from Keach's outline of ecclesiastical polity; he neglected to mention the role of the

⁴²Second London Confession (1677/88), Chapter XXVI, para. 15. Lumpkin, p. 288.

⁴³Maze Pond Church Book, vol. I, p. 35.

⁴⁴Narrative of Proceedings (1689), p. 10: "...we disclaim all manner of Superiority, Superintendency, over the Churches; and that we have no Authority or Power, to prescribe or impose any thing upon the Faith or Practice of any of the Churches of Christ".

association. Keach did not hold aloof from other pastors; he was present at each of the general assemblies; he signed his name to the 1688 edition of the Second London Confession; and his catechism and defense of ministerial maintenance received the endorsement of the assembly. On the other hand, he was in large part to blame for the singing controversy and was reprimanded for his part in it by the assembly, although they ultimately took his part against Marlow. There may be some truth to Whitley's charge that Keach was an ecclesiastical "strong man" who preferred to withdraw from an assembly he was unable to dominate.⁴⁵

Keach was aware of the shortcomings of pastors, as well as the shortcomings of members. If the account of Keach's behaviour in the singing dispute as recorded by the anti-singers is to be trusted, then it shows him to have been an emotional and perhaps easily angered person. It may have been with such scenes vivid in his memory that Keach wrote

Another thing that tends to disquiet the Peace of the Church is, when there are any undue heats of Spirit, or Passion shewed in the Pastor, or others, in managing the Discipline of the Church. Have we not found by experience the sad effect of this? therefore things must be always managed with coolness, and sweetness of Spirit, and moderation; every Brother having liberty to speak his mind, and not to be interrupted, until he has done; nor above one speak at once.⁴⁶

Other Baptists were concerned about the role of discipline and lay members' duties, as well as Keach. The First London Confession

⁴⁵Whitley, A History of British Baptists, p. 178.

⁴⁶Keach, Glory, pp. 49-50.

notes that

Christ has...given power to his whole Church to receive in and cast out, by way of Excommunication...and this power is given to every particular Congregation, and not one particular person, either member or Officer, but the whole.⁴⁷

Keach did not so clearly designate the agent of discipline: "The Power of the Keys, or to receive in and shut out of the Congregation, is committed unto the Church...."⁴⁸ However, his instructions regarding disciplinary procedures against a pastor require another pastor to pronounce the censure. The Second London Confession is equally vague:

To each of these Churches thus gathered, according to his mind, declared in his word, he hath given all that power and authority, which is any way needfull, for their carrying on that order in worship, and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe; with commands, and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power.⁴⁹

According to the First London Confession, "...every particular member of each Church...ought to be subject to this censure and judgement of Christ..." However, the 1644 confession was speaking of a "censure and judgement" wielded by the churches as a whole. Keach laid more stress on submission to the pastor: "It appears that such who refuse to adhere to what the Pastor commands and exhorts to, in the Name of Christ, are to be deemed disorderly Persons..."⁵⁰

⁴⁷First London Confession (1644), Article XLII. Lumpkin, p. 168.

⁴⁸Keach, Glory, p. 20.

⁴⁹Second London Confession (1677/88), Chapter XXVI, para. 7. Lumpkin, pp. 286-287.

⁵⁰Keach, Glory, pp. 24-25. Cf. the decision of the Particular Baptist churches of South Wales (sixth general meeting, 30-31 August 1654): "In relation to their elders, they are to honour them...Submit

For Keach the lay person's chief duty was to be present when the church assembled for worship, especially for celebrations of the Lord's Supper. A member could not be excused from the Lord's Day assembly to hear the minister of another church: "When Members take liberty to hear at other Places, when the Church is assembled to worship God: this is nothing less than a breaking their Covenant with the Church, and may soon dissolve any Church".⁵¹ Nor could a member absent himself from the Lord's Table on the grounds that a brother or sister was leading an ungodly life: "Another disorder is this, When Members refuse to communicate with the Church at the Lord's-table, because some person, or persons, they think are guilty of Evil, and yet they have not proceeded with them according to Rule".⁵² The duty of gathering with one's sister and brothers for worship was paramount. As Keach succinctly observed: "Live Coals separated soon die".⁵³

iv. Conclusion.

The Glory of a True Church is evidently a document of a church "coming of age". It is no longer the polity of a threatened sect but of a church seeking to establish itself and be accepted. Keach

to and obey them...Not to grieve them...Nor to speak roughly to them...Nor hastily to receive an accusation against them..." (Association Records (Part 1), p. 12.)

⁵¹Keach, Glory, p. 37.

⁵²Ibid., p. 52.

⁵³Ibid., p. 66.

probably laid greater stress on the authority and dignity of the pastoral office than other Baptists of the period, but when his opinions are compared with other contemporary documents, it is clear that Keach was a leader in a general movement. He also emphasised pastoral duties. Such an emphasis is what one would expect in a church beginning to turn its primary attention away from winning converts and toward the nurture of the faithful. Finally, Keach's extensive treatment of the duties of church members suggests the need for discipline in a second-generation church which no longer has the fervor of the original band of converts.

II. The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated.

i. Introduction.

In 1688 Benjamin Keach's colleagues, Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, William Collins, John Harris, George Barret, Richard Adams, Isaac Lamb, Edward Man, Leonard Harrison, and Hercules Collins, urged him to write a book defending the financial support of Baptist ministers by their churches. The topic was much discussed by the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in London in 1689:

We cannot but bewail that great Evil, and neglect of Duty in many Churches concerning the Ministry...In neglecting to make that Gospel-Provision for their Maintenance, according to their Abilities, by which means many of them are so incumbred with Worldly Affairs, that they are not able to perform the Duties of their holy Calling, in preaching the Gospel, and watching over their respective Flocks.⁵⁵

The general assembly subsequently recommended the book:

Moreover, this Assembly do [sic] declare their Approbation of a certain little Book, lately recommended by divers Elders dwelling in and about the City of London, Intituled, The Ministers Maintenance Vindicated. And it is their Request that the said Treatise be dispersed amongst all our respective Congregations; and it is desired that some Brethren of each Church take Care to dispose of the same accordingly.⁵⁶

⁵⁵A Narrative of the Proceedings (1689), p. 4. Discussion carries on through p. 6.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 18. One of the questions addressed at the assembly was, "Q. Whether it is not the Duty of every Church of Christ to maintain such Ministers as are set apart by them, by allowing them comfortable Maintenance according to their Ability? A. Concluded in the Affirmative..." (p. 13.)

Oddly, The Gospel Minister's Maintenance was published anonymously. That it was written by Keach, however, is verified by Crosby.⁵⁷ It may be that the Baptist pastors who urged Keach to write reasoned that it would be more influential if published under their joint authority.

ii. Baptist attitudes toward ministerial maintenance.

The fact that Keach wrote The Gospel Minister's Maintenance and that he was urged to do so by his fellow ministers indicates that the issue of the churches' financial support of their ministers had become a problem. Records show that in the earliest period of their expansion Particular Baptists did discuss ministerial maintenance, but not precisely in the terms which Keach used.

During the Commonwealth period Baptist assemblies routinely discussed and condemned the practice of minister's receiving state support. The Leominster Church Book includes a letter written in 1658 from Benjamin Cox to Richard Harrison in which Cox criticizes Harrison for receiving pay from the state:

...have you forgotten that some maintenance from churches is expressly justified by the gospell rule in the New Testament? Mind againe, Gal. 6.6; I. Cor. 9.4-11; Phil. 4.10, 14-18; I. Tim. 5.17f. Can you produce the like gosple [sic] allowance of your maintenance? [i.e., of state maintenance.]⁵⁸

⁵⁷Crosby discusses The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated on pp. 292-298 of vol. 4.

⁵⁸Association Records (Part 1), p. 44.

The letter shows that although state maintenance was condemned as contrary to the New Testament, maintenance of the minister by his church was accepted. Other Baptist associations condemning state maintenance were the Midlands association (Morton Hinmarsh, 24 October 1655); the West Country association (Wells, 8-10 April 1656; Bridgewater, 5-6 November 1656; Tiverton, Devon, 15-16 September 1657);⁵⁹ and the Abingdon association (Tetsworth, 11 March 1656).⁶⁰

Although Baptists appear to have been generally opposed to state maintenance, there was no general opposition to ministerial maintenance, as such. Other Baptists of the period were in favour of adequate financial support of Baptist ministers. In 1650, the an association of Particular Baptist churches in South Wales raised 30 pounds "towards the maintenance of the ministry".⁶¹ In 1657, some London elders issued a letter in which they urged the churches to provided adequate maintenance of their ministers:

It hath bene for some time sadly observed by us that there hath appeared a great neglect in the churches in taking care to provide a maintenance for the comfortable supply of a [spiritual] ministerie, according to what the rule doth require, which hath brought some to pinching povertie, run others upon desperate temptations and occasioned some to fall into sinfull disorders to the dishonour of their high and holy calling. And, we feare, made the work of the ministrie not onely uncomfotable to the teachers but unprofitable to the hearers.⁶²

⁵⁹Ibid., Part 2, pp. 22-23, 62, 64, and 69.

⁶⁰Ibid., Part 3, p. 151.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 3.

⁶²Association Records (Part 2), p. 173.

Article XXVIII of the First London Confession (1644) insists that "the due maintenance of the Officers aforesaid, should be the free and voluntary communication of the Church, that according to Christs Ordinance, they that preach the Gospel, should live on the Gospel".⁶³ However, this clause disappears from the 1651 and 1652 editions of the confession. William L. Lumpkin suggests that it disappeared due to Quaker influence.⁶⁴ The fact that Particular Baptists elsewhere in the 1650s objected to state maintenance but not to ministerial maintenance as such, and that records show that churches sometimes did pay their ministers raises doubts about Lumpkin's theory.

It is important to note that these examples are taken from the Commonwealth period. At that time the discussion of ministerial maintenance centred around the question of state support of ministers. Those were days of relative freedom for Baptists; after the Restoration there was no longer any question of the state supporting Baptist ministers, and the issue of ministerial maintenance was eclipsed by the far more important business of surviving. Thus it was not until the accession of William and Mary that Baptists began to think again about the churches' responsibility to provide financial support for their ministers.

The Second London Confession (1677/88) makes provision for the payment of ministers:

...it is incumbent on the Churches to whom they Minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to

⁶³Lumpkin, p. 166.

⁶⁴Ibid.

their ability, so as they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in Secular Affairs; and may also be capable of exercising Hospitality towards others; and this is required by the Law of Nature, and by the Express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.⁶⁵

Crosby notes that the "glorious Revolution in 1688" released "the Protestant Dissenters from their hardships which they had long suffered from the established church", and that as a consequence, "they endeavoured a reformation in this matter", i.e., the maintenance of the ministry.⁶⁶ Keach also implies that the "glorious Revolution" had made it possible to set this matter to rights. He noted that the "late Storms of Persecution" hindered "Christ's Spiritual Harvest-men". The toleration granted under William and Mary

opened a great Door for the Gospel, and sent us Blessed Harvest Weather, and the Labourers alas! being also very few, though the Harvest is very great: How ought we to stick to our Business?⁶⁷

iii. Reasons for writing The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated.

Keach appears to have had three principal reasons for writing The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated. First, he was responding to his own situation. Secondly, Keach and other Particular Baptist leaders were concerned to show Anglicans, as well as their

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 287-288.

⁶⁶Crosby, vol. 4, p. 294.

⁶⁷Keach, The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated, p. 102.

Nonconformist colleagues, that the term "Anabaptist" did not apply to them. Thirdly, Keach vindicated the right of ministers to financial support from their congregations because of his exalted view of the task and office of the minister.

The nature of the financial arrangements between Keach and the Horsleydown church cannot be recovered. What is known is that Keach was originally trained as a tailor,⁶⁸ and that while in London he bought the rights to manufacture a "tincture of sugar plumbs" from a physician in his congregation.⁶⁹ Furthermore, in addition to writing popular books, he kept a bookshop.⁷⁰ So, when Keach wrote of "working at Trades and Callings" tending "to the hinderance of the promulgation of the Gospel",⁷¹ he may well have been describing his own situation.

A charge frequently levelled at the Baptists by the Anglicans (and to a lesser extent by the Presbyterians) was that their ministers were mere "mechanicks" and "tradesmen". As is evident in Keach's own case, there was some force to the charge. Few of the Particular Baptists were "were brought up to Learning, and who are utterly uncapable to follow Secular Trades and Callings".⁷² One of the reasons

⁶⁸The Calendar of State Papers' account of his first arrest refers to him as a tailor and "a teacher in their new-fangled way" (Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1663-64, p. 595.)

⁶⁹Crosby, vol. 3, p. 147.

⁷⁰The title page of George Keith's The Christian Quaker (1693) reads: "Printed in Pennsylvania, [sic] and reprinted in London for Benjamin Keach, and are to be sold by him at his House near Horse-lie-down..."

⁷¹Ibid., p. 100.

⁷²Ibid., p. 52.

for the writing and publication of The Gospel Minister's Maintenance was to clear the Baptists from this "scandal" and from the charge that, like the Continental Anabaptists, they held their possessions in common. The "Advertisement" placed before the beginning of the text of The Gospel Minister's Maintenance refers to the thirty-eighth of the Thirty-nine Articles: "The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the Right, Title and Possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsly boast". The "Advertisement" asserts that

we know none called Anabaptists in England, nor any where else, who hold that absurd or rotten Principle; but do testifie our dislike and abhorrence of it, and verily believe, as 'tis intimated in the said Article, That the Goods, Riches, and Possessions of all Christians, as touching the right and title of the same are their own, as the Holy Scripture witnesses, Acts 5.4.

The connection between the thirty-eighth article and The Gospel Minister's Maintenance is not entirely clear. The "Advertisement" goes on to say that "we thought it not amiss to publish this to clear our selves and our Brethren, from the scandal, which possibly some may cast upon us since these Articles...are more generally known and examined by many People". The Gospel Minister's Maintenance, however, was not a vindication of the principle of private ownership. The similarities between the English Baptists and the Anabaptists of Germany and Switzerland may have been strengthened by the fact that the pastors of both groups were self-supporting.

That the Particular Baptists were somewhat concerned about their "respectability", seems evident, not only from The Gospel Minister's Maintenance, but also from the fact that at their first general

assembly, they set up a fund for the training of ministers. The fund was "[t]o assist those Members that shall be found in any of the aforesaid Churches, that are disposed for Study, have an inviting Gift, and are sound in Fundamentals, in attaining to the knowledg and understanding of the Languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew".⁷³ The issue of "respectability" may have been one of the reasons that the 1692 assembly censured of the author of A Sober Reply. Murdina MacDonald suggests that the censure was due in part to that book's suggestion that Particular Baptists did not provide adequate compensation for their ministers and to their sensitivity to that charge.⁷⁴

A third reason for vindicating ministerial maintenance was Keach's exalted view of the ministry. This had three aspects: First, he believed that the task of the minister was divinely ordained. Secondly, he believed that by adequately compensating their ministers, the churches would enable them to spend more time on ministerial tasks. Thirdly, he feared that by not providing adequate compensation to their ministers, the most capable men would choose not to go into the ministry.

The conclusion of The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated is a panegyric on the ministry entitled "The Great and Weighty Work of a True Gospel Minister Opened".⁷⁵ Keach employed a wealth of lofty

⁷³A Narrative of the Proceedings (1689), p. 12.

⁷⁴Murdina MacDonald, "London Calvinistic Baptists, 1689-1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration", p. 65.

⁷⁵Keach, The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated, pp. 113ff.

titles for ministers: "Ambassador of Christ",⁷⁶ "Stewards of the Mysteries of God",⁷⁷ "Shepherds ... Guides ... Seers ... Watchmen ... Planters, Builders, and Labourers ... Fathers, Angels, Ambassadors, Stars and Rulers".⁷⁸

Another way of gauging the regard which Keach had for pastoral ministry is to observe that he located the foundation of the ministry in Christ's sending of the Seventy: In commenting on the call of the Twelve and the sending out of the Seventy in Mark 3.13-19, Keach wrote, "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..."⁷⁹ After the Ascension, Christ's call to ministry comes through the churches: "Christ being now in Heaven, and an extraordinary Call being ceased, the Scriptures being a perfect and standing Rule to the Church through all Ages, he has committed this Care to herself...to provide Ministers for her own Edification..."⁸⁰ So, Keach regarded ministers to be, in a sense, successors to the apostles.

The most important reason for Keach's high estimation of the ministry was his belief that preaching was God's normal "means of

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 113.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 122.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 124.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 6.

grace" for converting souls. According to Keach Christ "committed the Management of his Glorious Interests" to ministers and made them "principal Agent[s], and efficient Cause...in the Application of the purchase of Man's Salvation..."⁸¹

The minister's task, according to Keach, consists in more than sermon preparation: "...we conclude to Preach one or two Sermons in a Week is the least part of his Work, and the least indeed, if his Matter be not so well prepared and digested..."⁸² He is also to visit those under his care: "There is another great Duty lyes upon them, which is, Visiting the Members of the Church under their Care, so that they [31] may know the State of their Flock..."⁸³ It would be nearly impossible for a minister to discharge these duties faithfully and follow a secular calling simultaneously:

What would you have poor men to do, that have (may be) no time to spare to give themselves up to the Study of the Scriptures, nor no useful Books and proper helps to improve and assist them in their Study: or if they have, yet their circumstances in the World will not afford them so much leisure from their worldly Business, to read and meditate upon the Word, so as well to digest what they have to

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 114-116. Cf. Benjamin Keach, A Golden Mine (1694), p. 131: "The Ordinance of Preaching, or Administration of the Gospel, is a rich Pasture especially when it is preached powerfully by the Influence and Demonstration of the Spirit; the opening and explaining the Word of the Gospel, is like the opening the Pasture-Gate, and so letting the Sheep into it. Did not our Hearts burn within us, while he talked with us, and opened the Scriptures? 'Tis like the opening of the Box of precious Ointment, causing a sweet Perfume in the Soul...the Work of the Ministry is to open the Scripture...The Preaching the Gospel, is the feeding of the Soul".

⁸²Keach, The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated, p. 30.

⁸³Ibid.

deliver to the People.⁸⁴

Keach pointed out the obvious fact that a man capable of being an effective minister would also be able to follow a "secular" vocation:

You do not chuse such Men to be your Pastors, or Ministers, who are of the lowest of the People; but such as may be allowed to have a share of Parts, Common Prudence, and Abilitys for Business with other Persons; and some of them could manage Trades or fall into other Employments, and get Estates as well as you, if they were not Devoted to a better Service....⁸⁵

The churches' reluctance to maintain their ministers discouraged some capable men from considering the ministry:

Nay to be plain with you, Have not some in a few Years last [sic] past seen to their great trouble and grief, how this neglect and omission of Duty hath laid divers hopeful young Men, who were indued with excellent Gifts for the Ministry under great Temptations, even so far as to refuse utterly the exercise of their Gifts to the Profit and Edification of the Churches; least [sic] in process of time they should be called forth to a Pastoral Charge, and thereby exposed to Snares and Poverty in the World...⁸⁶

iv. Conclusion.

The accession of William of Orange and the subsequent Toleration Act not only meant wonderful new possibilities for English Baptists but new problems, as well. While they were a struggling, threatened sect, compensation of ministers was not an issue; all their energies were directed toward survival. Toleration allowed England's Baptists

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 59.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 54.

to direct their energies outward in evangelism and growth, and the ministers of growing churches must have found it difficult to find time both to support themselves and their families and to serve the needs of their congregations.

Keach responded to this situation with The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated, the most practical of his books. In it he was writing from his own personal experience and the experience he had observed of his fellow pastors. Judging from the names affixed to the recommendatory epistle, it was also the book which received the most general approval from his fellow Baptist ministers. Although addressed to a specific problem in the Baptist churches, i.e., the lack of adequate compensation for ministers, it also had a wider audience in view: the Anglicans and Nonconformists who held Baptist ministers in contempt for their lack of training. Keach's attempt to vindicate ministers' maintenance was part of a larger movement in the Baptist churches to improve the status of the ministry; the same assembly that gave its imprimatur to The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated also began a fund for training ministers. His apology for ministerial maintenance shows that Keach was aware of and responsive to the needs and concerns of his community and was accepted as a leader in an attempt to address those needs and concerns.

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

i. Summary.

This dissertation has been organized to present Benjamin Keach's views on worship and practical theology. The great majority of his works fit comfortably into one of those two categories.

It is impossible to doubt that worship was much on Keach's mind. From the beginning to the end of his career he struggled with the question, "What does the New Testament teach about the proper way to worship?" His earliest publication in this area was Darkness Vanquished (1675), a defense of the laying on of hands for confirmation. The last book he prepared for publication Believer's Baptism: or, Love to the Antient Britains Displayed (1705) dealt with baptism in the New Testament.¹

No Baptist of his generation defended the Baptist understanding of baptism at greater length or with more passion. The 1680s and '90s were the most productive decades of his life; these were the years of the six books on baptism: Gold Refin'd (1689); Paedobaptism Disproved (1691); The Rector Rectified (1692); The Ax Laid to the Root (1693); A Counter-Antidote (1694); and Light Broke forth in Wales (1696).

Also, the 1690s were marked by the bitterness of the singing controversy. On this issue Keach showed himself to be a leader and innovator for English Protestantism in general, and not for the

¹It was identical to an earlier book, Light Broke forth in Wales (1696).

Baptists alone. It is not too much to claim that on 1 March 1691, when Keach's church voted to sing a hymn each Sunday following the sermon, the great tradition of English Protestant hymnody began.

The sermons that Keach published throughout his life form an invaluable, though largely unexplored, treasure for Baptists. The nearly one thousand pages of A Golden Mine Opened (1694) and Gospel Mysteries Unveiled (1701) exceed any two volumes of sermons published by any of Keach's fellow seventeenth century Baptists.

Keach's practical theology was characterized by two passions: a deep conviction that "Baxterian", or conditional justification, was a betrayal of an essential Christian principle and an emphasis on religious education that led Keach to produce not only standard tools of religious education (such as the catechism), but innovative methods, as well (such as the allegories and hymns).

Scholars have much work to do yet. No attempt has been made here to deal with two of Keach's major themes: the polemics against Roman Catholics and Quakers.

ii. Evaluation.

This dissertation concludes with three questions about Benjamin Keach: First, what picture of Keach emerges from this research? Secondly, what picture of late seventeenth century Baptists do we gain from a study of Keach? Thirdly, what insight into practical theology is gained from a study of Keach?

First, what sort of picture of Keach emerges from this study?

The picture of Benjamin Keach built up by this dissertation is incomplete for two reasons: First, much of his life is beyond recovery. He left no journal, letters, or personal papers. The sources that give us the most immediate information about his life are the parish records of Stoke Hammond that record his christening, the church book for the Horsleydown congregation which simply lists births, baptisms, and weddings, and the church book for the Maze Pond congregation (the "anti-singers") which gives an account of Keach from the viewpoint of a group hostile to him. Secondly, this dissertation looks at Keach through the prism of his work as a practical theologian. Although this perspective is limiting, viewing Keach as a practical theologian provides the most comprehensive way of seeing him.

Keach emerges from the shadowy past as both a sympathetic and a harsh figure. Keach was a man of deep passions and strong feelings. When his ally in the singing controversy, Samuel Bagwell, spoke in favour of the anti-singers' request for dismissal from the Horsleydown congregation, Keach replied, "...brother doe you know what you doe, you had as good take a knife and stab me to the Heart".² Surely many pastors at odds with their congregations could sympathize with Keach's reaction to what must have seemed to be betrayal by a friend. Both the admirable and the reprehensible in Keach's character emerged during the singing controversy. He could also be insultingly condescending, as when Mary Leader explained why she could not in good

²Maze Pond Church Book, MS, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, vol. I, p. 32.

conscience join in or tolerate corporate singing: "...then he replied quick upon her, and looking ernistly at her, saying you have learnt a fine piece of Relidgion ha'nt you, I confess I am troubled to see you that are but a Babe should pretend to such knowlidg above others..."³ Wounded pride and haughty anger characterized Keach's reactions, and he was also capable of political manipulation. It can hardly be doubted that Keach was in some way involved with Thomas Whinnel's attempt to have the 1691 Particular Baptist Assembly censure the anti-singers, although the assembly had renounced that kind of oversight.⁴

Yet Keach could also be moved by beauty. His advocacy of hymn singing points to a love of music. His epic, The Glorious Lover, although poor poetry, shows that Keach was thoroughly familiar with Milton's Paradise Lost, and loved such poetry, even though he could not achieve such heights himself.

Secondly, what picture of late seventeenth century Baptists do we gain from a study of Keach? In the late 1680s and 1690s Baptist churches had arrived at a critical stage. They were no longer severely persecuted. The first generation of leaders were dying or dead (Kiffin died in 1701 and Knollys died in 1691.) Keach's writings clearly show the tensions experienced by a group in transition from being a sect to being a church. For example, a threatened sect would not expend energy debating the propriety of corporate hymn singing, the laying on of hands, or the payment of stipends to pastors.

³Maze Pond Church Book, vol. I, pp. 65f.

⁴See p. 137.

Benjamin Keach's writings on practical theology and worship show that he stood at a critical theological juncture for seventeenth century Baptists. Keach himself wrote of the "sad witherings" being experienced by Particular Baptists in his day. Two aspects of Keach's work point toward a movement with profound consequences for Baptists in the eighteenth century: his high Calvinist soteriology and his emphasis on the importance of awakening the "affections" in preaching and hymn-singing.

First, Keach defended and developed the doctrine of unconditional justification, an idea that had profound consequences for the pastoral task. In the following generation, Baptists such as John Gill (who followed Keach and Stinton as pastor of Horsleydown) took this doctrine in a hyper-Calvinist direction. At least two Baptist leaders, John Skepp (d. 1721) and John Brine (1703-1756), explicitly rejected issuing calls to conversion.⁵

Another effect of hyper-Calvinism was to douse Baptist enthusiasm for missions to the heathen. Here, Keach displays a significant

degree of sympathy for the hyper-Calvinist position: [God] might have sent the whole Lump of fallen Mankind to Hell ... Why we, and not those in India, and few or none in England? why should we have the Gospel here in this Isle, and almost all the Word [sic] lie in the Darkness of Popery, Mahometanism, or Paganism? If Christ died for all, why is not the Gospel preached to all? ... the Gospel he doth not give to all, nor his Spirit, Faith, and other Gifts that are necessary to Salvation, to many thousands in the world; therefore he did not give his Son to die to save them all.⁶

Keach's attitude was much like that which Baptist missionary William

⁵See Leon McBeth, The Baptist Heritage, pp. 174-176.

⁶Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk II, pp. 75-76.

Carey (1761-1834) encountered. At a meeting of the Ministers' Fraternal of the Northampton Baptist Association in 1787 Carey proposed the following topic for discussion: "Whether the command given the apostles to teach all nations was not binding on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world." Distinguished Baptist leader John Ryland, Sr., reportedly replied: "Sit down young man. You are an enthusiast! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without consulting you or me."⁷ That was not far from the attitude implied in the excerpt from Keach's sermon quoted above.

Secondly, in his hymns Keach anticipated the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century. One of the distinctive notes in Keach's rationale for hymn singing is his emphasis on the joy which it produces. Such joy, Keach insists, is "no natural or counterfeit Joy".⁸ This is similar to his reasoning for preaching on the parables: They are uniquely suited to "move upon our Affections".⁹ Keach's interest in moving the "affections", shows him to have been a precursor of Wesley. In his "Preface" to A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the People called Methodists (1780), John Wesley expressed the hope that his hymns would serve "as a means of raising or quickening the spirit of devotion".¹⁰ Thus, Keach the arch-Calvinist

⁷Mcbeth, Baptist Heritage, p. 185.

⁸Benjamin Keach, Breach Repaired, pp. 176-177.

⁹Benjamin Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk. I, p. 2. See above, p. 106.

¹⁰John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley, vol. 14, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House (n.d.), p. 342.

was one with Wesley the arch-Arminian in regarding it as legitimate to use means (especially hymns) to awaken piety. Keach's hymns and sermons point in the direction of revivalism, a movement which virtually defined practical theology in America (and to a lesser extent in England) during most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Benjamin Keach bore within himself competing tensions, perhaps even contradictions. On the one hand, he held to a high Calvinist soteriology, and thus he stood firmly on the side of Tobias Crisp against Richard Baxter. In the generation following Keach's death this soteriology was developed by Skepp, Brine, and Gill into a bloodless hyper-Calvinism and led Skepp and Brine to deny the propriety of issuing invitations to conversion. On the other hand, Keach's hymns and sermons reveal him to have been a warm-hearted pastor who did appeal to sinners to "cleave to Christ".¹¹ Keach never saw the contradiction between these apparently irreconcilable themes and never attempted to harmonize them in a systematic theology, because he was a practical theologian. In Keach's theology pastoral concerns subdued logic.

What, if any, enduring contribution did Keach make to the Baptist churches? In the area of religious education, Keach developed a comprehensive program which was not matched by any other Baptist of his generation. Keach not only produced a conventional catechism, he also used hymns and allegories as innovative means of catechesis.

¹¹Benjamin Keach, Gospel Mysteries, Bk. 2, p. 215. See above, p. 116.

In other areas, however, his legacy is more difficult to assess. Keach's hymns and allegories were justly forgotten; his sermons have remained unread by all but a handful of scholars; few are aware of his vigorous apology for believer's baptism; and none know the extent of his contribution to the debate about Baxterian soteriology. Baptists are marginally aware that he taught them to sing, but the Horsleydown church, under the leadership of his next successor but one, John Gill, allowed the practice of laying on of hands for confirmation to lapse and Baptists have not recovered it.

Perhaps the obscurity of Benjamin Keach is not so much due to his inadequacy as to what Keach described as the "sad witherings" of the Baptist church which he was already observing in the 1690s. In the early eighteenth century Baptists and other Dissenters were threatened and divided. Persecution of all Dissenters was renewed under Queen Anne, and the Particular Baptists were unable to take concerted action after the failure of the London assembly. Keach's long pastorate was followed by the brief pastorate of Benjamin Stinton, and Stinton was followed by John Gill, under whom the Horsleydown church split. Keach's heritage was not encouraged by Gill who wanted to put his own mark on the church, and there were no connectional structures to enshrine the principles which Keach had held dear.

Judging from his Articles of Faith and The Glory of a True Church, Keach himself did not value associations. Thus, when he died, much that he had worked for died with him. He had established hymn singing as a part of Baptist worship, but not the laying on of hands. He had defended unconditional justification, while retaining a hold on

the importance of a warmly evangelical theology, but Gill and others turned this high Calvinist soteriology into cold, bloodless hyper-Calvinism.

Three hundred years later, it could be argued that on every count but one (hymn singing) Keach was a failure. That judgment, however, is too harsh. Keach's second book, A Pillar Set Up (1670), was a memorial to his first wife. If the "pillars" Keach set up have, like this one, disappeared from the sight of all but a few historians, that should not be the occasion of a negative judgment on Keach's accomplishments. In his own time he was a useful ornament to the Particular Baptists and a scourge of the (in his opinion) heterodox.

Thirdly, what insight into practical theology is gained from a study of Keach? Are there any contemporary applications for practical theology that we can draw from this study of Keach? There are at least two. First, Keach exhibited a willingness to be innovative that has not always characterised Baptists. He moved forward on the issue of hymn singing, even though the majority of Baptists were opposed to sung corporate praise and the majority of Protestants preferred psalms to hymns. Keach's use of religious allegories as vehicles for religious education reveal him to be innovative, as well. The second point is more difficult to express. Keach seems to have been untroubled by the inconsistency of maintaining, on the one hand, that the ungodly are completely passive in justification and, on the other, of using "means" to awaken the "affections". It suggests that in practical theology pastoral care forces its practitioners to look beyond their doctrinal convictions. Keach the arch-Calvinist may not

have been entirely comfortable with Keach the preacher of "awakening Sermons".¹² The fate of the Particular Baptists in the generation following Keach points to the danger of doctrinal over-consistency. The hyper-Calvinism of eighteenth century Baptists (developed, it must be admitted, from the high Calvinism of Keach and others) resulted in massive declines among Particular Baptists in the generation after Keach's death. To caution against rigid doctrinal consistency is not to advocate latitudinarianism, but it is to argue that in practical theology (as opposed to systematic theology) pastoral concerns should triumph over ideology, as they did in Keach's work.

The point of this exercise is not merely recovery of the hidden past; much as in Keach's day, Baptists today are seeking a way forward in the midst of uncertainty and conflict. The inerrancy controversy which threatens to split the world's largest Baptist body, the Southern Baptist Convention, involves a far more important issue than singing, but if Baptists divide over it, the effect will be the same as the effect of the singing controversy: There will be at least a generation before momentum and direction are recovered. On this issue Baptists would do well to remember that Keach firmly subordinated the doctrine of the Bible to the doctrine of God. If this doctrinal corrective from Keach's theology is not helpful, then perhaps Baptists could adopt his conciliatory spirit toward those with whom he differed. With regard to those who disagreed with them about the laying on of hands and corporate singing, Keach urged his

¹²John Dunton, The Life and Errors of John Dunton (1705), p. 237.

congregation to show "Tenderness, Charity and Moderation to such as differ from you in those Cases... [do] not refuse Communion with them..."¹³

¹³Keach, Articles, "Epistle Dedicatory".

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²Crosby, vol. 4, p. 311. No longer extant.

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