

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

William Erbery (1604-1654) and the Baptists

ALTHOUGH William Erbery¹ has been claimed as a Baptist by two Baptist bibliographers² in this century it remains highly unlikely that he ever was one.³ On the one hand it is certainly true that he believed that Christian Baptism should be administered only to believers but, on the other, it is equally true that he believed contemporary Baptists to be misled themselves and to be the means of misleading others about the essential nature of Christian Baptism. Whilst his writings provide another strand in the rich tapestry composed of the various sectarian theologies and communities of the time they also make their own contribution to the debate about the true nature of Christian Baptism. It is most difficult now to judge how wide his influence was although it is clear that his relations with Morgan Lloyd were affectionate and his contacts with Vavasour Powell not inconsiderable. His thinking, which shared common elements with men like John Saltmarsh and William Sedgwick, seems to have been influenced not only by the Army chaplains alongside whom he served but also by the writings of Thomas Brightman and Jacob Boehme.

The significant features of his own career can be briefly summarized. After his enforced resignation of St. Mary's, Cardiff, in 1638 he gathered round him an Independent congregation on the pattern of⁴ "the Saints of Lanvagh, who being then gathered into a new modelled Church, never left me, till I and mine came into the same form with them." Whilst perhaps still linked with the Parliamentary troops as a chaplain he was denounced for holding views in 1647 which were described by a Presbyterian minister as "Heresie and Blasphemy." Most of the remainder of his life seems to have been spent in London except for occasional visits to Wales and to the provinces. In March 1653⁵ he faced the old charge once more refurbished and extended but was apparently released from house arrest after a hearing before the Committee for Plundered Ministers. He was dead before the publication, with a preface by his disciple John Webster, of his last pamphlet, *The great earthquake*, in July 1654.

In order to understand the inner logic and the possible impact of Erbery's attack on the Baptists and other sectaries of the time it is necessary to grasp something of the dispensational framework within which his thought moved. For him the first dispensation had ended with the Incarnation; the second dispensation, which had begun with Christ's first coming, had eventually been swamped by the

total apostasy⁷ of the Christian Church. Hence, Erbery maintained, he and his contemporaries lived in a situation when⁸ "the Spirit of Christ has departed, and the spirit of Antichrist come with power in the Church," Nevertheless, no doubt partly because of this conviction, like many others of his time, he expected the day would shortly arrive when⁹ "Christ shall come the second time in Spirit and glory, time shall be no more" and the third and final dispensation would be inaugurated. Among these convictions the one which most powerfully influenced his attitude to the churches and sects of his own day was his belief that the coming of the Apostasy had meant the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit.

This led him to insist that all attempts to reconstitute the New Testament framework of church, ministry and sacraments were not merely irrelevant but quite obviously impossible: ¹⁰"this is the confusion which hath ever followed the Churches to this day, to take up the Apostles words and writings, and to apply that to ourselves, which was possible to those times, and proper only to primitive Saints and Churches, where that power was, which is now wanting to all the world." In fact he seems to have believed that it would be possible to reconstitute much of the outward structure of the apostolic Church: what would be impossible, in the absence of the Spirit of God, would be to give the structure any life. At best it would be a hollow shell. Hence the Baptists could gain little comfort from his admission that ¹¹"the baptized Churches . . . are the purest form of Church-fellowship this day" since the sting lay in use of the word "form." The word itself, to William Erbery's mind, almost inevitably and invariably implied ideas of emptiness, powerlessness and lifelessness.

Because he maintained that lifelessness, the absence of the Spirit, was shared by all Christian communities in his day Erbery told his readers, ¹²"I would not . . . bring you out of your Church-fellowship, till the Lord call you; nor call you forth to any particular form . . . nor to any fellowship distinct from the rest of the Saints." The reasons he gave for this rather negative policy were entirely consistent with the rest of his teaching: ¹³"If before the Spirit we go forth to any form, fellowship, or fleshly Ordinance or Office, the presence of the Lord goes not with us." It can now be understood why Erbery was bound to look upon any claim to restore the New Testament pattern of Christian Baptism as a somewhat tasteless gaudying up of a corpse from which life had long since sped.¹⁴

It would be expected that, fundamentally, his criticisms of the Baptists would be very similar to those he made of other groups since they all, to his mind, lacked the life-giving presence of the indwelling Spirit. However, it also becomes clear, when all his unquestioned writings of this period are examined,¹⁵ that he singled out the Baptists in order to refute them point by point¹⁶ and that they seemed to him destined to play a special part in the final darkening

stages of the Apostasy. It should not be thought that Erbery forgot to criticise others: he did not. Both the Fifth Monarchists¹⁷ and the tithe-hungry parsons¹⁸ of his day received his attention but the Independents, among whom he still evidently had a number of friends, were treated more gently.

In the course of his writings Erbery mentioned three separate encounters which he had had with Baptists. Each of them has some interest in itself, each of them serves to underline something of Erbery's attitude towards them. One was at a joint gathering¹⁹ of Baptists and Independents on 22 November 1652. Earlier, when they had come together to pray for a new Parliament,²⁰ he mentioned that Captain Spencer²¹ was present but, on this occasion, at London House near St. Paul's, the first speaker he heard (and approved) was Christopher Feake.²² However, Erbery differed sharply from John Simpson²³ who followed him. His intervention caused disturbance and heated dispute and he shortly took his leave with the words,²⁴ "I see you are all in the dark, and so I bid you Good-night." But he was not to have the last word for, as he reported, "up starts a Martial man, my very good friend in the Army, Major Packer." William Packer²⁵ then accused him of having a "Ranting Spirit"²⁶ which Erbery promptly denied and withdrew in good order leaving, as he said, "the man of War praying."

The main interest in this occasion lies in that part of Erbery's record which suggests that the primary purpose of this gathering of Baptists and Independents was to offer prayer for "a way of propagating the Gospel" and for "an Union" of the churches. Erbery himself was profoundly pessimistic about the possibility of such a union since, on his reading of the situation and of the Scriptures, he said, ²⁷"never shall all the Saints unite . . . till wrath be poured forth on all their Forms . . . Then shall the Spirit come from on high, and gather up all the Saints and men in God."

His second recorded encounter with a Baptist took place in Glamorgan. There he met ²⁸"Mr. Davis of Kelligare" who had come, Erbery believed, deliberately to counter the teaching he intended to give at ²⁹"Lantrishant." As an orthodox Calvinist David Davies apparently considered that Erbery, whose Arminian sympathies were fairly clear, was making too open an offer of the Gospel to his congregation. In reply Davies stressed that "Straight is the Gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life" and Erbery answered that the assertion that few would be saved was hardly "Gospel and glad tydings to all people." The clash seems to have been sharp and, for the moment, bitter but afterwards, Erbery reported, ³⁰"the man . . . was ashamed of what he said; and therefore followed me to my Inn, desiring to be friends with me; which I ever was, and am still to him and to all men also."

But this was not destined to be the end of the matter. Erbery promised to return to preach a fortnight later but, on his arrival, was forestalled by Davies who ³¹"stept up before me to preach

in Welsh; whom yet I quietly heard all the time, till he had ended his Sermon." When Davies had finished Erbery gave a discourse on the Last Things in English. No sooner was this concluded than ³²"the Gentleman starts up again, and begins to contradict and withstand my words the second time, to the trouble and the tumult of the company; who being strange to such open affronts, and publique contests in the Church, began to forget what they heard before and to rise up on their seats, as if they were to see a shew." At this point Erbery withdrew promising as he went that Davies would share the coming experience of the fires of God. It is undoubtedly a pity that there is no account of these incidents from the point of view of David Davies!

Erbery's other encounter with the Baptists was with the congregation gathered by Edmund Chillendon³³ in the cavalry barracks which, at the time in 1653, took up at least part of old St. Paul's Cathedral which itself was, according to Erbery, ³⁴"a visible monument of the folly and madness of Bishops." In addition to voicing some of his usual criticisms of the Baptists, Erbery reflected his own radical convictions in two questions which he put to Chillendon's congregation and his other readers: ³⁵"Is it not ridiculous that the Anabaptist Church should expend so much on sticks and seats in a Horse-guard, when living stones and members of Christ want the money?" and "How far is this Horse-guard from the order of Gospel-Churches, who never made a meeting place for themselves, to preach and pray in, but went forth to the world, to the Temple or Synagogues to preach, and to pray in their own houses."

In addition to these personal and specific encounters with the Baptists Erbery made a number of detailed theological criticisms of the whole group without making any serious attempt to differentiate between the various parties into which they were divided. In the situation of virtually total apostasy which he believed the Christians of his day to be experiencing he held that all the churches were in error, although he was prepared to admit that their errors of constitution varied in degree: ³⁶"I called the present Churches, Harlots, and Whores. Prelatique and Presbyterian Churches, I called old Rotten Whores, being in fellowship with the whole Nation, with every man in the parish; but Independent and Baptized Churches being in fellowship with Saints so called, I compared to the well-favoured harlot." For Erbery one of the clearest signs of the Age of Apostasy and of the absence of the Spirit was the division between the various Christian sects for, he claimed, the apostolic churches ³⁷"were but one Body, had but one Baptism, as there was but one Spirit leading all the Saints in one Church-way, one way of worship, one Church government was among all the Saints, though there were differences between brother and brother; yea between one Apostle and another, yet never was there a difference between Church and Church, as in Babylon this day; for the Spirit being then but one, kept the Body in one Baptism. But now the Churches are become

three bodies, and these have three Baptisms; Presbyterians baptize the whole Nation; Independents the children of believers only; the baptized Churches believers themselves: Here is Babylon in three parts: Again the baptized Churches are subdivided into three parts, one Church is for Free Will, a second for universal Redemption, a third count themselves more Orthodox in Doctrine, as the Church of England: Neither of these three baptized Churches dare communicate one with another." Later still Erbery was able to announce that ³⁸"a fourth divided part of the Anabaptists, who are by themselves about laying on of hands" had come into existence.

Whilst he made it abundantly clear that he believed that the judgment of God rested upon *all* the contemporary Christian churches because ³⁹"they would hasten to a Church-way, not waiting for the Baptism of the Spirit, and of fire, to set them in a Gospel-order or to shew them a higher glory to be revealed in them" he nonetheless spoke especially sternly of the Baptists with their great emphasis upon the correct outward shape of the rite of water-Baptism. In an important passage in *The great earthquake* Erbery emphasized the comparatively minor part he believed water-Baptism had been intended by God to play in the life of the Church. He explained that ⁴⁰"the end of Baptisme with water was not that it should abide for ever, that was only the promise of the Spirit; the Spirit, or baptism of the spirit was to abide, to continue and increase . . . the baptism of water was to decrease and dye in time . . . but by the Apostacy, the Baptism of Christ, the Baptism of the spirit hath decreased, and the Baptism of water, the Baptism of John hath increased and continued to this day. Again, the Baptism of water which was in the Apostles times, was rather by permission then by command, an indulgence to the Church, that was for the most part carnall, as circumcision, and many things of Moses, did continue for a time in the Gospel-Churches; so the Baptism of John, the baptism of water was not to continue any longer." But, as he complained a little further on, the Churches all contented themselves "with the Baptism of water" and even those who dipped believers only did not "baptize them in a true form, nor right end, not owning baptism of the Spirit at all."

Against the background of such teaching as this the most developed statement of Erbery's case against the Baptists, as published in ⁴¹*The children of the west*, can be readily grasped. It comes as no surprise, for example, to find him saying that the Baptists held and taught ⁴²"a Gospel-order, and Ordinances of Christ, which are merely Antichristian, I mean that of Baptism or dipping, this day." He explained that, in the first place, the Baptists disobeyed Christ for, the very people who laid such stress upon the necessity for outward obedience to the rite of water-baptism shared, with all other Christians, the situation of the first Apostles before the first Whitsun: they lacked the presence of the Spirit. Hence they were disobedient in refusing to wait (Acts 1.4) "for the promise of the Father." Even

when the Apostles had the commission recorded in Matthew 28.19ff (by which Baptist apologetic at the time set so much store) they had still to await the Spirit's coming. He also made his own personal and inevitably tangential contribution to discussion about the right administrator of Baptism when, in the same context, he alleged "not every teacher but he that could teach all Nations was to baptize: and this could not be without the baptism of the Spirit."

In the second place he alleged that the Baptists denied the Spirit of Jesus since ⁴³"to Baptize in a Gospel-way without the Baptism of the Spirit, is to deny the Spirit of Jesus: for John's baptism before was but a legal Ordinance." Thirdly, he claimed, the Baptists divided the community of the Christian Church. "I do not know how it was in England," Erbery asserted, ⁴⁴"but I know, in Wales all that feared God and professed Christ in truth, were once of one heart and mind; but since the waters came over the mountains, the Saints there have been wonderfully divided."

His final major criticism of the Baptists was that they deceived the world in general in three respects. In the matter of faith they, like other contemporary Christians, taught ⁴⁵"a legal faith": one that believed in the Virgin Birth and the saving significance of Calvary and not one that looked for a living and immediate experience of the Spirit's indwelling. The second way in which William Erbery maintained that the Baptists deceived the world was concerned with the administration of Baptism, a matter upon which he had already touched, and now supported his earlier arguments with the assertion that the Apostles, ⁴⁶"had the manifestation of the Spirit in manifold gifts" and the question, "What manifestation of the Spirit have any of the Churches this day?" The section ended with his triumphant claim that "I never read in the Scriptures of any that did baptize, but the Apostles, or such as had a special call, as Philip and Ananias, yet both had the manifestation of the Spirit with them, that it might appear they were sent of God to baptize: "Where's the administrator this day?" Thirdly, Erbery insisted, the Baptists deceived themselves and the world by teaching that baptism should be by immersion. The true mode of Baptism in fact, he claimed, ⁴⁷"in the Primitive Churches was by way of washing the Disciples feet, or believers going down into the waters up to the ankels." The scripture proofs, as given here, for such an assertion were ⁴⁸John's confession that he was unworthy to undo the thong of Christ's sandals and the fact that when the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized by Philip the writer of Acts gave no indication that either man undressed. Erbery then went on, as he supposed, to clinch his argument by reference to the Baptists' own "Catechism" ⁴⁹in which, he said, "they say, He that is the Minister must have a modest garbe or garment, and those that are to be dipt must have garments; when Peter baptized five thousand in one day, where could the Apostles have so many modest garments at once?"

Another favourite theme among the Baptists, that of death and burial with Christ in baptism by immersion, seemed only pathetic and unreal to Erbery. In answer to such talk ⁵⁰“concerning believers and baptizing into his death, and being buried with him by dipping” he asserted that “burial is of the body new dead (as Christ was, and the Church too then) but we are as those long dead, till the bones be dry.”

Elsewhere he explained a little further his claim that only Apostles and others especially commissioned should administer water-baptism. It was, he pointed out, not until the gift of Tongues (understood as the gift of languages) that the Apostles were able to teach “all nations” and therefore carry out their commission. On the other hand only those with this worldwide commission were to baptize, hence ⁵¹“not every one that could preach, but he that could teach all nations, was to baptize but with the promise of the gift of the spirit annexed . . . which the baptized Churches have not attained to, nor can promise to their Dipt Believers.”

Erbery also sharply attacked the Baptists, in *A call to the churches*, which was particularly addressed to the Welsh Baptist congregations, for the lovelessness displayed by their divisions. He told them that ⁵²“Papists, Prelates, and Presbyters, have not committed halfe of your sins; yea the Independent Churches have more love then you.” He further assured them that lovelessness was the mark of an apostate church and that “love to the brotherhood . . . is commanded, as well as baptism.” Those Baptists who first read Erbery may well have been very much upset to discover that he held the ordinance they so much valued in such low esteem but how much more trying must it have been for them to read of his hope for them: ⁵³“Oh that you could dye to your own life, to flesh and blood, to that reason and understanding of yours, raised on the traditions of men.” That they, of all people, could be accused of relying upon “the traditions of men” must have come as a rude shock. There was, however, more to come: toward the close of the letter he told them that their divisions and their current uneasiness were not merely a sign of their apostate condition, they were also an evidence of the work of God among them for, he told them, ⁵⁴“The greatest work that God hath to do with you this day, is to make you see you are dead; that’s the end why he does dash and divide you, disquiet and destroy all your comforts.” “Truly brethren,” his letter closed, “the living God knows, that all I have written, or shall, is not intended by me to trouble your walkings, but to give you rest in the Lord alone at last; not merely to throw down your Churches, or for your fall, but to raise you up, that we all may live together with Christ in God.”

In these circumstances it can have been little comfort to Baptists to read that Erbery considered infant baptism ⁵⁵“so childish a tradition” that its folly had been “fully confuted” both by the Baptists themselves and “some Presbyterian brethen.” In an important passage

he sought to make his own position unmistakable and this was the more necessary since there were those among his contemporaries who believed themselves "above" the outward and visible "forms" of puritan churchmanship. Erbery's own position, as he said, was very different, ⁵⁶"What some Saints scoff at others, and others say of themselves, that they are above Ordinances, I cannot judge nor condemn; but for my part, I do not professe myself above Ordinances, but far below them in mine own feeling; though I may be above in the favour and knowledge of God, yet as far as I know, I am below any Gospel-Ordinance, having not that manifestation of the spirit that was always with them in the Churches, nor that presence and power of the Spirit appearing in me (as was in them) to carry me up from living in Ordinances, to live in God alone; nor yet that testimony of the spirit to tell me, that in the use of Ordinances as they are, I may be preserved pure from that uncleanness which sticks upon them through the Apostacy." Hence he stood aside from the Ordinances of the contemporary Christian communities rather than above them.

Finally it is necessary to consider the part Erbery seems to have thought the Baptists were to play in the last days of the Christian Apostasy. Whilst it is clear that Erbery shared with many of his contemporaries a sense of the imminence of the Return of Christ it is also clear that he differed from many of them in considering that most laid far too much stress upon outward and visible forms and constitutions. With reference to a commonly held hope he emphasized his own view that the Mount Zion of Revelation 14.1 ⁵⁷"is not an outward Church-state as the Churches now imagine." Hence, as he insisted, ⁵⁸"it is but flesh and fleshly forms that Churches fight and contend for," and he went on to lay the blame for this firmly upon the ministers: "the cause of all the contention is in the Shepherds or the Ministers, the Church-members poor souls would be quiet, and come up again to walk in the Spirit; but because the Members will follow, not the Head, but their fellows, Members and Ministers, God gives them up to their King."

Erbery quite evidently held that the development of the purest Churches, that is in regard to their outward structures, marked the darkest point of the apostasy. The church at Laodicea in Revelation 3 stood, he believed, for the Churches in England, and this church, he pointed out, was totally condemned by the Risen Lord ⁵⁹"because she was well, and wanting nothing, no Church-Order, no Ordinance is wanting to them." Two pages further on he gave it as his own considered judgment that the ⁶⁰"present Churches I look upon, as the Assyrian the last oppressor that shall be in the Land." He felt the pace of history to be quickening as the dawn of the last days drew near⁶¹ and several times Erbery mentioned the successive fall of the various Churches in Britain in the days since the Reformation and always in the order Popery, Prelacy, Presbyterianism, Independency and, finally, the Baptists.⁶² With his vision centred upon the British

Isles he could say ⁶⁵“Popery is faln, Prelacy faln, Presbytery and Independency are faln, likewise; nothing stands now but the last of Anabaptism, and that is falling too.” Erbery was also aware of the beginnings of Quakerism in the north of England and drew the attention of the Baptists to them as he affirmed ⁶⁴“What is the meaning of those honest men and women in the North, that so many of them are taken with that power, that they can do nothing else but quake and tremble? For my part, I look upon it as a sign of something both to you and to me; that when God shall roar in us, and speak forth himself with glory in us, God shall make our flesh to shake, quake, and tremble; that is, he will make our most heavenly enjoyments and attainments, peace and power, he will make it all to shake and tremble before him.”

Erbery saw the divisions of the original Independent congregation at Llanfaches⁶⁵ as one more evidence of the Apostasy and that contemporary churches lived in “Babylon.” He believed that all such divisions were the working out, in history, of God’s judgment upon those churches which had the “form” of apostolicity whilst lacking the “life” of the Spirit’s presence.⁶⁶ So, when he wrote to the Baptists he mentioned that the lovelessness for which he rebuked them, ⁶⁷“shews, the falling away is come upon you, and that Apostacy foretold by the Apostles is come upon you in perfection.” Nevertheless he had really summarized his case against the Baptists rather earlier when he had stated, ⁶⁸“I proved it plain at Bridg-end, that you are not in a capacity to baptize or be baptized, there being no true Administrator, nor a man sent of God, with power from on high to baptize: First, because you have not the faith of the Gospel. Secondly, you are fallen from your first love, therefore the Apostacy is complete and perfect, and appears most visible in your churches.” The Apostasy, in fact, he urged, was most evident ⁶⁹“now the Churches are come up to purest forms, where yet the Ordinances are defiled, and fail in spirit and form from the first . . . the wisest of the Churches, who coming nearest to Gospel-order in form . . . must be the first in whom the spirit of Antichrist must come forth with power to appear in them and to all.” Meanwhile he had a growing sense that the fire of God’s judgment ⁷⁰“is not yet fallen on all, but it shall with a vengeance, very shortly.”

From all this it seems clear that the part for which Erbery had cast the Baptist community in the unfolding drama of the Apostasy was that of the most perfect (but also the most powerless) attempt to reconstruct the pattern of the Apostolic church. With the collapse of this attempt would come the end of the age of Apostasy and the beginning of the final dispensation, that of the Spirit. Perhaps it was fortunate for William Erbery that he died without learning that the purposes of God were longer in their evolution and more painful and complicated in their outworking than he had foreseen.

NOTES

¹ I am grateful to the Revd. J. I. Morgans, M.A., B.Litt., whose unpublished Oxford B.Litt. thesis entitled "The life and work of William Erbery" first stimulated my interest in this subject.

² W. T. Whitley, *Baptist Bibliography*, London 1916, Vol. i and E. C. Starr, *A Baptist Bibliography*, New York 1947—in progress.

³ In 1658 many of Erbery's writings were republished in one volume as *The Testimony of William Erbery* which will be cited hereafter in this article as *Testimony*. It would be possible to interpret a reference in "The honest heretique," *Testimony*, 336 as an indication that he had once been a Baptist but the context suggests that to do so would be unwise.

⁴ "The wretched people," *Testimony*, 162.

⁵ The presbyterian minister was Francis Cheynell and the controversy was recorded by Erbery in "Nor truth, nor error," *Testimony*, 1-18.

⁶ "The honest heretique," *Testimony*, 310-338.

⁷ The "apostasy" remained a key category in Erbery's thought: it was given detailed exposition in "The wretched people" and "The great earthquake." It appeared as early as 1647 in "Nor truth nor error," *Testimony*, 6.

⁸ W. Erbery, *The general epistle to the Hebrews*, London 1652, 2.

⁹ "A scourge for the Assyrian," *Testimony*, 65.

¹⁰ "A call to the churches," *Testimony*, 224.

¹¹ "The children of the west," *Testimony*, 135. Cf. W. Erbery, *Apocrypha*, London 1652, 2.

¹² W. Erbery, *Hebrews*, *op. cit.*, 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5f. His positive advice, given here, appears in a passage when the term "Puritans" seems to be used, in 1652, of a generation which had already passed away. It reads: "'Tis safest then for you and me, to be alone, from all men, unto God, or to be as the godly of old, the honest Puritans were; to be self-denying, and strict in our life, sweet in love together, doing good to all, and suffering for well-doing, to be true in our words, just in our dealings; to watch our own hearts and this present evil world, to be preserved pure and spotless in it, to have our conversation in Heaven, and use all earthly things in a heavenly manner, to minde things that are above, not in place, but in affection and attainment, to see Christ sitting at the right hand of God in our hearts, and nothing raining there but himself; thus walking humbly with our God, and waiting for his glorious appearance in us; we then were in all good duties, more in Spirit and less in form, thus 'twas with us formerly."

¹⁵ In Mr. Morgan's thesis (Appendix III) he argues that two works have been incorrectly ascribed to Erbery by Wing. I accept his arguments and am also doubtful about *Zions sad tears* (which Mr. Morgans allows to Erbery): the tract is anonymous which is uncharacteristic and shows little evidence of his characteristic ideas and thought forms.

¹⁶ The contexts in which Erbery most systematically set out his criticisms of the Baptists were in *Testimony*, 136-8, 272-5, 329-31 and in *The mad man's plea*, London 1653, *passim*.

¹⁷ E.g. *Testimony*, 184-192.

¹⁸ E.g. *Ibid.*, 48-59.

¹⁹ "The bishop of London," *Testimony*, 43-47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

²¹ John Spencer was a Baptist by 1658, *Trans. B.H.S.*, II, 181.

²² H. B. Wheatley, *London Past and Present*, 1891 London (3 Vols.) II 430 London House, St. Paul's Churchyard, the inn or townhouse of the Bishops of London, stood at the North West corner of St. Paul's Churchyard. Christopher Feake is also normally reckoned to have become a Baptist during the 1650's.

²⁰ Simpson was an Independent (G. F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, Oxford 1957, 36).

²¹ *Testimony*, 46.

²² *Ibid.*, 47, William Packer was a well-known Baptists leader.

²³ The Ranters were an extremist group of antinomians.

²⁴ *Testimony*, 47.

²⁵ "A call to the churches," *Testimony*, 219. This was almost certainly David Davies of Gelligaer, a colleague of John Miles, mentioned in T. Richards, *The puritan movement in Wales*, London 1920, 152, 164, 203ff.

²⁶ Llantrisant, Glamorgan. See my article, "The organisation of the Particular Baptists 1644-1660," *J.E.H.* October 1966 for the wider context of this encounter.

²⁷ "A call to the churches," *Testimony*, 220.

²⁸ Evidently Erbery could understand Welsh even if (T. Richards, *op. cit.*, 156 n. 8) he could not speak it.

²⁹ *Testimony*, 221.

³⁰ Chillendon was probably always a General Baptist.

³¹ W. Erbery, *The mad mans plea*, London 1653, 6.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ "The honest heretique," *Testimony*, 326.

³⁴ "A scourge for the Assyrian," *Testimony*, 78. Such divisions were signs of the Church in apostasy for then ("The great earthquake," *Testimony*, 305) "the Church is not in the unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace."

³⁵ "The children of the west," *Testimony*, 137.

³⁶ "A scourge for the Assyrian," *Testimony*, 81. In "The great earthquake," *Testimony*, 272, he wrote "the first Gospel Ordinance, or that which constituted the Church in a Gospel-Order, was the Baptism of the Spirit."

³⁷ "The great earthquake," *Testimony*, 274 (misprinted as "174"). The same point was made in similar words in *The Welsh Curate*, London 1652, 3f.

³⁸ "The children of the west," *Testimony*, 127-144, prefaced by a letter addressed "To the Baptized Churches in Sommersetshire, Wiltshire, and Devon." This explicitly regretted their "empty forms" and "fleshy apprehensions of Christ, and him crucified, of his coming and Kingdom."

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 136. See note 16 for references to other contexts where these criticisms are repeated and, in some cases, slightly expanded.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, (Cf. *Testimony*, 225, 300f.).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ This argument is also extended elsewhere e.g. *Testimony*, 329f.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 138. This evidently refers to one of the several editions of the *London Confession* of 1644.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴⁸ "The great earthquake," *Testimony*, 304 (misprinted 249). Cf. *ibid.*, 272, "the Apostles themselves, who had a Call and a Commission from Christ to teach all Nations and to baptize Believers, could not go forth to perform either till the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was come upon them."

⁴⁹ "A call to the churches," *Testimony*, 227, 229.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁵² "The great earthquake," *Testimony*, 274 (misprinted "174").

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 292. In *The Welsh Curate*, *op. cit.*, 8, Erbery gave a definition of the true visible church-fellowship as "a Free Company, or Society of Friends, who come together, not as called by an outward power, but freely closing by the inward spirit."

⁵⁴ "A scourge for the Assyrian," *Testimony*, 66.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 79. Erbery explained that this interpretation was his own independent idea although this was shared by Thomas Brightman and Peter Sterry.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁶¹ "The woman preacher," *Testimony*, 148.

⁶² *Ibid.*, and pp. 126, 133.

⁶³ "The children of the west," *Testimony*, 133. Cp. 136. In *Apocrypha*, London 1652, 7, he noted "how all formes stand fast as they were from the beginning in other Nations but in this one falls after another, as if nothing should stand on English earth, but pure Spirit, but the Lord himself." In a comment on Isaiah 24.20 in *The Welsh Curate, op. cit.*, 14, Erbery spoke of the earth having "reeled from Popery to Prelacy, from Prelacy to Presbytery, from Presbytery to Independency, and now the whole earth, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, is reeling from Independency, to Anabaptisme; as if the world were running into its first Chaos, and to be covered againe with waters."

⁶⁴ "The children of the west," *Testimony*, 140.

⁶⁵ "The idol pastor," *Testimony*, 152f.

⁶⁶ "The wretched people," *Testimony*, 163.

⁶⁷ "A call to the churches," *Testimony*, 229.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁶⁹ *The Welsh Curate, op. cit.*, 4.

⁷⁰ *Jack Pudding*, London 1654, 5.

B. R. WHITE

THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT AND BAPTISM

(Concluded from p. 113)

¹¹ The "Name" is of course a common Hebraism. In the book of Acts only 5 of the 30 or so occurrences of the phrase "in the Name" and its variations are connected with baptism. In the Pauline epistles there are but two possible references to baptism (1 Cor. 1.10-13 and 6.11), whereas the phrase is often used in quite different contexts (e.g. Eph. 5.20, Col. 3.17, 2 Thess. 3.6).

¹² See the evidence cited by Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Midrash und Talmud* (Munich 1922-28). Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the NT*. (1958), p. 352, regards this as the real origin of the word. Heitmueller (*art. cit.*, p. 43) on the other hand regards the rabbinic evidence in favour of the application of seal to circumcision as both too slight and too late.

¹³ *La Seconde Epître aux Corinthiens* (Paris, 1958), p. 21, note.

¹⁴ so G. S. Duncan, *Galatians* (Moffatt Commentary, 1934), p. 103.

¹⁵ On the meaning of this interesting term see especially Behm, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart 1933ff.), vol. I, p. 474, and Strack-Billerbeck *op. cit.*, III, p. 495.

¹⁶ So Behm *op. cit.*, Lietzmann, Barrett, Vincent Taylor, P. E. Hughes and also Bultmann *Existence and Faith* (Eng. Trans. 1961), p. 249.

¹⁷ *Romans* (I.C.C., 1902), p. 209.

J. K. PARRATT