

ABSTRACT

Messenger, Apologist, and Nonconformist: An Examination of Thomas Grantham's
Leadership among the Seventeenth-Century General Baptists

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This dissertation argues that Thomas Grantham (1633/4-1692) was instrumental in organizing and legitimizing the General Baptists in Lincolnshire and Norfolk in the second half of the seventeenth century. The first chapter introduces the study and provides a historiographical survey of the variety of ways in which Grantham has been studied. The second chapter provides a biographical and literary sketch of Grantham's life and published documents. Unlike most surveys of Grantham's writings which focus on select publications, the literary sketch in the second chapter provides a brief and basic introduction to all of Grantham's writings. The third chapter of this dissertation builds on the conclusions of J. F. V. Nicholson by examining Grantham's role in consolidating the office of Messenger and establishing it as a distinctive third ministerial office among the General Baptists in the seventeenth century. Grantham helped to solidify the office of Messenger between 1660 and 1700 by publishing defenses of the Messenger's office, preaching, baptizing, planting churches, and ordaining ministers in Lincolnshire and later in Norfolk. Chapter Four examines Grantham's apologetic efforts to defend the baptized believers against Anglicans, Catholics, Quakers, and Presbyterians. He was called upon

to contend with other Christian groups by means of public debates and epistolary correspondence. The fifth chapter addresses Grantham's interactions with the government and his thoughts on civil matters. He represented the baptized believers of Lincolnshire before Charles II and called all Christians to remain loyal, peaceable subjects. Grantham affirmed the acceptance of government-issued licenses to preach and congregate for religious purposes, and he unequivocally instructed his readers to avoid revolution or sedition. Grantham argued that the baptized believers supported the welfare of England by paying taxes; he even believed Christians could hold positions in civil government and serve in the military.

Messenger, Apologist, and Nonconformist: An Examination of Thomas Grantham's
Leadership among the Seventeenth-Century General Baptists

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Religion

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Accepted by the Graduate School
December 2008

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CONTENTS

PREFACE		v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		vi
DEDICATION		viii
Chapter		
ONE	INTRODUCTION	1
	Outline of the Dissertation	
	Historiography	
	The Social, Political, and Religious World of Thomas Grantham	
	Early Stuart and Revolutionary Political and Religious	
	Life, 1603-1660	
	Baptist Life to the Restoration	
	Stuart Lincolnshire to the Restoration	
TWO	BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY SKETCH	43
	Birth and Background (1633/34)	
	Childhood and Adolescence (1635-1650)	
	Baptist Beginnings: 1651–1660	
	Thomas Grantham: Husband, Father, Husbandman?	
	From the Restoration to the Declaration of Indulgence	
	(1660-1672)	
	Thomas Grantham in Mid Life (1673-1685)	
	The Final Years: Norfolk (1686-1692)	
THREE	“Old Things by their Old Names”: GRANTHAM AND THE OFFICE OF MESSENGER, 1660-1700	92
	Background of the Office in the Seventeenth Century	
	“Messengers” in the Grantham Corpus	
	Thomas Grantham’s Activities as a Messenger	
	The Office of Messenger in the Eighteenth Century	
	Conclusion	
FOUR	GRANTHAM THE APOLOGIST	140
	Grantham vs. William Fort of the Church of England	
	Background of the Debate	
	The Debate	
	Results and Conclusions	

	Grantham vs. an “Unnamed Papist”	
	Background of the Correspondence	
	The Epistolary Correspondence	
	Results and Conclusions of the Correspondence	
	Grantham vs. the Quaker John Whitehead	
	Background	
	The Debates	
	Results and Conclusions	
	Grantham vs. the Presbyterian John Collinges	
	Background of the Correspondence	
	The Epistolary Correspondence	
	Results and Conclusions	
	Conclusion	
FIVE	“The Loyal Baptist”: GRANTHAM AND THE GOVERNMENT	188
	Grantham before Charles II	
	Grantham and “A Humble Address and Remonstrance,”	
	1672	
	Licensing the Baptists, 1672 and 1688/9	
	The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672	
	The Toleration Act, 1689	
	Grantham and the Government: <i>The Loyal Baptist</i> and	
	<i>Christianismus Primitivus</i>	
	The Loyal Baptist, 1674 and 1684	
	<i>Christianismus Primitivus</i> , 1678	
	Conclusion	
SIX	CONCLUSION	242
	APPENDICES	249
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	256

PREFACE

I will always remember the fifth of November. Whereas many historians of English history remember the fifth of November as the anniversary of the failed Gunpowder Plot in England in 1605, I will also celebrate this anniversary because it is the day on which I defended this dissertation.

I first encountered Thomas Grantham (1633/4-1692) while studying under William H. Brackney at Baylor University in 2006. Aside from being a suitable dissertation topic, Grantham's activities as a seventeenth-century Nonconformist were of particular interest to me. It is to Grantham's credit that after more than two years and hundreds of written pages I remain intrigued by this well-known yet elusive Baptist figure. My initial foray into the secondary literature revealed that Grantham was an appreciated but under-studied figure. I offer this study, then, as but another small step in explaining and justifying such an appreciation.

Dates are according to the Old Style, but I have taken the new year to begin at 1 January instead of 25 March. I have modernized the spelling in quotations only where absolutely necessary.

John D. Inscore Essick, Jr.
Waco, Texas
Season after Pentecost, 2008

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would still be incomplete were it not for the assistance of numerous friends, mentors, and institutions. It is a pleasure here to thank them. I must begin by thanking the Department of Religion at Baylor University for providing an environment conducive to learning, research, and writing. I am grateful to the staff of Moody Memorial Library on the campus of Baylor University for their wonderful work. In particular, I must call attention to the unbelievable ability of Interlibrary Services to procure even the most difficult request.

The Glenn O. and Martell B. Hilburn Endowed Graduate Research Scholarship, given through the Department of Religion at Baylor University, made possible a successful and productive research trip to England in the spring of 2008. Additional financial aid for research abroad was provided by the Baylor University Graduate School. While researching in Lincolnshire, England, Mr. Bob Kershaw led me down many helpful paths and directed me away from dead ends. I must express particular gratitude to Mr. Kershaw for his helpful direction related to the biographical information for Thomas Grantham. The staff of the Lincolnshire Archives endured my many questions and requests with uncommon patience and expertise. In Oxford, George Southcombe willingly shared his scholarly research. The following libraries in England were hospitable and granted access to numerous manuscripts: The Lincoln Public Library, Lincoln; Dr. Williams's Trust and Library, London; The Bodleian Library, Oxford; and The Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library, Norwich. Finally, the kind staff members

of St. Stephen's Church in Norwich were helpful in my efforts to locate Grantham's final resting place.

Countless friends, colleagues, and professors encouraged me throughout this process, and for their meaningful support I am most appreciative. The dependable editing of Ms. Stephanie Moody was extremely beneficial during the writing process. I am grateful to Dr. Rosalie Beck, Dr. Keith Francis, Dr. Charles McDaniel, and Dr. Rady Roldan-Figueroa for participating in my oral defense; their insights and patience were invaluable. It is impossible to measure the debt of gratitude owed to my dissertation director, Dr. Bill Pitts. His faithful and generous guidance shaped my thinking and writing in countless ways, and his gracious spirit reassured me during the final stages of manuscript preparation.

Finally, I must express my love and appreciation for the wonderful members of my family. The completion of this project would have been impossible without their support. I must call attention to Amber's perseverance and unyielding optimism throughout this lengthy and occasionally frustrating process. Above all, the completion of this dissertation is my gift to her. It was her gentle encouragement and continual affirmation that sustained me in the difficult times, and it was her congratulations and praises that surrounded me in the good times.

To Amber,
my navigator

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Thomas Grantham (1633/34-1692) provided important leadership as an English Nonconformist and General Baptist polemicist and Messenger in the second half of the seventeenth century. Grantham was baptized in 1652 in the Baptist church at Boston, Lincolnshire and became one of the most significant Baptist figures of the period, yet no major study of Grantham has appeared.

Religious upheavals in England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries spawned numerous new religious groups. Among those that still exist today, the Baptists first appeared within this particular milieu and were greatly affected by the period's volatile nature. This study of Grantham's ministry reflected much of this conflict and controversy. He was arrested and imprisoned for religious reasons on several occasions. In addition, Grantham publicly debated Church of England ministers and Quakers on topics ranging from infant baptism to the role of women in worship. Other Baptists, too, took issue with Grantham on issues such as laying-on of hands, the office of Messenger, and the government requirement for preaching licenses.

I was initially drawn to Thomas Grantham because he was a Baptist Nonconformist in England. This may seem obvious at first since Baptists were, by definition, dissenters, but there is a certain propensity among some Baptist historians to approach English Nonconformity as a window into early Baptist life. Without questioning or denying the viability of such an approach, one objective of this project is to seek to analyze late seventeenth-century English dissent from a Baptist perspective.

A study of Thomas Grantham also provides an opportunity to examine an interesting aspect of early Baptist polity. Baptists joined the chorus of voices who rejected the episcopacy and favored the authority of local congregations. Particular and General Baptists both utilized Messengers (traveling ministers), but their presence was more prevalent among the latter. Any study of Grantham's ministry as a General Baptist would be incomplete if it failed to address his role as Messenger. Furthermore, Grantham's polemical and theological writings provide much insight into the office of Messenger and inter-congregational cooperation (and authority) among the early Baptist congregations. A scholarly contribution, therefore, seeking to contextualize and understand this prolific writer and tireless churchman is important and overdue.

An important burden of this project will be to demonstrate that Thomas Grantham was not only an important figure among the early General Baptists but also to elucidate his roles as religious dissenter and Baptist apologist. Fortunately, such an endeavor is feasible given that Grantham's numerous works and the writings of many of his opponents are extant and accessible. The bulk of information on Grantham comes from a thorough investigation of his writings. Insights may, of course, also be derived from the writings of his opponents. Previous scholarly examinations of Grantham have tended to focus on *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678). At more than 600 pages, *Christianismus Primitivus* addresses issues ranging from doctrine and polity on the one hand, to divorce, marriage, and the role of women in worship on the other.

This project, however, will study Grantham from the perspective of his entire corpus and the development of his thought, both of which deal with a broad range of Nonconformist and Baptist issues. Many of the shorter and lesser-known documents

offer a fresh and unique vantage point from which to assess Grantham's place within the historical setting of English dissent and his unifying presence among the General Baptists. *The Second Humble Address*, for example, was submitted to Charles II in 1661 in response to the imprisonment of some "Anabaptists" in Lincoln. Grantham (et al) submitted the one-page treatise in order to show that its signatories were both faithful believers and loyal subjects. *The Loyal Baptist* (1674) was an apology for baptized believers based on 1 Pet. 2:17 in which Grantham was quick to illustrate how Baptist Christians could be loyal subjects and devoted Baptists.

Infant baptism and infant mortality also raised important questions for many English Christians of the period. A study of documents such as *A Religious Contest* (1674), *The Quaeries Examined* (1676), *Presumption No Proof* (1687), and *Truth and Peace* (1689) reveals that Grantham was engaged in arguments over infant baptism during much of his ministry. Moreover, he engaged Catholics, Presbyterians, and Anglicans on the subject. In addition, *The Controversy about Infants* (1680) and *The Infants Advocate* (1688) reveal considerable and sustained disagreement with Presbyterians concerning the fate of dying infants. Grantham was among those General Baptists who engaged detractors and opponents in serious debate, thus making him a crucial unifying figure in early Baptist life.

As will be seen in the historiography below, Baptist historians generally approach Grantham by outlining his theological positions, with particular attention devoted to his ecclesiology. Key examples of this are helpful studies by scholars such as Ted L. Underwood, Philip Thompson, Stanley Fowler, and especially William H. Brackney. By focusing primarily on Grantham's theological trajectory, these works, while constituting

an invaluable scholarly contribution, fail to capture the full range of Grantham's immediate impact in the seventeenth century or his long-term significance for Baptist life. Thus, this project will not ignore or diminish Grantham's theological contributions, but will seek to employ the tools of the historian in order to supplement the theological understanding of Thomas Grantham. I intend to achieve this goal by examining Thomas Grantham as a seventeenth-century Englishman, Nonconformist, and Baptist.

Outline of the Dissertation

The present chapter is an introduction to the project. In addition to a historiographical survey of the germane scholarship, chapter one will also survey Grantham's political, social, and religious milieu. The political and religious environment in which Nonconformists such as Grantham were active is among the issues addressed in the remainder of this chapter. Furthermore, an overview of the Baptist situation in seventeenth-century England is necessary if one wishes to ascertain Grantham's immediate impact as a General Baptist Messenger, minister, apologist, and polemicist. Finally, chapter one will conclude with a summary of life in Lincolnshire, Grantham's most immediate realm of activity.

Several biographical sketches of Grantham's life and ministry are available to the modern reader, yet none adequately combines biographical details with a chronological exposition of Grantham's writings.¹ Toward that end, chapter two will lay out a biographical sketch of Grantham's life and contextualize his corpus. I hope to show how

¹Joseph Ivimey (*A History of the English Baptists* [London, 1814], 2.262ff.) and Adam Taylor (*The History of the English General Baptists* [London: T. Bore, 1818], 1.127ff.) come as close as any other sources to providing the type of biographical and literary sketch which is necessary.

the opponents and themes taken up in his writings do, in some sense, proffer relevant biographical details.

Chapter three focuses on Grantham's place in the process by which Messengers became an established office among the General Baptists of the seventeenth century. In addition to Grantham's own extensive writings on the office of Messenger, three additional sources for information for this chapter include confessions of faith and minutes of assemblies of Baptist churches, the published writings of individual Baptists, and the records of individual churches. The third chapter will show that Grantham's writings and ministry provided important leadership as he worked to legitimize the office of Messenger among the General Baptists.

Chapter four addresses Grantham's interaction with Anglicans, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Catholics. Grantham engaged non-Baptists on important theological issues of the day, and like many religionists of the period he was often quick to dismiss or reject those holding opposing views. I will argue in chapter four, however, that Grantham was also capable of sustaining debate with theological opponents on a range of issues. In so doing, Grantham legitimated the General Baptist presence in Lincolnshire and Norfolk during his career as a Messenger.

Chapter five examines Grantham's leadership among the General Baptists by focusing on the relationship with, and attitude toward, governing authorities. This chapter will also suggest that General Baptists in Lincolnshire experienced harassment at the hands of local officials, which prompted them to seek protection from the king. In addition, Grantham's Nonconformity was almost exclusively expressed in communal and congregational terms, for he typically spoke and acted on behalf of other Baptists. In this

context, it is clear that Grantham advocated no anarchic or revolutionary theology. Rather, he believed that Baptists could serve God and remain loyal to the crown. A short concluding chapter summarizes the findings.

Historiography

The life and writings of Thomas Grantham have not gone unnoticed. In fact, because of the attention historians and theologians have given Grantham the absence of a scholarly study of his life and immediate impact on seventeenth-century Baptist life is surprising. Broadly speaking, general histories of the English Baptists give only limited attention to Grantham and focus chiefly on his capable leadership and contributions as Messenger. The following authors have dealt with Grantham in varying degrees and manners.

Unhappy with Daniel Neal's treatment of the Baptists in *History of the Puritans*, Thomas Crosby (ca. 1685-1752) took it upon himself to produce a history of the movement. Crosby's four-volume *The History of the English Baptists* was published between 1738 and 1740. Crosby makes mention of Grantham briefly in volume two in order to show how the unjust "storm" of persecution on the early English Baptists was felt in both the urban and rural areas.² In addition, the full text of *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith* is appended to volume two.³ It is in volume three, however, where Crosby highlights learned and influential early Baptists who were instrumental to the movement's survival, and Grantham is among those figures Crosby deems critical as he surveys the more than 100 years of English Baptist history. Setting a biographical pattern

²Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1739), 2.149.

³*Ibid.*, 2.76ff.

which will later be followed by Joseph Ivimey and Adam Taylor, Crosby tells the story of Grantham primarily from the perspective of his conflict with theological opponents and local officials. Crosby underscores Grantham's successful petitions to Charles II on behalf of the harried General Baptists in Lincolnshire and includes a section of text from *The Baptist Complaint against the Persecuting Priests* (1685). From the outset, then, Crosby unequivocally connects the ministry of Thomas Grantham with the spread and strength of General Baptist life in Lincolnshire.

In 1805, just over fifty years after Crosby's history appeared, William Richard wrote a fairly thorough introduction to the life and ministry of Grantham for the *Universal Theological Magazine* in order that the "name of this eminent confessor . . . should not be suffered to sink into oblivion."⁴ Richard underscores Grantham's role in presenting confessions to the King during the Restoration, multiple persecutions, and enduring contributions to Baptist life in Lincolnshire and Norfolk. An interesting aspect of this biography centers on the description of the differences between the General Baptist churches of Grantham's lifetime and those of the New Connexion churches in Richard's lifetime.

Joseph Ivimey's two-volume *A History of the English Baptists* (1814) includes an excellent appraisal of the life and writings of Thomas Grantham in a section devoted to important Lincolnshire ministers after the Restoration. Building on the work of Crosby, Ivimey spends considerable time and energy outlining Grantham's toils as Nonconformist, pastor, and Messenger. Ivimey's discussion of Grantham weaves together his life and writings by including local Lincolnshire concerns and broader

⁴William Richard, "Biography of Thomas Grantham," *Universal Theological Magazine* 3, no. 13 (January 1805): 1. Richard wrote the biography in four parts, published in the January, February, March, and April editions of *Universal Theological Magazine* in 1805.

political and religious issues in England. Ivimey references several of Grantham's publications throughout, but three in particular receive sustained attention: *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678), *The Loyal Baptist* (1684), and *Truth and Peace* (1689). *Christianismus Primitivus* is described as Grantham's "principal work,"⁵ yet *Truth and Peace* is discussed in greater detail. Ivimey presents a fairly thorough introduction to Grantham, but does so primarily from the perspective of Grantham's interaction and conflict with government officials or religious opponents.

In *The History of the English General Baptists* (1818) Adam Taylor also spends considerable energy outlining General Baptist life in Lincolnshire, of which Grantham was a vital part. Taylor, too, relies heavily on Crosby's *History* and Grantham's own writings. Taylor apparently had access to many of Grantham's published documents, from which he worked to highlight Grantham's importance as a Nonconformist spokesperson, capable debater, and tireless Baptist leader. Grantham's death was a "heavy loss," Taylor writes, for "none of his successors inherited an equal portion of his spirit and abilities, though several of them were assiduous and sincere."⁶ In addition to the thorough treatment of Grantham's work in and around Lincolnshire, Taylor's history is noteworthy for its fairly detailed discussion of Grantham's published and unpublished writings.

William T. Whitley's *A History of British Baptists* (1923) constitutes the earliest modern and systematic attempt at a comprehensive account of Baptist history. Whitley

⁵Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, 2.277.

⁶Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 2.316. Just nine years after Taylor's published history of the Baptists, Richard Knight's *History of the General or Six Principle Baptists, In Europe and America* (1827; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1980) credits Grantham with establishing a General Baptist presence in the South Marsh of Lincolnshire, 33-34.

highlights Grantham's contributions as author, evangelist, and church founder.⁷

Christianismus Primitivus is singled out as "a repertory of learning for [Grantham's] denomination."⁸ Whitley also calls attention to *Six Principles of the Christian Religion*, in which Grantham "laid his finger on the ultra-Calvinist weakness of condemning all unbaptized infants, and found himself drawn into a many-sided debate on kindred points."⁹ Whitley goes on to claim that the General Baptist expression lost one of its "unifying forces"¹⁰ when Grantham died in 1693; thus, it is no wonder that Whitley includes Grantham in the larger discussion of General Baptist decline.

Jesse Plumb's University of Sheffield thesis, "Early Nonconformity in Lincolnshire" (1940), includes a biographical sketch of Grantham's life and ministry.¹¹ When surveying Nonconformity in Lincolnshire during the seventeenth-century, Plumb singles out Grantham as a pioneer among the Baptists of South Lincolnshire. Plumb goes on to highlight the importance of Grantham's influential *Christianismus Primitivus* and numerous imprisonments.

Comprehensive studies of Baptist history in the second half of the twentieth century tended to devote less attention to Grantham, but by no means limited or downplayed his significance. Robert Torbet surprisingly makes only brief mention of Grantham in his *A History of the Baptists* (1973): "Among General Baptists, new churches had been planted and old ones were flourishing both in Lincolnshire and the

⁷William T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1923), 134-35.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 168.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Jesse Plumb, "Early Nonconformity in Lincolnshire" (master's thesis, University of Sheffield, 1940).

adjacent counties under the able leadership of the reverend Thomas Grantham and of younger ministers.”¹² While Torbet’s description leaves the reader wishing for more detail, he does affirm Grantham’s organizational importance in and around Lincolnshire.

Yet A. C. Underwood’s *The History of the English Baptists* (1947), for example, hails Thomas Grantham as the General Baptists’ “ablest writer.”¹³ Underwood’s treatment of Grantham consists primarily of a biographical sketch, though no sources are included. Underwood emphasizes Grantham’s part in the debates concerning infant-baptism, limited atonement, and church Messengers. Regarding Messengers in particular, Underwood writes that Grantham was so effective in mollifying objections to the office of Messenger that Messengers became an accepted part of General Baptist church polity. Likewise, B. R. White’s *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (1983) treats Grantham in the context of the Messenger debate and highlights the significance of *Christianismus Primitivus*.¹⁴

H. Leon McBeth, like Underwood and White before him, first references Grantham in the context of the church Messenger debate, noting that Grantham taught the main function of Messengers was to preach, plant churches, and ordain Elders.¹⁵ McBeth’s distinct addition to the Grantham portrait is found in his assertion that Grantham worked to distance himself, and Baptists in general, from the Fifth Monarchists

¹²Robert Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1973), 53.

¹³A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Baptist Union Publication Department, 1947), 53. Ollie Latch’s *History of the General Baptists* (1954; repr., Poplar Bluff, MO: General Baptist Press, 1972), 80, mentions only Grantham’s appearance before Charles II in 1661.

¹⁴Barrington R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 114-17.

¹⁵H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 78-79.

and “Munster radicals.”¹⁶ McBeth notes that in *Christianismus Primitivus* Grantham “expounded Baptist theology, described Baptist worship, and set out Baptist views on several subjects.”¹⁷ Finally, McBeth finds that by 1700, after years of persecution and abuse, Baptists were “emotionally and spiritually drained.”¹⁸ Thus, educated leaders like Grantham were difficult to replace, especially since Baptists were excluded from high-profile schools, and educated converts were no longer flowing into the movement.¹⁹

Thomas Grantham also appears as an important figure in numerous specific studies of seventeenth-century England. Ted L. Underwood spends considerable time in *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb’s War* (1997) examining the Baptist-Quaker conflict in seventeenth-century England. Going in directions somewhat different than general introductions to Baptist history, Underwood draws on Grantham several times, especially where the idea of the primitive church is concerned. When the discussion turns to the nature of religious authority, Underwood highlights the tension – as represented by Grantham – that existed between the sufficiency of the Spirit and the sufficiency of scripture.²⁰ As Underwood takes up the question of Christ’s humanity, Grantham is again chosen as the Baptist voice in the debate. It is noteworthy that Underwood recognizes Grantham not only as an important voice within General Baptist circles, but also as a viable, informed, and capable defender of the movement. Furthermore, he highlights the range of issues on which Grantham wrote and disputed.

¹⁶Ibid., 89.

¹⁷Ibid., 117.

¹⁸Ibid., 153.

¹⁹Ibid., 153-54.

²⁰Ted L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb’s War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 25.

In his 1980 contribution to the History of Lincolnshire series, Clive Holmes surveyed life in seventeenth-century Lincolnshire.²¹ Holmes's excellent study adds significant insights related to Grantham's social and political contexts. Dissent and Nonconformity, in particular, characterize the discussions in which Grantham appears. I will return to Holmes' work later in this chapter and throughout the dissertation.

Samuel E. Hester completed a dissertation on Thomas Grantham at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1977, focusing primarily on the idea of the primitive church in *Christianismus Primitivus*.²² In a 1982 dissertation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Michael Atwol Smith included Thomas Grantham in his "The Early English Baptists and the Church Fathers."²³

Robert Kershaw's 1995 thesis at the University of Nottingham addresses how Lincolnshire came to include a strong General Baptist contingent in the late seventeenth century.²⁴ Kershaw examines a variety of key figures such as Hanserd Knollys, Samuel Oates, and Thomas Grantham. In addition to providing a fresh biographical sketch, Kershaw further argues that Grantham was the most prominent Baptist in Lincolnshire after 1660 and that his ministry was crucial to the survival of the Baptist movement in Lincolnshire during the tumultuous years before Toleration.

²¹Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, UK: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1980).

²²Samuel E. Hester, "Advancing Christianity to its primitive excellency: The quest of Thomas Grantham, early English General Baptist (1634--1692)" (Th.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1977).

²³Michael A. Smith, "The Early English Baptists and the Church Fathers" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982).

²⁴Robert R. Kershaw, "Baptised Believers: Lincolnshire Baptists in Times of Persecution, Revolution and Toleration, 1600--1700" (master's thesis, University of Nottingham, 1995).

Philip Thompson takes a keen interest in Grantham in “A New Question in Baptist History: Seeking a Catholic Spirit among Early Baptists.”²⁵ In this 1999 article for *Pro Ecclesia*, Thompson argues that contemporary Baptists have deviated from the path set forth by the early Baptists, who were “catholic in mind and spirit, and believed themselves to be speaking from within a tradition larger than any single communion.”²⁶ Of interest here is Thompson’s use of Grantham in support of this claim. In order to “reveal the catholic mind”²⁷ of early Baptists like Grantham on issues such as creeds, episcopacy, and the sacraments, Thompson draws heavily on *Christianismus Primitivus*, *St. Paul’s Catechism*, *The Prisoner Against the Prelate*, *The Loyal Baptist*, and *Hear the Church*. Thompson notes that Grantham readily affirmed the church’s ancient creeds, and even includes the text of the Nicene Creed in *St. Paul’s Catechism*. Where episcopacy is concerned, Thompson points to Grantham’s status as a Messenger among the General Baptist churches. Finally, Thompson directs the reader to *Christianismus Primitivus* and *The Loyal Baptist* in support of his claim that “early Baptists possessed a sacramental understanding of baptism and eucharist.”²⁸

Similarly, Stanley Fowler’s *More Than a Symbol* brings Grantham into a discussion of sacramentalism and early Baptist baptismal views. Citing *Christianismus Primitivus* and *A Sigh for Peace*, he shows how Grantham makes baptism not “merely a

²⁵Philip Thompson, "A New Question in Baptist History: Seeking a Catholic Spirit among Early Baptists," *Pro Ecclesia* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1999), 51-72.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 71.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 64.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

sign, but an effective sign.”²⁹ In the end, Fowler finds that Grantham apparently says more about what does not happen to infants in baptism than what does happen to adults. The contributions of Hester, Kershaw, Fowler, and Thompson are important, focused examinations of particular areas of Grantham’s thought, but they are not – nor are they intended to be – comprehensive studies.

George Southcombe, in an unpublished dissertation for Oxford University (2005), examines the variety of dissenting responses to the Restoration in 1660.³⁰ Among the case studies employed to demonstrate this variety is an analysis of Thomas Grantham. Southcombe sees in Grantham an evolving accommodation of the General Baptists with the Anglican Church and finds that Grantham’s ministry and move from Lincolnshire to Norfolk included a gradual shift in the Baptist minister’s relationship with the Anglican establishment. Furthermore, he notes an increasingly irenic tone in Grantham’s writings during the 1670s. Southcombe’s work will provide a suitable departure point for a discussion of Grantham’s relationship with the Church of England in chapter four.

Brackney has perhaps gone farther than any scholar towards establishing Grantham as a prominent – if overlooked – early Baptist theologian. In his *Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (2004), Brackney refers to Grantham as the “first organized, comprehensive, published theologian of any of the Baptists.”³¹ The broad strokes with which Brackney paints in *Genetic History* renders a detailed analysis impossible. A more

²⁹Stanley Fowler, *More than a Symbol: The British Baptist Recovery of Baptismal Sacramentalism* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2002), 28.

³⁰George Southcombe, “The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England” (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2005).

³¹William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 114.

recent essay, however, “Thomas Grantham, Systematic Theology, and the Baptist Tradition” (2006), uses *Christianismus Primitivus* as a way to survey Grantham’s thought. In this article, Brackney outlines Grantham’s positions on topics such as Nonconformity, creeds, scripture, Christology, ecclesiology, and worship patterns. I will return to this essay in more detail in chapter five, but it is worth noting here that Brackney works to establish Grantham as an important figure in the early Baptist evolutionary process who bequeathed to that process “a set of factors that qualified Baptists as a maturing evangelical Protestant tradition.”³²

It should be clear that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries historians (e.g., Crosby, Richard, Ivimey, and Taylor) were often inclined to tell the Baptist story by recounting the lives and exploits of influential Baptists. In the mid-twentieth century writers such as Underwood, White, and McBeth tend to emphasize important aspects of early Baptist life and employ various personalities as examples. More recently, theologians and historians are looking to early Baptists like Grantham in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of Nonconformity, county life, and Baptist identity.

Two observations deserve mention before moving on. First, it should be obvious from this historiographical survey that Grantham was among the most able, influential, and prolific early English Baptists.³³ Yet the absence of any broad treatment is equally apparent. The early testimonies of Crosby, Ivimey, and Taylor all affirm that Thomas

³²William H. Brackney, “Thomas Grantham, Systematic Theology, and the Baptist Tradition” in *From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith: Essays in Honor of Lee Martin McDonald*, eds. William H. Brackney and Craig A. Evans (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 199-216.

³³Despite the best efforts of the censor Robert L’Estrange and others, it is a wonder that so many Baptists works managed to be published. For a helpful discussion of the printing and proliferation of Nonconformists texts, see Neil H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Avon, UK: Leicester University Press, 1987), 120ff. Citing the Baptists Benjamin Keach, John Spilsbury, and Grantham, Keeble also finds that the social standing of many published authors was not very high, 145.

Grantham was a pivotal figure in the first century of English Baptist life. Furthermore, Grantham was deemed influential because of his tireless work to establish Baptist churches. One should not overlook, however, that all three historians explain Grantham's importance by elucidating his conflict with non-Baptist opponents. Ivimey, for example, consistently draws attention to Grantham's conflict with ecclesiastical and governmental officials, almost to the exclusion of any inter-Baptist dialogue. In time, however, those interested in the witness and example of the seventeenth-century Baptists have turned their attention to leaders like Thomas Grantham. As many contemporary Baptists debate questions of Baptist identity, the work of scholars such as Fowler, Thompson, and Brackney exemplify a renewed interest in early Baptist life in general and Grantham in particular.

Second, recent scholarship indicates that Grantham was a key General Baptist theologian in the second half of the seventeenth century. The essay by Brackney, perhaps more than any other study, solidifies Grantham's place among the notable early Baptist theologians. Yet such an emphasis on Grantham's theological legacy may obscure the organizational aspects of his leadership. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to explore the ways in which Grantham, informed by his own theological convictions, sought to establish and sustain the General Baptist presence in Lincolnshire and Norfolk.

The Social, Political, and Religious World of Thomas Grantham

Early Stuart and Revolutionary Political and Religious Life, 1603-1660

The notion that the Elizabethan "settlement" forever quelled the religious questions in England is inaccurate. One could make the case, in fact, that the series of

English civil wars during the 1640s constituted the last of Europe's religious wars in the seventeenth century. The distinction here, however, is the unmistakably Protestant nature of the English conflict. Instead of a Catholic-Protestant divide which characterized Continental struggles, English Protestants fought other English Protestants, though not everyone saw the conflict in such a light.³⁴

Complete understanding of the contours of English religious life in the opening decades of the seventeenth century is complicated at best and unachievable at worst. This situation is partially explained by the fact that issues of politics, finances, and religion were inextricably tangled in early seventeenth-century England. Historians have worked to categorize various participants and their allegiances, but to date there seems to be no single explanation for all variables. Complicating all of this is the tendency among some scholars to view the events of the 1620s and 1630s in light of the 1640s, as if the civil war and king's execution were inevitable. The overview of this era in the pages to follow will paint with broad strokes.

England faced manifold and inveterate problems in the seventeenth century.³⁵ Barry Coward has noted that the accession of James I (James VI of Scotland) plunged the monarchy into the murky waters of ruling multiple kingdoms (England, Ireland, and Scotland). Compounding the situation were the country's dire financial situation and the

³⁴ That some feared a popish plot is clear. John Pym's now-famous conviction that the king had fallen prey to such a plot is one such example. As misguided as these fears may have been, they should not be surprising. Peter Marshall points to the idea of "Laudianism" as papism in disguise, the sagging Protestant cause in the Thirty Years' War on the continent, and the king's marriage to the catholic Henrietta Maria as reasons many English would fear Catholic encroachment, *Reformation England 1480-1642* (London: Arnold Publishers, 2003), 211-18.

³⁵ I have in mind here the helpful categories provided by Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1704* (New York: Pearson Education, 2003), 91.

ever-present question of the future of the Church of England. James I was somehow capable and flexible enough to hold these together relatively well; his successor was not.

Religious Nonconformity was not monolithic during the reign of James I, as he dealt with reform-minded Puritans on the one hand and Catholics on the other. It is to his credit that his policies and interactions were generally successful. Where Catholics were concerned, James I was prepared to distinguish between quiet and loud Catholics at least until the Gunpowder Plot was uncovered in 1605.³⁶ The ensuing policies restricting Catholic worship to the private realm certainly appeased Catholic opponents, but the real religious question of the day centered on those commonly called “Puritans.”

There is no strong consensus concerning the nature and identity of “Puritan” elements in early seventeenth-century England. The events of the 1640s would go a long way toward establishing a group of Puritan Protestants distinct from other Protestants, but in 1603 they may be described as those “whose life-styles were more influenced than others by Protestant principles and more concerned than others to reform the church.”³⁷ Coward goes on to say that there were probably few Puritan types who wanted to do away with bishops or the established church in 1603. James I was fairly sympathetic to Puritan reform efforts and appeared, ostensibly at least, to have Calvinist leanings. He even appointed George Abbot, a professed Calvinist, as Archbishop of Canterbury. Still, as Coward notes, James’s Calvinist sympathies only went so deep while the constant Puritan barrage of calls for ever-expanding reform frustrated the king.

³⁶The language of “quiet” Catholics comes from J. R. Tanner, *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I, A. D. 1603-1625* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 28.

³⁷Coward, *The Stuart Age*, 129.

The royal revenue system was in need of reform by the early seventeenth century. Elizabeth had managed to maintain relatively little debt, but James's fairly luxurious lifestyle and expensive marriage burdened the royal finances. Economic plans such as the Great Contract in 1610 and the Cockayne cloth project of 1614 were designed to re-establish royal financial stability but achieved only lackluster results. Taken together, it seems likely that "finance, unlike religion, was a major political issue" for James I.³⁸ The same could not be said for the reign of Charles I.

By the time Grantham was born in 1633/34, Charles I had ascended the throne (1625), dissolved parliament (1629), and entered a period of self-rule. Lacking the political acumen of his father, Charles's reserved nature coupled with his uncompromising approach took a toll on the relations between court and parliament. Charles inherited the complicated set of problems surrounding multiple kingdoms, finances, and religion, but his actions only exacerbated the situation in each case. So egregious was his rule, Coward says, that "[i]t is difficult not to sympathize with the judgment that Charles I was the most inept monarch to have occupied the English throne since Henry VI in the fifteenth century."³⁹ What is clear in the end, it seems, is that Charles I did little to alleviate the problems he inherited. Despite all the problems facing the king in the 1630s, however, it would be premature to assume that the English people were necessarily thinking in terms of making a choice between crown and parliament. Similarly, it would be unwise to assume that the civil war was inevitable or obvious to contemporaries. Those types of choices were not the only options until the 1640s, and no one factor was to blame for the turmoil to come.

³⁸Ibid., 141.

³⁹Ibid.

Popular discontent with Caroline rule in the 1630s was certainly related to increased taxation and economic crises, but the king's religious policies were even more troubling. Complicating all things religious was Charles's propensity to press for uniformity, a pattern that eventually led to the end of his personal rule. The decision to impose religious uniformity within the three kingdoms was like tossing a match into a powder-keg.⁴⁰ Whereas a broad consensus built around Calvinistic doctrine had managed to secure some level of religious unity, Charles's introduction of Arminian ideas brought division. The growing sense of discomfort was extended by the king's close association with William Laud.⁴¹ Laud's strong anti-Calvinist position on predestination coupled with his insistence on moving the altar table to the east of the church aroused no small amount of indignation. Yet taken together, financial failures and religious reforms were not enough to bring about the end of Charles's personal rule. The final straw was Charles's complicity in the Scottish rebellion, which again can be traced to Charles's push for uniformity in matters of religion.⁴²

The events above undoubtedly played some part in moving England toward war, but there is considerable disagreement over the nature and causes of what transpired during the 1640s.⁴³ The series of armed conflicts comprising the English Civil Wars

⁴⁰Charles Russell, "The British Problem and the English Civil War," *History* 72, no. 236 (1987): 399.

⁴¹Coward prefers to describe Charles's theology as "Laudian" instead of "Arminian."

⁴²See Russell, "The British Problem and the English Civil War," 178.

⁴³For discussions of possible long-term causes of the war, see Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998); and Norah Carlin, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999). Ann Hughes and Richard Cust have edited a helpful introduction, *The English Civil War* (New York: Hodder Arnold, 1997), while Peter Gaunt has compiled essential readings, *The English Civil War* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). Not all contemporary scholars agree, however, that designations such as "English Civil War" or "English Revolution" are accurate descriptions for the events from 1640-1660. For discussions of alternate terms

during the 1640s left many of the foundations of English political and religious life in disrepair by decade's end. The convocation of the Long Parliament in 1640 marked the beginning of a series of events which would erode the monarchy throughout the 1640s. Other traditional loci of authority and stability such as the House of Lords and bishops were done away with. Conflicts between the crown and parliament culminated in the famous regicide of Charles I. Late in 1648 Colonel Pride and Lord Grey guarded the doors while the Long Parliament was purged of unsympathetic Ministers of Parliament, then those remaining orchestrated the king's execution on 30 January 1649. In the absence of a monarch or established church censorship faltered and radical expressions flowed freely. Further complicating the situation was that those of low social status, who had little or no voice before 1640 or after 1660, were often the primary dispensers of such radical thought.⁴⁴ This may help explain why in 1660 monarchical rule was restored and the changes of the previous two decades proved transitory.

The period often referred to as the "Interregnum" dates from the execution of Charles I in 1649 to the monarchy's restoration in 1660 with the return of Charles II. The intervening years saw political control take on both parliamentary and military forms, with the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell being the most famous.

The persistent problem of the Interregnum was the inability to formulate policies which could satisfy military and sectarian interests on the one hand, and those local officials who occupied positions of power prior to 1640.⁴⁵ The downfall of all attempts at

such as "War(s) of the Three Kingdoms," see John Morrill's "The War(s) of the Three Kingdoms," in *The New British History*, ed. Glenn Burgess (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 65-91.

⁴⁴Coward, *The Stuart Age*, 185.

⁴⁵Coward, *The Stuart Age*, 238.

governance was the failure to maintain peace and ensure stability. The Rump Parliament, which consisted of those remaining in the Long Parliament after the purge of 1648, was largely unsuccessful in healing the breach in the early 1650s and subsequently dissolved in 1653. Oliver Cromwell convened the Barebones Parliament in July of 1653, but circumstances and perceived influence from radical parties forced him to dissolve it in December of the same year.⁴⁶

At this crucial juncture Cromwell chose to take the title Lord Protector and share power with a parliament. The Instrument of Government, the name of the Protectorate constitution, was an attempt to outline the ways in which government would work.⁴⁷ It established that authority was to be settled in a single ruler and parliament. Together, the ruler and parliament were to share control of the militia, while parliaments were to be elected every three years and sit for no fewer than five months. Furthermore, The Instrument required that the Protector rule in conjunction with the advice of a Council of State, a situation in which accord was not achievable.

The Cromwellian approach was ultimately unable to hold the government together, but it did meet with some success. A degree of religious toleration was achieved, but toleration was only extended to those who did not upset the social order. For this reason, Coward points out, Catholics and Laudian clerics were harassed far less than Quakers and Ranters.⁴⁸ Such toleration, however, did not sit well with some MPs who favored a more restrictive approach to religious dissent. Thus issues of religious

⁴⁶One of its first acts was to name itself a parliament.

⁴⁷For context and details surrounding the adoption of The Instrument of Government, see Austin Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1982), 362-78.

⁴⁸Coward, *The Stuart Age*, 267.

toleration and questions of military control prompted Cromwell to dissolve Parliament in January 1655.

By the time Cromwell called the second Protectorate parliament in September of 1656 the brief experiment with major-generals was coming to an end.⁴⁹ The major-generals failed in their attempt to further godly reform, but they achieved limited success in securing the regime.⁵⁰ Differences concerning the extent of religious toleration resurfaced in the second Protectorate parliament. The brutal treatment of the Quaker James Nayler only exacerbated tensions between parliament and Cromwell, leading the latter to lay aside The Instrument and look instead for a solution that would allow him to check the power of the House of Commons. So, Cromwell ended the major-generals experiment and moved to introduce a new constitution, the Humble Petition and Advice. The Humble Petition and Advice included many elements amenable to Cromwell, but he rejected the crown. Under the conditions set forth in the Humble Petition, Cromwell accepted the position as Lord Protector for a second time in June of 1657. He died fifteen months later.

In a confusing flurry of regime change, the next twenty-four months saw power change hands multiple times. Following Oliver Cromwell's death, the mantle of leadership immediately fell to his son, Richard, who in his short time as Lord Protector failed to match the major success of his father: to gain the support of the army.

⁴⁹Christopher Durston's *Cromwell's Major-Generals* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001) is probably the standard treatment of Cromwell's major-generals. The major-generals ruled from October of 1655 until June of 1656. Nineteen major-generals and deputy major-generals were appointed in all, though only sixteen were active. Each major-general was assigned to rule over an association, or group of counties. Edward Whalley, whom Durston describes as the most "eirenic and moderate" of all the major-generals (page 47), was assigned to the association which included Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Warwickshire.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 228.

Consequently, the army forced Richard to dissolve parliament in April 1659. With the Lord Protector out of the way and in an ironic twist, the army recalled the Rump Parliament (which had been dissolved in 1653 by Oliver Cromwell) in May 1659. The Rump only sat until October, when disappointed with its lack of progress, the army chose to set up an interim government and place its grantees in charge. This quick succession of leadership regimes reveals that all attempts to create effective rule during the Interregnum fell short of the goal of stability, and as a result the republic crumbled. Amidst the turmoil, General George Monck entered London and recalled the Rump to restore order. Disenchantment with the Rump, however, did not take long to develop because it must have been clear that a return to monarchy in some form was necessary. So, on 21 February 1660, with Monck's aid, the Long Parliament (now twenty years old) returned and voted to dissolve itself, making new elections possible and necessary.

The election of the Convention Parliament, so-called "Free Parliament," took up the business of making the necessary arrangements for Charles II to rule, and believed that the burden to govern should rest on the shoulders of monarch, lords, and commons. It seems likely that all factions found something palatable in Charles' declarations from Breda, in the Netherlands, in April of 1660, though it was not altogether clear how far he would go in dealing with "tender consciences."⁵¹ Nonetheless, more than ten years after

⁵¹For the text of the document see Gerald Bray, ed., *Documents of the English Reformation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 544-45. Charles announced his acceptance of the English crown in April of 1660 in a statement commonly known as the "Declaration of Breda." For our purposes, the Declaration is significant because in it Charles outlined his conditions for assuming the throne. He attempted to assuage the fears of those who may have been skeptical of the restoration of the monarchy when he offered a "general pardon" to enemies and ensured the citizens of a "free parliament." Charles also stated that he would grant "liberty to tender consciences" so long as they did not threaten the peace of the kingdom. As we shall see in the fifth chapter, those General Baptists with "tender consciences" in Lincolnshire took Charles at his word and urged him to fulfill his promise of liberty. For background and context of the Declaration of Breda, see Paul H. Hardacre, "Genesis of the Declaration of Breda, 1657-1660," *Journal of Church and State* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 65-82.

his father was executed, Charles II took the English throne in May 1660. His inheritance: multiple kingdoms, financial difficulties, and serious religious disagreement.

Baptist Life to the Restoration

Baptists were born amidst the political and religious turmoil of the early seventeenth century when Separatists such as John Smyth and Thomas Helwys sought freedom and refuge in Amsterdam, where the first Baptist church was formed in 1609.⁵² The Baptist story, however, actually began three years earlier in Gainsborough, Nottinghamshire, where Smyth and other like-minded believers separated from the Church of England in order to establish a true church. Since church attendance in England was regulated by law and failure to appear in worship could lead to imprisonment or banishment, Smyth's group chose a life in exile in Amsterdam.⁵³

Upon his arrival in Amsterdam, Smyth continued to examine the scriptures for directives and instructions regarding authentic ecclesiastical form and practice. It almost seems inevitable that he would arrive at the question of baptism, and, in time, he became convinced of believer's baptism. Barrington R. White has identified at least three elements which played some part in moving Smyth and his fellow Separatists along the path to believer's baptism.⁵⁴ White first points to lingering doubts among most

⁵²For an introduction to Smyth's theology, see Jason K. Lee, *The Theology of John Smyth: Puritan, Separatist, Baptist, Mennonite* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003). On the question of Baptist origins, there is general agreement among historians that the Baptists first emerged out of the English Separatist ranks, but the question of Anabaptist influence remains. See K. R. Manly, "Origins of the Baptists: The Case for Development from Puritanism-Separatism," *Baptist History and Heritage* 22, no. 4 (October 1987): 34-46. For discussions of Anabaptist influence, see Lonnie Kliever, "General Baptist Origins: The Question of Anabaptist Influence," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36, no. 4 (October 1962): 291-321; and Glen H. Stassen, "Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of The Particular Baptists," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36, no. 4 (October 1962): 322-48.

⁵³William H. Brackney, *The Baptists* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 4.

⁵⁴White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 19.

Separatists regarding the validity of their baptism as administered by what they thought to be a false church, the Church of England. No less important was the ardent desire to identify and realize the apostolic pattern as recorded in the scriptures. The third element noted by White centers on the pattern of believer's baptism already in existence among the Dutch Mennonites. In the end, the practice of believer's baptism spoke to the range of issues at stake in this new attempt to establish an apostolic church.

Affirming believer's baptism was perhaps the easiest step, for then the question was raised as to whom Smyth and his followers should turn for baptism. Because of theological disagreement with Mennonites, they were not viewed as a viable option. So, as reported by John Robinson, "Mr. Smyth baptized first himself and next Mr. Helwys and so the rest."⁵⁵

Smyth's theological housecleaning did not stop with the question of baptism. Perhaps in response to debates raging in the Netherlands concerning the nature and extent of election, Smyth came to affirm what would later be called an "Arminian" position.⁵⁶ This theological position would be a key tenet of the incipient General Baptist movement which denied outright the prevalent Calvinistic positions on election and predestination.

As time went by, Smyth became increasingly open to dialogue with the Waterlander Mennonites and began to doubt his own self-baptism. Contrary to his

⁵⁵John Robinson, *Of Religious Communion* (Leyden, 1614), 48. Lest one assume that Baptists practiced baptism by immersion from the outset, it should be noted that Smyth baptized "out of a bason." For a detailed discussion of this event see Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2006), 33ff.

⁵⁶Smyth may have encountered the discussion years before when Peter Baro had disseminated similar opinions in Cambridge. See White, *The English Baptist of the Seventeenth Century*, 19. "Arminianism" specifically refers to the theological views of those following the theological trajectory of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (d. 1609). Arminius challenged the Calvinistic doctrine of double predestination by affirming that Jesus died for all and that humans could resist God's grace. Arminian views were expressed clearly in the *Remonstrance* of 1610 and later denounced at the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619.

previous position, Smyth began to appreciate the Mennonites and no longer deemed them heretical. He concluded, to the dismay of Helwys and a few others, that he should have, in fact, sought baptism from the Mennonites. In 1609, when Smyth applied for membership in the Mennonite community, the Helwys faction excommunicated him. The Helwys congregation set forth a *Declaration of Faith* in 1611, explaining their core theological and ecclesiological convictions.

Helwys' small congregation soon decided to return to England in 1612 and in the same year they established the first Baptist church in England at Spitalfields. Once in England, the group published *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*, which included a plea to James I for toleration. Though small in number and comprised entirely of lay persons, the church survived as leadership was passed on to John Murton upon Helwys's death in 1616. A complete history of the Spitalfields congregation is impossible due to a lack of records, but it is clear that those first Baptists existed in a precarious state up to the beginning of the Long Parliament in 1640. The theological climate of England was decidedly predestinarian, but the earliest Baptist leaders were unified in rejecting theological claims that God predestined some humans for destruction. Stephen Wright notes that Helwys denied both free will and original sin, opting instead for the concept of "foreseen faith."⁵⁷

Brackney notes that other sectarian groups took issue with Baptist Arminian tendencies and Anabaptist-like practices, while Anglicans "considered them dangerous schismatics and used political and ecclesiastical machinery to silence their message."⁵⁸ Despite repression and persecution, at least four new Baptist churches grew out of – and

⁵⁷Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649*, 51.

⁵⁸Brackney, *The Baptists*, 6.

were associated with – the Spitalfields congregation: Lincoln, Sarum, Coventry, and Tiverton.⁵⁹ White estimates that there were about 150 Baptists in all of the five congregations combined in the mid 1620s.⁶⁰ These earliest Baptists are typically referred to as “General” Baptists, based on their belief in general atonement, and their numbers would not increase significantly until the Restoration in 1660.⁶¹

The struggles faced by the small and harassed group of General Baptists were not only external. Details of conflict among the General Baptists prior to 1660 are few because sources are limited, but extant documents do reveal that disagreement over the imposition of hands was widespread.⁶² White notes that most concurred that hands should be laid on Elders at ordination and the sick, but “those who came to believe in the absolute necessity for the laying on of hands upon baptized believers did so because they believed that this was part of the blueprint for the church. . . .”⁶³ It is worth noting at this point that as late as 1687 we find Grantham delineating arguments in favor of laying on hands in *St. Paul’s Catechism*. The question had not disappeared.

⁵⁹White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 23.

⁶⁰Ibid., 24.

⁶¹Stephen Wright’s 2006 monograph, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649*, is in many ways a revisionist account of Baptist origins. Wright makes a strong argument against the accepted opinion that almost from the beginning Baptists formed into two distinct groups: “Particular Baptists,” or those who accepted predestination, and “General Baptists,” or those who held to general atonement. Instead, Wright makes the case that early Baptist alignments were more fluid than previously thought and did not necessarily conform to the later categories of “General” and “Particular”. Thomas Lambe is an example of such flexibility, 95-120. For a detailed treatment which assumes a “General Baptist” group long before the Restoration, see Thomas K. Gulley’s lengthy dissertation, “The General Baptists in Early Stuart and Revolutionary England” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1994). The long-term impact of Wright’s conclusions remains to be seen. See also Barrington R. White, “The Frontiers of Fellowship between English Baptists, 1609-1660,” *Foundations* 11, no. 3 (July-September 1968): 244-56. The accepted categories of “General” and “Particular” remain in use and are helpful, and for that reason, will be employed in this section.

⁶²Edward B. Underhill, *Records of the Churches of Christ gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720* (London: Haddon Brothers, 1854), 1.254.

⁶³White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 39.

The picture of church structure and organization among the General Baptists was not uniform in the 1640s and 1650s, but neither did the diversity of polity and practice elicit the same tension as the imposition of hands. The General Baptists employed the offices of Messenger, Elder, and Deacon, though the exact role of Messengers varied from region to region. We will explore the office of Messenger at greater length in chapter three, but the situation in the 1650s suggests that there was an inter-congregational nature to the office and that they were somehow successors to the apostles. The role of General Baptist Messengers is directly related to the relationship among the various congregations. Though in a state of flux, White lists sundry local (East Midlands, Cambridge, and Kent) and at least three national meetings of General Baptists.⁶⁴ The issues discussed ranged from practical church organizational issues like records to deeper issues of church discipline and the person of Christ.⁶⁵ By the time Thomas Grantham became a public figure in 1660 the General Baptists constituted a visible religious minority, yet they were characterized by diversity on a vast array of issues.

The earliest Baptists were a diverse lot, and we can identify the emergence of a distinct group of Baptists on the religious scene beginning in the 1640s.⁶⁶ Contrary to the General Baptists, however, these new Particular Baptists held that 1) atonement is limited to particular persons and not people in general, and 2) that immersion is the biblical mode of believer's baptism.⁶⁷ Perhaps the Particular Baptists "first appeared as a self-

⁶⁴Ibid., 47ff.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶See Barrington R. White, "The Frontiers of Fellowship between English Baptists, 1609-1660."

⁶⁷General Baptists did not embrace immersion until the 1640s.

conscious group with the publication of *The London Confession* of 1644,⁶⁸ but the steps leading up to such a public statement can be traced to the London Separatist congregation led by a succession of able pastors such as Henry Jacob, John Lathrop, and Henry Jessey. Bible study was again the catalyst for some members within the congregation concluding that believer's baptism was the only scriptural model. By 1638, when Henry Jessey was pastoring the congregation, a group of six decided that separation was necessary and did so to found a communion opposed to infant baptism.⁶⁹ It would be about two years before the mode of baptism was subjected to scrutiny by Richard Blunt, and then another two years before he (probably) baptized himself and others to restore the ancient church.⁷⁰ It would be another two years before the Particular Baptists were willing – and perhaps able – to publicize their beliefs.

The London Confession put forth by these Baptists in 1644 was modeled to a great degree on *The True Confession* of 1596.⁷¹ White has noted the similarities in “the basic churchmanship” of the two confessions, yet *The London Confession* included several new

⁶⁸White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 59.

⁶⁹ Brackney, *The Baptists*, 6.

⁷⁰It is widely held that the recovery of baptism by immersion can be traced to Richard Blunt in 1641/1642. E.g., McBeth *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 44-46; White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*; and Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 29. Wright, on the other hand, claims that Edward Barber “had arrived at his new views on baptism” and “became the first Londoner to embrace believers’ baptism by immersion, at least in theory, by mid-1640,” *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649*, 97.

⁷¹The 1644 Confession was revised in 1646. The texts of both confessions can be found in William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 82-97, 156-71. The 1596 Confession outlines the doctrine and polity of a Calvinistic Separatist congregation which had been divided geographically by persecution. Key leaders of the church such as Francis Johnson remained imprisoned in London, while most of the laity had removed to Amsterdam.

aspects.⁷² We have already noted how *The London Confession* clearly asserts that efficacious baptism requires the immersion of believers only, but a second difference centered on the value ascribed to the ministry among the Particular Baptists. Whereas the 1596 *Confession* disallowed the sacraments without the presence of proper ministers, the 1644 document revealed how the “ministry was firmly subordinated to the immediate authority of the covenanted community”⁷³ among the Particular Baptists. A third and resounding departure from the Separatist statement was the belief that the government should not involve itself in punishing heresy or stabling God’s law. Views such as these could be construed as anarchic or subversive, so *The London Confession* did affirm that magistrates should be obeyed.⁷⁴ Finally, the Synod of Dort (1618-19) had condemned “Arminianism” and affirmed the five points of limited atonement, unconditional election, irresistible grace, total depravity, and perseverance of the saints. So, when the Baptists inserted language consistent with the five points (articles XXI-XXXII of the *Confession*), White is correct to remind us that “every part of [the Confession] had been carefully scrutinized before inclusion.”⁷⁵

⁷²White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 62. White counts no less than four new features. Stephen Wright also notes a “spreading millenarianism” in the 1644 confession which was not present in the 1596 confession, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649*, 134-35.

⁷³White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 63.

⁷⁴Wright draws attention to the glaring absence of Hanserd Knollys and Edward in the list of signatories for 1644 confession. Where Knollys is concerned, Wright wonders whether Knollys may have refrained from signing the confession because he “disliked the submissiveness to the magistracy,” *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649*, 137.

⁷⁵White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 64.

Particular Baptists seem to have been more committed to associational or inter-congregational cooperation than their General Baptist neighbors.⁷⁶ Multiple factors were probably responsible for this impulse. They include, according to White, patterns of inter-congregational links among Independent churches which Particular Baptists had jettisoned, desire to form community which could overcome the stigma and ostracization attending the pejorative “Anabaptist” label, and associational language found in John Cotton’s *The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1644).⁷⁷

This loose cooperative impulse was given expression most clearly in *The London Confession* of 1644. Its appearance and the circumstances which gave rise to it betray something of the importance given to article XLVII of the *Confession* itself, which states that

although the particular Congregations be distinct and several Bodies, every one a compact and knit City in itself: yet are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all means convenient to have the counsel and help one of another in all needful affairs of the Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their only head.⁷⁸

Alterations and additions made to the 1644 *Confession* in 1646 did not significantly affect the text of article XLVII, but the biblical references may reflect a growing concern for financial assistance among the congregations.⁷⁹ The cooperation necessary to produce *The London Confession* in 1644 eventually led to the first “General Meeting” of Particular Baptists in South Wales in 1650. From the beginning these meetings were

⁷⁶See Barrington R. White, “The Organization of the Particular Baptists, 1644-1660,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 17, no. 2 (October 1966): 209-26.

⁷⁷White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 66.

⁷⁸See Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 168-69.

⁷⁹The marginal scripture citations for article XLVII are: I Cor. 4:17, 14:33, 36, 16:1; Matt. 28:20; 1 Tim. 3:15, 6:13-14; Rev. 22:18-19; Col. 2:6, 19, and 4:16.

primarily concerned with providing aid and advice to weaker churches.⁸⁰ The process was fruitful as Particular Baptists experienced a period of expansion and growth from 1644 up to the Restoration in 1660.

Baptists were not simply isolated from the events of the world around them, as their presence in the New Model Army attests. The army turned out to be a seedbed of Nonconformity, to the point that Cromwell was criticized for admitting some who held “Anabaptist beliefs.” In all likelihood it was the Baptists who attained high ranking positions and wrote drill books for military training that sparked such controversy.⁸¹ No doubt the presence of such high-profile Baptists did much to further the Baptist cause and foster their acceptance.

Brackney estimates that by 1655 there were more than 170 Baptist congregations throughout England, with most of those falling in the Particular camp.⁸² Thus, Baptist life in England was firmly established by 1660, but any burgeoning sense of unity or identity among the various Baptist expressions would soon be challenged by renewed persecution following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

This brief overview of Baptist life to the Restoration is important for understanding the context in which Grantham’s ministry among the General Baptists began. In the years after the Restoration Grantham provided important leadership as the General Baptist inter-congregational office of Messenger was firmly established. In

⁸⁰White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 68.

⁸¹Brackney, *The Baptists*, 8.

⁸²Ibid., 9. Brackney lists seventy-nine General Baptist congregations, ninety-six Particular Baptist congregations, and less than ten Baptist churches adhering to sabbatarian views.

addition, Grantham's ministry as a Messenger contributed to the organization and solidarity of General Baptist congregations in Lincolnshire and Norfolk.

Stuart Lincolnshire to the Restoration

As attractive as it may be to contextualize the Baptists and other Nonconformists in relation to national governmental and religious policies, the enforcement of such policies was almost always carried out at the local level.⁸³ Thus, any treatment of Thomas Grantham must take into account his primary local context: the county of Lincolnshire. Moreover, if Crosby is right that with Thomas Grantham "almost all the events in relation to the Baptists in [Lincolnshire] are connected"⁸⁴ and Ivimey is correct that Grantham was "[t]he principal instrument, used by the great Head of the church, for reviving the truth in [Lincolnshire],"⁸⁵ then an understanding of seventeenth-century Lincolnshire is crucial.

A major question on the minds of many local rulers when James VI of Scotland took the English throne in 1603 as James I was the extent of royal influence in local politics. If religious policy was an accurate predictor for the Jacobean attitude, then the Hampton Court Conference with bishops and Puritans indicated James's intention to exercise a great degree of control over the localities. In response to those grievances outlined in the Millenary Petition, the king conceded almost nothing, insisted on the

⁸³See Lawrence Stone ("English and United States Local History," *Daedalus* [Winter 1971]: 128-32) and William G. Hoskins (*English Local History: The Past and the Future* [Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966]) as the principal originators of the modern examination of local history. While the study of local history as a scholarly discipline is a relative newcomer at the academic table, it has quickly expanded to include a number of hotly contested debates. Chief among these debates is the question of what constitutes a community.

⁸⁴Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.262.

⁸⁵Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 2.128.

despised ceremonies and vestments, and demanded complete conformity by 30 November 1604. In Lincolnshire, Bishop Chaderton worked to enforce conformity but was ultimately unwilling to enforce deprivation on Nonconformist ministers. Holmes writes that by 1606 central pressure to hold ministers accountable to the *Book of Common Prayer* subsided and Puritan types such as John Cotton enjoyed some level of toleration.⁸⁶ In the end, it appears that James's policies were largely unpopular at the local level. Holmes describes James's monetary interest in local affairs as occasional and sporadic, resulting in a growing suspicion of central government during the next ten to fifteen years.⁸⁷

The succession of Charles I in 1625 ushered in new concerns and exacerbated existing ones for counties like Lincolnshire. Holmes identifies and details several ways in which royal policy during the personal rule of Charles I directly impacted citizens and rulers in Lincolnshire: fen drainage, ship money, forced loans, The Book of Orders, and the Bishop's War.⁸⁸ An issue specific to Lincolnshire was increased pressure for fen drainage in the opening decades of the seventeenth century. In a study of peasant farming in Lincolnshire, Joan Thirsk found that drainage was the key issue for the fenlands during this period.⁸⁹ Traditionally, the Lincolnshire fens functioned as common land suitable for a pastoral economy. Charles was the lord of two manors in the county, both of which happened to be situated in the midst of fen-heavy areas. In order to

⁸⁶Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 96.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 102.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, chapter 8. For a brief overview of the Book of Orders, see pages 35-36.

⁸⁹Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (New York: Methuen, 1957), 108. See also William Page, ed., *The Victoria County History of Lincoln* (London: Archibald Constable, 1906), 2.332-34.

increase income on these manors, the king opened the way for outside investors to drain the fens, thus doing away with the means of production for significant amounts of the common land worked by peasants and other manual laborers.⁹⁰

In addition to fen drainage, Lincolnshire residents were also forced to support financially a growing military force. England had managed to remain out of the fray in the Thirty Years War until 1624, but eventual involvement prompted Charles to insist on the formation of a well-trained and well-equipped army. The development of such a fighting force required significant financial support, not to mention considerable energy and local government machinery for collecting the new tax. In Lincolnshire, landowners were required to pay a penny an acre for each muster. Under James I the muster cost was manageable since musters were infrequent, but under Charles I musters occurred weekly and amounted to significant payments.⁹¹ The strain of these royal demands for the military only served to alienate people further from the crown.

An additional factor in the decline in royal popularity among many citizens of eastern Lincolnshire was an increase in yet another kind of financial burden: ship money. Charles's decision to require towns and counties to provide additional money for expenses related to the navy incited strong negative reactions to the crown in counties like Lincolnshire.⁹² Citizens initially refused to pay and some resisted to the point of imprisonment, but threats and punishments eventually led to payment in full. Roger

⁹⁰For a detailed discussion, see Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming*, 108-41. See also Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 130.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 104-5.

⁹²Thomas G. Barnes writes that "no other secular program attempted by Charles and his Council during the 'personal rule' appears so foolhardy as ship money," *Somerset, 1625-1640* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 203. For specifics on reaction to the demand for ship money in Lincolnshire, See Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 130-40.

Lockyer has pointed out that increased attention to the payment of ship money affected a larger percentage of the population in a given county, thus promoting a greater political awareness among the common citizens.⁹³

The aspect of Caroline government which was met with some respect was the issuance of the Book of Orders in 1631. Though the Book of Orders contained nothing original, it was an attempt by Charles to compel local magistrates to enforce specific statutes which had been in place since the Tudor days. The legislation included poor relief, ale house licenses, wage rates, enclosure policies, and repairs for roads. Records suggest that the various laws were initially strictly enforced under the Tudors, but in subsequent years enforcement seems to have waned.⁹⁴

When taken with the factors indicated above, the promotion of Laud to the position of Archbishop was a monumental step for Charles I. For our purposes, it is worth noting that Bishop Williams of Lincoln had an ongoing conflict with Laud which dated back to their days at court in the 1620s. Williams had no sympathy for the Arminian influences at the national or local level, and so Lincoln fell far short of Laud's vision for the Church of England. Williams's hesitancy to enforce and apply Laudian reforms eventually led to the former's rather public and nasty conviction before the Star Chamber.⁹⁵ In Williams's absence, Laud himself took over direct control of the diocese.

⁹³Roger Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts: A Political History of England 1603-1642* (New York: Longman House, 1989), 265-67.

⁹⁴For the larger context of the issuance of the Book of Orders, see Coward, *The Stuart Age*, 169-70. The unavailability of records related to the implementation of the Book of Orders is unfortunate, but Barnes's study of Somerset may exhibit a pattern, *Somerset*, 172-202. For the impact in Lincolnshire, see Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 109-12.

⁹⁵For a discussion of the Williams-Laud affair, see Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573-1645* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1963), 179-84; 325-32.

Finally, the circumstances surrounding what is commonly called The Bishops' War also did much to erode allegiance to, and popularity for, the crown. In his attempt to stave off the Scottish rebellion Charles took measures to raise an army. A great many objected to his decision to replace local military leaders with professional soldiers, while the methods of choosing, training, and sustaining the troops were ill-suited for forming a fighting force capable of resisting the Scots. Lincolnshire, like many other counties, experienced various hostile reactions to royal attempts to raise money and recruit soldiers. Leaders ranging from sheriffs to constables sought to avoid collecting money and forcing conscription. At the conclusion of The Bishops' War (1639-1640), all the factors mentioned above left Charles without support and the end it was clear that the end of his rule without parliament was rapidly approaching.

When the realities of civil war appeared in 1641 and 1642, the House of Commons was divided as to the distance it should go in rejecting the crown. Of Lincolnshire's twelve members of Parliament, ten sided with the Pym-led majority who favored greater restrictions on royal prerogative such as limits on choosing advisers.⁹⁶ Back in Lincolnshire there was no clear consensus regarding the extreme measure proposed in the House of Commons. Holmes points out that popular motivation is difficult to measure, but the equivocations of many "demonstrate that in Lincolnshire, as in other counties, enthusiastic commitment to either of the competing sides was anything but universal."⁹⁷ Holmes goes on to say that county elections in 1640 exhibited a desire for reform through Parliament, but as the year wore on parliamentary support was sapped

⁹⁶Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 142-43.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 149.

on account of Pym's increasingly radical plans, the self-interests of gentry and nobility, and basic loyalty to the crown.⁹⁸

Lincolnshire was "a major theater of the civil war" and frequently found itself caught in a back-and-forth struggle for supremacy.⁹⁹ In addition, Lincolnshire's place in the civil war is "memorable" because it was the "field where Cromwell's military genius first received public recognition."¹⁰⁰ The parliamentarians typically had the upper hand, but the royalist stronghold in Newark, just across the county in Nottinghamshire, was a source of irritation because of constant raids and plundering. So when Newark fell in 1646 the royalist annoyance ceased. Holmes believes it is difficult to determine how the war affected the economic, social, political, and religious structures in Lincolnshire, though he is more confident when speaking of its impact on local government and the development of sectarian religious groups.¹⁰¹ Local administration of governmental duties was restructured to reflect the growing "associational" model of parliamentary cooperation in the counties, so that after 1645 Lincolnshire was administered by a county committee as a member of the Eastern Association. In time, these committees came to be hated on account of their sensitivity to Westminster and insensitivity to local concerns.¹⁰² Where religion was concerned, the inevitable erosion of ecclesiastical discipline in these tumultuous years certainly paved the way for a more pluralistic religious situation.

⁹⁸Ibid., 150-51.

⁹⁹Ibid., 177.

¹⁰⁰Page, *The Victoria County History of Lincoln*, 2.282-83. Cromwell is often credited with providing key leadership and direction at the Battle of Winceby in October of 1643.

¹⁰¹ Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 177-80.

¹⁰²Ibid., 193.

Baptists were among the groups that benefited from the new situation as they gained adherents and influence.¹⁰³

Lincolnshire was not a major theater during the second civil war, though there were two military engagements within the county. There was talk of plots, prompting Parliament to send additional troops, but whatever discussions there may have been, nothing materialized. A lack of any serious or organized royalist sentiment in the county is perhaps most responsible for this situation. The end of the second civil war was followed by the Rump Parliament.¹⁰⁴ Holmes notes how the Rump was received rather coolly in Lincolnshire because of high taxes and burdens related to the persistent presence of soldiers in the county. That various religious expressions also found space to maneuver, recruit, and grow only served to magnify questions of England's security and stability. It is difficult to overestimate the acute sense of fear and chaos held by many rulers, magistrates, and magnates. By the commonwealth's end in 1653 few citizens were pleased with the direction government had taken. Perhaps some model of the old constitution was preferred.

During the Protectorate years, Lincolnshire, like most other counties, experienced some religious toleration. Baptists and Quakers seem to have benefited greatly from such tolerance in Lincolnshire. This should not suggest, however, that the regime cared little about the state of religion in the realm. Cromwell's policy in the counties was generally

¹⁰³Jesse Plumb found that the county of Lincolnshire was "eminently suitable" for the proliferation of sectarian groups on account of its size and meager wages for clergy, "Early Nonconformity in Lincolnshire," from the Summary. See also Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 198ff. See also *The Victoria County History of Lincoln*, 67, which reports that a "feature" of the restored Church in Lincolnshire was the "comparatively large body of organized dissent outside its borders." It should be noted that *The Victoria County History of Lincoln* incorrectly records Thomas Grantham's first name as "John," 67.

¹⁰⁴The "Rump" Parliament is the name given to the Long Parliament after Colonel Thomas Pride purged it of hostile members in December of 1648. See above, 22-24.

to depend on pre-war rulers, so in 1654 local “ejectors” were appointed to rid the localities of suspect ministers and complete the clerical purge which began in the previous decade.¹⁰⁵ Lincolnshire’s committee was characterized by a hint of stubbornness, and the work of ejection was probably not all that successful.¹⁰⁶ When Cromwell resorted to ruling with the aid of major-generals in 1655, the authoritarian momentum continued as the central government increasingly involved itself in local affairs. Major-general Whalley, who oversaw the midland counties, which included Lincolnshire, was less abrasive than most, but all in all attitudes in the county were generally negative toward excessive external influence in county affairs.¹⁰⁷ This is evident by the short-lived experiment with the major-generals, which came to an end in 1656.

Cromwell’s rejection of the crown fostered an environment in which a new constitution was drafted and instituted, whereby Cromwell ruled in a modified executive role. While his popularity in Lincolnshire had certainly declined by 1658, it is telling that upon news of the Protector’s death a group of approximately 6,000 Lincolnshire men agreed, in an encomium for *Mercurius Politicus*, that Richard Cromwell was inheriting a “peaceable and prosperous government.”¹⁰⁸ Richard Cromwell, however, proved less capable of maintaining peace and prosperity than his father, prompting the recall of the Rump, a rejection of the Protectorate, and whispers of the return of a king. In chapter three I will examine the Restoration’s impact on Lincolnshire General Baptists, who, just

¹⁰⁵Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1704*, 266.

¹⁰⁶Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 213.

¹⁰⁷Durston, *Cromwell’s Major-Generals*, 47-48.

¹⁰⁸*Mercurius Politicus*, no. 559 (17-24 March 1659): 308. *Mercurius Politicus* was a periodical of the Commonwealth-Protectorate period.

months after the king returned, complained to the king of the injustices imposed upon them by their enemies. The last name on the petition is that of a young man, Thomas Grantham, who, though only twenty-six years old, delivered the document into the king's hand. Such is the beginning of Grantham's public ministry.

CHAPTER TWO

Biographical and Literary Sketch

Reconstructing the life of Thomas Grantham is no simple task. There is no known autobiography or a biography written by a contemporary. In the case of Grantham, however, the historian is fortunate to have more than twenty original writings. Though predominantly polemical in nature, these documents and those of his opponents provide various biographical details. Thomas Crosby's *History of the English Baptists* (1738-40)¹ includes the earliest known attempt at reconstructing the life and ministry of Thomas Grantham. The work of William Richard, Adam Taylor, and Joseph Ivimey in the early nineteenth century built on and augmented that of Crosby. While the historical interpretations of these authors are not always reliable, they nonetheless constitute important sources for information related to the life and times of Thomas Grantham. Perhaps the most important contribution made by these authors centers on the fact that they had access to important documents and sources which are no longer extant.

More recent biographical sketches, including the entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *ODNB*) and the work of Robert Kershaw, are also

¹Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1740), 3.75ff. A bibliography of Grantham's publications is available in William T. Whitley, *A Baptist Bibliography, 1526-1837* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1916-1922); and Edward C. Starr, ed., *A Baptist Bibliography* (Rochester, NY: American Baptist Historical Society, 1947-1976), 9.101-6. The standard source for information regarding English publications during the second half of the seventeenth century is Donald Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in other Countries 1641-1700*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1982), 2.157-58. For more information on documents cited in this dissertation which were published prior to 1641, see A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640*, 2nd ed. (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976). For a helpful introduction to the variety and locations of sources related to Baptist history in particular, see Susan J. Mills, "Sources for the Study of Baptist History," *Baptist Quarterly* 34, no. 6 (April 1992): 282-96.

helpful and provide a general framework for the pages to follow. The following reconstruction of Thomas Grantham's life and ministry is built on birth records, wills, Grantham's publications, the writings of Grantham's opponents, unpublished letters, and a thorough collation of the studies by Crosby, Richard, Taylor, Ivimey, the *ODNB*, and Kershaw.²

Birth and Background (1633/34)

Determining exact birth dates and years for those born in seventeenth-century England is an inexact science. Parish records and bishop's transcripts are the primary sources for this type of biographical information, but unfortunately these records are often incomplete, missing, or ambiguous. Where Thomas Grantham is concerned, the parish records and bishop's transcripts for this period in Lincolnshire include at least two

²In addition to Crosby's *History of the English Baptists*, biographical introductions can also be found in an anonymous, thirty-two page, hand-written manuscript housed in Dr. Williams's Congregational Library, *Brief Notes Containing Memoirs of the Ministerial Acts, Particularly Such as relate to the Writings of that Servant of Christ, the Reverend Mr. Thomas Grantham Messenger of the Baptized Churches in Lincoln Shire of Blessed Memory*, (n.p., 1690s or later?); Adam Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists* (London: T. Bore, 1818), 1.127-37, 185-218, and 307-17; the three-part article "A Memoir of Thomas Grantham," *General Baptist Repository and Missionary Observer* 4/44 (1 August 1825): 281-86; 4/45 (1 September 1825): 321-26; and 4/46 (1 October 1825): 361-67; the four-part article by William Richard, "Biography of Thomas Grantham," *Universal Theological Magazine* 3/13 (January 1805): 1-10; 3/14 (February 1805): 57-68; 3/15 (March 1805): 109-17; and 3/16 (April 1805): 165-71; Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1814), 2.262-83; Alexander Gordon, "Grantham, Thomas (1634-1692)," *Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *DNB*), eds. Stephen and Sidney Lee, 63 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1890) 22:410-12; W. L. Johnson, Jr. and Richard L. Greaves, "Grantham, Thomas (1634-1692)," *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Richard L. Greaves and Robert Zaller, 3 vols. (Brighton England: Harvester Press, 1983): 2:23-24; A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1947), 110-111; Barrington R. White, *The English Baptist of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1996), 118-19; Robert R. Kershaw, "Baptised Believers: Lincolnshire Baptists in Times of Persecution, Revolution and Toleration, 1600-1700" (master's thesis, University of Nottingham, 1995); Oscar C. Burdick, "Grantham, Thomas (1633/4-1692)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11298?docPos=2> (accessed 3 September 2008); and Keith E. Durso, *No Armor for the Back* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 154-62. The majority of later writers tend to draw heavily on Crosby, Taylor, and Ivimey.

different birth entries for “Thomas Grantham” in late 1633 and early 1634.³ The *ODNB*, probably the most popular secondary source for information on Grantham, identifies the “Thomas Grantham” born to Ralf and Elyzabeth Grantham in Spilsby on 15 April 1633 as a probable match.⁴ These details of Grantham’s birth have been repeated and assumed true in recent decades, yet there is reason to question the *ODNB*’s conclusion.

The 1692 entry in *The Lincoln Date Book*, a record of notable events and people in Lincolnshire history up to ca. 1866, includes an obituary for one Thomas Grantham, “. . . born at Hatton near Spilsby, in 1634.”⁵ A survey of the bishop’s transcripts for Hatton, which is near Spilsby, reveals that a “Thomas Grantham” was born to William and baptized on 27 January 1633/34.⁶ This entry in the Lincoln Date Book is import for at least three reasons. First, the obituary itself includes a lengthy account of Grantham’s activities in the years immediately following the Restoration. Second, the location and date of birth recorded supply important clues related to Grantham’s origins, for there were several men by the same name in Lincolnshire during the seventeenth-century.

³Though no extant primary source identifies either of these as Grantham’s birth years, it is possible to determine his birth date by counting backward from his death in January of 1692. His published dying words state that he died at the age of fifty-eight. When determining precise birth dates for this period, it is important to remember that methods of dating could fluctuate and vary depending on the context. C. R. Cheney’s most helpful *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1981) is probably the standard source on the varying ways of calculating dates. It was common until 1752 to use 25 March (The Annunciation) after Christmas as the beginning of the year, though in the seventeenth century 01 January was also a common starting point. Thus, Grantham occasionally will specify which day it is on both calendars. So, those born in December of 1633 and February of 1634 can be considered to have been born in the same year, though not in the same Gregorian calendar year.

⁴Bishops Transcripts for Spilsby (1633/34), Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, UK. Burdick, in his article for the *ODNB*, and White (*The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 118) point to Spilsby. Richard points to Halton, “Biography of Thomas Grantham,” *Universal Theological Magazine* 3, no. 13 (January 1805): 2.

⁵*The Date Book for Lincoln and Neighbourhood* (Lincoln, UK: R. E. Leary, 1866), 155.

⁶Bishops Transcripts for Hatton (1633/34), Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, UK. The handwriting is unclear after William, but it does confirm that Thomas was born to a William in Hatton. Richard writes that Grantham’s house was still standing during his lifetime, “Biography of Thomas Grantham,” 2.

Finally, this entry is important is important because it highlights the respect later Lincolnshire historians had for Thomas Grantham. For Grantham to be granted almost an entire page in this county history – along with bishops, ministers to parliament, knights, sheriffs, etc. – is a monument to his immediate and long-term impact in Lincolnshire.

A second reason to question the *ODNB*'s conclusions about Grantham's birth is a Lincolnshire will for a William Grantham, dated 19 January 1657.⁷ In this will, William Grantham names two sons, Thomas and Richard, as equal executors of his will. A second and perhaps more important aspect of this will which suggests a strong connection to our Thomas Grantham is that William's specified employment in the will is that of a tailor. Grantham mentions later in life that in his youth he had the same employment as his father, "who was both a Farmer and a Taylor."⁸ Thus, it seems plausible that the William Grantham responsible for this will is Thomas Grantham's father.

If we are correct, William Grantham's will may also indirectly provide a clue as to Thomas Grantham's place in the larger Grantham lineage in Lincolnshire. In his will, William left his best suit to his brother, Thomas Grantham.⁹ Given that there were several men named Thomas Grantham in seventeenth-century Lincolnshire, it is difficult to identify exactly which Thomas Grantham could have been William's brother. We do know that at least two Ministers to Parliament from Lincolnshire during the seventeenth

⁷The Will of William Grantham, 19 January 1657 (W1662/i/364), Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, UK.

⁸Thomas Grantham, *The Infants Advocate* (London: Printed by J. D., 1688), 8. Grantham's humble origins are similar to those of other Baptist leaders such as William Kiffin and Benjamin Keach.

⁹The Will of William Grantham, 19 January 1657 (W1662/i/364).

century were named Thomas Grantham.¹⁰ This is especially interesting in light of Grantham's allusion to his family background and pedigree in the Dedicatory to his *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678), which is actually addressed to his family:

To my kinsmen according to the flesh, in the next place I address my Self; I mean the ancient of family of the Granthams in the county of Lincoln especially. How welcome such a Dedication will be to you I know not, and therefore shall not name you particularly, you being persons of Quality in this World, and my extraction being immediately from your poor Kindred, yet such as were acknowledged by your Progenitors. And though I am one of the lowest of my Father's House, yet let it not displease you to hear my Voice, whilst in these several Tractates I only bespeak you for God; and in order thereunto, beseech you to consider your standing in relation to Christianity, in respect of its Primitive Institution.¹¹

From this excerpt it is clear that although Grantham's family held some place of esteem in Lincolnshire, Grantham himself comes from those who were less wealthy.

In the end, it is obvious that Thomas Grantham was born in Lincolnshire, probably in the winter of 1633 or spring of 1634. Based on the discussion above, it seems plausible that he was the son of William Grantham and born in the village of Hatton. Robert Kershaw describes this region of Lincolnshire as a place where the Wolds, the Holland Fen around Boston, and the coastal Marsh converge.¹²

Childhood and Adolescence (1635-1650)

Little is known of Grantham's childhood. Giles Firmin, a theological opponent from Grantham's later years in Norwich, reports that he was told by another Baptist that

¹⁰See Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, UK: History of Lincolnshire Committee for the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1980), 103-4; 140-43.

¹¹Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1678), 1.1.

¹²Kershaw, "Baptized Believers: Lincolnshire Baptists in Times of Persecution, Revolution and Toleration, 1600-1700," 32.

Grantham's family suffered "much loss for king" during the civil war.¹³ If Firmin is correct, it appears Grantham's family may have had limited wealth at some point. Regardless of Grantham's economic and social background, his spiritual tendencies were evident at a young age as he "began to seek the Lord very early."¹⁴ Grantham's father apparently disapproved of this spiritual bent, and so he unsuccessfully attempted to extinguish the spiritual fervor of his son in childhood by apprenticing him to a tailor.¹⁵ This parental nudge may have failed, for Firmin says that upon completion of "his service" as a tailor Grantham "gave himself to learning."¹⁶ At about age fourteen or fifteen (ca. 1650) Grantham came to "repentance and faith."¹⁷ This serious young man would eventually find a spiritual home among the General Baptists of Lincolnshire.

Baptist Beginnings: 1651–1660

Joseph Ivimey probably overstates the case when he claims that with Grantham "almost all the events in relation to the Baptists in this county are connected," but he is certainly right to include Grantham among the major Baptist figures in the county.¹⁸ Nothing is known of Grantham's first interaction with the Baptists or Baptist principles, and his movements in the years following his conversion are unclear, but sometime

¹³Giles Firmin, *Scripture Warrant* (London, 1688), A2.

¹⁴Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 3.75-76. Crosby does not provide a source for this claim.

¹⁵Firmin, *Scripture Warrant*, sig. a2v-a3r. See also *The Answer of Giles Firmin* (London: n.p., 1689).

¹⁶Firmin, *Scripture Warrant*, sig. a2v-a3r.

¹⁷Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 21 April 1691, Letters to Thomas Grantham, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

¹⁸Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, 2.262. John Smyth had been in Lincolnshire before moving to Amsterdam. In addition, the Particular Baptist Hanserd Knollys was an important figure in seventeenth-century Lincolnshire.

between 1651 and 1653 he found in Boston, Lincolnshire “a people congregate upon the profession of the foundation principles of Christ’s doctrine Heb. 6:1-2.”¹⁹ Strangely, more biographical information becomes available at this crucial point in Grantham’s life, but organizing it is complicated. Although Grantham was baptized in the Baptist church at Boston in 1653, all accounts of his life point to an earlier connection with a young but growing Baptist congregation in the South Marsh area of Lincolnshire. Since the beginning of Grantham’s own public ministry is intricately involved with the South Marsh church, a brief account of the church’s history is in order.

About 1644 a reform-minded church took shape in the South Marsh of Lincolnshire.²⁰ This congregation rejected signs and sponsors but retained sprinkling as the preferred mode of baptism.²¹ The church was probably of the Independent persuasion and was persecuted for admitting no sponsors and rejecting ceremonies such as making the sign of the cross.²² Disagreements eventually divided the congregation, so that by 1651 it appears the church consisted of a group of four, all of whom embraced baptism by immersion. This nucleus, Crosby writes, formed the foundation of the General Baptist

¹⁹Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 21 April 1691. Crosby writes that Grantham was baptized at “about the 19th year of his age” in the gathered church at Boston, Lincolnshire (*History of the English Baptists*, 3.76-78). Crosby goes on to say that Grantham was later ordained as a pastor in 1656 at age twenty-two. Richard writes that Grantham embraced immersion and Baptist principles in 1651, at about age nineteen, and joined the Boston church, “Biography of Thomas Grantham,” 3. The *ODNB* says that this happened about 1652.

²⁰Crosby’s account of this congregation comes from Grantham’s no-longer extant *Christianitas Restaurata*, *History of the English Baptists*, 3.77. There seems to be no other version of the manuscript available after Crosby.

²¹Apparently those in the congregation had already rejected making the sign of the cross and allowing parents to function as “sponsors” for their infants at baptism.

²²Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 3.77

presence in Lincolnshire.²³ Kershaw wonders whether Grantham may have already attached himself to this young Baptist congregation in the South Marsh in 1651, two years before being baptized in Boston.²⁴ If this is the case, then Taylor may be correct in identifying Grantham as one of the four to separate over the issue of immersion in 1651.²⁵ Regardless of whether Grantham was one of the original four, Taylor rightly describes Grantham as a “principal instrument” and chief supporter of believer’s baptism in the South Marsh congregation, though only seventeen years of age. In the following years Grantham assisted the South Marsh church by procuring preachers as he “exercised his own gifts among them privately.”²⁶

Grantham’s potential for ministry did not remain hidden long, for in 1656 the South Marsh congregation chose him as pastor, a post he would hold for the next thirty years.²⁷ When reflecting on his ordination later in life, Grantham recalled his reluctance and doubts:

. . . in all faithfulness, nothing seemed more terrible to me. The greatness of the work, and my poor and low capacity, and great unfitness for so sacred a work, did cause me to strive much against many pressures in my spirit, which yet I hope

²³Ibid. By 1651 the congregation consisted only of those who favored believer’s baptism. Four of those members advocated believer’s baptism by immersion.

²⁴Kershaw, “Baptized Believers,” 32. Kershaw is here following the order of events found in Crosby, Richard, and Taylor instead of the *DNB* entry.

²⁵Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.128.

²⁶Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 3.77.

²⁷Ibid. Grantham would have been about twenty-two years old when he became the pastor. The *ODNB* holds that Grantham’s first pastorate was at Boston, but Kershaw argues that Grantham’s first pastorate was not at Boston but was with the South Marsh Church in 1656, “Baptized Believers,” 32. Monksthorpe Baptist Church’s history (see Bryan Keyworth, “History of Monksthorpe Baptist Church,” Monksthorpe Baptist Church, <http://homepage.nflworld.com/bh.keyworth/History.htm> [accessed 12 November 2008]) suggests that the “South Marsh” church may have been a false name used to protect the identity of the actual Monksthorpe location, an argument Kershaw advances (“Baptized Believers,” 34-35). If this is the case, then Grantham helped found Monksthorpe Baptist Church, which remains an active and worshipping community to this day. The Monksthorpe records, however, never make mention of Grantham.

were from the Lord. I remained silent under a heavy burthen, with much begging of God that I might be excused; but if not, that it would then please him to fit me for, and bless me in the work. And he was stronger than I, and prevailed. Then I opened my mouth with great trembling and fear: (the Lord knows it.) I had rather been sent to any drudgery in the world, than to preach. Howbeit, it pleased God to bless my weak beginnings to the edification of some, and to the illumination, and, I hope, true conversion of others. This being observed by some leading men among the baptized churches, for to them I was now related, I was chosen, though God knows unwillingly, to the office of presbyter, to take the oversight of a small congregation; and solemnly ordained, by fasting and prayer, and laying on of hands, of such as were ordained before me.²⁸

Grantham turned out to be a superb candidate and minister. The church grew under his leadership and eventually dispatched numerous General Baptist preachers.

Most of the events described above took place during the Protectorate, which tended to be more tolerant of Nonconformists than previous or later regimes. Yet Baptists did encounter persecution during Cromwell's reign as they were often taken before judges because of their absenteeism and choice to gather independently of the official parish congregation.²⁹ This was true for the South Marsh congregation. Local magistrates and local mobs openly sought opportunities to disturb meetings and disrupt worship, but somehow the church obtained meeting space at Northelm Chapel, Wainfleet.³⁰ In the following years the number of General Baptist congregations increased so much that the modern historian William T. Whitley described Lincolnshire as a General Baptist "stronghold."³¹

²⁸See Thomas Grantham's letter to John Connould, 11 June 1691.

²⁹ Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 3.86.

³⁰Taylor, *History of the English Baptists*, 1.131. Crosby records that the university-educated John Watts was a notable convert who joined the congregation during this period (*History of the English Baptists*, 3.78-79).

³¹William T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1923), 168.

Thomas Grantham: Husband, Father, Husbandman?

Before moving to deal with Grantham's public career as a Messenger and General Baptist spokesperson, it is useful to provide the few details which are available regarding Grantham's family and secular occupation. This is a difficult task because Grantham left few clues to his personal life, and *Christianitas Restaurata*, the one document which apparently contained some information, is no longer extant.³² Working with the slivers of data available and relying on various public records, one can, however, say a few things with confidence.

Perhaps the best source for information about Grantham's family and life in Lincolnshire is a will signed by one Thomas Grantham on the ninth day of May, 1690. Although none of the published sources related to Grantham seem aware of this document, there are sufficient internal and external connections to conclude that this 1690 document is the will of the Thomas Grantham under consideration in this dissertation.³³ Several family members and situations stand out in this will.

1. The will mentions that Grantham considered Sutterby, Lincolnshire to be his home and that he was a husbandman. He also owned land in Hundelby, Ashby next Partney, and Halton Hologate.
2. Bridget is mentioned as the deceased wife of Thomas Grantham, though it is unclear how long she had been dead.

³²Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 3.77.

³³The Will of Thomas Grantham, 9 May 1690 (W1691/ii/255), Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, UK. To my knowledge, no other published source references this will. For the full text of the will, see APPENDIX A.

3. Benjamin, one son of Thomas Grantham, was to receive his father's land in Hundelby.³⁴
4. Benjamin and two other sons, John and Abel, were to receive a portion of the money obtained from the sale of Thomas Grantham's land in Ashby next Partney.
5. Thomas Grantham left twenty-one pounds to John Hill, a kinsman, who was to use the money to pay a debt owed by Mary Grantham.
6. Mary Grantham was the widow of the deceased Thomas Grantham of Ashby.
The implication here is that Thomas Grantham had a son named Thomas (perhaps the eldest?), but he died before the completion of the will, widowing Mary Grantham.
7. If Mary Grantham had already paid the debt, then John Hill was to divide the twenty-one pounds equally between Thomas and Abner when they turned twenty one. Thomas and Abner were the sons of the deceased Thomas and (presumably) Mary Grantham.
8. Thomas Grantham asked John Hill and Mark Smith, a son-in-law, to oversee the sale of the Ashby land and distribution of the proceeds from that sale.
9. Thomas Grantham asked John Hill and Mark Smith to oversee the sale of his land in Halton Holegate. With the money received, they were to pay Mary Grantham's twenty-one pound debt if it remained unpaid. If that debt had already been paid, they were instructed to give the twenty-one pounds to Thomas Grantham's grandchildren: Thomas and Abner.

³⁴A manuscript of Grantham's, *The Quaeries Examined* (London, 1676), held in the British Library has a hand-written note on the last the page that the book is the property of Benjamin Grantham and is dated 1684. A copy of Grantham's *The Loyal Baptist* (London, 1684), also held at the British Library, has the same name and date.

10. Mark Smith and John Hill were then instructed to take the remaining money from the sale of the Halton Hologate land and divide half of it among the four children of Thomas Grantham's other deceased son, Abner, and then to give the rest to a pious and charitable cause.

Based on the contents and details of this will, Thomas Grantham was a husband, father, and grandfather. His wife, Bridget, had already died by the time of the writing of his will, as had at least one son.³⁵ He worked as a husbandman (farmer) and owned at least three plots of land in close proximity to each other (Hundelby, Ashby by Partney, and Halton Hologate). Sutterby, where he ratified his will, is several miles north of Hundelby, while his birthplace, Hatton, is a greater distance to the north-west of Hundelby.

That this will belongs to the Thomas Grantham under consideration here seems even more likely upon discovery that this Thomas Grantham was the trustee of a 1679 will for John Tailor. In this will, it is said that Grantham's children, Abner and Mary, were both under the age of twenty-one.³⁶ Moreover, there is a reference to Grantham's work as a tailor and his farming at Ashby by Partney, where he reared a family. The few pieces of information gleaned from John Tailor's will do much to confirm the likelihood that the Thomas Grantham mentioned is none other than the Thomas Grantham responsible for the Sutterby will of May 1690. The mention of family members named

³⁵Though no details are given, based on common marital patterns among Baptists in the seventeenth century, it is likely that Bridget was herself a Baptist. Baptists were strict about enforcing endogamous marriages. See further, Bill Stevenson, "The Social Integration of post-Restoration Dissenters, 1660-1725," in *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725*, ed. Margaret Spufford (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 361.

³⁶See the *ODNB*.

Abner and Mary is important, as is the reference to being a tailor and farmer in Ashby by Partney.

There are still more indications of relevant biographical information available in Grantham's writings. In the late 1680s Grantham referred to his wife and family, noting that some of his children had died as infants.³⁷ Where his occupation is concerned, we know that by 1663 he was earning a living "by the labour of [his] hands, and never saluted the schools to gain knowledge of their arts."³⁸ Elsewhere he wrote that farming had been his primary occupation.³⁹ All of these details accord with those in the will, but there are certainly gaps in this picture.

For example, why would an overtly religious and pious figure like Thomas Grantham include almost no religious language in his will? There is the line "Into the handes of almighty God I commit my Soul, and to the earth my Body in hope of a Happie Resuerection to Life eternal through Jesus Christ." at the outset and the mention of "Pious and Charitable uses" at the end, but that is the extent of the religious language.⁴⁰ That Grantham would be concerned with retribution or trouble with the established church seems unlikely, for the Toleration Act (1689) granted certain freedoms. Technically speaking, institutional structures which might have impacted the language and nature of Nonconformist wills in the past were no longer in place. At the same time,

³⁷Grantham refers to children who died in infancy in *The Infants Advocate, The Second Part* (London, 1690), 8.

³⁸Grantham wrote *The Baptist against the Papist* (London, 1663) during a stint in prison. Apparently Grantham was an autodidact, for in the opening pages of that work he reminds his reader that he works for his food and has no formal education. Grantham's vocation is consistent with what we know of most post-Reformation dissenters. Bill Stevenson has shown that most dissenters during this period "lived and worked in the countryside," "The Social and Economic Status of post-Reformation Dissenters, 1660-1725," 357.

³⁹Grantham, *The Infants Advocate*, 8.

⁴⁰The Will of Thomas Grantham, 9 May 1690 (W1691/ii/255).

one could make the case that Grantham remembered all too well that freedom could be illusory and fleeting in the seventeenth century. He had seen two declarations of indulgence come and go; perhaps he thought the third would end in a similar fashion. While the lack of religious language is a relevant question, it seems that the lack of a good answer to this objection is no serious obstacle to asserting that this is Thomas Grantham's will.

As will become clear in a few pages, Thomas Grantham moved to Norwich around 1686, which means he would have been required to return to Sutterby just before his death to sign and ratify this will in May of 1690. Is it really possible that he would have made this journey late in life? While it may seem unlikely at first, we will soon see that Grantham was quite active in his last years. For example, he traveled to London in 1689 for the General Baptist Convention, where he took the minutes. It does seem odd to find him in Sutterby in 1690, yet given his other travels late in life, it was by no means an impossible trip.

There is also some question regarding the family tree. Questions surrounding a son and grandson named Abner and a daughter and daughter-in-law named Mary give reason to pause, but the problems likely center on a lack of details. Similarly, Ann Grantham was present when Grantham died in Norwich, but nothing is known of her identity or place in the family. It seems odd that she would be present at such a crucial moment but find no place in any other document related to Grantham. Again, the picture is incomplete. When taken together, however, the significant overlap of names, places, and occupations convince this author that we do, in fact, possess the will of Thomas Grantham, the prominent General Baptist minister and Messenger.

From the Restoration to the Declaration of Indulgence (1660-1672)

The General Baptist cause in Lincolnshire prospered in the late 1650s, which is partially responsible for the increasingly open hostility against the movement following the Restoration in 1660. In March of 1660 forty-one General Baptists met in London to compose and issue a “Confession of Faith,” which was “[o]wned and approved by more than twenty thousand.”⁴¹ At least one representative from Lincolnshire signed the document: William Paine (Pann). This statement of faith was revised on several occasions and came to be known as *The Standard Confession*. By 1700 it had become the foundational General Baptist statement of faith. Grantham, who was not even a signatory in 1660, has mistakenly been identified as the author of *The Standard Confession*.⁴² He was, however, soon to become a representative for the Lincolnshire General Baptists.

Nonconformists in Lincolnshire were not immune to these tumults. General Baptists appealed to local magistrates for help but received little or no protection. Finding no relief locally, they turned their attention to Charles II with direct appeals for assistance. In July of 1660, several General Baptists (most of them from Lincolnshire) formulated and signed a *Narrative and Complaint*, the first address or petition to the king protesting their ill treatment at the hands of local magistrates.⁴³ Grantham, though only twenty-six years old, and Joseph Wright, a Messenger of the Westby congregation, were

⁴¹The text is available in Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, vol. 1, Appendix, 87-90. For the context of *The Standard Confession* see William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 220ff.

⁴²William J. McGlothlin, ed., *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1911), 109.

⁴³This petition is available in Henry Jessey’s *The Lords loud call to England* (London: Printed by H. J., 1660), 15-16. Grantham includes the confession in *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.7-9.

assigned the task of delivering the petition into the king's hands. They obtained an audience with the king, at which time they presented the petition and a copy of the *Confession* signed in March.

The *Narrative and Complaint* describes local hostilities in detail and recounts how peaceful Baptist meetings were disturbed by adversaries.⁴⁴ Some were imprisoned and even fined for not attending weekly Anglican worship. Others were unjustly indicted at the Quarter Sessions.⁴⁵ The petition is primarily an account of the harassment suffered by the General Baptists in Lincolnshire; it makes no specific request of the king.

The king responded favorably to the petition, however, saying “[t]hat it was not his mind, that any of his subjects, who lived peaceably, should suffer any trouble upon the account of their judgements or opinions in point of religion.”⁴⁶ Charles II promised to watch over these loyal subjects and assigned a member of Parliament to look into the matter.⁴⁷ Little else is known of this promise, but Thomas Venner's three-day uprising in London in January of 1661 halted any momentum sectaries may have secured in 1660. The government responded quickly and decisively to the uprising. On 10 January 1661 the king forbade Anabaptists, Quakers, and Fifth Monarchy men to meet. Thus it should come as no surprise that some Baptists, commonly referred to as “Anabaptists,” would submit *The Humble Apology of some commonly called Anabaptists* to Charles II on 28

⁴⁴Since chapter five of this dissertation deals specifically with Grantham's role in petitioning the king on behalf of Lincolnshire General Baptists, here I will only provide a brief overview of the contents of the various petitions signed and delivered by Grantham in the early 1660s.

⁴⁵The Quarter Sessions were periodic county courts which were supposed to convene at least four times per year.

⁴⁶Jessey, *The Lords loud call to England*, 17.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

January 1661. This apology was signed by prominent Baptists such as William Kiffin, Christopher Blackwood, John Spilsbury, and the printer Francis Smith.

The Lincolnshire General Baptists, however, made their own separate appeal to Charles II. Grantham was one of thirty signatories on the *Second Humble Address* of 23 January 1661, which represented a large number of Baptists in Lincolnshire.⁴⁸ The submission of two appeals in rapid succession reveals that the Baptists throughout England were concerned to remove any hint of disloyalty in light of growing hostility against them. Thomas Grantham led the way in this endeavor for those in Lincolnshire.

It did not take long for hostility toward Baptists to express itself more forcefully. Sometime between the *Second Humble Address* of January 1661 and 23 February 1661, Grantham was arrested at a Baptist meeting in Boston and taken to Lincoln Castle, which also served as a jail. It is from Lincoln jail that Grantham and seven others composed *The Third Address* to Charles II, which is dated 23 February 1661.⁴⁹ The address maintains the prisoners' innocence and requests the freedom to worship God as they are persuaded by scripture. The appeal apparently came to nothing, for Grantham spent more than a year in the castle, during which time he wrote *The Prisoner against the Prelate* (1662) and *The Baptist against the Papist* (1663).⁵⁰

⁴⁸Thomas Grantham, et al., *The Second Humble Address* (London: Printed by Simon Dover, 1661).

⁴⁹Grantham was one of eight signatories on *The Third Address* (London, 1661). All eight had signed *The Second Humble Address*.

⁵⁰It is important to point out that almost all of Grantham's published treatises were printed as pamphlets. Pamphlets were short treatises printed in quarto, or on sheets of paper folded twice. Often these pamphlets would be bundled with other pamphlets. Extant manuscripts of Grantham's writings reveal they were bundled with various and even unrelated treatises by other authors. The number of folds typically suggested the status attached to a particular publication. The notable exception in the Grantham corpus is *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678), which was printed in a folio style (a sheet of paper folded once). For a detailed discussion of the production and importance of pamphlets in the seventeenth century,

The Prisoner against the Prelate is a dialogue composed in verse between a personified Jail (“Prisoner”) and the Lincoln Cathedral (“Prelate”). In this prison treatise Grantham takes the perspective of the Prisoner and offers various reasons for separating from the established church. Among the issues addressed are toleration, believer’s baptism, infant baptism, imposition of hands, the end of all things, and organ music. It is worth noting that Grantham includes the text of the *Confession* submitted to Charles II in July of 1660, but in *The Prisoner against the Prelate* he deals with the various articles in more detail and even employs the “the test of antiquity” to support his positions. Though it has “little merit as a poem,”⁵¹ *The Prisoner against the Prelate* reveals the range of Grantham’s interests and his willingness to converse with antiquity regarding contemporary liturgical practices.

Some time later during this same stint in the Lincoln jail, rumors of Grantham being a closet papist and perhaps a Jesuit began to circulate. Local clergy questioned him about his identity and beliefs, and in response to their questions Grantham published *The Baptist against the Papist*. In this short treatise Grantham publishes his correspondence with an unnamed Catholic which shows clearly that he is no papist, yet he does desire the same freedom for Catholics as he seeks for himself. Still, he is quick to outline several ways in which the “present Papal Church” can not be the true church of Christ (e.g., the Roman church is unable to prove its status as the true Church, it has no true baptism, it is a national church, it increases its membership by means of the “carnal sword,” and it has

see Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4ff.

⁵¹Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.198.

unregenerate members).⁵² Finally, this publication reveals Grantham's willingness to engage Catholics in conversation and advocate for their freedom to worship, since they too, were susceptible to imprisonment. Grantham included the full text of *The Baptist against the Papist* in the fourth book of *Christianismus Primitivus* in 1678.

Grantham remained in prison for at least two Assizes, but in 1663 he was brought before the bar and dismissed without charge after fifteen months of imprisonment.⁵³ He likely returned to his South Marsh church upon release, but his freedom was short-lived.⁵⁴ When the Conventicle Act went into effect in 1664, soldiers were sent into the countryside with orders to enforce the act and disarm dissenters.⁵⁵ Though they found no weapons among the General Baptists, Grantham was among those arrested for failure to comply. Crosby reports that during the round up of sundry dissenters, Baptists were made to "run along like lacqueys" beside the authorities' horses.⁵⁶ For the first night of their imprisonment, Grantham and his companions were lodged in an inn, where they were subjected to filthy language and swearing.⁵⁷ The following morning, they were asked difficult questions intended to trap them and invited to take an oath to the Church

⁵²Grantham, *The Baptist against the Papist*, 34-46.

⁵³The Assizes were periodic criminal courts in the seventeenth century. For a detailed analysis of the Assizes during Grantham's lifetime, see J. S. Cockburn, *A History of English Assizes 1558-1714* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 23-48; 153-87.

⁵⁴Ivimey records that Grantham and those with him returned to their respective churches upon release, *A History of the English Baptists*, 2.267.

⁵⁵The Conventicle Act of 1664 forbade any religious gathering of more than five people outside the Church of England. It was intended to discourage dissent and strengthen the established Church.

⁵⁶Crosby, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 3.81.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

of England. As a result of Grantham's steadfastness in all this, he spent the next six months in the Louth jail.⁵⁸

Grantham's enemies kept his case from being heard at the local Assizes, but he was eventually examined and released at the Quarter Sessions. Shortly after his release, a suit was brought against Grantham accusing him of baptizing a woman and then beating her.⁵⁹ This case, like the others, was thrown out and Grantham was released. This pattern of harassment and slander would continue throughout his life, and probably contributed to the ten imprisonments he endured.⁶⁰

Few details regarding Grantham's life are available for the later 1660s. We do know that Grantham was appointed to the office of Messenger in 1666. Grantham and the place of Messengers in General Baptist life will be taken up in the next chapter, but let it suffice to point out here that he was instrumental in transforming the office into a regional and inter-congregational position. In letters to an Anglican friend later in life, Grantham described the process by which he became a Messenger and the role he played among the various Baptist churches. In one letter he describes the ordination:

I was elected by the consent of many congregations, and ordained to the office of a messenger by those who were in the same office before me, and . . . the place where I was thus ordained was in mine own mansion or dwelling house (the place where the church usually met). . . .⁶¹

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Charles B. Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1957), 29. Grantham's grandson, Grantham Killingworth, set a memorial monument to his grandfather in Norwich. The monument is no longer in existence, but Jewson includes the wording. See APPENDIX B.

⁶¹Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 21 April 1691.

In a later letter he mentions that he was appointed to a “larger trust,” which was to “oversee the churches in divers places that had need of help.”⁶² The office of Messenger was a controversial topic among Christians in England, however, and Grantham would often find himself defending this office.

Shortly after his appointment as Messenger Grantham published *The Seventh-Day-Sabbath* (1667), which is a short document outlining why the fourth commandment “is of a different nature from the other nine.”⁶³ Grantham develops seven points in this treatise:

1. Nothing moral is impossible; it would be impossible for the entire universe to observe the Sabbath command. Therefore, observing the Sabbath command must not be a moral imperative.
2. Moral precepts take precedent over ceremonial precepts. Grantham makes the point that observation of the Sabbath often gave ground to other ceremonies like circumcision.
3. All purely moral commands may be dispensed with in cases of necessity. Grantham is convinced that saving the life of a beast or human is more necessary than observing the Sabbath.
4. Grantham employs the warning against judging others in Colossians 2:16.
5. The Sabbath day was a sanctifying sign given to the “Church of the Jews,” and not necessarily to the whole world.
6. Jewish festivals were ceremonial; therefore, the seventh-day Sabbath is also Ceremonial.
7. Grantham asserted that if the fourth command were to be enforced, then so would the punishment for breaking it: death.

The particular context of this short work is unknown, yet it is assumed that some Baptists in Lincolnshire were of the mind that the Sabbath commandment was still to be followed strictly. That John Lupton, a signatory to both *The Second Humble Address* and *The Third Address*, wrote the Epistle Dedicatory for this treatise and recommends it to the churches suggests that the issue was not unimportant in late 1660s.

⁶²Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 11 June 1691.

⁶³Thomas Grantham, *The Seventh-Day-Sabbath* (London, 1667).

It was about this same time that the Lincolnshire Baptists encountered another wave of resistance from local clergy and conforming parishioners. Local leaders denied Baptists burial plots in the typical areas, going so far as to dig up corpses and then leaving them in front of their homes.⁶⁴ Grantham narrates the story of the desecration of a corpse in the late 1660s. Robert Shalder of Croft had been baptized in 1666 only to die a couple of years later. Grantham recorded Shalder's epitaph in order "to keep in memory that sordid action. . . ."⁶⁵ Grantham and his fellow Baptists were appalled at such indecent actions, yet this kind of treatment was not unusual.

A short time later the Lincolnshire minister Robert Wright delivered a speech defending the sprinkling of infants and attacking believer's baptism. Wright's speech was especially offensive to the Lincolnshire Baptists since he was formerly a Baptist minister. Wright was excluded from a Baptist congregation in the past for "irregular life and conversation."⁶⁶ Without income Wright was forced to seek employment elsewhere, so he requested a benefice from the bishop in exchange for denying his former convictions and preaching against the Baptists. The bishop agreed, and Wright made good on his promise.

Wright assumed the local Baptists would wilt under the power of his rather public denunciation and attacks, but in March of 1670 Thomas Grantham signed and posted four fliers, addressed to all Lincoln residents, challenging Wright to a "friendly conference in

⁶⁴Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.56. Crosby also includes this account, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.239. See also Daniel Neal, *History of Puritanism* (1732; repr., Bath: R. Crutwell, 1795), 4.492-93.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.242.

the place where he preached. . . .”⁶⁷ Two papers were posted above the hill and two below.⁶⁸ The two up the hill were promptly removed and likely delivered to the bishop and judge, while the two down the hill were read by many throughout the city before the clergy took them down in the afternoon. It is unclear what, if anything, was done to Grantham immediately, but the bishop’s chaplain, William Silverton, did send a rather “angry” and “ill-natured” letter to the Baptists, outlining his disdain for their meetings and practices.⁶⁹ Grantham again functioned as the Baptist spokesperson. Grantham wrote: “Finally, whereas Mr. Silverton saith, he will defend his proposition; it is hereby certified, that if he will either publish any thing upon the last two proposals, or dispute of them peaceably in a free audience, some of those whom he in the height of his wit [styles], *erroneous antick Baptists*, are resolved in the strength of Christ, to hear and try that which he shall declare, time and place being convenient.”⁷⁰ William Pann delivered this letter to Silverton, but nothing became of the invitation to public discourse. Given Grantham’s rather public and steadfast response to these attacks, William Richard seems right in noting that this entire episode may have resulted in a six-month imprisonment.⁷¹

Baptists not only faced external opposition during the early 1670s; there was also considerable internal disagreement and strife. The imposition of hands was a controversial issue among the General Baptists during these years. Adam Taylor writes

⁶⁷Ibid., 2.242-43. Crosby includes the entire text of the flier, adding that they were posted by William Pann.

⁶⁸A portion of the downtown area is built into a rather steep hill.

⁶⁹Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.243.

⁷⁰Ibid., 244.

⁷¹William Richard, “Biography of Thomas Grantham,” *Universal Theological Magazine* 3, no. 14 (February 1805): 65.

that Baptists were far too eager to devour one another in the early 1670s over the issue of imposition of hands, which is probably why Grantham chose the title *A Sigh for Peace* (1671) for his defense of the practice.⁷² Grantham addressed *A Sigh for Peace* to the “Church of Christ London, with the General Assembly of Messengers” in hopes that it might bring “brotherly concord, peace and truth” to a polarized situation.⁷³ Grantham proposes that all sides agree that imposition of hands “is one of the principles of Christ’s doctrine, and part of the foundation.”⁷⁴ Grantham also appends an explanation of why “apostles” (Messengers) are still necessary and imperative.⁷⁵

Grantham also published *The Paedo-Baptist Apology* in 1671 on the occasion of “unkind usages which the Baptized Churches have received from the Paedo-Baptists, by violently dispersing their Assemblies, by defacing and taking away their meeting places, by imprisoning their persons, seizing and wafting their estates, by injuring them in their trade by means of excommunications . . . and penal proceedings. . . .”⁷⁶ Among other things, Grantham attacked the paedo-baptists’ understanding of circumcision as a type of baptism and their claims that baptism cleanses children from original sin. This is the first of several documents written by Grantham in support of believer’s baptism.

Charles II’s Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 prompted the Lincolnshire Baptists to again send a message to the king. Charles attempted to extend some level of religious liberty and mitigate the persecution of Dissenters by offering preaching and worship

⁷²Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.119.

⁷³Grantham, *A Sigh for Peace* (n.p., 1671), Epistle Dedicatory, A2.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, A4.

⁷⁵The office of messenger and the imposition of hands will be the subject of chapter five.

⁷⁶Grantham, *The Paedo-Baptist Apology* (n.p., 1671), To the Reader, A2.

licenses in exchange for name, location, religious affiliation, and promise to avoid seditious behavior. In light of the Indulgence, Lincolnshire Baptists sent Grantham (with another unknown Messenger) to wait on the king with *A Humble Address and Remonstrance*.⁷⁷ The *Humble Address* expressed gratitude for the toleration but also noted the ways in which the Indulgence still infringed upon their liberty. In addition to delivering the address to Charles II, Grantham was among those Nonconformists who obtained a license under the terms of the Declaration of Indulgence.⁷⁸ Grantham was given a license as a “Baptist teacher,” but curiously he registered for it in the town of Rouston (or Raiston), Leicestershire, a county bordering Lincolnshire to the west. Possessing an official license ensured relative safety and peace for a time, but Parliament pressured Charles into retracting his indulgence on 8 March 1673. The licenses were recalled in 1675.⁷⁹ It is possible that Parliament would have been willing to tolerate Protestant dissenters, but it was the clauses allowing freedom for Catholics that were so detestable.⁸⁰

Grantham’s other known activities during this period included public disputes with Quakers. At least two such debates occurred in Lincolnshire in 1672, one at Spilsby

⁷⁷For a more detailed discussion of the response to the Declaration of Indulgence and *A Humble Address and Remonstrance*, see Chapter Five of this dissertation.

⁷⁸All information related to licenses requested and granted under the 1672 Declaration of Indulgence can be found in volume one of George L. Turner’s *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, 3 vols. (London: T. F. Unwin, 1911-1914).

⁷⁹See Frank Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672: A Study in the Rise of Organised Dissent* (London: University Press of Liverpool, 1908), 130-43.

⁸⁰Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1704* (New York: Pearson Education, 2003), 308.

and another at Sleaford.⁸¹ Grantham's *The Baptist against the Quaker*, which is only found in the fourth book of *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678) shows that he and John Whitehead debated issues ranging from the authorship of the Pentateuch to the nature of Jesus' resurrection body. In addition, Grantham's *The Baptist against the Quaker* was a direct refutation of Quaker claims in *The Quakers Refuge*. Though the details are often sketchy, the previous paragraphs clearly show how much faith Lincolnshire Baptists had in Grantham's abilities as a Baptist spokesperson and apologist.

It is in the context of toleration given and then revoked that Baptists once again fell prey to the harassment of ecclesiastical and secular authorities. Grantham was imprisoned along with other Lincolnshire Baptists during this period. At the behest of his fellow Baptists, Grantham penned an unpublished account of these ordeals and entitled it *The Baptist Complaint against the Persecuting Priests*.⁸² Based on the excerpt in Crosby's *History*, one gets a picture of a sustained effort on the part of Lincolnshire Baptists to live in peace with members of the Church of England, only to receive persecution and insult in return. Grantham, using Job as an example, claims that "to complain against malicious, debauched, and cruel practices, is part of the work of those, who are to bear a testimony for God."⁸³ The cruel practices included being dragged before judges in the time of Cromwell and the removal of possessions, which were never restored. They estimated their imprisonments during the previous decades at no less than one hundred incidents and their levies at three hundred pounds. Furthermore, they

⁸¹Robert Ruckhill, *The Quakers Refuge* (n.p., 1673), 40. See the fourth chapter of this dissertation for further discussion of Grantham's debates with Quakers.

⁸²The exact date or context is unclear, but Crosby apparently had access to a copy and included a lengthy excerpt, *The History of the English Baptists*, 3.84-90.

⁸³Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 3.85.

claimed the cost of their imprisonments and related appearances at the Assizes and Quarter Sessions came to more than a thousand pounds. Finally, the excerpt notes that hundreds had been presented to commissary courts and excommunicated as a result.⁸⁴ This account of Baptist sufferings in Lincolnshire shows that local actors were often responsible for persecution and that the threat and presence of persecution solidified a young General Baptist population. Grantham's central place in the story of seventeenth-century Lincolnshire Baptists is undeniable, and we now turn to a period in his life when most of what we know is confined to what he wrote and published.

Thomas Grantham in Mid Life (1673-1685)

Little is known of Grantham's movements from 1673-1685. His activities as an author increased, and he published no less than nine treatises, most notably the massive and monumental *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678). Sometime prior to 18 September 1673, William Fort, a parish minister in Blyton, appeared at Baptist meetings and sought to disrupt the proceedings.⁸⁵ Fort aimed to dispute with the Baptists, but most of the latter had no experience with such things. Thus, they requested that Grantham debate Fort on 18 September 1673. Based on Grantham's account of the dispute, which was published in dialogue form as *A Religious Contest* (1674), the two men debated issues related to baptism. The debate ended in a friendly manner as both sides "went away in peace."⁸⁶ Appended to *A Religious Contest* is Grantham's response to Edward

⁸⁴Commissary courts were ecclesiastical courts; each diocese had its own commissary court.

⁸⁵Thomas Grantham, *A Religious Contest* (London, 1674), Epistle to the Reader. The *ODNB* claims that Grantham had a dispute with a Quaker named Fort, but that appears to be a mistake since the only known "Fort" Grantham interacted with was an Anglican minister.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 20. For a more detailed treatment of *A Religious Contest* and the impact of Grantham's participation see chapter four. It seems that Grantham also argued with the Independent minister John

Stillingfleet's *A Rational Account of the Grounds of the Protestant Religion* (originally published in 1665). Stillingfleet was a bishop of Worcester during the second half of the seventeenth century and a well-known preacher and writer. Stillingfleet's primary opponents were those Anglicans who had converted to Rome, but Grantham accuses Stillingfleet of doing harm to the cause by affirming the validity of infant baptism.

In 1674 Grantham also published a work entitled *The Loyal Baptist*. In this treatise (which is given in the form of two sermons) Grantham works from 1 Pet. 2:17 as he delineates the four great duties of "a constant conformist to the scriptures": 1) to honor all people, 2) to love the brotherhood, 3) to fear God, and 4) to honor the king.⁸⁷ These attributes are important because they exhibit to the magistrates and king that Baptists should not be considered a threat to the social order. The fifth chapter of this dissertation will treat the context and contents of *The Loyal Baptist* in more detail.

During the same year Grantham was involved with internal General Baptist disputes over the place of imposition of hands. In *The Fourth Principle* (1674) Grantham responded to Henry Danvers's *A Treatise of Laying on of Hands*.⁸⁸ While Danvers limits the imposition of hands to certain contexts (i.e., benedictions, healing, conferral of charismatic gifts, and ordination), Grantham agrees on the necessity of imposition of hands but contends that all believers should have hands laid on them, but this should not

Horne over the issue of infant baptism during this period. Horne wrote against Grantham in *The cause of infants maintained* (London, 1675), but the circumstances of their interaction are unclear. See also Sheila M. Cooper, "Horne, John (bap. 1616, d. 1676)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13790> (accessed 8 October 2008).

⁸⁷Grantham outlines these duties on the title page and at numerous other places in the opening pages of *The Loyal Baptist* (London, 1684). We know that Grantham first published *The Loyal Baptist* in 1674 because he included the 1674 title page in the 1684 edition.

⁸⁸Thomas Grantham, *The Fourth Principle* (London, 1674). Henry Danvers, *A Treatise of Laying on of Hands* (London, 1674).

be taken to mean that all believers are given the authority to perform the imposition of hands. It is also important to note that the previously-published *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles* (appended to *A Sigh for Peace* in 1671) is now appended to *A Fourth Principle* but with a slightly different title: *A Discourse of the Successors of the Apostles*.

In 1675 the Cambridge-educated Presbyterian minister John Barret published *Fifty Queries*, which is comprised of fifty questions gathered from Richard Baxter's *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church Membership and Baptism* (1651) for any who would deny the validity of infant baptism.⁸⁹ Baxter originally published *Plain Scripture* in the context of his debates with the Baptist John Tombes, but the question was by no means settled in 1675. Grantham took up Barret's challenge in 1676 with *The Quaeries Examined*. In this short treatise Grantham responded to each of Barret's questions in detail. Attached to the end is a three-page postscript detailing Grantham's answers to related questions posed by an Anglican minister. Barret returned the favor in the 1678 with *Much in a Little*, which was for the most part a direct rebuttal of Grantham's treatise. Early in the work Barret refers to Grantham as "your champion," sarcastically revealing the latter's esteem and reputation among the Baptists.⁹⁰

Grantham would later respond to Barret in *The Controversie about Infants Church-Membership* (1680), but as was often the case, Grantham's theological attention was divided between non-Baptist opponents and divisions among the General Baptists themselves. In 1678 a significant amount of time and attention must have been devoted

⁸⁹John Barret, *Fifty Queries, seriously propounded to those that question, or deny infants right to baptism* (London, 1675). Richard Baxter, *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church Membership and Baptism* (London, 1651).

⁹⁰John Barret, *Much in a Little* (London, 1678), 7. Joseph Whiston also reacted to Grantham's baptismal views in *Infant-Baptism Plainly Proved* (London, 1678), Letter to the Reader.

to the final draft of *Christianismus Primitivus*. As the title of this 600-page tome suggests, B. R. White is correct in writing that Grantham intended “to get behind the traditions of the Reformers, of the Medieval Church, of the Fathers, to the New Testament model.”⁹¹ By far his largest and most detailed publication, *Christianismus Primitivus* was written at the request of several churches in Lincolnshire as a compilation of new material and previously-published treatises. The new material is found in books I, II and III, and it is here that the reader encounters what is probably Grantham’s most mature theology. He addresses a variety of issues from across the theological and ecclesiastical spectrum including, among others: the authority of the scripture, biblical translations, the divine attributes, Christology, eschatology, angelology, worship, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, church polity, Christian discipline, sabbatarianism, Christians and the civil government, Christians in civil offices, the roles of women in the church, marriage and familial roles, and the state of the Jewish people.

Christianismus Primitivus includes material in the fourth and final book which had already been published by Grantham, with one possible exception. The previously-published documents are: *The Baptist against the Papist* (1663), *The Baptist against the Quaker* (no longer extant); *The Paedo-Baptists Apology* (1671), *The Quaeries Examined* (1676), and *The Fourth Principle* (1674). The sixth treatise, *Gospel-Separation Maintained*, appears to have been new in 1678, but given the textual evidence that the other treatises had already been published, it is likely that *Gospel-Separation* was also published at some point earlier.

That Grantham addressed the work to the English nation, his own family, and the baptized Christian churches reveals just how comprehensive he understood his

⁹¹White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 117.

undertaking to be. Yet, surprisingly little is known of *Christianismus Primitivus*'s reception among Grantham's fellow Baptists or other Christians of the period. That Grantham's *magnum opus* was published in folio could imply that it was highly regarded by many General Baptists. His popularity (and unpopularity in other circles) in the post-*Christianismus Primitivus* years, however, could be deduced from the sheer number of writings produced and disputes entered on behalf of the General Baptists. Grantham's activity level in the years following the publication of *Christianismus Primitivus* increased greatly, and his growing reputation involved him in more controversy.

In the same year that *Christianismus Primitivus* appeared there was considerable Christological controversy among the General Baptists. Partly in response to the heretical teachings of Matthew Caffyn, who had come to hold Hoffmanite conceptions of Jesus, Thomas Monk led fifty-three other General Baptists from the Midlands in drafting and publishing the *Orthodox Creed*. The creed was intended to "unite and confirm all true protestants in the fundamental articles of the Christian religion. . . ." ⁹² The first eight articles deal extensively with the nature of the Trinity, which betrays the underlying concern with correct Christology.

The *Orthodox Creed* was not the only document submitted during this period. In a little-known letter to the General Assembly, which likely dates to this same period, Thomas Grantham and other Baptists from the Isle of Axholme, Nottinghamshire, and Peterborough also expressed great concern at the "grievous" impurity infiltrating the churches. ⁹³ The letter urges the Assembly to allow no "New or Strange Doctrine to

⁹²The quotation is taken from the title page. See Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 297.

⁹³A portion of this letter was reproduced by Joseph Hooke, *Creed-Making and Creed-Imposing* (London: Printed by J. Darby and T. Browne, 1729), 37-38. Hooke does not give a date for the letter, but

obtrude upon the Churches, and more especially concerning the Godhead, from whence the whole Body of Christian doctrine hath its true Value and Usefulness.”⁹⁴ The excerpt ends with an affirmation of the dual natures of Christ.

In 1680 Grantham published *The Controversie about Infants* in response to Barret’s *Much in a Little* (1678). Grantham’s reply consists of two main points. First, Grantham denies that any infant dying before baptism is destined for damnation. The second portion of the treatise records Grantham’s answers to Barret’s more than sixty questions in *Much in a Little*.⁹⁵ Upon closer examination, it appears that Grantham had already printed a response to Barret in 1679 entitled *The Querist Examined, The Second Part*, but included it as part two of *The Controversie about Infants* in 1680. The eternal fate of dying infants was an issue that Grantham would be debating in the coming years, especially as he increasingly came into dialogue with Presbyterian ministers.

Grantham was not out of touch with the Church of England during this time, for in the same year, 1680, he published *A Friendly Epistle to the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of England* calling for more congenial relations between the established church and the Baptists. In this intriguing treatise Grantham pens a prayer for concord among Christians, echoes concerns from both sides regarding the division among Christians, and even examines questionable tenets of the Thirty-Nine Articles. Grantham

internal evidence in the excerpt he quotes suggests that it was written around the time that the General Assembly was struggling with how to deal with Caffyn. It is possible that the letter was written while Grantham was ministering in Norfolk after ca. 1686. There was renewed controversy during this time as Joseph Wright tried to have Caffyn censured. Assigning an earlier date to the letter is probably more accurate since there is no mention of other Baptists from Norfolk in Hooke’s explanation. It is also noteworthy that as late as 1729 Hooke was employing Grantham’s influence and writings to uphold a Trinitarian understanding of the Godhead.

⁹⁴Hooke, *Creed-Making and Creed-Imposing*, 37.

⁹⁵See page 27 of *The Controversie about Infants* (London, 1680), which is actually a title page for *The Querist Examined, The Second Part* (printed in 1679).

concludes with a plan for unity: 1) Petition the king or Parliament for a meeting between the dissenters and Church of England clergy, 2) if the proposals do not meet the standard of “the good old way of Christianity, then we desire they may rejected, and that you would be pleased to propose things which may be more effectual to procure the unity desired,” 3) that if unity cannot be achieved, grant the dissenters freedom from the suffering they have endured.⁹⁶ Grantham was confident the proposal would be “little regarded by many,” but he does allude to a sermon by the aforementioned Stillingfleet which laments the division among dissenting Christians.⁹⁷

The irenic spirit evident in *A Friendly Epistle* was also on display during this period as Grantham participated in a “very Christian conference” in London with Dr. William Lloyd, bishop of St. Asaph.⁹⁸ Lloyd had a reputation for being rather tolerant and even conversant with dissenters in his diocese, which did not necessarily increase his standing with other bishops.⁹⁹ He met with Quakers on 22 September 1681 and 6 August 1682, and with Presbyterians on 27 September 1681 and 28 August 1682. Where he and Grantham met is unclear, but if the meeting took place in St. Asaph, then it is rather curious that Grantham would be so far away Lincolnshire.¹⁰⁰ Where dating is concerned, Grantham’s conference with Lloyd likely occurred some time after Lloyd was appointed bishop in October of 1680.

⁹⁶The proposal for unity is found on pages 37-40 of *A Friendly Epistle to the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of England* (London, 1680).

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 40.

⁹⁸Knowledge of this conference comes to us by way of Thomas Grantham’s letter to John Connould, 10 May 1691.

⁹⁹Michael Mullett, “Lloyd, William (1627–1717),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16860?docPos=2> (accessed 10 July 2008).

¹⁰⁰St. Asaph is located in North Wales.

Whatever peace dissenters had experienced early in the decade evaporated upon discovery of the Rye House Plot in 1683.¹⁰¹ Protestant involvement in the plot prompted a new wave of persecution against dissenters, who had largely fallen out of favor with the king after throwing their support behind the Exclusion Bill in 1679. Ever since, it had been Charles who harassed and persecuted those he had formerly sought to protect.¹⁰² In this environment of royal hostility Grantham re-published *The Loyal Baptist* in 1684. Thus it should come as no surprise that Grantham reiterates the four great duties of “a constant conformist to the scriptures”: 1) to honor all people, 2) to love the brotherhood, 3) to fear God, and 4) to honor the king.¹⁰³

In the same year Grantham published *The Second Part of the Apology* (1684) in response to Nathaniel Taylor’s arguments in favor of infant baptism. Grantham also takes issue with the lack of discipline in the Church of England, and appeals to Matthew 18 as the normative example of discipline among believers. Grantham concludes the treatise with a three-fold test of truth: antiquity, reason, and scripture. *The Second Part of the Apology* is the last known work Grantham published while ministering in Lincolnshire. We turn now to his final years, which were lived out in Norwich, Norfolk.

The Final Years: Norfolk (1686-1692)

Almost nothing is known of the circumstances surrounding Grantham’s removal to Norfolk sometime in 1685 or 1686. The various published histories offer no explanation for his departure. There is no hint that health concerns were behind his

¹⁰¹While not everyone agrees there was such a plot, dissenters were mistreated and harassed as a result of the “discovery.”

¹⁰²Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 1.253.

¹⁰³Grantham lists these duties on the title page of *The Loyal Baptist*.

move, nor did his church-planting or writing activities abate. He remained mobile and influential until death. That his health and reputation were intact is proven by his secretarial role at the General Baptist assembly in London in 1689.¹⁰⁴ It is probably safe to assume that as a Messenger of the South Marsh church Grantham would have needed permission to leave, but there is no record of a mission to Norwich and to the surrounding areas. What, then, might have been behind this unexpected move to Norfolk?

Citing the tragic and public downfall of William Pann in 1693, Kershaw wonders whether Grantham may have departed Lincolnshire on negative terms.¹⁰⁵ The evidence for any clear connection between Grantham's departure and Pann is speculative at best and in many ways is based on an argument from silence.

Jewson indirectly speaks to this question in his important history of the Baptists in Norfolk.¹⁰⁶ Calvinistic Baptists were the first to put down roots in Norfolk. General

¹⁰⁴William T. Whitley, ed., *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England* (Kingsgate Press, London, 1910), 1.28.

¹⁰⁵Kershaw, "Baptised Believers," 35. Pann, from Halton-Holegate, was the other signatory from Lincolnshire on the 1660 petition to the king. It was William Pann who posted Grantham's fliers inviting Robert to debate in 1670. Crosby writes that it was William Pann who delivered Grantham's debate invitation to Mr. Silvertown shortly thereafter in, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.241-44. Taylor describes Pann as Grantham's "co-adjutor and fellow-messenger," and it was none other than William Pann who "succeeded [Grantham] in the care of the churches" in Lincolnshire, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.316-17. Given Pann's reputation and relationship to Grantham, his tragic and public fall from grace in 1693 is most surprising. Published histories seem unaware of the event, but details are available in the *Burgh & Monksthorpe Church Book, 1692-1825*, held in the Angus Library at Regent's Park College, Oxford, UK. See also Kershaw, "Baptised Believers," 35. The records show that Pann presided over an associational meeting at Spalding in April of 1693, but by August of the same year he was on "trial" in Gunby. At least fifteen witnesses were brought in from various towns, and Pann was eventually found guilty of fornication, verbally abusing Lincolnshire representatives to London, lying, denial, and false accusation. The association excommunicated Pann, and the church records mention him no more.

¹⁰⁶Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk*, 29-37.

Baptists and Particular Baptists rarely succeeded in occupying in the same area,¹⁰⁷ but just before the Revolution in 1688 General Baptists from Lincolnshire began to extend efforts into the region.¹⁰⁸ Jewson identifies Grantham as the principle figure in this effort, but notes that he made little or no effort to work with Particular Baptists in the area.¹⁰⁹ It is quite possible that insufficient records survive regarding the details of this move and that Grantham was released by his South Marsh church to work as a Messenger and church-planter in Norfolk.¹¹⁰ Regardless of how or why Grantham ended up in Norfolk, however, once there he worked tirelessly to plant churches, debate local ministers, and publish.

Ordering Grantham's exact movements during these years is rather difficult, but it is certain that he was responsible for planting churches in Norwich, Yarmouth, King's Lynn, and Smallburgh.¹¹¹ The origin of the church Grantham founded in Norwich – the second Baptist church in the city – is unclear. Tradition has assigned it an earlier date than 1686, perhaps 1670, but there is no evidence to support this claim.¹¹² Meetings were held at the White Friars' Convent, where the congregation had evidently secured long-

¹⁰⁷ Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.1.

¹⁰⁸ James Marham, a General Baptist minister in Lincolnshire in the 1670s and early 1680s, moved to in Norfolk 1685 and began to proclaim Baptist principles. Grantham worked extensively with Marham in 1688 and 1689.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹¹ The *ODNB* notes that Grantham founded a church in Yarmouth in 1686 and in King's Lynn in 1689/90. In King's Lynn Grantham preached in the town-hall, *The Lyn Persecution* (n.p., 1692/3), 11. Perry Gauci finds that the Yarmouth church had been reconstituted as recently as 1686, *Politics and Society in Great Yarmouth, 1660-1722* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 166.

¹¹² Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk*, 29. He does consider it a possibility that the church was planted during an unrecorded visit by Grantham to Norwich at an earlier date.

term use of the premises and land for burial.¹¹³ Grantham's grandson, Grantham Killingworth, erected a monument to his grandfather which describes his early career.¹¹⁴ Neither the monument nor White Friars exists today.

The year 1687 brought winds of change and controversy for Grantham and all dissenters. In April James II issued the Declaration of Indulgence, which suspended all penal laws related to church attendance, permitted dissenters to worship in private houses or other buildings, and did away with required oaths for civil or military service.¹¹⁵ While this was a huge turn of events for dissenters, it also carried the potential for open and public in-fighting among the various dissenting groups. Reversal of the declaration in 1688, however, would have certainly put dissenters on edge, and it would not be until the Act of Toleration in 1689 that relief would become permanent. It is worth noting that toleration was not extended to Catholics in 1689 and dissenters were once again required to register their meeting houses.

In early 1687 Samuel Petto wrote *Infant baptism of Christ's Appointment* as a defense of infant baptism and attack on the Baptist position.¹¹⁶ Petto was a local

¹¹³Ibid., 29. On the site where the convent once stood is now a printing house. See also Richard Copey, *The Medieval Carmelite Priory at Norwich: A Chronology*, (<http://www.carmelite.org/chronology/Norwich.pdf> [accessed on 7 July 2008]); and John Kirkpatrick and Dawson Turner, eds., *History of the Religious Orders and Communities and of the Hospital and Castle of Norwich* (Yarmouth: C. Sloman, 1845), 150-95; and Francis Blomefield and Charles Parkin, eds., *History of Norwich*, vol. 4 of *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, (London, 1805), 416-23.

¹¹⁴See APPENDIX B for the full text of the monument.

¹¹⁵The Declaration of Indulgence issued by the openly Catholic James II in 1687 (which was revised and reissued in 1688) was similar to that issued by Charles II 1672 insofar as both sought to alleviate pressure on religious dissenters. Both the 1672 and 1687 Declarations circumvented Parliament, which helps explain why they lasted only a short time before being retracted. James II had hoped to win the support of the dissenters with such moves in 1687 and 1688, but his actions ultimately led to the "Glorious Revolution" and the end of his reign.

¹¹⁶Samuel Petto's prefatory letter is dated 29 March 1687, *Infant baptism of Christ's Appointment* (London, 1687).

Congregationalist minister and fellow dissenter in Norfolk, which is why Grantham was perturbed that he had written against the Baptists. “It is no convenient time,” Grantham wrote, “for Dissenters to write one against another; friendly conferences might do much better.”¹¹⁷ There was to be no friendly conference, however, since men like Petto were “averse to such meetings.” Grantham obviously felt a response was necessary, so he offered *Presumption no Proof* (1687) as a defense of believer’s baptism and critique of infant damnation. In addition to dealing with Petto, Grantham also used *Presumption no Proof* as an opportunity to respond to *The Plea of the Children of Believing-Parents for their Interest in Abraham’s Covenant*, written by Giles Firmin some four years earlier.¹¹⁸

Petto responded with *Infant-Baptism Vindicated from the Exceptions of Mr. Thomas Grantham* in October, 1687; Firmin followed suit with *Scripture-Warrant Sufficient Proof for Infant-Baptism* in 1688. The circumstances surrounding Firmin’s reply are telling. In the opening pages, Firmin recounts that he was recently informed by a “young furious Zealot against Infant Baptism” from London that his previous book, *The Plea of the Children*, had been answered by a “great” and “learned” writer by the name of Thomas Grantham, who would undoubtedly prove to be a “formidable” adversary.¹¹⁹ The young man even purchased a copy of *Presumption no Proof* for Firmin. This exchange and the conflict surrounding it reveal that Grantham adopted the role of apologist rather easily and quickly in Norfolk, just as he had done in Lincolnshire.

¹¹⁷Thomas Grantham, *Presumption no Proof* (London, 1687), To the Reader.

¹¹⁸We encountered Firmin above in the discussion of Grantham’s background. Since Firmin’s work pre-dated that of Petto, Grantham opens with an eight-page preface which doubles as a short response to Firmin.

¹¹⁹Giles Firmin, *Scripture-warrant*, To The Reader, A2-A3.

Moreover, Grantham's reputation preceded him, and his fellow Baptists in London saw in him a powerful and capable defender of the Baptist tradition.

Sometime in the midst of these literary disputes with Petto and Firmin, Grantham found time to publish *St. Paul's Catechism* (1687), which is a catechism for children and is organized as a conversation between a father and son. The main force of his argument is that the six principles found in Heb. 6:1-2 are foundational for the Christian churches.¹²⁰

In addition, Grantham published three separate treatises under the title *Hear the Church: Or, An Appeal to the Mother of us All* (1687).¹²¹ Written as an appeal to all Christians to embrace the Jerusalem Church as the mother of all churches, Grantham takes specific aim at the "papists," though the treatise does occasionally broach disagreements with the paedo-baptists. The first treatise describes the state of the first Christian church and outlines why it is reasonable to appeal to it as an example. The second treatise, originally written in 1685, consists of a comparison between Baptist and Roman Catholic views on baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹²² The third and final treatise has a rather interesting history. Grantham introduces the treatise by informing the reader

¹²⁰Thomas Grantham, *St. Paul's catechism, or, A brief and plain explication of the six principles of the Christian religion, as recorded Heb. 6., 1, 2* (London, 1687). The six principles are: 1) Repentance from dead works, 2) faith towards God, 3) the doctrine of baptisms (Grantham asserted three baptisms: the baptism of repentance for remission of sins, the pouring out of the Spirit, and the afflictions which accompany Christian commitment), 4) the laying on of hands, 5) the resurrection of the dead, and 6) the eternal judgment. See further, Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2006), 138ff.; Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 28; White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 36-40; and Ernest Payne, "Baptists and the Laying on of Hands," *Baptist Quarterly* 15, no. 5 (January 1954): 203-15.

¹²¹Thomas Grantham, *Hear the Church: Or, An Appeal to the Mother of us All* (London, 1687).

¹²²The final page of the second treatise on standing firm in the midst of persecution records that it was written in 1685 (*Hear the Church*, 40). Page twenty (the second page of the second treatise) references "St. Pauls Catechism." Though *St. Paul's Catechism* was not published until 1687, the reference here implies Grantham had been thinking through the idea for some time. The second treatise has a postscript entitled: "Concerning the Original Manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures."

that the unnamed adversary in *The Baptist against the Papist* (1662) never replied in print, but did send him seven questions in manuscript form. So, finally, in 1687, Grantham found opportunity to publish the papist's questions and his own answers. The disagreements center on scripture, Eucharist, and the marks of the universal church. *Hear the Church* thus provides valuable insights into Grantham's understanding of, and disagreements with, the Roman church.¹²³

Grantham's activities were not limited to Norwich, however, for in 1687 he was present at a meeting in the church at Bourne. The Bourne church book records that Thomas Grantham was in Lincolnshire for the ordination of Joseph Hooke on 07 September 1687.¹²⁴ Grantham's role was consistent with his office: Hooke was ordained "by Fasting and Prayer, with Laying on of Hands, by Thomas Grantham, then Messenger of the Baptized Churches in Lincolnshire."¹²⁵ An entry for 30 June 1688 is basically a five-page list of officers and members. Grantham's name and the title of Messenger appear first, followed by Elders, and then wives.¹²⁶ Grantham is also found in the Warboys church book, where it is written that he baptized two new members in 1688.¹²⁷

¹²³In the fourth chapter I address *Hear the Church* and *The Baptist against the Papist* in more detail when outlining Grantham's interaction with Catholics.

¹²⁴The entry can be found on page seven of the church book. The record was entered in 1720. For commentary, see F. J. Mason, "The Old Minute Book of Bourne Baptist Church," *The Baptist Quarterly* 15, no. 5 (January 1954): 226.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*

¹²⁶The date is actually given as June 31 in the church book. Adam Taylor (*The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.215ff.) raises a question concerning Grantham's inclusion in this list. He is not sure whether Grantham is included and at the head of the list because he presided over the meeting (the option he believes most likely), or whether Grantham may have removed his membership from the South Marsh church to this church at some point.

¹²⁷Edward B. Underhill, *Records of the Churches of Christ gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720* (London: Haddon Brothers, 1854), 1.282.

It is clear from these entries that Grantham remained active and influential as a Messenger in Lincolnshire after his departure for Norfolk.

Grantham initiated another round of debate with Giles Firmin in 1688. It was noted above that Firmin published *Scripture Warrant* in early 1688 as a rebuttal to Grantham's *Presumption no Proof* (1687), so Grantham, not content to let the matter die, retorted with *The Infants Advocate* (1688). Firmin returned the favor some months later in the short, sardonic, and exasperated treatise *The Answer of Giles Firmin*. Grantham replied again a year or so later in *The Infants Advocate, The Second Part* (1690).¹²⁸ This would not be the end of this rather lengthy and increasingly bitter spat.

Baptist baptismal views were a constant source of disagreement with their opponents, and in 1689 Grantham published yet another critique of infant baptism, *Truth and Peace*. This time the opponent was an unnamed "Doctor of the Church of England."¹²⁹ Grantham intended for *Truth and Peace* to be his last contribution to the controversy, and his main point is that the restoration of sacred baptism is the only method to revive ancient Christianity in all nations. That Grantham adds a postscript detailing the nature of marriage among baptized believers is interesting, for freedom to worship did not necessarily pave the way for civil or religious equality where marriage was concerned. Grantham claims that the law of the land does not nullify or void marriages of baptized believers, but actually establishes them. He doubts that marriages should be celebrated by an official minister and equates the giving and receiving of rings

¹²⁸I have had limited access to this document. Regent's Park has the only copy I am aware of, but since the college was between librarians when I visited in March 2008, I was unable to gain access and examine the manuscript.

¹²⁹Thomas Grantham, *Truth and Peace* (London, 1689), title page.

as a baseless Catholic superstition. The nature of conformity and Nonconformity may have been different in 1689, but marriage remained an issue nonetheless.

At some point in late 1688 or early 1689 James Marham invited Grantham to preach in King's Lynn.¹³⁰ Grantham's preaching gained several followers and the congregation began to grow. Upon Grantham's recommendation, Marham secured a place for public worship by registering a meeting place as specified in the Toleration Act. In this way, a General Baptist presence was established in King's Lynn.¹³¹

In March of 1689 Grantham made his way to London for the General Baptist General Assembly.¹³² Grantham likely participated in the lively discussions concerning ordination and congregational singing. The minutes note that he was especially vocal in opposition to singing recent compositions in a mixed congregation. It is also recorded that he took down the minutes.¹³³

Nothing further is known of Grantham until we find him in Sutterby, ratifying his will in May of 1690. This may well have been his last visit to Lincolnshire. Taylor writes that Grantham unsuccessfully sought to return to Lincolnshire in 1691, but he gives no source for this claim.¹³⁴

¹³⁰*The Lyn Persecution* (n.p., 1692/3), 7-11. For more on Grantham's role in King's Lynn, see pages 209-11 of this dissertation.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 11-12. See also William Richard, "Biography of Thomas Grantham," *Universal Theological Magazine* 3, no. 15 (January 1805): 111.

¹³²Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.1.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 1.28.

¹³⁴Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.313-14.

Upon returning to Norwich, Grantham continued to advance the Arminian cause in the face of growing Calvinistic momentum.¹³⁵ Grantham appears to have shown little interest in the Particular Baptists, at least in his published works, but it is obvious that he sought to build bridges, albeit unsuccessfully, with other groups. Toward that end, Grantham wrote to Dr. John Collinges, a local Presbyterian minister, in September of 1690. In the letter, Grantham reacts to a passage in Collinges' *A Discourse of Divine Love* which ostensibly supports God's sovereignty in election: "God cannot seriously act, and be finally opposed."¹³⁶ Collinges, who seems to have been unfamiliar with Grantham, immediately penned a response questioning Grantham's knowledge of God and his common sense. Collinges had little desire to enter into dialogue with Grantham, but the former's death in January of 1691 insured its impossibility. Martin Finch, a Congregational minister in Norwich, presided at Collinges' funeral. Such an unlikely friendship between competing churches would have been impossible in the past, but Collinges had recently orchestrated a union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in Norwich. There is little wonder Grantham felt Calvinism was taking hold of his city.

In February of 1691, only a month after Collinges' death, Grantham daringly published *A Dialogue between a Baptist and a Presbyterian*, which included the Grantham-Collinges correspondence and a contrived conversation between a Baptist and a Presbyterian. Finch, who must have been felt compelled to defend his friend, published *An Answer to Mr. Thomas Grantham's Book* in June. Grantham appears to have been upset that Finch did not seek to meet him personally, but Finch defends his reserved nature and hesitancy to engage in discussion with a most intriguing statement:

¹³⁵Thomas Grantham, *A Dialogue Between the Baptist and the Presbyterian* (London, 1691), 3.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, 4ff.

Sir, I perceive you take it ill, that I do not seek acquaintance and familiarity with you, truly it is my natural temper to love retirement, and not to have much acquaintance, but as to your self, I confess I do not desire intimacy with you, because I told you the first time, I ever spake with you about fifteen years since, that one of your own judgment about baptism, had charged you in print, that you set the houses of God on fire, where ever you came, and that you pretended to be an archbishop, and to have jurisdiction over other churches, or words to that purpose; and since you came to live at Norwich, you have been so quarrelsome with those of your own persuasion about baptism, and likewise with my worthy friend Dr. Collinges¹³⁷

One should proceed cautiously when looking for truth in statements from opponents, but the allusions to division among the Baptists (General-Particular?) and Grantham's possible propensity to overstep the bounds of his office do raise interesting questions.

The General Baptist Assembly convened again in London in April of 1691. Those present discussed the republication of *The Standard Confession* and the appropriate monetary stipend for traveling Messengers. In addition, two Messengers were approved and there was a decision to send a "Brother Foxwell" to "assist Thomas Grantham in Norwich in the ministerial work of the gospel."¹³⁸ The minutes provide no details on the reasons for Nathan Foxwell's assignment, but it is clear that Grantham required some manner of assistance.

Grantham persisted in attacking Calvinism despite a string of antagonistic encounters with his opponents. In August of 1691 he published *The Forerunner to a Further Answer*. In this short treatise Grantham attaches an anti-Calvinistic excerpt by George Withers, a Church of England clergyman who died in 1605, then resumes what was by this point a one-sided debate with Finch.

¹³⁷Martin Finch, *An Answer to Mr. Thomas Grantham's Book* (London: Printed by T. Snowden(?), 1691), 146.

¹³⁸Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.30ff.

Frosty interactions with Collinges and Finch are balanced by Grantham's amicable relationship with John Connould, vicar of St. Stephens in Norwich. Grantham's efforts in Norwich caught Connould's attention when his own parishioners were attracted to the Baptist church. In light of this, Connould wrote to Grantham inquiring about his ordination and rejection of infant baptism.¹³⁹ The letters reveal that Connould and Grantham developed a fairly close relationship. Grantham was allowed access to Connould's library, where he may have encountered Michael Servetus' *Restitution of Christianity* (1553).¹⁴⁰ The aforementioned *A Dialogue between a Baptist and a Presbyterian* (1691) alludes to Servetus several times, marking a notable reference to him in English.¹⁴¹ It also becomes apparent in this correspondence that reports of Grantham's ability to work with eight or nine languages are probably incorrect.¹⁴²

Theological debates and controversies were not Grantham's only concern in 1691; he was also forced to defend his innocence and integrity against numerous allegations and accusations. In *The Slanderer Rebuked* (1691), Grantham describes a disagreement with a "Mr. Toathby," a "seller of wool" and former magistrate in Norwich. According to Grantham, some years before, when he was still living in Ashby, Lincolnshire in 1677, he paid to have his ram shorn. The shearer, however, mistakenly sheared the ram of a

¹³⁹John Connould to Thomas Grantham, 17 April 1691.

¹⁴⁰John Connould to Thomas Grantham, 8 May 1691.

¹⁴¹The *ODNB* has it that Grantham accessed the document in Connould's library. Jewson believes Grantham accessed the manuscript in the library of John Moore, Bishop of Norwich (*The Baptists in Norfolk*, 37).

¹⁴²In a letter to Connould dated 5 May 1691, Grantham mentions that he has limited knowledge of Latin and requests that Connould refrain from using so much Latin in his letters. William Richard reports that Grantham Killingworth said his grandfather worked in Latin with some ease, "Biography of Thomas Grantham," *Universal Theological Magazine* 3, no. 16 (January 1805): 166. The *DNB* entry for Grantham notes that Grantham may have been proficient in eight or nine languages, but this appears to be incorrect based on Grantham's request to Connould that the latter refrain from using so much Latin in the correspondence.

nearby poor man. When it was later discovered that it was not Grantham's ram, Grantham paid the man one-half the cost of the ram to settle the matter. After some time, Grantham's enemies encouraged the man to sue Grantham, but it does not seem the matter ever went to court. When Grantham finally moved to Norwich, Toathby confronted Grantham about the incident in May of 1691. As a relatively new resident, Grantham found himself without anyone to vouch for his innocence in the matter. To clear his name, Grantham had several men from Ashby, where he was living at the time of the incident in 1677, write letters confirming his testimony and honesty.¹⁴³ The mayor of Norwich was convinced of Grantham's innocence and dismissed any charges. The motivation for smearing Grantham's name and reputation is unclear, but it is probable that the accusations were religiously motivated.¹⁴⁴

In October of 1691 Grantham was again accused of stealing sheep. *The Grand Imposter* (1691) tells how John Willet, rector of Tattershall in Lincolnshire, testified in writing that he had seen Grantham in the Louth pillory for two hours for ordering his servant to brand seven of his neighbor's sheep as his own.¹⁴⁵ When he was called upon to testify before Thomas Blofield, mayor of Norwich on 6 October 1691, Willet broke down and admitted to concocting the entire story. Willet also confessed to lying when he accused three men, one of which was Connould, of encouraging him to lie by giving him

¹⁴³Grantham includes the letters in *The Slanderer Rebuked* (n.p., 1691). See further, George Southcombe, "The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England" (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2005), 177-78.

¹⁴⁴Southcombe makes this very point, "The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England," 178.

¹⁴⁵Thomas Grantham, *The Grand Imposter* (n.p., 1691), 4. An anonymous pamphlet written by a Calvinist opponent was published in light of this episode, *A Brief and plain discourse upon the decrees of God wherein Mr. Grantham's query is considered and answered* (London: Printed by T. Snowden[?]), 1692).

too much wine and a payment of two shillings. Blofield was disgusted with these actions and fined Willet, but Grantham took pity on him and paid the fine himself. Grantham also writes in *The Grand Imposter* that some thought him to be a papist, others a drunkard, and still others called him a “Whoremonger.”¹⁴⁶ Grantham dismisses all these accusations, noting that he has been the husband of one wife.¹⁴⁷

Thomas Grantham took his last breath on 17 January 1692 at the age of fifty-eight. The cause of death is unknown. Eight people were present at his passing: John Mingo, Andrew Pegg, William Sidwell, Thomas Gambell, Thomas Miller, John Clarke, Alice Clarke, and Ann Grantham.¹⁴⁸ John Clarke’s personal copy of *Christianismus Primitivus* contains several important hand-written compositions which reflect Grantham’s importance in Norwich and the devoted, personal relationships he developed there.

Grantham’s dying words were recorded and transcribed into the manuscript shortly after his death; they were later made public and printed as *The Dying Words of Mr. Thomas Grantham*.¹⁴⁹ Given his “weak condition,” Grantham’s final thoughts were strikingly coherent and pastoral. He reminded his friends that “preaching and printing” were his primary contributions. Furthermore, he spoke of his many skirmishes with opponents and claimed to have forgiven them all.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 10.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸*The Dying Words of Mr. Thomas Grantham* (n.p., 1692/3). There is no mention of how or whether Ann Grantham was related to Thomas Grantham. The Millennium Library in Norwich holds a manuscript copy of *Christianismus Primitivus* which was owned by a Richard Clarke. It is possible that Richard was related to Alice and John and that all three were members of Grantham’s church.

¹⁴⁹Grantham’s dying words are included below as APPENDIX B.

In addition to the dying words, two acrostic poems written on the occasion of Grantham's death are included in the manuscript. The poems convey the grief and sadness resulting from the death of friend, but also express confidence in God's presence and future restoration of all things.¹⁵⁰ Two poetic epitaphs are found in the manuscript along with the acrostics and dying words. The epitaphs emphasize Grantham's labors as "A preacher, Bishop, and Evangelist" and encourage the readers to find solace in the coming day of resurrection.¹⁵¹ There is a thirteen-stanza poem entitled "The Christians daily Exercise." It is likely that Grantham authored this poem, but it is impossible to know for sure.¹⁵² The poem urges the Christian to take advantage of the opportunities each day provides, control the passions, think on heavenly things, speak wisely and kindly, pray daily as an individual and family, and close the day with a benediction.

Finally, Clarke's manuscript includes the hand-written text of two eulogies which must have been delivered at Grantham's funeral. The first is a fascinating and anonymous piece entitled "An Elegy on the Death of that Eminent and faithful Servant of Christ; and unwearied Labourer in the Gospell Mr Thomas Grantham."¹⁵³ The eulogy lauds Grantham and laments his passing, but it also recounts his multi-faceted ministry. The writer describes the irreplaceable nature of Grantham's ability: "Thus whilst our souls were filled, with painfull grieve Rouling from place to place to finde Reliefe. Thinking whoe now was left still to defend. Christs Glorious truth, whoe able to contend. With courage, Argument & dextrous wit. 'Gainst all opposers of the wayes of it." The

¹⁵⁰The acrostic poems are included below as APPENDIX C.

¹⁵¹The epitaph is included below as APPENDIX D.

¹⁵²See APPENDIX E for an excerpt on "Discourse." Jewson believed that Grantham was the likely author since it was composed "in Grantham's tradition," Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk*, 34.

¹⁵³The eulogy takes up almost an entire folio page and is written in a two-column format.

eulogy goes on to praise Grantham's humility and intellectual capacity. It draws attention to *Christianismus Primitivus*, which, as the eulogy claims, is a "famous work" known to "every readers eye." In the remainder of the eulogy Grantham is remembered for attacking Rome and defending believer's baptism.

There is a second eulogy added to the manuscript which Taylor and Jewson believe was by Connould.¹⁵⁴ Regardless, the remembrance calls attention to Grantham's arguments against infant baptism, his care for the churches, his desire for unity, and his loyalty to the king. It concludes with the observation that "this day has a very great man fallen in Israel."

It was reported that Grantham's enemies may attempt to "abuse his corps" after his burial, so Connould had the body interred inside St. Stephen's church in order to protect it from desecration.¹⁵⁵ When Connould died in 1708, he requested that his body be placed next to his Baptist friend, Thomas Grantham.¹⁵⁶ By all accounts, the loss of Thomas Grantham was difficult for the General Baptists in Lincolnshire and Norfolk. The following chapters will demonstrate that Grantham's importance can be traced to his labors as a General Baptist Messenger, apologist, and Nonconformist.

¹⁵⁴Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.315; Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk*, 36.

¹⁵⁵Taylor holds that Grantham was interred in the middle aisle (*The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.315); Jewson writes that his body was placed inside the west door (*The Baptists in Norfolk*, 36). Benjamin Mackerell's account of the monuments in St. Stephen's reads: "Thomas Grantham, an Anabaptist Teacher, was buried under two rows of small broken stones, near to the south porch, Jan. 19, 1691" (*St. Stephen's Parish In the City of Norwich, with some Observations on the same* [n.p., 1729?], 63).

¹⁵⁶The current stones in the floor are different than those of the eighteenth century. Connould's stone has been moved from its original position and now rests near the chancel. Thus, Grantham's burial site is likely under an unmarked stone slab at the west end of the church.

CHAPTER THREE

“Old Things by their Old Names”: Grantham and the Office of Messenger, 1660-1700

From the beginning Baptists affirmed a twofold ministry of Pastors (also referred to as Elders) and Deacons.¹ In time, Baptists began to utilize a third office, that of “Messenger,” in varying ways. Particular Baptists predominantly used Messengers as congregational representatives to convey messages to other congregations or carry out missionary work but never embraced or affirmed the office as a third order of ministers. General Baptists, on the other hand, embraced the office of Messenger as biblical and the office gradually became an important institution among their congregations.

More than fifty years have passed since J. F. V. Nicholson published the “The Office of ‘Messenger’ amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.”² This seminal work continues to be the foundational study concerning the office but little has been done in the way of expansion or critique. This chapter will expand Nicholson’s work and primarily focus on Grantham’s place in the process by which Messengers became an established office among the General Baptists of the seventeenth century. It is quite common to encounter the name of Thomas Grantham in what little scholarship there is related to the emergence of the office, and there appears to be little doubt that Thomas Grantham played an important role in solidifying the office in

¹Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 53.

²J. F. V. Nicholson, “The Office of ‘Messenger’ amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Baptist Quarterly* 17, no. 5 (January 1958): 206-25. For a more recent theological discussion of church offices in Baptist life, see Paul S. Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces: Baptist Identity in Church and Theology* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2003), 83-106.

General Baptist life by the time of his death in 1692.³ Thus, any explanation or inquiry as to how the office of Messenger evolved into an accepted third ministerial office must account for Thomas Grantham. Yet if Nicholson is correct in singling out Grantham's writings as the "main source for evidence"⁴ of the office among the General Baptists from 1660-1700, then given Grantham's conspicuous place in the evolution of the office it is surprising that no detailed analysis of his writings on the subject exists. In light of this lacuna, this chapter develops Nicholson's conclusions by detailing how Grantham, by way of his writings and ministry, exhibited important leadership and influence as the office of Messenger was established among the General Baptists between 1660 and 1700. The chapter is organized into three major sections: 1) Background of the Office among the General Baptists in the Seventeenth Century, 2) "Messengers" in the Grantham Corpus, and 3) Grantham's Activities as a Messenger. A brief look at the development of the Messenger's office in the eighteenth century and summary of the findings conclude this chapter.

Background of the Office in the Seventeenth Century

The primary goal of this section is to outline and expand Nicholson's conclusions regarding the office of Messenger before 1660. First, Nicholson's discussion begins with the office of Messenger in a confession of faith entitled *The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations* (1651). There are, however, two earlier references to the office in the 1640s: *The London Confession* (1644) of the Calvinistic Baptists and Edward Barber's *A*

³See H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 79-80; Barrington R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1996), 117; and Bill Leonard, *Baptist Ways*, 55-56.

⁴Nicholson, "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 211.

True Discovery of the Ministry of the Gospel (1645). Second, Nicholson rightfully identifies three major sources for information pertaining to the office of Messenger (i.e., confessions of faith and minutes of assemblies of Baptist churches, the published writings of individual Baptists, and the records of individual churches⁵), but he deals with the records of individual churches last. This study examines the available sources in a slightly more chronological order: 1) confessions of faith and minutes of assemblies of Baptist churches, 2) the records of individual churches, and 3) the published writings of individual Baptists.

The origins of the Messenger's office among the Baptists are difficult to locate. Moreover, the term "Messenger" carried different connotations depending on the context. It could refer to a person sent from one church to another with a message or simply someone representing a congregation. In other contexts, a Messenger referred to an evangelist or preacher who was responsible for planting new churches. While it may be difficult to assign a specific date or time to the genesis of the office among the Baptists, there is little doubt that scripture, and especially the example of the primitive church found therein, was their point of departure for any discussion of the office.

It is this emphasis on scripture, Adam Taylor writes, which led the General Baptists of the seventeenth century to the conclusion that there was indeed a third ministerial office. Based on their close reading of the scriptures,

... it was not long before they supposed that they had discovered in the primitive churches an officer superior to an elder ... and that in various passages they are called apostles, or in English, messengers of the churches. ... They introduced an officer into their systems whom they styled a messenger. He was generally chosen by an association of the representatives of the churches in a certain district, and ordained by those of his own order with great solemnity, the various churches keeping seasons of prayer and fasting. Sometimes a particular church

⁵Ibid., 207.

chose a messenger; but in that case his business appears to have been confined to preaching the gospel where it was not known, and regulating such churches as he might be made instrumental in planting. It is indeed probable that at the first this was the chief object of their appointment.⁶

Taylor highlights at least three important characteristics of the early attempts to appoint and ordain Messengers. First, an emphasis on scripture led the Baptists to consider the validity of a new and superior ecclesiastical office. Second, the Messenger-system was somehow contingent upon the cooperation and involvement of a number of local Baptist congregations. Third, preaching the gospel and planting new churches were the primary tasks of those appointed to this office.

Taylor's identification of scripture as the foundational roadmap is important, but it is important to remember that he is describing a pattern which only crystallized among some Baptists over a period of decades. In 1644 "elders and Messengers" representing seven churches gathered and issued a confession declaring their right to congregate. White recognizes such a meeting as perhaps the first reference to a gathering of this kind among Baptists,⁷ while Stephen Wright remarks that in 1644 "the act of association which the confession embodied" was important.⁸ *The London Confession* of 1644 is critical in our context because it reveals the presence of "Messengers" at a Baptist gathering. No mention is made of their status or role, but signatories such as William Kiffin and John Spilsbury were influential pastors.

A notable omission from the list of signatories in 1644 was Edward Barber, who was apparently in the process of adopting views more consistent with general atonement

⁶Adam Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists* (London: T. Bore, 1818), 1.413-14.

⁷White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 68.

⁸Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2006), 136.

and laying on of hands.⁹ The very next year, Barber's reading of Ephesians 4:8-14 led him to the conclusion that the office of "apostle" had not ceased with the death of the last Apostle.¹⁰ In *A True Discovery of the Ministry of the Gospel* (1645), he examines the various gifts described in Ephesians 4:8-14: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He provides no less than thirty-six qualifications for those who would be "Apostles, or Messengers; the Master-builders, or layers of the foundation; Fathers or begetters to the faith. . . ."¹¹ Barber insists that Messengers must have already submitted to believer's baptism and must belong to a true church.¹² Barber cautions churches against sending forth those too young or inexperienced,¹³ and similarly instructs the Messengers to rely on the Spirit instead of books or university training.¹⁴ Envisioning that Baptist Messengers, like the original Apostles, would face stiff resistance, he demands in several places that Messengers be willing to endure hardship and persecution.¹⁵ Barber also points out that Messengers should "strive to make the Gospel

⁹Ibid. For a discussion of the rather complicated journey of Edward Barber, see Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649*, 99-140.

¹⁰Nicholson, identifies Thomas Lover's *The True Gospel Faith* (London, 1654) as the "first reference to the office in a published work" ("The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 208), but Edward Barber's *A True Discovery of the Ministry of the Gospel* (London, 1645) clearly predates Lover.

¹¹Barber, *A True Discovery of the Ministry of the Gospel*, 1. See also, White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 30-31.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 2.

¹⁴Ibid., 3.

¹⁵Ibid. The hostility may come in various forms, so a messenger must be willing to endure the following: be seen as "mad and out of his wits" (3); "preach the gospel boldly in time of opposition" (6); "bear all sorts of affliction with patience" (7); "be mean and poor" in the eyes of the world" (8); "Not to hide their heads, nor flee their countries for fear of persecution" (8); and even to "lay down their lives for the publishing and defense of the gospel" (8).

free” by finding their own employment.¹⁶ Barber paints the contemporary Messenger primarily as an evangelist who is to preach, baptize, and grow churches, but it is important to note that his discussion stops short of offering a full-blown picture of a tri-fold ministry of Messengers, Elders, and Deacons. At the same time, he provides no distinction or differentiation between the original Apostles and later apostles.

Barber signed the document “servant to the churches of Christ,” prompting Wright to question whether Barber himself may have been “recognized as such an apostle or messenger by other churches than his own.”¹⁷ Regardless of whether Wright is correct, one can conclude with White that Edward Barber successfully planted “the seeds” for a third and distinct order of ministry with some kind of inter-congregational responsibility.¹⁸ Yet to assume that General Baptist conceptions of the ministry were fixed or static during this period would be incorrect, and it is perhaps because of this state of affairs that the office of Messenger assumed a more prominent position among the General Baptists.

Gauging the extent of Barber’s sentiments on the office of Messenger in the late 1640s is probably impossible, but it is possible to obtain some sense of the process by which the seeds planted in the 1640s germinated and spread in the 1650s. By looking to the three main sources identified by Nicholson one is able to reconstruct with some detail a picture of the various roles assigned to Messengers in the years leading up to the Restoration and the beginning of Grantham’s public ministry.

¹⁶Ibid., 7.

¹⁷Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-1649*, 139. See also Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena, or, A catalogue and discovery of many of the errours, heresies, blasphemies and pernicious practices of the sectaries of this time* (London, 1646), 1.104-5; and E. P. Winter, “The Administration of the Lord’s Supper among the Baptists of the Seventeenth Century,” *Baptist Quarterly* 18, no. 5 (January 1959): 196-204.

¹⁸White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 31.

The General Baptists took advantage of increasing governmental leniency in the early 1650s as evidenced by the convening of joint meetings of representatives from across a particular region.¹⁹ The agendas for these meetings included a variety of tasks ranging from theological discussions to financial matters to church discipline. Occasionally the representatives would issue a statement or confession as the need arose. One such confession was issued by thirty Midland congregations in 1651, but one looks in vain for any reference to Messengers. There is acknowledgement of the need to set apart gifted ministers to preach the gospel and the need for mutual aid.²⁰

When, in 1654, Baptist congregations in Lincolnshire, Kent, and Buckinghamshire sought to distance themselves from the Fifth Monarchy movement, they sent “many of the Messengers, Elders and Brethren belonging to several of the Baptized Churches in this nation” to compose, sign, and issue a statement reflecting their support of civil authorities.²¹ The extent of the Messengers’ authority is unclear from the minutes, but their presence and title are unmistakable.

Additional details can be found in the minutes from a 1656 meeting, which are signed by ten Messengers and include two comments related to the function and limits of the office. Messengers are expressly forbidden to choose other Messengers without the consent of the local congregation, and it is plainly stated that Messengers and Elders constitute “ye presbittery of the church. . . .”²² A few lines later the process by which

¹⁹Ibid., 47.

²⁰William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 174-88.

²¹William T. Whitley, ed., *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptists* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1909), 1.1, 5.

²²Ibid., 6.

congregations in need request aid includes sending “sufficient testimony” to another congregation by means of “a messenger appointed for that purpose.”²³ It is evident from these brief references that “Messengers” could refer to ministers of an “official order” or those with the task of communicating a message to a neighboring congregation.²⁴

Details from the various General Baptist church books in the 1650s suggest that there was no consensus regarding the tasks of a Messenger.²⁵ Nicholson identifies a reference to a “Messenger” in a Calvinistic Baptist church at Hexham in Northumberland in 1652 as the earliest use of the term in any church record.²⁶ In the records, Thomas Tillam was commissioned as a minister and Messenger of one of the seven churches in London, but his role was apparently that of missionary to several northern counties. In later entries the term “Messenger” apparently denotes a representative role.²⁷

The Fenstanton records suggest that a Messenger’s task could vary and that one’s status as Messenger could be temporary or permanent. For example, the church appointed members as “Messengers” to visit those guilty of backsliding in 1652.²⁸ A more famous episode including Messengers occurred in 1653, when the church in Westby, Lincolnshire sent the Messengers John Lupton and Joseph Wright into the county of Huntingdon “to call into question all persons, and to judge and determine all

²³Ibid.

²⁴Nicholson, “The Office of ‘Messenger’ amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” 208.

²⁵Ibid., 209-10. Most of the examples included below are also cited in Nicholson but with less background or commentary.

²⁶Edward B. Underhill, *Records of the Churches of Christ gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720* (London: Haddon Brothers, 1854), 289.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., 40.

matters.”²⁹ Such presumption of authority sparked so great a disagreement when the Messengers arrived at Fenstanton that before they proceeded to the next town Wright removed the offending line from the letter. When the Westby congregation discovered their Messengers had acted in this way, they wrote a letter to the Fenstanton church about the matter and also inquired as to why the Fenstanton church maintained communion with those who had not received the laying on of hands.

Henry Denne was also chosen and ordained as a Messenger in 1653, but his particular task was “to divulge the gospel of Jesus Christ.”³⁰ There was apparently some concern by 1654 and 1655 that Baptist ministers not engage in public ministry without the formal backing of their church.³¹ Furthermore, Messengers were reluctant to make serious decisions without first consulting with their home church.³²

An entry from the Fenstanton records in 1656 provides valuable insights related to financial support of Messengers during this period.³³ A group of Baptists meeting at Stamford (in the Midlands) decided to send John Fairbrother and William Reignolds into the western parts of England as Messengers. In order to offset the cost of their expenses, an appeal was made to the churches for support. The Fenstanton church refused to participate on two grounds: questionable collection methods and the background of one of the Messengers. Financial assistance was also discussed in a meeting at Chatham in

²⁹Ibid., 68ff.

³⁰Ibid., 72.

³¹Ibid., 98-113.

³²Ibid., 138-56. This is the case of Edmond Mayle and John Denne in 1655. The two were sent to assist John Miles in Wisbeach but would not agree to stay on longer unless granted permission by the Fenstanton church.

³³Ibid., 196-98.

Kent in 1657, where “messengers, elders, and brethren” affirmed the evangelistic role of Messengers and insisted that their families should receive financial support in their absence.³⁴

The entries above from the church records in no way provide a complete picture of the origins of the office in the 1650s. Yet it does seem that the local church may have been *the* determining factor in how Messengers functioned among General Baptists in the 1650s. Nicholson notes that local churches evidently desired to retain control of their own Messengers and looked upon Messengers from other churches with some suspicion.³⁵

We have already encountered the ideas of Edward Barber, but when one turns to discussions of the office in the works published by individuals during the 1650s it should come as no surprise that the theoretical and theological explanations reflect the variety of positions evident in the confessions, joint statements, and church records.

The practice of sending Messengers is vaguely outlined in Thomas Lover’s *The True Gospel Faith* (1654). Article 22, citing Acts 1, asserts that Christians “have the power to choose Messengers, Pastors, and Teachers from among themselves.” Lover notes that in English “Apostles” are called “Messengers,” and their task is twofold: to “set in order the things that are wanting” and to “ordain Elders in every Church.”³⁶

Thomas Collier, a Particular Baptist, articulated an opposing interpretation of Ephesians 4:8-14 in 1655 when he wrote that the church has only two offices: Elder and

³⁴“Two Association Meetings in Kent, 1657,” *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* (1912-13): 247-50. See also White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 49-50.

³⁵Nicholson, “The Office of ‘Messenger’ amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” 209.

³⁶Lover is referencing Acts 6:3 (*The True Gospel Faith*, 9).

Deacon.³⁷ Collier affirms the gifts of Apostles but basically limits their expression to the primitive church. Where the other gifts are concerned, Collier contends that with the exception of Apostles, the multiplicity of gifts given in Ephesians are exercised through the office of Elder. Thus, one Elder may exhibit gifts of teaching and ruling whereas another may only possess the gift of teaching.³⁸

William Rider, a General Baptist writing in 1656, expressly rejected Collier's twofold understanding the ministry.³⁹ Instead, Rider is convinced that "in the word Elders is comprehended all offices in the Church . . . and so Elders is distinguished into several offices in the Church, as Bishops and Deacons. . . ."⁴⁰ Having made room for multiple offices, Rider denies that the office of Apostle has ceased and notes that whoever does the work of an Apostle (i.e., laying a foundation) is an Apostle. It is noteworthy that Rider does not employ the term "Messenger" as a title or description of the office of Apostle.

One final publication from the 1650s illustrates an emerging pattern of the ministry of Messengers among the General Baptists. William Jeffrey, a Messenger from Kent and signatory to the declaration in 1654, published *The Whole Faith of Man* in 1659. *The Whole Faith of Man* includes perhaps the most organized and detailed defense of the office in the 1650s. Given the comprehensive nature of Jeffrey's discussion of the office in *The Whole Faith of Man* and the close association of the congregations in Kent and Lincolnshire, it is likely that Thomas Grantham's own conception of the office of

³⁷Thomas Collier, *The Right Constitution and True Subjects of the Visible Church of Christ* (London: Printed by Henry Hills, 1654), 20.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹William Rider, *Laying on of Hands Asserted* (London, 1656), 15ff.

⁴⁰Ibid., 16-17.

Messenger was directly or indirectly impacted by Jeffrey's defense of the office and the prevailing pattern of church polity it represents.⁴¹

Jeffrey's treatment is important for several reasons. First, it establishes that among the General Baptists of the late 1650s "Apostles" and "Messengers" were synonymous titles for the same office in the region around Lincolnshire.⁴² Second, Jeffrey provides clear details of how Messengers are to be chosen: "they are to be chosen out of the congregation by the congregation . . ." and they are to be elected by the "free consent" of the church.⁴³ Their formal ordination, or setting apart, occurs "by fasting, and prayer, and laying on of hands."⁴⁴ After being set apart for the work of ministry, Messengers are to preach the gospel and "make out truth to the Nations in these last times."⁴⁵ In addition, Jeffrey affirms that Messengers should work to support themselves. Where the issue of authority is concerned, Jeffrey goes farther than perhaps any previous source in defining the boundaries and delineating duties. Lest there be any confusion regarding the primacy of the original Apostles, Jeffrey distinguishes between the "extraordinary" Apostles (a phrase Grantham will later use) and those who follow in their footsteps by being ordained into the perpetual office of Messenger.

⁴¹We have already mentioned that Jeffrey signed a statement issued by Baptists in Kent and Lincolnshire. His relationship with Baptists in Lincolnshire is again confirmed in 1661 when he was one of seven Baptist ministers from Kent, Lincolnshire, and Hertfordshire to sign a petition addressed to the king, parliament, and people of England. In this petition, which is found in *Sions Groans for her Distressed* (London, 1661), the signatories deny the magistrate's right or claim to regulate the worship of God. Joseph Wright, who had delivered a 1660 petition to Charles II, was also a signatory. Grantham quotes Jeffrey when arguing against Quakers, *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1687), 4.71.

⁴²William Jeffrey, *The Whole Faith of Man* (London: Printed by G. Dawson, 1659), 95-96.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 96-98.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

Jeffrey concludes his discussion of the church offices with a description of the relationship between the local church as an authority unto itself and the authority granted to Elders and Messengers:

But although it be so, that the power lieth in every particular Body, the Church, to govern according to the word of Christ, yet understand that with consent the Elders, and Messengers are to rule in love, and are to be obeyed, by every particular member, the exhorting and commanding duty, and declaring the sense of the Church, according to the word of Christ . . . and also, the Body, the Church, may command the Elders, or Pastors, and Messengers, to look to their own Ministry, which they have received in the Lord, that they fulfill it. . . . And also note, it is good and safe for a particular church, in things of high concernment, to call for, or desire help from sister Churches, and so Messengers who are to take care of all Churches, in a special manner, are to go in such cases.⁴⁶

It is not clear that Jeffrey's polity grants any explicit inter-congregational authority to Messengers or Elders, nor is their authority within their own church absolute. Rather, their authority derives from the consent of the congregation, which has the authority to "command" that its Messengers perform their assigned tasks. Jeffrey then goes on to clarify, but not necessarily limit, the Messenger's task to inter-congregational aid. This rather ambiguous wording does raise important questions regarding the extent of a Messenger's relationship with other congregations when providing assistance.

What kind of aid did Jeffrey have in mind? Already in 1656 the General Assembly explicitly mentioned "poverty" as a legitimate reason to request assistance, but that Jeffrey does not specify the assistance in financial terms may be noteworthy. Determining what might constitute "things of high concernment" is difficult, as is the ambiguous line where Messengers "are to take care of all churches, in a special manner. . . ." Can one see in statements like these a subtle evolution of the duties and responsibilities of the office of Messenger in some General Baptist churches? There is

⁴⁶Ibid., 109.

simply not enough information in the church records for these years to make the case conclusively, but there is little doubt that in another ten years the role of Messengers had expanded to include more inter-congregational duties and significant work as an apologist.

This survey of the origins of the office of Messenger among the Baptists confirms Bill Leonard's observation that the office "seems to have grown out of the specific needs of the churches."⁴⁷ It has been shown that the needs faced by many Baptists in the 1650s centered on preaching the gospel, forming new churches, and dealing with sundry concerns. The records indicate that Messengers were chosen from within the congregation and set apart for a particular purpose. While there was no set protocol for such ordinations during the 1650s, it is clear that both Particular and General Baptists employed Messengers to address various needs.⁴⁸ To what extent Messengers exercised authority and what authority they possessed remains a mystery. Still, by 1655 General Baptists in the Midlands and Kent were convinced that the office of Messenger was distinct and separate from that of Elder or Deacon, and as such, possessed a unique – if undefined – authority. It was in one of these Midlands congregations that a young man by the name of Thomas Grantham was ordained as an Elder and later a Messenger. We now turn our attention to examine his writings on the office he occupied for twenty-five years.

⁴⁷Leonard, *Baptist Ways*, 55.

⁴⁸Nicholson, "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 210-11.

“Messengers” in the Grantham Corpus

Nicholson identifies Grantham’s life and writings as the “main source for evidence” and the “most fully justified and expounded” treatment of the office of Messenger for the period 1660-1700, yet he provides little more than a page in the way of summary.⁴⁹ Thus, a comprehensive examination of Grantham’s writings on the office of Messenger is in order if we hope to obtain a better understanding of Grantham and the office he so vigorously defended in word and deed. The analysis of Grantham’s writings below confirms Nicholson’s assertions but attempts to build on them by offering a thorough and predominantly chronological examination of the primary documents.⁵⁰ This section concludes with a summary of Grantham’s theoretical framework for the office of Messenger.

Grantham burst onto the General Baptist scene in 1660 when he, along with Joseph Wright, signed and delivered a complaint to Charles II on behalf of the baptized churches in the Kent and Lincolnshire regions.⁵¹ While in the king’s presence, Wright and Grantham also took the opportunity to present *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith* signed by forty “elders, deacons and brethren” and representing more than 20,000 supposed “Anabaptists.” No mention is made of Messengers in *A Brief Confession*, but some of the signatories held the office. Joseph Wright, for example, was a Messenger from Kent, and possibly met Grantham in March of 1660 when the Elders, Deacons, and brethren gathered in London to draw up the *A Brief Confession*. William Jeffrey, whom we encountered in the previous section as a defender of the office of Messenger, was also

⁴⁹Ibid., 211-12.

⁵⁰Nicholson cites only one treatise in *Christianismus Primitivus*.

⁵¹Grantham would be called upon to deliver another petition in early 1661.

a signatory. Exactly why the office of Messenger does not appear in the subscription line or the discussion of leadership in the fifteenth article is puzzling, but the absence of any reference to “Messenger” may reflect a desire to use language agreeable to all parties. Regardless, *A Brief Confession* became the “Standard Confession” among the General Baptists and Grantham himself appears to have been comfortable with its tenets.⁵²

Grantham’s writings from the 1660s never speak directly to the subject of Messengers, but we do know something of his ordination to the office in 1666. In a letter to John Connould of Norwich in 1691, Grantham recalls that he was “elected by the consent of many congregations” and ordained a Messenger “by those who were in the same office before me.”⁵³ Apparently the ordination was rather humble as it took place in his house, where the church also met for worship. He describes his assignment as one “ordained to oversee the churches in divers places that had need of help.”⁵⁴ Since there is no reason to believe Grantham’s ordination was atypical for the Lincolnshire region, it is of some importance that multiple congregations were involved in choosing Grantham. The reader will recall that Jeffrey’s description suggested that a single congregation was responsible for choosing Messengers. Also, Grantham’s account of his own ordination reveals that it involved – and likely required – the presence and blessing of other Messengers. As such, there appears to have been, at least in the Midlands, a formal

⁵²Similarly, Wright and Jeffrey must have been comfortable with the trajectory and meaning of *Confession*. The *Confession* went through several revisions on its way to becoming *The Standard Confession*. An early revision in 1663 was accepted by the General Assembly, as were Grantham’s revisions and explanations in 1678. I will return to Grantham’s revisions of *The Standard Confession* in the third section of this chapter. See also Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 221-23.

⁵³Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 21 April 1691 (and 11 June 1691), Letters to Thomas Grantham, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

process in place for identifying, electing, and ordaining someone to the office of Messenger.

Grantham's initial defense of the Messenger's office is found in *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles; and of the Continuance thereof in the Church till the End* (full title), which was appended to *A Sigh for Peace* (1671). *A Sigh for Peace* is addressed to the "Church of Christ in London, with the General Assembly of Messengers" in hopes that it might bring "brotherly concord, peace and truth" to a polarized situation.⁵⁵ The immediate context of the treatise is the controversy over the imposition of hands, but Grantham adds a "vindication" of the Messenger's office since it, too, was "much questioned by some."⁵⁶

A Defence of the Offices of Apostles is Grantham's most detailed and complete writing on the office of Messenger. A quick glance at the publication history suggests that Grantham was largely pleased with his work. The treatise was reprinted in 1674 under the title *The Successors of the Apostles* (short title). The entire treatise was included in the fourth book of *Christianismus Primitivus* under a similar but more nuanced title: *A Defence of the Office of Subordinate Apostles* (short title). Regardless of the changing titles, the basic structure of the work generally remained the same.⁵⁷ When writing of the office in 1687, Grantham briefly describes how the primitive church "was endowed with a three-fold order of ministry," but rather than outline the office in detail

⁵⁵Thomas Grantham, *A Sigh for Peace* (n.p.: 1671), Epistle Dedicatory, A2.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, Epistle Dedicatory, [A5?].

⁵⁷Grantham made changes to the treatise in 1674 and 1678. A discussion of these changes follows the survey of the 1671 edition.

Grantham refers the reader to the much fuller defense “demonstrated” in *Christianismus Primitivus*.⁵⁸

Instead of going directly to the 1678 edition in *Christianismus Primitivus*, as does Nicholson, it seems wise to begin with an examination of Grantham’s defense of the office of Messenger by looking to his earliest treatment of the question in 1671 as it appeared in *A Sigh for Peace*. Edward Barber had not hesitated to use “apostle” and “messenger” interchangeably, with the result that “messenger” became the preferred term. Lack of clarity and distinction on the matter seems to have aroused great concern among some congregations by 1671, for it was unclear how the Messengers differed from the original Apostles. It is in this context that Grantham wrote *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles*. A corrective to misunderstandings and misconceptions, Grantham writes, is “to call old things by their old names.”⁵⁹ With this comment Grantham gets behind any linguistic quibbling and arrives at the critical question: “whether God hath given to his Church ANY Apostles or Messengers to succeed the Primitive Apostles, as a constant Ministry in the Church to the end of the World”?⁶⁰ The Particular Baptists would answer in the negative. The typical General Baptist answer during this period would have been a qualified “yes,” for it seems they were not yet clear about the office’s parameters. But Grantham’s published articulation of a clearly defined justification for the perpetuity of the office of Messenger provided the General Baptists with a defensible position on the matter.

⁵⁸Grantham, *Hear the Church: Or, An Appeal to the Mother of us All* (London, 1687), 13.

⁵⁹Ibid., *A Sigh for Peace*, 138.

⁶⁰Ibid., 139.

It was noted above that Jeffrey used “extraordinary” to describe the premier apostles, though he did not specify in what ways they were extraordinary. Grantham employs this very same vocabulary in *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles*, which begins by spelling out the differences between the “extraordinary” (i.e., temporary) roles of the original Apostles and those parts of their ministry which were “ordinary” (i.e., fixed). He laconically outlines four elements of the primitive apostolic ministry which the original Apostles alone possessed: 1) they received a unique mission to spread the gospel, 2) they learned their doctrine directly from Jesus or by direct revelation, 3) they laid a doctrinal foundation for others to build upon and this foundation was both a pattern and measuring stick for examining all other doctrines, and 4) they were endowed with the gift of tongues to illustrate that they were commissioned by God and their message was of divine origin.⁶¹

Grantham provides little in the way of elaboration on these points, but Nicholson’s paraphrase captures the essence of the argument: “[T]here are now no apostles, in the sense that the first apostles received their mission from Christ himself by infallible revelation to lay an infallible foundation, for which mission they were endowed with gifts of tongues, miracles, signs or mighty deeds.”⁶²

Yet Grantham concluded that the apostolic office persists in several ways which were not confined to the original Apostles. He highlights the static elements of the apostolic ministry by first pointing to the God-given “authority to preach the gospel” at

⁶¹Grantham, *A Sigh for Peace*, 139-40.

⁶²Nicholson, “The Office of ‘Messenger’ amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” 212. It should be noted that Nicholson is summarizing the 1678 edition, which is not significantly different.

all times and in all places.⁶³ A second ordinary task is twofold and involves teaching and governing the churches. The third fixed aspect of the apostolic office is the requirement to defend the gospel against false apostles. The final remaining aspect of the apostolic ministry is to assist pastors in resisting “Usurpers, and such as despise the Ministers of Christ.” In sum, Grantham identifies four tasks of the apostolic office which remain in effect and incumbent upon all who hold the office of “Apostle.”

Having laid out his position with regard to the nature of the apostolic office, Grantham proceeds to support his claim that “the chief Apostles have some to succeed them in the Apostleship.”⁶⁴ He begins by returning to the commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15, where Jesus instructs the disciples to preach the gospel to all people. Grantham proposes there are three ways of interpreting this command: 1) some people in particular are to preach the gospel to all people, 2) all Christians are bound to preach the gospel to all people, or 3) the command was no longer binding after the death of the Apostles. He quickly dismisses the second and third options, leaving only the possibility that particular Christians must be sent to fulfill this command of preaching and baptizing.

The second proof is found in Ephesians 4:8-14, where the gifts of offices are given to the Church. Removing some of these gifts from the Church would be “a very dangerous thing,” he writes, for the Church would quickly realize its need. Grantham was quick to warn his readers that the continuation of all offices mentioned in Ephesians 4 in no way guarantees the continuation of tongues or miracles.⁶⁵

⁶³Grantham explains these briefly on pages 140-41.

⁶⁴Ibid., 143.

⁶⁵Ibid., 146-47. Grantham devotes the majority of this section to this point. He writes: “And although we said before that the gift of Miracles and Tongues . . . was necessary to the Office of the chief Apostles, and yet was only temporary: and now say the gifts of Miracles may not be denied to have a being

Grantham's third bit of evidence is taken from the example of the primitive churches described in scripture, where he finds a great "many Apostles beside those that were Foundation layers and Master-builders."⁶⁶ Grantham seems primarily intent upon illustrating how the ministries of Apostles such as Barnabas or Titus were directed to minister to every church and not restricted to the care of a specific congregation.⁶⁷ Under the weight of such evidence from the primitive churches Grantham is convinced that "God hath ordained such a ministry to continue in his Church till the body of our Lord be perfected."⁶⁸

Grantham next turns to the existing practices of his opponents to prove the necessity and usefulness of the Messenger's perpetual office. Grantham rhetorically asks whether "our brethren"⁶⁹ do not already

send out men to act Authoritatively both in preaching the Gospel to them that are without? in setting things in order In remote Congregations? to exercise Discipline by Excommunication of offenders? and remitting the penitent? by ordaining them Elders, and dispensing to them the holy Ordinances? . . . As these things cannot be denied, so we may justly enquire how it comes to pass that they

or continuance in the Church. In this there is no contradiction; for, the making those gifts temporary . . . as they were necessary to the Office of those which first preached the Gospel, doth not at all conclude that they are wholly abrogated, or taken away from the Church. And when we say that these gifts were necessary to the Office of the chief Apostle, our meaning not that Miracles was a part of their office, but only a necessary concomitant thereto; so that though this concomitant should not be found, it is no prejudice to the Office considered as we have defined it."

⁶⁶Ibid., 147.

⁶⁷Ibid., 150-53. Other examples include Luke, Mark, Silas, Silvanus, Titchicus, Troplimus, Apollos, Timothy, and James.

⁶⁸Ibid., 154.

⁶⁹Grantham does not specify who this might be. It is possible that he is referring to the Particular Baptists, but this seems unlikely since there is no evidence of interaction with, or concern for, the Particular Baptists. So far as I can tell, Grantham never directly mentions Particular Baptists in his writings. It is probable then, given the audience and the imposition of hands controversy, that he has in mind other General Baptists.

do thus? if indeed the Church hath none to act in the capacity of Apostles, or messengers of the Gospel. . . .⁷⁰

He goes on to question by what authority ordained Elders involve themselves in the affairs of other congregations. Grantham emphasizes that there are particular duties in the Church which Elders are unable to perform by virtue of their own divinely instituted office. It follows that rather than using Elders inappropriately, Grantham urges the churches to utilize the office of Messenger, which, as it were, is also divinely instituted. But Grantham's concern is not simply semantic here, for he realizes that the Church will only function properly when there is "a ministry remaining in the Church which is related to all Congregations indifferently."⁷¹

Grantham's final reason for the necessity of the office of Messenger is "the state of the world."⁷² With this phrase he transitions into a discussion of the Church's interaction with those outside the faith. There is a great need, he says, for the Church to "dispose of her Members to that needful work" of proclamation.⁷³ Elsewhere in this section he argues that preaching the gospel to all people is bound up with the consummation of all things. Thus, there must be an office "whose work it is to preach *To all Nations*, even to the end of the world." Yet the "world" is unlikely to "come to [the Church's] Assemblies" or "send to the Church of God for instruction," he writes, and in the absence of any compulsion, the Church must rely on the proclamation of the gospel

⁷⁰Ibid., 154.

⁷¹Ibid., 155.

⁷²Ibid., 158.

⁷³Ibid., 159.

by those appointed to such a task.⁷⁴ In addition, the continued presence of “false apostles” requires the Church’s diligence in sending out those true apostles prepared to defend the true faith.

Grantham concludes the treatise with a summary of the Church’s ministry. He recognizes fixed offices such as Elder, Pastor, and Deacon, who are bound and committed to the welfare of particular congregations. There are, however, unfixed ministers whose job it is to preach the gospel, plant churches, order new churches, and comfort established churches.⁷⁵ Grantham leaves it to the “sober and unprejudiced Reader to consider” whether it is better to follow human tradition and title unfixed ministers “Bishops,” or listen to the scriptures and refer to them as “Apostles.”

When Grantham published *Christianismus Primitivus* in 1678 he chose to include several previously-published treatises in the fourth and final book. One of the treatises is entitled *A Defence of the Office of Subordinate Apostles of Christ, or Messengers of his Churches, and the perpetuity of his Ministry by Divine Institution, for the more orderly Promulgation of the Gospel, and the better settlement of Churches to the end of the World* (full title). This is basically the same document as that appended to *A Sigh for Peace* in 1671 and *The Fourth Principle* in 1674, yet there are several noteworthy differences in the 1678 edition.⁷⁶ First, Grantham introduces the treatise with a new explanatory paragraph:

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., 162-63.

⁷⁶It is quite possible that Grantham made the additions to *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles* (1671) when he re-published it as *A Discourse of the Successors of the Apostles* in 1674. Since Regent's Park College Library was without a librarian during a research visit in March of 2008, access was denied to an original copy of *The Fourth Principle* (1674) and thus also the appended *A Discourse of the Successors of the Apostles*. Early English Books Online does provide photo images of *The Fourth Principle*, but for an

Seeing all sorts of Christians do allow of an Itinerate, or Travelling Ministry, as necessary to promulgate, publish, or preach the Gospel where it is not known, and to strengthen the Churches of God, specially where there is a Paucity, or Insufficiency of Instruments; it may there seem strange that any should give occasion to write a defence of that which themselves do allow; and yet so it falleth out at this time, through some mistake, partly about the Titles, or Appellations prefixed, and partly about the nature of the Institution of this Ministry, whether it be Divine, or of Humane Prudence only?⁷⁷

Here Grantham affirms the existence of an itinerate ministry among the General Baptists to preach the gospel, but he also acknowledges that there is disagreement over the title, function, and origin of that ministry.

Grantham also expands definitions and includes additional scripture references throughout the treatise. The more significant changes to the 1678 version include a number of objections to the office (followed by brief answers) and the addition of a short list of patristic authors who utilized the term “apostle.”

Grantham’s source for the patristic citations, at least in this case, seems to have been Henry Hammond (1605-1660), a Church of England clergyman and theologian. Hammond had extensive knowledge of the patristic sources, and Grantham admits to relying on Hammond’s “Collections” in *Christianismus Primitivus* when discussing the

unknown reason the appendix is not included. Thus, for this research project, I must work under the assumption that Grantham’s changes to *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles* (1671) were made sometime after he published *The Fourth Principle* (1674) and before *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678). If, however, it is learned that *A Discourse of the Successors of the Apostles* included the changes discussed below, the conclusions below would only need to be adjusted ever so slightly. One interesting aspect that would require attention is the possible impact of the Declaration of Indulgence (1672) on General Baptist Messengers’ ability to perform their duties. As will be shown, several of Grantham’s changes in 1678 center on questions related to the extent of a Messenger’s authority among the various churches. Is it possible that Charles II’s decision to allow ministers to travel freely and interact more openly with like-minded believers indirectly exacerbated inter-congregational tensions among General Baptists regarding authority and local church autonomy?

⁷⁷Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 4.152.

office of Messenger.⁷⁸ Hammond was a prolific writer in the mid-seventeenth century and ardent supporter of the episcopacy, so it is probably for these reasons that Grantham found Hammond's work helpful. That Grantham did not reference Hammond in *Sigh for Peace* (1671) might suggest that Grantham encountered Hammond's work sometime after 1671 or even 1674, but it is by no means certain that Grantham was unaware of Hammond before 1671. Though Grantham does not specify which of Hammond's writings he uses, it is quite likely that Grantham relied heavily *Of the Power of the Keyes* (first published in 1647).

In *Of the Power of the Keyes* Hammond defends the structure and role of church government against presbyterian-type arguments. Chapter three in particular identifies "the Apostles successors" as those who exercise a dual ministry of planting and governing.⁷⁹ Hammond translates "apostle" as "ambassador" or "messenger," noting that "extraordinary privileges" such as tongues and miracles were necessary for the work of planting but were not necessary for the work of governing.⁸⁰ Hammond calls on the witness of antiquity in support of his position, and it is from this litany of ancient writers that Grantham draws several quotations.

While it is clear that Grantham utilized the ancient sources provided by Henry Hammond, it is perhaps more noteworthy that the office of Messenger, or Bishop, constituted some small piece of common ground between the two thinkers. Moreover, is it mere coincidence that Hammond's language of "Apostles successors" when speaking

⁷⁸Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 2.120 and 4.166. The ancient authors quoted on 2.120 are as follows: Clement of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Irenaeus. Book 4.166 cites Eusebius of Caesarea, Theodoret, Clement of Alexandria, and Chrysostom.

⁷⁹Henry Hammond, *Of the Power of the Keyes* (London, 1647), 18.

⁸⁰Ibid.

of bishops in his own day is strikingly similar to Grantham's own articulation? It is interesting to see that arguments and sources used to substantiate episcopacy could also be used to justify a third office among the baptized churches. Trends toward an elevated ministry, however, promoted fear among some General Baptists. The additions to *A Defence of the Office of Subordinate Apostles of Christ* in 1678 reveal that some of Grantham's fellow General Baptists may have been wary of a third office which planted *and* governed churches.

Seven objections are also included in the body of the treatise along with a postscript containing three questions submitted to Grantham by an unnamed "Judicious Friend in London."⁸¹ Of the ten objections and inquiries which Grantham provides for the reader, one deals with the cessation of signs and miracles, one consists of curiosity about the identity of the Messengers, two others question whether the office is of divine institution, and six revolve around issues related to the extent of the office's authority.

In responding to objection concerning signs and wonders, Grantham repeats the distinction between the chief and subordinate apostles, noting that neither Timothy nor Titus is reported to have performed miraculous signs.⁸² He adds that it is "unsafe" to assume that miracles ceased in the Church, but warns the reader to be wary of those who would prove their apostolicity by means of signs, for such signs "rather prove them Deceivers."⁸³

Grantham's response to the objection related to the identity of the Messengers is in perhaps as odd as the objection itself. Grantham references Ezra 5:4 and retorts:

⁸¹Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 4.167.

⁸²Ibid., 4.163.

⁸³Ibid.

“what would it profit you to tell you their names?”⁸⁴ The objection may reflect a bias against the “meanness” of those who occupy the office, for he contends that the validity of the office should stand or fall on the basis of the scriptures and not one’s wealth or position.

The two critiques regarding the origin of the office basically speak to the same question: is the office of Messenger of divine or human origin? In response to this query Grantham answers that since the “Church is of Divine Institution by Christ, so are all her Officers.”⁸⁵ Thus, the Church sends Messengers in the name of Christ alone. Grantham also argues that if the offices of Elder and Deacon are assumed to be of divine origin, then the office of Messenger should be considered divine also.

The last six objections and questions all push for clarity regarding the extent of the Messenger’s authority. In Grantham’s responses to these objections and questions, one is able to gain a clearer picture of the duties, limits, and ordination of Messengers during the 1670s.

One objection raises the question of why Messengers do not “magnifie their Office” or “impose themselves upon the Churches where they come?”⁸⁶ Grantham responds by clarifying that Messengers are endowed by Christ with “Power and Capacity” but they have no “dominion” over the faith of the churches, especially those churches which they did not plant.⁸⁷ Grantham’s response suggests that Messengers’

⁸⁴Ibid., 4.164.

⁸⁵Ibid., 4.159. Grantham makes the same argument in the Postscript (4.167-68), where he writes: “I say, this Ministry is of Divine Institution, because the whole Ministerial Authority, which the Church hath received as such is of Divine Institution; yea, the very Church her self is of Divine Institution. . . .”

⁸⁶Ibid., 4.164.

⁸⁷Ibid.

authority is limited only to those churches they planted, and even then a Messenger's power is not absolute.

Another objection regarding authority worries that such a ministry might result in the establishment of Archbishops or other forms of "Anti-Christian Usurpation" among the churches.⁸⁸ Grantham contends that the best way to prevent such usurpation of power is to establish firmly the office of Messenger, for "it preserves all particular Churches Right to send forth such Ministers as there is occasion for them so to do, and no one Church is herein privileged above another."⁸⁹ Grantham upholds the duty and right of individual churches to set apart Messengers for service, but does define the elevated status of the office as a position of "Honor" instead of "Power."⁹⁰ He concludes his response to this objection by listing three chief reasons the office is necessary: 1) to plant churches, 2) to organize and order the affairs of those churches which request help, and 3) to provide assistance to pastors and churches in confronting the propagation of false teaching.⁹¹ Notice that Messengers are only to assist churches that express a desire for their services.

A third objection raises the question of ordination: "But do you not give the sole Power of Ordination to your Messengers, or Apostles?"⁹² Grantham offers a qualified "no" to this question. He briefly outlines the role of Messengers in the ordination process. First, Messengers are the only officers capable of ordaining Elders in those new

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid., 4.164-65.

⁹²Ibid., 4.165.

churches which have no officers. Second, those churches which have Elders are capable of ordaining the full range of offices: Deacons, Elders, and Messengers.

A fourth objection centers on the discipline or correction of those Messengers who “fall into Errors in Life or Doctrine.”⁹³ Since it is required that every Messenger belong to a particular congregation, each particular congregation “is the most proper Judge” to decide on the judgment of erring officers. Moreover, Grantham affirms that any local congregation, as a part of the Church, “may lawfully anathematize . . . an Apostle of the greatest dignity. . . .”⁹⁴

A fifth question demands that Grantham reveal whether he is a Messenger before anyone is obligated to obey him. Grantham’s brief and answer is self-deprecating and evasive: “Paul was constrained to *become a Fool* . . . and it is no marvel if such as are not worthy to loose the latchet of his Shoes, be constrained, by the unfriendly dealing of some of their Brethren, to come into the same predicament. And therefore . . . I here expose my self to your contempt. . . . Thus *I am become a Fool, but ye have compelled me*.”⁹⁵ Given that Grantham’s status as a Messenger was quite public by 1678, this cryptic response is rather interesting.

Reluctance to articulate a strong defense of the office’s authority is evident in the sixth and concluding question, which has two elements: 1) the duty of churches to receive Messengers, and 2) whether it is a sin if they refuse Messengers.⁹⁶ Grantham argues that since Timothy and Titus were generally received as ministers without any

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid. Grantham is citing 2 Cor. 12:11.

⁹⁶Ibid., 4.169-70.

previous agreement with the various churches they visited, all Messengers should likewise be received. He does allow that some churches may be ignorant of the office and its functions. In such cases, these churches are to be instructed regarding the “Mind of God in this particular,” and once instruction has been given, “Churches which shall then reject such Servants of Christ, do sin, and are to be blamed. . . .”⁹⁷ Grantham also recommends that letters of commendation be written to facilitate peaceful and trustworthy encounters.

That so much attention is devoted to the issue of authority in these objections and questions suggests that the authority of a perpetual apostolic office was a major obstacle preventing consensus among the General Baptists in the 1670s. Grantham was aware that granting substantial authority to Messengers threatened the freedom and autonomy of each local congregation. In his writings, therefore, he not only provides a theoretical justification for the office, but he also provides clear and biblical guidelines to govern the office’s implementation in the baptized churches.

Grantham’s treatment of the office of Messenger was not limited to the detailed discussion in *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles* (1671) or the later editions in 1674 and 1678. Elsewhere in *Christianismus Primitivus* Grantham describes the various ministers “God hath given or appointed to Govern the Christian Church to the End of the World.”⁹⁸ Grantham does little new in the chapter where Messengers are concerned. He seems content to let the fuller treatment of the office at the end of *Christianismus Primitivus* suffice. He does provide a condensed justification for subordinate apostles and notes again that “sacred scripture, great Antiquity, and later Doctors” support his position on

⁹⁷Ibid., 4.170.

⁹⁸Ibid., 2.117.

the matter of Messengers,⁹⁹ but it is the eighth and final section, on the election and ordination of ministers, which provides additional insights.

Grantham unequivocally claims that proper and authentic ordination flows out of true baptism, and the phrase “No Baptism no Ordination” boldly defies both the legitimacy and leadership of the Roman and Anglican churches.¹⁰⁰ He then moves to describe the process of ordination for Messengers, Elders, and Deacons in the baptized churches. No one is ordained in a baptized church, he writes, until elected by the church’s consent. Consent is important, Grantham argues, for churches are to choose their own pastors and leaders.¹⁰¹ Following the election, an inquiry is made into the nominee’s background and competence, which is followed by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands.

Grantham’s thoughts on the relationship between ordination and apostolic succession are also evident in this final section. He notes that in Acts 13 that Paul and Barnabas were ordained by non-ordained teachers and prophets in the absence of any other living Apostles.¹⁰² This proves, for Grantham, that apostolic succession in terms of

⁹⁹Ibid., 2.119-20. Grantham adds nothing new at this point, but he does once more credit Hammond as the source of his quotations from antiquity. In this particular passage, the authors from “great Antiquity” include Clement of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Irenaeus. Heinrich Bullinger is the lone “modern writer.”

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 2.129.

¹⁰¹In support of congregational consent, Grantham refers the reader to the Council of Nicaea, Leo the Great, and Cyprian. Modern writers include Thomas Bilson and John Field. Grantham quotes Thomas Bilson (1546/7–1616), bishop of Winchester, directly: “Each Church stands free by God’s Law, to admit, maintain, and obey no man s their Pastour, without their liking, and that the Peoples Election–dependeth on humane fellowship, and first principles of humane Society or Assemblies,” *The Perpetual Gouvernement of Christes Church* (London: Printed by Christopher Barker, 1593), 339.

¹⁰²Ibid., 2.131.

ordination was “interrupted even in the Apostles days. . . .”¹⁰³ In the absence of a direct link with the Apostles, Grantham asserts that the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the church are sufficient grounds to appoint and commission ministers of the gospel.

Grantham’s treatment of the Messenger’s office in *Christianismus Primitivus* consists of two primary movements. First, Grantham includes an expanded version of the 1671 treatise complete with numerous quotations from antiquity and responses to several critiques. Second, a shorter section explains how the churches nominate, elect, and ordain and Messengers, Elders, and Deacons. Taken together, Grantham’s justification of the office of Messenger is probably the most complete and detailed analysis of the office from the period 1660 to 1700.

Grantham’s justification of the office of Messenger as outlined in *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678) was given expression in the “Orthodox Creed,” which also appeared in 1678. This creed, which was put forth “in the name of many baptized Christians or congregations” in the counties of Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Oxford, specifically speaks to the office of Messenger in Article XXXI¹⁰⁴:

Of Officers in the Church of Christ. The visible church of Christ . . . consists of officers and members; and the officers, appointed by Christ, to be chosen by his church . . . are these three, viz. Bishops, or Messengers; and Elders, or Pastors; and Deacons, or Overseers of the poor; and the way appointed by Christ, for the calling of any person fitted and gifted by the holy ghost, unto the office of bishop, or messenger, in the churches, is, viz, That he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church, and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands, by the bishops of the same function, ordinarily, and those bishops so ordained, have the government of those churches, that had suffrage in their election, and no other ordinarily; as also to preach the word, or gospel, to the world, or unbelievers.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴See Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 297-334.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 319-20.

Several aspects of Article XXXI stand out. First, the creed clearly reflects a tri-fold ministry of Messengers, Elders, and Deacons. Second, the creed's description of the ordination of Messengers outlines election, imposition of hands by other Messengers, and the task of preaching. Finally, the creed was published by congregations in four Midland counties. Lincolnshire is not named specifically as a contributing county, but it is important to remember that Lincolnshire falls in the geographical region known as the Midlands. Even though Grantham was not a signatory and there is no textual link to his work on the office of Messenger in the creed, the similarities between the "Orthodox Creed" and *Christianismus Primitivus* on the subject of Messengers are unmistakable. Thus, it seems quite possible that the office of Messenger had been accepted regionally as a viable and critical third office by the end of the 1670s. William T. Whitley confirms this and points to 1678 as a key moment in the evolution of the office: "From this time forward there is no indication that any doubt was felt as to the scripturalness of the office, its permanence, and its necessity."¹⁰⁶

Consensus, however, should not suggest that the office's opponents were silenced. Opposition to the office continued, as the aforementioned objections and questions show. When Grantham edited and included the text of *The Standard Confession* (1660) in *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678), "Explanatory Supplements; and the Testimony of many of the Ancient Writers of Christianity" were also added.¹⁰⁷ Yet the absence of even an allusion to the office of Messenger when commenting on Article XV (officers of the church) is telling, especially since Grantham's aim was to explain

¹⁰⁶Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.xxix.

¹⁰⁷Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 2.62.

some passages “for the better understanding of the Reader.”¹⁰⁸ It is possible Grantham avoided the subject for the sake of unity, which could be why a third office was left out of the original *Confession* in 1660. Regardless, Grantham’s edits obviously found favor with a majority of the General Baptists and his edits were accepted and affirmed by the General Assembly in 1691.¹⁰⁹

One final document written by Grantham in 1687 provides additional details regarding the office of Messenger during this period. In *Hear the Church*, Grantham reaffirms the Messenger’s office and also comments on the biblical pattern of councils or assemblies “settling the Churches in peace, when troubles did arise among themselves, by means of false Teachers.”¹¹⁰ These assemblies consisted of “Messengers, Elders, and Brethren” who all participated in the discussion and deliberations.¹¹¹ Based on their example, Grantham contends that decisions are to be reached by consensus and not by the imposition of power. In addition, he limits the authority of the general assemblies with regard to punishment and grants the local church the power to punish offenders. In the end, neither Messengers nor general assemblies have complete authority or control, but they are to be the means by which disagreements are addressed and consensus secured.

When explaining how Baptized churches approach the baptism of a believer, he notes that the Messenger or Elder preaches and presides “attired in comely Raiment, not much different from the rest of his brethren. . . .”¹¹² In addition, Messengers and Elders

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 2.74.

¹⁰⁹Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.30.

¹¹⁰Grantham, *Hear the Church*, 14.

¹¹¹Ibid., 15.

¹¹²Ibid., 23.

led the congregation in the celebration of communion. Such insights into the ministry of General Baptist Messengers in the second half of the seventeenth century are not surprising, but they are important reminders of the broad type of leadership these itinerant apostles provided. That so much attention was devoted to justifications for the office of Messenger could obscure the fact that the Messenger's most basic and common task among the General Baptists was to organize and lead congregational worship.

Grantham's last and final defense of the Messenger's office appeared in the form of an epistolary dialogue with John Connould, vicar of St. Stephen's in Norwich. In April of 1691 Connould wrote to Grantham questioning the latter's authority to gather a church and insistence on believer's baptism.¹¹³ A rather prolific and friendly correspondence ensued regarding the two questions. In the course of the discussion of Grantham's authority to gather a congregation separate from the established Church of England, Connould expresses a keen interest in Grantham's status as Messenger. In response, Grantham outlines his understanding of the tri-fold ministry of Deacons, Presbyters, and Messengers before detailing his own distinct ordinations to the offices of Presbyter and Messenger.¹¹⁴ Connould accuses Grantham of bringing into the Church a "new" office. Grantham, however, adamantly denies any hint of novelty: "God forbid that I should be for a new order in the church."¹¹⁵ In the end, both men ultimately agree

¹¹³Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 17 April 1691.

¹¹⁴Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 21 April 1691. Grantham employs arguments similar to those discussed above, pages 15ff.

¹¹⁵Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 5 May 1691.

on the presence and importance of Messengers but disagree on whether they should form a distinct office.¹¹⁶

In summary, this survey of Grantham's writings on the office of Messenger shows his concern to legitimate and establish a third office in addition to those of Elder and Deacon. His major discussion of the office, *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles*, was first published in 1671 and appended to *A Sigh for Peace*. Grantham published *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles* with *The Fourth Principle* in 1674 but under a different title: *The Successors of the Apostles*. In 1678 Grantham edited and expanded the treatise a third time before including it in the fourth book of *Christianismus Primitivus* under the title *A Defence of the Office of Subordinate Apostles*.

The common thread in all of these versions is that the office of Messenger, or apostle, is biblical and therefore required of all true churches. Post-biblical apostles are not identical to the original Apostles in every way, but their office does involve three common tasks: preach the gospel in all places, establish churches, and defend the gospel. Grantham's writings affirm that Messengers were elected by, and served under the authority of, their own particular local congregations; however, their ordination service reflected an inter-congregational gathering of Elders and other Messengers. Messengers worked in conjunction with local churches – especially those they planted – to preach, baptize, lead in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, ordain, arbitrate, and defend.

Thomas Grantham's Activities as a Messenger

The previous section analyzed Grantham's writings on the office of Messenger, writings which Nicholson identifies as the main source for information on the office of

¹¹⁶Ibid. See also John Connould to Thomas Grantham, 8 May 1691.

Messenger from 1660 to 1700. Grantham himself was convinced that a part of his “duty” as a Messenger was to write and publish as necessary.¹¹⁷ Yet Grantham’s impact must not be confined to publications alone, for to do so would be a vast underestimation of his contributions and leadership. Adam Taylor emphasizes Grantham’s writings and also depicts him as a tireless minister who went about “preaching the gospel, founding churches, nursing them up to maturity, and setting in order the things that were wanting in London, at Norwich, at Lynn Regis, at Warboys, at Warwick, and various other distant places. . . .”¹¹⁸ Taylor’s litany accurately portrays the range of Grantham’s ministry, but it also conveys the sense that his ministry reflected writings, or vice versa. The remainder of this chapter briefly examines Grantham’s labors as a Messenger recorded in the local church books and General Assembly records.

Grantham’s writings are the primary sources for information regarding his ministry. Almost nothing is known of Grantham’s preaching since no manuscripts and few details of his sermons survive; still, it is highly likely that he preached on a regular basis.¹¹⁹ The little that can be gleaned from local church records and General Assembly minutes, however, suggests that he consistently labored to plant new churches, establish existing congregations by means of baptism and ordination, and support the office of Messenger at the national level.

Grantham played a key role in founding several General Baptist congregations in Lincolnshire and Norfolk during his career. We saw in the second chapter that prior to

¹¹⁷Grantham, *Hear the Church*, 20.

¹¹⁸Adam Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.211.

¹¹⁹The manuscript of a sermon on the promise of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:1 is included in *The Paedo-Baptist Apology* (n.p., 1671), 66-97. It is probably safe to assume that Grantham authored the sermon even though no information is given.

his ministry as a Messenger Grantham was instrumental in establishing a General Baptist congregation in the South Marsh area of Lincolnshire during the 1650s. He expended most of his efforts and energy in and around Lincolnshire, but it is of his church-planting activities while based in Norfolk that we know the most. Kershaw attributes Grantham's increased presence in the few extant church records after 1685 to the more tolerant regime of James II, which may have "allowed Grantham to minister fully as a messenger."¹²⁰

Upon his arrival in Norfolk around 1685/1686, Grantham worked to gather a Baptist church in Norwich. He also founded churches in Yarmouth (1686) and in King's Lynn (1689/90). At some point during these years he is also credited with starting a church at Smallburgh.¹²¹ Almost nothing is known of his activities in Yarmouth and Smallburgh, but the available information for Norwich and King's Lynn confirms that he provided important leadership as a General Baptist Messenger.¹²² It seems that one of Grantham's first goals as a church planter was to secure a permanent and stable meeting space. In Norwich, he gained long-term use of White Friars' Convent for worship and burial.¹²³ A similar strategy is evident in his work with James Marham in King's Lynn.

¹²⁰Robert Kershaw, "Baptised Believers: Lincolnshire Baptists in Times of Persecution, Revolution and Toleration, 1600–1700" (master's thesis, University of Nottingham, 1995), 34.

¹²¹Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.224. Jewson notes that the Smallburgh church was gathered "in the country round about North Walsham where there many Baptists who he might hope to bring to his way of thinking. . . ." (*The Baptists in Norfolk*, 32).

¹²²The text of a memorial erected in Norwich by Grantham's grandson, Grantham Killingworth, mentions that Grantham was "A learned messenger of the baptized churches, And pious founder of this church of believers baptized. . . ." For the full text of the memorial see APPENDIX B. The text is found also found in Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk*, 29.

¹²³John Kirkpatrick and Dawson Turner, eds., *History of the Religious Orders and Communities and of the Hospital and Castle of Norwich* (Yarmouth: C. Sloman, 1845), 150-95. See also, Francis Blomefield and Charles Parkin, eds., *History of Norwich*, vol. 4 of *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* (London, 1805), 416-23.

Marham, who had previously ministered in Spalding and planted churches in Holbeach and Walpole during the 1680s, made his way to King's Lynn after the death of his wife ca. 1689. A deliberate drift westward is evident in Marham's movements in these years, and there was no discernible General Baptist presence in King's Lynn before Marham's arrival. He quickly sought Grantham's assistance. Grantham preached "frequently in the Town-hall to numerous and attentive congregations," and the nascent congregation grew in size. Grantham thought it best to secure a place for public worship by obtaining a license to meet for worship.¹²⁴

Broadly speaking, Grantham's work to establish the congregation in King's Lynn resulted in a legitimate General Baptist presence in the three most populated areas of Norfolk: Norwich, Yarmouth, and King's Lynn. If Grantham was part of a concerted – but unrecorded – effort to establish General Baptist roots in Norfolk, the campaign seems to have been successful. In 1733 three of the four churches he took part in founding remained in direct touch with the General Assembly.¹²⁵ Thus, Grantham planted and established congregations in keeping with his self-defined role as a General Baptist Messenger.

The available records for Baptist churches in Bourne and Warboys confirm that Grantham remained active and influential as a Messenger in Lincolnshire after his departure for Norfolk. The records for the church in Bourne, Lincolnshire, record that Grantham participated in the ordination of Joseph Hooke as an Elder on 7 September

¹²⁴*The Lyn Persecution* (n.p., 1692/3), 7-11.

¹²⁵Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, lxiii. The original King's Lynn congregation was extinct by 1773 but had been revived by 1801.

1687.¹²⁶ Grantham, who is described as “Messenger of the Baptized Churches in Lincolnshire,” ordained Hooke “by Fasting and Prayer, with Laying on of Hands.”¹²⁷ Another entry, this one from 30 June 1688, includes a lengthy list of officers and members. Grantham’s name, followed by the title “Messenger,” heads the list.¹²⁸

The case of Joseph Hooke provides important insights into Grantham’s long-term influence where the office of Messenger was concerned. Hooke was ordained as an Elder in 1687. In 1695 the General Baptist churches in Lincolnshire formed an association to foster “mutual support and cooperation.”¹²⁹ At the first meeting they proposed to ordain Hooke to the office of Messenger, assuming his church at Bourne and Hackenby, the General Assembly, and Hooke himself were all amenable. All parties consented, and in September of 1696 Francis Stanley, a Messenger from Northamptonshire, ordained Hooke to the office of Messenger.¹³⁰ This episode reveals important details regarding the ordination process, which appears to have formalized by the end of the seventeenth century. Nicholson notes that the local association was responsible for starting the process, but everyone from the candidate to the General Assembly had to confirm the nomination.¹³¹

¹²⁶The entry can be found on page seven of the church book. The record was entered in 1720. For commentary, see F. J. Mason, “The Old Minute Book of Bourne Baptist Church,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 15, no. 5 (January 1954): 226.

¹²⁷See Mason, “The Old Minute Book of Bourne Baptist Church,” 226.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

¹²⁹Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.318. See also William T. Whitley, “Associational Life till 1815,” *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* (1916-17): 20.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 319.

¹³¹Nicholson, “The Office of ‘Messenger’ amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” 215.

In 1701 Hooke wrote *A Necessary Apology for the Baptized Believers* in response to attacks by William Eratt, a parish minister in Hatfield, Yorkshire.¹³² One of Hooke's primary goals in the treatise is to demonstrate that the baptized churches are, in fact, true churches. Hooke, like Grantham, appealed to the "Primitive Pattern" found in the scriptures of as normative.¹³³ Following a discussion of the primitive model of "free" and uncoerced fellowship, Hooke explains how the baptized churches "are not without a Ministry that is of Divine Authority."¹³⁴ He goes on to describe the tri-fold nature of General Baptist polity: Messengers, Elders, and Deacons.

Nicholson rightly notices that Hooke's justification of the Messenger's office "follows Grantham quite closely in claiming scriptural justification for a third order of ordained messengers."¹³⁵ Hooke, like Grantham, argues that the biblical witness requires that itinerate ministers, or Messengers, preach the gospel in remote locations, plant churches, set things in order, and defend the gospel.¹³⁶ Yet it seems that Grantham provided more than a methodology or model for exegesis, for when writing of the election of officers Hooke specifically cites *Christianismus Primitivus* and quotes the same passages from Leo and Dr. Field.¹³⁷ In fact, Hooke's justification of the office of

¹³²Joseph Hooke, *A Necessary Apology for the Baptized Believers* (London: Printed by R. Tookey, 1701). William Eratt had attacked the Baptists in *Anabaptism considered Wherein the chief objections of that sect against infant-baptism, and the manner of baptizing by aspersion, or sprinkling, are fairly stated and answered*. . . . (London: Printed by W. B., 1700).

¹³³Hooke, *A Necessary Apology for the Baptized Believers*, 76.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, 77.

¹³⁵Nicholson, "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 219.

¹³⁶ Hooke, *A Necessary Apology for the Baptized Believers*, 80.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 86-87. The same quotations are found in *Christianismus Primitivus*, 2.130.

Messenger is in many ways a paraphrase of Grantham's own work some twenty years earlier.

Hooke's dependence on Grantham illustrates well the latter's literary and personal impact on the developing office of Messenger among the General Baptists. Not only did Grantham fulfill the role of Messenger when he ordained Hooke as an Elder in 1687, but Grantham's justification of the office served as a template and source for defending it against opponents in the early eighteenth century.

In 1688 Grantham was also in Warboys, Cambridgeshire, where he baptized Richard Read and Susan Homes. The church book curiously describes Grantham as an "Elder of the church, according to the primitive practice of the apostles."¹³⁸ This appears to be a common practice in the Warboys records, and it is not clear that the records distinguish between "Messengers" and "Elders." John Denn and Edmund Mayle, both of whom were Elders of the Fenstanton congregation, ordained officers at Warboys and are labeled "Elders" in 1655 and 1684 entries from the Warboys minutes.¹³⁹ Regardless of the exact meaning of "Elder" in the Warboys records, the congregation evidently valued Grantham's presence and recognized his authority to baptize.

The minutes of the General Assembly from 1689 and 1691 also confirm and elucidate Grantham's importance as a Messenger in the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1689 the proceedings of the General Assembly were "Digested & written by Thomas Grantham."¹⁴⁰ An important issue related to the office of Messenger appears in

¹³⁸Underhill, *Records of the Churches of Christ gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644-1720*, 1.282.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁴⁰Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.28.

the minutes. No particular speakers are mentioned by name, but as a Messenger Grantham likely participated in the discussions. First, there was some question regarding those ordained as Elders of particular congregations could later be ordained as Messengers. The Assembly, citing precedent, agreed that it was advisable to continue to allow Elders to be ordained to the office of Messenger, with the understanding that each office must have its own ordination. Thus, it was decided that for an Elder to be ordained to the office of Messenger required a second and unique ordination.¹⁴¹ Grantham's own ministry contributed to the pattern of distinct ordinations for distinct offices. In 1656 he was ordained "to the office of presbyter, to take the oversight of a small congregation"¹⁴² by the South Marsh church, and then in 1666 he was "ordained to the office of a Messenger by those who were in the same office before me."¹⁴³ Based on Grantham's own history with ordination, it seems plausible that he would have supported arguments in favor of unique and distinct ordinations for all three ministerial offices.

Grantham was not present for the 1691 General Assembly in London, but his name appears twice in the minutes. The first reference is the acceptance of Grantham's comments on the *Standard Confession* (1660) in *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678).¹⁴⁴ It is also recorded that Nathan Foxwell was sent from Canterbury to Norwich in order to

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²See Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 11 June 1691.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴See Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.30. For Grantham's proof-texts and brief explanations in *Christianismus Primitivus* see Book 4, pages 152-70. The General Assembly elected to republish the confession in 1691; Grantham's comment on the third article was included in the text.

“Assist Bror. Grantham in the Ministerial work of the Gospel.”¹⁴⁵ Grantham’s death in 1692 apparently left a rather involved and large ministry to Foxwell, for the 1693 General Assembly granted Foxwell’s request for assistance.¹⁴⁶

Finally, the 1691 minutes also reveal that a decision had been made in 1687 to provide monetary support for traveling ministers. The General Assembly affirmed the decision and agreed that “there be a Collection in all the Churches” for the support of the Messengers.¹⁴⁷ Thus, by the time of Grantham’s death in 1692 the office of Messenger was firmly established as an important ministry among the General Baptists with a primary emphasis on planting and establishing churches.

The Office of Messenger in the Eighteenth Century

Whitley has noted that the scripturalness, necessity, and permanence of the Messenger’s office became widely accepted among the General Baptists during Grantham’s lifetime, but the office continued to evolve and change in the decades following Grantham’s death.¹⁴⁸ By the end of the eighteenth century, evangelism, which was perhaps the cardinal task of the office in the seventeenth century, had gradually disappeared as a task of the Messenger. Instead of working to plant new churches, Messengers increasingly acted as superintendents of existing congregations. The causes for such a shift are not altogether clear, but Nicholson and Whitley do identify several factors.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 31.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 39.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 31.

¹⁴⁸Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.xxix.

First, Nicholson identifies developments in the Messengers' appointment and duties as important factors in the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁹ In Grantham's own ministry and writings it is clear that local congregations and associations were ordinarily responsible for identifying and ordaining Messengers. Nicholson has shown that the consent of local associations was paramount, and not all associations or congregations were necessarily willing to release capable and gifted Elders to become Messengers.¹⁵⁰ In Lincolnshire the congregation at Monksthorpe and Burgh repeatedly refused to allow the Lincolnshire association to ordain its pastor, John Hursthouse, to the office of Messenger.¹⁵¹ One can only wonder how Grantham's departure for Norfolk in the 1680s may have impacted sentiments within the Lincolnshire association with regard to the appointment or release of future Messengers. After all, Grantham was a well-known and nearly irreplaceable Messenger in Lincolnshire at the time of his departure for Norfolk.

Rodney Ambler finds that the strong ministry of the Messengers in the second half of the seventeenth century was directly related to the level of inter-congregational cooperation and effort.¹⁵² Reluctance to release Elders at the local level may have played some part in an apparent dearth of Messengers among the General Baptists in the 1700s. The recorded minutes of the General Assembly reveal that the Assembly issued frequent requests to the local associations for more Messengers and additional money to support

¹⁴⁹Nicholson, "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 215-16.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁵¹Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 2.106.

¹⁵²Rodney W. Ambler, "Place and Structure: Lincolnshire General Baptists in the Seventeenth Century," in *La christianisation des campagnes*, eds. J. P. Massaut and M. E. Henneau (Rome: Brepols Publishers, 1996), 417-18.

them between 1709 and 1767.¹⁵³ The abundance of appeals may be a sign that local associations slowly relinquished the responsibility to appoint Messengers, yet it may also have been the case that the paucity of Messengers indicates that there was an absence of desire or vision for evangelism on the part of local congregations and associations.

A sermon preached by William Evershed at an ordination service for Messengers in Canterbury in 1783 illustrates well the move away from evangelism as a primary duty of the Messenger.¹⁵⁴ In an appendix to the published sermon, Evershed describes the Messenger's "proper work and business" as regulation of existing congregations, but denied that evangelism and church planting were the "peculiar work and business" of apostles or messengers.¹⁵⁵ Instead, the Messenger's specific tasks center on visiting congregations to set things in order and to ordain Elders.

Messengers certainly played a valuable role in General Baptist life throughout the eighteenth century, though their specific duties evidently contracted to the point of visiting churches and ordaining Elders. Nicholson concludes that waning passion for evangelism was one signal of the spiritual decline of the General Baptist in the early decades of the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁶ It is ironic that the New Connection of General Baptists, which formed in 1770, embodied an evangelistic energy comparable to that of the Messengers of the seventeenth century, yet disagreement over the office of

¹⁵³Nicholson, "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 216-17. See also Rodney W. Ambler, "Church, Place and Organization: The Development of the New Connexion General Baptists in Lincolnshire, 1770-1891," *Baptist Quarterly* 37, no. 5 (January 1998): 238-39.

¹⁵⁴Both Nicholson ("The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 220) and Leonard (*Baptist Ways*, 56) point to Evershed's sermon and appendix as an example of development in the messenger's office in the eighteenth century.

¹⁵⁵William Evershed, *The Messengers Mission* (London: Printed by J. Brown, 1783), 25-26.

¹⁵⁶Nicholson, "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 221-22.

Messenger itself was among the issues which prevented full communion among the various General Baptist factions at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁷

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the two primary ways in which Thomas Grantham helped establish the office of Messenger between 1660 and 1700. Nicholson is correct to identify Grantham's writings as a key source for information on the office of Messenger from 1660 to 1692. During the 1670s Grantham published articulate and biblically-supported defenses of the office of Messenger, and his justifications remained important into the eighteenth century. In his writings Grantham outlined a three-fold task for the Messenger: 1) preach the gospel, 2) teach and strengthen churches, and 3) defend the gospel against attacks. His contributions were not merely literary; in many ways his ministry as a Messenger reflected the very essence of the office he defended. In continuity with the first two tasks, he preached, baptized, planted churches, and ordained ministers. Thus, Grantham's writings and ministry provided important leadership as he worked to legitimize the office of Messenger among the General Baptists.

Grantham also expended considerable energy fulfilling the third task of the Messenger: defending the gospel against attacks. The context of many of Grantham's publications confirms that General Baptists in Lincolnshire and Norfolk saw in Grantham a capable defender of the baptized churches' theology and ecclesiology. The next chapter illustrates how Grantham's apologetic interaction with Quakers, Presbyterians, Catholics,

¹⁵⁷See Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 2.183; and Nicholson, "The Office of 'Messenger' amongst British Baptists in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 221.

and Anglicans was an outgrowth of the office he tirelessly labored to establish and a defense of the vision proclaimed by the baptized churches.

CHAPTER FOUR

Grantham the Apologist

Christopher Hill has noted that in seventeenth-century England the lines separating one religious group from another were “much more blurred” than we might imagine.¹ Hill has in mind the intersection of the various religious radicals of the 1640s and 1650s. Accepting that many religionists may have shifted allegiances frequently during this period should not, however, be taken to mean that lines were not already forming. Following his baptism as a teenager in the late 1650s, for example, Thomas Grantham sought to join a congregation which adhered to the six “foundation principles” in Heb. 6:1-2.² Grantham’s fidelity to those principles never wavered as he worked among the Baptists until his death in 1692. For Grantham, the Baptized churches proclaimed and embodied a distinct and singularly authentic vision of the church.

Chapter three analyzed Grantham’s defense of the peripatetic ministry of General Baptist Messengers, whose four-fold task included preaching the gospel in all places, teaching and governing the churches, defending the gospel against attacks, and assisting pastors in resisting those who would usurp authority. As a Messenger, Grantham was not only about the business of preaching the gospel and planting churches in Lincolnshire and Norfolk; he was also called upon to defend the Baptized churches against what were considered to be false teachings. Grantham questioned the theological and

¹Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 14.

²Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 21 April 1691, Letters to Thomas Grantham, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

ecclesiological tenets of Anglicans, Catholics, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists.

This chapter will demonstrate that Grantham's work as an apologist fostered a sense of unity and legitimacy among the General Baptist congregations in the seventeenth century. Grantham's reputation as a capable and informed spokesperson often resulted in invitations to speak on behalf of Baptist congregations in local debates and disputes. A survey of select public disputes and correspondence highlights the significance of Grantham's labors as an apologist for the baptized believers in Lincolnshire and Norfolk. The following examination, therefore, focuses on four of Grantham's disputes with various religious opponents: 1) Grantham vs. William Fort of the Church of England (public debate); 2) Grantham vs. an unnamed Catholic (published correspondence); 3) Grantham vs. John Whitehead the Quaker (public debate); and 4) Grantham vs. John Collinges the Presbyterian (published correspondence). Each section will discuss the background of Grantham's interaction with his opponent, outline the content of the discourse, and attempt to draw conclusions concerning the immediate impact of Grantham's involvement. A summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

Before moving on, it is necessary to say a word regarding the nature of public disputes and debates in seventeenth-century England. Public disputes seem to have been a popular forum for expressing religious differences during this period.³ The pattern typically consisted of an invitation to debate publicly, to which the named opponent

³Jesse Plumb, "Early Nonconformity in Lincolnshire" (master's thesis, University of Sheffield, 1940), 170.

would respond with acceptance or refusal.⁴ More than a hundred of these disputations occurred in the seventeenth century in numerous locations; at least three such public debates occurred in Lincolnshire during this period, all of which involved Grantham.⁵ The first was a contest between Grantham and an unnamed Catholic in 1662.⁶ The second was a series of debates between Grantham and Whitehead sometime before November 1672. The third dispute occurred at Blyton, Lincolnshire in 1673 and involved the Anglican clergyman William Fort.⁷

Grantham vs. William Fort of the Church of England

Background of the Debate

A considerable portion of Grantham's writings addresses differences with the established Church of England.⁸ Grantham writes of the necessity for baptized believers

⁴One could obviously ignore an invitation. Robert Wright and William Silverton apparently ignored Grantham's invitation to a public disputation in 1670. See Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1739), 2.242-43.

⁵Ibid. Plumb only notes two debates, but as will be seen below, Grantham had several debates with the Quaker John Whitehead in Lincolnshire. Baptists were apparently involved in debates in New England also. In 1673 a pamphlet entitled *Mr. Baxter Baptized in Blood* was published in England which alleged that Baptists in Boston, New England, had killed the Anglican minister Josiah Baxter because he had triumphed in a debate. A anonymous response from the Baptists in England soon appeared denying the charges, *Forgery detected and innocency vindicated being a faithful account of the seasonable discovery of an horrid and detectible slander raised on the Anabaptists of New-England, in the diabolical pamphlet entituled, Mr. Baxter baptized in blood, designing so maliciously the reproach and exposure of all under that denomination* (London: Printed by J. D., 1673).

⁶Grantham published excerpts from this "contest" as *The Baptist against the Papist* (London: n.p., 1663). This dispute will be addressed in more detail in section two of this chapter. Grantham returned to the debate some years later when he published *Hear the Church Or, An Appeal to the Mother of us All* (London, 1687).

⁷Grantham recounts the context and content of the debate in *A Religious Contest* (London, 1674).

⁸No less than eight of Grantham's more than twenty published manuscripts specifically address differences with the Church of England: *The Prisoner Against the Prelate* (n.p., 1662); *The Paedo-Baptists Apology* (n.p., 1671); *A Religious Contest* (n.p., 1674); *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1678); *A Friendly Epistle* (London, 1680); *The Second Part of the Apology* (London, 1684); *The Baptists Complaint*

to separate from the established church in the Epistle Dedicatory for *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678): 1) the church “requires of us, as a condition of her Communion, an acknowledgment and profession of that for a Truth, which we know to be an Error;” and 2) “she requires of us, as a condition of her Communion, the joining with her of some Practices, which we know to be against the Law of God.”⁹ In light of these disagreements, Grantham claims it is the “duty” of dissenting believers to withdraw obedience from the Church of England.¹⁰ Such strong sentiments did not equate to an outright rejection of all things Anglican, for as late as 1691 Grantham could write of his “love” for the Church of England and its articles of faith.¹¹ Such language could imply that a gradual rapprochement with the Church of England is evident in Grantham’s ministry.

George Southcombe argues that Grantham did, in fact, reach an “accommodation” with some clergymen in the Church of England, and identifies the publication of *A Friendly Epistle to the Bishops* in 1680 and the friendship with John Connould of Norwich in 1691 as evidence of a gradual transformation.¹² In addition, Southcombe finds that the process of accommodation began in the early 1670s when Grantham began to exhibit signs of a growing “irenic temperament.”¹³ Absent from Southcombe’s

against the Persecuting Priests (no longer extant, 1685); and *Truth and Peace* (1689). There is also the collection of unpublished letters written to John Connould in 1691.

⁹Thomas Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, The Epistle Dedicatory.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 17 April 1691.

¹²George Southcombe, “The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England” (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2005), vi-viii. See also 194ff. for additional discussion of *A Friendly Epistle* and the relationship with Connould.

¹³Ibid., vi-vii.

analysis is a discussion of an episode which supports his thesis: Grantham's debate with William Fort at Blyton in 1673. As will be seen below, the circumstances and content of this debate reveal that Grantham – and those Baptists whom he represented in the debate – were communicative with members of the Church of England.

Knowledge of the debate and its context come to us by way of Grantham's own account of the events, which he published as *A Religious Contest* in 1674. Grantham writes that prior to 18 September 1673, William Fort, a parish minister in Blyton, Lincolnshire repeatedly appeared at the meetings of “a small remnant of baptized Christians” and attempted to “hinder their proceedings.”¹⁴ Fort's actions impeded the ability of the baptized believers to “edify one another” according to their custom, and he insisted that they disperse and cease gathering in Blyton for the purpose of worship.¹⁵

The small group of Baptists resisted pressures to disband, but their attempts to maintain their innocence and articulate their beliefs failed. Fort “slighted” their arguments and asked that they find someone suitable for debate, someone who “understood the Languages, and knew Logick. . . .”¹⁶ They replied that there were few among them capable of conversing about such matters. Fort continued to press the congregation for a public debate until it finally consented. Fort himself organized the

¹⁴Thomas Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, Epistle to the Reader. The *ODNB* mistakenly claims that Fort was a Quaker (Oscar C. Burdick, “Grantham, Thomas [1633/4-1692],” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11298?docPos=2> [accessed 3 September 2008]).

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

meeting and secured the meeting space since the Baptists had no adequate space for a public discourse.¹⁷

It is unclear how Grantham came to be involved in the Blyton affair, though it is likely that the small congregation sought Grantham's help in the matter. This would have been natural given Grantham's activities in the early 1670s. The appearance of *The Paedo-Baptist Apology* in 1671 exhibited Grantham's willingness to challenge the established church's treatment of the Baptists and infant baptism. In *The Paedo-Baptist Apology* Grantham describes the "unkind usages which the Baptized Churches have received from the Paedo-Baptists, by violently dispersing their Assemblies, by defacing and taking away their meeting places, by imprisoning their persons seizing and wasting their estates, by injuring them in their trade by means of excommunications . . . and penal proceedings. . . ."¹⁸ Grantham never specifies where these tumults occurred, but the context was not unlike that in Blyton in 1673. Grantham's debating skills were also on display against the Quaker John Whitehead in Sleaford in 1672. Grantham's reputation may also have been enhanced when he was granted a government license as a Baptist preacher in February of 1673.¹⁹ It seems plausible, based on these factors, that the Blyton congregation would have had good reason to seek Grantham's assistance when confronted with a knowledgeable and educated opponent such as William Fort.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Thomas Grantham, *The Paedo-Baptist Apology*, The Epistle to the Reader.

¹⁹See George L. Turner's *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1911-1914), 3.58. See Chapter Five below for additional information.

The Debate

On 18 September 1673 William Fort, Mr. Wright, another unnamed Anglican minister from Blyton, and a number of local townspeople congregated in the designated meeting place for the debate with Thomas Grantham. Grantham's account of the proceedings is based upon his own recollection, but he assures the reader that he has reproduced the "substance" of the arguments.²⁰ Grantham claims that he has "rendred rather more advantageous" Fort's own arguments in the published document, though exactly how he has done so is unclear.²¹ Thus, one must approach Grantham's presentation of Fort's positions with a healthy suspicion, yet there is little reason to doubt that Grantham accurately represented the general contours of the dispute.²²

There was apparently some confusion at the outset regarding the topics for debate. Fort assumed Grantham intended to defend the Baptists against charges that "their meetings are unlawful . . . their way of Anabaptism is sinful, And . . . that our way of baptizing Infants is lawful."²³ Grantham, however, had not been informed that the lawfulness of "our Meetings" was to be the subject of the debate.²⁴ In light of the oversight, Fort graciously limited the scope of the debate to two principal issues: 1) the mode of baptizing in the Church of England and 2) the baptism of infants.

²⁰Grantham, *The Paedo-Baptist Apology*, The Epistle to the Reader.

²¹Ibid.

²²I can find no published rebuttal contesting the accuracy of Grantham's representation of the debate.

²³Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, 1.

²⁴Ibid., 2.

Grantham began by presenting seven arguments against the Anglican baptismal mode and seven arguments against baptizing infants. Grantham's critiques of the prevailing baptismal mode in the Church of England can be outlined as follows²⁵:

1. Scripture does not support sprinkling or making the sign of the cross as legitimate forms of baptism.
2. The Anglican mode of baptism ridicules the example of the Jesus and the apostles.
3. The Anglican mode of baptism "brings unavoidable confusion into the Church" because there is no reason to sprinkle water on the head as opposed to the foot, chest, or back.²⁶
4. Similar to argument three, baptizing only one part of the body leads the new convert to question whether he or she has done the will of God.²⁷
5. Anglican baptism does not adequately signify that which it represents: complete burial with Christ.
6. Anglican baptismal practices do not conform sufficiently to the meaning of the Greek word βαπτίζω.
7. The Anglican mode of baptism "was innovated long after the institution of baptism."²⁸

At least two important themes emerge in this initial round of the debate. First, Grantham makes the case that the Anglican practices of sprinkling and making the sign of the cross are illegitimate. In the course of responding to Grantham's first point, Fort voluntarily confesses that sprinkling does not constitute true baptism. It is unclear why Fort would admit this opinion in public, but the ensuing dialogue shows that he was forthcoming about his beliefs and practices. For example, he claims that not once "did I ever sprinkle any in all my life."²⁹ At this point Grantham calls attention to the *Book of*

²⁵The arguments summarized below are found on pages 2-10 of *A Religious Contest*.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷Grantham's point here is that since scripture does not identify a particular body to be baptized, a baptismal candidate can seriously doubt that it is God's will to sprinkle the head as opposed to any other body part. Therefore, sprinkling should not be considered a legitimate mode of baptism.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 9.

²⁹Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, 3.

Common Prayer, where there are instructions “to sprinkle and cross the infant.”³⁰ Fort grants that the “old” edition did include the word “sprinkle,” but does point out that the disputed word was removed when the “new” edition was published.³¹ Grantham and Fort agree in principle that the practices of sprinkling and making the sign of the cross have no place in baptism. Having secured the point, Grantham proceeds to point out that sprinkling is a common practice in other parishes. Grantham’s aim, then, is to demonstrate that the Church of England includes large numbers of people who, by virtue of being sprinkled, have no real baptism.

Second, Fort had asked the small Baptist congregation to find a capable debater. Grantham did not disappoint. It is clear from his opening arguments that he had acquired considerable debate skills. Grantham capably crafted his arguments according to the popular syllogistic model: a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.³² The second argument provides a good example³³:

1. **Major Premise:** “That which renders the practice of Christ and his Apostles superfluous and ridiculous is not the right way of baptizing. . . .”
2. **Minor Premise:** “. . . But your pretended way of Baptising renders the practice of Christ and his Disciples superfluous, or ridiculous. . . .”
3. **Conclusion:** “. . . Ergo. Your way of Baptising is not the right way of Baptising.”

Each of Grantham’s fourteen arguments conforms to this model.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹This is a rather curious exchange. One looks in vain for any baptismal reference to “sprinkle” in the 1549, 1552, 1559, and 1662 versions of *The Book of Common Prayer*. All four editions allow for dipping or pouring, depending on the health of the infant.

³²For a discussion of syllogisms in logic and disputes, see Alexander Broadie, *Introduction to Medieval Logic* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1987), 124ff.

³³Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, 4-5.

It is important to point out that the assumption behind syllogistic disputes is that the major premise is correct, which means the opponent must confirm or deny the minor premise. Grantham understood that the weight of the argument rested on the minor premise. So, when Fort denied the minor premise in the syllogism above, Grantham was aware of his own responsibility to “evince” the premise with a “demonstration.”³⁴ Grantham demonstrates his point by appealing to the example of Jesus and John the Baptist, who baptized with “much water,” while the Church of England simply dips the fingers or hand in a little water.³⁵ Grantham’s understanding of the disputation method is even more apparent when we turn to his second set of arguments.

In the second stage of the debate Grantham offered seven reasons that infants should not be baptized. They are as follows³⁶:

1. The scriptures do not show that infants should be baptized.
2. Only those who claim to be disciples of Jesus are to be baptized.
3. Infants are not among those whose duty it is to be “born again of water and of the Spirit,” and therefore should not be baptized.³⁷
4. Faith and repentance are not required of infants, therefore they should not be baptized.
5. “All that ought to be buried with Christ in Baptism, ought first to be dead with him from the rudiments of the world. Infants ought not to be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. Ergo, Infants ought not to be baptized.”³⁸
6. Neither Jesus nor the apostles baptized infants.³⁹

³⁴Ibid., 5.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶The arguments summarized below are found on pages 10-16 of *A Religious Contest*.

³⁷Ibid., 12.

³⁸Ibid., 14.

³⁹Baptists may have rejected infant baptism, but they were not necessarily opposed to dedicating young children. Michael J. Walker argued that Grantham’s comment in *Christianismus Primitivus* (2.6) could be taken as an allusion to a distinct child dedication service based on the example of Jesus (“Baptist Theology of Infancy in the 17th Century,” *Baptist Quarterly* 21, no. 6 [April 1966]: 250). See also Richard A. Underwood, “Child Dedication Services among British Baptists in the Seventeenth Century,” *Baptist Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (October 1969): 164-69.

7. Infants are unable to worship God in spirit and truth, therefore they should not be baptized.

Grantham's arguments against infant baptism in this debate appear to be standard seventeenth-century Baptist boilerplate. It is beyond the scope of this study to probe every facet of Grantham's baptismal theology. By 1671 his own thoughts had been shaped by authors such as Henry Denne (d. 1666) and John Tombes (d. 1676), whom he described as producers of the "learned works of those of our way."⁴⁰ Grantham pointed the interested reader specifically to Denne's *ANTICHRIST Unmasked* (1645) and Tombes's three-volume tome, *Antipaedobaptism* (1652–57), as valuable sources in the struggle against infant baptism. Grantham's commendation of Denne and Tombes suggests that the authors' writings and arguments were held in high esteem among the Baptists during the reign of Charles II.

A comparison of Grantham's arguments with those provided by Denne and Tombes reveals that the former's approach to questions regarding the legitimacy of infant baptism was shaped by the latter. One example of this influence is found in Grantham's argument that the "water and spirit" baptism does not apply to infants. Grantham insists that baptismal candidates must be able to provide a "demonstration" that they have been reborn of the Spirit.⁴¹ Henry Denne had argued quite similarly in a 1645 debate with the Anglican minister Dr. Daniel Featley that "faith (whose object is remission of sin in Jesus

⁴⁰Grantham, *The Paedo-Baptist Apology*, The Epistle to the Reader. Tombes was especially influential for many early paedobaptist opponents. For a discussion of Tombes's positions on infant baptism, see Michael T. Renihan, *Antipaedobaptism in the Thought of John Tombes* (Auburn, MA: B&R Press, 2001). As Renihan notes on page 70ff., Tombes also used syllogisms when arguing against infant baptism.

⁴¹Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, 13.

Christ) is required in persons to be baptized.”⁴² Tombes also contended that “the person baptized is supposed to be born again, to be a repenting and believing person afore he is baptized.”⁴³

Emphasis on being “buried with Christ in baptism” is another example of common imagery employed by early Baptists. In 1652 Tombes rhetorically asked: “What resemblance of our burial or resurrection with Christ is there in sprinkling?”⁴⁴ The complete and total nature of burial, Tombes suggests, demands an equally all-consuming mode of baptism. Grantham builds on the burial imagery when he argues that since infants are not spiritually dead they should not be buried spiritually in baptism. Illustrating Grantham’s reliance on established Baptist arguments for believer’s baptism by immersion is important for the purposes of this study because it provides valuable insight into the nature of his leadership. That Grantham articulated standard arguments against infant baptism underscores the way in which he incorporated established Baptist arguments into his own apologetic disputes. In so doing, Grantham was – perhaps unknowingly – legitimating and solidifying Baptist baptismal theology in the public sphere.

Also in this second stage of the debate we find Grantham’s knowledge of the laws of disputation on full display. On at least three occasions Grantham accuses Fort of violating the accepted rules of disputation. The first instance involved Fort’s objection to the premise that the scriptures do not show that infants should be baptized. The claim in

⁴²Henry Denne, *ANTICHRIST Unmasked* (n. p., 1645), 16.

⁴³John Tombes, *Anti-paedobaptism, or, The second part of the full review of the dispute concerning infant-baptism in which the invalidity of arguments* (London: Henry Hills, 1654), 214-21.

⁴⁴John Tombes, *An Addition to the Apology* (London: Henry Hills, 1652), 36.

question is Grantham's minor premise in the following syllogism: "Holy Scripture doth shew who are to be baptised, Holy Scripture doth not shew that Infants ought to be baptised. Ergo, Infants ought not to be baptised."⁴⁵ In reaction to this syllogism Fort proclaims that he can prove "that Infants ought to be baptised, from Mat. 28.19."⁴⁶ Understanding that Fort is technically prohibited from arguing a point, Grantham complains: "Sir, you mistake your place, for you are not now to prove, but to answer me. . . . You do violate the Law of disputing for being my respondent you ought not to argue. . . ."⁴⁷ Grantham's account of the debate does not include Fort's reaction to the correction.

The second violation of protocol also occurs in the argument over whether the scriptures teach that infants should be baptized. Fort again states his intention to "prove that infants ought to be baptised as being disciples from Acts 15."⁴⁸ At this, Grantham again notes the mistake: "Sir, I marvel you should no better observe the Law of disputing which must hold you to, and the rather because you were pleased to glory so much over your poor Neighbours because of your skill in Logick. . . ."⁴⁹ Is there a hint of sarcasm in this rebuttal? Perhaps, but Grantham certainly calls to mind the fact that Fort initiated this debate and requested a capable opponent.

Fort's third and final misstep again highlights Grantham's skill in syllogistic debate. The disagreement occurred after Grantham put forth the following syllogism

⁴⁵Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, 10.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 11.

⁴⁹Ibid.

(argument five above): “All that ought to be buried with Christ in Baptism, ought first to be dead with him from the rudiments of the world. Infants ought not to be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. Ergo, Infants ought not to be baptized.”⁵⁰ Fort’s denial of the conclusion prompted a rather blunt reply from Grantham: “No Sir, you cannot deny the consequence in a Categorical syllogism, so that you must either distinguish, or deny one of the propositions.”⁵¹ Here again Grantham proves his mettle as a disputant. That Fort chose to deny the major premise is perhaps less important than his acquiescence to Grantham’s correction. It is noteworthy that Grantham, a Baptist with no formal or classic education, was familiar enough with the laws of disputation to oppose and correct an Anglican clergyman in a formal debate.

In the final stage of the debate Fort presented two syllogistic arguments in support of his claim that “our way of baptizing [is] the right way of baptizing, and that Infants ought to be baptised.”⁵² His first argument addressed the Anglican mode of baptism⁵³:

1. **Main Premise:** If the Anglican mode of baptism signifies that which should be signified, then it is correct.
2. **Minor Premise:** The Anglican mode of baptism signifies all that should be signified in baptism.
3. **Conclusion:** The Anglican mode of baptism is correct.

Debate on this argument was fairly brief. Fort holds that the Greek word βαπτίζω means to wash something or someone, and so the Anglican form of baptism signifies the washing away of sins. Grantham denies Fort’s minor point and contends that there is no scriptural evidence that Greek word βαπτίζω, when used in the context of baptism,

⁵⁰Ibid., 14.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., 16.

⁵³Ibid., 17.

implies washing the forehead. It is with Fort's second argument, however, that Grantham takes considerable offense.

The dialogue which ensued as a result of the second argument may, more than any other dialogue, underscore the distance between the disputants. Fort argued⁵⁴:

1. **Main Premise:** If infants are included in the covenant of grace, they should be sealed with appropriate seal of that covenant: baptism.
2. **Minor Premise:** Infants are included in the covenant of grace and therefore should be sealed.
3. **Conclusion:** Infants should be baptized.

Grantham's initial response was to seek clarification on the number and nature of the seals of the covenant of grace. Fort identified two seals: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Upon hearing this, Grantham denied the minor premise by pointing to what he considers to be an Anglican inconsistency: allowing infants access to one seal (i.e., baptism) while denying them access to the other (the Lord's Supper). Fort defended the restriction by pointing Grantham to the requirement that Christians examine themselves before partaking of the elements.⁵⁵ Grantham conceded that self-examination is a requirement but also spoke of repentance as a requirement for baptism in Acts 2:38.⁵⁶ According to Grantham's logic, both requirements are binding on infants or neither requirement is binding; he could not understand how infants could be capable of one and not the other. For Grantham, it appears to be a matter of ability and responsibility. Interestingly, by 1678 Grantham could affirm that the children of members of the visible church are "related to the visible church," but he in no way suggests infants should be "brought to

⁵⁴Ibid., 18.

⁵⁵I Cor. 11:28.

⁵⁶Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, 18.

particular duties of the New Covenant.”⁵⁷ Again, infants are incapable and unable to bear the weight of responsibility which is demanded of adults.

The debate concluded on a rather friendly note. Grantham called for both sides to “maintain the great duty of Charitie towards each other, till God shall rectifie our judgements in these things.”⁵⁸ Mr. Wright, who earlier in the debate expressed anger at Grantham’s lengthy arguments, expressed similar sentiments and urged all “to walk in love one towards another.”⁵⁹ So the meeting dissolved with neither side convinced by the other’s arguments, but all “went away in peace.”⁶⁰

Results and Conclusions

The debate on 18 September evidently left Fort and Wright with additional questions for the Baptists. So, the next day the two clergymen appeared again at the Baptist meeting and “in a very civil manner” questioned the authority by which the Baptists preached. Fort and Wright assumed that Baptists had no ordination or formal call to preach, but the Baptists reported that they only recognized ministers who had been elected, ordained, and had received the imposition of hands “by the Presbiterie, Bishops, and overseers of the Church.”⁶¹ Grantham writes that they debated for some thirty

⁵⁷Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 2.6. Walker describes the difference in terms of “status” versus “service,” “Baptist Theology of Infancy in the 17th Century,” 248.

⁵⁸Grantham, *A Religious Contest*, 20.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

minutes “in friendly discourse . . . but not agreeing in our expositions . . .” before “. . . Mr. Fort took his leave and we proceeded in our work.”⁶²

A close examination of Grantham’s debate with Fort at Blyton in 1673 reveals that Grantham’s leadership averted an impending crisis in the life of the small Baptist congregation. Furthermore, it is a reminder that Baptists were often subjected to the whims of local leaders. Prior to Grantham’s arrival the small Baptist congregation was being harassed by local ministers of the established church and was on the verge of suppression. This situation implies that the congregation did not meet secretly and that the place of worship was no secret. There is no suggestion that Fort threatened legal action beyond suppressing Baptist meetings. Thus, Grantham’s presence and participation in the debate secured for the congregation the opportunity to continue its work of edification and worship. Moreover, it seems that Grantham’s theological arguments, which he capably expressed in syllogistic terms, persuaded clergymen of the established church that the Baptists should not be harassed or suppressed further. Understanding and tolerance, if not agreement, prevailed in Blyton.

When Grantham published his account of the Blyton debate in 1674, he directed The Epistle Dedicatory to William Fort and the other Anglicans who attended the debate. There is an overriding irenic tone to the dedicatory which is expressed in three recommendations for ecclesial reconciliation. First, Grantham laments that “we who differ not about the Godhead, should at all differ about things which pertain to his blessed Service.”⁶³ He then commends the Church of England for its reformation of the Eucharist and encourages it to look with more “diligence” at the institution of baptism.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., The Epistle Dedicatory.

Second, Grantham draws attention to the significant common ground that exists between the two parties where the “Thirty-Nine Articles” are concerned, but he suggests that the three or four articles over which they disagree be removed. Finally, he calls for a conference between Anglican Bishops and Baptist Bishops and Pastors for the purpose achieving “brotherly concord.”⁶⁴ That Grantham’s proposals for union in 1674 are strikingly similar to those outlined six years later in *A Friendly Epistle* lends additional support to Southcombe’s accommodation thesis. While Southcombe rightfully finds evidence of an irenic position in 1680, *A Religious Contest* suggests that Grantham’s irenic trajectory was apparent and established as early 1674.⁶⁵

Grantham vs. an “Unnamed Papist”

Background of the Correspondence

In late 1662 Charles II issued a Declaration of Indulgence in order to secure religious tolerance for all Nonconformists, even Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics, however, were among the most feared and loathed of any of nonconforming Christians in seventeenth-century England.⁶⁶ Charles II under-estimated the anti-Catholic sentiments in the country and his effort was rejected by Parliament in 1663.⁶⁷ In reality, to be

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵See Southcombe, “The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England,” 194-98.

⁶⁶For a discussion of the development of anti-Catholic sentiments, see John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England 1660-1688* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 67-90.

⁶⁷A similar series of events would transpire in 1672-73 when Charles II again enacted a Declaration of Indulgence.

labeled a “Papist” was perhaps worse than being branded an “Anabaptist.”⁶⁸ Some in England played on common fears of Catholicism to further their own interests; thus painting one’s opponent in a “papist” light was not an uncommon strategy in local disputes. In 1659 the Quaker George Whitehead was accused of being a papist for refusing to take oaths. The Baptist Henry Denne, though not opposed to oaths himself, defended Whitehead and claimed that refusal of oath-taking was not a clear sign of papist sympathies.⁶⁹ Just a few years later in 1662, Thomas Grantham was accused of being a Jesuit while imprisoned in the Lincoln jail. The accusation was apparently an “ordinary aspersion” thrown at Baptists.⁷⁰

The conversion of a Nonconformist like Robert Everard to the Roman church, however, is a reminder that alleged “papism” was not always fabricated as a smear tactic. Everard, who had achieved the rank of Captain in the New Model Army and was a well-known General Baptist author in the 1650s, underwent a conversion to the Roman Catholic faith sometime in the early 1660s.⁷¹ Everard published *An Epistle to the Several Congregations of the Non-Conformists* in 1664 as an account of his conversion. Its appearance drew the ire of a number of different Nonconformists.⁷² Jeremiah Ives, a

⁶⁸See Robin Clifton, “The Popular Fear of Catholics during the English Revolution,” *Past and Present* 52 (August 1971): 23-55.

⁶⁹Henry Denne, *The Quaker no Papist* (London, 1659), 6. M. G. F. Bitterman has examined the nature of Quaker responses to such accusations in “The Early Quaker Literature of Defense,” *Church History* 42, no. 2 (June 1973): 203-28.

⁷⁰Thomas Grantham, *The Baptist against the Papist*, The Author to the Reader.

⁷¹The exact date of his conversion is unknown. For biographical information on Everard, see George Southcombe, “Everard, Robert (fl. 1647–1664),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/9000?docPos=10> (accessed 15 September 2008). See also Southcombe, “The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England,” 224-58.

⁷²Robert Everard, *An Epistle to the Several Congregations of the Non-Conformists* (Paris, 1664).

General Baptist, published *Rome is No Rule* in 1664.⁷³ Francis Howgill, a Quaker, published *The True Rule, Judge and Guide* in 1665.⁷⁴ Matthew Poole, a Presbyterian, also addressed Everard's conversion in the appendix of *The Nullity of the Romish Faith* (1666).⁷⁵ Some twenty years after the fact Joseph Harrison's *The Popish Proselyte* was also critical of Everard's conversion. Harrison's treatment of Everard's account is biting and approaches the status of an *ad hominem* attack. Harrison accuses Everard of ignorance, inadvertency, and self-interest.⁷⁶ That Everard's conversion evoked such a heated response so long after the fact says something of the event's profound significance. Southcombe introduces the possibility that Everard's conversion was the result of a concerted effort by Catholics to "proselytize among the General Baptists congregations in Lincolnshire" in the early 1660s.⁷⁷ While there is no clear evidence to support such intentional Catholic efforts in Lincolnshire, it was quite possible that Grantham had Everard in mind when he published *Hear the Church* as an effort "to prevent others from being deceived by [Catholics]."⁷⁸

Grantham's first known engagement with a Catholic opponent occurred in 1662. Grantham, who was almost certainly in Lincoln jail at the time, writes that an anonymous Catholic had posed seven questions to the local baptized believers regarding the

⁷³Jeremiah Ives, *Rome is No Rule* (London: Printed by T. M., 1664).

⁷⁴Francis Howgill, *The true rule, judge, and guide of the true church of God discovered* (n.p., 1665).

⁷⁵Matthew Poole, *The nullity of the Romish faith* (London: Printed by H. Hall, 1666).

⁷⁶Joseph Harrison, *The popish proselyte the grand fanatick* (London, 1684), 1.

⁷⁷Southcombe, "The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England," 190, fn. 62. The possibility of an organized effort to draw General Baptists into the Catholic ranks is strengthened by the similarities between the pro-Catholic arguments referenced in Everard's account and those evident in Grantham's correspondence with an unnamed Catholic.

⁷⁸Grantham, *Hear the Church: Or, An Appeal to the Mother of us All*, The Epistle to the Reader.

authenticity and authority of the scriptures. Grantham crafted a response to the queries at the “importunity of some Friends.”⁷⁹ It appears that Grantham and the unnamed Catholic carried on an extended correspondence, though the exact duration and nature of the exchanges are unknown.⁸⁰ The discourse apparently terminated when Grantham’s opponent was reported to have “gone out of this nation.” When Grantham was later accused of being a Jesuit while in prison, he saw fit to publish a portion of the correspondence in order to disprove the allegation and “blunt the edge” of Catholic arguments.⁸¹

The Epistolary Correspondence

The Baptist against the Papist is organized into three sections. The first section includes a letter to the reader, seven queries sent to the baptized believers, and Grantham’s seven anti-queries.⁸² The second section consists of a lengthy discourse concerning the first query posed by the Catholic: “Whether we are to resolve all differences in point of Religion, only out of the written Word of God?”⁸³ The third

⁷⁹Grantham, *The Baptist against the Papist*, The Author to the Reader. The Epistle to the Reader bears the date 10 January 1663.

⁸⁰The correspondence probably consisted of hand-written letters, which could be returned with marginal notes and comments. In 1687, when Grantham included the seven queries at the end of *Hear the Church*, he described in the Epistle to the Reader that his opponent never responded in print but “only sent me a few Notes in Manuscript.”

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²For the queries and anti-queries, see *The Baptist against the Papist*, The Author to the Reader.

⁸³Ibid., 5.

section is a discussion of ten reasons why “the present Papal Church of Rome . . . is not the Church of Christ.”⁸⁴

In the first section Grantham simply lists the Catholic queries and his own anti-queries so as to provide the reader with background for the lengthy correspondence which comprises the second section of the treatise. The queries can be summarized as follows:

Query 1: Are all religious differences to be decided only out of the written Word of God?

Anti-Query: What differences can you resolve in religion without the written word of God?

Query 2: How do you know precisely what is the true Word of God?

Anti-Query: Does not the Bible deserve the privilege to speak for itself?

Query 3: Since we have no original manuscripts, how do you know that your copies and translations are correct?

Anti-Query: Since we have no original manuscripts, how are your copies and translations better than ours? Where are the original manuscripts of the prophets and apostles?

Query 4: Since the “dead Letter” of the text is unable to explain itself, who is to judge between us when we differ about the meaning of a text?

Anti-Query: Do the scriptures compared together not explain themselves? Is it right to call the scriptures a “dead Letter”?

Query 5: What scriptural texts do you have for the following: the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and Son, changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, and prohibiting polygamy and infant baptism? Are there not clear texts to prove the unwritten traditions of purgatory and real presence?

Anti-Query: Do Papists not confess that infant-baptism is not found in scripture? Does not John 14:26; 15:26; and 16:27 show that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son? Does not 1 Cor. 7:1-3 prohibit a husband from having more than one wife? Are there any among us who believe Sunday to be the Sabbath? Is it not absurd for you to ask for scriptural proof from us while you affirm belief in purgatory and real presence, neither of which are found in scripture?

⁸⁴Ibid., 34. It is not clear whether the third section was written part of the correspondence or written solely for the purposes of publication. Since this section reads more like a treatise and no response from the Catholic is included, it is likely Grantham composed it with publication in mind.

Query 6: Is not the universality of both time and place the mark of the true church?

Anti-Query: What church can you name that has that mark? Was not the woman that John saw none other than Rome?

Query 7: If you really have the mark of universality, should you not be able to identify out of all ages and nations those who hold to your religion?

Anti-Query: Who can show this without the help of human history, and is history a good rule for divine faith? Were not the earliest histories destroyed and those that do remain contradict each other? Is it not true that a church whose gathering, constitution, and government conform to the scriptures the true church? And in this sense, do not the baptized churches exceed all others?

These queries provide important insights into one Catholic's thoughts regarding the insufficiency of the Baptist position. The Catholic's unsolicited queries call attention to two central differences with the baptized believers: 1) the sole authority of scripture in matters pertaining to religion and 2) the marks of the true church. The queries seek clarification not only on the proper role of scripture in religious discourse, but they also press the baptized believers to justify the legitimacy of scripture as an authority in light of the absence of original manuscripts. The papist also draws attention to certain practices and beliefs among the Baptists which are seemingly discordant with scripture (e.g., not keeping the Sabbath and the prohibition of polygamy). The last two queries force the Baptists to define the universal nature of the church and demonstrate how they have been a part of it from the beginning. These are all serious and pointed questions, and it is no wonder that Grantham believed Catholic adversaries "to be the most subtil, as well as coherent with their Principles . . ." of all his adversaries.⁸⁵ It is significant, then, that at such a young age Grantham was importuned by those around him to respond to such serious questions (Grantham was not even thirty years old in 1662).

⁸⁵Grantham, *Hear the Church*, 47.

The second section of *The Baptist against the Papist* is the heart of the treatise and contains the dialogue between the two writers. As we noted earlier, Grantham did not publish the entire correspondence, opting instead to save portions for possible future publication. The portion included in the treatise addresses what Grantham considered to be the chief question between himself and his Catholic counterpart: “What is the authoritative Judge of Controversies?”⁸⁶ Grantham dismisses the Quaker conception of the light within as inadequate since it leads to as many judges as there are people. He also rejects the notion that the “Papal Church of Rome is the Supream Judge and Catholick Moderatrix of all Disputes in matters of faith. . . .”⁸⁷

What then is left? Grantham looked to the scriptures coupled with “right reason” as the “only infallible and authoritative Judge” in religious controversy.⁸⁸ Yet Grantham did allow that pastors have been of “great importance” in settling disputes in ages past, as have the “Records of Antiquity.”⁸⁹ In addition, he writes that “there is a Judgement of Science to be allowed every man, as touching all things which he chuseth or refuseth in matters of religion, to be used with moderation and discreet subjection.”⁹⁰ Grantham

⁸⁶Grantham, *The Baptist against the Papist*, 3.

⁸⁷Ibid., 4.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid. Grantham takes up this idea again on page 16ff., where he distinguishes between a “Judgement of Science” and a “Judgement Authoritative.” Grantham understood the “Judgement Authoritative” to be an authority only present “in the Church as embodied together,” whereas the “Judgement of Science” is localized in each individual member of the church. Grantham does not provide an example of a “Judgement Authoritative,” but as an example of a “Judgement of Science” he points to 1 Cor. 10:15: “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say” (Authorized Version of 1611). Grantham concludes that “each particular ought to have the free exercise of his judgement in what he chuseth or refuseth, since without this he cannot chuse or refuse any thing with confidence, nor to his comfort,” 17. In some sense Grantham’s appeal to the “Judgement of Science” could fall prey to the detested individualism of the Quakers. The phrase “judgement of science” is not unique to Grantham in this period, however, but his use of it seems to be. Both Samuel Fisher (*Baby-baptism meer babism*, 76) and John Tombes (*Anti-*

outlined an approach to understanding the scriptures which stayed clear of excessive emphasis on the individual, the congregation, or tradition. At the same time, he granted that all three had some role to play in settling religious disputes.

Several other notable differences emerge in the course of the dialogue. Grantham and the Catholic disagree on how to conceive of the “living voice of the church.” The Catholic understands the “living voice” to include the “Holy Fathers and General Councils,” while Grantham takes the designation to mean “the present Church and her Pastours.”⁹¹ Grantham castigates the Catholic on this point and claims that the errors of both the fathers and the councils are “undeniable.”⁹²

The admission of errors, however, does not negate tradition’s importance in religious disputes. The difficulty was that both Grantham and his opponent understood that the other side claims to possess the support of scripture and tradition. At one point Grantham writes that “because you do cry up the Fathers . . . I will therefore shew you, that they do clearly avouch the Answer which I have given to this your first inquiry.”⁹³ This apparent impasse is probably why Grantham identified the Catholic’s fourth query as the “most difficult.”⁹⁴ The difficulty was that neither side could agree on the past in

paedobaptism, or, The third part being a full review of the dispute concerning infant baptism [London: Printed by E. Alsop, 1657], 552) employed the phrase in an anti-paedobaptist context. In both cases, the phrase “judgement of science” refers to the need to wait until infants are old enough to show observable signs of faith. Grantham, on the other hand, uses the phrase as a means by which individuals are responsible to draw their own conclusions regarding religion.

⁹¹Ibid., 9

⁹²Ibid., 11. Grantham includes a litany of supposed mistakes and contradictions on pages 11-14.

⁹³Ibid., 29.

⁹⁴Grantham, *Hear the Church*, 42. The fourth query reads: “Where we differ about the Sense of the Word, by whom must we be tried? The dead Letter cannot explain it self.”

such a way that it could become usable. Therefore, for Grantham tradition and history are ultimately disqualified from judging all matters religious.

The employment of miracles as support for one's position also becomes a problematic approach. Neither side doubted the existence of miracles. The problem again arises that both sides claim miracles in support of their position. The Catholic appealed to the signs and wonders experienced at Loreto, a popular pilgrimage destination in Italy. Grantham allowed that miracles may have occurred at Loreto, but also pointed out that it was supposedly a "place of most gross Idolatry, blind devotion, and deceit."⁹⁵ Grantham even references a story of a Catholic who traveled to Loreto to inquire about the truthfulness of the Catholic faith before separating from the church.⁹⁶ In this way Grantham responded to particular miraculous events, but he attacked the larger question of miracles by appealing to the plague narrative in Exodus. The narratives in Exodus where Moses and the magicians perform miracles give rise to the dilemma of opposing miracles, Grantham notes, and he expresses this dilemma succinctly: "You say, you are the Church. We say, we are the Church. Here is Testimony against Testimony, as there was Miracle against Miracle."⁹⁷ Elsewhere he notes that even the Turks and Quakers claim miracles.⁹⁸ Thus, appealing to miracles is no sure way to settle religious disputes or identify the true church.

Grantham concludes *The Baptist against the Papist* with several reasons why the Church of Rome is not the true church. This final section does not appear to have been

⁹⁵Grantham, *The Baptist against the Papist*, 23.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid., 22.

⁹⁸Ibid., 54.

part of the original correspondence, though Grantham must have felt his readers would benefit from a delineation of the marks of the true church. For Grantham, the Roman Catholic Church is no true church because it lacks true baptism, which results in the gathering of unregenerate persons.⁹⁹ In addition, Grantham makes an Anabaptist-like critique that the Roman Church is no true church because it is a “national church” which increases its influence and numbers by means of the “carnal sword.”¹⁰⁰ Grantham also takes issue with the Roman Catholic practice of forbidding the common person access to the scriptures in his or her own language. Similarly, insistence upon clerical celibacy and abstaining from eating certain meats “under pain of cursing and death” is tantamount to averring a “doctrine of Devils.”¹⁰¹ Grantham goes on to specify the marks of the true church as antiquity, succession, universality of time and place, visibility, sanctity, unity, and miracles. In so doing, Grantham basically undermines all Roman Catholic claims of exclusivity where these marks are concerned and instead declares that the “present Assemblies of Baptized Believers . . . are the true visible Church of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰² For Grantham, the Roman Catholic Church could not be the Church of Christ because that was a position occupied by the Baptists. In essence, then, Grantham’s Baptists possessed the birthright of the true church.

⁹⁹See *The Baptist against the Papist*, 37-40, 56-47. The lack of true baptism is Grantham’s second reason, while the gathering of unregenerate persons is reason six.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 41-43.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 47.

¹⁰²Ibid., 58. See also Southcombe, “The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England,” 190-91.

Results and Conclusions of the Correspondence

The immediate results of Grantham's correspondence with the unnamed Catholic are not recorded. What is clear is that in 1662 a Roman Catholic sent unsolicited queries to the baptized believers in Lincolnshire which Grantham was encouraged to answer. Grantham responded with seven anti-queries and several letters. The impetus to publish the correspondence came in early 1663 when Grantham was accused of being a Jesuit in disguise. Grantham published the correspondence under the title *The Baptist against the Papist* to dispel the circulating rumors. Grantham affirmed his identity as a Baptist by publicizing the disagreements between himself and an unnamed Catholic.

When Grantham's magnum opus, *Christianismus Primitivus*, appeared in 1678 he judged it beneficial to include *The Baptist against the Papist*. In addition, Grantham attached the seven queries and seven anti-queries to the end of *Hear the Church* in 1687.¹⁰³ Our knowledge of Grantham's interaction with Catholics is limited to the epistolary correspondence of 1662, but the publication history of the correspondence is also informative.

The circumstances surrounding the correspondence and subsequent publications of *The Baptist against the Papist* draw attention to several aspects of Grantham's leadership among the General Baptists during the reign of Charles II. First, the specific content of the dialogue suggests that the theological distance between the Catholics and the Baptists was great. This may seem obvious, but in the previous section we saw that Grantham held out some small hope of reconciliation with the Anglican establishment. This was certainly not the case with the Roman church. The central issue of

¹⁰³In 1687 Grantham added a few additional explanatory comments to his anti-queries. This is the only difference between the queries and anti-queries as they appear in the 1662/1678 version and the 1687 publication.

disagreement was not simply the place of scripture in the life of the church, but rather the place of scripture in defining, constituting, and governing the true church. By engaging the “papist” in epistolary correspondence and then publishing that correspondence, Grantham provided his fellow Baptists in Lincolnshire with legitimate responses to questions concerning the authority of scripture and the place of Christian tradition in contemporary disputes. Moreover, Grantham demonstrated that the nomenclature of “true church” belongs to the “Assemblies of Baptized Believers.”

Second, a recurring question in all of this is how the assemblies of baptized believers could be mistaken for Catholic enclaves? How could Grantham be confused for a Jesuit? Moreover, this was not an allegation that disappeared with time, for in 1691 he wrote of continued accusations of papist sympathies while living in Norfolk.¹⁰⁴ At first glance the answer is probably that, regardless of reality, accusing someone of “papism” was the quickest and easiest way to discredit and dismiss an opponent. It is also possible that his irenic tendencies rendered him susceptible to unfavorable association with Catholics. Looking deeper, however, it is quite possible that Dissenters and Catholics were thought to have similar aims. This assumption is evident in another anonymous author from the period: “The Papists would destroy our Church and State; so would the Common-Wealthsmen: The Papists would set up Popery and absolute Monarchy; the other an Amsterdam Religion, and Arbitrary Government in the hands of the many. . . .”¹⁰⁵ The anonymous author goes on to point out that whereas the Catholics had plotted against the king in the 1640s, only the “Common-Wealthsmen” had succeeded in

¹⁰⁴ Grantham, *The Grand Imposter* (n.p., 1691), 10.

¹⁰⁵ *Advice to the Men of Shaftesbury* (n.p., 1681?), 1. For a more detailed discussion, see Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts* (New York: Longman, 1993), 99-101.

killing him.¹⁰⁶ For this reason, the king had equal reason to be jealous of Dissenters as he did of the Papists.¹⁰⁷ Thus, at least from a political perspective, there was good reason for some in England to believe that Baptists were merely masquerading Catholics.

Finally, the circumstances of the 1663 and 1687 publications of the correspondence may provide important insights regarding the situation in which Nonconformists found themselves in the early 1660s and late 1680s. Grantham chose to publish the correspondence at times when anti-Catholic sentiment swelled and accusations of being a Catholic in disguise were serious allegations. In 1662 Charles II unsuccessfully attempted to extend some level of toleration to Catholics and Nonconformists with a Declaration of Indulgence. James II did so again, with the same result, in 1687. Harris points out that Tories often sought to paint Whigs and Catholics with similar strokes, that is, that both groups had a vested interest in an authoritarian regime. If this was the case, then it follows that dissenting Baptists would have been more susceptible to “papist” allegations in times when the possibility for religious tolerance was at the fore of national and local politics, for these would have been the times that fears of “papism” would have been the most acute. The years 1662-63 and 1687 certainly qualify as periods when questions of religious tolerance were on the minds of many in England. Perhaps it was not mere coincidence that Grantham chose to publish his correspondence on the nature of the true church in 1663 and then re-publish those same exchanges outlining clear differences with the “papists” in 1687.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 1-2.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 2.

Grantham vs. the Quaker John Whitehead

Background

Momentary lapses in persecution by authorities from 1660 to 1689 allowed the various religious sects to turn their attention toward each other.¹⁰⁸ This seems especially true of the rancorous relations between Baptists and Quakers in Lincolnshire following the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672.¹⁰⁹ In 1672 an anonymous tract was published alleging that ca. 1663 the Quaker Richard Anderson, of Panton, Lincolnshire, was commanded by God to smite Ralph James, a Baptist minister at North Willingham, with leprosy.¹¹⁰ Anderson's own family was instead struck with "restless pain in their bodies."¹¹¹ The illness was only cured when, at Anderson's request, James's own congregation prayed for the family's restored health.

The report of such an incident sparked a flurry of tracts from Quakers and Baptists in Lincolnshire which only exacerbated the existing tension between the two

¹⁰⁸Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, UK: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1980), 231.

¹⁰⁹See Ted L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Surprisingly little work has been done on the relationship between the Baptists and the Quakers in the seventeenth century. Reuben E. E. Harkness's now dated study of the initial contacts between the two groups in "Early Relations of Baptists and Quakers," *Church History* 2, no. 4 (December 1933): 227-42. In addition to his published monograph, Underwood also examined the Baptist-Quaker conflict from the perspective of the Baptist Henry Denne, "Baptist Henry Denne and the Quaker Doctrine of the Inner Light," *Quaker History* 56, no. 1 (Spring 1967): 34-40. For an introduction to Baptist-Quaker interactions during the Interregnum, see Craig Horle, "Quakers and Baptists 1647-1660," *Baptist Quarterly* 26, no. 8 (October 1976): 344-62. See also Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Baptists and Quakers – Left Wing Puritans?" *Quaker History* 62, no. 2 (Autumn 1973): 67-82; and Ronald L. Cobb, "George Fox and the Quaker-Baptist Controversy," *Foundations* 14, no. 3 (July-September 1971): 236-39.

¹¹⁰*A True and impartial narrative of the eminent hand of God that befell a Quaker and his family* (London, 1672). James had registered his home in North Willingham as a Baptist meeting place under the terms of the 1672 Declaration of Indulgence. It is quite possible that James published the tract himself, for it consists of a series of letters in which he and John Green discuss the details of the incident. Underwood assumes that James was responsible for publication, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*, 116.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 10-11.

groups. The Quaker Thomas Rudyard quickly countered with *The Anabaptists Lying Wonder*, which denied the events and accused James of dishonesty.¹¹² John Whitehead, another Quaker leader, added a postscript to Rudyard's short treatise denying that Anderson had even been a Quaker.¹¹³ Ralph James responded in turn with his own narration of the events, *The Quakers Subterfuge*, essentially denouncing Rudyard and Whitehead.¹¹⁴ James concluded his controversial treatise with a short and anonymous postscript on the "Light within."¹¹⁵ That the unnamed author of the postscript was Thomas Grantham suggests that he played no small part in the tract warfare between Baptists and Quakers in 1672.¹¹⁶ Possible reasons for Grantham's anonymity will be discussed in the "Results and Conclusions" section below. As news of the Anderson-James episode spread supporters on both sides labored to obtain the facts in order to explain the alleged incident in the best possible light. This contentious atmosphere is the context in which Grantham's conflicts with Quakers are best understood. Grantham's leadership among the Baptists was not confined to tract warfare, however, for he also engaged the Quaker John Whitehead in several public debates throughout Lincolnshire.

¹¹²Thomas Rudyard, *The Anabaptists Lying Wonder* (n.p., 1672).

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹⁴Ralph James, *The Quakers Subterfuge* (London, 1672).

¹¹⁵James, *The Quakers Subterfuge*, 23-24.

¹¹⁶It seems to be a little-known fact that Grantham authored the postscript. In chapter five of *The Baptist against the Quaker* (found in *Christianismus Primitivus*, 4.70-72) Grantham inserted "what I have published before in this behalf." The text that follows is identical to that found in James's postscript of 1672.

Thomas Grantham and John Whitehead were not strangers when they agreed to debate in the early 1670s, for they had both been confined in Lincoln Castle in 1662.¹¹⁷ While anything resembling transcripts of Grantham's multiple debates with Whitehead are unavailable, it is possible to reconstruct with some certainty the nature of those debates.¹¹⁸ Some time before November of 1672 Grantham and Whitehead engaged each other in several public disputes. At least two of these disputes took place in Spilsby, while another occurred at Sleaford.¹¹⁹ Given the contentious relationship between Quakers and Baptists in Lincolnshire, it is not surprising that that debates drew "hundreds" of observers.¹²⁰ The chief subject of the debates seems to have been the nature of Christ's earthly body.¹²¹ At Sleaford the two men argued over the question of "Whether Christ hath now any Body of Flesh, beside his Church?"¹²² At one of the Spilsby debates Whitehead sought Grantham's answer to the question of "What kind of

¹¹⁷Grantham's *The Prisoner against the Prelate* was composed while he was confined in Lincoln Castle in 1662. A collection of Whitehead's letters published posthumously include several written from the same location in the same year, *The Written Gospel-Labours* (London: Printed by T. Sowle, 1704), 73-79, 149-60, 214-28.

¹¹⁸All information on the debates is found in Grantham's, *The Baptist against the Quaker* (1678) and Robert Ruckhill's *The Quakers Refuge* (n.p., 1673). Appended to *The Quakers Refuge* is a postscript by John Whitehead, which, among other things, details his interactions with Grantham. Grantham's *The Baptist against the Quaker* only appears in *Christianismus Primitivus* (4.57-74), which was published in 1678. See also Southcombe, "The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England," 191-94.

¹¹⁹Grantham, *The Baptist against the Quaker*, 61; and John Whitehead, "Another Postscript to Ralph James," in *The Quakers Refuge*, 40.

¹²⁰John Whitehead, "Another Postscript to Ralph James," in *The Quakers Refuge*, 40. Horle points out that from 1647-1660 it was the common practice of Friends to publicize their meeting places and times in order to garner a wider hearing, "Quakers and Baptists 1647-1660," 348. Baptists did occasionally interrupt Quaker meetings, Horle writes, but Baptists were less willing to allow Quaker interruptions. Perhaps the Quaker practice was still common enough in the early 1670s that the Grantham-Whitehead debates could draw significant numbers.

¹²¹See Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*, 34-50, for a helpful discussion of Baptist-Quaker disagreements on the person of Christ.

¹²²Grantham, *The Baptist against the Quaker*, 61.

Flesh Christ's body was?"¹²³ Whitehead would later complain that those "opposite him" asserted that he believed "nothing which was mortal was called Christ."¹²⁴

Determining what was actually said and what was intended is a complex puzzle, however, for both men commented on the debate in a polemical context. Whitehead later insisted that his comments regarding the physical body of Christ were twisted and manipulated by Grantham in the aftermath of the debates for the purpose of turning others against the truth.¹²⁵ Likewise, Grantham accused the Quakers, and Whitehead in particular, of cheating because they employed "Wiles and Equivocations" in their conversations and disputes.¹²⁶

It is also instructive to note that each man later portrayed his opponent's actions in the debates as intolerant and unyielding. Grantham supposedly condemned Whitehead's words as "grevious Heresie" during the debates.¹²⁷ Whitehead traced the nature of the misunderstanding to Grantham's rashness and rush to judgment, noting that Grantham interrupted him and did not permit him to explain himself adequately.¹²⁸ In Whitehead's account, then, it was Grantham's intransigence which prohibited any peaceable outcome.

Grantham, on the other hand, remembered that Whitehead became so enraged that he shook his hands and head before cursing his opponent with words similar to those uttered by Richard Anderson: "Thou whited Wall, God shall smite thee; the Plagues, and

¹²³Ibid., 60.

¹²⁴John Whitehead, "Another Postscript to Ralph James," in *The Quakers Refuge*, 37.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Grantham, *The Baptist against the Quaker*, 59.

¹²⁷John Whitehead, "Another Postscript to Ralph James," in *The Quakers Refuge*, 39.

¹²⁸Ibid, 37-41.

Curses, and Vengeance of God is thy portion.”¹²⁹ Grantham then informed Whitehead that God instructs Christians not to “render Railing for Railing, Cursing for Cursing, but contrariwise Blessing,” to which Whitehead consented and replied “Fainer, Fainer, Fainer. . . .”¹³⁰

Results and Conclusions

The debates themselves seem to have accomplished little in the way of resolution or mutual understanding. The verbal sparring between Grantham and Whitehead spilled over onto the printed page in 1673, with Whitehead drawing first blood. Robert Ruckhill published *The Quakers Refuge* in early 1673 as an answer to James’s *The Quakers Subterfuge*. *The Quakers Refuge* was in many ways an attempt at damage control in the wake of the Richard Anderson-Ralph James episode and James’s *The Quakers Subterfuge*. *The Quakers Refuge* seems preoccupied with disowning Richard Anderson and denouncing Ralph James. Ruckhill goes to great lengths to absolve the Quakers and highlight their superiority to the Baptists. Toward that end, Ruckhill calls attention to one William Smith of Eltham, who though formerly “a Brother of the Baptists,” had become “a faithful Follower of the Light of Christ” and actually written against the Baptists in 1669.¹³¹ Ruckhill also poses several queries for James to answer. John Whitehead’s contribution to *The Quakers Refuge* is a postscript in which he decries James and Grantham.

¹²⁹Grantham, *The Baptist against the Quaker*, 61. The scriptural example of this language of righteous indignation is Acts 23:3.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 61.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 4.

Shortly after the appearance of Ruckhill's *The Quakers Refuge*, a "paper" was sent to Grantham that he "might answer it."¹³² The "paper" was undoubtedly a copy of Ruckhill's recently-released pamphlet, for Grantham wrote *The Baptist against the Quaker* in direct response to the queries and accusations in *The Quakers Refuge*.¹³³ Whereas *The Quakers Refuge* is almost preoccupied with disowning Richard Anderson and denouncing Ralph James, Grantham virtually ignores the controversy in the *The Baptist against the Quaker*. Why? Perhaps he was uninterested in continuing the discussion. It is possible, however, that he considered excessive focus on Anderson and James to be a distraction from the more important question of underlying fundamental differences between the Baptists and Quakers. This may also shed some light on the reason his name was not attached to the postscript in James's *The Quakers Subterfuge*.

Grantham may have chosen to avoid being drawn into specific discussions of the Anderson-James controversy, but his reply to Ruckhill (and Whitehead) via *The Baptist against the Quaker* indicates his willingness to counter Quaker understandings of the scriptures, the nature of Jesus's earthly body, the nature of Jesus's resurrected body, the necessity of observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the scriptures.¹³⁴ Grantham, by means of his disputes and publications, focused attention on theological differences with the Quakers.

¹³²Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 4.51.

¹³³In the *ODNB* entry for John Whitehead, Richard Greaves claims that Grantham published *The Baptist against the Quaker* in 1673 before recounting the debate again in 1678 ("Whitehead, John [c.1630–1696]," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29290?docPos=1> [accessed 19 September 2008]).

¹³⁴Grantham devotes an entire chapter (which only amounts to a few pages) to each of these issues in *The Baptist against the Quaker*.

We have already noticed Grantham's propensity to publish his disputes with Anglicans and Catholics, and the next section will show that Grantham also published his correspondence with the Presbyterian John Collinges. Grantham admits in *The Baptist against the Quaker* that there was much more he could have written "respecting the several Debates" with Whitehead.¹³⁵ Why, then, did he not publish a more detailed account of his debates with Whitehead?

Grantham published *A Religious Contest* without access to detailed transcripts, so it is unlikely that the lack of transcripts from his debates with Whitehead would have kept him from doing the same in this case. If anything, the Baptist-Quaker animosity in Lincolnshire, which was amplified in the late 1660s and early 1670s, would have been an ideal time to recount how a Baptist had successfully debated a Quaker on several occasions. It is possible that Grantham had not fared too well in the debates. It may also have been the case that since Baptists and Quakers lacked access to public meeting places and likely had no large meeting places of their own, debates between them tended toward informality. Whatever the reason, Grantham's decision to refrain from publishing an account of his disputes with Whitehead is surprising given the gravity of the situation in Lincolnshire.

Baptist-Quaker interaction during the early 1670s was quite contentious and vitriolic. The Grantham-Whitehead debates, and their portrayal in print, provide insight into the nature of dissent when official persecution was less common. This short examination of those debates has shown that Baptists actively confronted and resisted Quakerism in Lincolnshire during this period. It is evident that the baptized believers in Lincolnshire looked to Grantham to defend them and their assemblies in the face of

¹³⁵Grantham, *The Baptist against the Quaker*, 61.

Quaker accusations and expansion. In the midst of the particularly contentious religious conflict surrounding the Baptist Ralph James, Thomas Grantham was a vocal and visible defender of the baptized believers in Lincolnshire. Grantham's activities as an apologist included several public debates and at least two anti-Quaker publications, both of which illustrate well the type of leadership he provided.¹³⁶

Grantham vs. the Presbyterian John Collinges

Background of the Correspondence

Whereas James II's attempts to provide toleration in 1687 and 1688 ultimately failed, William III (William of Orange) and Parliament succeeded with the Toleration Act in 1689. The act removed many of the impediments to open communication among the various sects, which resulted in a spate of quarrels similar to those in 1672 and 1673.¹³⁷ Most of what we know concerning Grantham's church-planting activities comes from his time in Norfolk, and his contentious interaction with Presbyterians and Congregationalists was primarily limited to his ministry in that county. He published at

¹³⁶The *ODNB* (Oscar C. Burdick, "Grantham, Thomas [1633/4-1692]," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11298?docPos=2> [accessed 3 September 2008];) and *DNB* (Alexander Gordon, "Grantham, Thomas [1634-1692]," *Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, 63 vols. [London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1890] 22:410-12) assert that later in life Grantham was drawn to the Quaker concept of the "inner light," but I can find no evidence to substantiate this claim. Burdick, who authored the *ODNB* entry for Grantham, stated that the comment suggesting Grantham gravitated toward the "inner light" later in life was not in his original draft, but must have been inserted by the *ODNB* editors. Oscar Burdick, e-mail message to author, 1 July 2008.

¹³⁷The quarrels were not only internecine feuds among the dissenters. Harris notes that the supposed fresh air of toleration also exposed the bitterness and festering resentment that Anglicans had for Nonconformists and vice versa, *Politics under the Later Stuarts*, 179-80.

least eight treatises pertaining to his disagreements with these groups, with the primary issues being the eternal status of dying infants and the nature of God's sovereignty.¹³⁸

By the time Grantham moved to Norfolk ca. 1686, he had a reputation as a capable and formidable General Baptist apologist. In fact, word of Grantham's skill as a defender of the baptized believers may have reached Norfolk before he did. In January of 1687 the Norwich minister Giles Firmin wrote that he had been informed by a "young furious Zealot against Infant Baptism" from London that a "great" and "learned" writer by the name of Thomas Grantham would undoubtedly prove to be a "formidable" adversary in a dispute concerning the eternal fate of dying infants.¹³⁹ Firmin also writes that a friend encountered one of Grantham's "tribe" in London who warned that the Baptists were sending "a Taylor to dispute" with Firmin.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Firmin includes that this "Taylor" was held in high regard among his own people.

One of a Messenger's tasks was to defend the gospel against false teachers and false teachings. In 1691 Grantham wrote specifically of his ministry in Norwich and his many disagreements with Calvinistic-minded Christians in the city:

God's Providence having ordered my Residence in this city, and my Business being to Preach the Gospel, I have endeavoured to perform my Office amongst you; for which I have met with many unkind and undue Reflections, and more especially from that sort of Professors who have espoused the Principles and

¹³⁸Grantham's *The Quaeries Examined* (London, 1676) and *The Controversie about Infants* (London, 1680) were written while he was still living in Lincolnshire; the latter was directed at the Presbyterian John Barret. Those treatises published while he was in Norfolk include the following: *Presumption No Proof* (London, 1687); *The Infants Advocate* (London: Printed by J. D., 1688); *The Infants Advocate: the second part* (London, 1690); *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian* (London, 1691); and *The Forerunner to a further answer* (n.p., 1691).

¹³⁹Giles Firmin, *Scripture-warrant sufficient proof for infant-baptism* (London, 1688), To The Reader, A2-A3.

¹⁴⁰Giles Firmin, *The Answer of Giles Firmin* (London, 1688), 3.

Doctrine of Mr. John Calvin, concerning his imaginary Decree of absolute and irrespective Reprobation.¹⁴¹

Grantham clearly understood his ministry in Norfolk as a fulfillment of his role as a Messenger. While preaching may have been his primary task, a large part of his ministry as a Messenger in Norfolk included disputations with other Christian coteries.

Grantham was concerned that in Norwich “many were ensnared” by the “Doctrine of Mr. John Calvin” and his followers who asserted that “God did from all Eternity unchangeably decree all things whatsoever comes to pass.”¹⁴² The implications of this belief, in Grantham’s mind, lead to the inevitable and “dreadful” conclusion that God eternally decreed some for salvation and some for damnation. Grantham considered Collinges to be the “greatest Assertor” of the doctrine in Norwich, so he “found an opportunity to write to him, upon the occasion of a Passage in his Book.”¹⁴³

Grantham’s brief epistolary dispute with John Collinges, a Presbyterian minister in Norwich, is a fitting final case study in this examination of Grantham’s interaction with other religious groups.¹⁴⁴ Grantham had engaged other local ministers such as Samuel Petto and Giles Firmin on issues such as infant baptism and the state of dying infants, but Grantham initiated contact with John Collinges in order to address the nature of God’s eternal decrees.

¹⁴¹Grantham, *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian*, 3.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴Collinges was a vocal and public opponent of the established church in Norfolk, where in 1672 he was licensed as a Presbyterian minister. See Stephen Wright, “Collinges, John (1623/4–1691),” *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5927> (accessed 23 September 2008). See also Southcombe, “The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England,” 199ff.

The Correspondence

In September of 1690 a total of three letters passed between Grantham and Collinges. Two of the three letters were written by Grantham. Grantham first sent Collinges a few observations upon the latter's claim that "God cannot seriously act, and be finally opposed."¹⁴⁵ By advocating such a "dangerous Position," Grantham wrote, Collinges was undermining the gospel and "scandalizing" those who affirm free will.¹⁴⁶

Letter 1: Grantham to Collinges, 12 September 1690. In this first short letter Grantham claims the maxim "God cannot seriously act, and be finally opposed" leads to a mistaken conclusion: if the statement is true, then God is to blame for human impenitence and stubbornness. Grantham then includes several examples of a serious divine act which was opposed. He appeals to God's "gracious" and "serious" discussion with Cain, who himself "opposed God finally."¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Grantham finds that God was long-suffering with those who ultimately resisted and died in the great flood. The Pharisees, too, resisted God's command through John the Baptist to "bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance."¹⁴⁸ Likewise, the prophets were sent to "turn Israel from their Iniquities," but Israel did not listen and God was opposed.¹⁴⁹ Grantham concludes his

¹⁴⁵This particular phrase is found in Collinges' *The Intercourses of Divine Love* (London: Printed by T. Snowden, 1683), 259. Grantham refers to the document as *A Discourse of Divine Love*.

¹⁴⁶Grantham, *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian*, 4.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.* The biblical reference is Matt. 3:8.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*

first letter with a request that Collinges neither “oppose God finally, by such Reflections” nor reject “the Council of God.”¹⁵⁰

Letter 2: Collinges to Grantham, 12 September 1690. Collinges received Grantham’s letter in the evening and answered it almost immediately. He had not heard of Grantham until the letter arrived at his home, and the tone of his reply suggests that Collinges gave little thought to Grantham afterward. Collinges’ letter is dismissive and disparaging, going so far as to describe Grantham as one who either “knoweth God so little” or has “so little sense.”¹⁵¹ Collinges accuses Grantham of ignorance concerning God’s omnipotence and points out that the Apostle Paul himself in Rom. wrote that no one has resisted the will of God.¹⁵² Collinges also challenges Grantham to prove that God, by an inward act of the divine will, willed the repentance of those who died in the flood or the Pharisees. Collinges concludes his letter by letting the reader know that he has “too much business further to regard such Impertinences.”¹⁵³

Letter 3: Grantham to Collinges, 1690. The final letter in this epistolary exchange was written by Grantham. In the letter he appears to be offended that Collinges would dare accuse him of ignorance regarding God’s omnipotence, so Grantham retorts: “And are you so sure you know therein unto Perfection?”¹⁵⁴ Grantham unequivocally affirms God’s omnipotence, yet he is hesitant to necessarily equate God’s “serious” acts with God’s “omnipotent” acts. Said a different way, God can act seriously in a given

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 6.

¹⁵²Rom. 9:19.

¹⁵³Grantham, *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian*, 6.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 7.

situation without acting omnipotently. Grantham uses as an example God's command to resist evil and do good to drive home the point:

And yet you grant, God may be finally opposed in what he adviseth or commands: but seeing you explain God's resolving by his willing a thing, here seems to be a plain Contradiction, unless you can be so hardy as to say, when God Adviseth or commands Mean to forsake Evil, and learn to do well, his Will is not that they should do so; and when he commands all Men everywhere to repent and obey his Voice, he inwardly never intends they shall do the one or the other, for he will not that; and if he wills not that, then he wills the contrary, that he may punish them for not doing that which he would not have them to do; or else he wills nothing at all, and so his Advice and Commands signify nothing.¹⁵⁵

Grantham finds such logic absurd, and insists that ministers must be able to assure their hearers that God does not will their demise and death. He concludes by saying that "God is altogether serious, even as Seriousness it self."¹⁵⁶ Collinges never replied to this second letter from Grantham.

Results and Conclusions

The results of this brief interaction between Grantham and Collinges are both interesting and informative. The correspondence between Grantham and Collinges was straightforward, but the reaction to the publication of the letters draws attention to the underlying tension among the various Nonconformist assemblies in Norwich. Collinges' only letter in this exchange suggests that he was uninterested in continuing any form of discourse, but his death in January of 1691 precluded any further correspondence. Grantham, undeterred by the death of his opponent, proceeded to publish in 1691 the letters under the title *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian*. He also

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 7-8.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 9.

attached a brief poetic exchange with two nameless friends of Collinges and a short treatise dealing with the doctrine of election.

Grantham's *The Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian* is the only document published while he resided in Norfolk which includes the defining epithet "Messenger of the Baptized Churches in Lincolnshire."¹⁵⁷ It would be tempting to overlook this minor distinctive addition had Grantham not also alluded to his status as Messenger in the preface as noted above. Moreover, Martin Finch, a minister in Norwich and friend of Collinges, was incensed that Grantham had published "what had passed about this Controversie," especially since Collinges had died between the writing of the letters and their publication.¹⁵⁸ Finch, determined to vindicate his friend and confute Grantham, published *An Answer to Mr. Thomas Grantham's Book* to those ends in 1691.

In the opening pages Finch takes aim at Grantham's title page and derides the one who "stiles himself Messenger of the Baptized Churches in Lincolnshire."¹⁵⁹ If by "Messenger" Grantham means those "chosen by some Churches to travel up and down to other Churches for a short space, to get Contribution and Relief for other Churches," then Finch accepts the term "office."¹⁶⁰ Finch is convinced, however, that Grantham considers himself to be a Messenger of another sort. "It is likely," Finch notes, that Grantham "counteth himself to have Jurisdiction and Authority over many Churches." Still, Finch questions why, if he is "more than an ordinary Presbyter," Grantham's

¹⁵⁷Grantham, *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian*, Title Page.

¹⁵⁸Martin Finch, *An Answer to Mr. Thomas Grantham's Book* (London: Printed by T. S., 1691), 6.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 2.

ministry in Norfolk is not characterized by “Mildness and Moderation.”¹⁶¹ Thus, it is clear that Grantham continued to face resistance in Norfolk where the Messenger’s office was concerned in Norfolk, only this time it was not other Baptists who bristled at his office. Finch’s acrimonious reaction to the title suggests that inter-congregational authority was an important issue among Nonconformists. Furthermore, Finch’s comments confirm Grantham’s importance as a leader and Baptist spokesperson in Norfolk, but they also raise serious questions regarding the nature and temperament of his ministry.

A second interesting insight gained from this study is the apparent congenial relationship that existed in Norwich among Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The friendship between Collinges and Finch highlights how the so-called “Happy Union” played out on a local and interpersonal level.¹⁶² Collinges was especially vital to the union and spent his final days “implementing the union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists” in Norwich.¹⁶³ On a practical level, Grantham’s publication of the correspondence prompted a Congregationalist minister to defend the dignity and theology of a deceased Presbyterian against the accusations of a General Baptist minister.

Finally, it is instructive to consider Grantham’s *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian* in the context of the rapprochement of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in Norwich. It is likely that for many in Norwich the visible union of

¹⁶¹Ibid., 3.

¹⁶²For a discussion of the “Happy Union” between Presbyterians and Independents in the early 1690s, see R. Tudor Jones, *Congregationalism in England* (London: Independent Press, 1962), 112-18. For the text of the *Heads of Agreement* see R. Tudor Jones, ed., *Protestant Nonconformist Texts* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 1:400-4.

¹⁶³Stephen Wright, “Collinges, John (1623/4–1691),” *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

previously-divided congregations joining together demonstrated the unique veracity of Calvinistic theology. For Grantham such a union was by no means a “happy” occasion, for he was greatly concerned that “many were ensnared” by their “dreadful and blasphemous” doctrines.¹⁶⁴ Thus, Grantham chose to engage someone of Collinges’ stature and then publish the correspondence in order to curb increasing Calvinistic momentum in Norwich.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Grantham provided important leadership for General Baptists in Lincolnshire and Norfolk by confronting the theological positions of Anglicans, Catholics, Quakers, and Presbyterians. The goal throughout has been to show that Grantham served as a spokesperson for his fellow Baptists in a variety of contexts. In some cases, as evident in Grantham’s debate with the Anglican minister William Fort, beleaguered congregations solicited Grantham’s aid in responding to external critiques. At other times, as seen in his correspondence with the unnamed Catholic, “Friends” urged Grantham to answer a series of questions posed to the baptized believers in general.¹⁶⁵ A third avenue to apologetic interaction involved Grantham initiating contact for the purpose of redressing what he considered to be dangerous theological tenets. In all of these circumstances it is clear that Grantham was fulfilling one of the main tasks of his office: defending the gospel against a variety of attacks.

A second important element of Grantham’s ministry as a General Baptist apologist was his pattern of publishing accounts of his polemical correspondence and

¹⁶⁴Grantham, *A Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian*, 4.

¹⁶⁵Grantham, *The Baptist against the Papist*, The Author to the Reader. The epistle to the reader bears the date 10 January 1663.

debates. Grantham was more than willing to write, receive, and publish letters. The desire to publish suggests that Grantham and his fellow Baptists considered his interactions with opponents worthy of circulation. It should be remembered, however, that Grantham apparently did not publish details of all of his interactions. There are any number of possible reasons for this, but given his habit in other cases such a lacuna in the history stands out all the more.

We must not assume Grantham's presentation of his disputes with various opponents to be wholly accurate, but from his own accounts he comes across as a capable, confident, and informed disputant. In the debate with Fort, Grantham's own command of debate protocol is on full display. In the debates with Whitehead, Grantham is portrayed as remaining calm while his opponent becomes angry. Where the exchanges with Collinges are concerned, Grantham chose to publish the correspondence despite the recent death of his opponent. Regardless of any redaction these documents may have undergone, they remain valuable as a window through which the troubled and volatile world of religious dialogue in the second half of the seventeenth century becomes visible.

Southcombe argues that on account of the "crises" of the seventeenth century and numerous disputes with other dissenters, Grantham's religious identity gradually shifted toward better relations with the established Church of England. Grantham's irenic correspondence and personal friendship with the Anglican John Connould in Norwich is the best testimony of such a shift. The evidence presented in this chapter corroborates Southcombe's conclusion that Grantham "could only stand closer to the Church of England by standing further away from those outside it."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶Southcombe, "The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England," 190.

As suggested in each of the previous sections, much of Grantham's apologetic activity occurred during tumultuous times on a national scale. Royal attempts to provide religious toleration in 1662, 1672, 1687, 1688, and 1689 provide the backdrop for all four case studies in this chapter. It is true that moments of toleration allowed the various Nonconformist groups to war against one another, but it was also the case that those same brief windows of freedom allowed the sects to distinguish themselves from one another by means of debates, letters, and publications. This chapter began by noting that in many ways the lines separating one religious group from another may have occasionally blurred during the seventeenth century, but for Grantham and those General Baptists he represented, the differences were distinct and worth serious dispute.

CHAPTER FIVE

“The Loyal Baptist”: Grantham and the Government

James I identified the symbiotic relationship between the crown and the prelacy with his now-famous line “No Bishop, No King.”¹ The execution of Charles I only seemed to affirm his father’s remark, for as Neil H. Keeble points out, it was “fidelity” to a distinctly non-episcopal vision for the Church of England which impelled those who executed the king.² The regicide ushered in a decade-long period of instability, which included numerous parliamentary failures, the rise and fall of the Protectorate, and the multiplication of religious sects. Thus the restoration of kingship in 1660 was an “aspiration” mixed with hope and uncertainty.³

There was good reason in April of 1660 to look favorably upon the return of the king. In his “Declaration from Breda,” Charles II attempted to assuage the fears of those who may have been skeptical of the restoration of monarchy by promising a “general pardon” to his father’s enemies and a “free parliament.”⁴ In the same statement, however, Charles’s plan to offer “liberty to tender consciences” was a foreboding

¹See David H. Willson, *King James VI and I* (New York: Holt, 1956), 198-207. James uttered these words at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, and is reported to have said further that if he desired to live under a presbyterian system he would simply return to Scotland.

²Neil. H. Keeble, *The Restoration: England in the 1660s* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 116.

³Jonathan Scott, *England’s Troubles: Seventeenth-century English Political Instability in European Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6.

⁴For the text of the document see Gerald Bray, ed., *Documents of the English Reformation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 544-45. Charles announced his acceptance of the English crown in April of 1660 in a statement commonly known as the “Declaration of Breda.” For our purposes, the Declaration is significant because in it Charles outlined his conditions for assuming the throne. For background and context of the Declaration of Breda, see Paul H. Hardacre, “Genesis of the Declaration of Breda, 1657-1660,” *Journal of Church and State* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 65-82.

proposal for those committed to the established Church and ray of hope to those with “tender consciences.”⁵ It was generally assumed by those in positions of power and influence that granting greater latitude to Dissenters of any stripe would inevitably effect a decline in the peace and stability of the nation.

Barrington R. White identifies several reasons for the strong reaction to, and ultimate rejection of, Charles’s plan for religious toleration. Three of White’s “causes” are particularly relevant to the present study.⁶ First, many in England believed that only a single, unified church could alleviate the pressures and solidify the foundation of their troubled nation. A second factor was the common notion that the radical religious factions which appeared in the 1640s and 1650s promoted and bred political instability or even sedition. A final cause was the idea that loyalty to the established church is performed best when joined with loyalty to the monarchy. The causes given by White may be better understood as a working set of assumptions held by many local magistrates and gentry in the late 1650s and early 1660s, but it is important to remember that such assumptions were not universally affirmed in England. Baptists, for example, claimed on numerous occasions that, despite their absence in the established church, they were loyal to the king and harbored no desire for insurrection.⁷

⁵Ibid.

⁶Barrington R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 96.

⁷Several examples of such claims will be examined in the following study of Grantham, but it should be noted that there was good reason to associate some Baptists with radical and possibly revolutionary ideas. White draws attention to “undeniable evidence” of folks linked with Baptists who had, in fact, sought to upset the Restoration (*The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 102). Among the regicides executed, two had clear Baptist connections: John Carew and Thomas Harrison. Mark R. Bell has shown that there were clear connections between Baptists and the Fifth Monarchists *Apocalypse How? Baptist Movements during the English Revolution* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 163ff.). See also, Thomas K. Gulley, “The General Baptists in early Stuart and revolutionary England,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1994), 604ff. Timothy George writes that Baptists “were among

Religious radicals were never a majority in England's religious life,⁸ so Baptists were probably relieved to hear that Charles II had promised to tolerate their own "tender consciences." In reality, however, the Restoration created an environment in which Nonconformists routinely faced harassment and persecution. The possibility of political violence was a reality for many people in England during the 1660s, 1670s and 1680s. No large-scale violent outbursts actually occurred during these decades, but it was the consistent threat of conspiracy, invasion, assassination, and rebellion that disquieted many citizens and magistrates.⁹ During these decades of open and intermittent hostility against Nonconformists, Thomas Grantham provided important leadership for the General Baptists in three distinct ways: 1) he represented the Lincolnshire General Baptists before Charles II in 1660 and 1672; 2) he favored accepting government-issued licenses for preaching and meeting places; and 3) he wrote treatises which affirmed a qualified loyalty to the crown. The pages to follow will address each of these aspects of Grantham's relationship to the government in order to illustrate how he was a major figure in General Baptist efforts to settle and solidify congregations in Lincolnshire and Norfolk. A summary of the findings will conclude the chapter.

the most militant of the godly" in the 1640s and 1650s ("Between Pacifism and Coercion: The English Baptist Doctrine of Religious Toleration," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 58, no. 1 [January 1984]: 48). White also addresses Baptists in the revolutionary context in a two-part article: "English Baptists and the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660, Point 1," *Baptist History and Heritage* 8, no. 1 (January 1973): 16-27; and "English Baptists and the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660, Point 2," *Baptist History and Heritage* 9, no. 1 (January 1974): 16-29. See also the dated but helpful work of Louis F. Brown, *Baptists and the Fifth Monarchy Men in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912).

⁸See Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 1.3. The Compton Census of 1676 revealed that out of a population of around 2.25 million, only about 100,000 were Nonconformists. For more on the Compton Census, see Anne Whiteman, ed., *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁹Paul Seaward, *The Restoration* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991), 2-4.

Grantham before Charles II

Grantham personally represented the baptized believers in Lincolnshire before Charles II in 1660 and again in 1672.¹⁰ The document from the audience in 1660 survived and reveals a great deal about the hardships faced by Lincolnshire Baptists during the earliest months of the Restoration. In the aftermath of Venner's uprising in January of 1661, Grantham was a signatory on two petitions presented to the king which aimed to refute any suggestion that Lincolnshire Baptists were guilty of sedition. In 1672 Grantham presented *A Humble Address and Remonstrance*, which is no longer extant, to the king on behalf of the Lincolnshire Baptists.¹¹ The current section will briefly examine the context, content, and import of Grantham's audiences with Charles II. Taken together, these episodes indicate that from the beginning of his ministry among the Lincolnshire General Baptists Thomas Grantham filled a specific and important leadership role. Among other things, his tasks included drafting public statements on behalf of local baptized congregations at critical times and presenting those statements to the appropriate ruling authorities.

Grantham and the Narrative and Complaint, 26 July 1660

When Charles II returned to England as king in May of 1660 there was widespread jubilation and celebration.¹² Charles's acceptance letter from Breda had

¹⁰Grantham was a signatory on *The Third Address* (Thomas Grantham, et al, *The Third Address of those person, known by the Name of Anabaptists, in the County of LINCOLN* [London, 1661]) from the Lincolnshire Baptists delivered to Charles II on 23 February 1661. Grantham almost certainly did not deliver it in person, however, for he was being held in Lincoln jail at the time.

¹¹Thomas Crosby's *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1740), 3.83, includes what amounts to a paraphrase of *A Humble Address and Remonstrance*.

¹²Keeble, *The Restoration: England in the 1660s*, 40-46. Keeble also writes of the skepticism which the restoration of monarchy aroused, 46ff. Christopher Hill describes the jubilation as "bought

given religious radicals reasons to hope for toleration, but in the localities the return of the king signaled the likely return to power of many royalists who had suffered countless indignities during the civil wars and Interregnum. In addition to the embarrassments they had endured, these royalists had accrued debt and lost land. For these reasons, Clive Holmes writes, many royalists sought revenge against those responsible for their sad state: those who had replaced them in local government, Puritan ministers, and religious radicals.¹³ The religious radicals were undoubtedly the easiest targets for revenge. Rodney Ambler notes that the breakdown and abolition of ecclesiastical courts during the civil wars and Interregnum fostered a sense of freedom among many citizens, but the Restoration of monarchy was also a restoration of church courts and “older frames of reference.”¹⁴ When “royalist gentlemen” were chosen as justices of the peace in Lincolnshire in early 1660, almost immediately the tenor of local Restoration politics shifted. This is evidenced by the arrest of numerous Quakers and the interruption of Baptist meetings.¹⁵

Henry Jessey’s *The Lord’s Loud Call* illustrates well how quickly the situation transitioned from possible toleration to certain persecution for Baptists in Lincolnshire. In August of 1660 Jessey published several narratives and documents pertaining to the

cheers” and finds “plenty of evidence for different sentiments among the populace,” *The World Turned Upside Down* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 354.

¹³Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, UK: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1980), 220.

¹⁴Rodney W. Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900* (Lincoln, UK: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 2000), 9.

¹⁵Ibid. Justices had been “the principal organ of local government” under Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I. For a discussion of the role of local justices of the peace in Stuart England, see J. H. Gleason, *The Justices of the Peace in England, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 68ff. For details of the Quaker arrests, see Susan Davies, *Quakerism in Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, UK: Yard, 1989).

harassment and imprisonment of various Nonconformists.¹⁶ Among the documents included in his short treatise is a portion of a *Narrative and Complaint*. The petition, which was presented to the king, describes the “Gross Abuses to many Good peaceable People in Lincolnshire.”¹⁷ H. Leon McBeth found that direct appeals to the king in the form of petitions were the most common form of Baptist publications from 1659 to the mid 1660s, and the *Narrative and Complaint* was the first of three direct appeals from the Lincolnshire General Baptists to the king in 1660 and early 1661.¹⁸ Robert Kershaw underscores the distinctly local nature of the *Narrative and Complaint* by pointing out that the twenty-four identifiable signatories were all from the South Marsh region of Lincolnshire where Thomas Grantham was a pastor.¹⁹

A short document of only two small pages, the *Narrative and Complaint* describes the dire situation in Lincolnshire for the baptized believers in 1660. The signatories claim that local magistrates attempted to discharge Baptist meetings, a

¹⁶Henry Jessey, *The Lords loud call to England* (London: Printed by H. J., 1660). The introductory letter is signed 13 August 1660.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 15-16.

¹⁸H. Leon McBeth, *English Baptist Literature on Religious Liberty to 1689* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 216. Other petitions from Baptists in 1660 and 1661 include the *Apology of some called Anabaptists, in and about the City of London* (London, 1660); *The Humble Apology of Some Commonly Called Anabaptists* (London, 1661); and *A Declaration of Some of those people in or Near London* (London, 1660); *To the king of these Nations* (London, 1661); *The Humble Petition and Representation* (London, 1661) and *Sions Groans for Her Distressed* (London, 1661). There were also three petitions from the General Baptists in Lincolnshire (discussed below). Other dissenters were active petitioners as well. For example, the Quakers submitted *A Declaration from the Harmles & Innocent People of God called Quakers* (London, 1660/1) and *For the King and both houses of Parliament being a short relation of the sad estate and sufferings of the innocent people of God called Quakers* (London, 1661). The Congregationalist Joseph Caryl submitted *A renuntiation and declaration of the ministers of Congregational churches* (London, 1661).

¹⁹Robert Kershaw, “Baptized Believers: Lincolnshire Baptists in Times of Persecution, Revolution and Toleration, 1600-1700” (master’s thesis, University of Nottingham, 1995), 33. There is a total of thirty-three signatories, nine of which we know almost nothing of their background or location.

command the Baptists “durst not receive.”²⁰ When the baptized believers in Lincolnshire refused to disband or to submit to the authority of those “who sate on the Bench of Justice,”²¹ the situation became quite uncomfortable. Baptists endured many hostilities: they suffered verbal abuse when walking in public; they were stoned on the way to congregational meetings; enemies beat on their doors and threw stones at their windows. In addition, they were fined twenty pounds per month for absence from Church of England services and even imprisoned. It appears from this brief narration that enemies of the Baptists in Lincolnshire became openly hostile in the months following the Restoration. The Lincolnshire Baptists appealed in vain to the local magistrates for “redress,” so they decided to plead their case before Charles II.

Charles II arrived in London on 29 May 1660. In the first months of his reign the king received countless guests. Noted writer John Evelyn found it difficult to meet the king in June on account of the presence of “all sorts of people” waiting to do the same.²² Given the crowded and frenzied nature of the newly-restored royal court, it is quite remarkable that two representatives of the Baptist “sort” were able to obtain an audience with Charles II in July of 1660.²³ The representatives chosen to deliver the *Narrative and Complaint* to the king were Thomas Grantham, pastor of the South Marsh congregation, and Joseph Wright, a Messenger of the Westby congregation. It is not altogether clear how Grantham and Wright succeeded in meeting Charles II. Thomas Crosby ascribed the

²⁰Jessey, *The Lords loud call to England*, 15.

²¹Ibid., 16.

²²John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn* (London: Macmillan, 1908). 204. This entry is dated 4 June 1660.

²³Jessey, *The Lords loud call to England*, 15-16.

meeting to the assistance of an unnamed “honourable Member of Parliament.”²⁴

While before the king, the two representatives also submitted for the king’s attention *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith* signed by forty “elders, deacons and brethren” and representing more than 20,000 supposed “Anabaptists” in England.²⁵

Grantham was not a signatory to the original *Confession*, which had been composed just a few months earlier in March. The curious part in all this is that Grantham, who was only twenty-six years old and was not yet himself an ordained Messenger, was chosen to represent his fellow Baptists before the king. Grantham’s relative youth could explain why Wright accompanied the young pastor to London. Nevertheless, that a persecuted and harassed association of Baptist congregations was willing to commission a young pastor to carry out such an important task suggests that Grantham was already recognized as a precocious minister with considerable discernment in matters religious and political.

Charles responded favorably to the Lincolnshire petitioners and assured them of the following:

That it was not his minde, that any of his good Subjects, who lived peaceably, should suffer any trouble upon the account of their judgements or opinions in point of Religion, and that hee had declared the same in several Declarations. Hee promised us also that (upon our declaring our grievances) that hee would have particular care over us, that none should trouble us upon the account of our consciences in things pertaining to Religion. And (while wee were present before him) hee ordered an honourable Member of Parliament to go to the Lord Chancellor, and Secretary, and get something done to that purpose; the Member of Parliament promised that hee would do as the King had ordered him.²⁶

²⁴Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.19.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Jessey, *The Lords loud call to England*, 17.

Such assurances from Charles II illustrate well the ruler's ostensible intentions regarding those with tender consciences. The king promised to protect his "peaceable" subjects and went so far as to remit the matter to Lord Chancellor Hyde.

The impact of Charles's official advocacy in Lincolnshire remains an open question, but if the release of imprisoned Quakers is any indication, Charles's sympathy for his peaceable subjects likely assuaged some of the pressures for Grantham's Baptists.²⁷ At the very least, the petition delivered by Grantham and Wright certainly alerted the king to the plight of his loyal subjects in the South Marsh area of Lincolnshire.

The progress toward implementing the Restoration was slow in the localities, as was the Convention Parliament's work to pass The Act of Oblivion and Indemnity. The relative toleration enjoyed by Quakers, Baptists, and other Dissenters in the second half of 1660 disappeared with the brief but frightful uprising led by Thomas Venner in January 1661. In this renewed atmosphere of fear and misunderstanding, Thomas Grantham was again called upon to declare the innocence of the Lincolnshire General Baptists.

Grantham and the "Second" and "Third" Addresses, 1661

The religious establishment of seventeenth-century England was not prone to making fine distinctions between the radical religious groups, so when the Fifth Monarchist Thomas Venner led a small revolt in London from 6-9 January 1661, the precarious freedom enjoyed by many dissenters throughout England quickly disappeared.

²⁷Adam Taylor assumed that the audience with Charles II provided some relief, *The History of the English General Baptists* (London: T. Bore, 1818), 1.188. According to Davies, twenty-one Quakers were released in Lincolnshire, *Quakerism in Lincolnshire*, 18-19. See also Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 221.

On 10 January 1661 Charles II issued a proclamation forbidding the assembly of Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchists, and other religious radicals.²⁸

Venner and his cohorts may have been an “aberration,” but it was not long before any religious dissenter was thought to be capable of similar actions.²⁹ Thus, it was commonly assumed that religious dissent and Nonconformity were inextricably linked to sedition and revolution. In *The Humble Apology of some commonly called Anabaptists*, published on 28 January 1661 and presented to the king, Baptists throughout England issued a joint disavowal of the “late wicked and most horrid and most treasonable Insurrection and Rebellion acted in the City of London.”³⁰ *The Humble Apology* reports that Venner’s uprising in London created a situation in which to be called an Anabaptist was tantamount to being a criminal, “or at least a ground sufficient to question his Loyalty and fidelity to the Kings Majesty.”³¹ *The Humble Apology* goes on to inform the king that those represented therein had no foreknowledge of the insurrection nor did they participate in it. The signatories, most of whom were from the London area, included the notable Particular Baptist William Kiffin and General Baptist Henry Denne.³² It seems

²⁸See the Calendar of State Papers Domestic for Charles II, 1660-1661 (10 January 1661), “Proclamation for restraining all seditious meetings . . .,” <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=54648> (accessed on 6 October 2008). See further, Norman Penney, ed., *Extracts from State Papers Relating to Friends, 1654-1672* (Philadelphia, PA: H. Newman, 1913), 117-27.

²⁹Meic Pearse, *The Great Restoration: The Religious Radicals of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998), 235.

³⁰*The Humble Apology of some commonly called Anabaptists* (London: Printed by Henry Hills, 1661), Title Page. Hereafter referred to as *The Humble Apology*.

³¹*Ibid.*, 6.

³²*Ibid.*, 14.

likely that the Lincolnshire General Baptists at least agreed with the *Apology* based on Grantham's decision to include the full text in *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678).³³

The situation in Lincolnshire was comparable to other Baptist contexts in early 1661, for it appears that local magistrates needed little motivation to enforce the royal prerogative. Adam Taylor records that during these days “thousands” of Baptists were “stripped of their possessions, and thrown into prison; or obliged to flee from their habitations, and forsake their callings and families.”³⁴ Struggles with the authorities in Lincolnshire prompted the General Baptists there to draft their own petition for the king in January of 1661.³⁵

In late January the king received a “Second Humble Address of those who are called Anabaptists in the County of Lincoln.”³⁶ The document, submitted in close chronological proximity to *The Humble Apology*, maintains that “in this Tottering Age” the Baptists in Lincolnshire are the king’s loyal subjects. While providing little in the way of detail regarding the nature of persecution in Lincolnshire, the petition does mention the king’s “Imprisoned and Distressed Subjects.”³⁷ The baptized believers in

³³Thomas Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1678), 3.7ff.

³⁴Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.194.

³⁵There is disagreement over the dating of this document and its submission to Charles II, though the confusion is of little consequence. The confusion may date to Taylor’s comment that a paper was submitted to the Lords of the Privy Council on 23 January 1661 to “strengthen” the petition from Lincolnshire, *The History of the English General Baptists*, 1.192. Taylor does not specify whether *The Second Humble Address* was also presented on 23 January or sometime earlier. William T. Whitley listed the date for *The Second Humble Address* as 16 January 1661 (*Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England* [London: Kingsgate Press, 1909], 1.xxxv). Kershaw gives the date as 23 January 1661, “Baptized Believers: Lincolnshire Baptists in Times of Persecution, Revolution and Toleration, 1600-1700,” 33.

³⁶*The Second Humble Address of those who are Called Anabaptists in the County of Lincoln* (London: Printed by Simon Dover, 1661). Hereafter referred to as *The Second Humble Address*. This document is a single-page petition.

³⁷*Ibid.*

Lincolnshire then call upon Charles to remember his “Letter from Breda” and distinguish properly between the just and the unjust when meting out judgment, “lest the Cryes of the Innocent and their ruined Families come up before the Lord.” The baptized believers in Lincolnshire boldly expressed in no uncertain terms that royal refusal to ameliorate the present situation would lead to God’s displeasure.

It is important to point out that Thomas Grantham’s name heads the list of thirty signatories. Based on Whitley’s list of General Baptist leaders in the seventeenth century,³⁸ *The Second Humble Address* seems to have been a “county-wide” petition.³⁹ No information is given regarding how the document made its way to the king, but it is possible, given his recent favorable audience with Charles II, that Grantham could have been the courier.

Charles’s reaction to the petition is not recorded, but based on the appearance of a third appeal to the king on 23 February 1661, it is clear that *The Second Humble Address* did not have the desired effect. Sometime after the delivery of *The Second Humble Address* in January but before 23 February, Thomas Grantham’s name heads a list of eight “Heads” of Baptist congregations in Lincolnshire who had recently been imprisoned in the “Common Gaol at Lincoln.”⁴⁰ All eight men had signed *The Second Humble Address*. Similar to *The Second Humble Address*, a survey of the geographical

³⁸Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.xxxv-xlvii.

³⁹Kershaw, “Baptized Believers: Lincolnshire Baptists in Times of Persecution, Revolution and Toleration, 1600-1700,” 33.

⁴⁰*The Third Address of those person, known by the Name of Anabaptists, in the County of LINCOLN* (London, 1661). Hereafter referred to as *The Third Address*.

distribution of the leaders suggests a county-wide representation of Baptist “Heads” jailed together in Lincoln.⁴¹

The address itself calls upon Charles to orchestrate the release of the innocent Baptist prisoners for the “Glory of God” and the “renown of your Princely Majesty.” Furthermore, the signatories pledge on behalf of the congregations which own “that Confession of Faith presented to your Princely Hands, July 26, 1660” that they will never disturb the peace. Furthermore, the assenting congregations and their leaders promised to “cheerfully (as much as in us lieth, when lawfully called thereunto) defend Your Majesties Person, Crown, and Dignity. . . .” Finally, *The Third Address* requests that Charles allow the baptized believers to worship freely, but they also remind him that they will continue to meet for worship according to the dictates of scripture regardless of the laws and statutes imposed upon them.

There is no record of how this petition reached the king’s hand, but a note to the reader states that Charles expressed his confidence in the innocence of the “Lincolnshire Petitioners” and his intention to “preserve” them. It is also recorded that Lord Chancellor Hyde spoke of the imminent completion of an “Instrument” which would protect and preserve those in such constraints. Despite such encouraging reactions, the promises made by Charles and Hyde proved to be hollow and had little positive effect in Lincolnshire. Local magistrates continued to persecute Nonconformists of all stripes; Grantham remained in Lincoln jail for at least two Assizes, but in 1663 he was brought

⁴¹Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.xxxv-xlvii.

before the bar and dismissed without charge after fifteen months of imprisonment.⁴² In vain did Grantham and his fellow Baptists attempt to secure religious toleration for their assemblies, but the unity and county-wide cooperation revealed in *The Second Humble Address* and *The Third Address* are important. Grantham may have only personally delivered one of the three petitions from the Lincolnshire General Baptists in 1660 and 1661, but he certainly provided important leadership during a period in which Baptists were accused of disloyalty and sedition.

Grantham and “A Humble Address and Remonstrance,” 1672

The Declaration of Indulgence in March of 1672 offered considerable freedom to religious dissenters given their choice to register for licenses, but it did not ensure the cessation of hostility. In direct defiance of the Declaration, Mr. Whately, a local justice in Lincoln, actually levied fines against worshippers meeting in a licensed assembly. John Maitland, Duke of Lauderdale and member of the king’s Cabal, prosecuted Whately on the grounds that he had acted in “high contempt of his majesty’s declaration.”⁴³ It is probable that situations such as this prompted the Lincolnshire General Baptists to send Grantham (with another unknown Messenger) to wait on the king with *A Humble Address and Remonstrance* in 1672.

The details surrounding Grantham’s audience with Charles II in 1672 are largely unavailable, and what we do know is found only in secondary sources.⁴⁴ Though no

⁴²For a more detailed discussion of the imprisonment, see the biographical and literary sketch in Chapter Two.

⁴³Quoted in Frank Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672: A Study in the Rise of Organised Dissent* (London: University Press of Liverpool, 1908), 102.

⁴⁴Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 3.83, provides an account of the encounter.

longer extant, a few details of this document are available in Crosby.⁴⁵ One significant difference between the audience in 1660 and the appearance in 1672 is that Grantham had been ordained to the office of Messenger in 1666. Thus, his status and reputation among the Baptists in Lincolnshire had certainly grown since his encounter with Charles some twelve years before.

In *A Humble Address and Remonstrance* the Lincolnshire Baptists first expressed their gratitude to the king for allowing public assemblies. Grantham and his companion expressed concerns, however, over the ways in which the Declaration still “infringed that liberty” which the Baptists felt they had a God-given right to enjoy. Based on Crosby’s account, it appears that the Lincolnshire Baptists faced some resistance at the local level when attempting to exercise their “spiritual gifts of prayer” and “preaching.” They urged the king to allow room for worship according to the dictates of scripture and affirmed that nothing less “would satisfy the church of God.”⁴⁶ No account of the king’s response is given, and it is likely that this was Grantham’s final appearance before the king.

Chapter four showed how Grantham’s role as a General Baptist Messenger required that he actively defend and support the Baptist cause in Lincolnshire. In the early 1670s he fulfilled his ordained role in a rather public manner by debating the Quaker John Whitehead and the Anglican William Fort. In addition to speaking for the Baptists in theological disputes, Grantham’s audience with the king in the wake of the Declaration of Indulgence demonstrates that he continued to serve as a trusted liaison to

⁴⁵Ibid. Crosby’s account of the address reads more like a paraphrase than a quotation, though there is no reason to doubt its accuracy (*The History of the English Baptists*, 3.83-84).

⁴⁶Ibid.

the royal court. The Lincolnshire Baptists valued this minister who was able to both gain an audience with the king and articulate their concerns in a convincing manner.

This section has shown that Grantham provided important leadership for the General Baptists of Lincolnshire at critical times. In 1660 and 1672 he was sent by the baptized believers of his county to wait on the king and secure royal protection. In 1661 Grantham was a signatory on two petitions delivered to the king on behalf of the Baptist congregations in Lincolnshire. That Grantham played such a crucial role before being ordained to the office of Messenger suggests he possessed considerable leadership ability at a young age.

Ambler argues that the ability of the Lincolnshire congregations to join together for local addresses and national statements suggests that Baptists in the county had organized effectively around capable leaders. Grantham's budding influence would confirm Ambler's conclusion. That Grantham was not a signatory on the original *A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith*, which was signed by forty leaders representing more than 20,000 Baptists nationwide, or *The Humble Apology*, might indicate that as of 1661 he was not yet a recognized figure in the larger General Baptist movement. Note, however, that during the critical moments of the Restoration in 1660 and 1661 all known documents drafted specifically on behalf of the Lincolnshire General Baptists for the king bear his name. The apparent expansion from the local to county-wide distribution of signatories represented in the three petitions in 1660 and 1661 suggests that his influence in Lincolnshire was growing.⁴⁷ Furthermore, that he was among the eight "Heads" of the local congregations arrested and imprisoned after Venner's uprising could lead to the conclusion that he was an important leader of the General Baptists in Lincolnshire.

⁴⁷Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900*, 24.

These petitions also reveal that the baptized believers in Lincolnshire were comfortable appealing over the heads of their local magistrates for redress of grievances. While it is certainly true that the king's court was a "remote" governing body for most people in seventeenth-century England,⁴⁸ Grantham's audiences with the king and the addresses he signed imply that the king and his counselors were accessible to, and discursive with, the more radical dissenters. An understanding of the local issues facing Baptists during the 1660s and early 1670s is important, but it is equally necessary to point out that Charles's desires for toleration as expressed in the Declaration from Breda (1660) and Declaration of Indulgence (1672) were not taken as distant declarations by dissenters in the countryside. Grantham's Baptists took Charles at his word and called upon the king repeatedly to make good on his promises.

Finally, what are we to conclude regarding the means by which Grantham and his fellow Baptists were able to gain multiple audiences with Charles II? As we have seen, Taylor suggested that their success was due to an unnamed but honorable member of Parliament. It is certainly possible and quite likely that there was small number of those in the Convention Parliament (1660) and the Cavalier Parliament (1661-1679) who were sympathetic to the plight of Nonconformists. It is also possible that Grantham's family heritage played some role. He was, he claimed, from the ancient and esteemed Grantham family of Lincolnshire.⁴⁹ Lincolnshire had sent two men by the name of Thomas Grantham to Parliaments in the first half of the century.⁵⁰ It seems there is no clear answer to the question of how they obtained the audiences, but the next section will build

⁴⁸Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1704* (New York: Pearson Education, 2003), 96.

⁴⁹Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 1.1.

⁵⁰See Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 140 and 205.

on the first by showing that Grantham was ever willing to take advantage of the rare governmental provisions for “tender consciences.”

Licensing the Baptists, 1672 and 1688/9

Grantham accepted a government-issued license and encouraged other Baptists to do the same. The following pages will examine Grantham’s interaction with the government by focusing on his reaction to the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 and the Toleration Act of 1689. In both contexts, Grantham saw in the toleration offered by the king an opportunity to expand and solidify the Baptist churches.

The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672

Charles II’s efforts to provide some level of toleration in the early 1660s had been thwarted, but on 15 March 1672 he issued a Declaration of Indulgence in an attempt to garner support for a war with the Dutch and to fulfill a promise made to Louis XIV of France.⁵¹ In 1670 Louis and Charles had agreed in the so-called “Secret Treaty of Dover” to make war against the Dutch. In addition, Charles promised to declare himself a Catholic “as soon as his country’s affairs admit” in exchange for French financial and military support.⁵² Thus, the Indulgence was an attempt to offer, in a limited fashion, toleration to Catholics. It is quite possible that Charles thought the “country’s affairs” were sufficiently in order for his open reconciliation with Rome. He was wrong.

⁵¹Charles proclaimed the Indulgence while Parliament was prorogued. For the full text of the declaration, see Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672*, 76-78.

⁵²For the full text, see Andrew Browning, *English Historical Documents, 1660-1714* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953), 863-67. For the context of the treaty, see Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1704*, 305-11; and Seaward, *The Restoration, 1660-1688*, 50-52.

The terms of the Indulgence did not require an oath of allegiance, but it did insist that dissenters apply for a license. Three basic types of licenses were offered under the Indulgence: 1) one could register for a license as a teacher, preacher, or minister of a particular group; 2) one could register as a teacher in general, and 3) one could register one's home as a Nonconformist meeting place.⁵³

The introduction of this tolerant policy posed a dilemma for dissenters. Many were afraid that it might open the door for a revival of Catholicism. For others, it was a question of whether an application for a government-issued license amounted to tacit affirmation of the government's right to permit or restrict religious expression. Quakers as a whole refused on principle to even apply for a license.⁵⁴ Presbyterians had mixed reactions, but they accounted for more licenses than any other group.⁵⁵

Baptists did not react uniformly to the offered Indulgence. In sum, approximately 200 Baptists obtained preaching licenses.⁵⁶ Baptists in the far northern counties seem to have been disinclined to accept licenses. Not a single one was issued to a Baptist in the northern counties of Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, or Westmoreland. In other northern counties such as Lancashire and Yorkshire, Baptists accounted for very few licenses.

⁵³Ibid, 95. Bate notes that "meeting place" licenses were not initially granted for churches, chapels, or other large structures, 96.

⁵⁴Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution*, 1.248. Some Presbyterians were unsure about the impact licenses would have on their attempts at comprehension in the established Church of England.

⁵⁵George L. Turner, *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1914), 3.732-36. See also Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Owen Chadwick, eds., *From Uniformity to Unity* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1962), 209ff.

⁵⁶An exact count is difficult. Bate puts the number at 200 (*The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672*, 99); Turner counts 210 (*Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, 3.732-36).

Whitley traces the reticence among some Baptists to a “disdain” for requesting that which they held to be a right.⁵⁷ Watts, relying on Whitley’s assessment, concluded that a good number of Baptists adopted an identical position to Quakers with regard to licenses.⁵⁸ While it is true that many Baptists did not accept licenses, the evidence suggests that roughly half of the known Baptist ministers did take advantage of the protection a license offered.⁵⁹ John Spurr attributes the positive reaction of some Baptists to the voluntary nature of Baptist life.⁶⁰

Of the 200 or so licenses issued to Baptists teachers or preachers, more than eighty were sent to Kent, Somerset, Lincolnshire, Wiltshire, and Norfolk.⁶¹ In Lincolnshire, Baptists, who comprised the largest dissenting group in the county, were awarded a total of twenty-two licenses.⁶² Of those, seventeen licenses were designated for “Teachers.”⁶³ Of the seventeen Baptists in Lincolnshire who categorized themselves

⁵⁷William T. Whitley, “The Baptist Licences of 1672,” *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* (1908-1909): 156.

⁵⁸Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution*, 1.248.

⁵⁹Of Baptist hesitancy Douglas R. Lacey wrote: “The conclusion of religious historians that a large number of Baptist ministers did not apply is based upon a comparison of the number who did apply, which was 210 or more, to the number of Baptist ministers there presumably were, which is thought to have been about 420,” *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England 1661-89* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 291 n. 89. Lacey’s figure of 420 is taken from Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1932), 123.

⁶⁰John Spurr, *England in the 1670s* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 35.

⁶¹Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672*, 98. Rodney Ambler has shown that not all areas in Lincolnshire with a large number of Baptists are represented in the distribution of licenses, *Churches, Chapels and Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900*, 21-24.

⁶²Turner, *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, 2.730-31. See Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900*, 21.

⁶³Turner, *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, 2.730-31.

as “Teachers,” fifteen also registered their homes as Baptist meeting places.⁶⁴ These numbers indicate that the Baptist leaders in Lincolnshire who registered as a teacher also used their home for congregational worship.

Thomas Grantham registered himself as a Baptist “Teacher,” which comes as no surprise. That he did so in the neighboring county of Leicestershire, however, is rather curious. The records show that Thomas Grantham, of “Raiston” or “Rouston,” received a license under the Declaration of Indulgence. Whitley draws attention to the unexpected location of Grantham’s license and notes the paucity of information regarding his ministry in the county.⁶⁵ Grantham’s license raises an important question: was Grantham living in Leicestershire or simply ministering there?

Questions concerning Grantham’s possible residence in Leicestershire come from a close reading of Turner’s analysis and the issuance and delivery of the license itself. Turner noted, perhaps mistakenly, in his analysis that Grantham took out a license for a meeting place in 1672.⁶⁶ There is good reason to be skeptical of Turner at this point since Bate did not list Grantham among those in Leicestershire who registered a meeting place.⁶⁷ On the other hand, we do know that as late 1666 the Baptist congregation which

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Whitley, “The Baptist Licences of 1672,” 159. Whitley also recommends that “Raiston” be taken as an alternate spelling for “Rolleston” or “Rouston.” For a helpful study of General Baptist beginnings in Leicestershire, see Alan Betteridge, “Early Baptists in Leicestershire and Rutland: General Baptists,” *Baptist Quarterly* 25, no. 8 (October 1974): 354-78. Grantham does not appear in Betteridge’s study.

⁶⁶Turner, *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, 1.771.

⁶⁷Bate does not have Grantham taking out a license for a meeting place, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672*, Appendix VI.

Grantham pastored in Lincolnshire met in his home.⁶⁸ More compelling evidence for a possible lengthy stay in the county is found in the details of Grantham's preaching license itself, for which Turner included two separate entries. The first entry has a license specified for Thomas Grantham of Raiston as a Baptist "Teacher" in December of 1672.⁶⁹ A second entry has a license being issued to Thomas Grantham of Rouston as a Baptist "Teacher" in February of 1673.⁷⁰ The two entries suggest that Grantham's license was issued in December but delivered in February.⁷¹ If this was the case, then at the very least, Grantham must have been present in Leicestershire in December of 1672 and February of 1673.

We saw in the last chapter that Grantham debated the Quaker John Whitehead in Lincolnshire sometime prior to November of 1672; in 1673 Grantham debated William Fort at Blyton, Lincolnshire. I can find no other reference to Grantham's presence or ministry in Leicestershire, nor have I found church records from the area that mention Grantham or his presence in this region neighboring Lincolnshire. Thus, it seems highly unlikely that Grantham ministered in Lincolnshire while based in Leicestershire. Yet, it is reasonable to expect that in fulfilling his duties as a General Baptist Messenger he found reason to travel west and minister in that county. Was he perchance traveling back and forth with some frequency for the purposes of ministry? Such a scenario would help explain his application for a license in Raiston, Leicestershire.

⁶⁸Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 21 April 1691, Letters to Thomas Grantham, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

⁶⁹Turner, *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, 1.579.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 1.58.

⁷¹Whitley records that the most of the licenses for Leicestershire were issued on 8 August and 9 December 1672, "The Baptist Licences of 1672," 159.

The experiment with licenses was short-lived. Since Charles II was involved in an expensive war and low on funds, he was forced to recall Parliament in 1673. Parliament turned its attention rather quickly to the legality of the Declaration of Indulgence issued a year earlier. Charles was caught between a need to secure additional money for the Dutch war and a desire to legitimate his Declaration of Indulgence. The need for financing prevailed, and in March Charles withdrew the Declaration of Indulgence.⁷² It was another two years before the licenses were recalled.⁷³ The king's decision to back down from his Declaration of Indulgence negatively impacted the Baptists and other Nonconformists, who faced considerable hardships in the later 1670s and much of the 1680s. In 1689, however, William III enacted a similarly tolerant approach known as the Toleration Act. It is in this context that we encounter a clear example of Grantham's utilitarian approach to government licenses.

The Toleration Act, 1689

Whiggish history has been prone to laud the Revolution of 1688 as a "Glorious" triumph for religious toleration, but in many ways the so-called Toleration Act enacted during the early reign of William III was deficient when compared with the Indulgences of James II in 1687 and 1688.⁷⁴ Technically speaking, the Toleration Act of 1689 was a

⁷²For the political context of the rescission, see Spurr, *England in the 1670s*, 36ff.; Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England 1661-89*, 47-70; and Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672*, 122-40.

⁷³Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672*, 140.

⁷⁴See Richard E. Boyer for an introduction to the Indulgences of 1687 and 1688, *English Declarations of Indulgence 1687-1688* (The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1968). Hugh Trevor-Roper also details the limitations and shortcomings of the Toleration Act, "Toleration and Religion after 1688," in *From Persecution to Toleration*, eds. Ole P. Grell, Jonathan I. Israel, and Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), in 389-408.

compromise which provided no laws or licenses to protect dissenters.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Nonconformists were still excluded from public office and universities. The Act did, however, repeal the punishment for Nonconformity under certain conditions.⁷⁶

Nonconformists could avoid facing punishment in civil and ecclesiastical courts for their unscrupulous behavior if they made certain public oaths. For those Quakers and sundry Baptists who opposed oaths, they could earn impunity by publicly confessing faith in the Trinity and belief in the inspiration of the scriptures. “Anabaptist” ministers were required to sign most of the “Thirty-Nine Articles,” with the twenty-seventh article on baptism being the exception. Nonconformists were given the latitude to worship publicly, with the doors unlocked, but only after they registered their meeting place with the local bishop or the Quarter Sessions. Instead of issuing licenses, Nonconformists were given a copy of the record of their oath or registration. Furthermore, Nonconformists were theoretically protected from the ire of bitter local magistrates since the latter were not allowed to reject or deny anyone intent on meeting the requirements.

In February of 1692 Nicholas Knowles recounted in a letter the early success and struggles of the Baptist presence in King’s Lynn following the issuance of the Toleration Act.⁷⁷ Sometime in late 1688 or 1689 James Marham and Grantham began working to establish a General Baptist presence in King’s Lynn. Marham secured a temporary meeting place in the Town Hall, where many “attentive Auditors, like hungry and thirsty

⁷⁵ Ambler points out that William’s plan for toleration amounted to a reluctant “acceptance of the failure of the Church of England to achieve the monopoly of religious practice envisaged for it in 1662,” *Churches, Chapels and Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900*, 47.

⁷⁶ The official title of the act is “An Act for Exempting their Majestyes Protestant Subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the Penalties of certaine Lawes.” The full text is available on the internet at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46304> (accessed 10 October 2008).

⁷⁷ *The Lyn Persecution* (n.p., 1692/3), 6-14. This short document was published anonymously.

Souls” attended to hear Grantham preach.⁷⁸ Grantham was so “exceedingly pleased” with the progress that he instructed Marham to secure “some convenient Place” in order that the “Meeting might be continued” in King’s Lynn.⁷⁹ The pulpit was filled by various preachers in the following months: Grantham, ministers from Whittelsey in Cambridgeshire, and William Long, who was sent to Norwich to assist Grantham.⁸⁰

Grantham sent Long to minister in King’s Lynn for a short time beginning in January of 1690 in order that the new congregation “might taste the Kindness of the London Brethren.”⁸¹ The congregation grew under Long’s leadership, and it was not long before local magistrates took notice. City leaders sent undercover informants to Baptist meetings, and subsequently accused the congregation of unlawful assembly and levied fines: twenty pounds for the meeting place, twenty pounds for the preacher, and five bounds for those who attended the meetings.

The magistrates did not know who to charge for the supposed violation of the Conventicle Act, so they called in Marham to find out who “hired” the meeting place.⁸² Marham admitted that he was responsible for securing the meeting place, to which his accusers replied that he must pay the twenty pounds for housing the worship of “new religion.”⁸³ Furthermore, they promised to discontinue the meetings and drive Marham out of the city if he persisted. Marham produced his copy of the record of the

⁷⁸Ibid., 11.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., 12.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

registration, but the magistrates' energies were unabated by the legality of the proceedings and the fines were imposed regardless. Marham's troubles continued for some time. He was jailed, his possessions were impounded, and his legal fees became more than even three Baptist congregations could pay.⁸⁴ Marham's case had not been resolved when *The Lyn Persecution* was printed in late February of 1692.⁸⁵

The narrative outlined above provides key insights into the nature of Grantham's leadership and understanding of Nonconformity. We do not know the extent of Grantham's personal compliance with the Toleration Act. Given his own appeals to the king, his request for a license in 1672, and his support of taking oaths in civil affairs,⁸⁶ it seems likely that he would have seen the Toleration Act as a means to solidify and protect his ministry in Norfolk. This conclusion is confirmed by Grantham's decision to encourage Marham to take advantage of toleration by officially registering a location for Baptist meetings. Grantham's advice to Marham to register a meeting place was intended to foster Baptist permanence in the city. In the short term, the legal and official means by which Marham obtained a meeting place were disregarded by local authorities who sought to disband the Baptists. In the long run, however, Grantham's efforts were somewhat successful, for there was a General Baptist presence in King's Lynn in contact with the General Assembly as late as 1801.⁸⁷

⁸⁴Ibid., 15.

⁸⁵*The Lyn Persecution* was published to alert Baptists in England to Marham's situation and garner support for his relief.

⁸⁶Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.23-28.

⁸⁷Whitley, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 1.xxxv-lxiii.

The local nature of harassment and persecution is also noteworthy in this episode. The events in King's Lynn illustrate well how latent local tensions over religiously tolerant royal policy could impact a young Baptist congregation. The earliest efforts of Grantham, Marham, and Long resulted in growth and an established General Baptist presence in King's Lynn. Consequently, Marham, who was not a native of Norfolk, shouldered much of the responsibility for defending the young congregation against attacks. Grantham had also faced persecutions in Norfolk in the early 1690s.⁸⁸ Whereas Grantham, also new to Norfolk, was accused of stealing sheep and other immoral behavior,⁸⁹ Marham was pressed on the legality of Baptist meetings. Grantham's efforts to clear his name by the testimony of witnesses resulted in his exculpation by the authorities in Norwich. Marham, on the other hand, produced all the necessary proof that his Baptists met legally yet he received no justice at the hands of the magistrates in King's Lynn. Grantham obviously understood the Toleration Act provided significant freedom and potential for growth, but he may have also overestimated the practical level of toleration resulting from the Act. Baptists had not been given "equal liberty" with Anglicans as Grantham wrote in 1691,⁹⁰ and local magistrates were not always willing to recognize what little liberty Nonconformists had been given.

⁸⁸See chapter two. See also, George Southcombe, "The Responses of Nonconformists to the Restoration in England" (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2005), 177-78.

⁸⁹See *The Slanderer Rebuked* (n.p., 1691) and *The Grand Imposter* (n.p., 1691).

⁹⁰Thomas Grantham to John Connould, 17 April 1691.

Grantham and the Government: The Loyal Baptist and Christianismus Primitivus

Baptist contributions to the struggle for religious liberty have been well-documented.⁹¹ H. Leon McBeth's excellent survey of seventeenth-century Baptist writings on religious liberty finds that the most significant Baptist literature on religious liberty in the seventeenth century was published before 1673.⁹² Moreover, McBeth determines that Baptists published little between 1673 and 1689 of any permanent significance in "content or influence."⁹³ A thorough investigation of Grantham's writings during these years, however, suggests that McBeth's negative conclusion regarding Baptist thought on religious liberty in the fourteen-year span is perhaps too sweeping and broad.

Where Grantham is concerned, McBeth's research focuses on *The Prisoner against the Prelate* (1662), *The Baptist against the Papist* (1663), *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678), *A Friendly Epistle* (1680), and *The Baptist Complaints against the Persecuting Priests* (date unknown).⁹⁴ McBeth concludes that Grantham did not deal extensively with the topic of religious liberty. This conclusion is surprising and deficient

⁹¹W. K. Jordan's four-volume *The Development of Religious Toleration in England* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932-1940) provides important context. For studies focused on Baptists in particular, see J. D. Hughey, Jr., "Baptists and Religious Freedom," *Baptist Quarterly* 17, no. 6 (April 1958): 249-55; William R. Estep, *Revolution within the Revolution: The First Amendment in Historical Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990); Walter B. Shurden, ed., *Religious Liberty* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1997); and John Coffey, "From Helwys to Leland: Baptists and Religious Tolerance in England and America, 1612-1791," in *The Gospel in the World*, ed. David Bebbington (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2002), 13-37.

⁹²McBeth, *English Baptist Literature on Religious Liberty to 1689*, 256.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 256-57. McBeth attributes this decline to several factors: an increase in harsh, restrictive laws; Baptists found it difficult to get their works printed; Baptists appealed frequently to previously-published materials; toleration was gradually becoming acceptable; Baptists shared in the spiritual decay of the period. His analysis of the documents from this period focuses on the confessions issued and the writings of Thomas Delaune, Grantham, and Benjamin Keach.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 239-44; 264ff.

for several reasons. First, McBeth fails to address the full gambit of Grantham's positions as presented in *Christianismus Primitivus*. He rightly draws attention to Grantham's distinction between "natural" religion and "positive" religion, but there is no discussion of Grantham's views on civil freedoms related to assemblies, marriage, burial, and poor relief. Second, and more even more detrimental to McBeth's overall conclusion, is the conspicuous absence of any mention or awareness of *The Loyal Baptist*, which Grantham published in 1674 and again in 1684. The pages below will argue that *Christianismus Primitivus* and *The Loyal Baptist*, when taken together, constitute a legitimate and significant theoretical contribution to seventeenth-century Baptist ecclesio-political life and thought. From the historian's perspective, they also reflect the parameters of civil life in which Baptists struggled following the withdrawal of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1673.⁹⁵

The Loyal Baptist, 1674 and 1684

Grantham's assertion in 1674 that Baptists were "loyal" to the king could be said of most Nonconformists of the period. The typical Nonconformist attitude toward the State in the seventeenth-century was one of loyalty, but those in positions of power were not usually capable of recognizing this. Events in London often precipitated persecution in the localities,⁹⁶ so the failed attempt by the House of Commons to pass a bill providing relief for Protestant dissenters and withdrawal of the Declaration of Indulgence in March

⁹⁵For more details see discussion above regarding the 1672 Declaration of Indulgence.

⁹⁶Seaward, *The Restoration, 1660-1688*, 58.

of 1673 left many “loyal” Nonconformists vulnerable to retaliation.⁹⁷ It is in this context of toleration extended and withdrawn that Grantham published *The Loyal Baptist: Or An Apology for the Baptized Believers* (1674).⁹⁸

Grantham argued in favor of a qualified loyalty to the king in 1674 when he published *The Loyal Baptist*. The treatise consists of two sermons (or discourses) on 1 Pet. 2:17: “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (Authorized Version of 1611). Grantham argues that these four duties are incumbent upon all Christians, and he was not alone in emphasizing the relevance of 1 Peter 2 in matters pertaining to a Christian’s responsibility to civil magistrates.

Nonconformist preachers and teachers often appealed to the thirteenth chapter of Romans when discussing the appropriate attitude toward governing authorities.⁹⁹

Another key passage, at least for General Baptists during the Restoration, was 1 Pet. 2:13-20. Article XXV of the *Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith* (which came to be known as *The Standard Confession*) Grantham delivered to Charles II in 1660 cites 1 Pet. 2:13-14 when speaking of the necessity and limits of Christian obedience to civil rulers:

We believe that there ought to be civil Magistrates in all Nations, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well, I Pet. 2.14. and that all wicked lewdness, and fleshly filthiness, contrary to just and wholesome

⁹⁷See Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672: A Study in the Rise of Organised Dissent*, 130. In 1673 a pamphlet entitled *Mr. Baxter Baptized in Blood* was published in England which alleged that Baptists in Boston, New England, had killed the Anglican minister Josiah Baxter because he had triumphed in a debate. An anonymous response from the Baptists in England soon appeared denying the charges, *Forgery detected and innocency vindicated* (London, 1673). The charges were proven to be false in a court of law, but it shows the ways in which Baptists were being publicly portrayed by opponents in 1673. See David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America* (Boston, MA: Lincoln and Edmands, 1813), 1.206-7.

⁹⁸Thomas Grantham, *The Loyal Baptist* (London, 1684). Hereafter cited as *The Loyal Baptist*. It should be noted the only accessible edition of this treatise was published in 1684. In the 1684 edition, Grantham included the title page from the 1674 edition immediately following the 1684 title page.

⁹⁹Evelyn D. Bebb, *Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life 1660-1800* (Philadelphia, PA: Porcupine Press, 1980), 77.

(Civil) Laws, ought to be punished according to the nature of the offences; and this without respect of any Persons, Religion, or profession whatsoever; and that all men are obliged by Gospel rules, to be subject to the higher powers, to obey Magistrates, Tit. 3.1 and to submit to every Ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, as saith Peter 2.13. But in case Civil Powers do, or shall at any time impose things about matters of Religion, which we through conscience to God cannot actually obey, then we with Peter also do say, that we ought (in such cases) to obey God rather than men; Acts 5:29.¹⁰⁰

The importance of 1 Pet. 2:13ff. is apparent in the excerpt quoted above, for it establishes the authority of civil rulers, the need to obey civil rulers, and the circumstances under which civil rulers are to be disobeyed. The *Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith* was repeatedly approved by the Assembly of General Baptists in the seventeenth century and became their “Standard Confession.” Similarly, article XLV of the General Baptist *Orthodox Creed* (1679) affirms the importance of civil magistrates and, among other scriptures, cites 1 Pet. 2:13, 17.¹⁰¹ Given its repeated appearance in General Baptist confessions of faith, 1 Peter 2 undoubtedly became recognizable as an important text for articulating a theology of the Christian's responsibility to civil magistrates. The consensus was that Baptists were commanded by scripture to be loyal to civil magistrates, but loyalty is always filtered “through conscience to God.”

Grantham's own thinking on the nature and extent of loyalty to civil magistrates is quite similar, and by using 1 Pet. 2:17 in particular, he expands the discussion of religious liberty by arguing that freedom brings responsibility. The first duty of any loyal Baptist is to honor and esteem all people. Grantham offers three reasons why Christians must honor everyone. First, all humans are “Equals by Creation, the Workmanship of the

¹⁰⁰William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 233.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 331.

Hands of God.”¹⁰² Second, God honors all humans through acts of providence, redemptive activity, and the preaching of peace.¹⁰³ Third, honoring others is an “effectual” means of convincing others of the veracity of Christianity.¹⁰⁴ Grantham concludes his thoughts on honoring all people with a warning to those who would “set up their Religion by Violence, Blood, and Treachery.” Those who abuse religion by employing violence on its behalf know neither Christ nor the “Divine Power of Christianity.”¹⁰⁵

Grantham interprets love for the “brotherhood” to be a “more special kind of love” than Christians have for the world’s general population. More specifically, Grantham takes “the brotherhood” in two senses. In a broader sense it includes all who “. . . hold to the Bible as the only rule of faith; believe in the Trinity; believe that Jesus died and was resurrected in order to justify sinners; and live sober lives according to the dictates of Christianity.”¹⁰⁶ In a more narrow sense, “the brotherhood” includes “truly constituted and well-governed Societies of Christians.” In this stricter sense Grantham assumes that God “undoubtedly” desires that Christianity be established in “all Nations.”¹⁰⁷ On a practical level, Grantham encourages his readers to “love the

¹⁰²Grantham, *The Loyal Baptist*, 7.

¹⁰³Ibid., 8-10. Grantham argues for a broad conception of “humanity.” In this section he takes all humans to be part of a “humane Fraternity” which is “antecedent” to any secondary association.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 13.

brotherhood” through practices such as prayer, defending reputations, meeting physical needs, and preserving peace and prosperity.¹⁰⁸

“To fear God,” Grantham claims, “is indeed a Duty incumbent upon all Men, and not upon Christians only.”¹⁰⁹ What Grantham means by this is that all people should “stand in awe” of God’s majesty and splendor. Those who fear God rightly will be freed from fear of others and will give to God that which belongs to God (i.e., religious obedience). Where obedience to princes is concerned, Grantham writes that those with a healthy fear of God “Will not resist the power of princes; yet will he do what God commands, tho all the Princes in the World forbid him; nor will he do what God forbids, tho all the Princes in the World should command it.”¹¹⁰ While Grantham denies the prince any claim to religious obedience, it is clear that he thought princes were obligated to “promote the Interest of Religion” and offer “Encouragement to the Lovers of it.”¹¹¹ For Grantham, then, the Church and government are not necessarily two separate spheres which never interact. In fact, it is the duty of all rulers appointed by God to foster an environment in which Christianity can flourish.

The fourth and final section of *The Loyal Baptist* addresses directly the issues of kingship and the nature of loyalty to earthly rulers. It is in this discussion that Grantham lays out a defense of government and kingship. He notes that the command to “honor the King” in 1 Pet. 2:17 does not refer to any king of Israel or Jesus, but rather it references a

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 17.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 20.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 24-25.

¹¹¹Ibid., 26.

“heathen king.”¹¹² In addition to 1 Peter 2, Grantham also cites Rom. 13:1 in support of his claim that “Christians are bound by Gospel-Rules to be good Subjects to Princes, to honour their Persons, and conscientiously to obey their Authority.”¹¹³ This does not mean, however, that princes rule independently of God.¹¹⁴

Grantham also addresses several possible objections to his views on obedience by listing those actions which are not appropriate for loyal Christian subjects. Are Christians only to obey those governing authorities established by God? There were apparently some whom Grantham encountered that thought so, but he would have none of this. Grantham ultimately grounds all secular authority and governing power in God’s decision to establish or topple human regimes. Thus any government, regardless of the type or quality, is to be obeyed since it has been established by God.

Are Christians to obey rulers who act inappropriately and oppress their subjects? Grantham argues that the only “remedy” for such circumstances is “patient suffering.”¹¹⁵ Grantham does allow for “humble Supplication, to seek for Favour,” much like what he presented to Charles II in 1660 and 1672, but beyond that the Christian has no recourse.¹¹⁶ “Rebellion,” Grantham states unequivocally, “must by no means be admitted.”¹¹⁷ Even if a ruler decides to “entrench upon the Civil Rights” of loyal subjects, Grantham forbids retaliation. Grantham even warns against “dreaming” about

¹¹²Ibid., 3.

¹¹³Ibid.,.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 30.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

regime change. For Grantham, then, there is no limit to the obedience and submission of Christian citizens to ruling authorities. Kings should extend religious liberty and toleration, but Christians should not seek to obtain their freedom at the expense of loyalty to those who rule over them. In this regard Grantham's theological theory of resistance and revolution is shown to be quite different than any of those Baptists who had cooperated with the Levellers or Fifth Monarchists of years past.

Grantham's message regarding loyalty was not all negative. Going in a more positive direction with regard to loyalty, Grantham urges his fellow Baptists to esteem the king, honor him in love, and refrain from speaking evil of him.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Christian subjects are to remember always their position in the divinely-ordained hierarchy, "for Obedience seldom issues from a lofty Mind."¹¹⁹ Based on *The Loyal Baptist*, Grantham conceives of a three-tiered system with God at the top: God → Rulers (Grantham does not assume these to always be Christian authorities) → Subjects (which includes Christians and non-Christians). By calling his fellow Baptists to value all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king, Grantham basically provided persecuted seventeenth-century Baptists with a comprehensive model of civil behavior. Moreover, he portrayed the Baptists as a loyal group of Christians who sought the best for country and king.

Grantham must have been pleased with the original publication of *The Loyal Baptist* in 1674, for he published a second edition a decade later. The legal situation facing many Baptists in 1684 was similar to that of 1674: persecution. Persecution of Nonconformists intensified in the aftermath of the discovery of the so-called Rye House

¹¹⁸Ibid., 31-32.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 33.

Plot in 1683. Regardless of whether the plot was a reality, anti-Catholic conspirators were accused of planning to assassinate Charles II and his brother James (both of whom had Catholic sympathies). The supposed plan was foiled, but in the aftermath the recusancy laws normally used against Catholics were increasingly employed against Protestant dissenters. Dissenters were accused of rioting when the government elevated efforts to collect fines. Reaction in some areas became so volatile that dragoons were almost called upon to suppress the dissenters.¹²⁰

It is not clear what changes, if any, Grantham made in terms of the content of *The Loyal Baptist* between 1674 and 1684, for only a copy from 1684 survives. Since the 1684 edition included the original title page from 1674, it is likely that the 1684 publication was a reprint and not a revision. The one significant addition in 1684 was an appended document entitled *The Second Part of the Apology* where Grantham critiques Nathaniel Taylor's arguments in favor of infant baptism.¹²¹

The 1684 edition of *The Loyal Baptist* concludes with personal pleas to the Baptists and Charles II. Regardless of whether the same pleas were present in the 1674 edition, they were equally applicable in the similarly difficult circumstances of 1684. Grantham encouraged his fellow Baptists to "humble themselves" and "suffer patiently what Trials it shall please God to exercise you under."¹²² Grantham hoped a copy of *The Loyal Baptist* would find its way into the hands of the king, and if it did, Charles would

¹²⁰John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England 1660-1688* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 191-93. See also Watts, *The Dissenters*, 1.255ff., who describes the increased persecution of dissenters following the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament in 1681. There was no relief until 1686 when James II dispensed with the Test Act and issued a general pardon to Dissenters.

¹²¹The two documents probably circulated together. For a brief discussion of Grantham's response to Taylor, see pages 69-76 of this dissertation ("Thomas Grantham in Mid Life [1673-1685].")

¹²²*Ibid.*, 39.

have read this personal appeal regarding the plight of the Baptists: “O let our Lord the King consider, that this is the greatest strait that any honest Christian can be put upon, either to deny what he believes to be true, or profess that to be true, which he believes to be otherwise.”¹²³

Christianismus Primitivus, 1678

Christianismus Primitivus is generally considered to be Grantham’s crowning literary and theological achievement. Joseph Ivimey thought it to be Grantham’s “principal” work, while Whitley called it “a repertory of learning for [Grantham’s] denomination.”¹²⁴ William H. Brackney boldly asserts it “may be fairly accorded first place chronologically among Baptist ‘systematic’ theologies.”¹²⁵ McBeth describes Grantham as the “greatest” General Baptist of the seventeenth century and claims *Christianismus Primitivus* was the “greatest” Baptist writing of the seventeenth century, yet he does not seem to consider Grantham’s discussion of religious liberty and toleration in *Christianismus Primitivus* (or *The Loyal Baptist*) to be a significant contribution similar to the Baptist documents which appeared before 1673.¹²⁶ The preceding discussion of *The Loyal Baptist* showed that McBeth’s conclusions need revision, and the following analysis of *Christianismus Primitivus* demonstrates this need even more emphatically.

¹²³Ibid., 40.

¹²⁴Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1814), 2.277. See also William T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1932), 134-35.

¹²⁵William H. Brackney, “Thomas Grantham, Systematic Theology, and the Baptist Tradition” in *From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith: Essays in Honor of Lee Martin McDonald*, eds. William H. Brackney and Craig A. Evans (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 216.

¹²⁶McBeth, *English Baptist Literature on Religious Liberty to 1689*, 239, 264.

The Loyal Baptist predominantly addresses freedom of religion and the duties of Christians toward civil magistrates in abstract ways. In *Christianismus Primitivus*, however, Grantham develops in greater detail the practical and theological foundation for a Christian subject's interaction with authority. The bulk of the material related to the relationship between religion and government is found in the third book, "Of divers Cases of Conscience." Grantham basically divides his attention between issues related to the "rulers of this world"¹²⁷ and those matters pertaining to "Duty of all Christians to Civil Governors and Government."¹²⁸

Grantham delineates the parameters of magisterial authority in several ways. He affirms the basic equality of magistrates to their subjects by pointing out that all people are stewards, but some are appointed by God to be stewards of a "higher Rank."¹²⁹ Those who have been given this esteemed position have the responsibility to enact prudent laws, administer justice, and act mercifully. Where the laws are concerned, Grantham plainly rejects basing legislation on biblical principles: "as to the particular Laws for the Civil Government of such or such Nations, the Scriptures cannot be the Platform."¹³⁰ Grantham rejects the idea that the New Testament was "written as a Form of Government for any one Nation . . . much less to be a Form of Government to all Nations," and he is similarly hesitant to claim that the Law of Moses is "fitted for the civil policy of all nations."¹³¹ Grantham does not intend that the scriptures be ignored in making laws, but

¹²⁷Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.12.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 3.1.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 3.13.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 3.18.

what he does mean is that any law which is passed should in no way contradict God's law or reason.

It is helpful at this point to explore the relationship between civil statutes and God's law. Grantham makes a rather intriguing distinction between "Natural Religion" and "Positive Religion." It is not clear where or when he picked up this notion of religious distinction. He may have encountered the terms in conversations concerning the increasingly popular Deistic idea that intrinsic to all humanity is a basic and primitive natural religion. Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) pioneered this kind of thinking, and the ideas were later developed by thinkers such as John Locke (1632-1704) and Matthew Tindal (1657-1733). Though Deism did not reach its peak until after Grantham's death, many of the ideas circulated during his lifetime.¹³² By the eighteenth century "natural religion" had come to mean that all rational beings could infer the presence of a creator by observing the design of the world. "Positive religion," on the other hand, involved the particular claims to truth made by the various religious sects. Chris A. M. Hermans defines the distinction clearly when labeling natural religion as the genus and the sundry religious expressions as conceptualized species of the one genus.¹³³

While Grantham never describes what he has in mind as "Positive Religion," he does use Rom. 1:21 to define the natural sense of religion common to all people which knows and recognizes "one God, the Maker, and Preserver of all things; whom therefore all are bound to love, and serve, by being thankful for the Blessings they receive daily at

¹³²Peter Gay finds that Deism in England was strongest from about 1690-1740, *Deism: An Anthology* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1968), 9-10.

¹³³Chris A. M. Hermans, *Participatory Learning: Religious Education in a Globalizing Society* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2003), 149. See also Nicholas Lash, *The Beginning and the End of "Religion"* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15-16.

his Hands, and to glorifie him only as their God.”¹³⁴ For Grantham, then, it follows that since this natural religion is discernable by all people the enforcement of its principles is included in the duties of civil magistrates.¹³⁵ In short, if all have access to natural religion, then all are to be held accountable for transgressing it. Punishable violations of natural religion for Grantham include “open idolatry” and “worshipping and serving a Creature” instead of the creator.¹³⁶ Grantham does not speak too specifically regarding additional problems, but he does allude to “vice and debauchery” as the “Enemy” of all religion.¹³⁷

Grantham is clearly calling for the freedom to worship according to commands of God, but he is not interested in a latitudinal society in which all citizens do what they wish in the name of religious freedom. While McBeth was reluctant to admit that the large majority of seventeenth-century Baptists advocated anything less than complete religious liberty “for those of every religion or none,”¹³⁸ John Coffey is right to call for a more “nuanced and complex conclusion.”¹³⁹ Grantham’s views may have been more radical in his own day, but he does not seem to have owned ideas similar to more modern notions of freedom from religion. Grantham sought freedom for religion. Nonetheless, Grantham’s larger point in this section of *Christianismus Primitivus* is that magistrates do

¹³⁴Ibid., 3.16.

¹³⁵McBeth, *English Baptist Literature on Religious Liberty to 1689*, 266.

¹³⁶Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.17. Grantham cites Job 31:26-27 in support of these claims.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸McBeth, *English Baptist Literature on Religious Liberty to 1689*, 277.

¹³⁹Coffey, “From Helwys to Leland: Baptists and Religious Tolerance in England and America, 1612-1791,” 21.

have a role to play in religion, but their involvement is confined to those elements which would fall under the category of “Natural Religion.”

In keeping with his understanding of natural religion, Grantham writes all rulers should make laws that prevent the “Ruine” of citizenzs and vindicate “the Civil Rights of all Men.”¹⁴⁰ Magistrates are also to enforce laws with a strong sense of justice and mercy.¹⁴¹ He calls all rulers to rule justly by avoiding what he considers to be the three most common barriers to the successful dispensation of justice: lack of courage, bribery, and partiality. Good rulers, according to Grantham, believe that justice mingled with mercy is the best approach. In this way, Grantham suggests that justice and mercy are indispensable aspects of a magistrate’s duty to his or her subjects.

Grantham is not content to speak only in positive terms about civil authority. He calls attention as well to two specific practices which fall outside of the religious jurisdiction of civil rulers. The first is related to General Assemblies, or Church councils. Grantham writes that it is a “most virtuous thing” for a ruler to convene a general assembly, but he denies the ruler the right to demand that the various local churches conform to the assembly’s findings.¹⁴² Here Grantham admits the legitimacy of past councils like Nicaea, but he stops short of granting them any absolute authority comparable to that of the scriptures. The independence of the local congregation is paramount, and Grantham goes so far as to claim that it is the “Priviledge” of all local

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 3.15-19.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 3.14-15.

¹⁴²Ibid., 2.138. Grantham does add that the baptized would gladly attend such a meeting if allowed, 2.143.

congregations to initiate a general assembly. For this reason, and since he did not consider Baptist meeting seditious, Grantham refused to admit that Baptists should adhere to the demands of the Conventicle Act (passed in 1664 and renewed in 1670).¹⁴³ Second, Grantham contends that persecution on account of differing “Apprehensions about Christianity” is inexcusable.¹⁴⁴ As witnesses to such a claim, he appeals to the testimony of antiquity, the learned opinion of Dr. Jeremiah Taylor, and Charles’s own letter from Breda.¹⁴⁵ In this argument it is clear that Grantham is mixing his views of the freedom and independence of local congregations with his conception of general assemblies of Christian congregations. The ultimate guide in any assembly, large or small, is the clear teaching of the scriptures.

In *Christianismus Primitivus* Grantham also speaks to a range of practical civil issues pertaining to baptized believers. He is forthcoming about his strong belief that government should be obeyed because it is ordained by God for the benefit of all people, yet he cautiously warns his readers against collapsing the distinctions between the Church and the State. He writes: “Christ’s Church consists not of Nations in gross . . . [the

¹⁴³Ibid., 3.48-50. This type of resistance is consistent with his claim that in cases where human law goes against that which God requires, Christians must choose the latter. Where the Conventicle Act is concerned, his claim is built on three conclusions. First, he claims that obedience would imply that government has the right to divide assemblies as often as it sees fit. Second, he writes that the act does not apply to Baptist meetings because they are not seditious. But if the government persists in enforcing the act, Baptists should not dissolve their meetings because, as the true Church, they have the right to meet regardless of the number. Grantham here appeals to the example of the practice of the churches in the New Testament.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 3.21.

¹⁴⁵Grantham includes excerpts from Jeremiah Taylor’s *Theologia eklektike. A discourse of the liberty of prophesying. Shewing the unreasonableness of prescribing to other mens faith, and the iniquity of persecuting differing opinions* (London, 1647). When Joshua Toulmin edited Daniel Neal’s *History of Puritanism*, he wrote that Taylor “stated the opinion of the Antipaedobaptists with such advantages of style and elaborate chain of argument, that he was thought to have said more for the Baptists than they were able to say for themselves,” (Bath: R. Cruttwell, 1795), 3.521.

Church] must have a Government distinct from the Government of Nations, although she is to be as subject to National Government.”¹⁴⁶

Insistence on a clear distinction between Church and government does not, however, preclude Christians from serving in the government. In fact, Grantham claims that it is just as much a citizen’s birthright to expect protection from civil rulers as it is to be the instrument by which others are protected.¹⁴⁷ There is a caveat: “[T]hough a Christian may lawfully be a Magistrate, yet he is not this as he is a Christian, but as a Man, ordained of God to Rule Men as Men, and not as Christians: And though a Man be no Christian, yet being by God’s Providence put into Authority, is as lawful a Magistrate as if he were a Christian.”¹⁴⁸ For Grantham, a Christian may attain the highest civil office in the land, but that does not mean that upon installment the Christian ruler automatically assumes the authority to govern other Christians in religious matters. In other words, the assumption of exclusive civil authority by a Christian does not translate into religious authority. Likewise, the legitimacy of a magistrate’s authority is not contingent upon his or her identification with Christianity.¹⁴⁹ Timothy George notes that this type of positive view of civil authority effectively creates a space for “civic loyalty and religious conviction [which] enabled the Baptists to work for positive change within the political system.”¹⁵⁰ One particular avenue for civil involvement which Grantham affirmed was military service, conscripted or otherwise.

¹⁴⁶Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.18.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 3. 51-52.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 3.19.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰George, “Between Pacifism and Coercion: The English Baptist Doctrine of Religious Toleration,” 47.

On the subject of military service, Grantham writes that Christians are first and foremost a people of peace. War between nations, he claims, is a sign that God is angry. As undesirable as war may be, Grantham permits Christians to bear arms and, if need be, take the life of another human if it will protect the “common justice.”¹⁵¹ Proof for his claim is found in the examples of John the Baptist and Cornelius. John the Baptist did not instruct his followers to resign their military posts, nor did Cornelius leave the Roman military upon his conversion. Grantham insists that the causes for war and battle should be just and honorable, but the final determination in these types of circumstances rests with the civil ruler who is responsible for making such decisions and not the individual conscience of the citizen. Magistrates, then, in Grantham’s mind, have the authority to wage war; Christians are not exempted from service.

The English Baptists of the seventeenth century did abstain from worshipping in the established Church of England, but they did not withdraw from parish life *in toto*. There were many ways in which they continued to interact and contribute to their communities. One of the ways English citizens testified to the truth was by taking an oath. Quakers were roundly criticized for their adamant refusal to take oaths; Baptists were more ambivalent.¹⁵² Grantham argues that oaths, unlike murder and idolatry, are not sinful in and of themselves. Rather, an oath is a permissible method for testifying to the truth before a magistrate because it “seems to be part of that Religion which is

¹⁵¹Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.54.

¹⁵²For a comparison of Baptist and Quaker reactions see Ted L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb’s War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 96-98.

Universal.”¹⁵³ Grantham traces the controversy over oaths to two key biblical passages: Matthew 5:34 and James 5:12. He insists that these passages do not abrogate the law established in the Pentateuch, and further supports the use of oaths by pointing out that God, angels, and various holy men all took oaths. He concludes his treatment of oaths by noting that the greatest attack on the practice of oath-taking has been the efforts of some civil authorities to impose “grievous Oaths, even such as may neither be lawful for them to impose, nor for others to accept.”¹⁵⁴

Seventeenth-century English Baptist marriage mores were quite restrictive. Grantham, like most Baptists, advocated endogamous marriage.¹⁵⁵ That being said, he was equally averse to the wedding of “near of Kin” and the dissolution of marriages on any grounds other than infidelity.¹⁵⁶ *Christianismus Primitivus* does not address directly the civil implications of Baptist marriages, but in 1689 Grantham published his thoughts on “the Manner of Marriages among the Baptized Believers” in a very revealing postscript to *Truth and Peace* (1689).¹⁵⁷ The postscript elucidates the complicated situation under which Baptists developed their matrimonial theology. Baptists were forced to oversee their own marriages since Anglican priests would not generally marry those guilty of Nonconformity. In the absence of a government-sanctioned ceremony,

¹⁵³Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.25. By “Universal” Grantham could be referring to Natural Religion, but it could also mean that oath-taking is universally-practiced. It is possible that he had both in mind with the latter being a reflection of the former.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 3.28.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 3.38. See Bill Stevenson, “The Social Integration of post-Restoration Dissenters, 1660-1725,” in *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725*, ed. Margaret Spufford (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 361ff. See also White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 139-45.

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 3.38-41. Grantham did not support dissolving a marriage in which one spouse became Baptist after the wedding.

¹⁵⁷Grantham, *Truth and Peace* (London, 1689), 74ff.

Baptists defied established marital customs by marrying each other in a private ceremony with friends and family. To ratify the marriage, they apparently drew up their own marriage certificates and provided “Counsel or Instruction” to the new couple.¹⁵⁸

Grantham also informs the reader that in Baptist marriages “no Man takes upon him the Office to marry any, that being the proper Act of the Parties themselves.”¹⁵⁹ This phrase suggests that the ministers present at Baptist marriage ceremonies had no official capacity or power to marry. A few pages later in the postscript Grantham makes it even more clear: “we can find no ground to believe that to celebrate Marriage is a ministerial act (though a Minister may do it) yet we do not refuse the Ministers of the Church of England, because such, but because they will not ratify our Contracts unless we conform to such things as seem to us to be sinful.”¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, Grantham points out that the scriptures impose no particular ceremony for the marriage occasion. His point is that in the absence of any biblical mandate, “let no Man judge one another to unlawfully married, because some Ceremonies devised by Men are not observed.”¹⁶¹ Marriages performed ceremoniously or unceremoniously are legitimate, Grantham argues, therefore Baptist marriages should be recognized.

The exclusion of persistent Nonconformists from nuptial ceremonies highlights the social alienation many dissenters experienced in seventeenth-century England.

¹⁵⁸The text of the sample certificate included in the postscript is available in APPENDIX F. This raises intriguing questions about Baptist conceptions of their own marriages. Does the situation described by Grantham amount to common-law marriage? Possibly, especially if one takes the perspective of the government or Church of England. It seems that the Baptists, by drawing up on their own certificates, were possibly attempting to legitimate the unions in their own way so as not to be guilty of immorality.

¹⁵⁹Grantham, *Truth and Peace*, 75.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*, 77.

Looking beyond the theological basis for endogamous marriage, it is not surprising that dissenters like Grantham's Baptists looked inward for suitable marriage partners.

Moreover, Grantham's writings show that Baptists had taken important steps to support and certify new couples.

Baptist alienation at the parish level is also evident in Grantham's treatment of poor relief and burials. Poor relief in the seventeenth century was carried out by the vestry of the local parish; the vestry determined the rate of payment and the dispensation of aid.¹⁶² In rural areas or smaller parishes applications were probably made in person, and one's fortune in securing relief could depend on several factors ranging from personal sympathy to how often one frequented the alehouse.¹⁶³ Grantham supported paying the parish taxes for the benefit of the needy, but he was upset that Baptists were denied access to these funds in their own time of need. He describes poor relief as the "Birth Priviledges" of all citizens, and goes on to characterize the neglect of the Baptist poor as "irrational."¹⁶⁴ In this same section Grantham attacks the practice of denying Baptists access to burial plots on the common land. "The Burial of the Dead," he writes, "is a Moral duty." Again Grantham notes that it is "not rational" to expect Baptists to pay for the upkeep of cemeteries only to be barred from being buried there.¹⁶⁵ To

¹⁶²See Lynn A. Botelho, *Old Age and the English Poor Law, 1500-1700* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2004), 21-22. See also Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-9, 27-39. Peter M. Solar has shown that English poor relief differed from continental relief in several ways ("Poor Relief and English Economic Development before the Industrial Revolution," *The Economic History Review* 48, no. 1 [February 1995]: 3-5). One, all parishes were responsible for organizing their own relief, which was to be available to all men and women. Two, poor relief in England was financed by a local property tax. Solar also finds that poor relief was better organized in rural areas.

¹⁶³Botelho, *Old Age and the English Poor Law, 1500-1700*, 22.

¹⁶⁴Grantham, *Christianismus Primitivus*, 3.55.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 56.

illustrate the point, Grantham narrates how the corpse of Robert Shalder, a Baptist of Croft, had been removed from the ground and left unburied in front in front of his family's home.¹⁶⁶ Grantham's comments related to poor relief and burials demonstrate the extent to which Baptists participated in, and contributed to, the welfare of their local communities. They also illustrate that Baptists expected to share in the many benefits of parish life; these expectations often went unfulfilled.

This examination of *Christianismus Primitivus* has shown that Grantham undoubtedly supported the government's role in maintaining peace and security in England. He recognizes that rulers have some duties in regulating religion, at least that natural religion which is accessible to all subjects. He affirms a magistrate's duty to pass just laws and enforce them with fairness, impartiality, and mercy. Civil rulers may convene an assembly of Christians, but they may not coerce their subjects to attend or accept the assembly's decisions as absolute authority on a par with the Bible. Furthermore, rulers of this world should not trouble subjects by imposing divergent beliefs regarding the particulars of the Christian religion.

Grantham provides multiple reasons that Baptists should not be considered revolutionary. At the same time, he details the reasons why, in some cases, Baptists must disobey governmental demands. Grantham is trying to make the point that Baptists are opposed to revolution, yet he also clearly defines which areas of the establishment need revision. In this way, he demonstrates those ways in which Baptists were both conservative and radical.

¹⁶⁶See also Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.239; and Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution*, 1.233.

What he does not address in *Christianismus Primitivus* (or *The Loyal Baptist* for that matter) is also noteworthy. First, he does not speak to the difference between local and national magistrates. What is the appropriate course of action when local demands conflict with the king or Parliament? One answer, as we have seen, is that Baptists were willing to appeal over the heads of local magistrates. Second, Grantham does not speak to elections or voting. It is unclear what percentage of Baptists in the post-Restoration years would have been eligible to vote, but information related to seventeenth-century Baptist thoughts on the process would provide additional insights into their political theory and practice. Third, Grantham does not address the tension that would inevitably arise when Christian nations war against each other. What are the limits of Christian loyalty to civil rulers when taking the life of another Christian is involved?

These types of questions point to what George describes as an “unresolved tension” in Baptist conceptions of the State in the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁷ Gary S. De Krey identifies four prominent types of published arguments for liberty of conscience in the post-Restoration years during which Grantham ministered.¹⁶⁸ Writers such as John Owen, John Humfrey, and Philip Nye based their conclusions on natural law and “defended the historical claims of the English crown to authority over a religious establishment.”¹⁶⁹ What proponents of this position sought, then, was freedom not to embrace the established religious settlement. A second position promulgated by some focused on the idea that liberty of conscience is beneficial for the State. De Krey notes

¹⁶⁷George, “Between Pacifism and Coercion: The English Baptist Doctrine of Religious Toleration,” 49.

¹⁶⁸Gary S. De Krey, “Rethinking the Restoration: Dissenting Cases for Conscience, 1667-1672,” *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 1 (March 1995): 53-83.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 57.

that authors were not confined to one approach by showing that Humfrey also argued this position. A third case for conscience voiced by the likes of Sir Charles Wolseley and William Penn worked from natural law arguments to deny the government any significant jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs. In this view, Christians have the responsibility and ability to determine whether their religious behavior is consistent with divine mandates. Furthermore, magistrates, who may or may not be Christian, are required by God to enforce natural religion. De Krey points out, however, that according to this line of thinking magistrates should not regulate particular doctrines or practices because a magistrate's temporal power begins and ends outside the Church. A fourth and final case for conscience used the Hebrew and Christian prophetic tradition of millennial imagery to make the point that religious persecution signaled a coming judgment.

While Grantham's writings included examples from all four of De Krey's categories, the third category seems to reflect best Grantham's position. The point here is not to pigeon-hole Grantham but to situate him in his own context. Grantham employed arguments of natural law, affirmed the magistrate's to uphold that law, and denied the State any serious influence in the Church's affairs. Grantham's assent to Christian service in the government and military was consistent with other Baptist sentiments of the period, but with such service the possibility of coercion in the spiritual realm is also introduced. Coffey finds that Baptist enthusiasm for toleration subsided towards the end of the seventeenth century, and Baptist writings were "far more cautious" in advocating complete toleration.¹⁷⁰ He ascribes this trend to an increased level of persecution which forced Baptists to concentrate on their survival. In some ways Grantham exemplifies this

¹⁷⁰Coffey, "From Helwys to Leland: Baptists and Religious Tolerance in England and America, 1612-1791," 21.

trend well. His arguments for religious toleration were securely fastened to an assumption that idolatrous or irreligious behavior would be punished. Moreover, he believed that civil rulers should create an environment conducive to the practice of Christianity. When seen in this light, Grantham and the Baptists he represented were not as radical as some accounts would suggest.

It is true that on many levels Baptists were quite different from their Catholic, Presbyterian, and Anglican neighbors. They refused to baptize their infants, bow before the altar, and make the sign of the cross. Historians are often tempted to emphasize the unique or unexpected at the expense of the ordinary or normal. Yet the kind of baptized believers Grantham describes in *The Loyal Baptist* and *Christianismus Primitivus* would have been, or desired to be, quite similar to their Conformist neighbors on many other levels: oaths, civil service, military service, marriage, payment and receipt of poor relief, and the use of public cemeteries. It is important to remember that for the many Baptists who continued to live and work within the parish structure of seventeenth-century England, loyalty meant contributing to the greater good of their communities and their country.

This investigation of Grantham's major writings on religion and the government, *The Loyal Baptist* (1674 and 1684) and *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678), suggests that at least one Baptist was producing fresh, creative, and significant literature on religious freedom between 1673 and 1689. That McBeth's study finds few others doing so during this period renders Grantham's contributions all the more important. In addition, the present study shows that *The Loyal Baptist* is a significant but overlooked Baptist treatise on the practical and theoretical nature of Christian interaction with the State.

Conclusion

There was no single theory of the proper relationship between the Church and the State out of which all Nonconformists acted in seventeenth-century England. Baptists themselves disagreed on the question. This chapter has examined one Baptist's contributions to Baptist relations with the government from 1660 to 1689. Grantham's writings and actions are important because they provide at least two valuable insights: 1) what Baptists *thought* about civil government, and 2) how Baptists actually *interacted* with civil government.

On the practical level, persecuted General Baptists in Lincolnshire actively sought to gain the king's sympathy in 1660, 1661, and 1672. On all three occasions Grantham was a central figure in writing, signing, and delivering petitions to Charles II. In 1672 large numbers of Baptists took advantage of the Declaration of Indulgence and registered for licenses; Grantham was among them. In so doing, licensed Baptists joined many of their dissenting neighbors in declaring the usefulness of some governmental intervention in religious affairs. That roughly half of all Baptist ministers registered with the government under the provisions of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 suggests that many Baptists were not opposed in principle to accepting governmental protection. In 1689 Grantham urged Marham to register a meeting place for worship in Norfolk. Marham likely took an oath in order to complete the registration process. Grantham's discussion of Christian magistrates, military service, marriage, poor relief, and cemeteries implies that Baptists were fairly integrated into parish life. In all of this, Grantham personally supported and directed Baptist interactions with national and local magistrates in order to uphold the common good and protect Baptists from false accusations. While

his efforts to protect Baptists from hostility were not always successful, Grantham consistently exhibited a willingness to cooperate with the government as much as possible.

Grantham's theoretical arguments are also instructive. Baptists, he argued, are to subjugate themselves to Government because civil authority exists by divine decree. On numerous occasions he reported that his Baptists were loyal English subjects who harbored no seditious desires. Yet it is clear from this chapter that there were limits to Baptist obedience. Grantham's constructive framework concerning the government and the Christian's posture toward government is probably best described as a "qualified loyalty." Examples of this qualified loyalty are present in the petitions Grantham presented to Charles II, *The Loyal Baptist*, and *Christianismus Primitivus*. In all of these one finds an unmistakable and unabashed Baptist commitment to obey the commands of God even in the unfortunate event that they come into direct conflict with the laws established by earthly magistrates.

Grantham's efforts to convince the civil rulers that the Baptists were a peaceable and legitimate movement were integral to the culmination of his ministry as a Messenger and apologist, making him one of the leading General Baptist figures from 1660 until his death in 1692. In the eighteenth century Grantham was remembered for representing Baptists before the king. Grantham Killingworth, Thomas Grantham's grandson, erected in Norfolk a memorial in honor of his grandfather which, among other things, recounts Thomas Grantham's successful audience with Charles II: "...Who delivered to the King Charles II our declaration of faith, And also presented to him a remonstrance against

persecution, Both were kindly received and redress of grievances promised.”¹⁷¹ Further recognition of Grantham’s labors to exculpate the Baptists in the eyes of the government came in Thomas Crosby’s *The History of the English Baptists* (1738-40). In his *History*, which was the first serious attempt at a history of the Baptists, Crosby made special mention of Grantham’s audiences with Charles II. He even included the full text of *Narrative and Complaint*.¹⁷² Grantham’s significance is even more apparent when we consider that Crosby was working with manuscripts and notes originally collected and organized by the Particular Baptist Benjamin Stinton (1676-1719). Thus, historically-minded Baptists in the first half of the eighteenth century seem to have valued Grantham’s leadership, for in the seventeenth century he was the one who “encouraged the churches under the sufferings, and chiefly directed them in all their proceedings.”¹⁷³

¹⁷¹For the full text of the memorial see APPENDIX B. The text of the memorial is found in Charles B. Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1957), 29.

¹⁷²Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 2.19ff.; 3.76-83.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, 3.90.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Thomas Grantham was a prominent and influential General Baptist leader during the second half of the seventeenth century. The historiographical survey in Chapter One outlined the variety of ways in which Grantham has been studied. Early historians of the English Baptists of the seventeenth century included Grantham in their chronicles of important Baptist figures. Thomas Crosby, William Richard, Joseph Ivimey, and Adam Taylor all agreed that Grantham was a formative influence among the baptized believers, especially those of the General Baptist persuasion in Lincolnshire and Norfolk. In the twentieth century, scholars such as William T. Whitley, A. C. Underwood, Barrington, R. White, and H. Leon McBeth began looking to Grantham as part of an ongoing effort to draw more informed conclusions about early Baptist life and thought. More recently, historians and theologians are finding Grantham useful in their attempts to better understand the development of Baptist theology and practice in relation to other Nonconformists. The work of Ted L. Underwood and George Southcombe exemplify such an approach. Finally, the historiographical survey revealed that Grantham has long been acknowledged as a seminal General Baptist theologian, but it was not until William H. Brackney's 2007 essay, "Thomas Grantham, Systematic Theology, and the Baptist Tradition," that a much-needed introduction to Grantham's "systematic" theology appeared.¹

¹William H. Brackney, "Thomas Grantham, Systematic Theology, and the Baptist Tradition" in William H. Brackney and Craig A. Evans, eds., *From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith: Essays in Honor of Lee Martin McDonald* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 199-216.

A scholarly consensus exists regarding the significant impact Thomas Grantham had on seventeenth-century General Baptist life. Scholars rightly identify Grantham's wide-ranging literary corpus as a major theological achievement, with *Christianismus Primitivus* being the chief work. There is little reason to doubt that Grantham's writings greatly affected the trajectory of General Baptist theology. A noticeable lacuna in the historiography, however, is any sustained contemporary analysis of the nature and impact of Grantham's leadership. Neither Grantham's immediate impact in the seventeenth century nor his legacy should be confined to his ideas or writings. His theology was shaped and formed in the context of a traveling ministry and constant interaction. Based on the findings in this dissertation, it seems most appropriate to describe Grantham as a situational theologian. Even *Christianismus Primitivus*, his "systematic" theological work, contains large amounts of previously-published material. In recognition that Grantham was also extremely active and peripatetic as a pastor, organizer, debater, speaker, and representative, this dissertation has explored three distinct ways in which he established and sustained the General Baptist presence in Lincolnshire and Norfolk.

The historiographical survey also revealed the need for a comprehensive biographical and literary sketch. Thus, a considerable portion of this dissertation is devoted to providing the reader with as much biographical information as possible. This study includes several unique contributions to our knowledge of Thomas Grantham's life and ministry. First, an examination of the local records in Lincolnshire has shown that Thomas Grantham was almost certainly born to William Grantham in the village of Hatton, in Lincolnshire, in 1633/4. Additional confirmation of Grantham's family background comes from William Grantham's will, which specifies that William was a

tailor by trade and had a son named Thomas. Second, the will of Thomas Grantham himself has also been introduced as a valuable resource for our understanding of Grantham's family. This will reveals a great deal about the specifics of Grantham's family and occupation: 1) he was married to Bridget; 2) he had at least three sons; 3) he was a farmer; 4) he owned land in Hundelby, Ashby by Partney, and Halton Holegate; and 4) the will was ratified in Sutterby. Finally, woven into the biographical narrative is a contextualization and summary of all Grantham's published documents. Unlike most surveys of Grantham's writings which focus on select publications, the literary sketch in Chapter Two provides a brief and basic introduction to all of Grantham's writings.

The third chapter of this dissertation built on the conclusions of J. F. V. Nicholson by examining Grantham's role in consolidating the office of Messenger and establishing it as a third ministerial office among the General Baptists in the seventeenth century. Grantham helped to solidify the office of Messenger between 1660 and 1700 in several important ways. Grantham's published defenses of the Messenger's office between 1671 and 1692 constitute perhaps the greatest source of information pertaining to the office of Messenger among the General Baptists in the post-Restoration decades. His best and most detailed treatment of the subject is *A Defence of the Offices of Apostles* (originally published in 1671; re-published again in 1674 and 1678 with similar titles). From these documents and the records of his activities as a Messenger, it is clear that Grantham was committed to solidifying the office to which he had been ordained.

The recurring point in Grantham's writings is that since the office of Messenger is biblical, it is required of all true churches. While he was not afraid to refer to Messengers as "apostles," he did not believe that post-biblical apostles are identical to the original

twelve. They do, however, share three common tasks: to preach the gospel in all places, to establish churches, and to defend the gospel. Grantham's writings also confirm that Messengers were elected by, and under the authority of, their own particular local congregations. At the same time, their ordination service reflected an inter-congregational gathering of Elders and other Messengers. Ideally, according to Grantham, General Baptist Messengers should work in conjunction with local churches, especially those they planted, to preach, baptize, celebrate the Lord's Supper, ordain, arbitrate, and defend.

Grantham's role in legitimizing the office of Messenger was not limited to his writings. His own ministry as a Messenger reflected the tri-fold understanding he defended. Grantham embodied the office he defended through his tireless efforts to preach, baptize, plant churches, and ordain ministers in Lincolnshire and later in Norfolk. Due in large part to Grantham's ministry as a Messenger, the General Baptists were able to establish a permanent presence in the county of Norfolk.

Chapter Four found that Grantham expended considerable energy fulfilling the third task of the Messenger: defending the gospel against attacks. Grantham developed a reputation as a capable defender of the baptized believers and was called upon to contend with other Christian groups by means of public debates and correspondence. The fourth chapter focused in particular on Grantham's interactions with Anglicans, Catholics, Quakers, and Presbyterians. In the cases of William Fort (Anglican) and an unnamed Catholic, Grantham was encouraged to respond on behalf of the baptized believers in Lincolnshire. As the correspondence with the Presbyterian John Collinges shows,

Grantham also initiated contact via letter in order to address the important theological issue of God's sovereignty.

Knowledge of Grantham's debates and interactions with opponents is primarily derived from his own publications. Grantham was more than willing to write, receive, and publish his apologetic discourses. It is quite likely that Grantham's presentation of his position in the disputes is somewhat biased, but even so it is clear that he had obtained adequate debate skills. In the debate with William Fort, Grantham exhibits a command of debate protocol, and when debating John Whitehead Grantham is portrayed as calm and collected. Taken together, Grantham's disputes with Fort, the unnamed Catholic, Whitehead, and Collinges provide valuable insight regarding the nature of the religious differences among the various religious groups of the later seventeenth century and the means by which those differences were expressed.

Chapter five examined Grantham's interactions with the government and his thoughts on civil matters. Grantham's own actions and writings are important because they likely reflect the actions and thoughts of the Baptist population he represented throughout his ministry. Practically speaking, Grantham petitioned Charles II on behalf of the persecuted General Baptists in Lincolnshire in 1660, 1661, and 1672. In addition, Grantham joined many other Baptist ministers in choosing to accept a government-issued preacher's license under the conditions of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672. In Norfolk he recommended that James Marham take a similar path in 1689 and register a meeting place for worship according to the Toleration Act. In all of this, Grantham provided important leadership during critical moments for the General Baptists in Lincolnshire and Norfolk.

Grantham offered *The Loyal Baptist* and relevant sections of *Christianismus Primitivus* as evidence that in belief and practice the baptized believers were loyal and peaceful citizens. In these documents Grantham unequivocally instructs his readers to avoid revolution or sedition. They are to obey the laws enacted by civil rulers and uphold the common good. Grantham did, however, qualify this loyalty by confessing that Baptists would, if necessary, obey the laws of God should they come into conflict with the laws established by earthly magistrates.

Grantham's writings also address the appropriate Christian attitude toward civil service, military service, marriage, poor relief, and use of cemeteries. Grantham allows Christians to serve in civil government and the military. He states that Baptists only conduct their own marriage because they are excluded from Anglican ceremonies. Grantham argues that Baptists, like other citizens, pay taxes for poor relief and the upkeep of cemeteries, therefore they should have equal access to governmental benefits. Grantham's positions on these issues suggest that many of the baptized believers with whom he was associated were – or sought to be – integrated into parish life. Far from desiring to overturn their society, Grantham argues that the baptized believers actually support the welfare of England and its people.

This dissertation has shown that Thomas Grantham was instrumental in organizing and legitimizing the General Baptists in Lincolnshire and Norfolk. He played an important part in establishing the office of Messenger as a third ministerial office among the General Baptists. He defined and articulated Baptist convictions over against other dissenters and the established Church of England. He represented the baptized believers of Lincolnshire before the king and called all Christians to be loyal, peaceable

subjects. In light of these accomplishments, it comes as no surprise that when Thomas Crosby decided to write the first history of the Baptists in England by focusing on important leaders, he recounted the ministry of Thomas Grantham.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Will of Thomas Grantham¹

In the name of God Amen. The ninth day of May, 1690. I, Thomas Grantham of Sutterby in the County of Lincolne, Husbandman, have made and ordained this My last will and Testament in manner and & form following.

Imprimis (in the first place).

Into the hands of almighty God I commit my Soul, and to the earth my Body in hope of a Happie Resurrection to Life eternal through Jesus Christ. My estate consisting in a Little Land I give it as followeth: To Benjamin my Son I give all my Land in Hundleby in the County aforesaid to hold to him and his Heires according to the Tenor of the Deed by *wch* it was given to me & to Bridget my Late wife and to the Heires of *or* bodies and for want of such Heires then to the right Heires of me the said Thomas Grantham forever Item my will is that all my land in Ashby next Partney shall be sold and the money for *wch* it shall be sold to be divided as followeth, to Benjamin my Son before Named ten pound, and the residue of price of my said Land to be equally divided between my two Sons John and Abel, Item I give to my kinsman John Hill of Azarby [Azgarby] one and twenty pound to enable him or his Assignes to pay a debt of twenty pounds for *wch* he standes bound with Mary Grantham relict of Thomas Grantham Late of Ashby Aforesaid deceased, but in case the said Mary Grantham do well and truly pay the said Twenty poundes with interest for the same Then my will is that the said John Hill or his Assignes shall pay the said twenty poundes To Abner and Thomas the sons of Thomas Grantham aforesaid deceased to be equally divided between them when they shall attain the age of one and twenty yeares. Finally I do hereby enable my Son in Law Mark Smith of Sutterby and my said kinsman John Hill of Azarby to sell my said Landes in Ashby aforesd. And to distribute the money for which they shall sell it as I have pvided in this my will And I do also empower & hereby enable my said son in Law Mark Smith and my said kinsman John Hill to sell all that my Close of pasture in Holton houlgate comonly called Hales Close, and with part of the money for which it shall be sould I do hereby enable the said John Hill to pay the said debtes of its twenty pound if the said Mary Grantham do not pay the same, or else to pay the said twenty pound to my two Gran-Children Thomas and Abner aforesaid as I have by this my will appoynted And for the remainder of the price of the said Hales Close if any be my will is that it be divided half to the four Children of Abner Grantham my son Late deceased and the other half to Pious and Charitable uses at the discretion of my said Son in Law Mark Smith and John Hill aforesaid.

Tho: Grantham

Signed Sealed Published

And declared in the presence of

George Hill (signs)

William Parrat (signs)

John Johnson (marked)

John Maltby (marked)

¹The Will of Thomas Grantham, 9 May 1690 (W1691/ii/255), Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, UK.

APPENDIX B

A Memorial¹

Dedicated to the singular merits of
A faithful confessor and laborious servant of Christ,
Who with true Christian fortitude endured persecution
Through many perils, the loss of friends and substance,
And ten imprisonments for conscience sake,
A man endued with every Christian grace and virtue,
The Rev. Mr. Thomas Grantham,
A learned messenger of the baptized churches,
And pious founder of this church of believers baptized,
Who delivered to the King Charles II our declaration of faith,
And also presented to him a remonstrance against persecution,
Both were kindly received and redress of grievances promised.

¹This text is found in Charles B. Jewson, *The Baptists in Norfolk* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1957), 29.

APPENDIX C

Acrostics Composed on the Occasion of the Death of Thomas Grantham¹

Acrostic A

Thomas granthams dead, yet still he speaks & lives
His death the Last and Loudest Sermon gives
Our thoughts are drown'd at present, but lets view
More what Gods interest is, and ours too
And then Grieve if you can; for you shall see
Such Dispensation will work well for thee

Grantham is gone and now there is but few
Remains from whom such services are due
And yet what then, shall now our spirits sinke
noe. Always, when wee've brought to ruins brink
There's Help for Sion, fear not Jesus will.
Hasten his coming, to confound the skill
And cunning of his foes O blessed Day
Make hast blest Lord, oh come, oh come away.

Acrostic B

Though I doe mourn and weep, my sorrow still
Hath such reboundings, that my heart doth fill
Oh my dear friend is gone, & left me here
My heart doth grieve for him I lov'd most dear
And all my Griefe & sorrow seems in vain
Seeing I cannot bring hime back again.

Goth hath remov'd him, and he hence is gone
Reason must rule my great Affection
And I must Learn to stoop under the Rod
Not murmuring at the Righteous hand of God
True wisdom is in him, his works are pure.
Hee doth in righteousness always Indure
All wee must die, but he doth still remain
My friend he will restore to Life again.

¹This text is taken from a manuscript copy of Grantham's *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1678) held in the Norfolk Heritage Centre, Millennium Library, Norwich, UK. The acrostics in the manuscript are hand-written and are reproduced here as they appear in the original.

APPENDIX D

Epitaphs Composed on the Occasion of the Death of Thomas Grantham¹

The Epitaph

Under this Earth here Thomas Grantham lies
the death of whom made many watry eyes
He Laboured Hard, and now his work is done
He resteth till the resurrection
Then he shall rise, and with all saints ascend
To live with the most High world without end
singing High praise to God, and to Adore
our Glorious Jehovah Evermore. Amen

The Epitaph

Within this Tomb, here Lies inclosed a guest
which was with universall Love possest
Its famous grantham, whoe is dearly mist
A preacher, Bishop and Evangelist.
Of his great worth can none but Angells
Hasten to him, and them, and soe farewell.

¹The text is taken from a manuscript copy of Grantham's *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1678) held in the Norfolk Heritage Centre, Millennium Library, Norwich, UK. The epitaphs in the manuscript are hand-written and reproduced here as they appear in the original.

APPENDIX E

Of Discourse¹

In thy discourse and talke with men
 still very carefull be;
Speak little but of things of God
 or of necessity.
Relate no faults of other men
 In a backbiting way;
But pittie sinner, loath their sins
 And go not thou astray
Before thou speak bethink thy selfe
 What glory God will have
And men, what profit by thy words
 Are likely to receive
Remember God doth hear and write
 Down all that men do say
And every idle word shall bee
 Accounted for one day.

¹This text is taken from the thirteen-stanza poem entitled “The Christians dayly Exercise,” which only appears in hand-written form in John Clarke’s personal copy of Grantham’s *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1678) held in the Norfolk Heritage Centre, Millennium Library, Norwich, UK. “The Christians dayly Exercise” consists of thirteen stanzas, or sections. I have reproduced here, as an example, the text for the tenth stanza as it appears in the manuscript.

APPENDIX F

A Sample Baptist Marriage Certificate¹

We whose Names are subscribed, do testify, That the above-said A. B. and C. D. the Day and Year above-said, did mutually take each other into the State of Marriage, acknowledging the Contract and Covenant, and ratifying the same by Word, and by the Subscription thereof as above-said. In witness whereof, we do hereunto set our Hands the Day and Year above-said.

¹This sample certificate is taken from Thomas Grantham, *Truth and Peace* (London, 1689), 75.

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