ABSTRACT

Parental Concern and the Baptism of Children:
Representations of Children from the Late Medieval Era to 1640

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Examining religious literature from late medieval England until 1640, this dissertation explores the effect that the English Reformation had upon the religious perception of children. A survey of medieval English religious literature reveals that a tension existed between the theology of Original Sin, baptism, and salvation, and parental concerns for the spiritual wellbeing and salvation of their children. The introduction of Protestant theology into England addressed many of these concerns, but also caused other issues as the laity were presented with conflicting views about the spiritual status of their children, their place in the church, and their salvation. Initially, this conflict was between Catholics and Protestants, but by the seventeenth century, Protestants fought among themselves as Reformed Protestants and English Baptists debated the nature of baptism, Original Sin, and infant salvation. This dissertation argues that people were concerned about the salvific status of their children and that the introduction of the Reformation into England provided opportunities for individuals to challenge, affirm, and modify existing beliefs about infants on innocence, Original Sin, baptism, salvation, and spiritual

vulnerability, and thus securing, at least for themselves and their followers, greater assurance as to the salvation of their children.

Parental Concern and the Baptism of Children:
Representations of Children from the Late Medieval Era to 1640

by

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A Dissertation

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

LW	*Luther's Works*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. 55 vols. St. Louis: Concordia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-86.
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. First Series. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. New York: Christian Literature, 1886-1890.
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
STC	*Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640*. Edited by A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgraves. Revised by W. A. Jackson, F. J. Ferguson, and K. F. Panzer. 2 vols. London: Bibliographical Society, 1986.
WA	Martin Luther. *Werke*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Weimar: Böhlhaus, 1906–
WA BR	Martin Luther. *Werke*. Briefwechsel. Weimar: Böhlhaus, 1930-48.
WA TR	Martin Luther. *Werke*. Tischreden. Weimar: Böhlhaus, 1912-21.
Wing	*Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641–1700*. Edited by Donald Goddard Wing. 3 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945-1955.

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To Karye and Jaxon

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In 1534 the Reformation entered England, changing the theological landscape of the nation. In the succeeding decades, indulgences were outlawed, the mass was abandoned, the cup was given to the laity, and priests were permitted to marry. Theological debates over justification by faith, baptism, and Original Sin ensued as Protestants argued, first against Catholics and then with each other over these issues. These theological debates, rooted in a desire to reform Christian theology and practice, had an unintended consequence; they affected the religious perception of children and their salvific status. Before the Reformation, children were viewed as guilty of Original Sin and in need of baptism for salvation. By the seventeenth century, other views had emerged. Reformed Protestants argued that children were guilty of Original Sin, but did not need baptism to save them as salvation came through God's election. For them, baptism served as a sign and seal of God's promise of salvation which was extended to the children of the elect; even then, the possibility existed that a baptized child was not of the elect and therefore, would be condemned. On the other hand, while English Baptists placed infants outside the visible church by completely rejecting infant baptism, they also argued that God condemned no infant for Original Sin, believing all children who died prematurely would be saved.

The views of Reformed Protestants and the English Baptists were a significant departure from the perception of children in medieval England. The common theme

between all of them was a concern for the salvation of infants. In medieval England, a tension existed between the theology of Original Sin, baptism, and salvation and parental concerns for the spiritual wellbeing and salvation of their children. Children were viewed as innocent of actual sin, albeit guilty of Original Sin. In the fifth century, Augustine greatly influenced western Christianity when he stated that unbaptized children, though innocent of actual sin, would be condemned to hell.[1] Medieval Christians, however, struggled with the belief that God would condemn innocent infants. Even Augustine struggled with the concept, stating that unbaptized infants would suffer the "mildest of condemnations" in hell.[2] By the twelfth century, some theologians were arguing that the mildest condemnation was a place between heaven and hell called limbo, where unbaptized infants were denied the beatific vision.[3] By this time, the practice of emergency baptisms, whereby a midwife baptized an infant who, it was feared, would not survive long after birth, had become common.[4] The theology of limbo and the practice of

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[1] Martha Ellen Stortz, "'Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent?': Augustine on Childhood," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 79–83, 91–96; William F. MacLehose, *"A Tender Age": Cultural Anxieties over the Child in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia, 2008), 57; Bradley L. Nassif, "Towards a 'Catholic' Understanding of St. Augustine's View of Original Sin," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 39 (1984): 288.

[2] Augustine, *On Merits and the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Baptism of Infants*, n.d., 1.21 (NPNF 1:5, 22-23).

[3] Cristina L. H. Traina, "A Person in the Making: Thomas Aquinas on Children and Childhood," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), 114; Francis A. Sullivan, "The Development of Doctrine about Infants Who Die Unbaptized," *Theological Studies* 72 (2011): 3–4.

[4] Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 25–26; Linda A. Pollock, "Childbearing and Female Bonding in Early Modern England," *Social History* 22 (1997): 286–306.

emergency baptisms signify that medieval Christians struggled with the belief that innocent infants were condemned by God and that they feared for their salvation.

The introduction of Protestant theology into England addressed many of these concerns, but it also complicated the situation. Protestant theology, in stressing the importance of faith for salvation, tended to de-emphasize the importance of baptism. Moreover, the fear of Anabaptism in England and the conflict between Catholics and Protestants further exacerbated parental anxieties as parents were presented with contradictory messages on the spiritual status of their children, their place in the church, and their salvation. By the seventeenth century, Protestants fought among themselves in earnest, as Reformed Protestants and English Baptists debated the nature of baptism, Original Sin, and infant salvation, arguments which planted the seeds of the baptismal debates of the 1640s and 50s. Both sides asserted that God loved and cared for children while also accusing each other of condemning children to hell. From medieval England to the seventeenth century, parents were concerned about the salvific status of their children and struggled with the notion that God condemned infants who were innocent of actual sin. This dissertation argues that introduction of the Reformation into England provided opportunities for individuals to challenge, affirm, and modify existing beliefs about infants on innocence, Original Sin, baptism, salvation, and spiritual vulnerability, thus securing, at least for themselves and their followers, greater assurance as to the salvation of their children.

Historiography

The modern study of the history of children and childhood began in 1960 when Philippe Ariès published *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*; two years later

the work was translated into English under the title *Centuries Of Childhood*.[5] Focusing on French society and primarily utilizing art to support his thesis, Ariès argued that the concept of childhood, an interim period between infancy and adulthood, did not exist before the sixteenth century. Because of high mortality rates and the lack of realistic depictions in art, Ariès concluded that children were viewed with indifference until about the age of five to seven, at which time they joined the society of adulthood where they participated in adult games, pastimes, and work. According to Ariès, "People could not allow themselves to become too attached to something that was regarded as a probable loss."[6] Moreover, Ariès argued that this indifference toward children lasted until the nineteenth century.[7]

Initially, Ariès' thesis was well received among scholars, including John Demos in *A Little Commonwealth* (1970), Lloyd de Mause in "*The Evolution of Childhood*" (1973), and Lawrence Stone in *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1977), who tended to support or refine his claims.[8] Demos, influenced by Ariès, focused on physical artifacts, wills, inventories, and official records from Plymouth Colony in his

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[5] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood; a Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962).

[6] Ibid., 38.

[7] Ariès argued that before the nineteenth century parents viewed dead children as an inevitable loss. This view changed as the result of Malthusianism and the extension of contraceptive practices. As the death of a child became less likely, parents began to devote more love and attention toward them. Ibid., 38–39.

[8] John Demos, *Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960); Lloyd de Mause, "The Evolution of Childhood," *History of Childhood Quarterly* 1 (1973): 503–575; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

study. Concerning children, Demos argued that "childhood…was barely recognized in Plymouth Colony. There was little sense that children might somehow be special group, with their needs and interests and capacities."[9] Based on children's clothing, Demos concluded children were miniature adults. The semblance of childhood that existed ceased by the age of six, at which point children started dressing like adults, "a symbolic step" which "must have been perceived as such by the children themselves."[10]

Lloyd de Mause published "The Evolution of Childhood" in the inaugural issue of *History of Childhood Quarterly* in 1973. A year later, he republished the article as the introduction to a collection of essays entitled *History of Childhood*.[11] De Mause utilized diaries, autobiographies, and letters employing a psychogenic theory of history. De Mause rejected Ariès' theory that childhood was invented, but he did hold to Ariès' thesis of evolutionary change. He argued that "the further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused."[12] Conditions for children improved because parents developed the ability to express love to their children. "It is, of course, not love which the parents of the past lacked, but rather emotional maturity needed to see the child as a person separate from themselves."[13] De Mause divided the history of parent-child

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[9] Demos, *Little Commonwealth*, 57–58.

[10] Ibid., 140.

[11] Lloyd de Mause, ed., *The History of Childhood: The Untold Story of Child Abuse* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974).

[12] de Mause, "Evolution of Childhood," 503.

[13] Ibid., 519.

relationship into six periods: Infanticidal Mode (Antiquity to 300 C.E.), Abandonment Mode (300-1200), Ambivalent Mode (1300-1600), Intrusive Mode (1700s), Socialization Mode (1800-1950), and Helping Mode (1950-present). Throughout the first five periods, children suffered from the projections of their parents, though their quality of life increased as each generation of parents overcame their "anxieties and began to develop the capacity to identify and satisfy the needs of their children."[14] The twentieth century, therefore, for de Mause, is the pinnacle of parental-child relations from which emerge children who are "gentle, sincere, never depressed, never imitative or group oriented, strong-willed, and unintimidated by authority."[15]

Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* employed the same kinds of sources as de Mause, but incorporated religious literature, though it was secondary to personal accounts. Stone built upon Ariès' theory of evolution but pushed the discovery of childhood to the seventeenth century. He viewed 1500-1800 as a period of transition in family life, which he characterized as "that from distance, deference and patriarchy to…Affective Individualism."[16] Stone divided the period in question into three stages. The final stage, Closed Domesticated Nuclear Family (1640-1800), was the one that gave birth to Affective Individualism in which the family was "organized around the principle of personal autonomy, and bound together by strong

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[14] Ibid., 553.

[15] Ibid., 556.

[16] Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 4.

affective ties."[17] For Stone, the development of the concept of childhood was directly connected to the rise in the number of children who survived into adulthood. "The value of children rises as their durability improves."[18] As mortality rates decreased in the eighteenth century, family members now felt free to develop emotional ties with each other, giving rise to a child-oriented society.

Starting in the 1970s, however, scholars increasingly began to question Ariès thesis, with the majority of them arguing for continuity over change. English historians have contributed greatly in this regard. In the *Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property, and Social Transition* (1978) and *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (1986), Alan MacFarlane placed the origins of the compassionate family, and thus childhood, in the fourteenth century.[19] Counter to Ariès, de Mause, and Stone, MacFarlane argued that while parents at times could be severe and intolerant toward their children, especially by modern standards, this does not mean they lacked affection toward them.

In *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500-1900* (1982), Linda Pollock argued that the thesis supported by Ariès, de Mause, Stone, and others relied on problematic evidence. She dismissed the previous theories of childhood (absence before the seventeenth century, lack of parent-child affection, and abuse experienced by

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[17] Ibid., 7.

[18] Ibid., 420.

[19] Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: Family, Property and Social Transition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978); Alan MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

children), stating they are at best only applicable to a minority population. While childhood might have become more elaborate through the centuries, Pollock argued that very little changed in parental care and child life from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Parents loved their children, recognized a distinctive stage between infancy and adulthood, and expressed anxiety and grief at the illness or death of their children. Even though previous scholars disagreed with the theories of Ariès, de Mause, and Stone, Pollock's monograph so effectively undermined their claims that it placed her among the top scholars in the field. Because Pollock wanted to reconstruct the experiences of parents and their children she utilized diaries, autobiographies, and newspaper accounts. Though a valuable study, her work largely neglects the sermons, household manuals, treatises, debates, and other such religious literature that would have influenced the thoughts and practices of parents.

Since Pollock, the general consensus among scholars has been that childhood did exist in earlier eras and that parents loved and cared for their children, though their discipline could be severe compared to modern sensibilities.[20] Steven Ozment in his *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe*, best summed up the critique against the Ariès school when he stated that "there can be no argument that child rearing in modern times has adopted a more positive view of a child's willfulness and desire for autonomy and that the goal controlling the lives of children has been largely abandoned.

[20] Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990); Barbara A. Hanawalt, *Growing up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); James A. Schultz, Jr., *The Knowledge of Childhood in the German Middle Ages, 1100-1350*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); Sally Crawford, *Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Gloucestershire, England: Sutton Publishing, 1999); Orme, *Medieval Children*; Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

But surely the hubris of an age reaches a certain peak when it accuses another age of being incapable of loving its children properly."[21]

Ozment's study focused on a variety of materials such as medical tracts, family chronicles, etiquette books, but also included religious materials: household books, popular sermons, and vernacular catechisms. Other scholars have also focused on religious materials in their study of children and childhood. In her 1982 dissertation, "The Cradle of Salvation: Children and Salvation in the Late Sixteenth and Seventh Century England," Sandra Lee Piercy argued through an examination of religious household books and treatises that Calvinist and Arminian parents were concerned about the salvation of their children and that religious education was the means by which parents could ensure their child's salvation, guiding them to justifying faith.[22] Based on this evidence, Piercy argued against the idea that English parents viewed their children as little adults, stating that all Protestants had an idea of child development and tailored religious education to meet the needs of their children.

C. John Sommerville's *The Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England* (1992) also examined the history of children and childhood through religious sources. Sommerville argued for a middle position that supported Pollock's view that the cultural construct of childhood existed before the sixteenth century, but also agreed with Ariès'

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[21] Steven E. Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 162.

[22] Sandra Lee Piercy, "The Cradle of Salvation: Children and Religion in Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century England" (Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1982).

claim that parental affection and attention toward children had increased.[23] Sommerville traced the origins of this phenomenon to the Puritans, a term he associated with anyone who objected to the Church of England, as they sought to survive following their disenfranchisement after the Restoration in 1660. According to Sommerville, the political, social, and religious situation forced Puritans to see children as individuals, as evidenced by their concern over names, descriptions of actual children, creation of children's literature, and education methods. While the idea of childhood existed before the sixteenth century, the Puritans, argued Sommerville, were the first to show a respect for children. In treating the Puritans as a monolithic group, however, Sommerville's methodology ignores the religious complexity of seventeenth-century England. Like Pollock, Sommerville overlooks the significance of theological currents for understanding the cultural perception of children.

Using religious sources in addition to other material, Meredith L. Bailey sought to understand how medieval writers and educators perceived childhood and presented it to adults and children. In *Socialising the Child in Late Medieval England, c. 1400-1600*, Bailey examined a variety of literature, including courtesy poems, household manuals, and educational books.[24] She argues that these materials reveal that medieval writers viewed childhood as a structured time of life, in which the child was taught to behave and live within the confines of an ordered society. The goal of socialization was to produce

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[23] C. John Sommerville, *The Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

[24] Merridee L. Bailey, *Socialising the Child in Late Medieval England, c. 1400-1600* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2012).

children who would uphold the conventions of adult English society. Moreover, Bailey argued that between 1400-1600 a shift occurred as increasing emphasis was placed on moral character as opposed to the outward appearance of manners, which also coincided with the rise of the home as a religious center for both Protestants and Catholics.

In 1994, The Ecclesiastical History Society published a collection of papers read at the 1993 summer and 1994 winter meetings that examined children and childhood through religious sources. Edited by Diana Wood, *The Church and Childhood* covered a broad geographical area and a variety of theological positions.[25] In relation to England, Shulamith Shahar argued that the Boy Bishop sermon illustrated the belief that children, being innocent, were conduits to God, and were thus able to grasp theological truths that were hidden from adults. Through the child possession account of William Withers, Alexandra Walsham demonstrated that while children were perceived as innocent, able to commune with the divine, they were also viewed as vulnerable to the devil. Moreover, possession also provided children the opportunity to express behavior that was otherwise forbidden and punishable.

More recently, Lucy Underwood and Anna French have explored the religious experiences of children and youth in England. In *Childhood, Youth, and Religious Dissent in Post-Reformation England*, Underwood examined the religious experience of Catholic children living as a minority religion in Protestant England.[26] She argued that children were not passive, but active participants in religion. More specifically, Catholic

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[25] Diana Wood, ed., *The Church and Childhood* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).

[26] Lucy Underwood, *Childhood, Youth and Religious Dissent in Post-Reformation England*, Palgrave studies in the history of childhood (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

children were more aware and involved with issues such as religious identity than their establishment counterparts. Focusing primarily on stories of child possessions and child prophets, Anna French's *Children of Wrath: Possession, Prophecy and the Young in Early Modern England* examined the ways in which Protestant children had agency in a culture where they were usually silent.[27] French argued that Protestants viewed children as "close to God and adjacent to the Devil," and that by acting out this perception through the image of the possessed child or child prophet, children were able to exercise religious authority.[28] Moreover, Protestant changes to the theology and practice of baptism had caused ambiguity with regards to a child's salvation, but the accounts of child prophets and demon possessions demonstrated that a child could exert some soteriological agency or assurance. Being the voice of God or emerging victorious from a spiritual battle testified to the certainty of a child's salvation, and raised the possibility that other children's salvation was secure.

Building upon the Pollock and others, this dissertation assumes the existence of childhood and that these parents both cared for their children and were concerned about their salvation. In the history of children and childhood, scholars have focused primarily on reconstructing childhood or the experiences of children. This dissertation, however, is concerned with the religious perception of children and the effect that the English Reformation had on it. Like French, this study emphasizes that the English Reformation caused ambiguity concerning a child's salvation, but argues that the anxiety at the root of

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[27] Anna French, *Children of Wrath: Possession, Prophecy and the Young in Early Modern England* (Ashgate, 2015).

[28] Ibid., 6.

this ambiguity had been present before the Reformation. Parents struggled with the belief that God condemned infants to hell and were concerned for their child's salvation. The English Reformation intensified and aggravated these fears, but also provided opportunities for people to reassess the doctrines of baptism and Original Sin in relation to children, and possibly find greater assurance in a different theological system.

Methodology and Structure

To investigate the effect that the English Reformation had on the religious perception of children, this dissertation examines vernacular homiletic exempla, sermons, household manuals, catechisms, and theological treatises from the late medieval period until 1640. These sources are valuable because of the inseparable connection of religious, social, and political life. Theology never develops in a vacuum. These sources not only reflect what religious leaders wanted the laity to believe, but also the actual beliefs and fears of society as a whole. In assessing the influence of the English Reformation, this study uses the vernacular literature of medieval era as a baseline for the religious perception of children. By the 1640s, the political and religious turmoil enabled baptismal debates in which Puritans, Independents, Presbyterians, and Baptists debated the practice of infant baptism and the place of children in the church; 1640, therefore, serves as the conclusion for this study while also highlighting the ways in which the conflict between Reformed Protestants and English Baptists in the preceding decades contributed to those debates.

For this study, texts were chosen based on their direct references to children and the doctrines of Original Sin, baptism, and infant salvation. Attention was placed on sources that represented the dominant theological voice during the period in question.

This study, however, is also concerned with assessing the diversity of beliefs existing within England as a result of the introduction of the Reformation. As such, special attention has been placed on minority dissenting theological works. Combined with the dominant voice, these works provide a clearer picture concerning the concerns, fears, and beliefs that existed in early modern England.

Chapter Two examines the religious perception of children in England from the late medieval period until 1533. This chapter provides the foundation for assessing the influence that the Reformation had upon the religious perception of children. Medieval exempla, sermons, and devotional literature demonstrate a tension between theology and a parental concern for the salvation and spiritual wellbeing of their children. While children were affirmed as possessing Original Sin, their freedom from actual sin meant that they were often characterized as innocent and as having a special connection to God. This view, combined with the belief in limbo, demonstrates that some people struggled with the belief that God would condemn children. However, while medieval literature tended to emphasize the innocence of children, evidence suggests that on the eve of the English Reformation greater attention was being placed on their sinful nature and need for religious education as a response to the growing influence of Luther's Reformation.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the continental reformers on the religious perception of children. The English Reformation was greatly influenced by the continental Reformation, so the theologies of Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, and the early Anabaptists on children provides context for views that developed as a result of the English Reformation. The magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists

inherited much from the medieval view of children while also modifying it significantly in relation to baptism, Original Sin, and infant salvation.

Chapter Four examines the result of the introduction of the Reformation on the religious perception of children from 1534 to 1553, the reigns of Henry and Edward VI. This chapter argues that the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations introduced a diversity of Protestant beliefs into England, which in turn complicated the religious perception of children. In addition to the medieval view of children, the laity were presented with the Lutheran and Reformed views of children in relation to Original Sin and Baptism. For some, these views addressed parental concerns about the spiritual wellbeing and salvation of children, but for others they caused much anxiety. Moreover, many of these works were often in response to the threat of Anabaptism, which helped to perpetuate the fear of the movement in England.

Chapter Five analyzes the perception of children during the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I. During this period, Protestantism and Catholicism competed for the adherence of the English people. While the fear of Anabaptism had previously dominated much of the religious discussion of children, the conflict now shifted between Catholics and Protestants as children became a tool in their polemical fights. These disagreements furthered the confusion and anxiety caused by the introduction of Protestantism into England as the laity were faced with competing views on Original Sin, baptism, and the place of children in the church, exacerbating parental concerns about their children as seen in the continuance of emergency baptisms and the rise of exorcism accounts of children.

Chapter Six focuses on the religious perception of children from 1603-1640 and the rise of early English Baptists. This movement challenged the dominant religious view of children by rejecting infant baptism and original guilt and advocating for the salvation of all children who died prematurely. The presence of Anabaptists had long been feared in England, and though they never claimed the name, the theology of the English Baptists meant that this fear had become a reality in the eyes of their opponents. Having adopted believer's baptism, the English Baptists developed a theology of infant salvation that extended to all children. These views prompted their opponents to defend and reexamine their theological views of children on baptism and Original Sin, and ultimately laid the foundation for the baptismal debates of the 1640s and 50s.

Chapter Seven draws conclusions based on chapters two through six. Medieval parents feared for the spiritual wellbeing and salvation of their children. The introduction of the Reformation into England affected the religious perception of children by prompting discussions on the nature of baptism and Original Sin. For some people, Protestantism addressed parental fears about their children and for other these theological changes increased parental anxieties. Ultimately, the introduction of the Protestant Reformation into England allowed people to explore beyond the traditional doctrines of innocence, Original Sin, and Baptism and secure for themselves greater assurance of the salvation of their children.

CHAPTER TWO

Representations of Children in Late Medieval England

> In as moche as Cryste sayth in the Gospell,…'Suffre ye children to come to me, for of suche the kingdom of heven is fulfilled,' by whom…it is not oonly understonde those that bene chyldrene of age, but those that been chyldrene pure in cleanesse from synn and malyce.[1]

John Alcock wrote these words as part of a sermon for a boy bishop celebration, and his description of young children as "pure in cleanesse from synn and malice" at first seems in contradiction with the medieval understanding that Original Sin infected every person with an inherited guilt and the corruption of sin. Alcock, however, illustrates the complexity of medieval English thought concerning children. Baptism cleansed a child of Original Sin, but a child did not become responsible for actual sin until the development of reason.[2] Childhood was divided into two stages: infancy and adolescence. Infancy spanned from birth to five or seven when reason developed which marked the beginning of adolescence. Without reason, a child was not responsible for his or her sin and therefore, could be described as "pure in cleanesse from synn and malice" being "neyther

[1] John Alcock, "A Sermon for a Boy Bishop by John Alock, Bishop of Ely (1430-1486-1500) (Tudor Catholic Sermons 3)," ed. Anthony Ward, *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 112 (1998): 124–130.

[2] Michael E. Goodich states that the positive view of children as innocent because of the lack of reason to influence of Arabic and classical philosophical thought. Michael E. Goodich, *Lives and Miracles of the Saints: Studies in Medieval Latin Hagiography* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 8–9.

dysposed to vertue neyther to vice."[3] John Alcock's sermon is one example of the perception of children in late medieval England.

Though children are not mentioned extensively in medieval vernacular literature, there is evidence for how children were perceived. Sermons, exempla, and devotional literature of the era depicted children as vulnerable and weak, innocent yet possessing a sinful nature, and surrounded by both parental and ecclesiastical authority figures who were concerned for their physical and spiritual wellbeing. Children were gifts from God. The church condemned the killing of children, even if unintentional, and endorsed emergency baptism. Born with Original Sin, children needed baptism to cleanse them, a rite so important it could be performed by a layperson if the child's life was in jeopardy. Even with baptism, the child still retained a sinful nature. Children were also depicted as morally innocent because they lacked the ability to commit actual/conscious sin; this, in turn, led to the church presenting them as moral examples to adults. This innocence, however, was fleeting, for with development of reason around the age of five or seven a child's innocence disappeared. Children, therefore, needed religious education to help them overcome sin and live a pious life. These themes are present throughout the vernacular literature, but by the eve of the Reformation in England, greater emphasis was being placed on the sinfulness of children and their need for religious education.

Shulamith Shahar has shown that there were positive and negative views of children in the middle ages. In some secular guidance manuals, writers placed an emphasis on being a wife and not a mother, ignoring children and the problems of

[3] Alcock, "Sermon for a Boy Bishop," 45–50, 128–130.

bearing and raising them. Other writers depicted children as a source of suffering, worry, and a hindrance to doing good deeds.[4] This negative view, however, came into conflict with views put forth by the church which sought to protect children. The church opposed infanticide, the killing of illegitimate children, and abortion, even postponing death sentences for pregnant women.[5] The laity were encouraged to marry and have children who were seen as gifts from God placed in trust, rather than the property of parents.[6]

The negative image of children borrowed greatly from Augustine who argued that children were born in Original Sin, an inherited guilt, which was the fruit of sexual intercourse. For Augustine, infants were not innocent, but bore the guilt of Adam and were a slave to sin.[7] Infants were not guilty of actual sin, but this was only because they lacked the development of reason and understanding.[8] Baptism served to expunge this

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[4] The praise of abstinence by theologians as the supreme moral virtue enabled many of these views. Some writers praised parents who abandoned their children so that they could enter monastic life. However, some monasteries had clauses which allowed women to bring their children with them. Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, 10–11, 13–14.

[5] John Boswell notes that in the twelfth century there were three separate papal rulings against infanticide. John Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 279.

[6] Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, 12–13.

[7] Augustine, *On Merits of Sin*, 1.21 (NPNF 1:5, 22-23); Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, n.d., 2.47-49 (NPNF 1:5, 302-303); Nassif, "Towards a Catholic Understanding," 288.

[8] Augustine, *On Merits of Sin*, 1.22, 39, 67-70 (NPNF 1:5, 23, 30, 42-44); Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, 14.

guilt and protected infants from spiritual evil.[9] To deny infants the rite of baptism was to condemn them to hell without any hope of redemption.[10]

Augustine left no room for discussion on the fate of unbaptized infants. Though they were innocent of actual sin, Augustine argued that Original Sin alone condemned a person to hell. Despite this, Augustine also argued that because they lacked actual sin, infants would suffer "the mildest condemnation of all."[11] The Council of Carthage (418 C.E.) affirmed Augustine's views on infants, Original Sin, and baptism.[12] Medieval theologians, however, struggled with the notion that God would condemn an infant innocent of actual sin.[13] By the twelfth century, scholastic theologians had developed the theory of *limbus puerorum* or children's limbo, a place between heaven and hell where unbaptized infants would reside, suffering only the denial of the beatific vision.[14] In this

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[9] Augustine's views were the culmination of a long shift in the purpose of baptism. Not only did baptism initiate one into the Christian faith, but now it also cleansed one of original sin. MacLehose, *A Tender Age*, 57; Nassif, "Towards a Catholic Understanding," 288.

[10] Stortz, "'Where or When Was Your Servant,'" 79–83, 91–96.

[11] Augustine, *On Merits of Sin*, 1.21 (NPNF 1:5, 22-23).

[12] *Canons of the Council of Carthage*, Canon 110 (NPNF 1:14, 496-97.

[13] Sullivan, "The Development of Doctrine about Infants Who Die Unbaptized," 3–4; Peter Lombard, *Book 2: On Creation*, trans. Giulio Silano, vol. 2, Book of Sentences (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2008), bk. 2, dist. 33, cap. 2, 166. Not all medieval writers emphasized the innocence of children. Innocent III stressed that infants were born out of sin and even believed that a babies cries were a sign of sin or the devil. Valerie L. Garver, "Faith and Religion," in *In the Middle Ages*, ed. Louise J. Wilkinson, vol. 2, A Cultural History of Childhood and Family (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 154.

[14] Traina, "A Person in the Making," 114; On the relationship of limbo to purgator see Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1981), 220–25, 335–37. The Council of Carthage also denied a middle place where unbaptized infants would live in happiness, but the condemnation of a middle place is not present in all manuscripts of the council. The theory of limbo eventually received papal endorsement through a letter of Innocent III to the bishop of Arles in 1201, in which he affirmed that the punishment of original sin is the lack of the beatific vision, but the punishment for actual sin is hell. Innocent III, "Letter to Humbert, Archbishop of Arles, Maiores

way, scholastic theologians could affirm Augustine's assertion that unbaptized infants suffered the "mildest punishment," though some like Thomas Aquinas argued that the denial of the beatific vision caused no suffering for unbaptized infants because they were ignorant of what they were missing.[15]

While scholastic theologians discussed Original Sin, baptism, and the fate of unbaptized children, vernacular medieval sources, for the most part, paid little attention to these topics. This absence does not say that children were not perceived in this way. The near ubiquitous practice of immediate baptism indicates that while most common people would not have had the ability to describe Original Sin fully, they did have a common understanding that all were born into sin and thus understood the necessity for baptism. Furthermore, the English Church forbade unbaptized infants and stillborns from being buried in sacred ground, a physical representation of their denial of access to heaven.[16] The practice of emergency baptisms, often performed by midwives, illustrates a

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Ecclesiae Causas," n.d., (DS 780). cf. Michael Sharkey and Thomas Weinandy, eds., "Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die without Being Baptized," in *Texts and Documents, 1986-2007*, vol. II, International Theological Commission (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 365–67; Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 45–46.

[15] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church*, 46; Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, ed. Brian Davies, trans. Richard J. Regan (Oxford University Press, 2003), q. 5, a. 3, 241. Limbo never became an official position of the Catholic despite being defended by Pope Pius VI against the Jansenist in the eighteenth century. Sullivan, "The Development of Doctrine about Infants Who Die Unbaptized," 3–4.

[16] The churches decree did not stop grieving parents from attempting to bury their unbaptized infants in sacred ground. Walls and gates were placed around some cemeteries to prevent unlawful burials. Orme, *Medieval Children*, 124–26. In Zurich, unbaptized children were buried in a certain middle part of the cemetery between the sacred and the profane, symbolizing the infants' place in limbo. Timothy George, "The Presuppositions of Zwingli's Baptismal Theology," in *Prophet, Pastor, Protestant: The Work of Huldrych Zwingli after Five Hundred Years*, ed. Edward J. Furcha and H. Wayne Pipkin (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1984), 78. The Synod of Nîmes (1252) said that in instances where an exposed child was found dead and baptism was in question, the infant could be buried in sacred ground. Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 324–25.

concern by medieval parents for the spiritual wellbeing of their children.[17] Parents feared for the spiritual estate of their children. All who were unbaptized were in the domain of Satan; baptism, and the exorcism which accompanied it, cleansed newborn children and protected them and reclaimed them from the realm of Satan.[18] The practice of baptism and exorcism illustrates the concern for the spiritual wellbeing of children, but these practices do not appear in all of the vernacular medieval religious literature. Furthermore, the image of children is more complex than this. The task then in this chapter is to examine the ways in which children are represented in these sources.

The Laity and Vernacular Devotional Literature

In the late medieval era, the vernacular sermon was one of the few avenues of mass communication, with the latter middle ages recognized as the high point of this method of communication.[19] The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), in an effort to remedy the laity's poor understanding of the faith, decreed that there should be regular competent preaching in parishes. In England, starting in 1281, Archbishop John Peckham required parish priests to preach in English four times a year on the Articles of Faith, the six main points of Christianity: creed, commandments, works of mercy, virtues, vices, and the

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[17] For more on midwives and emergency baptism see, Linda A. Pollock, "Childbearing and Female Bonding in Early Modern Europe," *Social History* 22 (1997): 286–306; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 25–26.

[18] See, Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 280–82; Jacques Gelis, *History of Childbirth: Fertility, Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Rosemary Morris (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1991), 194; John Douglas Close Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*, Alcuin Club collections No.47 (London: S.P.C.K, 1965), 111–12.

[19] Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People in Fourteenth-Century England* (Rochester, N.Y.: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 8.

sacraments.[20] Sermons were one of the only sources for religious instruction that the laity received.

Many priests, however, who worked in the parishes had not attended school. No formalized system of education existed for priests, and educational requirements were low.[21] The Black Death wrought vast demographic devastation which resulted in a shortage of clerical applicants and the funds to support them. With more lucrative opportunities available to young boys, the church sought to address its labor shortage by lowering the educational requirements for the priesthood.[22] The priests who did attend school often acquired several benefices to support themselves, employing other uneducated priests to cover their duties. Education brought greater opportunities with

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[20] Karras notes that archbishop's decree in 1281 does not mean that preaching on these topics were being neglected, but only that the archbishop perceived it this way. Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 104; W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 193–94; F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney, eds., *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 886. On the effects of this decree see, Andrews Reeves, "Teaching the Creeds and Articles of Faith in England: 1215-1281," in *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Late Middle Ages (1200-1500)*, ed. Ronald J. Stansbury (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 41–72. These six points increasingly in the thirteenth century came to be seen as the foundation of Christianity and essence of Christian revelation. For more on their development see, Joseph Goering, "Christ in Dominican Catechesis: The Articles of Faith," in *Christ Among the Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 127–38. Lynch argues that emphasis on teaching the laity the Creed and the Lord's Prayer began with Carolingian reforms which entrusted the spiritual education of children to godparents. Joseph H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 305–332..

[21] For the requirements for priesthood, see Beth Allison Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2008), 25; John Raymond Shinners and William J. Dohar, eds., *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 49–55.

[22] Barr, *Pastoral Care*, 22–26. For the effects of the Black Death on clerical recruitment see, William J. Courtenay, "The Effect of the Black Death on English Higher Education," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 696–714; J. A. H. Moran, "Clerical Recruitment in the Diocese of York, 1340-1530: Data and Commentary," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 34 (1983): 19–54; William J. Dohar, *The Black Death and Pastoral Leadership: The Diocese of Hereford in the Fourteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 103-09.

priests choosing to take positions as canons, bishops, or members of civil service or royal courts. These circumstances meant that unlearned and uneducated priests far outnumbered their counterparts.[23]

This climate created the situation in which the clergy who might have been trained in pastoral care were not the ones interacting with parishioners on a regular basis. Claire Waters argues that this lack of properly trained clergy is what led to the perception that the clerical hierarchy was not fulfilling its duties. Independent preachers, some orthodox and some not, filled this gap.[24] Many of these independent preachers were Franciscans and Dominicans who also wrote sermon aids and model sermon collections for others in their orders or for parish priests.[25] Because parish priests often had little to no training in Latin, many of these aids, though originally written in Latin, were translated into the vernacular.[26] These resources sought to address some of the educational deficiencies. The sermons contained in these collections drew upon and were derived from a vast Latin corpus. Often these sermons contained exempla which were used to capture the attention of the audience. Exempla are short historical and pseudohistorical narratives inserted into sermons and text that sought to illustrate a moral

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[23] Barr, *Pastoral Care*, 22–26.

[24] Claire M. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures: Preaching, Performance, and Gender in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 58.

[25] Karras, *Common Women*, 104.

[26] Barr, *Pastoral Care*, 27–30; H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1993), 20–22.

point.[27] In this sense, they are a literary genre, but they are also a device used to transmit culture and values.[28] Though many of them were centuries old having been culled from learned sources, as the exempla depicted everyday life, they were especially meaningful to laity with the preacher adjusting them to reflect current social mentalities.[29] While not reflecting the experience of the preacher, they would not have been repeated if they did not reflect the viewpoints of the preacher nor would they have been repeated if they did not connect with the audience.[30]

There has been some debate as to the function of exempla in the medieval sermon. Larry Scanlon argues that there was no cultural connection between the exempla and the audience; rather exempla were an enactment of cultural authority on behalf of the preacher. Exempla, therefore, served only to further the goal of the sermon, to instruct the laity. There are two groups: the exemplarists (clergy) and the audience (laity).[31] Furthermore, J.–C Schmitt argues that exempla were only used because of an unlearned audience. The learned could comprehend speculative language whereas the unlearned

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[27] In this context," exemplum" should be confused with the term used in rhetorical theory. John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern Franceand Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 8–10; cf. F. A. C. Mantello, A. G. Rigg, and Nigel F. Palmer, eds., "Exempla," in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 582–88.

[28] Lyons, *Exemplum*, 9; Robert D. Cottrell, *Sexuality/Textuality: A Study of the Fabric of Montaigne's Essais* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1981), 58.

[29] Spencer, *English Preaching*, 48.

[30] Karras, *Common Women*, 104; Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 63–64; Barr, *Pastoral Care*, 34.

[31] Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33–36, 67; Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 63.

need the concrete language. In this way, exempla only reinforced the authority of the preacher to the unlearned audience.[32] Claire Walters, however, notes that this view overemphasizes the divide between clergy and laity. She argues that exempla enabled the clergy to connect with their audience, allowing them to influence their thinking. Like Scanlon and Schmitt, Walters acknowledges that exempla reinforced the authority of preachers, but she emphasizes that their use reflected a connection between the clergy and the laity. [33] Exempla did not just reinforce the position of the preacher nor did they just connect the preacher to his audience, but they held a dual purpose. Exempla had to relate to the lived experiences of the audience, but they also had to be constructive. Their use demonstrated the preacher's learning. The preacher, however, was not someone who stood outside the vernacular culture, but one who participated in it, and exempla reflected the social culture and mentalities which the preacher shared with his audience.[34] While not the actual actions of parents, exempla reflect the social mentalities which the preacher shared with the audience. In this way, the sermons and exempla propagated, perpetuated, and reinforced social perceptions of children.[35]

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[32] Claude Bremond, Jacques Le Goff, and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *L' "Exemplum," Typologie Des Sources Du Moyen âGe Occidental*, vol. 40 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1982), 85.

[33] Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 63–64; cf. D. L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 227.

[34] Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 63–64; Valerie Edden, "Devils, Sermon Stories, and the Problem of Popular Belief in the Middle Ages," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992): 213–14; cf. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), xii.

[35] Consider Finucanes comments on the clergy propagating the belief in saints' miracles. Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 55.

Most sermon collections were written for and by secular priests, and the fact that many of them contain more than enough sermons to preach in a year implies that the compilers wanted to encourage weekly preaching. While Sunday was the usual day for sermon going, there were also compilations which provided sermons for daily preaching which was growing in popularity. Collections of *de tempore* and *de sanctis* sermons ensure that a priest had plenty of material from which to preach.[36] While the collections were prepared for priests, evidence suggests that the surviving collections could have been used by laity for pious reading. Religious literature became increasingly important for lay piety in the middle ages; it could either be consumed publically or privately. H. Leith Spencer has shown that laity read religious literature during sermons and that they also read or had them read during mealtimes. The leisurely consumption of sermons, with multiple hearings, enabled the laity to assimilate arguments better than through a single hearing.[37]

The laity, moreover, did not limit their consumption of devotional material to sermon and exempla collections, but they also read many pastoral works which were first intended for priests.[38] The Fourth Lateran Council not only decreed regular preaching for priests, but also that all Christians above the age of discretion should give confession and

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[36] Sermons on saints' lives were a recognized alternative to the Sunday lessons. Cf. Edward H. Weatherly, ed., *Speculum Sacerdotal: Edited from British Museum MS. Additional 36971*, EETS original series 200 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 3; John Mirk, *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies by Johannes Mirkus*, ed. Theodore Erbe, EETS extra series 96 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1905), 132–33; Spencer, *English Preaching*, 31.

[37] Spencer, *English Preaching*, 36–39.

[38] See also, Vincent Gillespie, "Vernacular Books of Religion," in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 317–44.

receive Eucharist at least once a year, usually on Easter. Leonard Boyle argues that the Fourth Lateran Council clearly defined pastoral care and responsibilities, and encouraged the development of literature that taught priests how to care for penitents.[39] During the fourteenth century, the vernacular gained new respect as it bridged the gap between the learned and unlearned. Soon pastoral aids were published that bound several distinct texts on doctrine and fundamentals of the church into a single manuscript. These works increasingly began to fall into the hands of the laity, feeding a hunger for this type of literature.[40] In some cases, the laity commissioned priests to translate and adapt these works for their personal use, but they would also pass them to friends and family. In this way, whether intended originally for priests or commissioned by the laity, vernacular devotional literature began to move freely between laity and clergy. As noted by Aron Gurevich, because vernacular religious literature was created for the laity, it was also influenced by them. The laity, however, were also influenced by the clergy, resulting in a mutual influencing which created "what might be called 'popular Christianity' or 'parish Catholicism.'"[41] As with sermons and exempla, vernacular devotional literature becomes an important source for examining the social views of children.[42]

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[39] Leonard E. Boyle, "The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology," in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 30–43.

[40] The interests in vernacular literature by laity created a market which spurred major developments in book production. Gillespie, "Vernacular Books of Religion," 317–18.

[41] Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 4–5.

[42] Gillespie, "Vernacular Books of Religion," 318–19.

Sermons and Exempla

As sermons were the primary form of mass communication, they are very useful in the study of children, especially because of the exempla they used. Particularly useful are the sermon collections of Mirk's *Festial* and BL MS Royal B XXIII (otherwise known as *Middle English Sermons*), and the exempla collection, *An Alphabet of Tales*.[43] Added to an examination of these collections is the sermon for a boy bishop, *In die innocentium Sermo pro Episcopo puerorum*, by John Alcock, Bishop of Ely. Of the collections, Mirk's *Festial* was by far the most popular. The *Festial* first appeared in 1483 with its final edition appearing in 1532 and its last recorded use for preaching in 1587. While not much is known about Mirk, he does reveal that he authored the sermons as a tool for priests who were not sufficiently educated to compose their sermons.[44] *Middle English Sermons* is an eclectic sermon compilation that was a contemporary of the *Festial*. It contains three *Festial* homilies in addition to the numerous other sermons drawn from a variety of sources.[45] Unlike the *Festial*, the authorship or editor of the collection is unknown. While some of the sermons contain references to the specific occasion of their delivery, others do not. As with the *Festial*, the fact that these sermons were compiled in English indicates that the targeted audience was the laity. One also

[43] Woodburn O. Ross, ed., *Middle English Sermons Edited from British Museum MS. Royal 18 B. XXIII*, EETS original series 209 (London: Oxford University Press, 1940); Mary McLeod Banks, ed., *An Alphabet of Tales :An English 15th Century Translation of the Alphabetum Narrationum of Étienne de Besançon*, EETS original series 126 and 127 (London: Oxford University Press, 1904).

[44] This is revealed in a prologue attached to eight of the surviving manuscripts. BL MS Cotton Claudius A II, f. 3v. Barr, *Pastoral Care*, 9–11, 126; Alan J. Fletcher and Susan Powell, "The Origins of a Fifteenth-Century Sermon Collection: MSS Harley 2247 and Royal 18 B XXV," *Leeds Studies in English* 10 (1978): 95 n. 20.

[45] Barr, *Pastoral Care*, 33; cf. Ross, *Middle English Sermons*, xviii–xix.

cannot assume that the sermons contained in the collection, as with the *Festial*, were delivered as transcribed.[46] While not a model sermon collection, *An Alphabet of Tales* is a compilation of exempla, many of which can also be found in *Middle English Sermons* and Mirk's *Festial*. It is an English translation of the popular Latin *Alphabetum narrationum* which was also translated into French and Catalan. The English version survives in a single manuscript, British Library Add. MS 25719.[47] With the increased attention to preaching in the Middle Ages, compilers began to collect exempla to aid preachers. Though the translator of the English version did not include it, the prologue to the Latin *Alphabetum narratioum* testifies to this. Exempla were also used by the laity in their devotion as they could be easily digested by those weak in the faith. Amanda Leff argues that given this association with the laity, it is possible that *An Alphabet of Tales* was used by clergy and laity alike.[48] Finally, Bishop Alcock's sermon is one of two extant sermons written for preaching by a boy bishop, the popular practice connected with the celebrations of Saint Nicholas and the Holy Innocents in which a schoolboy is appointed or elected to serve as the "bishop" for designated period.[49] Preached for the

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[46] Ross, *Middle English Sermons*, xvii–xxvi. On determining whether sermon collection were actually preached, see Stephen Morrison, *A Late Fifteenth-Century Dominican Sermon Cycle: Edited from Bodleian Library MS E Musaeo 180 and Other Manuscripts*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), li–liii. On reconstructing the delivery of a sermon see, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "Medieval Sermons and Their Performance," in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Boston: Brill, 2002), 89–124.

[47] The manuscript was edited by Mary McLeod Banks for the Early English Text Society in 1904-05. In the Part I of the edition, Banks promised an introduction and glossary in Part II though this was never completed. For more thorough introduction to the text see, Amanda M. Leff, "Text in Context: Representing Writing in Medieval Religious Narrative" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2009), 85–90.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Some have claimed that Erasmus' sermon "Homily on the Child Jesus" was also a boy bishop sermon, but Shulamith Shahar notes there is no evidence it was ever delivered by a boy bishop. Shulamith

Feast of the Holy Innocents, the sermon was published in 1498 and 1499 by Wynkyn de Worde.[50] As the sermon is unique, it will be treated separately from the sermon and exempla collections.

Mirk's Festial, Middle English Sermons, and An Alphabet of Tales

The sermon collections of Mirk's *Festial* and *Middle English Sermons* contain 125 sermons with thirteen exempla referring to children. Of these thirteen, nine belong to Mirk's *Festial* and four to *Middle English Sermons*. *An Alphabet of Tales*, on the other hand, contains 801 exempla with more than thirty-three of them referring to children. Many of the exempla reference daughters and sons, but these terms could refer to children as well as adults, and so for the purposes of this study, only exempla and sermons which use the term "child" have been examined. As other scholars have noted, the term "child" was ambiguous as it could refer to any sex, and could refer to a baby, child, an adolescent, or even a young adult. While it could refer to boys and girls, often the term implied boys in particular.[51] Of the forty-six exempla examined, only three refer to a child as female.[52] The vast age range to which child could refer is illustrated in many

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Shahar, "The Boy Bishop's Feast: A Case-Study in Church Attitudes Towards Children in the High and Late Middle Ages," in *The Church and Childhood*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 244–45 n. 6.

[50] John Alcock, *In die Innocencium sermo pro episcopo puerorum* (Westminster: Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1498), STC 283; John Alcock, *In die Innocencium sermo pro episcopo puerorum* (Westminster: Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1499), STC 282.The second extant sermon for a boy bishop emerged during Queen Mary I's reign in 1558. A. Ward published a critical edition of the sermon in 1998. Anthony Ward, ed., "Richard Ramsey's Sermon for a Boy Bishop (Tudor Catholic Sermons 2)," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 111 (1997): 476–505. This sermon will be examined in Chapter Five.

[51] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 6; cf. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 25–29.

[52] Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, 133–35; Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 51–52, 277–78.

of these exempla. In two exempla from *An Alphabet of Tales*, one refers to a child who is an infant while in another the child is called a damsel. The disparity of age is further illustrated by another exemplum from *An Alphabet of Tales* in which a child who becomes ill from blaspheming is described as fifteen, but this specificity is a rarity as in many of the exempla the exact age is impossible to determine.[53]

The narratives depict children as both having passive and active agency. Active agency is the ability of a person to act within a social structure whereas passive agency is the way in which actors are constrained with that structure.[54] As passive agents, they are depicted as powerless, dependent upon others, and often victims of violence or the sin of adults. The exempla also depict children as spiritually innocent which enabled them to be potential messengers of God from whom they derive their agency. Thus the image portrayed of children is one in which they are helpless victims, but also messengers of God.

The powerlessness of children is probably best seen in their briefest depictions in which they are mentioned only as the result of sexual sin. In these exempla, the children are not really characters in the narratives, but they are illegitimate children, the consequence and evidence of sin. In an exemplum of the Pope Joan tradition from *An Alphabet of Tales*, a young damsel is dressed like a man and brought to Rome by her "luff." Her disguise was so good that "shoo went unto þe scule and wex so parfyte in

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[53] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 82.

[54] Cf. Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2011), 237-43. Cf. Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2000), 237–43.

connyng þat sho had no make in all Rome. So att þe laste, be ane hole consent, sho was chosyn to be pope and was made pope."[55] The exemplum emphasizes that after becoming pope, she became pregnant. Even then, she was able to keep her secret until she went into labor while traveling from Saint Peter's to Saint John's Lateran when she "bare hur chylde betwixt Colliseum & Saynt Clemett kurk; & þer sho dyed; þer þai berid hur."[56] No mention is made of the child's survival; presumably, the child also died. The child is central to the exemplum, but only in that the child is illegitimate and evidence of sin. In another narrative, a daughter of a priest becomes pregnant and accuses a deacon of being the father. Though the deacon pronounces his innocence, he is stripped of his deaconship and told to marry the young woman by the bishop and the priest. The deacon refuses and consigns himself to a monastery where he "with grete prayers & wpyngis he besought God at þe treuth mott be knawen." "And when þe day of hur byrth drew nere, sho traueled vii dayes to-gedur, & was hugelie vexid with grete paynys . . . and than sho began to cry horrible & sayd 'Wo is me, wriche! for I am fallen into a dubble perill. Furst, for I hase loste my maydenhed; and þe secund, I hase putt a fals cryme uppun þe Dekon."[57] Though many prayed for the woman in her suffering, it was not until the deacon prayed for her that she was delivered from her suffering and so the "dekyn was

[55] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 401-02.

[56] Ibid., 402. There is a similar exemplum in *An Alphabet of Tales* in which a princess disguises herself as a man to flee unwanted marriage and eventually becomes an abbot of a monastery. Her deception is revealed when she as a man is falsely accused of seducing a woman and the case is brought before her father. Ibid., 218–19.

[57] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 261–62.

purgid of þis defame, & restorid agayn unto his offes."[58] Once again, no resolution is given for the child, but it merely serves as evidence of sin, and quite possibly the reason for the woman's painful delivery. Their illegitimacy and lack of resolution in these exempla illustrates the powerlessness of these children. They have no agency, but suffer because of their parents. Their existence brought shame on their parents and themselves, a shame for which they held no responsibility. Even more so, children born to monastics or clerics were deemed sacrilegious as they were an affront to the sacrament of holy orders and the vow of celibacy and chastity. As such, these children could not hold clerical office or enter religious orders except through papal dispensation. Even with dispensation which would remove the stain of their birth, the stigma of their birth would follow them through life.[59] These children are mentioned in these exempla because they are the consequence and evidence of sin, and they are meant to evoke the shame and humiliation that was associated with illegitimacy.

Violence is another way in which exempla depicted the powerlessness of children. As victims of violence, children suffer not for their own sins, but for the sins of adults, most often their parents. In an exemplum found in *An Alphabet of Tales*, an infant girl is the child of an English clerk and a Jewish woman. In an effort to hide his culpability in the pregnancy from the woman's parents, he fools the parents and the Jewish community into believing that the woman was a virgin and that the child would be the Messiah, but

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[58] Ibid., 262.

[59] The primary example this is Erasmus who continued to suffer shame even after receiving a papal dispensation in 1517. For more illegitimacy see, John Witte Jr, *The Sins of the Fathers: The Law and Theology of Illegitimacy Reconsidered* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 86–99.

when the woman gave birth to a daughter, the people were angry and "tuke þis childe be þe legg & threw it agayn þe wall & killed it."[60] The infant daughter here is only referred as daughter, child, and the impersonal "it" after she has been thrown against the wall. This act of mob violence is meant to shock the audience. While the parents are not the perpetrators of the violence, the child suffers because of their sin.

Another narrative in *An Alphabet of Tales* tells a story of infanticide and incest. In the exemplum, a worthy woman is very affectionate to her son, kissing him and letting him lie next to her just as when he was a baby. One day while the husband was on pilgrimage, "as hur son lay by hur he had at do with hur, and beliefe sho was with childe."[61] Heavy with grief and having fervently prayed to the Virgin Mary, the woman traveled from her home to give birth after which "sho slow it & ekid syn upon syn & keste it into a sege."[62] A fiend seeking to destroy her posed as a clerk and brought her before the courts.[63] Upon her request, the court postponed her trial during which time she confessed to a priest. Seeing her sorrow and contrition, the priest bade her to say one pater noster and to pray to the Virgin Mary for help. Her prayers were fruitful for when she returned to the court bringing her husband and friends with her, the fiend when asked to identify her replied, "this is not þatt synner nor man-queller þat I accused; ffor þis is

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[60] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 277–78.

[61] Ibid., 221.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Through vernacular literature, such as sermons and hagiographies, the devil permeated medieval culture, influencing other genres. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer, the Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1984), 212–14. On medieval perceptions of the devil and demons see also, Goodich, *Lives and Miracles of the Saints*, 139–52.

holie woman, and Marie, þe moder of Criste, stondith by hur & kepis hur."[64] Though guilty of infanticide, the woman does not confess her guilt to the court, but to a priest. Very few who were accused of infanticide admitted to the charge. In the Province of Canterbury, parents who denied the accusation of infanticide were required to find an assigned number of compurgators who would swear their belief in the accused's proclamation of innocence.[65] The woman's husband and friends are her compurgators, but the Virgin Mary serves as her primary and most trustworthy compurgator and illustrates the sincerity of the woman's contrition and the reality of her forgiveness. While the exemplum is meant to convey the power, protection, and importance of the Virgin Mary along with sincere contrition of sin, one should not ignore the violence inflicted on the infant. The woman's act of infanticide is described as increasing sin upon sin, and one that brought her before the courts.

The infanticide in both exempla would have shocked medieval listeners.[66] The number of infanticides in medieval England remains a mystery as a reporting of

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[64] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 223.Compare this with the many stories of pregnant nuns praying to the Virgin Mary who then intercedes miraculously removing all signs of a physical birth, thereby protecting the nun from embarrassment and shame. Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 372.

[65] R. H. Helmholz, "Infanticide in the Province of Canterbury During the Fifteenth Century," *History of Childhood Quarterly* 2 (1975): 382.

[66] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 95–96; Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 63–65. Hanawalt notes that secular law did not explicitly state until 1623 that a mother who killed her child was guilty of murder. Citing Eleanora Gordon, Finucane states that since cases of infanticide were typically handled by the church then it is not surprising to find evidence of the practice in secular legal sources lacking. Barbara A. Hanawalt, "Childrearing among the Lower Classes of Late Medieval England," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8 (1977): 10; cf. Barbara A. Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 102; Ronald C. Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 224 n. 141; E. C. Gordon, "Accidents among Medieval Children as Seen from the Miracles of Six English Saints and Martyrs," *Medical History* 35 (1991): 154.

accidental death could easily hide the truth.[67] Aware of the practice, church leaders forbade parents against practices that might result in the death of their children, such as smothering from sleeping with them and leaving them unattended, especially with fire in close proximity.[68] Within England, religious leaders categorized the killing of infants with the same seriousness as adults, as murder for an unbaptized child meant he/she suffered death in this life and the life afterward.[69] What is striking in the second exemplum is that the woman received such a light penance for her sin, only one pater noster. Under the requirements of the church, penance for infanticides had to be handled by the bishop and should have been severe. Before the twelfth century, the penalty was excommunication, but ultimately this was shortened to ten years, with Pope Gregory IX in the thirteenth century recommending in his *Decretals* that mothers should willingly enter a religious house as penance.[70] Her light penance illustrates her contrition, but it is

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[67] Instances of infanticide are low in court records. Examining coroner rolls, Hanawalt offers four possible explanations for the lack of evidence. 1. Being widespread and accepted in society, it was ignored in the records. 2. People concealed the practice. 3. Infanticide was unnecessary as infant mortality rates were high. 4. Because of labor needs, children were valued by society. As Hanawalt concludes her study, she reveals her support for the second possibility arguing that coroner rolls indicate that parents loved children and killed them in only rare cases. Hanawalt, "Childrearing," 10, 14. Hanawalt mentions the lack of positive rationalization in European folklore as one argument against the widespread acceptance and practice of infanticide. Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound*, 100-01.

[68] Hanawalt, "Childrearing," 10; Helmholz, "Infanticide," 380–82.

[69] The killing of an unbaptized child was more severely judged than that of one who was baptized. Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. Pierre Riché (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 16–17; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 95–96; Hanawalt, *Growing up in Medieval London*, 44.

[70] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 95–96. Even though they intended to kill their infants, some parents shared this concern for their children and performed emergency baptisms before committing the act. Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents*, 47.

meant to be contrasted with the severity of her crime. In both exempla, the audience would have been shocked and horrified by the infanticide.

The violence, however, is not confined to infanticide, illustrating that older children suffered as well. In an exemplum repeated twice in Mirk's *Festial*, a child is the victim of his mother's hunger during the siege of Jerusalem.[71] In another from *An Alphabet of Tales*, a father who was devoted to St. Nicholas organized a feast in his honor in which he dispensed alms. The devil, however, "had a dispite þeratt, & come to þe dure in a pure mans likness, & axkid almos uppon þe Saynt Nicholas day. And þe gude man sent hym almos with þis scoler, and þer þe devull strangled þe childe & kylled hym."[72] Upon discovering his dead son, the father cried out to St. Nicholas who raised the child from the dead.[73] In an exemplum from Mirk's *Festial*, a Jewish boy is thrown into an oven by his father for receiving the host at an Easter Mass, but when the door to the oven is opened, he is shown to be playing in the fire and says that he was saved by the Virgin Mary.[74] An expanded version found in *An Alphabet of Tales* adds that "þis childe and his

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[71] Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, 122–23; cf. Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 329–31. The origins of this exemplum traces to Josephus. Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, trans. G. A. Williamson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959), Book VI, III, pt. 4.

[72] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 374.

[73] Ibid. Battles with the devil were an important part of saints' lives, with the saint always being victorious. In this exemplum, the saint continues to triumph over the devil even in death. Russell, *Lucifer*, 156–58, 212–14.

[74] This exempla has several parallels with biblical story found Daniel 3 in which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are protected by God when they are thrown into a furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar II. A version of this exempla is also found in the thirteenth century work *Milagros de Señora* by Gonzalo de Berceo which he copied and edited from MS Thott 128 *Miracula Beate Marie Virginia*. Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 356; Patricia Timmons and Robert Boenig, eds., *Gonzalo de Berceo and the Latin Miracles of the Virgin: A Translation and a Study* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 3–10, 113–29. See also, Julie Nelson Couch, "'The Child Slain by Jews' and 'The Jewish Boy,'" in

moder, and many other Iewis, wer cristend enspeciall for þis fayr meracle of þe sacrament."[75] Both versions illustrate a cultural belief in the power of the host to save sans baptism, even if the individual is Jewish, but the story hinges on a powerless child who suffers at the hands of his father. In many of these exempla, the violence is perpetuated by the parents and only in one is the child a victim of the supernatural. In several of them, the child is rescued from the violence, but this, however, is not always the case as in the stories of infanticide. While the violence depicted in the narratives does represent a reality experienced by children, it also represents the unacceptability of the practice. As Helmholtz notes through his analysis of church legislation, the church was not only concerned with the sin of the parent, but also the protection of children.[76] Even though the acts of violence are vehicles to emphasize intercession of saints, the power of the host, or the power and importance of the Virgin Mary, the heinous acts are also meant to shock the audience and remind them of the need to protect and care for children.[77]

While the exempla examined so far have illustrated the powerlessness of children, several of the narratives in the collections present the child in the image of innocent and pure. In *De Innocentibus et Eorum Festiuitate*, a homily on the Holy Innocents from Mirk's *Festial*, the author reveals the dichotomy in which children existed.[78] Though

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Medieval Literature for Children, ed. Daniel T. Kline (New York: Routledge, 2003), 204–26. On the medieval fear that Jews were a threat to children see, MacLehose, *A Tender Age*, 107–74.

[75] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 211.

[76] Helmholz, "Infanticide," 381–82.

[77] On the Virgin Mary and child victims see, MacLehose, *A Tender Age*, 143–46.

[78] Oosterwijk points to the popularity of the theme of the Massacre of the Holy Innocents in drama and art as evidence that parents did not view the death of a child with indifference. Sophie Oosterwijk,

they were born with Original Sin, they were also innocent.[79] "For when a chylde ys withyn state of innocentes, he ys not aschemet of hys shappe, hor he ys not defowled wyth fulth synne, but of synne þat he hathe, he draweth of þe Adam and Eve."[80] As a child ages, he/she becomes more aware of sin and "when bygynnyth to take rote un a child, þen innocentes gothe away; for þen he begynnyth to know þe good from þe evil."[81] Their innocence should not be confused with perfection, but it arises from a distinction between Original Sin and actual sin. Baptism cleansed the child of Original Sin and thereby saved the child from limbo. Only actual sin remained of which the child bore no responsibility because he/she lacked the ability to discern good from evil. The innocence of children was because they were morally neutral. *De Innocentibus et Eorum Festiuitate* reflects a cultural belief that children were not born as wretched and miserable sinners. Both the clergy and the laity refused to assign sin to those who for the absence of reason could not discern between good and evil. While they inherited the sin of Adam, children

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"The Medieval Child: An Unknown Phenomenon?," in *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen J. Harris and Bryon Lee Grigsby (New York: Routledge, 2008), 232. See also, Sophie Oosterwijk, "'Long Lullynge Haue I Lorn!': The Massacre of the Innocents in Word and Image," *Medieval English Theatre* 25 (January 1, 2003): 3–53; MacLehose, *A Tender Age*, 73–75; cf. Weatherly, *Speculum Sacerdotal*, 12–13.

[79] Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, 35. Consider Daniel T. Kline's comparison of the medieval view of children with romantic view of children. Kline notes that medieval culture understood the innocence of children, but affirmed original sin. However, he does not delve into the reasons for this innocence. Daniel T. Kline, "That Child May Doon to Fadres Reverence': Children and Childhood in Middle English Literature," in *The Child in British Literature: Literary Constructions of Childhood, Medieval to Contemporary*, ed. Adrienne E. Gavin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 22–23. For the debate about the nature of children in the twelfth and thirteenth century see, MacLehose, *A Tender Age*, 53–106.

[80] Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, 35.

[81] Ibid.

were innocent, and they remained this way until they could distinguish between right and wrong.[82]

The image of the child as innocent and pure permeates throughout the three collections examined. All three collections mention the exemplum where Constantine suffers from leprosy and is told to bathe in the blood of three thousand children in order to be healed, but spares the children on behalf of the mothers' petitions.[83] "And when he saw þe moders of þies childer, shewand hym þer brestis & pulland of þer hare, & wepand befor hym, he made sorow & sayd; 'How sulde I vse þis wykkid bath? It is bettur to me to dye for þe heale of þies innocentis, þan for to requovir my life for þer deade."[84] In the versions found in Mirk's *Festial* and *An Alphabet of Tales*, Constantine returns the children to their mothers along with gifts and is rewarded by God with the restoration of his health. The version recorded in *Middle English Sermons*, on the other hand, says that Constantine "chose raþur all his liff tyme to be smytte with a lepre þan he wold suffure þe innocents blod to be shed to saue hym."[85] Two things are evident from these two versions. The first is the obvious belief of the child as innocent and the second is the detestation of the concept of killing innocent children.

The image of the child as pure and innocent, however, is not confined to those under two years old for in many of the exempla the child is able to speak, which

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[82] Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, 46.

[83] Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, 37; Ross, *Middle English Sermons*, 253; Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 478.

[84] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 478.

[85] Ross, *Middle English Sermons*, 253.

illustrates that most people probably extended this stage of innocence beyond the age of two and that their special status gives them a special connection to God. In an exemplum recorded in *Middle English Sermons*, a wicked clerk returns to England and suddenly dies. As the young clerks read the Psalter over the body, the dead clerk rises up and begins to expound upon his coming punishments because of a wicked life. This event occurs three times as the children read from the Psalter.[86] In another exemplum found in Mirk's *Festial* and *An Alphabet of Tales*, a child is taken up to heaven and is taught to sing a litany. When he returns to earth, he sings the litany and the people are healed.[87] This exemplum not only illustrates the innocence and purity of children, but also that this innocence in some way gives them a special connection to God. Mirk's *Festial* records another exemplum which illustrates this point. An eleven-year old child became sick and went into a coma and when he awoke, he prophesied many things, including of a man who kept a mistress. The man heard of this child and went to speak with him. Along the way, the man met and kissed a fiend who looked like his mistress. When he finally met the boy, the boy prophesied that the man would die from a canker set on his lip by the fiend. "But, for þis man toke hys worde bot for a fantasye, þis kanchur quikkonod, and ete hym os he sayde, and dyud þeron."[88]

Much of medieval society struggled to assign sin and damnation to children who could not discern between good and evil. While *De Innocentibus et Eorum Festiuitate*

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[86] Ibid., 176–77.

[87] Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales*, 87.

[88] Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, 293.

shows that some church leaders ascribe this innocence only to those under the age of two, exempla prove that most people extended this innocence beyond that age, and they reveal a tension between the theology of the church and cultural belief. Even though the church taught that children were born with Original Sin and needed baptism to cleanse them, society refused to believe that little children were as sinful as adults. Church leaders explained that this innocence was because infants and children lacked the ability to understand good and evil, leaving them morally neutral. Furthermore, these exempla, believed to be accounts of actual events, reflect a cultural belief that this innocence gave children a special connection to God, enabling them to be messengers of God and it is through this connection that children derive their agency.

Boy Bishop Sermon

A sermon very much of interest in this study is one of two extant sermons prepared for boy bishop celebrations for it further illustrates the image of children as innocent and messengers from God. The origins of the boy bishop celebrations lie in the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28, which can be traced to the early fifth century, and the Feast of St. Nicholas, December 6, which gained prominence in the thirteenth century.[89] Each of these liturgical events had a connection to children. The Feast of the Holy Innocents venerated as martyrs those male infants killed by Herod and became an occasion for church leaders to emphasize the innocence of children.[90] On the other hand,

[89] Paul A. Hayward, "Suffering and Innocence in Latin Sermons for the Feast of the Holy Innocents, c. 400-800," in *The Church and Childhood*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 67; Shahar, "Boy Bishop's Feast," 244; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 188.

[90] Hayward, "Suffering and Innocence," 80.

because of the sanctity of his infancy, St. Nicholas became the patron saint of children.[91] By the twelfth century, the justification began to appear that children should perform the Feast of Holy Innocents because it was children who suffered for Christ. Gradually, the celebration of the Feast of Holy Innocents grew so that eventually, it also became connected to the Feast of Nicholas.[92] The celebrations' popularity increased significantly in thirteenth century spreading across Europe.[93] The earliest evidence of the ceremony in England is found in the York, Salisbury, and St. Paul's Cathedrals in the 1220s.[94] The Reformation, however, brought an end to the practice in Protestant lands, as it did to most Medieval Catholic celebrations.[95] In England, Henry VIII outlawed the practice in 1541. The boy bishop, however, experienced a short revival under Mary I, being revived in 1554 and fully re-established by 1556. With the death of Mary I in 1558, the practice was outlawed once again under Elizabeth I, with the last sermon being preached on December 28, 1558, some thirty-nine days after Mary I's death.[96]

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[91] Arthur F. Leach, "The Schoolboy's Feast," *Fortnightly Review* 59 (1896): 130–31; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 188.

[92] Shahar, "Boy Bishop's Feast," 244–46; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 188; Warren W. Wooden, *Children's Literature of the English Renaissance*, ed. Jeanie Watson (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 24–25.

[93] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 188–89.

[94] Wooden, *Children's Literature*, 25.

[95] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 188–89.

[96] On the reestablishment of the practice under Mary I, see Ward, "Richard Ramsey's Sermon for a Boy Bishop," 476–78.

Universally popular, the celebrations could vary from country to country and region to region.[97] Typically, on December 6, a child was chosen from among the chorister of schoolboys at a cathedral, abbey, or collegiate church.[98] Often the boy bishop was accompanied by corresponding roles, with cathedral canons performing the duties usually required of the schoolboys. Though chosen, the boy bishop would not perform his official duties until December 28.[99] Miniature vestments were made, often from expensive materials, for the boy bishop. The popularity of the celebration is attested by the evidence of attempts to curtail the expenses of the celebration.[100] Once elected, the boy bishop and his boy retainers would go on "visitation," both soliciting gifts from and administering blessings to the townspeople.[101] The boy bishop would officially be installed in the choir on vespers December 27 and would serve until vespers of Holy Innocents Day, December 28. For Holy Innocents Day, there were special breakfasts and dinners held for the boy bishop and his retainers. On Holy Innocents Day, he would lead

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[97] Popularity of the ceremony was such that even some convents established their own version of the ceremony in which a young girl would be elected as the abbess. While the endorsed the ceremony for boys, church leaders tended to condemn this practice for girls. Wooden, *Children's Literature*, 27.

[98] Leach, "The Schoolboy's Feast," 132. Some nunneries celebrated the abbess girl's on the Feast of Holy Innocents, but as opposed to the boy bishop, the practice raised opposition among church leaders. In the thirteenth century, Archbishop John Peckham forbade the nunneries from the practice. Shahar, "Boy Bishop's Feast," 246–47.

[99] Shahar, "Boy Bishop's Feast," 244–46; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 188.

[100] Leach, "The Schoolboy's Feast," 132–33; Alcock, "Sermon for a Boy Bishop," 59.

[101] Leach, 133; Nicholas Orme, "The Culture of Children in Medieval England," *Past and Present* 148 (1995): 70-71. Wooden notes that these visitations could extend to Candlemas, February 2. Wooden, 26-27.

the ceremony, doing everything but the saying the mass, and in some cases, he preached, though often the sermon was written for him.[102]

Through the practice, the church emphasized the innocence of children, presenting them as an example to adults.[103] Nicholas Orme notes that the boy bishop celebration, occurring during advent, was the first in a series of liturgical impersonations, with the others occurring on All Saints Day, All Souls' Day (November 2), St. Clement (November 23), and St. Katherine (November 25). Of these, the celebrations of the boy bishop which occurred on St. Nicholas and Holy Innocents Day were the greatest.[104] In this licensed role reversal, the boy bishop acted as a social release valve, an opportunity to express antiauthoritarian and anticlerical opinions. With their popularity, the celebrations helped balance the sacred with the blasphemous.[105] Throughout the celebrations adults were involved, especially in the cathedrals. They took part in the visitations, prepared the meals, and coordinated the liturgy. In the parishes where clergy were fewer, the boys were probably less supervised. Orme notes that the term "St.

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[102] Leach, "The Schoolboy's Feast," 133; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 70–71. Wooden argues that it is possible that the letters were a collaborative effort between an adult and child. Wooden, *Children's Literature*, 31–32.

[103] Richard L. DeMolen, "Pueri Christi Imitatio: The Festival of the Boy-Bishop in Tudor England," *Moreana* 45 (1975): 17; Shahar, "Boy Bishop's Feast," 249.

[104] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 70.

[105] Boy Bishop celebrations could at times become occasions for anti-clericalism. See Shahar, "Boy Bishop's Feast," 247–50.

Nicholas's clerks" coming to mean robbers probably illustrates how the festivities could get out of hand.[106]

As previously mentioned, in some cases the boy bishop would deliver a sermon. Only two English sermons are extant, one from the late fifteenth century and the other from the sixteenth century. The fifteenth century sermon was prepared by John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, probably in the mid-1480s or 1490s for a boy bishop at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. The sermon was published by Wynkyn de Worde and under the title, *In die innocentium Sermo pro Episcopo puerorum*.[107] The sermon lacks date and authorship. Wynkyn de Worde was identified as the publisher after an examination of the sermon's illustrations and typesetting. The dates are estimates using similar evidence. The approximate dates place the sermon close to end of Alcock's life.[108]

Alcock was born in 1430 at Beverley, Yorkshire to William Alcock of Hull, a wealthy merchant. He attended Cambridge University and was ordained in 1449. In 1471, Alcock was appointed the dean of the royal free chapel of St. Stephen and the keeper of the rolls chancery, a government position which placed him royal circles. From 1472-1473, he was the keeper of the great seal, and from June 10-September 29 of 1475, he acted as chancellor while Bishop Thomas Rotherham of Lincoln accompanied the king to France. In 1476, Alcock became the bishop of Worcester. He continued to rise in stature

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[106] Nicholas Orme, "The Culture of Children in Medieval England," *Past & Present* 148 (1995): 70–71.

[107] The date of delivery is difficult to determine as the sermon survives in two printed editions dated 1498 (?) and 1499 (?). A. Ward estimates that the sermon was delivered at least seventy years before Richard Ramsey's, a canon and prebendary of Gloucester Cathedral, 1558 boy bishop sermon. Alcock, "Sermon for a Boy Bishop," 59–60.

[108] Ibid., 61.

being appointed chancellor of the realm and delivering the opening sermon of Henry VII's first parliament in 1485. In 1486, he led the delegation which negotiated a three year truce with Scotland, a feat which most probably resulted in his appointment as the Bishop of Ely. While at Ely, Alcock built a new great hall for the episcopal palace, improved the bishop's manor house at Downham, and founded Jesus College at Cambridge University.[109]

Given his accomplishments, it is no surprise that he was asked to write the boy bishop sermon for St. Paul's. Though written for a child, the sermon bears the marks of Alcock's erudition. The sermon contains references to historical events and people, and is permeated with Latin citations, with the English translations provided on occasion. Though Alcock is the author of the sermon, an effort is made to establish the boy bishop as the vocal author of the sermon. Early in the sermon, the boy bishop is established as the vocal author through various references to his status as a child. For the most part, the sermon is serious in tone, but Alcock employs a bit of humor near the beginning through which the vocal authorship of the child is emphasized. While directing prayers for various leaders, the boy bishop asks that they pray for him so that he may retain his current obedient disposition, and "never more be vexed with Jerom's vysyon … whan the good Lorde askyd of Jeremye, *Quid tu vides, Jeremia*? He answered … 'A waken rode I see' …. Trueley thys waken rode oftentimes hath troubled me in my childholde."[110]

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[109] A. J. Schoeck, "John Alcock (1430–1500)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed January 21, 2018, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-289.

[110] The citations is from Jeremiah 1:11. Alcock, "Sermon for a Boy Bishop," ll. 82-90.

Following this, the boy bishops states that he violently shakes when he sees his master in the congregation stating, "As Nero the Emporer wold to his mayster Seneca, the same wysshes I wold to my mayster I love soo well," a reference to Nero making Seneca kill himself.[111] He says he wishes that all his masters would sit on the King's Bench, a play on the similarities of the terms King's Bench, the supreme court of common law, and the King's Bench Prison at Southwark. This humorous section closes with the boy bishop saying he will especially pray that all prelates "cometh to theyr dygnytee as I dyde; for thanked be God, without conspyracy, lorshyp, or simony I was sette in thys degree.[112] The humor switches to serious tone as the section closes saying that any advancement through simony and royal favor "hath and shall brynge Crystys chirche *in confusionem dampnabilem*."[113]

Though written by Alcock, the humor employed establishes the boy bishop as the vocal author of the sermon, a connection which becomes important as the boy bishop exhorts his listeners "to be pure as childerne."[114] The image to which Alcock refers is that of an infant who lacks reason, and therefore, is pure, neither disposed to virtue or vice. Alcock speaks of two stages of childhood: infancy and adolescence. Adolescence (*Adolescencia*), the second stage, is when the child develops a disposition to vice and virtue. This is when reason begins to arise, a faculty upon which Alcock places great

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[111] Ibid., ll. 92-95.

[112] Ibid., ll. 95-110.

[113] Ibid., ll. 108-110.

[114] Ibid., ll. 133-135.

emphasis for through reason and knowledge humanity is directed by his/her free will and by faith to God. A person who possesses reason is responsible for his/her actions. In the infancy stage, infants lack reason and because they lack reason, children are "neyther dysposed to vertue neyther to vice."[115] For this reason, they are described as "pure in cleanesse from synn and malyce."[116] Children existed as it were almost in Adam's state before the fall, pure and holy having no sin in them. This is not to say that children are perfect. They still possessed Original Sin. While the purity to which they are ascribed is similar to pre-fall Adam, Alcock compares childhood to that age after the Fall but before the giving of the Law, an age he calls the "Law of Kynde." Children are not responsible for their actions because the law has not been given to them. Their innocence is due to ignorance. "Do he what somever he wyll, no man doth blame hym."[117] Children, therefore, are flawed. Adults through reason and knowledge and by the grace of God are able to pursue a holy life. Children, however, "for tendernesse of age and lack of knowlege can not dyrect theyr deds convenyentely to that ende," except with special help from God as in the case of the Holy Innocents. It is through education that children "lackyne the use of reason and habyte of cognycyon" learn to follow God.[118]

Though their innocence is due to ignorance, the pure innocence of children is that to which the Alcock and the vocal author, the boy bishop, calls his listener to aspire; it is

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[115] Ibid., ll. 45-50.

[116] Ibid., ll. 128-130.

[117] Ibid., ll. 143-149.

[118] Ibid., ll. 35-50.

the central theme of the sermon. Citing Matthew 19:14, where Jesus said to let the little children come to him, Alcock says "it is not oonly understode those that bene chyldern of age but those bene chyldern pure in clennesse from synne and malice."[119] Immediately after this, 1 Corinthian 14:20 is referenced where Paul says that one should not think like a child, "but from all synne and malice be children in cleannese," something to which "alle maner of people and al manner of ages" are called.[120] Furthermore, childhood is the model by which all people should live should worship and love God. For in childhood, one's life is devoted to the worship of God. Fathers send their children to school where they learn to serve God, "to be meke, gentyll, and lowly."[121] This time, however, is short lived. Alcock uses the Roman calendar as analogy. The Roman calendar is composed, says Alcock, of three major days: *Kalendas*, *Nonas*, and *Ydus*. These days are fixed points by which the Romans organized their calendar. *Kalendas* is the first day of the month which would be devoted to the worship of various goddess. This day corresponds to childhood in which children are taught to worship. *Nonas* was the market day on which there was no worshiping and this corresponds to youth "in the which he is ful of undevocyon, and all moost forgetith to worship his God or ony saynt."[122] Manhood corresponds to *Ydus* after which there would be many *Kalendas*.[123] Because the Romans,

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[119] Ibid., ll. 128-129.

[120] Ibid., ll. 130-135, cf. 258-260.

[121] Ibid., ll. 280-281.

[122] Ibid., ll. 291-294.

[123] The way in which the Romans organized their calendar was by counting down to the *Kalendas*, *Nonas*, and *Ydus*. *Kalendas* was the first day of the month so the last sixteen days of the previous month would be marked by how many days were left until *Kalendas*.

marked their days by how many days there were until the next fixed day, there would be, as Alcock says, many days named *Kelandas*, and just as childhood was dedicated to the worship so in the last stage of life should one devote many days to devotions. Alcock's message is for his listeners to return to that the stage of childhood where they more attuned to God, worshiping God and increasing in virtue, "followynge in the ways of Innocency with thyse holy Innocents."[124]

The image of the children presented *In die innocentium Sermo pro Episcopo puerorum* fits with that seen so far. Children are innocent, but they are innocent because they lack a sense of right or wrong. Despite this being because of ignorance, they possess a purity, one which the church put forth as an example for all people to follow. Part of the foundation for this understanding comes from scripture passages like Matthew 19:14 and 1 Corinthians 14:20, but then also from the tradition of the Holy Innocents. It also comes from their observation of children in that young children lack reason and so are not responsible for their actions. *In die innocentium Sermo pro Episcopo puerorum* illustrates the ways in which children were esteemed in the Church. Though written by Bishop Alcock, it was the boy bishop, a child, who was calling the people to return to the innocence of children. Of course, the child is beyond the age of innocence, but the imagery cannot be ignored, a child calling adults to the innocence of children. Just as the children in exempla were innocent giving them a special connection to God so that they could be God's messengers, the boy bishop illustrated this innocence and could also be

[124] Alcock, "Sermon for a Boy Bishop," ll. 363-366.

God's messenger. In the case of Bishop Alcock's sermon, by becoming the vocal author of the sermon, the boy bishop became a physical representation of this reality.

Devotional Literature

In addition to reading sermon and exempla collections, the laity also had access to various pastoral and devotional literature. As early as the ninth century, noble devout laity imitated clergy by devoting portions of their day to religious devotion.[125] Religious devotion and the desire for devotional literature increased as literacy increased with religious devotion being firmly secured on the eve of the English Reformation.[126] Literature once intended for the clergy, eventually, made its way into hands of the laity. A prime example is Robert Mannying's *Handlying Synne*, which was a translation of *Manuel des Péchés*, and John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*. Soon the clergy began to write works especially for the laity as in Richard Whitford's *A Werke for Householders* and Desiderius Erasmus' *De civilitate morun puerilium* and *A treatise perswadynge a man patientlye to suffer the deth of his frend*. With the increase in literacy in the fourteenth century, these works filled a demand for devotional literature and reveal a concern for the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of children.

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[125] Nicholas Orme, "Children and the Church in Medieval England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45 (1994): 568.

[126] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28–29; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 68–87.

Handlynge Synne

An importance piece of devotional literature in the late middle ages was Robert Mannyng's *Handlynge Synne*. Composed in 1303, *Handlyng Synne* was a translation of *Manuel des Péchés* written in the vernacular as means of fulfilling the Fourth Lateran Council's call for yearly confession. Mannyng omitted several topics covered by *Manuel des Péchés*, but because of his explanations and narrative, the work still runs longer than its original source material.[127] Written in English rhyme with old exempla from Latin and French sources added to entertain and instruct, *Handlynge Synne* covered the Ten Commandments, the seven deadly sins, the twelve points of shrift, and the twelve graces of shrift.[128] Mannyng hoped that through the work the laity would be more knowledgeable of how to avoid sin and interact with the sacraments of confession and

[127] Moira K. Fitzgibbons, "Knowing Believers: Pastoralia, the Laity, and Interpretive Christianity" (Ph.D., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2001), 38. Mannying omits all of book 1 of the manual which contained the articles of faith and only translated about half of the 8500 lines from the sections does use. Raymond G. Biggar, "Robert Mannyng [Robert Mannyng of Brunne] (d. in or after 1338)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed January 21, 2018, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-17986.

[128] Biggar, "Robert Mannyng," ODNB.

penance.[129] The work eventually served as a model for Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Gower's *Conefessio amantis*.[130]

In his explanation of the seven sacraments, Robert Mannyng illustrates the cultural belief in Original Sin and the necessity of baptism for salvation. The reader is reminded of the sin of Adam "yn which synne alle mankynde ys bore" and that only baptism can save them from hell.[131] Children who die after birth without baptism, "þogh quyk in the wombe before," will not go to heaven.[132] Neither will the child go to hell having never sinned. The child will remain in limbo with "ne peyne of hete, ne of colde, Hyt shal non fele, no ryȝt hyt wolde."[133] Despite the lack of pain from hell, this is not a pleasant experience for the child is denied joy of God, which is described as "peyne wit*h*-outen ende."[134] The fear of limbo, therefore, became a motivation for baptism and it was important that all individuals should know how to perform the rite. "For every man, bothe hygh and logli, þe poyntes of bapteme oweþ to knowe, to helpe chyldryn yn many

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[129] Fitzgibbons, "Knowing Believers," 38; Robert Mannyng, *Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Synne," A.D. 1303: With Those Parts of the Anglo-French Treaties on Which It Was Founded, William of Wadington's "Manuel Des Pechiez,"* ed. Federick J. Furnivall, EETS original series 119 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1901), ll. 89–114. Fitzgibbons argues that by publishing a handbook on sin Mannyng was inadvertently undermining the spiritual authority of the priests, and that Mirk's *Festial* and *Jacob's Well* were written as a response to this lay empowerment. Fitzgibbons, "Knowing Believers," 192–241.

[130] It has also been argued that audiences would have recognized *Confessio amantis* as a parody of Mannyng's *Handlyng of Synne*. Biggar, "Robert Mannyng," ODNB.

[131] Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 9502–9503.

[132] Ibid., l. 9557.

[133] Ibid., ll. 9563–9564.

[134] Ibid., l. 9570.

kas."[135] Mannyng stressed that the correct words must be said and water must be poured over the child. More often than not midwives performed the rite and Mannyng stated that priests should teach them the words and ensure that they say the words correctly, "examyne her what she couthe, what she shuld do, and seye wit*h* mouþ."[136] The importance of midwives correctly baptizing infants is further stressed through the addition of an exemplum, consisting of twenty-nine lines, about a midwife who failed to baptize a child correctly. In the exemplum, a midwife realizing that the childe she just helped deliver would die baptizes the infant in the name of God and Saint John. In inquiring about the baptism of child so as to determine if the child could be buried in holy ground, a priest catches the midwife's error proclaiming, "yn euyl tyme were þou bore, for yn þy defaute, a soule ys lore."[137]

In his discussion on baptism, Mannyng also emphasized the importance of religious education in children. After stressing the need to baptize immediately, Mannyng urged those "þat heue chyldryn al day" to guard them from witchcraft and remember their promise to teach their children "whan hyt haþ age … þat þou ne haue for hyt no wrang."[138] Like Richard Whitford will later write, Mannyng was emphasizing the importance of guarding children from evil. "Haþ age" could refer the ambiguous age of discretion, somewhere between 7-14, but most likely reflects a thought similar to

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[135] Ibid., ll. 9591–9593.

[136] Ibid., ll. 9617–9618.

[137] Ibid., ll. 9645–9646.

[138] Ibid., ll. 9571–9582.

Whitford in which education should begin as soon as the child can talk.[139] Later, Mannyng stated that children should be taught the pater noster and creed and "ȝyf ȝe ne do, hyt ys to drede."[140] Furthermore, he warned godparents to fulfill their spiritual duties and not to indulge in lechery.[141] The godparents were to teach the children to flee sin by example.[142]

The importance of teaching and disciplining children is also found in Mannyng's covering of the sin of sloth. Discipline and education are intimately connected. Parents are to discipline and "teche hem gode þewys echone," though they are warned to temper the severity of corporal punishment, "breke hem no bone." Concerning those children who are not disciplined, Mannyng says, "better were the þe chylde vnbore."[143] These comments are followed by an exemplum against swearing. This exemplum is more extensive than other versions, providing an introduction and concluding remarks. In the introduction, the father is described as hating his child because he "chastyed hym

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[139] Richard L. DeMolen, "Childhood and the Sacraments in the Sixteenth Century," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 66 (1975): 52.

[140] Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 9697–9700.

[141] Lynch traces the practice and responsibilities of godparents to the Carolingian reforms which were a synthesis of various practices and ideas, which became standard for Western Europe. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe*, 286–339. Joseph H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 286-339.

[142] Mannyng specifically is referring to godfathers taking advantage of their goddaughters. He names drunkenness as the chief cause and provides an exemplum where God kills the godfather for having sex with his goddaughter. Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 9701–9786. The practice of godparents surrounded the child with three adults, two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex who were entrusted with the physical and spiritual care of the child. Orme, *Medieval Children*, 25, 201-04. For the development of the practice, see Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe*.

[143] Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 4849–4863.

noght."[144] As the swearing child is sitting on the father's lap, he is forcibly removed from his father's arms by a fiend. The child dies and is taken to "helle with shame."[145] Though the child is described as "wurþy to blame" in the introduction, the concluding remarks reveal that the real fault lies not with the child who "was fyve wyntyr olde," but with the father who failed to verbally and physically punish the child for swearing.[146] Ultimately, the child died not for his own fault, but for the fault of this parent. This exemplum and the explanations which precede and follow are an example of the fears, concerns, and perceptions of the responsibilities of childrearing.[147] The child sinned by swearing, but as the child was only five, the parent bears responsibility. Parents who failed to discipline children did not love them and exempla such as this one, perpetuated and reinforced societal fears that their children could suffer for their negligence.

John Mirk

In addition to the *Festial*, John Mirk also wrote *Instructions for Parish Priests*. Like his *Festial*, Mirk intended it as a supplement for poorly trained priests, instructing

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[144] Ibid., l. 4868.

[145] In this account, it is also appears that only child can see and knows that the fiend, which is described as a "blake men," is coming to take him to hell. Ibid., ll. 4884–4895.

[146] Ibid., ll. 4869, 4865–4902.

[147] Hasenfratz notes that fear is Mannyng's dominant rhetorical theme in his exempla, with very few employing humor. Robert Hasenfratz, "Terror and Pastoral Care in Handlyng Synne," in *Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care: Essays in Honour of Bella Millett*, ed. Cate Gunn and Catherine Innes-Parker (Rochester: York Medieval Press, 2009), 132–48.

them on what they should preach and teach their parishioners.[148] *Instructions for Parish Priests* was one of two priests' manuals written by John Mirk, the other being *Manuale sacerdotis*. Both are believed to be influenced by William Pagula's *Oculus sacerdotis* which was written in the 1320s. Whereas *Manuale sacerdotis* was written in Latin prose and explored the spiritual duties of the priesthood, *Instructions for Parish Priests* was composed in English rhyming couplets and covered the practical duties of the priesthood. Through these works, Mirk provided instruction for both novice and advanced priests. Presumably writen in the late fourteenth century, scholars suggest that *Instructions for Parish Priests*, because of its lack of references to Lollardy, was probably written before the more hostile *Festial* and *Manuale sacerdotis*.[149] Scholars theorize that *Instructions for Parish Priests* might have been published with the *Festial*, and that with the publication of *Manuale sacerdotis*, Mirk provided a comprehensive program of pastoral instruction.[150]

Like Mannyng, Mirk emphasized the importance of baptism though he never expounded on Original Sin or the possibility of limbo. Typically, baptism would be performed at the church font by a priest eight days after the child's birth.[151] Childbirth,

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[148] Barr, *Pastoral Care*, 21; John Mirk, *John Mirk's "Instructions for Parish Priests": Edited from MS. Cotton Claudius A II and Six Other Manuscripts, with Introduction, Notes and Glossary*, ed. Gillis Kristensson, Lund Studies in English 49 (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 67–68.

[149] Susan Powell, "John Mirk (Fl. c. 1382–c. 1414)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed January 21, 2018, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18818; Alan J. Fletcher, "John Mirk and the Lollards," *Medium Ævum* 56 (1987): 217–24.

[150] Susan Powell, "John Mirk," ODNB (accessed June 27, 2014); Fletcher, "John Mirk and the Lollards," 217. Powell, "John Mirk, ODNB"; Fletcher, "John Mirk," 217.

[151] Cf. Mirk, *Instructions*, 75.

however, entailed many potential dangers and complications, and Mirk stressed the importance of priests ensuring midwives are properly trained to administer baptism.[152] As part of her preparations, the midwife should "heo haue redy clene watere, to folowe the chylde ȝef hyt be need, ȝef heo hyt be in drede."[153] If the child's life is in danger then the midwife should not hesitate to baptize the child even if it is "bote half be bore…hed and necke and no more;" all that matters for baptism is that she is able to see the child's head.[154] If the mother dies during the delivery, Mirk instructed the midwife to remove the child "wyth a knyf" and baptize it.[155] He even says to call a man to perform the action if the midwife is overcome with grief.[156] Though traumatic for those involved, the purpose was to "saue so the chyldes lyf, and hye that hyt crystened be, for that ys a dede of charyte."[157] The baptism can either be performed by pouring water on the child's head or "in a vessel to crystone hyt," after which the vessel and water should be burned or brought to the church and cast into the baptism font.[158] While midwives typically performed the emergency baptism, Mirk stated that if there were no other men or women

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[152] On the dangerous of childbirth see, Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents*, 23–33; Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, 33–37.

[153] Mirk, *Instructions*, 72.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Mirk, *Instructions*, 72.Ibid.

[156] Typically, men though close by would not have been involved in the delivery. Given that the nearest man was most probably the husband, this advice makes for a gruesome scene. For more on the role of men in childbirth see, Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents*, 33–35.

[157] Mirk, *Instructions*, 72.

[158] Ibid., 73.

nearby, the father or mother can baptize the child "wyþoute blame" if they "se that hyt be need."[159] The emphasis here is that if the child's life is in danger, then every effort must be made to baptize the child before it dies which reflected and reinforced the parental fears for the salvation of their children.

Of the sacraments, only baptism could be performed by priests and laity, which included women. The baptism was valid as long as the words, which can either be said in English or Latin, were said in the correct order. "And say the words alle on rowe … say ryȝt thus and do no more, for non othere kynnes lore."[160] Elsewhere, Mirk stated that baptism performed in Latin was valid even if it was bad Latin. As long as "þe sylabul" is spoken, "Pa of patris, fi of filij, spi of spiritus sancti," then the baptism was efficacious.[161] Like Mannying, Mirk stated parents must still bring the child to church, even though the child has been baptized at home as the priests must examine each emergency baptism to ensure it was administered properly, asking "whenne þe chylde I-folowede was, and wheþer þe words were seyde a-ryȝt."[162] Baptism, however, can only be performed once. When the child is brought to the church to be examined, Mirk warned priests to "folowe thow not þe childe twye, lest afterwarde hyt do the nye."[163] If the validity of the baptism was in the question, the priest is to baptize the child conditionally with these words: "Si

[159] Ibid., 75.

[160] Ibid., 74.

[161] Ibid., 98.

[162] Ibid., 97.

[163] Ibid., 74.

tu es baptizatus, ego te non rebaptizo. Sed si non es baptizatus, ego te baptize. In nomine patris & filij & spiritus sancti. amen."[164] Phrased in this way, the baptism's validity was contingent on the invalidity of the previous baptism. Furthermore, Mirk instructed priests to use this formula to baptize abandoned infants. As the state of the foundling's baptism would be unknown, the conditional baptism would ensure the child was baptized without administering a second baptism. Mirk's instructions on baptism reveal a deep concern for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of children. Parents feared what would happen to children without baptism. While ideally a priest would administer the baptism eight days after the child's birth, anyone could perform the baptism if the life of the child was in jeopardy. In this way, cultural concern for the salvation and spiritual wellbeing influenced church practice. As long as the person used water and spoke the words in the correct order, the baptism was valid. What was important was not who administered baptism, but that baptism was administered.

Like Mannying, Mirk's *Instructions* reveal the belief that children should be cared for both physically and spiritually. Several of Mirk's teachings refer to the protection of children. Mirk warned against the unintentional harm of children. Godparents were told not to sleep with their godchildren "tyl þey con hem-self wel kepe." In confession, priests, furthermore, were to inquire of parents if they have accidentally smothered their children, a sin so grievous that a bishop must ascribe the appropriate penance.[165] Children

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[164] Ibid., 100. Sometimes parents would abandon their infants which when found raised questions as to the child's baptism at which a priest would perform a conditional baptism. A council in Bordeaux (1234), while deploring the practice of child abandonment, asked that women use salt as a sign that the child had been baptized. Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 324.

[165] Mirk, *Instructions*, 145, 160–61.

were also to be protected from intentional harm. Mirk listed among those excommunicated were people who "sleen children or distroien boren or unboren with drynkes or with wichecraft" or who abandon their children "at eny wey-letes or at eny chirch-dores or at eny other weyes."[166] Parents and godparents were entrusted with the physical wellbeing of children. The failure to care for them whether unintentionally or intentionally brings consequences, and the severity of these consequences illustrates the importance of this task.

Not only must children be cared for physically, but they must be cared for spiritually. Proper spiritual care entailed baptism which cleansed the child of Original Sin, but also religious instruction and confirmation. Part of religious instruction included the teaching of the pater noster and creed by child's godparents. Mirk stated, "here godchyldere to gode teche, here pater noster and here crede, techen hem they mote need."[167] Being responsible for the religious instruction of their godchildren, Mirk stated that priests should inquire during confession if godparents were performing their required task.[168] Learning the pater noster and the creed, however, was not enough, for parents themselves must ensure that children are taught to avoid sin. Once again, during confession, priests were to inquire of parents, "þy chyldre þat were schrewes, hast þow I-taght hem gode þewes."[169] The teaching of good manners would have included

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[166] Ibid., 106; see also Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 333.

[167] Mirk, *Instructions*, 76.

[168] Ibid., 128.

[169] Ibid., 146.

instructions to avoid sin and pursue piety. In addition to religious instruction, parents and godparents must ensure that their charges are confirmed.[170] Confirmation bestowed grace upon the child which helped it grow in grace.[171] Debate existed as to when children should be confirmed. Some church leaders argued that it should be performed before the child was seven, while others said it should only be administered to those over the age of twelve. [172] Within the Church of England, priests, through various decrees, were instructed to ensure that parents confirmed their children before a year and a day after the child's birth.[173] For Mirk, confirmation should occur before the age of five, stating that priests should excommunicate parents who wait longer than five years after the child's birth. "For tho þat bydeth ouer-more, the fader & moder mote rewe hyt sore. Out of chyrche þey schule be pyt tyl þe byschope haue bysbede hyt."[174] Children began to develop reason somewhere between five and seven years old, and thereby became responsible for sin, a belief illustrated in Mirk's instructions that boys and girls should not sleep in the same bed after the age of seven because they could experience sexual temptation. "They schule no lengere lygge I-fere, leste they by-twynne hem brede the

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[170] While Mirk comments on confirmation only mention the father and mother, the instruction to have the child confirmed would have been included in the charge given to the godparents at its baptism. Orme, *Medieval Children*, 202. Cf. A. Jefferies Collins, ed., *Manuale Ad Vsum: Percelebris Ecclesie Sarisburiensis*, Henry Bradshaw Society 91 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2009), 32.

[171] Traina, "A Person in the Making," 110–11. For the development of confirmation see, Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 217–19.

[172] Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, 23.

[173] Powicke and Cheney, *Councils & Synods*, II:74, 453.

[174] Mirk, *Instructions*, 76.

lykynge of that fowle dede."[175] The recognition of sexual desire was evidence for the development of reason and thus, the responsibility of sin. Because Mirk believed that reason developed at least by the age of seven, he stressed the importance of children being confirmed at an earlier age. By confirming their children at the age of five, parents ensured their children received the grace needed to help them overcome sin well before reason developed. Mirk's comments on religious instruction and confirmation illustrate the belief that the responsibility of adults to care for children extended beyond their physical wellbeing. Children must also be cared for spiritually. Taken together, these instructions illustrate the belief that children were weak and vulnerable, needing protection from the dangers of this world and the next.

Erasmus

Another important author of devotional works in England was Desiderius Erasmus. A contemporary and acquaintance of Richard Whitford, Erasmus spent six years in England where he became friends with John Colet, Thomas More, and Cardinal Wolsey among others.[176] A veritable printing industry arose around Erasmus' writings, making it into the hands of those at court and in the university, as well as the laity.[177]

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[175] Ibid., 80.

[176] A letter dated 1504, in which Erasmus asked Whitford to moderate a debate between him and More testifies to the influential connections of Erasmus. Desiderius Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 142-297 (1501-1514)*, ed. Wallace K. Ferguson, trans. R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson, vol. 2, Collected works of Erasmus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), no. 191.

[177] James McConica, "Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1467–1536)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), accessed January 21, 2018, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-39358; Gregory D. Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus: The Erasmian Legacy and Religious Change in Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), xi.

Erasmus' works illustrate the expectation that parents love and care for their children, emphasizing that children were gifts from God.

In *De civilitate morun puerilium*, one of his most popular works going through more than eight editions in the sixteenth century, Erasmus emphasized the importance of love in childrearing. The raising of children was composed of many parts, the chief of which was that children "drink the seeds of love to god and his parents."[178] When discussing proper table manners, Erasmus chided parents who make their children sit still at the table with them long into the evening, saying "they hate their children."[179] In *A deuoute treatise vpon the Pater noster*, Erasmus used the love between children and fathers as an example of the proper relationship between Christians and God. "Woldest we shulde rather loue the as thy children, than feare the as they servantes and bond men."[180] Children, stated Erasmus, revel in the glory of their fathers and lament in their dishonor, and this was the same for parents. "So deeply hath this thing naturall affection routed in mannes hert that fathers reioyse in their childrens glory and their children the glorie of their fathers."[181] The love between parents and children was one that was fundamental to nature and example of Christians should love God. Elsewhere, in speaking of the devotion that was required for God, Erasmus mentioned that Christians must at times "forsake our natruall affections, and that whiche we have moost dere as our

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[178] Desiderius Erasmus, *De civilitate morun puerilium* (London, 1532), STC 10467, a2r.

[179] Ibid., STC 10467, c5v.

[180] Desiderius Erasmus, *A deuoute treatise vpon the Pater noster* (London, 1526), STC 10477, c1r.

[181] Ibid., STC 10477, c2r.

fathers and mothers, wyves, chyldren, and kynesfolke."[182] While his statements were directed toward a person's love and devotion to God, his real world examples illustrate the belief that the love which motivated parents to care for their children was part of the natural order, mirroring the love between Christians and God.

Another example of parental concern for children is found Erasmus' treatise *A treatise perswadynge a man patientlye to suffer the deth of his frend*. Works on the *ars moriendi* were quite common in the late medieval church, many written to aid priests in helping their parishioners confront death firm in their devotion to God.[183] In *A treatise perswadynge*, Erasmus sought to help to parents who have lost or might lose a child. The pain of losing a child was echoed in the opening line of the work. "Howe bytter and howe grievous a wounde precethe your fatherly harte for the death of your chylde."[184] Erasmus acknowledged the pain of a grieving father but encouraged him to temper his grief, "for

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[182] Ibid., STC 10477, d2v.

[183] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 316.The first such work was *Speculum artis bene moriendi* written in the fifteenth century by the order of the Council of Florence. Sometime between 1414 and 1418 the work appeared in English and circulated widely, especially with the advent of the printing press. For more on the *Ars moriendi*, see Nancy Lee Beaty, ed., *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 1–53; Kirsty Owen, *Identity, Commemoration and the Art of Dying Well: Exploring the Relationship between the Ars Moriendi Tradition and the Material Culture of Death in Gloucestershire, c. 1350-1700A.D.* (Oxford: Hadrian Books, 2010), 28–32; David William Atkinson, ed., *The English Ars Moriendi*, Renaissance and Baroque Studies and Texts 5 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), xi–xxv. For more on the death and religious life in England see Duffy, 301-37. For the evolution of the *ars moriendi* in the Reformation, see Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The Ars Moriendi in the German Reformation (1519–1528)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

[184] Desiderius Erasmus, *A treatise perswadynge a man patientlye to suffre the deth of his frende* (London, 1531), STC 10476.6, a2r. Though Erasmus says these words as means of comfort, he never lost a child. Luther grieved deeply at the loss of his daughter Magdalene. James M. Kittelson, *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 284; Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 312.

no man can denye but that ye have ryghte good cause to be beuy."[185] He emphasized that in time grief will pass. "For what selye mother doth so extremely bewayle the dethe of her childe, but that in a shorte tyme her sorrowe some what asslaketh, and at length is clene forgotten?"[186] Death was a natural part of life and can come at any moment. In response to the claim that the laws of nature were subverted when a child dies before his father, Erasmus reminded the reader that any day can be a person's day. A child can die in the womb, during birth, while in the cradle, or as a youth. "To how few is it gyve[n] … to steppe vpon the gryce of olde age."[187] These words illustrate the reality of death in the life for parents of children. Death could come at any point in a child's life, and it was this fear that motivated the church, parents, and midwives to baptize children as soon as possible.

While Erasmus' words to a grieving parent might seem harsh, comfort was found in the belief that the soul of a child was with God. Though time spent with the child was short, parents have comfort in that the child was with God and does not have to suffer the evils of the world.[188] In their grief, parents should remember that children, Erasmus argued, were gifts from God to parents. Parents feared for their children and they sought to protect them from the dangers of the world. While the loss of a child might seem as failure, Erasmus emphasized that the afterlife was better for the child. Being mindful of

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[185] Most likely this is reference to drinking. Erasmus, *A treatise perswadynge*, STC 10476.3, a2v.

[186] Ibid., STC 10476.3, a2v-a3r.

[187] Ibid., STC 10476.3, b3v.

[188] Ibid., STC 10476.3, c1r.

their grief, Erasmus informed them that "it be nat a poynte of vnkyndness that ye shulde remembre the requeste of the gyfte to be restored agayne."[189] Erasmus does not mention the possibility of purgatory for the child, presumably out deference to the parent's grief. The possibility also exists that Erasmus was speaking to parents who have lost a child still within that state of innocence. As the child was not guilty of actual sin, he/she is already in the presence of God. To have the child returned to the physical world would deprive them of God's presence and present them with the opportunity to commit actual sin, thereby ensuring that would spend time in purgatory. Erasmus' message was clear; the death of a child was not an occasion for sorrow because the child was now beyond physical and spiritual dangers. This illustrates the reality of grief in the life of parents who lost their children. Their grief was evidence of their love and Erasmus' treatise gives voice to their love and hope to their grief.

Richard Whitford

One of the most popular and influential devotional works was Richard Whitford's *A Werke for Householders*, a household manual intended to aid the laity in the spiritual edification of their household.[190] Very little is known about Whitford, with much left to speculation. Born ca. 1470 in the parish of Whitford in Flintshire to a family of considerable wealth, Whitford began his education at Queen's College, Cambridge in 1490s. Whitford does not officially appear in any records until 1496 when he became a

[189] Ibid., STC 10476.3, b5v.

[190] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 25–28.

questionist at Cambridge, paying a *cummuna* of seven shillings.[191] From 1498 to 1504, he was a fellow of Queen's, Cambridge and in 1498, he took a leave of absence to serve as chaplain to William Blount, Lord Mountjoy; both were studying abroad in France. In 1498, Whitford received a BA and in 1499 an MA from Paris University.[192] Paris served as the occasion for Whitford's introduction to Erasmus, who accompanied Whitford and Mountjoy back to England in the summer of 1499. Upon returning to Queen's College, Whitford was "incorporated MA and became dean of chapel, junior bursar (1500-1501) and senior bursar (1501-1502)."[193] Sometime after 1502, but before 1511, Whitford became the chaplain to Richard Foxe, bishop of Winchester.[194] Based on his will, it

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[191] Veronica Lawrence estimates Whitford's birth year based on the assumption that sixteen was the average age one began study at Cambridge. Cambridge records show that Whitford paid a *cummuna* in 1496 making is birth year sometime in the 1490s. Veronica J. Lawrence, "The Life and Writings of Richard Whitford" (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Andrews, 1988), 1; J. T. Rhodes, "Richard Whitford (d. 1543?)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed February 15, 2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29308; Mary Bateson, *Grace Book B: Containing the Proctors' Accounts and Other Records of the University of Cambridge for the Years 1488-1511*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 103.

[192] Early scholars incorrectly listed several important dates of Whitford's life. Glammor Williams places the first reference to Whitford at Queen's College, Cambridge in 1495 instead of 1496. P. G. Caraman also places him at Queen's College in 1495, but adds that he took a leave absence to travel with Lord Mountjoy in 1496. The 1496 date for traveling to Paris is connected to a tradition concerning Lord Mountjoy. James P. Carely notes that in 1497, Mountjoy was involved the suppression of the Cornish uprising and he married Elizabeth Say, daughter and coheir of Sir William Say, around Easter of the same year. Glanmor Williams, "Two Neglected London-Welsh Clerics: Richard Whitford and Richard Gwent," *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* pt 1 (1961): 24; Philip Caraman, "An English Monastic Reformer of the Sixteenth Century," *The Clergy Review* new ser., 28 (1947): 2; James P. Carley, "William Blount, Fourth Baron Mountjoy (c. 1478–1534)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed January 21, 2018, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2702.

[193] Rhodes, "Richard Whitford," ODNB.

[194] William Roper in his biography of Erasmus mentions a conversation between Whitford, "then Chapleine" to Foxe, and Erasmus. Rhodes notes that there is no documentary evidence for this appointment. Ibid.; Caraman, "An English Monastic Reformer," 2; William Roper, *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, Knighte*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, EETS original series 197 (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 8.

seems that Whitford entered Syon Abbey in 1511.[195] Outside of his publications, Whitford is not mentioned again until 1536 when Thomas Bedyll cites him, and thus Syon, as a strong opponent of the king's title and claims of divorce.[196] Syon was suppressed in 1539 and Whitford was fortunate to receive one of the higher yearly pensions, £ 8. Tradition holds that Whitford took refuge in the home of Charles Blount, the fifth Baron Mountjoy, but Rhodes notes that no evidence exists to support this assertion.[197] The Syon martyrology holds that Whitford died on September 16, 1543, and 1543 is almost certainly the year as his last pension payment was made October 3, 1543.[198]

Henry V established Syon Abbey in 1415 as part of his program of religious reform in England.[199] The only Bridgettine Order in England, Syon Abbey became a

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[195] Mary C. Erler, *Reading and Writing during the Dissolution: Monks, Friars, and Nuns 1530-1558* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 129. James Hogg speculates that Whitford entered Syon probably before 1507, but definitely before 1513. James Hogg, "Richard Whitford," in *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigittine Order*, ed. James Hogg, vol. 2 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 254.

[196] Hogg, "Richard Whitford," 255.Bydell describes Whitford as having a "brasyn forehed, whiche shameth at nothing" and states that he bared Whitford from hearing the nuns confessions. Bydell even recommended that the confession area used be walled up because the confessions were "cause of muche evyl, and of muche treason … in this matter of the kinges tittle and … succession and marriage." Thomas Wright, ed., *Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of Monasteries* (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Sons, 1843), 49.

[197] Williams states that it is impossible to tell if Whitford took the Oath of Supremacy in order to receive his pension, but it "can be said with any degree of certainty" that he retired to the home of Charles Blount. Hogg also supports the tradition that Charles Blount protected and sheltered Whitford in his last years, citing Whitford's friendship with the Mountjoy family. Williams and Hogg, however, fail to cite any evidence for these claims. Williams, "Two Neglected London-Welsh Clerics," 26; Hogg, "Richard Whitford," 254; Rhodes, "Richard Whitford," ODNB.

[198] Rhodes, "Richard Whitford," ODNB.

[199] In addition to Syon Abbey, Henry V also founded the Carthusian monastery at Sheen as part of his program of religious reform. Both became important centers of devotion and intercessory prayer. Jeremy Catto, "The Burden and Conscience of Government in the Fifteenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 17 (2007): 97; Alexandra da Costa and Ann M. Hutchinson, "The Brethren of

religious powerhouse for intercessory prayer and guidance of lay devotion. Henry became aware of the Bridgettine Order of Sweden in 1406 through the negotiations for the marriage of his sister to the Swedish King Eric. Seeking to combat the perceived threat of Wyclif and the Lollards, Henry V contacted Vadstena Abbey, the motherhouse, asking if they could send a monk and six sisters to help found Syon. After its establishment, Syon became a major distributor of devotional material. This emphasis on learning was built into the foundation of the Bridgettine Order. Founded as an enclosed order, Birgitta designed the order as a place focused on meditation and prayer based on the sound study of religious texts, and while poverty was fundamental to the Order, no limit was placed on the number of books each nun could own.[200]

Though intended for nuns, a limited number of monks were admitted so as to serve as chaplains to the nuns. The abbey was limited to eighty-five persons, seventy-two for the disciples and thirteen for the apostles including Paul.[201] Of this, sixty were nuns with the remaining divided among 13 priests, 4 deacons, and 8 lay-brothers.[202] The Order served the community through brethren who in addition to hearing the confessions of the

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Syon Abbey and Pastoral Care," in *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Late Middle Ages (1200-1500)*, ed. Ronald J. Stansbury (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 235. Glammor Williams incorrectly places the date as 1431. Williams, "Two Neglected London-Welsh Clerics," 25.

[200] da Costa and Hutchinson, "Brethren of Syon Abbey," 236. For more on the library of Syon see, Vincent Gillespie, "Syon and the New Learning," in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 75–95.

[201] Willem A. M. Peters, "Richard Whitford and St. Ignatius' Visit to England," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 25 (1956): 332.

[202] Da Costa and Hutchinson note that in requiring brothers to be twenty-five on entrance the Order ensured "a higher level of maturity and experience than may have generally been the case." da Costa and Hutchinson, "Brethren of Syon Abbey," 236.

nuns also received those of the laity and were required to preach regularly in the vernacular for the nuns and the lay community.[203] The emphasis on vernacular preaching corresponded with an emphasis on vernacular devotional literature. The Syon brothers translated many texts into the vernacular for the nuns. An anonymous Syon brother produced in the fifteenth century a translation of the *Breviary* entitled *The Myroure of our Ladye* and another produced a translation of St. Catherine of Siena's revelations entitled the *Orched of Syon* for the Bridgettine nuns.[204] Virtually all Whitford's writings began as internal vernacular publications for consumption of the nuns, best seen in his first publication, a translation of the Rule of St. Augustine.[205]

Whitford published his writings to feed the laity's hunger for devotional material, but also to combat religious turmoil of the 1520s. Whitford wanted to ensure that the laity had access to spiritual guides which were orthodox. By the 1530s, Luther's writings were beginning to make their way into England, and Caraman argues that defending orthodox Catholic faith from the encroachments of Luther was one of the chief aims of Whitford

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[203] Ibid., 336. Each brother probably preached a minimum of five times a year as vernacular preaching was required on each Sunday and all solemn feasts, although it is possible this number was higher. For vernacular preaching and the Bridgettine Order see, Ibid., 237, 243–44; Susan Powell, "Preaching at Syon Abbey," *Leeds Studies in English* 31 (2000): 229–67.

[204] Thomas Gascoigne, *The myrroure of Oure Lady* (London, 1530), STC 17542; Raymond of Capua, *Orchard of Syon* (London, 1519), STC 4815. For modern editions see Thomas Gascoigne, *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, ed. John Henry Blunt, EETS extra series 19 (Millwood, N.Y: Kraus Reprint Co, 1973); Catherine of Siena, *The Orcherd of Syon*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson and Gabriel M. Liegey, EETS original series 258 (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

[205] While Syon Abbey produced vernacular texts, the Carthusian monks copied and translated texts used for meditation and spiritual guidance, with many of them being commissioned for Syon Abbey. da Costa and Hutchinson, "Brethren of Syon Abbey," 238.

and his writings.[206] Alakas notes that Whitford's engagement with Protestant reformers was both direct, such as *Pype, or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection* (1532), and indirect as in *A werke for householders*.[207] In regards to *A werke for housholders*, Alakas argues that Whitford defends Catholic traditional piety by re-imaging the home as a monastic house, using private devotion as means to inculcate orthodoxy. While upholding traditional piety, Whitford also embraces current theological developments as seen in his evaluation of preaching over the mass.[208] If presented the opportunity to attend mass or hear the preaching of God's word, Whitford encourages the latter if only one can be attended.[209] This advice can be seen as an attempt to co-opt a popular practice of Protestantism. Witnessing and partaking of the miracle of the mass was important, but with the threat of Protestantism looming, Whitford placed greater emphasis on the laity hearing a sermon which reinforced Catholic piety and beliefs.[210]

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[206] Caraman, "An English Monastic Reformer," 1–16; Erler, *Reading and Writing*, 126; Lawrence, "Life of Writings," 71; cf. Richard Whitford, *A werke for houshoulders* (London, 1530), STC 25421.8, e3r. See also Bailey, *Socialising the Child*, 149–50.

[207] Brandon Alakas, "A Monastic Reformation of Domestic Space: Richard Whitford's 'Werke for Housholders,'" *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 38 (2013): 11. For Whitford's defense of Catholic piety in *Pype, or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection*, see Brandon Carlos Alakas, "'Partners in the Same:' Monastic Devotional Culture in Late Medieval English Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 2010), 156–76; Alexandra da Costa, *Reforming Printing: Syon Abbey's Defence of Orthodoxy, 1525-1534* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 93–100.

[208] Alakas, "A Monastic Reformation," 1–19.

[209] Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, d3v.

[210] Alakas, "A Monastic Reformation," 11.

From 1525 to 1541, Whitford published more than ten works, some of them original works and others translations of Latin works.[211] His most popular work was *A werke for houshoulders,* which from 1530-1537 went through seven editions.[212] The presence of so many editions testifies to the popularity of the work.[213] Before the advent of the printing press, bookmakers were hesitant to publish vernacular books because of the cost. The printing press lowered these costs, but the printing was still expensive and the market unpredictable. Printers did not publish multiple editions of works unless they knew the works would sell.[214]

The earliest edition of *A werke for houshoulders* is probably the undated Robert Redman edition. The Redman edition is the only one that does not include a translation of Bernard Sylvester's "Care or Governauce of a Household according to Policy," and the only edition which lacks the phrase "newly corrected and printed again." The earliest dated edition is the Wynkyn de Worde edition printed in the December of 1530. The *Revised Short Title Catalogue* gives a suggested date of 1530 for Redman edition which Lawrence says is possible because of the late publishing of the Wynkyn de Worde

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[211] Lawrence argues that a work on the life of Christ, and translations of Mapheus, Gerson, and Climacus are no longer extant. Lawrence, "Life of Writings," 229.

[212] Ibid., 161; Rhodes, "Richard Whitford," ODNB. Eler states there were nine editions of *A werke for houshoulders*, but provides no evidence to support this. Erler, *Reading and Writing*, 126.

[213] Lawrence, "Life of Writings," 229–30; Martha Driver, "Pictures in Print: Late Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth- Century English Religious Books for Lay Readers," in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Cambridge England: D.S.Brewer, 1989), 233.

[214] Helen Constance White, *The Tudor Books of Private Devotion* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951), 67.

edition, though the date of the Redman could be earlier.[215] Though first published in the 1530s or earlier, Erler theorizes that based on the lack of patristic and classical references, the work could have been composed before Whitford came to Syon Abbey, possibly the product of his time at Cambridge or Bishop Foxe's household.[216]

Though extremely popular, Whitford's *Werke* was not new in content or form. Household manuals and courtesy literature existed in the fourteenth century, though the printing press increased their availability.[217] The significance of Whitford's work lies in his practical approach. Instead of providing outlines, Whitford provides detailed instructions on how to perform his devotions. He acknowledges the complexity and difficulty an average householder faced in being the spiritual leader of his family. His book, therefore, was tailored for the devout layman whom Whitford expected to be the spiritual educator of his family.[218] While previously the laity consumed devotional literature originally meant for priests, *A werke for houshoulders* probably bore an immense attraction because it was a work specifically written for them.[219] Syon Abbey had produced previous works which claimed to be written for the laity, but in fact, had merely been adapted to them. Whitford's *A werke for houshoulders* was the first to focus

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[215] Lawrence, "Life of Writings," 166.

[216] Erler, *Reading and Writing*, 131.

[217] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 206; Kline, "Children and Childhood," 30–33. See also Merridee L. Bailey's examination of courtesy literature and household instruction manuals. Bailey, *Socialising the Child*.

[218] White, *Tudor Books*, 157–60.

[219] Alakas argues that Whitford sought to impart to the laity the religious life of the monastery which was an attempt to defend and restore the value of religious houses and claustral life. Alakas, "A Monastic Reformation," 1–2.

on them. He rejected the idea that clergy alone were responsible for religious education, and by writing a work for them, empowered the laity to care spiritually for themselves and those around them.[220] Whitford expects fathers, mothers, children and servants all to be in his audience as he views lessons in virtue and vice as beneficial to people of all ages. [221] Through his writings, Whitford endorsed the non-Latinate laity and encouraged them to share his lessons with those around them.[222] Furthermore, Lawrence argues that there existed in the sixteenth century two categories of devotional literature, emotional and intellectual, and though Whitford's writings belonged to the latter, they also sought to bridge the gap between the two. Being both intellectual and emotional, Whitford's works, argues Lawrence, cannot be put in the normal category of catechetical works.[223]

For the purposes of this study, *A werke for houshoulders* is significant in that it is one of the only household books to address directly in detail the topic of children and

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[220] Da Costa notes that while canon law endorsed the laity being involved in religious education, the fact that much of the literature was in Latin or written specifically for priests, though read by the laity, reinforced the priests as the sole dispenser of religious knowledge. da Costa, *Reforming Printing*, 72–73, 76.

[221] Whitford, STC 25421.8, b2v. Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, b2v.Whitford makes specific comments to other audience members, as seen in his comments toward mothers and the disciplining of children, and his comments toward children and their obligation to obey their parents. Ibid., STC 25421.8, c6r-c6v, d3r-d3v.

[222] Bailey argues that Whitford's encouragement to share his lesson from *A werke for houshoulders* illustrates the importance of communal literacy and reading networks in early modern England. Bailey, *Socialising the Child*, 152–54.

[223] Lawrence notes that others, such as Erasmus, were critical of typical devotional aids which emphasized emotion while neglecting the inner spiritual development. Lawrence, "Life of Writings," 259–60. Subsequent editions further emphasized Catholic lay spirituality through their inclusion of Catholic commentaries, passages of the beatitudes, and the saints. Bailey, *Socialising the Child*, 151.

their religious education.[224] Very little was written about or for children despite them comprising one-third of the population. Emphasis was placed on the education of adult laity.[225] Rarely are children mentioned in arguments for the laity's education; it was the assumption that the parents and godparents would provide this education, as seen in the work of Robert Mannyng and John Mirk.[226] The expectation was that the priest would educate the parents who in turn would teach their children. Nicholas Orme states that one cannot discount the possibility that parish priests taught children, but the practice did not become common until the Reformation. The home was the place where most religious education occurred.[227]

In *A werke for houshoulders*, Whitford gives a prominent voice to this expectation, emphasizing the responsibility of parents to educate their children. Of paramount concern for Whitford was the belief that upon death Christians will be held accountable for the actions of their lives. Judgment is certain for Christians because the "lyfe of this worlde is very shorte."[228] All will be brought before God for judgment where

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[224] Often courtesy literature was aimed primarily at adolescent boys and, as Bailey argues, was not focused on the development of a virtuous identity in children. Bailey, *Socialising the Child*, 154.

[225] Cf. Council of Lambeth in 1281. Powicke and Cheney, *Councils & Synods*, II:900-05. See also Bailey, *Socialising the Child*, 153.

[226] Orme, "Children and the Church," 564–65; Orme, *Medieval Children*, 204-06. Cf. John Thoresby, *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, ed. Thomas Frederick Simmons and Henry Edward Nolloth, EETS original series 118 (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1901), 21–22; Reginald Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, EETS original series 156 (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 70; Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 9697–9786; Mirk, *Instructions*, 76.

[227] Orme, "Children and the Church," 565; Alexandre-Bidon and Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages*, 61.

[228] Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, a1v.

their conscience shall "clerely confesse all our hole lyfe … unto greate honoure" or "yf evyll it shall be unto our great shame and rebuke."[229] Most likely the judgment of which Whitford spoke was not that of hell, but of purgatory. While baptism cleansed Original Sin and opened the gates of heaven to the Christian, a life plagued with unconfessed actual sin guaranteed purgatory. Whitford encouraged his readers to remember that death can come suddenly and therefore, they should be aware "how we passe this lyfe or rather how this lyfe passeth us."[230] Since judgment was a certain reality, Christians should mind "howe we spende our tyme."[231] Whitford's recommendation was to establish a set of devotional practices, "some customable course good and p[ro]fytable exercyse," which will help the Christian avoid and flee the temptation of sin. Children enter this equation because they were members of the household. The householder was not just responsible for his own spiritual life, but the spiritual life of those in his care. "We thike it not sufficie[n]t nor enough for you to lyve well yourself but that all other christians also lyve the better for you …especyally those that you have in charge and gouvernau[n]ce that is to say your childer and servau[n]tes."[232] The household was a microcosm of a kingdom and just as the ruler of kingdom was responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of his/her people, so the householder was responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of those in his

[229] Ibid., STC 25421.8, a2r.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid., STC 25421.8, a2r.

[232] Ibid., STC 25421.8, b1v.

house.[233] Whitford placed the responsibility upon householders to ensure that all within the household can recite the pater noster, Ave Maria, and creed.[234] This task was a "greate discharge of conscyence and not without meryte or great rewarde."[235] While previous works had instructed godparents to complete this task, Whitford places it in the realm of the householder.[236] For Whitford, the education of children by their parents was a responsibility which not only benefits the children and their salvation, but also has implications on the spiritual life of their parents. He taught that love of others and love of God were intimately connected, with the implication that the love of children was connected to love of God. In expounding upon the fifth commandment, Whitford stated concerning children that in addition to teaching them not to murder, they should be taught, among other things, not to "hate any persone in hert." Citing 1 John 4.20, Whitford argued that one cannot hate someone and say they love God for "whoever doth love god must love neighbor."[237] "Whosoever doth not hooly and fully love his neyghbor whome he may se and beholde with his bodyly sight, he can never love God."[238] Whitford's admonitions to householders to ensure the spiritual development of all those

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[233] Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 47; Alakas, "A Monastic Reformation," 5–6.

[234] Alexandre–Bidon and Lett, whose study focuses primarily on the continent, note that this task was usually performed by mothers. Whitford, however, believes it is the responsibility of fathers to ensure that the task is fulfilled. Alexandre-Bidon and Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages*, 41–43, 61. See also David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 122–24.

[235] Whitford, STC 25421.8, c1r.Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, c1r.

[236] da Costa, *Reforming Printing*, 76.

[237] Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, e1r.

[238] Ibid.

around them, including neighbors, children, and servants, must be in the context of his teachings on love. Parents expressed their love toward God as they teach those under their care.[239]

Moreover, parents feared for the lives of their children and the time they might spend in purgatory. Whitford's encouragement that parents start religious education early in the life of the child should be read in light of parental fears of divine punishment for their children.[240] Whitford's writings on the religious education of children not only reflect the church's teachings on living a pious life, but also a cultural desire to protect and care for children. By teaching their children to live a pious life, parents were helping to ensure that their children were care for spiritually. Everyone, except saints, was guaranteed to spend some time in purgatory. By providing children with religious instruction, thereby giving them the tools to lead a pious life, parents potentially could mitigate the time their children spent in purgatory.

Concern for the wellbeing of children, however, can also be seen in other areas of *A werke for houshoulders*. On one occasion, Whitford spoke negatively concerning actions performed by parents out of love for their children. In a section of *A werke for houshoulders*, Whitford rebuked parents who sought out "sup[er]sticious wytchcraftes and charms" for the "unlawfull love unto the helth of their bodyes or of their childer."[241]

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[239] Whitford views fathers and mothers as having specific roles. Fathers or householders are charged with ensuring the religious education of children whereas mothers are to oversee the disciplining of the children. As will be discussed latter, Whitford encourages fathers and mothers to bless their children and teach them to ask for blessings. For Whitford, none of these can be compartmentalized, but they encompass a proper program of religious education.

[240] Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, b1v.

[241] Whitford, STC 25421.8, c2rIbid., STC 25421.8, c2r.

The use of charms was one of the practices listed as witchcraft in Gratian's *Decretum*, one of the standard textbooks used to teach canon law. Citing Augustine, Gratian said that healing incantations and charms possessed no physical power, but were a means by which demons entered into contracts with the devil.[242] Though witchcraft and charms might be employed for the sake of a sick loved, their use placed one in contact with demonic powers. According to the General Sentence of Excommunication, magical practitioners were among those listed as automatically excommunicated, with some versions also excommunicating those who knew someone was guilty of magic, but did not report it. Such a stance placed those who created the charms and those who used them in the same category. Catherine Rider notes that while English bishops issued strong pronouncements against magic stating that it was occurring with much frequency, very few cases were actually brought to court.[243] Like Whitford, other pastoral manuals warned against the use of magic, with some priests complaining that the people confused magical practitioners with medical healers.[244] Seeking help through magic and charms might be done with "good and charitable" intentions, stated Whitford, but they were unlawful. Whitford's condemnation of the practice is more evidence of parental concern for the physical wellbeing of their children.[245]

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[242] Catherine Rider, *Magic and Religion in Medieval England* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 14–15; Gratian, "Decretum," in *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. Emil Friedberg, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879), c. 27; Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, n.d., 2.19-25 (NPNF 1:2, 545-48).

[243] Rider, *Magic and Religion*, 156–75.One such trial is recorded in the register of John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells. T. S. Holmes, *The Register of John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1425-1443*, vol. II (London: Harrison and Sons, 1916), 226.

[244] Rider, *Magic and Religion*, 129–46, 155.

[245] Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, c2r.

Concern for children is also seen in Whitford's admonition for father and mothers to bless their children and for them to teach their children to ask for blessings.[246] The blessings of parents, which included the sign of the cross, "doth fyrme and make stable the possessyons and the kynrede of the chylder."[247] The sign of the cross can protect the child and may even ward away evil spirits "that els sholde have had power upon the chylde."[248] Furthermore, the sign of the cross has power of its own for even if the parents were "abhomynable sinner, or excommunicate, accursed, or an heritake" it might protect the child from further "sodden mischief that might come to the child."[249] Moreover, the blessings of a good person are connected to the power and degree of the person and therefore, Whitford encouraged parents to teach their children to ask for blessings from every bishop, abbot, priest, godparent, and other devout persons they meet. Blessings provide protection and Whitford informs parents they should give them to their children and teach their children to ask for them, further signifying that parents were concerned about the wellbeing of their children.

In addition to encouraging parents to bless their children, Whitford also encouraged them to punish them. In teaching children to ask for blessings, Whitford instructed parents that if the "child is within age then they are to be compelled by force, with good rod" and if the child is older, then the punishment should be as "sharpe and

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[246] Ibid., STC 25421.8, d1v.

[247] Ibid., STC 25421.8, d3v. Whitford says that the same is true of curses; children should not take pride in their disobedience.

[248] Ibid.

[249] Ibid.

grevous … as convenyently maybe devised."[250] While his statement seems to advocate harsh physical violence, his examples are the opposite: sitting at dinner alone, and sitting by themselves in the middle of the hall with only brown bread and water allowing all who pass by them to rebuke them "as they would a thefe or traytour." [251] Elsewhere, Whitford encouraged householders to ensure that those under them recite the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Creed morning, noon, midday, and night under threat of punishment.[252]

Ariès, de Mause, and Stone have cited parental punishment as a sign of the lack of parental affection. Ariès argued that the birth of corporal punishment in sixteenth century led to the formation of the modern family which restricted the child's freedom and increased the severity of punishment.[253] De Mause argued that "the further back in history one goes, the lower level of child care, more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused."[254] Parents did not lack love for their children, but merely lacked the maturity to express that love, and in keeping with this notion, de Mause entitled 1300-1600 as the Ambivalent Mode in the history of parenting.[255] In *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe*, Steven

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[250] Ibid., STC 25421.8, d3r.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid., STC 25421.8, c1r.

[253] Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 413.

[254] de Mause, "Evolution of Childhood," 503.

[255] De Mause divides the history of parent-child relations into six modes: : Infanticidal Mode (Antiquity to 300 C.E.), Abandonment Mode (300-1200), Ambivalent Mode (1300-1600), Intrusive Mode (1700s), Socialization Mode (1800-1950), and Helping Mode (1950-present). He is also extremely optimistic about the Helping Mode (1950-Present), stating it is period from which emerge who are "gentler,

Ozment, however, argued that while the father was the leader of the house, he was not a legalized tyrant. Contemporary commentators encouraged fathers to rule cleverly and not through violence.[256]

For Whitford, punishment was connected to love and was not to be thought as an act of cruelty, but mercy. Citing Proverbs 13.24, Whitford informed his readers that "who spareth the rode hateth the childe."[257] All punishment, whether verbal or corporal, was meant for the "reformation of the persone rather than for the revenge of the defaute."[258] While Whitford views punishment primarily the responsibility of the mother, he stressed that fathers, masters, and servants could dispense discipline. Even so, no matter who administers punishment, it should never be dispensed in anger, with Whitford stating that it should be deferred until the anger has passed. All correction should "be done with charitie of our lord and with a mylde and softe spiryte."[259] Whitford further explained the implications of punishing for revenge, for the child and the parent. In children, it will cause them to be stubborn and stiff hearted, leading them to hate their parents. For parents, they will "lose the mertye that you earn, but also deserve the punishment of

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sincere, never depressed, never imitative or group oriented, strong-willed, and unintimidated by authority." Ibid., 553–56.

[256] Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 2. Concerning de Mause's positive view of childrearing in the present age, Ozment writes, "surely the hubris of an age reaches a certain peak when it accuses another age of being incapable of loving its children properly." Ibid., 162.

[257] Whitford, *Werke for Houshoulders*, STC 25421.8, c6.r.

[258] Ibid., STC 25421.8, c6v, d1r.

[259] Ibid., STC 25421.8, c6v.

God."[260] Parents, therefore, were tasked with finding the balance between too little and too harsh punishment. Furthermore, punishment should include instruction, helping the child to understand the consciences of their actions, and he stresses that after the punishment, parents "forgyve them clerely and gentlely."[261] For Whitford, the disciplining of children was an expression of a parent's love for their children. In Proverbs 13:24, Whitford added the instruction, "Powder your childer therefore betyme and than you love them and have co[m]forte of them."[262] While the practice of corporal might go against modern sensibilities and theories of children rearing, the practice is not an indication that parents lacked affection for their children. Whitford illustrates a cultural understanding that all discipline, verbal and corporal, when done with charity and the goal of character reformation is an expression of love. Actions had eternal implications and it was the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children learned how to live a moral and virtuous life. For parents to neglect to train and discipline their children meant to doom them, both the children and parents, to God's judgment, a sure sign that the parents did not love or care for their children.

Besides the parental responsibility to love, educate, and discipline children, Whitford reveals in *A werke houshoulders* a window into the cultural perception of children. No direct reference is made to children and the need for baptism as this was a universal assumption for medieval society. Whitford mentioned baptism only on four

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[260] Ibid., STC 25421.8, d1r.

[261] Whitford says that parents should let their children know that they also suffer pain when their children. Ibid., STC 25421.8, c6v.

[262] Ibid., STC 25421.8, c6r-v.

occasions, two of which relate to Jesus. The other two emphasized the importance of baptism in the life of the Christian. In a prayer he provided to his readers, he has them renew each day the "promise made in" their "baptysme at [th]e font stone," an event they experienced as an infant.[263] Here, Whitford was emphasizing the promise made to serve God and renounce sin and the devil, a task which must be done daily through the help of God.[264] Elsewhere in another prayer, Whitford stated that it was through the grace of baptism one entered into the "realme and kyngdome of christianite."[265] Adults reading and hearing these words would be impressed with the importance of baptism and the need for their children to receive baptism.

In regards to children, he emphasized the importance of the religious and moral education of children, parents teaching them to serve God and to abstain from sin. The education of children should begin as soon as a child can speak.[266] Present throughout *A werke for houshoulders* is the belief in the impressionability and malleability of children. He compared children to vessels which take on the smell of what is first put in them. Vice and virtue could be learned at any age so education must start early, "for educacion and doctrine [that] is to say bryngynge up and learning done make" good manners.[267] Children were not by nature good, but have a disposition toward sin. While previous

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[263] Ibid., STC 25421.8, a2v.

[264] In keeping with medieval theology, Whitford states that one cannot be in state of salvation without "feyth and wyll of co[n]fession" atone for deadly sins. Ibid., STC 25421.8, c3r.

[265] Ibid., STC 25421.8, b2v.

[266] Ibid., STC 25421.8, b2r.

[267] Ibid.

sermons and exempla have emphasized the innocence of children coming from their lack of reason, Whitford emphasized the sinful nature that is present in all children, waiting to arise with the development of reason. Through instruction and discipline, this disposition toward sin can be changed and altered. Education, however, was not enough for children to learn through instruction and example. In discussing the evils of swearing, Whitford provided several examples of the impressionability and malleability of children. Parents were warned not keep a swearer in their house, a person more dangerous than a person infected with leprosy or the plague, for they can "infect your childe in the cradle."[268] Whitford also provided a narrative on the dangers of swearing around children. In this shorter version of the exemplum found in Mannyng's *Handlynge Synne*, a child was swearing while sitting on his father's lap when the devil, as opposed to a fiend, came and violently seized the child from his father, never to be seen again. To which Whitford added "here may you perceyve the great peril and iopardy of swearing."[269] Whitford also stated that the child took great pleasure in swearing having learned from others. Both the child and the father are punished; the child is carried off by the devil and the father suffers the loss of his child. As the father permitted the child to associate with people who swore and allowed the child itself to swear, the father bears responsibility for the loss of his child. Care must, therefore, be taken as to whom children associate. Whitford compared children to other animals which can be taught actions contrary to their natural disposition. Children, however, exceeded animals because they possess reason enabling

[268] Ibid., STC 25421.8, c5r-v.

[269] Ibid.

them to be influenced by what they see and hear. Whitford emphasized this assertion repeatedly throughout *A werke for houshoulders*. Virtuous and good people will lead to virtuous and good children, and evil persons will lead to evil children. Though children eventually become responsible for their sin, the path that they take partly depends on the instruction they have received from their parents. Parents have the responsibility to raise and instruct their children in godliness.[270]

Conclusion

In examining the influence of the English Reformation on the perception of children, the medieval English view of children serves as the foundation for charting changes in the religious view of children. Children resided in the tension of innocence and corruption. Influenced by Augustine, the church taught that all children were born with Original Sin and needed baptism to cleanse and save them. While Augustine said that those who died without baptism suffered the mildest of punishments in hell, those after him struggled with assigning children who had never committed conscious sins to hell, and thus the concept of limbo of arose. Medieval sermons and exempla illustrate this with their depiction of children as innocent. As seen in the Mirk's *De Innocentibus* and Alcock's *In die innocentium*, this belief in the innocence of children became part of church teaching, existing alongside the belief in their sinful nature. The church argued that their innocence came from the lack of reason. Unable to understand good and evil, children were morally pure. As seen in the exempla, people believed this purity gave them a special connection to God, even serving of messenger of the divine. Yet, the

[270] Ibid., STC 25421.8, b2r.

church also taught that children possessed a sinful nature, and upon the development of reason, they would become responsible for their sin, thus ending their innocence. Children, therefore, needed religious instruction to ensure that they would live a life of piety. This tension between Original Sin and innocence reflects the conflict between theology and society's view of children. Parents' struggled with the notion that God would condemn children hell. Limbo was a way of lessening this punishment and emergency baptisms were a way of avoiding it. The image of the child as a messenger and agent of God was a manifestation of the belief in the innocence of young children. Even still, the theology of Original Sin could not be escaped and all believed that in the near future this innocence would be lost when with the development of reason the child gave birth to actual sin.

Children also were seen as vulnerable, susceptible to physical and spiritual dangers. Parents feared for their children and mourned in their death. The church, concerned with the physical and spiritual wellbeing of children, worked with parents to protect them. They reminded them that children were gifts from God and the love of children was part of the natural order. Priests' manuals encouraged emergency baptism, instructed parents to protect their children from unintentional and intentional harm, stressed the importance of confirmation, and emphasized the need for religious instruction. The religious literature of this period reflected and reinforced the idea that children were a special gift from God who needed to be protected and guided.

However, on the eve of the Reformation in England, there are detectable changes in the vernacular literature. Whitford does not mention the innocence of children, but instead emphasizes their sinful nature and the need for religious instruction. Spurred by

the growth of Luther's Reformation, Whitford focused on the importance of fathers ensuring they had pious Catholic families. Furthermore, whereas John Mirk and Robert Mannyng, through the instruction of parish priests, stressed the importance of godparents ensuring their charges received religious instruction, Whitford placed the responsibility directly on the fathers, providing them with the tools which once had been only in the hands of priests. Whitford's goal was to protect Catholic families from the encroachment of Lutheranism, but his emphasis also reflects a cultural concern for the salvation of children. Whitford essentially argued that if parents loved and were concerned for their children, then they needed to ensure their children were raised in the Catholic faith. His emphasis on their sinful nature, while in keeping with Catholic theology, was to ensure that parents, specifically fathers, were motivated raised their children within Catholicism. Just as Whitford was influenced by the rise of the Protestant Reformation so too were reformers of the English Reformation. The next chapter, therefore, explores the views of the continental reformers on children so as to provide context for assessing the effect that the introduction of the Reformation into England had on the religious perception of children.

CHAPTER THREE

Protestant Reformers and Children

The continental reformers greatly influenced the English Reformation and so to assess the English Reformation's influence on the religious perception of children, an overview of Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, and early Anabaptists on children provides a comparative context for the thoughts and opinions that developed in the English Reformation. Various studies have examined the place of children in the thought of the magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists. While differences existed on the significance of baptism and its relationship to children, the reformers and Anabaptists all agreed that children were gifts from God who needed to be nurtured in the faith. In keeping with medieval views about child development, they believed that children became responsible for actual sin with the advent of reason, usually developing between five to seven years old. Both the magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists believed in the importance of religious education to cultivate within children a life of obedience to God, and to understand the faith into which they had been baptized or, in the case of the Anabaptists, into which they were to make a profession of faith. In spite of their differences, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the Anabaptists all esteemed children as important members of the community who were in need of God's grace and needed to be taught the faith. While they inherited much from the medieval view of children, the changes the magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists made to baptism, Original Sin, and infant salvation signify a shift in religious thought concerning children.

Martin Luther

Much of Luther's views about children come through his writings on infant baptism. Of the reformers, he changed baptism the least. As seen in medieval theology, Luther viewed children as corrupted by Original Sin and in need of the grace offered through baptism. He viewed baptism as a sacrament, permitted emergency baptisms, and retained some exorcisms.[1] From 1518-1520, his writings, while affirming justification by faith, still maintained the child was baptized into the faith of its parents and the church. In *The Holy and Blessed Sacrament* (1519), Luther emphasized the importance of faith and baptism, but it is not as developed as that found in his later writings. He rejected the notion that baptism was *ex opere operato*; for Luther, baptism did not remove sin, so the body was still sinful, but sin was no longer imputed to the individual. Luther made a distinction between the sign and the thing signified. Baptism signified a new birth in which the sinful nature and death are buried.[2] Concerning children, baptism, and faith, Luther emphasized the ability of God to change people, believing that children are baptized with *fides aliena*. Eventually, through God and the prayers of the church, the child would believe with their own faith. In *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), Luther stated concerning adults that Satan has been able to extinguish baptism by

[1] Karen E. Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community, 1536-1564* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 42–50; Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 1997), 59–60; Michael James Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confesionalization: The Making and Meaning of Lutheran Baptism in Reformation Germany, 1520-1618" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2001), 87–92, 234–40.

[2] Luther believed that baptism signifies a present change and a future change. After baptism the individual is truly without sin and pure, though the sinful body remains, but also points to the moment at which sanctification will be complete. Jonathan D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 138–39.

helping them to forget it so that they pursue works righteousness. "But Satan, though he could not quench the power of baptism in little children, nevertheless succeeded in quenching it in all adults, so that now there are scarcely any who call to mind their baptism."[3] For adults, baptism needed to be awakened through faith. Children, on the other hand, truly experience the freedom of baptism as they are freed from sin and unable to engage works.[4]

After 1527, Luther's view on baptism and children reached its final stage of development and much of the writing in this period is a response to Anabaptists who argued that baptism must follow a visible profession of faith. In response to this argument, Luther stressed the importance of the sign and promise and less on the validity of the rite. Key to Luther's understanding of baptism is faith. Faith, however, does not constitute baptism, but it receives it.[5] Luther argued that baptism is a parallel of circumcision. Both are signs of the divine promise of God, the covenant, and just as circumcision was given to infants, so now baptism is given to infants.[6] Baptism is made effective through faith, but faith does not originate in the individual. Faith is the gift of God. As salvation comes through faith, baptism is salvific but only when faith is present.[7]

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[3] "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church (1520)," in *LW* 36: 57–58.

[4] Trigg, *Baptism*, 135–44.

[5] Ibid., 84–85; Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord; the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 443.

[6] Trigg, *Baptism*, 103-05.

[7] Egil Grislis, "Martin Luther and Menno Simons on Infant Baptism," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 12 (1994): 11; Brian Brewer, "Radicalizing Luther: How Balthasar Hubmaier (Mis)Read the 'Father of the Reformation,'" *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (2010): 101.

The absence of faith does not mean the baptism is invalid, but only that faith is required.[8] "Baptism does not become invalid even if it is wrongly received or used, for it is bound not to our faith, but to the word of God….Baptism is simply water and God's Word in and with each other; that is, when the Word accompanies the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith is lacking."[9] Performed in the name of the Trinity, baptism is a divine act with the water testifying to the promise of God.[10] As baptism is the sign of the promise and faith is the gift of God, there is no possibility that the rite would need to be repeated for that would say that human error is greater than the power of God. People might wander away from baptism, but as a divine act, baptism never needs to be repeated.[11]

As faith is a gift from God, only God knows when baptism is truly valid. This also opens the possibility of infants having faith. Luther first mentioned the possibility of infant faith in 1517 during his lectures on Hebrews; however, he provided no explanation for how that might be.[12] A few years later, Luther used this argument in defense of infant baptism as he responded to the attacks of Karlstadt and the Zwickau Prophets.[13] After

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[8] Trigg, *Baptism*, 84–85.

[9] Theodore G. Tappert, ed., "Large Catechism," in *The Book of Concord; the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 443.

[10] Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 94.

[11] Trigg, *Baptism*, 85.

[12] Paul Zietlow, "Martin Luther's Arguments for Infant Baptism," *Concordia Journal* 20 (1994): 151, 170–71.

[13] Lorenz Grönvik, *Die Taufe in Der Theologie Martin Luthers* (Åbo: Åbo akademi, 1968), 162–64.

1527, Luther continued to use the argument of infant faith. He admitted there is no direct reference to infant faith in scripture, but it is a possibility because its presence can be inferred from several passages in the New Testament.[14] Luther cited the example of John the Baptist who leaped in the womb when first in the presence of the pregnant Mary, thus illustrating his faith. Luther also referenced the example of the slaughter of holy innocents and Christ's invitation for the children to come to him. How infants are able to believe is a mystery of God.[15] Faith could be awakened through the faith of others (alien faith) and the preaching of the Word. Ultimately, when faith interacts with baptism is a mystery of God, and given the examples in the New Testament, infant faith is a possibility.[16] Breaking with those around him, Luther rejected the assertion that the lack of understanding or ability to speak equaled an ability to believe. "They imagine this, I suppose, because children do not speak or have understanding. But such a fancy is deceptive, yea, altogether false, and we cannot build on what we imagine."[17] For Luther, faith could exist in children without reason. In an entry in the *Tischreden*, Luther, upon watching a little boy play, praised the innocence of children for they believe "very simply and without any question in a gracious God and eternal life…Children live altogether in

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[14] Jaroslav J. Pelikan, "Luther's Defense of Infant Baptism," in *Luther for an Ecumenical Age: Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1967), 84–85, 103-05.

[15] Trigg, *Baptism*, 103-04.

[16] Ibid.; Jonathan D. Trigg, "Luther on Baptism and Penance," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Lubomir Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 316.

[17] "Concerning Rebaptism (1528)," in *LW* 40: 242.

faith, without reason. It's as Ambrose said, 'There is lack of reason but not of faith."[18] Because of the New Testament, and supported by personal observation, Luther believed the onus was on the Anabaptists to prove from Scripture that infants cannot have faith.[19] The development of infant faith in Luther's theology points to a tension between his emphasis on faith receiving baptism and his desire to retain the medieval practice of infant baptism. In doing so, Luther, while affirming the lack of intellectual limitations, ascribed greater abilities to children, but only because faith was a gift of God.

Luther believed that infants needed baptism because they were infected with Original Sin and in need of grace and salvation. Baptism conferred God's grace and promised salvation. Through baptism, they experienced the grace of God, and parents trusted that God would complete the promise of salvation made through the sacrament. "We bring the child with the purpose and hope that he may believe, and we pray to God that he grant him faith…Because we know that God does not lie…God's word cannot err."[20] Being a promise of hope for parents, infant baptism, therefore, symbolized the grace of the Gospel. Brought to baptism which is God's work and Word, children are made holy through the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and purifies them, joining them to Jesus Christ in true faith. Salvation was not completed at baptism, but began at baptism with

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[18] *LW* 54, no. 4367, 335.

[19] Trigg, *Baptism*, 103-04; Trigg, "Luther on Baptism and Penance," 316. For Luther, the Anabaptists' assertion that faith was a prerequisite to baptism was a return to works righteousness. Much of Luther's theology is an attempt to distance human abilities from the divine act of salvation. Pelikan, "Luther's Defense of Infant Baptism," 206.

[20] Tappert, "Large Catechism," 444.

God's promise.[21] This belief was an important distinction from medieval theology which said that baptism had the immediate effect of cleansing the infant of Original Sin and saving it from hell. Luther still emphasized the cleansing nature of baptism with regards to Original Sin, but salvation was not completed; it only had begun.

Traditionally, exorcisms accompanied baptism, but Luther downplayed the importance of the exorcism for infants. In *The Little Book of Baptism in German* (1523), Luther curtailed the number of exorcisms. Medieval Catholics believed, that before their baptism children were vulnerable vessels susceptible to demonic forces.[22] Exorcisms had long been an important part of preparing a catechumen for baptism, but increasingly in the third century, the practice became connected to the rite of baptism.[23] Luther, however, stressed that the ritual exorcism with its use of salt, spittle, oil, chrism, gown, and candle did not protect the child. He believed in the reality of demons, but the reading of God's word and the prayers of the people in conjunction with the priest were enough to frighten demons away and protect the child. For Luther, faith had more power to protect the infant than anything else.[24] In the *Little Book of Baptism Revised* (1526), Luther responded to increasing criticisms that he had permitted too many Catholic practices to remain in the

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[21] Jane E. Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), 141–43.

[22] Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 51–52. The importance of this endeavor for Luther is illustrated in fact that the vernacular baptismal became an important defining characteristic for many Lutheran communities as they adopted Lutheran reforms. Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confesionalization," 61.

[23] Bodo Nischan, "The Exorcism Controversy and Baptism in the Late Reformation," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987): 32. For more on the practice of exorcism see Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 45–50.

[24] Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 51.

rite.[25] He once again limited the exorcisms and omitted the use of spittle, oil, chrism, and the burning candle. Satan was still very much present in Luther's mind, but the verbal command of the minister was sufficient to rid the demonic from the child. Halvorson argues that Luther recast the exorcism as prayer. Furthermore, Luther rejected the post-baptismal exorcism because baptism was sufficient to protect the child from the demonic. The grace of baptism endured and served as a Christian's defense against the attacks of Satan. The difference here between Luther and medieval Catholics was that Luther elevated the power of God to guard and protect the child. In medieval theology, exorcisms were not *ex opere operato*, but they were a divine entreaty, one of the weapons used by a priest to combat the demonic. For Luther, the exorcism before the baptism served as a reminder of the power of Satan and a physical rejection of him. Children after baptism, therefore, were not in danger of the demonic because God through baptism protected them.[26]

In one sense, the diminishing of the exorcism and the rejection of *ex opere operato* in baptism diminished pastoral care for parents. As seen in the previous chapter, medieval parents could take comfort that baptism would save their children if they died prematurely, and the Catholic Church facilitated this comfort by authorizing the laity, usually midwives, to baptize the child in emergency situations. Stephen Ozment notes that early Protestants agreed with Luther's rejection of *ex opere operato* and decried

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[25] Ibid., 51–52; Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confesionalization," 75–78.

[26] Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confesionalization," 87–89.

mothers who frantically employed emergency baptisms on their children.[27] Even though Luther criticized the more extreme practices of emergency baptism, such as pouring water over the mother's abdomen or baptizing protruding limbs, he still retained the practice. [28] He did so for at least two reasons. While significantly modifying the practice and theology of baptism, Luther did not want laity to go to the extreme of neglecting baptism, but Luther also retains the practice as a means of pastoral care.[29] All who were baptized were in God's care, and so Luther instructed that all people "be taught what great benefits baptism brings, namely that God will care for and protect the child and receive it has his own."[30] With emergency baptism, if the infant's life was in jeopardy, parents could take comfort in that the child had received the promise of God.

In retaining emergency baptism and modifying baptism and exorcism, Luther, therefore, sought to mitigate greatly the fears of parents for their newborn children.

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[27] Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 164–65. See also Eberhardus Weidenssee, *Von dem stand der kindlein so on die tauff vorscheyden* (Nuremerg, 1525), b1r.

[28] Martin Luther, "To Wenceslas Linkk, Wittenberg, May 12, 1531," in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 50 (Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1955), nos. 240, 13–17, 14 8. See also Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner, eds., *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 183–85; WA TR VI, no. 6758, 187-69. Thomas Aquinas endorsed emergency baptism and supported the baptizing of arms and legs if the head was not available. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, n.d., III. q. 68. a. 11. More than anything, Luther emphasized the importance the Word in baptism. "If water is not present, beer will do!" LW 54 no. 394: 61. Even though Luther retained emergency baptisms, he rejected conditional baptisms, a common medieval practice if the child's baptism was in doubt, believing that it accomplished. Emergency baptism eventually became a point of contention between Lutherans and Reformed theologians who argued that the practice reeked of superstition and magic. Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confesionalization," 237–38.

[29] Mark D. Tranvik and Timothy George, "Baptism," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), accessed January 31, 2018, http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195064933.001.0001/acref-9780195064933-e-0100; "Comfort for Women Who Have Had A Miscarriage (1542)," in *LW* 43: 249 no. 8.

[30] "Concerning Rebaptism," in *LW* 40: 288.

Having lost two children, Elizabeth at eight months in 1528 and Magdalene at thirteen in 1542, Luther understood the fears and pain that parents experienced. On losing Elizabeth, Luther described the depth of his grief. "My daughter, my Elizabeth, is dead. It is astonishing how sick at heart, almost womanish, it has left me. I grieve so much for her. I never before believed that a father's heart could be so weaken for his child."[31] In 1539, Luther, while watching a child play commented, on the emotional trauma of losing a child and affirmed them as natural to the created order. "It would cause me great grief because part of my body and part of their mother's flesh and blood would die. Such natural feelings don't cease in godly parents, no matter how hardened or calloused they think they are, for feelings like these are the work of a divine creation."[32] While Luther believed these emotions were natural, he taught that parents should not grieve deeply, but take hope in the promises of God. Even still, Luther admitted that he struggled with grief. On the death of Magdalen, Luther sought to comfort his wife with the hope that Magdalen was with God, yet in a letter to Justus Jonas, he wrote, "I and my wife should only joyfully give thanks such a felicitous departure and blessed end by which Magdalen has escaped the flesh of the world, the World, the Turk, and the devil; yet the force of [our] natural love is so great that we are unable to do this without experiencing death ourselves…even the death of Christ…is unable totally to take all this away as it

[31] WA BR 4, no. 1303: 511; Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 168. While Luther believed these emotions were part of creation, he did believe that people should attempt to control them, especially men. Luther, like others around him, associated deep emotional grief with the weaker female gender. After the death of Magdalen, he sent Hans away to school "to become hardened" because Luther believed Hans had "turned soft through the words of his mother, in addition to mourning over his sister's death." Luther hoped "to curb that womanish feeling…and not to indulge in that childlikeness." "To Marcus Crodel [Wittenberg,] December 26, 1542," in *LW* 50, no. 300: 239; Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 168.

[32] LW 54, no. 4367: 335.

should."[33] Even two years later, Luther admitted that he was still grieving the loss of his daughter.[34] Luther's grief serves as an example of the emotional pain that many parents felt on the loss of a child. Even with the promise of God received through baptism, Luther suffered greatly at the loss of his children. Theology does not develop independently of one's experiences and culture. The loss of children would have influenced Luther's theology, as seen in his retention of emergency baptism. Moreover, Luther also illustrates that in some cases the promises of God could not wholly sooth the grief that one felt.

Luther's teachings, therefore, sought to comfort parents of baptized children, like himself, but what of the parents of unbaptized children? Luther had rejected limbo, and if an unbaptized child is not consigned to limbo what happens to it? Luther's answer came from a pamphlet entitled *Comfort for Women Who Have Had a Miscarriage* (1542) that was attached to John Bugenhagen's exposition of Psalm 29. Having read Bugenhagen's manuscript, Luther believed it important to address the pastoral issue of mothers who had miscarried or lost children at birth and so were unbaptized. While Buganhagen desired not to address the topic, he permitted Luther to attach a short appendix to his work. Luther was no stranger to this topic; Katherine von Bora miscarried and almost died in 1540, two years before the publication of this work.[35] In *Comfort for Women*, Luther

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[33] "To Justus Jonas [Wittenberg,] September 23, 1542," in *LW* 50, no. 299: 238. On Luther trying to find comfort in God after the death of Magdalen see, LW 54, no. 5491: 428; no. 5497-5500: 432-34.

[34] Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 168.

[35] Martin Treu, "Katherine von Bora, the Woman at Luther's Side," *Lutheran Quarterly* XIII (1999): 163.

consoled mothers, emphasizing that "they should be confident that God is not angry with them or others who are involved."[36] Concerning the fate of the unbaptized child, Luther believed that parents could trust in God that the child was not condemned. "One ought not straightway condemn such infants for whom and concerning whom believers and Christians devoted their longing and yearning and praying."[37] This assurance was derived from two important beliefs. First, God's will is not bound to the sacraments, but to God's word. The second, to which Luther devoted greater attention, is that God is able to hear the prayers that mothers in their grief are unable to express. "Her heartfelt cry and deep longing to bring her child to be baptized will be accepted by God as an effective prayer."[38] Luther's call to prayer is in keeping with the medieval tradition of the baptism of tears. Mentioned occasionally in medieval pastoral literature, the baptism of tears comforted mothers with the possibility that their heartfelt cries and prayers would move God to reckon the child baptized.[39] This possibility of infant salvation is not available to everyone as Luther differentiates between children of Christians and non-Christians. Non-Christian parents do not have this hope because they do not have faith. Because of faith, Luther says "one must…take comfort in the thought that he surely has heard our

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[36] "Comfort for Women," in *LW* 43: 247.

[37] Karant-Nunn and Wiesner, *Luther on Women*, 181; "Comfort for Women," in *LW* 43: 250.

[38] "Comfort for Women," *LW* 43: 247.

[39] The intellectual origins for the baptism of tears resides in the same theological reasoning that said that Christians martyrs who died unbaptized were baptized by the shedding of their blood for the glory of God. Medieval Christians believed it was through the baptism of blood that the holy Innocents were sanctified into the kingdom of God. Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confesionalization," 230.

unspoken yearning and has done all things better than we could have asked."[40] How might God save the infant? The possibility of infant faith could be one of the answers to this question, but in *Comfort for Women*, the answer lies in God's mercy and the reliability of God's promise. "I have said it before and preached it often enough: God accomplishes much through faith and longing of another, even a stranger, even though there is still no personal faith."[41] This assertion of God's graciousness in the salvation of the unbaptized is repeated in no. 6758 of Luther's Table Talk. Emphasizing that God hears the prayers of Christian parents and quoting Matthew 19:14, Luther stated, "So we should regard it as certain that this little child, even if it has not attained proper baptism, is not hereby lost."[42] Elsewhere, Luther wrote that God's ability to save the unbaptized child mirrors God's saving of Job, Naaman, and the king of Nineveh apart from the law. From this, he concluded that "the good and merciful God is well intentioned toward these infants who do not receive baptism through no fault of their own."[43] The salvation of the unbaptized infant, however, appears to be a view that Luther did not preach from the pulpit, but expressed in pastoral counseling, as exemplified in the documents above.[44] In commenting on God saving some apart from the law, Luther said that God "did not want the law to be open despised, but upheld under threat of punishment of an eternal curse"

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[40] Ibid., 250.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Karant-Nunn and Wiesner, *Luther on Women*, 184; *WA TR*, VI, no. 6758:167-69.

[43] "Comfort for Women," *LW* 43: 249 no.8.

[44] George, "Baptism," 117.

and so with the salvation of unbaptized infants, "yet [I consider] that he does not and did not wish this to be publicly preached or believed…so that the ordained and commanded would not be despised."[45] Luther comforted those parents of unbaptized children with hope but was reticent to preach this view for fear that baptism might be neglected.[46] The fact that Luther privately believed unbaptized children would be received by God and that he and Katherine experienced a miscarriage further demonstrates that experiences influenced theological development. While Luther mentioned Katherine's miscarriage, the event had to have contributed to his theological development and even prompted his desire to write a pamphlet on the topic.

Like medieval Catholics, Luther believed that children were born with Original Sin which would eventually manifest into actual sin. He also affirmed the medieval view of child development. Children did not develop reason until around the age of seven. Dormant within young children, sin began to assert itself between the ages of five and seven. With the development of reason comes conscious and personal sin.[47] Children just as adults were marred by sin and as they grew they became increasingly responsible for their sin, with maturity came the conscious decision to sin. Luther, like others around him, believed that humans developed in seven-year cycles with each cycle being marked by a crisis of testing, all of which contributed to maturation. The most troubling of these

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[45] "Comfort for Women," *LW* 43: 249 no. 8.

[46] Halvorson rightly asserts that for Lutherans and Catholics the only sure way to protect the child was through baptism, but Luther's comments on the possibility of infant salvation offer more hope than traditionally taught. Halvorson, "Theology, Ritual, and Confesionalization," 232.

[47] Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology," 144–54.

cycles was the development of sexual passion at the age of fourteen during which the child became rebellious and defiant of authority, and, while many teachers and parents tried as they may to delay this development, Luther believed that it could not and should not be delayed. Sexual desire was given by God and the suppression of it could, Luther feared, create opportunities for sin much in the same the way monastic vows of celibacy had. Instead, Luther argued for the rigorous and effective inculcation of young children in the faith. Only through teaching and discipline, could the child overcome sin and successfully mature into a Christian adult.[48]

Luther believed that young children were especially open to religious instruction. Parents bore the responsibility to instruct their children and other household dependents in the faith. Faith came from God, but parents must ensure their children were raised in the faith.[49] Luther provided several catechetical tools for this purpose and believed that a systematic approach would produce results. He envisioned parents leading their children in prayers, catechizing them, and administering discipline. After a series of visitations in Saxony, Luther, however, was shocked to discover that parents had not been fulfilling their duties to his expectations. Religious education, especially of children, was of such importance that Luther transferred the educational responsibilities of the parents to the

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[48] Ibid., 144–45. Gerald Strauss concludes that Luther's view of original sin and education resulted in a passive, weak, unassertive, and self-doubting being only certain of their sinfulness and deserved condemnation. Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 135–36. Ozment, however, counters that the emphasis on original sin explained "selfish, possessive, irrational, and unaltruistic behavior" of people. Education and discipline instructed the child to be responsible to a higher standard, understanding the importance of service to God and society, and therefore, created a confident being who understand their "place in the large scheme of things, and was prepared to demand that others accept their place as well." Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 163.

[49] Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 163.

ruling authorities. Luther believed that parents had obligations to educate their children in the faith, but he refused to leave this task to them alone.[50] For Luther, as with many Protestant reformers, reading was associated with religious instruction and the catechism became part of school curriculum.[51] He encouraged teachers to choose a catechism and faithfully use it throughout many years. Education was so important that Luther threatened those who failed the task with denying Christ, and those who refused to study the catechism, said Luther, should be refused food and drink by their parents and employers and threatened with banishment by the prince.[52]

Luther even advocated for the education of girls. Traditionally, much of education for girls had been less formal and structured than boys. Parents were often their teachers;

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[50] Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology," 146. Strauss and Ozment disagree as to the success of the Lutheran education efforts. Strauss is highly critical of Lutheran theology's effects on children, which created only passive children who were certain of their sinfulness, and concludes, partly based on the visitation records, that the Lutheran educational endeavor was a failure. Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 135–36, 220–21, 249–308. Ozment, however, counters that Strauss has let modern sensibilities influence his arguments. He argues that viewed within its societal context Lutheran theology had positive effect on children, creating adults who understood their place in society and demanded that others accept their place also. Furthermore, he asserts the formal catechisms used in schools and churches were official documents to defend theological doctrines and, "not as guides to daily life; they may only marginally reflect and be relevant to the actual concerns and practices" of sixteenth century individuals. Ozment contends that a better window into the actual concerns and goals of the reformers is the short sermon pamphlets and catechisms, which did not contradict the larger formal documents, but more directly addressed the practical consequences of doctrine. Extremely popular in the sixteenth century, this literature instructed children to reject and ridicule the traditional Catholic religion. When examined in this light, Ozment argues that the Lutheran educational efforts were a success, and possibly helped to create individuals willing to challenge the "new Protestant 'papacies' as well as that of the old church." Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 161–77. Both Strauss and Ozment argue that one can use religious literature to ascertain the Lutheran perception of children, but they disagree as to the goal of the educational efforts and the effects that it had on children.

[51] Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 121; Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 146.

[52]Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology," 146; Theodore G. Tappert, ed., "Small Catechism," in *The Book of Concord; the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 339.

though in cities and towns, there were "cranny schools" run by older women who, though barely literate themselves, taught young children their letters and to sing psalms.[53] Lowell Green notes that in "To the Nobility of the German Nation," Luther called for the education of girls, criticizing convents for straying from their original purpose.[54] One of Luther's goals of education was the preservation of the Christian temporal world. The education of girls supported this goal so that women would be "able to manage the household and train children and servants aright."[55] Girls would attend school for one to two hours a day for two years in which they would be instructed in reading, writing, the catechism, some math, and the singing of the psalms. Luther believed this instruction would produce godly women who would help maintain godly households.[56] Even with Luther's call for the education of girls, opportunities for schooling were limited. Wiesner observes that in 1580 in Electoral Saxony only ten percent of parishes had licensed schools for girls.[57]

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[53] Often these women could read, but not write which enabled them to avoid those responsible regulating and licensing teachers. If a "cranny" teacher became particularly popular, the authorities would take steps to limit her influence, often instructing only teaching read and to limit their pupils to girls. Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 121.

[54] Lowell Green, "The Education of Women in the Reformation," *History of Education Quarterly* 19 (1979): 97.

[55] "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christians Schools (1524)," in *LW* 45: 368.

[56] Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 122. Wienser has shown that Luther sought to reinforce and preserve the societal place of women. Luther believed that women existed for marriage and to bear and raise children. In releasing women from the cloister, Luther believed he was freeing them to pursue the natural order for them established by God. Mary Wiesner, "The Death of Two Mary's," in *Feminist Theology: A Reader*, ed. Ann Loades (London: SPCK, 1990), 123–37.

[57] Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 121.

Education contributed to a moral and Christian society, and for this goal to be achieved, girls and boys needed to be educated. Religious instruction typically took place in the home, and formal education had been for those training to serve in the church or government. Luther believed that education should be offered to all children and advocated for public education as not all parents could afford it. Those parents who refused to educate their children were sinning against them.[58] Through education, children were taught about God and the importance of obedience, which extended not just to the home, but heads of households, princes, and spiritual fathers. Through the catechism, children learned to discern between right and wrong and to obey the laws which govern their lives. Education benefited society and God by providing individuals who can govern creation and proclaim the gospel to the world.[59] In this way, Luther was not that different from the medieval calls for religious education. Both sought the educating of children so that they would become obedient and faithful members of the Christian community. In advocating for community supported public education, and extending it to boys and girls, Luther placed greater importance on ensuring that the Christian community was maintained, and fulfilled God's call to spread the gospel.

Luther affirmed many views of children which were in harmony with wider medieval culture, but he also has some views which are significantly different. These views became evident in the tension resulting from him retaining certain beliefs and practices from his former Catholic life, and from the adoption of justification by faith. In

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[58] Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology," 146–48, 152–53.

[59] Ibid., 148–49; Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 163.

keeping with medieval theology, Luther affirmed that children inherit Original Sin and are in need of God's grace conferred through baptism for salvation, but he rejected the belief that baptism removed Original Sin or automatically saved the child. Baptism became effective through faith. This assertion, coupled with the belief that children should be baptized, led Luther when faced with the challenges of the Anabaptists to postulate the possibility that infant faith. This development is significant because medieval theologians, including Luther, acknowledged the intellectual limitations of infants and children. Luther, therefore, ascribed greater abilities to children, but this ability to believe is not something inherent in children. Infant faith was a gift of God, and just as infant baptism, testified to the mercy and grace of God.

Another area of tension that bears significance to Luther's view of children is his retention of exorcisms at baptism. Unlike other reformers, Luther maintained the practice, but in modifying the baptismal exorcism, Luther diminished the demonic and spiritual vulnerability of infants. As with infant faith, the diminished threat was not because of something in the child, but from the magnification of the power of baptism. Baptism alone served to protect the child. For Luther, the exorcism was not necessary. He still believed that children were weak and vulnerable, stained with Original Sin, and in need of God's grace, but baptism covers all that is necessary to protect the child from the demonic. When combined with Luther's views on the salvation of unbaptized children, his stance offered a powerful word of comfort to worrying parents.

Another area of significance is Luther's assertion that all children should receive an education. Medieval Catholics advocated for religious instruction for all children, with boys only receiving the option for further study. In part because of the religious

competition, he helped to create, Luther combined religious education with general education and opened the doors for both girls and boys. Proper education would help maintain, sustain, and grow the Reformation. While Luther believed that this responsibility resided with parents, he also extended it to the community. If parents failed or were unable to accomplish the task, then the community should ensure its completion. In advocating for public education, Luther elevated the importance of children for the wellbeing of the church, society, and the world.

Huldrych Zwingli

Although he understood the rite differently from Luther, Zwingli also retained infant baptism. Zwingli, however, did not believe that baptism affected the individual by cleansing the conscience of sin, as Catholics believed. He also rejected the Lutheran belief that baptism affirmed the Spirit's inward working through the outward sign of washing.[60] He also removed from the baptism ceremony of Catholic practices such as the double sign of the cross, blowing on the eyes, use of salt and spittle, and the anointing of oil.[61] Zwingli, however, broke with Luther in his understanding of Original Sin. While Zwingli believed that all were born with Original Sin, he did not believe that Original Sin condemned anyone, as he rejected the notion that Original Sin carried with it an inherited guilt. Citing Ezekiel 18:20, as Anabaptists later would do, which states that the son will not bear the sins of the father, Zwingli argued that one is not condemned for the guilt of

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[60] W. P. Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 88–89.

[61] George, *Theology*, 138–39.

another. Original Sin, for Zwingli, was a defect present in all humans, but the defect had no power to condemn.[62] "The original contamination of man is a disease, not a sin, because sin implies guilt, and guilt comes from a transgression or trespass on the part of the one who designedly perpetrates a deed."[63] This defect permeated all of humanity from birth. As this defect was present from birth, it cannot condemn, "for things which come from nature cannot be put down as crimes or guilt."[64] Condemnation, therefore, came as the result of willfully transgressing against the law of God, but citing Romans 4:15, Zwingli argued that individuals cannot sin against the law if the law has not been given to them, and thus children exist in a state of innocence.[65] "They are in a state of innocence as long as they are too young to know the law, as I have unhesitatingly maintained relying for support upon the authority of Paul to the Romans 4:15….Those of tender years who know not the law are just as much without the law as Paul was. Therefore, they do not transgress, and consequently, are not condemned."[66] Zwingli explained his reference to Paul in the following sentence. "And Paul says, Rom. 7:9, that he was alive without the law once, but that is to be understood of no part of his life except infancy and boyhood."[67] Zwingli's interpretation of Paul in Romans 7:9 is unique, but the citation, for

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[62] Stephens, *Zwingli*, 74–75; George, *Theology*, 138–39.

[63] William John Hinke, ed., *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Heidelberg, 1922), 5.

[64] Ibid., 2:4–5.

[65] Zwingli's views on original sin and voluntary transgression led Luther to accuse Zwingli of Pelagianism as he felt that Zwingli's views opened the door for free will. Stephens, *Zwingli*, 74.

[66] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:25.

[67] Ibid.

Zwingli, further supported the belief that children under the age of reason existed in a state of innocence. Only when children become aware of the law and sin, do they suffer condemnation. Continuing from Romans 7:9, Zwingli states "But when the law had come to life, he testifies that he died. In the same way, we ourselves do not sin, as long as we are ignorant of the law because of age, but when the light of the law has shone upon us, we become liable to it."[68] As infants and young children were unable consciously to transgress against God, there was no sin to condemn them. This view is an important change in theological thought concerning children. In medieval theology, children existed in a duality, guilty and corrupted by Original Sin, yet innocent and pure because they were free of actual sin. Zwingli still maintained that children under the age of reason were innocent, but he rejected the condemnation and guilt of Original Sin. For Zwingli, the tension is significantly decreased in children; they bear the corruption of Original Sin, but Original Sin does not condemn them.

The implication for Zwingli's thought is that infants and young children are innocent and therefore, do not suffer eternal punishment upon death.[69] Zwingli, however, was reticent to ascribe with certainty this salvation to the infants of both Christians and heathens. This is because Zwingli understood salvation within the divine election of God and the work of Christ.[70] According to Zwingli, the defect of Original Sin inevitably leads to actual sin, but through Christ, Original Sin is conquered for those who trust in

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 95.

[70] W. P. Stephens, "Bullinger and Zwingli on the Salvation of the Heathen," *Reformation and Review* 7 (2005): 287; Stephens, *Zwingli*, 74–75.

him.[71] Without Christ, there is no salvation. Citing Romans 5:19-21, Zwingli states, "original and actual sin must be admitted to have been made good through Christ, just as we admit it have come through Adam."[72] Even so, Zwingli's view of Original Sin would logically lead one to conclude that all infants who die prematurely will be saved since they have not consciously committed sin. Zwingli, however, emphasized that it was through God's election, Christ as the second Adam, and the participation of the parents in the covenant that guarantees the salvation of infants. Just as the children of the Hebrews were members of the covenant so were the children of elect parents. Zwingli's belief was not merely based on the symmetry of the Old and New Testaments, but on the belief that one covenant that began with Abraham spans the two testaments.[73] Faith is the fruit of election and Zwingli offered assurance to elect parents arguing that they could be confident that their children are members of the covenant, thus making the salvation of their children sure. Through Christ, all are restored to life, those "who believe or who are of His Church according to the promise."[74] Even though these children do not yet believe, they are, by virtue of their parents, members of the covenant.[75] "Original sin cannot condemn the children of Christians, because…it cannot damn on the account of the

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[71] This distinction enabled Zwingli to sign the Marburg articles which placed in agreement with Luther, at least on the notion that original sin leads to condemnation. Stephens, *Zwingli*, 75.

[72] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:23.

[73] Stephens, *Zwingli*, 54–55; George, *Theology*, 141–42.

[74] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:207.

[75] W. P. Stephens, "Bullinger and the Anabaptists with Reference to His Von Dem Unverschämten Frevel (1531) and to Zwingli's Writings on the Anabaptists," *Reformation & Renaissance Review: Journal of the Society for Reformation Studies* 3 (2001): 98–99; Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:18–22.

remedy provided by Christ, especially it damn those who are included in the covenant which was included with Abraham."[76]

Furthermore, Zwingli stated with surety that all children of Christian parents who die in infancy were of the elect. "Thus there are none of whose election we are more sure than of those children who are taken away young, while still without the law….in children who are born of believing parents, there can be no blemish."[77] For Zwingli, children of Christian parents existed in a state of innocence, corrupted by Original Sin, but not condemned because of the lack of actual sin. In the event of an early death, Zwingli unequivocally believed in their election and salvation even though the children could not believe. "And since no cause but sin separates from God, and they are without sin, it is clear that no one is so incontrovertibly known among the elect as those children who finish their days while young."[78] Christian parents could rest assured that their children who died under the age of reason would be saved. "For dying is just as much a sign of election in them as faith is in grown people. Those who are unregenerate and have been rejected of God do not die in this condition of innocence, but are preserved by Divine Providence that their rejection maybe made known by their wicked life."[79] Zwingli actually spoke more firmly about the election and salvation of the children of the Christian parents than he did the reprobate. "It is not, therefore, a general rule that he who

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[76] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:23.

[77] Ibid., 2:207.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

has not faith is damned, but him who has heard the doctrine of faith expounded and remains and dies in unbelief, we can perhaps count among the wretched."[80] Death, for Zwingli, served as the point for when one could ascertain a person's election. In the case of reprobation, a person's persistent refusal until death of the gospel could possibly point to their reprobation, but Zwingli believed with certainty that Christian parents could trust that the death of their child was a sign of that child's election and salvation. This belief in the salvation of children of the Christian parents without baptism is a significant break from the medieval belief in the necessity of baptism for salvation. Quite possibly, the belief brought significant comfort for parents as they worried or grieved over the loss of a child. The belief in salvation the children of the Christian parents probably also contributed to his rejection of the Zurich tradition of burying unbaptized infants in the middle section of the cemetery, halfway between sacred and profane ground. Instead, Zwingli advocated that all children of Christian parents should be given a Christian burial.[81] Zwingli's belief in the salvation of children of Christian parents, coupled with his new burial practices would have comforted parents who were grieving the loss of a child, even Zwingli himself whose youngest daughter, Anna, died in infancy.[82]

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[80] Ibid., 2:200 Cf. 207. Gottfried Locher notes that Zwingli differs from Calvin in that the question of reprobation never figured prominently into Zwingli's preaching or theology. Ultimately, Zwingli's believed that reprobation could not truly be known by humans and so his attitude was to assume that all were part of the elect. Gottfried Wilhelm Locher, *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 129–131, 135, 209.

[81] George, "The Presuppositions of Zwingli's Baptismal Theology," 78.

[82] Ulrich Gäbler, *Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 57–58; Jean Rilliet, *Zwingli, Third Man of the Reformation*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 169.

What then of the children of the non-elect, those whom Zwingli refers to as the children of the heathens. In arguing for the inability of Original Sin to condemn anyone, Zwingli stated Original Sin "was made good through the grace of Christ."[83] Zwingli states that "it is proper to ask whether Christ restored the whole race or only the church of the faithful?"[84] In answering this question, Zwingli appeared reticent to give an affirmative yes or no, stating "because some things seem to contradict it, and because I do not know that whether anybody has held it."[85] Instead, he emphasized that the status of children of elect parents was certain because of their participation in the covenant, and the fact that children cannot sin against the law, all of which was evidenced in scripture. Concerning children of the non-elect, Zwingli stated he only had the support of Romans 5. "About the others, who are born outside the Church, we have nothing but the present testimony of as I know, and things similar to this fifth chapter of Romans, by which it can be proved that those who are born outside of the Church are cleansed of original pollution."[86] Even with this statement, Zwingli admitted the possibility that Romans 5 referred only to the children of the Christian parents. "For one might maintain, and perhaps rightly, that the words of Paul…are not to be understood of others than the faithful and their children."[87] While Zwingli admitted to a dearth of scriptural evidence

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[83] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:23.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 2:24.

for the inclusion of the children of the elect in Christ's saving work, he questioned whether the absence of evidence should lead to definitive statement of condemnation. "However the case may be with the children of the heathen…so be it that we poor mortals in our boldness consign to everlasting death some about whom we have no clear word of God; are they on that account really damned?"[88]

Zwingli's previous statements give the impression of equivocation, but, in reality, he focused considerable attention on proving that the children of the non-elect would indeed be saved if they died prematurely. Zwingli states that "it is more probable that the children of the heathen are saved through Christ than that they are damned" and that such a person "would have more basis and authority for his view in Scripture than those who deny this. For he would be maintaining nothing more than that the children of the heathen are no damned in tender years because of the original defect, and this through the blessing of Christ."[89] Furthermore, Zwingli states that while one can believe that Christ only affected the children of the elect, this belief restricts saving work of Christ. "If, on the other hand, only the church is restored, it will follow that salvation through Christ does not extend so widely as the ravages of the disease that began with Adam. For no one, I think, denies that the children of the heathen are just as much born with inclination to sin as our children."[90] Finally, the children of the non-elect are included in his discussion on Romans 4:15, in which he argues that children under the age of reason are

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[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., 2:23–24.

[90] Ibid., 2:24.

in a state of innocence and are not damned because they are not yet accountable to the Law:

> This point must not be passed over, either, that whether our children only or those of the heathen also, if that view should prevail, are altogether restored in nature through Christ as far as original pollution is concerned, they are in a state of innocence as long as they are too young to know the law as I have unhesitatingly maintained…upon the authority of Paul to the Romans 4:15….And those of tender years who do know not the law….they do not transgress, and consequently are not damned.[91]

This statement comes in Zwingli's final paragraph on the topic of the children of the non-election. In discussing the issue of children of the non-elect, Zwingli only appeared to equivocate. Though he stated that greater evidence existed for the salvation of children of Christian parents, he believed the scriptural, as little as it might be, was enough to warrant belief in the innocence and salvation of the children of the non-elect.

Zwingli's position on children concerning Original Sin and infant salvation is a significant development in the religious perception of children. Medieval theology stated that all children were born contaminated and condemned by Original Sin; only through the washing of baptism would a child receive salvation. Zwingli, on the other hand, had a theology that was more inclusive. God's grace was not restricted just to those children who had received baptism, but also to the children of the elect and non-elect. God's grace was not dependent on baptism. Salvation and God's grace was dispensed through God's election. As previously mentioned, Zwingli believed that the death of children under the age of reason was a sure sign of that child's election. While this statement was made in the context of children of Christian parents, one can postulate that Zwingli believed this

[91] Ibid., 2:25.

statement applies to all children. Furthermore, Zwingli agreed with the medieval position that children under the age of reason existed in a state of innocence. As has been shown, many medieval people appeared reticent to ascribe unbaptized children who were innocent of actual sin to hell, thus leading to the creation of children's limbo. Zwingli's statements illustrate that he too was wary of declaring that children, innocent of actual sin, suffered God's wrath. For Zwingli, limbo had no support in scripture, but the extension of the saving work of Christ to all children was supported. Zwingli had several radical and innovative beliefs when compared to medieval theology. The rejection of condemnation through Original Sin was radical, as was the belief that children of Christian parents would be saved even without baptism. In arguing for the salvation of children of the non-elect, Zwingli knew that his position was a break from traditional belief, which is why he provided the conciliatory statements that said that one could believe otherwise, but Zwingli believed that his position was supported in scripture, one which would be taken up later by the Anabaptists.

If the salvation of children is not dependent on baptism, why then are infants baptized? For Zwingli, the answer was found once again in God's election and the covenant. Salvation came through faith, and election preceded faith.[92] As election was known only to God, all were to be baptized. Zwingli understood baptism as the sign of the covenant that God made with humanity.[93] Whereas Luther compared baptism to circumcision, Zwingli went even further by arguing that the Bible contained not two, but

[92] Stephens, "Bullinger and Zwingli," 98–99.

[93] George, *Theology*, 143–44.

one covenant with one sign of the covenant.[94] Baptism was the sign of this covenant, an initiatory rite. Medieval theologians had argued that there were two baptisms in the New Testament: John's baptism of repentance and the Jesus' baptism of forgiveness. Zwingli rejected this division, stating the baptism of John and Jesus were the same in form and function, signified through Jesus' submission to John's baptism. This connection was important to Zwingli because it underscored his argument that the Bible contained one covenant, that between Abraham and God. The Church, therefore, began not in the New Testament, but with the establishing of the covenant with Abraham. "I believe that to this Church belong Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and all who were of the seed of Abraham."[95] The medieval understanding saw the baptism of John as a transitional step between the circumcision of the Jews and the baptism of Jesus. John's baptism pointed to the circumcision of the Old Testament covenant, signaled its conclusion, and foreshadowed the baptism of Jesus which would wash away sins.[96] Because Zwingli believed that there was one covenant which began with Abraham, he concluded Christian baptism did not originate with Jesus' command in Matthew 28, but with the baptism of John. "How the baptism of John and that of Christ differ is a question much mooted both in the past and today…for there really is no difference at all as far as the reason and purpose are

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[94] Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 44.

[95] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:45.

[96] David C. Steinmetz, "The Baptism of John and the Baptism of Jesus in Huldrych Zwingli, Baltharsar Hubmaier and Late Medieval Theology," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History*, ed. F. F. Church and Timothy George (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 171–74, 181.

concerned."[97] Circumcision had been the sign of the covenant, "the Church's token," but baptism replaced it.[98] Jesus submitted himself both to circumcision and baptism, signaling that they were of equal value.[99] Infants were baptized because children of the covenant had always received the sign of the covenant. The difference now between circumcision and baptism was that the initiatory sign was applied to boys and girls. As previously mentioned, children of the elect parents belong to God and are members of the covenant. As such, they cannot be denied the sign of the covenant.[100] The existence of one covenant strengthened Zwingli's argument for the inclusion of children of the elect as members of the church and recipients of God's promise of salvation. "Since these (the ancient Israelites), then, were members of the Church, infants and children belonged to the primitive Church. Therefore, I believed and know that they were sealed by the sacrament baptism."[101] Though Zwingli never mentioned it himself, the argument of one covenant further strengthens his case for the salvation of all children of Christian parents. If an early death was a sign of God's election, then one could be assured of the salvation of the children of Christian parents for they participated in the covenant established with

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[97] Huldrych Zwingli, *Commentary on True and False Religion*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and Clarence N. Heller (Durham: Labyrinth, 1981), 189.

[98] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:45.

[99] George, *Theology*, 140–42.

[100] Stephens, *Zwingli*, 90–91.

[101] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:45.

Abraham.[102] Christ's promise of salvation to these children was not new, but was a continuation of the promise that God with Abraham when God established the church.

Despite his belief that infants are proper recipients of baptism, baptism was not about children. The rite did not cleanse them of Original Sin, confer grace, or even, in opposition to Luther, initiate faith in the infant as they are incapable of belief. Baptism was a human act that Zwingli compared to a monk's vow to live under the rule of Christ.[103] "Baptism is therefore an initiatory sign…. It is like the cowl which is cut out for the initiates into an order. They do know the rules statues when the cowls are made, but they learn them in their cowls."[104] Elsewhere, Zwingli says that "baptism is an initiatory sacrament by which those who were going to change their life and ways marked themselves out and were enrolled among the repentant."[105] Parents, who were active members of the community, made this vow on behalf of their children, promising to nurture and educate them in the faith. [106] The church accepted the parents' profession presuming, until given a sign otherwise, that the child was elect.[107] For Zwingli, baptism,

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[102] The same can also be applied Zwingli's arguments for the salvation of the children of the non-elect.

[103] Bruce Gordon, "Huldrych Zwingli," *The Expository Times* 126 (January 1, 2015): 167; Steinmetz, "Baptism of John," 179.

[104] Huldrych Zwingli, "Of Baptism," in *Zwingli and Bullinger*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, The Library of Christian Classics XXIV (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 79.

[105] Zwingli, *Commentary*, 186.

[106] This emphasis became especially important as Zwingli fought against the Anabaptists. By submitting their children to baptism, parents signaled that they were members of the community, and not seditious Anabaptists. George, "Baptism," 118; George, *Theology*, 139–40.

[107] Stephens, *Zwingli*, 92.

which was a public ecclesial event, testified to and emphasized the faith of the community in the covenant and promise of God. [108] Moreover, baptism as the sign of the promise signified a children's membership in the covenant. Baptism, therefore, for Zwingli, also served to comfort anxious parents, but not in the way as medieval theology had argued. Medieval theology stated that baptism conveyed grace and granted the child salvation. Zwingli believed that baptism testified to God's promise of salvation that the child already possessed. "Here the promise of God precedes, that He regards our infants, no less than those of the Hebrews, as belonging to the Church."[109] Baptism did not convey, but merely testifies to one "who had previously been received through grace."[110] Zwingli believed with confidence that children of Christian parents were of the elect, and would be saved with or without baptism if they died. Baptism merely publically certified to the covenant of salvation which God had initiated with Abraham.

In many ways, Zwingli broke from the traditional understanding of children. His theology reveals that he changed the status of children. Zwingli described children as existing in a state of innocence. This theme was present in medieval literature, but joined to it was the belief in Original Sin whereby a child bore the guilt and corruption of Adam. Zwingli affirmed a belief in Original Sin, but not the traditional understanding, as children were not deserving of hell for they did not possess the guilt of Original Sin. Instead, children possessed only the defect/taint of Original Sin, which could not directly

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[108] George, *Theology*, 143.

[109] Hinke, *The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 2:47.

[110] Ibid., 2:47–48.

condemn them. For Zwingli, baptism, then did not cleanse children of Original Sin, but testified to their inclusion in the covenant. Medieval theology had classified children as spiritually unclean outsiders in need of baptism. Zwingli, on the other hand, viewed children of the elect as already insiders; baptism was their right because they were already members of the church.

With this view of Original Sin, the rejection of exorcisms, and his understanding of baptism, Zwingli, like Luther, also lessened the spiritual danger which threatened children. Parents did not need to fear the death of their children because children by virtue of their elect parents participated in God's covenant of salvation. This belief is best signified in his recommendation that unbaptized children were to be buried in sacred ground. Moreover, one cannot ignore the fact that Zwingli advocated for the belief in the salvation of the children of the non-elect, possibly believing an early death signaled these children's election just as it did for children of Christian parents.

John Calvin

Calvin held a view of children which was very much in keeping with medieval thought, in that he believed infants were guilty of Original Sin, but because of a lack of mental development exhibited a humility which adults were called to emulate. Like Luther, Zwingli, and others before them, Calvin divided childhood into three stages which had distinct characteristics, each of them about seven years. Infancy lasted until around age seven during which time children were unaware of pride and honor. Because of this, Calvin, following the example of Jesus, esteemed children in this stage as examples of piety for adults. Infancy ended with the development of reason, around the age of six or seven. With the onset of reason, the simplicity of children disappeared, and

they entered a stage of spiritual and intellectual development. The third stage, adolescence, began around age fourteen, though Calvin believed it could start early in girls. In this stage, sexual desires began to awaken in children, and it was also characterized by pride and rebelliousness.[111]

Characterized throughout each of these stages were guilt and sin. Calvin, in keeping with Luther and other contemporaries, believed that Original Sin was an inherited corruption that affected the will and understanding, and rendered everyone guilty, deserving of condemnation.[112] Barbara Pitkin notes that Calvin had a more pessimistic view of sin, especially in regards to the mind. Even infants were not exempt from Original Sin. Whereas Zwingli held that Original Sin did not condemn infants, Calvin believed that infants bore their condemnation in their mother's womb. Present within them is the seed of sin, which was their whole nature, and though it had not yet brought forth fruit, its presence was abhorrent to God and thus, condemned them.[113] Only through baptism and faith is the corruption of human nature restored. Contrasted with Calvin's pessimistic view of sin and children, notes Pitkin, is his appreciation of their spiritual maturity resulting from ignorance and the lack of pride, and their ability to praise God. Expounding upon Psalm 8, Calvin states that children are bold proclaimers of

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[111] Barbara Pitkin, "The Heritage of the Lord': Children in the Theology of John Calvin," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), 165–66.

[112] Ibid., 167; Barbara Pitkin, "Nothing But Concupiscence: Calvin's Understanding of Sin and the Via Augustini," *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (1999): 357–58.

[113] Pitkin notes that this view is found in a passage in the *Institutes* that remained unchanged throughout its subsequent editions. Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 167; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 4.15.10.

the goodness and glory of God, though Calvin limits this attribute to "babes and sucklings," those under the age of reason.[114] "The providence of God…does not wait until the age of maturity, but even from the very dawn of infancy shines forth so brightly as is sufficient to confute all the ungodly."[115] Augustine greatly influenced Calvin, but whereas Augustine stressed that infants demonstrated evidence of sin, Calvin stressed that they were champions who defended God's glory.[116] "The speechless mouth of infants is sufficiently able to celebrate the praise of God" for" these [infants] are invincible champion….God needs not strong military forces to destroy the ungodly; instead of these, the mouths of children are sufficient for his purpose."[117]

Calvin's emphasis on the corruption of children while being messengers of God was not novel. This tension was often present in the medieval image of children. The significant difference is that Calvin more greatly stressed the sinfulness of children. Even though Calvin ascribed to children the special status of being bold proclaimers of God, he believed that it had no bearing on their salvation. Guilty of Original Sin, infants deserved God's condemnation.[118] Calvin even sought to downplay the emphasis on the innocence of children, fearing it might lead to parents "to give children leave…to rush upon

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[114] Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 166. See John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 95–96.

[115] Calvin, *Commentary on the Books of Psalms*, 1:95.

[116] Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 166–67. For the influence of Augustine of Calvin's theology of original sin, see Pitkin, "Nothing But Concupiscence," 347–69.

[117] Calvin, *Commentary on the Books of Psalms*, 1:96–97.

[118] Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.6-8 and 4.15.10; Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 167.

mischief…reckless of right and wrong."[119] The absence of actual sin in no way changed God's view of children. Calvin believed that all people whether infants or adults were just as deserving of divine wrath. As with Zwingli, Calvin understood salvation in terms of God's election. As stated previously, Zwingli, though seeming equivocated on the subject, advocated that all children who died before the age of reason would be saved. Calvin, however, did not equivocate on the subject. God elects some infants to salvation and some to reprobation. "Again I ask: when does it happen that Adam's fall irremediably involved some many people, together with their infant offspring, in eternal death unless because it so pleased God?[120] One should note that Calvin did not take pleasure in this belief, but believed he was being faithful to the Bible. "This decree is dreadful, I confess."[121] Calvin understood that God's predestining of people to reprobation, including infants who had not committed actual sin, was a harsh doctrine. For Calvin, the faithfulness to the sovereignty of God in salvation as taught in scripture outweighed any uneasiness caused by the doctrine. This view, however, is in sharp contrast to the medieval belief that since infants were innocent of actual sin, they suffered a milder punishment in limbo. Calvin rejected limbo emphasizing that infants were just as deserving of punishment was anyone else.[122] In this sense, Calvin took a more stern view

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[119] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson, vol. 5 (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1849), 112. See also John Calvin, *The Secret Providence of God*, trans. Paul Helm, New edition. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 112–13; Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 168 n.21.

[120] Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.23.7. See also Calvin, *The Secret Providence of God*, 112–13; John Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: Henry Middleton, 1583), 1143–44.

[121] Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.23.7.

[122] Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 168–69.

of infants and divine punishment. While others sought to temper the punishment infants might receive, Calvin sought to be consistent concerning the pervasiveness of Original Sin and God's just punishment of it, even if it infants and little children were damned to hell.[123]

As salvation was tied to God's election, baptism functions differently for Calvin than Luther. Unlike Luther, Calvin did not believe that baptism was a firm moment when salvation began.[124] Like Zwingli, Calvin emphasized the symbolic and inauguratory nature of baptism, but not to the same extent.[125] Calvin believed that Zwingli diminished the work of God by overstressing baptism as humanity's sign of obedience.[126] For Calvin, baptism is a pledge of obedience that is connected to church discipline, but Calvin places greater emphasis on baptism as God's testimony and promise of grace and salvation to undeserved people.[127] The sign, baptism, and the thing signified, salvation, are distinct but not separate for Calvin. Wherever baptism is administered, the promise of Christ is offered, but the promise can only be accepted through faith which is awakened by the Holy Spirit. Faith, however, does not need be present at baptism, for it can be accepted by

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[123] Pitkin seeks to lessen harshness attributed to Calvin's views on the sinfulness of children, noting that he was in agreement with medieval thought which said that children were less sinful than adults and that he emphasized the positive example of children more than some of his forbearers and successors. Ibid., 169.

[124] Ibid., 183.

[125] Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 46.

[126] John W. Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: An Historical and Practical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 51; George, "Baptism," 188.

[127] Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition*, 51; Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 45; Galen Johnson, "The Development of John Calvin's Doctrine of Infant Baptism in Reaction to the Anabaptists," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73 (October 1999): 811.

faith at a later point in life. As the promise is offered by God through the Holy Spirit, the promise is never withdrawn.[128] Elected children, therefore, are baptized into future faith, as opposed to Luther's belief in infant faith, while all others received an empty sign.[129]

Like Zwingli, Calvin emphasized the unity of the covenant with baptism replacing circumcision as the sign of the covenant. As with Zwingli, Calvin believed that one can only be a participant in this covenant through election, and children of the elect, like the children of the Israelites, were included in this covenant and so should be baptized. Elect parents fearful for their children, Calvin stressed, could rest assured that their children were included in the covenant, recipients of God's grace. "God declares that he adopts our babies as his own before are born, when he promises that he will be our God and the God of our descendants after us."[130] The whole baptismal rite testified to the grace of God given through the covenant. In the rite, the minister prayed that the infant would be received into God's protection. These words recognized parental fears. Baptism testified to the perpetual nature of the covenant between God and humans. Through baptism, children of the elect were incorporated into the fellowship of Christ, benefiting from God's grace as recipients of God's promise.[131] For Calvin, the promises of the covenant assuaged all fears, even parental concerns for their children. Calvin was not immune to

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[128] Jill Raitt, "Three Inter-Related Principles in Calvin's Unique Doctrine of Infant Baptism," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980): 53–56.

[129] Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition*, 66–67; Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 184.

[130] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.15.20.

[131] Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 45–57.

these fears; he and Idelette having lost three to four children in infancy.[132] As participants in the covenant, elect parents could find comfort that their children would be covered by God's grace.[133] "For God's sign, communicated to a child as by an impressed seal, confirms the promise given to the pious parent, and declares it to be ratified that the Lord will be God not only to him but to his seed."[134] For this reason, Calvin banned emergency baptisms, stating they were blasphemous. Emergency baptism testified to an absence of faith in God's promise, a lack of understanding concerning baptism and its effects, and a disregard for the proper ministry of the sacraments as only the ordained could administer them.[135] Faith was necessary to receive the promise signified through the water of baptism, but baptism was not necessary for salvation.[136] In the case of elect infants who

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[132] William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 23, 243 n.79. Building on the misconceptions of Ariès, Bouwsma downplays Calvin's grief stating that because of high infant mortality, Calvin "could not afford to be sentimental about children" he never met, choosing instead to focus on his disciples, his "ten thousand children." With his childlessness, one cannot ignore his comments on Psalm 127 concerning children. "The Prophet means that those who are without children are in a manner unarmed; for what else is it to be childless but to be solitary?" Calvin, *Commentary on the Books of Psalms*, 5:111.

[133] The salvation of the children of the elect was later addressed at the Synod of Dort in response to accusations by the Remonstrants that Reformed theology taught that some children of the elect were reprobate. SeeCornelis P. Venema, "The Election and Salvation of the Children of Believes Who Die in Infancy: A Study of Article I/17 of the Canons of Dort," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 17 (2006): 57–100.

[134] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.16.9.

[135] Raitt, "Three Inter-Related Principles," 57–58; Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.15.20-22.

[136] Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 182. While Calvin sees baptism as a command from the Lord, he also views it as an accommodation to human weakness. God's grace does not need baptism to be effective, but humans needed a physical sign that would assure them of God's grace. Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 46.

died before baptism and who had not developed reason, God worked mysteriously through the Holy Spirit to arouse faith in them.[137]

The emphasis on baptism as a testimony to God's grace strengthened its perception as a communal event. All children were to be baptized, but not all children received the effects of baptism.[138] Calvin connected the wellbeing of society with membership in the church. For society to function well, all must be members of the church through baptism.[139] Here, Calvin made the distinction between the visible church and the invisible church. The visible church was composed of the elect and non-elect, but the invisible church, known only to God, was comprised of the elect alone. As opposed to the Anabaptists, the goal, for Calvin, was not to create a separated community, but a reformed society.[140] Furthermore, as only God knows the identity of the elect and God has commanded baptism, all children should be baptized so that none are neglected.[141] Medieval theology said that baptism was effective for all who received it, but for Calvin, baptism was the sign of the covenant for the elect and their children. Calvin, therefore, limited the effects of baptism. The reformed society, envisioned by Calvin, meant that all were to receive the sign of the covenant, but the non-elect received an empty sign. The

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[137] Raitt, "Three Inter-Related Principles," 53.

[138] Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 47.

[139] Calvin, like other reformers, believed sacraments are instituted by God and must be defendable from scripture, but infant baptism was defended with minimal scriptural evidence. Spierling notes that infant baptism brought the unity of scripture into question as the usefulness of the rite blurred the scriptural lines. She argues that Calvin's clearest arguments are sociological rather than theological. Ibid., 49.

[140] Ibid., 45, 56–57.

[141] Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 182–84.

presence of a mixed community would also mean that there were non-elect parents whose children did not benefit from the promises of God. The possibility of not being one of the elect, and the consequences for their children, probably caused great concern for some parents.[142]

Just as Calvin's view of the covenant enabled him to reject emergency baptism, his view also supported his rejection of the exorcisms traditionally associated with baptism. Luther had retained the practice, though modified. Calvin argued that because of the child's connection to the covenant as a child of the faith, exorcism was an unnecessary and superstitious practice. In contrast to medieval tradition, children of the elect were not empty vessels who were susceptible to demonic forces, but as heirs of the covenant, they were holy. Renouncing the devil was unnecessary and contradicted the theology of baptism.[143]

As baptism was applied both to the elect and non-elect with the goal of creating a reformed society, Calvin emphasized the importance of religious education for the church and society.[144] The emphasis on education was woven into the baptismal rite. Traditionally, godparents served as the infant's sponsor who renounced the devil on behalf of the infant and promised to educate it in the faith. In his baptismal rite, Calvin

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[142] This possibility was on Thomas Helwys' main complaints about Reformed theology. Thomas Helwys, *The Life and Writings of Thomas Helwys*, ed. Joseph E. Early, Early English Baptist Texts (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2009), 91.

[143] Spierling notes that despite the assurances of Calvin, parents still feared for their children and so the practice continued, along with emergency baptism. Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 58.

[144] Ibid., 49.

had rejected the exorcism, but he was unclear on godparents.[145] The *Institutes* do not mention sponsors and the baptismal rite found in *The Form and Ecclesiastical Chants* (1542) was ambiguous as to godparents. The *Form and Ecclesiastical Chants* required the presence of parents, especially fathers. Promises were made to instruct the child in the faith, but these could be applicable to parents or sponsors, which could be the same person. In 1547, Genevan ordinances specified the requirements of godparents, and later in life, Calvin did express the need for sponsors in instances when the child's parents were not Christians. Calvin's ultimate goal was to dispense with the practice, with parents taking the responsibility to educate their children in the faith.[146]

A strong advocate for the religious education of children, Calvin prepared ordinances for the regulation of the Genevan church, wrote two catechisms, and promoted school reform, but as exemplified in his baptismal rite, he ascribed the responsibility of education to the public and private spheres.[147] Calvin taught that children were the heritage of the Lord. As all of human life was guided by the providence of God, no child was a mistake, the result of natural desires, or the product of chance. "Children are not the fruit of chance, but…God, as it seems good to him, distributes to

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[145] Will Coster notes that Calvin was probably influenced by Willaim Farel who in 1533 dispensed with the interrogatories, requesting instead that sponsors promise to educate the child. Will Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship in Early Modern England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 84.

[146] Even still, the practice continued in Geneva. Ibid., 85. Cf. W. G. Naphy, "Baptisms, Church Riots and Social Unrest in Calvin's Geneva," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 87–97.

[147] Pitkin notes that this is in contrast to Gerald Strauss claim that the Reformation era marked a shift in which the church and government assumed more responsibility for religious education. Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 162, 169, 182. Cf. Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 7–10.

every man his share of them."[148] All children were gifts from God, with baptism also serving to remind parents of this so that they did not become ungrateful and careless in their education. Entrusted to them, parents had the responsibility to raise their children in godliness. Calvin acknowledged that not all children bring joy to their parents' lives, but parents must remember that God helps form and mold them. Calvin believed that this knowledge would inspire parents in their child-rearing.[149] "Unless men regard their children as the gift of God, they are careless and reluctant in providing for their support, just as on the other knowledge contributes in a very eminent decree to encourage them in bringing up their offspring."[150] Parental responsibilities in childrearing were important to Calvin. He instructed parents to discipline their children with love and kindness, and not with a heavy hand. Children, on the other hand, were to love, honor, and obey learning from their parents a life of piety, and in time care for them when they are old. While children were responsible for their own sin, parents who failed to raise them properly also bore responsibility and should be punished alongside them. Ultimately, Calvin stressed that children are evidence of God's grace and care for the family which should motivate parents to raise them in the way of the Lord.[151]

As it has been seen with Luther and Zwingli, Calvin understood children as a gift from God. Because of the covenant, they by virtue of their parents were members of the

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[148] Calvin, *Commentary on the Books of Psalms*, 5:110.

[149] Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 169–71.

[150] Calvin, *Commentary on the Books of Psalms*, 5:111; Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 171.

[151] Pitkin, "Heritage of the Lord," 169–74.

church, entitled to the rite of baptism, and their parents bore the responsibility to raise them in the faith. Like other reformers, Calvin lessened the spiritual danger that children faced by rejecting exorcisms, emergency baptisms, and limbo. Significant in Calvin's understanding of children is his lack of emphasis on their innocence. Traditionally, children were understood to be in a state of innocence until the age of five or seven, and for this reason were esteemed as examples of piety. On the other hand, while Calvin did praise children as bold proclaimers of God's mercy and greatness, he limited this to young children, emphasizing instead the sinfulness of children. For Calvin, there is no question that all children deserve condemnation, even though they are innocent of actual sin. This assertion is in significant contrast to Zwingli's view of children. As with Luther and Zwingli, Calvin offered hope for parents who have lost children, but this hope extends only as far as election. For Zwingli, the possibility of salvation for children of the non-elected existed, but Calvin, as with Luther, limited this promise only to the children of the elect.

Anabaptists

The connection of early Anabaptists to the Peasant's War and the Münster Rebellion along with their rejection of infant baptism and oath taking solidified among Protestants and Catholics the popular notion of Anabaptists as seditious and dangerous to social order.[152] The Diet of Speyer in 1529 mandated the death penalty for all

[152] Peter G. Wallace, *The Long European Reformation: Religion, Political Conflict, and the Search for Conformity, 1350-1750* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 85–87; Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 326–332.

rebaptizers.[153] Anabaptists' views on baptism and children constituted a unique perspective in the early modern era. Composed of various independent movements, each with their own distinctives, Anabaptists shared the rejection of infant baptism and the guilt of Original Sin, and an emphasis on parental responsibility in childrearing, all of which contributed to their views of children.[154]

While Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin retained infant baptism, the Anabaptists rejected the practice. Building upon Matthew 28, Anabaptists believed that baptism must follow a confession of faith.[155] Children could not make this response, so they were denied baptism. In doing, Anabaptists made baptism even more exclusionary than Calvin who said the non-elect received an empty sign. Only those who could hear the gospel and respond with a confession of faith would be admitted to baptism. Until this point, children were members of the Christian community, but not members of the church. Baptism was an outward sign of an inward experience of faith. Without this inward experience of faith, there is no baptism. This view is in contrast to Luther and Calvin who believed that faith would follow baptism.[156] The crucial point here is the difference of understanding concerning the significance of baptism. For Luther and Calvin, baptism

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[153] George, *Theology*, 228. Wallace notes that between 1525 and 1533 Protestants and Catholics executed more than 600 Anabaptists, often even after they had recanted. While some Anabaptists still desired to initiate the Kingdom of God by force, the majority of Anabaptists embraced pacifism. Wallace, *Long European Reformation*, 87. The Schleitheim Confession (1527) with its emphasis on pacifism was probably intended to distinguish Michael Sattler's group from the more violent radicals. Cameron, *Reformation*, 328.

[154] George, *Theology*, 256; Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 50–41.

[155] Some Anabaptists like David Joris eliminated or Melichor Hoffman suspended the practice of adult baptism because of extreme practices. George, "Baptism," 118–19.

[156] George, *Theology*, 288.

represented God's promise of grace, whereas for Anabaptists baptism represented their faith in God and a public pledge of commitment that bound the believer to the congregation.[157] This emphasis is seen in Balthasar Hubmaier's *On Fraternal Admonition* in which he described the premise for Christians reproving one another. "Namely from the baptismal commitment, in which he subjected himself…to their church and all his members."[158] In this regard, they were in agreement with Zwingli on the covenantal nature of baptism, also separating baptism into the sign and thing signified.[159] Baptism signaled a response of obedience to the gospel, symbolic of a change in identity and lifestyle which was the result of true repentance and faith, and the grace of God.[160]

Anabaptists, however, objected to Zwingli's attempts to lessen the distance between the Old and New Testaments. [161] Not one, but two covenants are found in the Bible. Circumcision marked the old covenant and baptism marked the new, but they rejected any correlation of circumcision to infant baptism.[162] Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin

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[157] Keith Graber Miller, "Complex Innocence, Obligatory Nurturance, and Parental Vigilance," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), 201; George, "Baptism," 119.

[158] Balthasar Hubmaier, *Balthasar Hubmaier, Theologian of Anabaptism*, ed. John Howard Yoder and H. Wayne Pipkin, trans. H. Wayne Pipkin and John Howard Yoder (Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1989), 383, cf. 373-74, 409-418.

[159] Cf. Zwingli, *Commentary*, 186.

[160] George, *Theology*, 266–69, 288; Steinmetz, "Baptism of John," 177–78. In emphasizing a profession of faith before baptism, Anabaptists argued for a visible church of the elect separated from the world, the opposite of Calvin's Reformed society composed of the elect and non-elect. Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 51.

[161] Steinmetz, "Baptism of John," 181.

[162] Luther, Medieval Catholics, and Baptists all shared this belief. George, *Theology*, 141–42; George, "Baptism," 118.

all argued for infant baptism based on indirect evidence. Anabaptists countered by stressing that scripture nowhere explicitly mandated infant baptism. Furthermore, the practice was in opposition to the teaching of the New Testament that said that baptism followed faith and repentance. Anabaptists, in keeping with medieval views of children, believed that infants lacked reason, but they argued from this that children, therefore, were incapable of making a profession of faith and repentance, which in turn barred them from baptism. Menno Simons wrote, "Little, innocent children have no faith, for they cannot hear nor learn."[163] Parents and godparents could not profess faith or make a vow on behalf of the child.[164] Anabaptists, therefore, emphasized spiritual independence.[165] Only individuals who passed the age of reason, understood the Gospel, and professed faith could receive baptism.[166] Anabaptists, such as Simons, argued that infant baptism was theologically dangerous as the rite did not change the relationship between the child and God, nor effectively call them to discipleship. Furthermore, infant baptism lured parents into false security, believing that because of the rite their children were Christians. Children then reach the age of reason with no knowledge of God, their parents having failed to teach them the necessity of a conscious profession of faith and repentance for salvation.[167] Whereas medieval theology and the magisterial reformers

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[163] Menno Simons, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, C.1496-1561*, ed. J. C. Wenger, trans. Leonard Verduin (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986), 241.

[164] Miller, "Complex Innocence," 200.

[165] Hillel Schwartz, "Early Anabaptist Ideas about the Nature of Children," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 47 (1973): 105.

[166] Miller, "Complex Innocence," 200.

[167] Ibid., 199.

emphasized that infant baptism helped the child and comforted for parents, the Anabaptists stated the complete opposite. Parents harmed their children by baptizing them; only by denying their children baptism and teaching them the necessity of a profession of faith and repentance could parents truly help their children.

Because of their rejection of infant baptism, their opponents charged them with neglecting children by denying them their rightful place in the covenant or the grace conferred through baptism.[168] Traditionally, children who died without baptism were denied burial in the cemetery's sacred ground, often being buried in the profane ground or a special section half-way between the sacred and profane.[169] Local authorities would even intercede on behalf of the child, baptizing the child against the wishes of one or both parents, and in many cases, they would remove children from their Anabaptist parents and place them in the homes of others.[170] All of this stemmed partly from a genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of the children.

Anabaptists responded to these accusations by emphasizing that children under the age of reason existed in a state of innocence. Claus Felbinger wrote in his confession of 1560, "They know of no sin and have never committed sin nor ever roused God to wrath, yet they must die as the old die…sin harms their soul not at all. But when the child

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[168] William Klassen, "The Role of the Child Anabaptism," in *Mennonite Images: Historical Cultural, and Literary Essays Dealing with Mennonite Issues*, ed. Harry. Loewen (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1980), 18; D. F. Tennant, "Anabaptist Theologies of Childhood and Education (1): The Repudiation of Infant Baptism (Continued)," *Baptist Quarterly* 29 (1982): 358.

[169] Klassen, "Role of the Child," 18; George, *Theology*, 138. Cf. Simons, *Complete Works*, 128.

[170] Marion Kobelt-Groch, "'Hear My Son the Instructions of Your Mother': Children and Anabaptism," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 17 (1999): 28–29.

grows up, the stronger will be his inclination to sin."[171] While children under the age of reason could not make a profession of faith, they also could not distinguish between good and evil. They could not believe or disbelieve nor consciously choose to sin. This state of innocence meant that children who died were not condemned to hell. This position was the result of Anabaptists' views on Original Sin, original guilt, and actual sin. As the term "Original Sin" never appears in the New Testament, Anabaptists generally avoided using it in their writings.[172] Like Zwingli, they also rejected original guilt. Condemnation came not through an inherited guilt, but through actual sin. Just as professed faith was individualistic so also was sin; no one could be condemned for the sin of another, and like Zwingli, they often cited Ezekiel 18 to support this claim.[173] Instead, many Anabaptists viewed Original Sin as an inherited corruption, a desire to sin. As with Zwingli, they rejected the medieval view that children were guilty and innocent. Sin entered the world through Adam which led to physical death. As Felbinger wrote, "Here one can note how far Original Sin harms man; namely, it causes him physical death."[174] Like Zwingli, the corruption/desire for sin existed in children, but its existence did not condemn them. Children under the age of reason lacked the ability to sin consciously.

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[171] Robert Friedmann, "Claus Felbinger's Confession of 1560," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 29 (1955): 159.

[172] Robert Friedmann, "Doctrine of Original Sin as Held by the Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 33 (1959): 206.

[173] Walter Klaassen, "Sin and Fear in the Thought of Pilgram Marpeck," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 85 (2011): 106.

[174] Friedmann, "Claus Felbinger's Confession," 159.

Only when children are able to discern right from wrong and choose to sin of their own volition are they condemned.[175]

Infants who died before the development of reason, however, were saved because they were innocent. The innocence of infants, however, here is not the same type as the original innocence of Adam and Eve.[176] They suffered the effects the Fall, but when compared to adults who committed actual sin, they were innocent. Their innocence was simply the absence of the ability to choose sin.[177]Anabaptists stressed the innocence of infants in opposition to the claim that the guilt of Adam condemned them. They found the idea that God would condemn children on account of another's sin abhorrent and blasphemous. "Some say if the children are not baptized they are condemned, which surely is not the smallest idolatry in so-called Christendom," wrote Pilgram Marpeck.[178] The salvation of children was not the result of their merit, for they can neither contribute to their salvation or condemnation, but through the grace of Christ.[179] "If they die before coming to years of discretion, that is, in childhood, before they have come to years of understanding and before they have faith, then they die under the promise of God and by

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[175] Miller, "Complex Innocence," 201-03; Klaassen, "Sin and Fear," 108; Friedmann, "Doctrine of Original Sin," 209.

[176] Klaassen, "Sin and Fear," 108.

[177] In his essay on Menno Simons, Keith Graber Miller calls this position 'complex innocence;' the absence of faithfulness and sinfulness in children, but who also have a predisposition to sin from Adam. Miller, "Complex Innocence," 194–95.

[178] Pilgram Marbeck, *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, ed. Walter Klaassen and William Klassen (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1978), 130. See also Simons, *Complete Works*, 244.

[179] Friedmann, "Doctrine of Original Sin," 209, 211.

no other means than the generous promise of grace given through Christ Jesus."[180] Anabaptists varied as to how this is accomplished, but a widespread opinion was that Adam's sin originally brought physical and spiritual death, but the atonement of Christ removed the spiritual death, a view similar to Zwingli's argument of Jesus as the second Adam.[181] Conrad Grebel wrote in a letter to Thomas Müntzer, "on the basis of the following Scriptures…we hold that all children who not attained knowledge to discern between good and evil and have not eaten of the tree of knowledge are surely saved through the suffering of Christ the new Adam, who has restored the life that has been distorted."[182] Simons also wrote, "To innocent and minor children sin is for Jesus' sake not imputed."[183] Anabaptists believed the seed of sin could be observed in children, but their actions were not reckoned to them as sin deserving condemnation until after the age of discretion; those unconscious sins were covered by Christ. Until the age of reason, children existed in a state of grace, being granted salvation in death. A unique feature of

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[180] Simons, *Complete Works*, 241, cf. 708.

[181] Hans J. Hillerbrand, "Anabaptism and the Reformation: Another Look," *Church History* 29 (1960): 409–10; Klaassen, "Sin and Fear," 108; Schwartz, "Early Anabaptists," 103.Some Anabaptists, such as Dirk Philips, maintained that original guilt had existed, but Christ's death had removed it, leaving only the propensity to sin. Timothy George includes Menno Simons among this group, incorrectly ascribing a quote of Philips to Simons. Simons' writings, however, reveal that he merely viewed original sin as an inherited corruption. Dirk Philips, *The Writings of Dirk Philips, 1504-1568*, ed. Alvin J. Beachy, William E. Keeney, and Cornelius J. Dyck (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1992), 77; George, *Theology*, 268; Simons, *Complete Works*, 504.

[182] Though written four months before, Grebel his followers performed their first adult baptism, this letter is an important window into the theology of the early Swiss Anabaptists.Conrad Grebel, "Grebel to Müntzer, Zurich, September 5, 1524," in *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism: The Grebel Letters and Related Documents*, ed. Leland Harder (Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1985), 290, 682 n79. See also, Simons, *Complete Works*, 135.

[183] Simons, *Complete Works*, 131.

this theology is the universal salvific efficacy of Christ's atonement for children.[184] As opposed to Calvin, this salvation was not limited to the children of the elect, but all children.[185] Like Zwingli, but without his caution, the Anabaptists declared the salvation of infants with certainty, a powerful word of pastoral comfort in an age of high infant mortality rates.[186] With this belief, the denial of baptism did not harm children because those under the age of reason would be recipients of God's grace of salvation.

Like those around them, Anabaptists believed that children became responsible for sin when reason developed. The development of reason also stipulated when the child could make a profession of faith and be baptized. Hillel Schwartz notes that Anabaptists marked the development of self-will as an important change in character that signaled the development of reason. Before self-will, one could not reason with children nor condemn them for their actions. In *The Admonition of 1542*, Marpeck writes one cannot "be accepted by God until he is rational and comes to the age of accountability."[187] Because the development of reason was different for each child, Anabaptists were reticent to assign an age. Some of them, in keeping with the rest of society, placed the age between five and seven years old. Simons believed that reason did not develop at least until the age of five.[188] "And such faith is not found in children of two, three, or four, both

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[184] See the explicit statements of Menno Simons and Conrad Grebel. Ibid., 707; Grebel, "Grebel to Müntzer, Zurich, September 5, 1524," 290.

[185] George, *Theology*, 268, 289; Miller, "Complex Innocence," 201.

[186] Simons, *Complete Works*, 135.

[187] Marbeck, *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, 217.

[188] Schwartz, "Early Anabaptists," 107.

Scriptures and common sense teach us."[189] Hubmaier, on the other hand, acknowledged that reason developed by age seven. "You say: The will only comes seven years later. Well said. So should one also put off baptism, until the time that the will is now here."[190] Just as the development of reason varied for Anabaptists so did the age of baptism. Hubmaier and Müntzer both baptized children as young as seven. Reports from Austria indicate that children were baptized around ten or eleven, and the *Martyrs Mirror* indicates that some baptized believers were teenagers.[191] Some Anabaptists, however, such as Hans Hut, Hans Schlaffer, Ambrosius Spittelmayr, and Peter Walpot, refused to baptize until the individual was at least thirty.[192] Anabaptist parents understood that they could contribute to the suffering of their children, for this reason, some withheld baptism for children young in understanding so as to protect them from execution.[193]

While Anabaptists rejected infant baptism, children were part of the congregation, though not believing members. As early as 1525, Anabaptists began dedicating their children to God in a public service. In a letter to Johannes Oecolampadius, Hubmaier wrote that in lieu of baptism, he gathered the congregation, read Matthew 19:14–"Then

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[189] Simons, *Complete Works*, 709.

[190] Hubmaier, *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 188.

[191] Miller, "Complex Innocence," 206-07; John M. Klassen, "Women and the Family among Dutch Anabaptist Martyrs," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 60 (1986): 565.

[192] Though not an Anabaptist, Michael Servetus argued that baptism should be withheld until thirty because it is not until then that original sin reached full development. Original sin would be then be destroyed by faith and baptism. Rollin S. Armour, *Anabaptist Baptism: A Representative Study* (Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1966), 94–95; Miller, "Complex Innocence," 206-07; Klassen, "Women and the Family," 564.

[193] Klassen, "Women and the Family," 565–66. Sources indicate that sometimes children eleven to fourteen years old were punished for being Anabaptists. Kobelt-Groch, "Children and Anabaptist," 27.

little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay hands on them and pray"[194]–and after the pronouncement of the child's name, "the whole congregation on bended knee prays for the child, entrusting him to the hands of Christ, that he may be ever closer to the child and pray on his behalf."[195] As infant baptism was a fundamental component of medieval life, it is reasonable that Hubmaier would develop a rite to take the place of infant baptism. Other Anabaptists also adopted the practice. In his confession of 1532, Marpeck provides a window into his consecration service. He states that in front of the congregation, "the infants shall be named before a congregation and God shall dully be praised for them, thanks and blessings shall be given to His fatherly goodness."[196] The congregation is then reminded that through Jesus God has "had mercy on the innocent creatures and that, without discrimination," having "promised them the kingdom of God," and instructed to pray "for everyone, and also the child, that God would also in the future give us knowledge of His gracious will."[197] Finally, parents are admonished not only to raise their child in the faith but also to commit it to God's care

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[194] Interestingly, Hubmaier uses this verse for his child dedications as latter half of the verse, "of such is the kingdom of God," was often cited as scriptural evidence for the command to baptize. In other writings, Hubmaier rails against this interpretation, arguing that "of such" refers to the humble and innocent nature of children. Hubmaier, *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 141, 231, 287, 513. Cf. "Concerning Rebaptism, in *LW* 40: 243. Menno Simons while rejecting that the verse supports infant baptism uses it to argue that through God's grace sin is not imputed to children. Simons, *Complete Works*, 131–33.

[195] Hubmaier, *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 72. Writing back to Hubmaier, Oecolampadius voiced his support of Hubmaier's dedication service. George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University, 1992), 230–31.

[196] Marbeck, *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, 147.

[197] Ibid.

"until it is clearly seen that God is working in him for faith or unfaith."[198] In the *Enchiridion* (1564), Dirk Philips states that while Scripture does not provide an example of infant baptism, it does through Matthew 19:13 provide an example of child dedications.[199] Christians, following the example of those who brought their children to be blessed by Christ, "must offer" their "children to Christ with our prayers, with a firm faith and confident trust that in him, as in the promised seed, they have already received the blessing to eternal life."[200] Child dedications were also practiced among and the Mennonites and though Simons' writings do not directly mention them, the practice can be inferred from *The Christian Faith* in which he instructs parents to commit their children to God.[201] "If they are of teachable age, instruct them in a Christian fashion. Dedicate them to the Lord in their youth; watch over their souls as long as they are under your care."[202] Elsewhere his writings reflect the theme of the dedications, the belief that children are members of the kingdom of God. Using Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these," Simons declared that "parents have in their hearts a sure and firm faith in the

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[198] Ibid.

[199] *The Enchiridion* is composed of several previously published works. Philips' comments on child dedications are located in the first section of the work, sometimes referenced as *'t Geloofsboek,* which was first published in 1557. The editors note that the individual treatises complied in the *'t Geloofsboek* could have circulated in handwritten form as early as 1552. Philips, *The Writings of Dirk Philips*, 51–52.

[200] Ibid., 86.

[201] Christian Neff and Harold S. Bender, "Consecration of Children," in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, ed. Harold S. Bender, vol. 1 (Scottdale, PA: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1955), 699–700.

[202] Simons, *Complete Works*, 390.

grace of God concerning their beloved children, that they are children of the kingdom, of grace, of the promise of eternal life."[203] The adoption of child dedications reveals the desire among Anabaptists to remember and acknowledge that even though children were not baptized, they still were members of God's kingdom and therefore, under God's grace, mercy, and care. Edward Muir notes that infant baptism was important for establishing the social identity of children. The rite gave children their name, confirmed their parentage, inducted them into the Christian community, and gave them spiritual parents.[204] Child dedications also served this purpose. In addition to giving the child its name and affirming its parentage, the dedications affirmed that the child was a member of the Christian community, though not like believing adults and appointed the whole Christian community as spiritual parents for the child.[205] Moreover, child dedications served to replace one of the most important functions of infant baptism, the affirmation for parents that as members of the Christian community, children were under God's care. Child dedications were meant to comfort parents just as infant baptism had. Their function as pastoral care is present throughout the descriptions of the dedications. While the theology of baptism changed, parental fears and child vulnerability remained a reality. These fears are best seen in Hubmaier's description of his dedication service. "If there are

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[203] Magisterial reformers used this verse in their support of infant baptism, arguing that the New Testament taught that children were included in the covenant just they in the Old Testament. Simons in keeping with traditional interpretation affirms that the verse supports their inclusion in the covenant, but it is because of God's grace through Jesus Christ and not a ceremony. Hubmaier, however, broke with tradition arguing that the verse references the humility of children which should be emulated by adults. Ibid., 135, 280, 386–90, 570; Hubmaier, *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 71, 141.

[204] Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 24.

[205] Klassen, "Role of the Child," 21.

parents of a sick child at a given time, who most earnestly wish the child baptized, I baptize it. In this matter, I take on sickness myself along with the sickly little ones."[206] Children were still vulnerable to physical dangers and Anabaptists addressed this concern. In consecrating the child to God, Anabaptists helped parishioners transition to a new understanding of baptism while still affirming that children had a place in God's kingdom.

The rejection of infant baptism and the emphasis on a profession of faith meant that Anabaptists focused on ensuring that their children could make a profession of faith when the time came, making the development of reason more important for Anabaptists.[207] Besides the salvation of children, Anabaptists understood that their children were the future of the movement.[208] Like those around them, Anabaptists believed that children were malleable and impressionable, especially with the advent of reason. While Anabaptists believed that infants and young children were innocent of actual sin, they did believe that within them was the seed of sin. This seed grew until the child bore the fruit of actual sin which coincided with the development of reason. As with their contemporaries, they believed this development occurred around five or seven, at which point children would start receiving religious instruction.[209] They believed that with proper religious instruction children would be able to discern between good and evil,

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[206] Hubmaier, *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 72.

[207] Schwartz, "Early Anabaptists," 105.

[208] Kobelt-Groch, "Children and Anabaptist," 25.

[209] Schwartz, "Early Anabaptists," 107-09.

and eventually through God's grace make their own profession of faith. By inculcating their children at an early age, Anabaptists ensured that their children could make a profession of faith, and thus, in spite of the persecution which surrounded them, ensure the survival of their movement.

The obligation to nurture their children in the fear of God, teaching and chastising them so they could make a profession of faith, was placed primarily on parents, but with the help of the community, a theme seen in Luther and Calvin.[210] Anabaptists, however, tended not to highlight the bent toward sin present in all children. Instead, they focused on encouraging faithfulness and discipleship. Parents were encouraged to follow the examples of Abraham, Tobit, and the Maccabean mother who all sought the salvation of their children. For many Anabaptists, religious education was accomplished not through catechisms, as seen in Luther and Calvin, but through parental guidance, clear boundaries, and an immersion in Scripture. Previously education had served to ensure that children understood and were committed to the faith into which they had been baptized. For Anabaptists, education served to bring children to baptism. Surrounded by a community which stressed discipleship, conversions for children were undramatic as they came to accept the faith in which they were raised.[211] Anabaptists leaders warned parents against letting their natural affection interfere with their parental responsibilities to train and discipline their children. They should not spoil their children. They were told not to be like Eli the high priest and his disobedient children because it

[210] Miller, "Complex Innocence," 194–95.

[211] Ibid., 209–10; Klassen, "Role of the Child," 21, 26–27.

was better to have one child who obeys God than to have many who do not.[212] Parents could be lenient with infants and small children, but no leniency should be given to the adolescent children. Children were taught that discipline from parents came from God, and they could only disobey if it conflicts with God's will. Obedience was a cardinal virtue with theological implications. In learning to obey their parents, children learned the importance of obeying God. More important, they were taught that obedience should be joyful and voluntary because through it they submitted themselves to God. Through ensuring that their children were raised in the faith, parents demonstrated their obedience to God and expressed their love for their children.[213]

Though they were accused of spiritually abusing or abandoning their offspring by denying them baptism, Anabaptists focused intensely on the spiritual faith of their children. While children were denied baptism, they were not outside the grace and mercy of God. Much of Anabaptist views of children are in keeping with medieval thought. They emphasized the innocence of young children and the responsibility for actual sin with the advent of reason. They, however, differ when it comes to the implications of this innocence. Whereas medieval tradition, while affirming Original Sin, sought to lessen the punishment of unbaptized children, Anabaptists completely removed the punishment. They rejected original guilt and asserted that children before the age of reason would be, because of God's grace, saved even without a profession of faith. Moreover, they extended this state of grace to all children, not just those of the elect. Though their

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[212] Klassen, "Role of the Child," 26–27.

[213] Miller, "Complex Innocence," 209–15; Klassen, "Role of the Child," 26–27.

theology, they affirmed that God cared for children. This affirmation was further shown through the practice of child dedication. Performed before the congregation, the rite emphasized that while baptism was denied to children, they were not outside the grace and mercy of God; children had a place in the church. Parents could take comfort that God cared for and protected their children.

Conclusion

Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the Anabaptists all esteemed children as special gifts from God, and parents and religious leaders bore the responsibility to ensure that children were raised to fear and love God. Disagreements, however, existed as to their nature. Both Luther and Calvin emphasized the effects of Original Sin on children, arguing that they bore the condemnation of Adam's guilt. Zwingli and the Anabaptists, however, rejected original guilt, choosing instead to emphasize the innocence of children until they reached the age of reason at which time the contamination of sin gave fruit to actual sin. In this Luther and Calvin preserved the tension of Original Sin and innocence present in medieval theology. Zwingli and the Anabaptists, however, broke with tradition, refusing to assign any guilt or condemnation until the children understood the difference between good and evil. The tension of a sinful contamination and innocence was still present, but it was a tension of a significantly lesser degree.

Both the magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists also believed in the salvation of children who died prematurely; all of which must be viewed within the terms of pastoral care and parental devotion. They, however, affirmed and proclaimed this belief in varying degrees. In pastoral counseling, Luther argued for the possibility of infant

salvation for children of Christians. Calvin proclaimed it as a promise of God, but only for children of the elect. Only Zwingli and the Anabaptists proclaimed that all children who died in infancy were saved. All struggled to some extent with the notion that God would condemn infants who were innocent of actual sin, but only Zwingli and the Anabaptists were willing to make the radical proclamation that all children would be saved.

The magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists also all emphasized the importance of religious education. For the magisterial reformers, religious education taught the importance of obedience and devotion to God, helping them understand and live the faith into which they had been raised. For the Anabaptists, religious education was important not only because it taught their children obedience and devotion to God, but also because it enabled their children to be able to make a profession of faith when the time came. In all this, the magisterial reformers and Anabaptists challenged and affirmed previous notions about children and their place in the church. Children were weak, vulnerable, and prone to sin, but the grace of God reached them even without baptism. Physical danger might still be present, but the spiritual danger was diminished. Parents could take comfort that God watched over their children, with their energies focused on ensuring that their children came to understand the grace they had received.

Finally, one should note that the discussion of children for Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the Anabaptists began with baptism. While still retaining baptism as an entrance into the church, the magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists disagreed as to its purpose and effects. All saw baptism as a sign of God's promise of salvation, but they all limited who benefited from baptism. For Luther, it was only those who possessed faith,

and for Zwingli and Calvin, it was only the elect. For all three of them, baptism was still administered to children. The Anabaptists, however, limited baptism the greatest in that only adults who made a profession of faith and repentance could receive it. In contrast to the traditional understanding, Anabaptists believed baptism that did not help children but harmed them. Children needed not to live in obedience to the baptism they received as a child, but to come to understand their need for salvation and repentance so they could receive baptism. The magisterial reformers and the Anabaptists modified baptism, and because baptism was administered to children, their changes in theology had significant effects on the religious view of children.

The themes seen in this chapter are important as the English Reformation felt the heavy influence of the continental reformations. The view of children that develops in England as a result of the Reformation was not a single view, but multiple views, each often bearing the influence of someone from the continent. As has been the case on the continent, much of the discussion about children will begin with baptism in England, as it reacts to competitive theologies.

CHAPTER FOUR

Children and the Introduction of Protestantism into England, 1534-1553

The formal introduction of the Reformation in England began as a byproduct of Henry VIII's desire for a male heir. In breaking from Rome, Henry VIII opened a door to Protestantism that he struggled to close. On the continent, the rise of Protestantism changed religious thought about children, especially in regards to their status in the church, spiritual condition and vulnerability, and salvation. These same changes would be seen in England as the influence of the continental Reformers made its way across the English Channel. During the Henrician and Edwardian Reformation, Catholic works that affirmed the medieval view of children on Original Sin and innocence, baptism, and education continued to published and read.[1] With Henry VIII's break from Rome, the works of continental reformers entered England and began to influence the thought of English reformers. This chapter focuses on the introduction of Protestant theology into England during the reign of Henry VIII and Edward VI and the ways in which it challenged and affirmed the medieval understanding of children in the areas of Original Sin. innocence, and baptism. This chapter argues that the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations resulted in the introduction of the diversity of Protestant theology into England which affected the perception of children by prompting discussions on baptism and Original Sin, often in response to the perceived threat of Anabaptism.

[1] Both Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy argue that Catholic piety was at a high on the eve of the English Reformation. Haigh, *English Reformations*; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*.

Innocence and Original Sin

An examination of medieval writings revealed a tension between children being guilty of Original Sin, yet until the age of discretion existing in a state of innocence. With the introduction of Protestantism into England, however, much of the discussion about children in religious literature heavily emphasized their guilt of Original Sin. Earlier medieval references to the innocence of children stemmed from the belief that children were not held responsible for actual sin. The absence of these references in the Henrician and Edwardian Reformation does not signal that this doctrine was abandoned, but that authors were focusing their attention on more pressing theological matters. Much of the discussion of Original Sin was in response to Anabaptist and Zwinglian theologies that declared children were free of Original Sin. While these movements were never sizable, English reformers saw them as a dangerous threat and sought to combat them.

Richard Taverner, Philip Melanchthon, and Erasmus Sacerius

Many of the works published during the Henrician Reformation were vernacular translations of continental Protestant works. In the late 1530s, Richard Taverner (1505?-1575) published two English translations of Protestant writings that bear significance because they demonstrate that many of the English reformers continued to affirm a traditional understanding of the doctrine of Original Sin and children.[2] Through

[2] Taverner also translated a number of Erasmus' contributing greatly to the humanist's popularity in England, but in doing so he presented a very protestantized version of Erasmus. John K. Yost, "Taverner's Use of Erasmus and the Protestantization of English Humanism," *Renaissance Quarterly* 23n (1970): 266–276; Andrew W. Taylor, "Richard Taverner (1505?-1575)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed February 25, 2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27006.

contributions in the 1530s in defense of the royal divorce, Taverner had allied himself with Thomas Cromwell, becoming a chief propagandist of Cromwell's religious reform.[3] In 1536, Taverner, at the request of Cromwell, published an English translation of the Augsburg Confession and Melanchthon's *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1530) which had been drafted as a response to *Confutatio Confessionis Augustanae* (1530), the Catholic rebuttal to the *Augsburg Confession* (1530).[4] In the article on Original Sin, Melanchthon affirmed that their position on Original Sin "dothe nat varie fro[m] scripture nor fro[m] the catholicke churche."[5] Original Sin condemned everyone, and could be remitted through baptism and faith. Even after baptism, Original Sin remained as the corruption, concupiscence, was present in all humans.[6] While Melanchthon never mentioned children in this section, children would be naturally assumed to be included.

A second translation by Taverner also affirmed the traditional understanding of Original Sin and children. In 1538, Taverner published a translation of Erasmus Sacerius' *Methodos in praecipous scripturae locos* entitled *Common places of Scripture*.[7] This work was dedicated to Henry VIII, with Taverner stating that the work was better than Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*. In translating, publishing, and dedicating a Lutheran

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[3] Taylor, "Richard Taverner," ODNB.

[4] Helmar Junghans, "Augsburg Confession," trans. Robert E. Shillenn, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford University Press, 1996), accessed February 22, 2016, http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195064933.001.0001/acref-9780195064933-e-0077.

[5] Philipp Melanchthon, *The confessyon of the fayth of the Germaynes* (London, 1536), STC 908, B1r.

[6] Ibid., A7r–B1v.

[7] Erasmus Sarcerius, *Common places of Scripture* (London, 1538), STC 21752.5.

doctrinal handbook that emphasized *sola scriptura*, Traverner sought to influence Henry VIII's theology and convince him that *sola scriptura* was the solution to the doctrinal controversies in England.[8] In the work, Sacerius explained a doctrinal position and then listed the various theological positions that were in opposition to Lutheran doctrine. In the section on Original Sin, he condemned anyone who did not believe that Original Sin was a guilt and corruption that inhabits all of humanity. A connection was made between the Anabaptists who said that Original Sin has ceased and those who "with the Pelagians" deny that "by baptysme original synne is losed in infants bycayuse they contende that in birth there is no original synne."[9] To this was added the condemnation of anyone who viewed Original Sin as merely a corrupt nature, a position held by some Anabaptists.[10] This condemnation of Anabaptist belief was one of more than twenty in the work. Awareness of Anabaptism had been in England since 1528, and by 1532 several arrests were made of individuals accused of Anabaptism. [11] The movement does not appear to have been significant in England, but arrests against them intensified after the Munster Rebellion in 1534. In response to the rebellion, Henry VIII issued the proclamation

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[8] Taylor, "Richard Taverner, ODNB"; Sarcerius, *Common places of Scripture*, a2r–a7r.

[9] Sarcerius, *Common places of Scripture*, STC 21752.5, XLIXr-v.

[10] Ibid., XLIXv.

[11] The first news of Anabaptism came to England through a letter from Erasmus to Thomas More. Further news came in 1531 when William Barlow after having visited the continent published his observations in *A dyaloge descrybying the orygynal ground of the Lutheran faccyons*. Albert Pleysier, *Henry VIII and the Anabaptists* (New York: University Press of America, 2014), 49–52; William Barlow, *A dyaloge describing the originall ground of these Lutheran faccyons* (London, 1531), STC 1461.

Ordering Anabaptists to Depart the Land in March 1535, which gave Anabaptists twelve days to flee the country or be arrested.[12]

While many people feared Anabaptism as a violent faction, this chapter will demonstrate that they also feared the theological innovations of the movement, some of which they believed placed children in spiritual danger. The association of Pelagianism with Anabaptism was common in the Reformation, largely owing to their similarity in views on Original Sin, but whereas Pelagius said that children existed in the same state of Adam before the Fall, Anabaptists were closer to Zwingli, arguing that children were innocent of the guilt of Original Sin because of the grace of Christ.[13] As will be been seen, a number of the works published that bear significance to the perception of children and the Reformation in England were in response to Anabaptist doctrine. In the case of Sarcerius' *Common places of Scripture*, he affirmed Original Sin and specifically names the Anabaptists among those censured for not believing that children are condemned by the doctrine. Sarcerius, however, not only condemned the Anabaptists' position on Original Sin, but Zwingli's as well, though he never mentioned him by name: "To say origynall syn is onely a weakeness in nature or incitement and kindling and no syn that is to say a thing of the selfe nature worthy of death and damnacyon."[14] One of the reasons Taverner probably favored *Common places of Scripture* was because Sarcerius listed the

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[12] Paul L. Hughes and James Francis Larkin, eds., *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 227–228; Pleysier, *Henry VIII and the Anabaptists*, 58.

[13] Irvin Buckwalter Horst, *The Radical Brethren: Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1972), 116, 134–35.

[14] Sarcerius, *Common places of Scripture*, STC 217752.5, XLIXr-v.

positions that were contrary to orthodox doctrine. The introduction of the Reformation into England brought with it a myriad of theological beliefs that competed for attention, some of which, like Original Sin, were relevant to the theological perception of children. The traditional teaching on Original Sin said that all children were condemned and guilty, needing God's grace of salvation. The condemnation of the Anabaptists and Zwingli on Original Sin illustrates that the introduction of the Reformation into England inadvertently opened the door for discussion on the nature of children, and that some saw these new ideas as a theological threat which could cause great confusion and harm. In publishing Sarcerius' *Common places of Scripture*, Taverner sought to combat some of the doctrinal confusion caused by the English Reformation, and guard against menacing threats such as the Anabaptists who said that Original Sin was not present in young children.

Bishop's Book and King's Book

In June of 1536, the Church of England issued the Ten Articles, its first official doctrinal statement. Written out of a desire to bring order to the diverse opinions that had arisen since Henry VIII's break from Rome, the Ten Articles were a compromise between the English reformers and traditionalists.[15] Thomas Cranmer was a leader in the push for a post-Rome theological statement, and by March of 1536, other bishops had joined in support. The theological statement approved in June was a compromise, a

[15] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 392; Peter Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 44.

reflection of theological innovation and a resistance to the same.[16] The Ten Articles endorsed justification by faith, but also endorsed three sacraments: baptism, penance, and Eucharist.[17] In 1537, *The institution of a Christen man*, more commonly known as the Bishops' Book, was published as an explanation of the Ten Articles for use in teaching, catechizing, and preaching. Once again a compromise between Protestants and traditionalists, the document, though published in September of 1537, never received official royal endorsement.[18]

By 1538, Henry VIII sought to stop the Reformation in England as he believed that Cranmer and others had gone too far. In November of that year, he issued a proclamation that gave Anabaptists and Sacramentaries, those who did not believe in transubstantiation, ten days to leave the country, forbade the importing of English books and Bibles without a license, demanded belief in the real presence and clerical celibacy, and required the observance of church ceremonies.[19] In May of 1539, Parliament passed

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[16] The Ten Articles were a compromise of the Wittenberg Articles, which had been a compromise, by the Lutheran princes, of the Augsburg Confession. With the threat of an imperial invasion, Henry VIII had turned to the Lutheran princes for support who had in turn attempted to use the situation to secure theological concessions. Luther called off negotiations when the English ambassadors who had helped draft the Wittenberg Articles refused to make any more concessions, as they doubted Henry VIII would even approve the Wittenberg Articles. On the passage of the Ten Articles see, Haigh, *English Reformations*, 125–28.

[17] Haigh notes that even the article on justification was compromise of the Lutheran stance on the doctrine. Ibid., 129.

[18] The work actually increased the sacraments to seven, but a concession was made that some sacraments were more sacramental. Henry VIII objected greatly objected to work and provided Cranmer with over 250 corrections, some of which included changes to the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. Ibid., 132–33; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 400-01.

[19] The proclamation was on the day of John Lambert's trial who was accused of denying the real presence. Henry VIII used Lambert as example of his question against heresy. One should also note, also in November, the pope had published his excommunication of Henry VIII and had tasked Cardinal Pole to

the Act of Six Articles which affirmed transubstantiation, withholding of the cup, clerical celibacy, vows of chastity, private masses, and confession. The passage of these articles severely weakened the reforming efforts of Cranmer and others, as many bishops were forced to resign or face imprisonment or worse, death.[20] By 1540, the remaining bishops began to work on Henry VIII's revisions of the Bishops' Book. Completed in 1543, *A necessary doctrine and erudition for any Christian man*, or the King's Book, had royal support, as opposed to the Bishop's Book, and it both rejected justification by faith and defended traditional sacraments.[21]

As an attempt to define and give direction to the English Reformation, the Bishops' Book and the King's Book reveal the theology that the principal authors wanted to affirm and guard against. Both of the Bishops' Book and King's Book affirmed the traditional understanding of Original Sin. In the section on baptism, the Bishops' Book stated that all children were born in Original Sin, "whiche…muste nedes be remytted, whiche canne not be done, but by the sacrament of baptisme."[22] The next reference to children and Original Sin is found in the section on the third petition of the Pater Noster. As a bit of excursus, the Bishops' Book stressed that children take upon themselves the "original and naturall qualities" of their parents. Children, therefore, were born with a natural inclination to sin and though the parents have been cleansed through baptism,

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persuade Francis I of France and Charles V to invade England. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 135–36, 152.; Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 1:270–276.

[20] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 424–25; Haigh, *English Reformations*, 153.

[21] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 152–53, 160–61.

[22] *The institution of a Christen man* (London, 1537), STC 5164, 35r.

"nevertheless the children of them begotten, be conceaued and borne in orginal synne and corruption…. full of chaffe and corruption of original synne, vntyl that by baptisme…they be washed and purged, as theyr parentes were."[23] Though the King's Book was a conservative response to the Bishops' Book, both were in agreement on the state of Original Sin in children. Having been edited from the Bishops' Book, the King's Book contained the same material on the topic. The King's Book, however, merged the Bishops' Book's statements on Original Sin from the section on the third petition into the section on baptism.[24] The way in which the material was consolidated resulted in greater emphasis being placed upon the presence of Original Sin in children, and in denying the teachings of Zwingli and the Anabaptists. The King's Book stressed that children of Christian parents were still guilty and contaminated with Original Sin: "The chyldren of christen men be full chaffe and corruption of original sinne, vntyl that by baptisme, they be washed clensed and purged from the same, as their parentes were."[25] While this statement was essentially the same as found in the Bishops' Book, the King's Book added "of christen men." Both statements must be seen within the context of Reformed theology, specifically Zwingli who argued that children of Christian parents regardless of baptism would be saved because of the promise granted to their parents. The addition of

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[23] Ibid., 84r–84v.

[24] Ibid., 35r, 84r–84v; Henry VIII, *A necessary doctrine and erudition for any Christen man* (London, 1543), STC 5168.7, g4v-h1r.

[25] Henry VIII, *A necessary doctrine*, STC 5168.7, 51r.

"christen men" to the King's Book was a more targeted rebuttal of Zwingli's views.[26] Lutheran theology was more prominent among English Reformers, but they were still aware of Zwinglian theology. In the 1530s, England even had a few Zwinglianists.[27] These statements demonstrate that the English reformers were shaped by and reacted to theology that happened on the continent. No evidence exists that anyone in England at this time held, or at least publically advocated, that the children of Christian parents were not condemned by Original Sin, but even then, the absence of a published work advocating this view does not mean that the English reformers were unaware of this position; in 1537, Cranmer admitted that he had read all the works of Zwingli.[28] These statements from the Bishop's Book and King's Book show that English reformers were aware of this position and feared its introduction into England because it diminished the pervasiveness Original Sin and lessened the need for baptism.

One must also note that both the Bishops' Book and the King's Book in their section on baptism provided a blanket condemnation against Anabaptist doctrine, which was once again equated with the Pelagians. Anabaptists, on the whole, tended to reject the belief that anyone, including children, inherited the guilt of Adam from Original Sin; the emphasis placed upon the Original Sin in the Bishops' and King's Book must also be

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[26] Though the exact dates are unknown, both the King's Book and the Joye's translation of Zwingli's *Declaration of Faith* were pushed in 1543. The authors of the Bishops' Book and King's Book would have been aware of Zwingli's *Declaration of Faith* from the original 1530 Latin edition.

[27] Carrie Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation: Zurich and England, 1531--1558" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2005), 92–123, 232.

[28] Thomas Cranmer, *The Works of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. John Edmund Cox, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846), 342–344; Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation," 99; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (Yale University Press, 1996), 180–181.

seen in this context. While the views of Zwingli and the Anabaptists might not have been widespread in England, these writings show that religious leaders feared that these views could lead to the perception that children were not affected by Original Sin, and thereby might result in a decline in infant baptism. The Bishops' Book and the King's Book, therefore, demonstrates that the religious leaders in England, both the traditionalists and English reformers, viewed these changes in theology as a danger that needed to be combatted so as to protect their children.

George Joye

While both the Bishops' Book and the King's Book's views on children and Original Sin represented the dominant position held by the church, the writings of George Joye (c.1490–1553), bearing the influence of Zwingli, represent the formal vernacular introduction of views that the Bishops' Book and King's Book sought to rebuke. Joye's publications argued that while children bore the corruption of Original Sin, the guilt of Original Sin was not imputed to the children of the elect. Joye was a long supporter and reader of Protestant works. As early as the 1520s, Joye's religious beliefs were brought to the attention of the Henrician government, and his home was searched in 1526 for heretical and prohibited works, but he was saved by the intervention of Stephen Gardiner.[29] By 1528, Joye had fled to Antwerp to escape persecution. Antwerp had long

[29] Stephen Gardiner worked closely under Archbishop Thomas Wolsey. During the early 1520s, a Luther reading society, dubbed "Little Germany," arose at Cambridge to which Joye is thought to have been a member, along with Thomas Arthur, Robert Barnes, Thomas Bliney, John Clark, John Frith, Hugh Latimer, and George Stafford. In 1545, Stephen Gardiner admitted to having been involved in the group, which might explain his protection of Joye in 1526. Haigh notes that this group was probably characterized by strong biblical piety rather than Lutheran theology. By the 1540s, Joye, however, was attacking Gardiner for his conservative approach to church reform. H. L. Parish, "George Joye (1490x95-1553)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004),

been a trading partner with London, and this trade connection proved useful for English Protestants; by 1530s, Antwerp had become a known source for English Protestant publishing.[30] While in exile, Joye produced a number of works, each bearing the influence of the continental reformers. In 1529, he published a non-extant primer that was heavily dependent on Luther, Brunfels, and Bucer. He also produced a number of translations of works by Andreas Osiander, Philip Melanchthon, and Ulrich Zwingli. Through much of the 1530s and 40s, Joye resided in exile on the continent, but he returned to England after the accession of Edward VI and secured ecclesiastical preferments.[31]

In 1546, Joye published *The refutation of the byshop of Winchesters derke declaration of his false articles* (1546).[32] Written as an attack against his onetime defender, Stephen Gardiner, Zwingli's influence is detectable in Joye's discussion on Original Sin.[33] Joye, like Zwingli, rejected the belief that baptism was salvific. Because

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accessed February 9, 2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/15153?docPos=1; C. D. C. Armstrong, "Stephen Gardiner (c. 1495x8-1555)," ed. David Cannadine, *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed March 2, 2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10364; Haigh, *English Reformations*, 58.

[30] Notably, William Tyndale had established Antwerp as his base of operations. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 65–66.

[31] Parish, "George Joye," ODNB.

[32] George Joye, *The refutation of the byshop of Winchesters derke declaration of his false articles* (London, 1546), STC 14828.5.

[33] Joye turned against Gardiner, his onetime defender, after Gardiner's involvement in the execution of Protestant reformer Robert Barnes in 1540. The public controversy between the two began in 1543 with Joye's publication of *George Joye Confuteth Winchesters's False Articles*. Gardiner responded in 1546 with *A Declaration of such True Articles* to which Joye responded with *The refutation of the byshop of Winchesters derke declaration of his false articles* (1546). Parish, "George Joye, ODNB"; Armstrong, "Stephen Gardiner," ODNB.

baptism was only a sign of God's promise of salvation, the rite cannot remove the guilt of Original Sin. Only God can remove the guilt of sin. "First false it is that baptisme with water taketh away the gylte of anye synne. For God only yea and that by Chryst only that taketh a waye the gilte of synne."[34] Joye distinguished between Original Sin and original guilt. As with Zwingli, he argued, citing Romans 5, that the guilt of Original Sin was removed through Christ being the second Adam. "Paule saith playnly that the original synne whiche entred into the worlde by only one man Adam, is taken awaye (he speaketh there, of the gylte) by the grace of God euen by that only one man…Iesus Christ."[35] Original Sin remained, but Joye, however, did not refer to it as an inherited disease. Instead, he employed the classical terminology of concupiscence, and described it "as an euil sead or plant ingraffed in to the nature and soul of man."[36] Like Zwingli, Joye did not believe that children of the elect suffered the guilt of Original Sin. Christ as the second Adam removed the guilt that Original Sin so that it was not "imputed to the chosen infants for their eleccion in Christ, or to the faithful waxen for their faith in Christ," an argument that Zwingli also makes.[37] Joye discussed the guilt and corruption of Original Sin only within the context of children of the elect, unlike Zwingli who extended the benefits of Christ as the second Adam to all children. While Joye never addressed this topic, he published an English translation of Zwingli's *Declaration of Faith* in 1543 and

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[34] Joye, *The Refutation of the Bishop of Wichesters*, STC 14828.5, CLXVIv.

[35] Ibid., CLXVIv.

[36] Ibid., STC 14828.5, CLXVIIr-CLXVIIIr.

[37] Ibid., CLXIIv.

1548 which contained Zwingli's argument that Christ removed the guilt of Original Sin for all children.[38] Furthermore, in his preface to the translation, Joye gave his endorsement to Zwingli's views on Original Sin, stating that the reader "shalt clerely vnderstande…original synne, what it is: & how by christ onely it is done away."[39] Publishing from abroad, Joye's writings demonstrate the fears expressed in Bishops' Book and King's Book, that the theology of continental reformers, while not widespread in England, were making their way into English religious consciousness. In the case of Goerge Joye, his writings and publications demonstrate that some people had begun to think differently about children and Original Sin as a result of the Reformation in England, going as far as to say that children of Christian parents were not condemned by Original Sin.

William Turner

While the denial of original guilt in children did not become widespread in England, the view did gain a small following, or at least the perception of a following, which needed to be refuted. This fear is especially seen in during the Edwardian Reformation when the political climate was more favorable to Protestants. The repealing of Henry VIII's anti-heresy laws meant that radical theology, such as the rejection of original guilt, became noticeable enough, or at least its potential, to prompt attempts to

[38] Huldrych Zwingli, *The rekening and declaracio[n] of the faith* (Antwerp, 1543), STC 26138; Huldrych Zwingli, *The rekenynge and declaracion of the fayth* (London, 1548), STC 26139, b1r-b5r.

[39] Zwingli, *The rekenynge and declaracion of the fayth*, STC 26139, a2v.

suppress it.[40] In 1551, William Turner (1509/10–1568) published *A perseruatiue, or triacle, agaynst the poyson of Pelagius lately renued, & styrred up again, by the furious secte of the Annabaptistes*.[41] While at Cambridge, Turner became associated with the Protestant contingent. In 1536, he took Deacon Orders, but in 1540, displaying his Protestant sympathies, Turner married Jane Alder. By 1541, Turner fled England, eventually residing in Zurich where he was greatly influenced by the teachings of Zwingli, Bucer, and Bullinger.[42] Upon Henry VIII's death, Turner returned to England serving as Somerset's physician, but struggled to secure ecclesiastical advancement, finally being ordained a priest in 1552.[43] Published during his period of favorability, *A perseruatiue, or triacle* was written against a non-extant manuscript of Robert Cooche which rejected Original Sin and argued against infant baptism.[44] Cooche's manuscript was never published, but appears to have circulated.[45] *A perseruatiue, or triacle*

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[40] Edward VI's reign saw an influx of religious immigrants as a result of the increased persecution on the Continent and the relaxing of anti-heresy laws in England. Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation," 288–89.

[41] William Turner, *A perseruatiue, or triacle, agaynst the poyson of Pelagius lately renued, & styrred up again, by the furious secte of the Annabaptistes* (London, 1551), STC 24368.

[42] While abroad, Turner received medical training which he used to support him and his family. Whitney R. D. Jones, "William Turner (1509/10-1568)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed July 15, 2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27874.

[43] In 1553, Mary I assumed the throne causing the now ordained Turner to flee England once again. Ibid.

[44] *A Perseruatiue, or Triacle* was one of eleven works published by Protestants during the Edwardian Reformation that specifically sought to combat the threat of Anabaptism Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation," 290–94.

[45] William Kellie Saffady, "Heresy and Popular Protestantism in England, 1527-1553" (Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1971), 68–69.

extensively quotes Cooche, providing the only source of his beliefs, and serves as the only direct evidence of the rejection of infant baptism in England during this time.[46] *A perseruatiue, or triacle* also testifies to the growing concern about Anabaptism in England, and the implications that it had on the perception of children. While the movement was never sizeable in England, Anabaptism had remained underground since Henry VIII, but the movement had been supplemented with new refugees from the Netherlands. As such Anabaptism was viewed as a threat that needed to be countered. [47] This fear is striking given that there is little evidence of rebaptism in England at this time. Despite its status as a small minority movement, the presence or perceived presence of Anabaptism engendered fear.

Turner accused Cooche of being an Anabaptist; however, no evidence exists that the latter was ever rebaptized or separated from the Church of England.[48] Though he held dissenting opinions, Cooche was never officially censured, possibly due to his connections. Cooche was well educated and held various religious appointments in the royal household, eventually serving as a singer in Elizabeth I's chapel.[49] Nevertheless, by

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[46] Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation," 292.

[47] Peter Marshall notes that one of the reasons for the founding of the London Stranger Church was to police immigrants for heresies such as Anabaptism. Horst, *The Radical Brethern*, 89–99; Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642*, 88.

[48] For the purposes of this study, an Anabaptist is defined as one who rejected infant baptism for believer's baptism, and put the belief into practice. Saffady, "Heresy and Popular Protestantism in England, 1527-1553," 69–70.

[49] Based on a letter from Peter Martyr to Cooche, Pearse argues that Cooche was quote knowledgeable in the patristics and church history. Cooche had written to Martyr about infant baptism. Martyr in his response chose not to address the scriptural arguments, but Cooche's historical ones. Michael T. Pearse, "Robert Cooche and Anabaptist Ideas in Sixteenth-Century England," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 67 (1993): 337–39, 342–43; Peter Martyr, *The Common Places* (London, 1583), STC 24669, 113-15.

1575, Cooche appears to have renounced some of his radical beliefs, as evidenced by a letter from Bishop Parkhurst of Norwich to Rudolf Gwalther in Zurich.[50]

Turner set out in *A perseruatiue, or triacle*, which was comprised 104 leaves, to address two beliefs of Cooche: the rejection of Original Sin and infant baptism. Turner connected the rejection of these doctrines to Pelagianism, and Pelagianism to Anabaptism. Turner described Pelagianism as a seven headed hydra from which came seven heresies. "For as out of one bodye rose seuen heads: So out of Pelagius rose vp these seuen sects: Anabaptistes, Adamites, Loykenistes, Libertines, Swengfeldianes, Dauidianes, and the spoylers."[51] Turner viewed just one person holding Pelagian doctrines as a danger to the masses. "One man should runne into ieopardy, then that many thousands should haue ben poisoned with the pyson of Pelagius."[52] Before *A perseruatiue, or triacle*, he first presented a lecture in Isleworth "against two of the opinions of Pelagius: namely against that childer have no original sin, & that they oughte not to be baptised."[53] From Turner's account, within a few weeks of his lecture, Cooche's manuscript began to circulate, presumably among the disciples Turner claimed

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[50] Pearse, "Robert Cooche and Anabaptist Ideas," 337, 342–43, 348; Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641): History and Criticism*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 63; Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641): Illustrative Documents*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 7–8.

[51] Turner, *A Perseruatiue, or Triacle*, STC 24368, a2r, a3v.

[52] Ibid., a3r.

[53] Pearse argues that Cooche's disciples were probably a non-separating group, in the tradition of the Lollards, that met for conventicles. Pearse, "Robert Cooche and Anabaptist Ideas," 342–43; Turner, *A Perseruatiue, or Triacle*, STC 24368, a3r, g6v-g7r, i4v.

Cooche possessed, which then prompted Turner to publish *A perseruatiue, or triacle*.[54] These events reveal that the English Reformation brought changes in how children were being viewed and though they were held by a small minority, some saw these changes as a growing threat.

While Cooche's manuscript has been lost, his beliefs about Original Sin can be reconstructed from Turner's quotes, though only partially on account of the polemical nature of *A perseruatiue, or triacle.* Based on Turner's quotations, Cooche rejected Original Sin because the doctrine was not found in Scripture. "Is the matter of origynall synne no part of scripture? You do holde that there is none at all, and therefore that the childer need no, nother ought to be baptysed, vntyll they be xiiij yeare olde: before which tyme, they haue done many actual synnes, whiche hadde need to be wasshed awaye, wyth the bath of baptime."[55] Cooche appeared to have argued against Original Sin based partly on account of Jesus calling the little children to himself (Matt. 18.15-16).

> If Christe had counted infantes so defiled with Adames sinne, as ye do: he wold nuer hue sent his Apostelles & vs vnto childe rot be defyled of them. But now he sendeth vs thither for clennes, to becum as they ar, if we wold entre into the kingdom of God…that we shuld be ful of innoce[n]cie & simplicitie. For it is write[n]: except ye conuert & becum as these infants ye shall not entre in to the kyngdom of heuenes.[56]

For Cooche, the imitating of children was incompatible with the presence of Original Sin in them. Christ called Christians to imitate the innocence and simplicity of children to

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[54] Turner, *A Perseruatiue, or Triacle*, STC 24368, a3r.

[55] Ibid., h5r–h5v.

[56] Ibid., n2r.

enter the kingdom of heaven; therefore, no sin, even Original Sin could be present in children.

According to Turner, Cooche's rejection of Original Sin was also an extension of the rejection of infant baptism. "But nowe I saye, that all the worlde hath synned, and is defyled in Ada[m]. Howe nowe, wyll water scoure awaye the fylthe of thps corruption? No. It is a wounde, recieued in the soule, and is washed away, but wyth only faith in the bloude of Christe."[57] In the quote provided by Turner, Cooche noticeably did not use the term Original Sin. Instead, he used the term corruption. While Turner's quoting of Cooche causes ambiguity, it was possible that Cooche believed that humanity received an inherited corruption from Adam, but not an inherited guilt that would condemn adults or children. Traditional theology said that baptism removed Original Sin, and it was this understanding of baptism Cooche rejected. Original Sin did not exist, so baptism was not needed. Furthermore, only faith in Christ could remove sin, not baptism, and since children cannot have faith, they should not be baptized. Cooche's views are, of course, viewed through the lens of Turner, and thus possibly had a more nuanced argument for lack of Original Sin in children. The important thing to note is that within England there were some people who viewed children as not having Original Sin, which was a sharp break from traditional theology, and demonstrates how the introduction of the Reformation into affected people's perception of children.

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[57] Ibid., h8v. Through an exchange of letters, Cooche, whose side of the exchange is now lost, had previously debated Peter Martyr on infant baptism in 1550. The letter briefly mentions Original Sin. Based on this letter, I. B. Horst states that Cooche had already questioned the doctrine of Original Sin. Michael T. Pearse, however, theorizes that the exchange with Martyr was what prompted to Cooche to deny Original Sin, based on the quote "if you admit Originall sinne to be in children, and yet will not permit them to be baptised, you are not of Origens iudgement…" Horst, *The Radical Brethern*, 115; Pearse, "Robert Cooche and Anabaptist Ideas," 341; Martyr, *The Common Places*, STC 24669, 113-15.

Turner, in turn, argued for the presence of Original Sin in all people, including children. He rejected Cooche's argument that children were without Original Sin because Christ called Christians to follow them. "So maye we folowe childer as they folowe Christe in humilite and lowliness, and yet their humilite doth not, poue they are cleare fro[m] original synne." Turner viewed Cooche's argument as being based primarily on the observable state of children, their humility and actual sin. For those who opposed the views of Cooche and similar movements like the Anabaptists, their arguments must have appeared to be based solely on what was observed in infants and young children, their humility and innocence, and not on scripture.

Turner believed that Cooche's rejection of Original Sin and infant baptism entailed logical fallacies which led to the condemnation of all children. Turner stressed that infants needed baptism to remove Original Sin. The water, however, did not remove sin, which Cooche accused Turner of believing, but "GOD purgeth and scourth them from it in theyr infancie…accordi[n]g vnto his promise….therfor the sacrament of baptim shuld be offered vnto them, as a synge, and seale of saluation…."[58] Turner's view of baptism appears close to Calvin's understanding, but Turner, in opposition to Cooche's claims, also believed that infants possessed faith, a position supported by Luther, but not Calvin. Cooche had claimed Original Sin did exist and that sin could only be removed by faith in Christ, so infants were not to be baptized. Turner, on the other hand, affirmed Original Sin and the need of baptism to remove it which was made effective through faith which children could possess.

[58] Turner, *A Perseruatiue, or Triacle*, STC 24669, n1r-n1v.

In Turner's eyes, if Cooche believed that children could not have faith then by Cooche's own admission children were unbelievers, and thus were condemned. "Here vpon it maye be gathered, that ye are of thys opynyon, that all children are in the state of dampnatyo[n]: and that, yf they dye, they are all dampned."[59] Turner stated concerning Cooche's beliefs, "It foloweth of your saeyenge: that ye are of that opynyon that all the chyldre[n] which dyed, sence the begynnynge of the worlde, vnto thys daye, dyed vnpurged from the fylth of the soule, and without forgyuenes of origynall synne."[60] To wait until the age of fourteen for baptism would mean that the child would "have done many actuall synnes, whyche hadde need to be washed awaye, wyth the bath of baptime."[61] Michael T. Pearse in his discussion on Turner's view of infant faith notes that Turner seemed unable to recognize that Cooche's rejection of Original Sin and denial of faith in infants did not necessitate condemnation on Cooche's part.[62] While Turner did not provide any quotes from Cooche, the possibility exists that Cooche believed that all infants would be saved. If infants do not have Original Sin and if Christians needed to become as infants "ful of innoce[n]cie & simplicitie" to enter the kingdom of heaven then, then by virtue of Cooche's reasoning, infants being "ful of innoce[n]cie & simplicitie" would not be damned, but upon death would enter heaven. For Turner, the notion that children were innocent not only of actual sin, but also Original Sin and thus

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[59] Ibid., i1v–i2r.

[60] Ibid., i1r.

[61] Ibid., h5v. Pearse notes that Turner's statements about baptism and sin appeared, at times, very close to *ex opere operato*. Pearse, "Robert Cooche and Anabaptist Ideas," 346.

[62] Pearse, "Robert Cooche and Anabaptist Ideas," 346.

did not need baptism was dangerous. Cooche's beliefs would condemn all children to suffering and damnation. Turner and Cooche illustrate the tension wrought by the introduction of the Reformation into England. Presumably, Cooche had an argument for the salvation of children. Turner, on the other hand, could not accept the rejection of Original Sin. Cooche's beliefs might have appeared favorable at first, but for Turner, logically they meant that children were condemned from the beginning of time. Moreover, Turner feared that under Cooche's beliefs people would assume that children were without sin, deny them baptism, and in doing so leave their children under condemnation.

For Turner the rejection of infant baptism and Original Sin equaled Anabaptism, and Anabaptism was a child of Pelagianism. As Cooche's manuscript has been lost, his beliefs supplied only by Turner's selective quoting can only partially and cautiously be reconstructed. The quotations provided by Turner provide merely a glimpse into Cooche's theology.[63] Cooche's rejection of Original Sin and infant baptism are significant for they show how the English Reformation influenced the perception of children. The conflict between Turner and Cooche also illustrates the way in which the English Reformation caused concern. Beliefs such as the rejection of Original Sin was not a new belief, but an ancient heresy. The practice of connecting an opponent to an ancient heretical group was common in the sixteenth century, but the practice also reveals the fears of the English reformers.[64] The reform of the English church was needed, but

[63] Horst, *The Radical Brethern*, 116–17.

[64] Anabaptists were regularly accused of being Donatists and Pelagianists. This polemical practice also extended beyond opposition to Anabaptists. In the late sixteenth century, Puritans accused Separatists

one had to be alert because it could lead to the reemergence of old heretical beliefs. For Turner, Cooche was an Anabaptist, and thus a Pelagian. Turner could accept the idea that infants had faith, a result of the Reformation, but he could not accept the rejection of Original Sin or baptism. The English Reformation affected the perception of children, but the changes caused by it also created tension. For Turner and others, the ideas such as those expressed by Cooche were not new, but long-established heretical beliefs that neglected the teachings of scripture and placed children at risk.

Cramner's Catechism and the Forty-Two Articles

As has been seen, competing ideas about children and Original Sin were making their way into England. Some these changes were connected to the influence of Zwingli on the English Reformation, while others stemmed from a growing fear of Anabaptism. The belief that all bore the guilt of Original Sin and thus deserved punishment was a fundamental doctrine shared virtually by all in Western Christianity. The argument put forth by Zwingli and the Anabaptists that children were not condemned by Original Sin was radical. While its foothold was small in England, this change in doctrine and status of children brought significant concerns. During the Edwardian Reformation, attempts to combat these changes are seen in the publication of two official documents, Thomas Cranmer's *Catechism* and the Forty-Two Articles.

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of being Donatists. David Wright, ed., *Studies in Christian History and Thought : Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective : Collected Studies* (Milton Keynes, GB: Paternoster, 2007), 212–225; Klaassen, "Sin and Fear"; Nischan, "The Exorcism Controversy and Baptism in the Late Reformation," 47–50; Jesse Hoover, "'They Bee Full Donatists': The Rhetoric of Donatism in Early Separatist Polemics," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 15 (July 2013): 154–176.

In 1548, Thomas Cranmer published *Catechism*, which was a translation of a work published in Nuremberg in 1533 by Andreas Osiander who had composed it as a series of sermons for children based on Luther's *Small Catechism*.[65] The work became very popular in Germany and was translated into Latin by Justus Jonas, which served as the basis for the English translation.[66] Ambiguity exists as to the extent that Cranmer was actually involved in the adaptation, but he assigned his name to the work and dedicated it to his godson, Edward VI.[67] Going through three editions by the end of 1548, the work also shows signs of a hasty adaptation to the English audience, as the *Catechism* endorsed Real Presence, which Cranmer later would have to defend, and a positive view of images that Cranmer did not share.[68] While the *Catechism* might not accurately reflect Cranmer's theology, the attachment of his name to the work created this perception and its theology influenced English thought. The *Catechism* also served as an attempt by Cranmer to rein in the diversity of theological opinions.[69] Highly controversial and short lived, the

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[65] See Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 193–201.

[66] Cranmer could have been aware of the work from several sources. In 1532, Cranmer was in Nuremburg and could have discussed it with Osiander, who officiated Cranmer's marriage to Osiander's niece, Margarete. In 1547, Jonas' son, Justus Jonas, had arrived in England and by the spring of 1548, was being shown hospitality Cranmer. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 70–72, 386–87.

[67] MacCulloch notes that the *Catechism* was the only purely Lutheran work to have any official place in the English Reformation. Ibid., 387.

[68] Images and Real Presence were source of the controversy that surrounded the *Catechism* and what prompted the three editions of the work. Ibid., 387–89. See also, D. G. Selwyn, "A Neglected Edition of Cranmer's Catechism," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 15 (1964): 76–90; Lynn Diane Durbin, "Education by Catechism: Development of the Sixteenth Century English Catechism" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1987), 102-03.

[69] I. M. Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), 78.

Catechism was supposed to set forth the official doctrines of the English Church, and the rushed nature of the work testifies to the importance that Cranmer placed on defining doctrine so as to guard against dangerous opinions such as those espoused by Anabaptists.

In keeping with Lutheran thought, the *Catechism* endorsed the traditional understanding of Original Sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, they fell from original justice and became corrupted. This corruption was then passed on to their children as all parents do with their children: "If the father and mother be infected with the leprie, we se commonly that the children borne between them haue the same disease: So lykewyseas our first parents Adam and Eve."[70] The *Catechism* rejected the Zwinglian and Anabaptist belief that infants and young children were innocent. Not even in the womb are children free from sin. When a child is hungry, cold, thirsty, they cry impatiently, exemplifying their sin. The *Catechism* made a direct appeal against the logic that says that since young children are incapable of actual sin, they are sinless. "Let not the sayinges of certen vnlearned persons moue you, whiche affirme that infants and suche as be vndre ye yeres of discretion, are pure, innocent, and cleane without sinne. For this opinion is not true, nor agreeable to holye scripture."[71] Reason might say that children were sinless because they were incapable of actual sin, but reason cannot be trusted. The human mind cannot "comprehende how infantes should be synners, by reason of lusts and desiers," but one must trust in the Word of God, "whiche euidently declareth vnto vs, that concupiscence is

[70] Thomas Cranmer, *Catechismus* (London, 1548), STC 5993, q4v-q5r.

[71] Ibid., m5r–m5v.

synne."[72] Most likely, this was an argument against Zwingli, who had declared that Original Sin did not condemn children, at least children of the elect. Children might be unable to commit actual sin, but they were still under condemnation because the corruption of Original Sin was within them. If children were sinless, then they would not need baptism, an argument that was meant to address how Zwingli's belief could possibly lead to Anabaptism.[73] While *Catechism* contained sections that Cranmer did not endorse, such as images, or which caused controversy, like the Real Presence in the Eucharist, Cranmer found the work useful for guiding and protecting the Church of England against the diversity of opinions developing, including those affecting the theological perception of children.

In 1553, the Church of England issued the Forty-Two Articles. Cranmer had been working on them since 1551, and in September of 1552, they were submitted to the Privy Council.[74] They received royal assent on June of 1553, less than a month before Edward VI's death, with the expectation that all clergy would subscribe to them.[75] The Forty-Two Articles were not meant to be a comprehensive theological statement, but were intended to provide compromise and ambiguity for English reformers on matters like

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[72] Ibid., m6r–m6v.

[73] Ibid., m5v–m6r.

[74] Cranmer had adapted the articles from the abandoned 1538 agreement with the Lutherans. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 180.

[75] MacCulloch has noted that as early as 1549 Cranmer was requiring all new preachers and theological teachers to subscribe to a set of doctrinal articles. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 543; Haigh, *English Reformations*, 180.

predestination and the Eucharist.[76] The Forty-Two Articles were also meant to combat beliefs and practices of Catholics and Anabaptists. Carrie Euler notes that the Forty-Two Articles devoted about equal space to refuting Catholic and Anabaptists beliefs. In some cases, Anabaptist beliefs were listed directly, such as in the articles on Original Sin and the denial of the community of goods, while others were indirect, such as articles on the Trinity, the definition of blasphemy, divine calling of ministers, the Testaments, government, and the swearing of oaths.[77]

In direct opposition to Anabaptist beliefs, the Forty-Two Articles rejected Original Sin as merely an inclination to sin, and as seen previously, connected Anabaptism to Pelagianism. "Original Sinne standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pellagianes doe vainelie talke, whiche also the Anabaptistes do now a daies renne."[78] Rather, Original Sin was the fault and corruption of every descendant of Adam so that all deserve condemnation. "It is the fault, and corruption of the nature of every manne…so that the fleshe desireth always contrarie to the spirit, and therefore in every persone borne into this world, it deserveth Goddes wrath and damnation."[79] Generally, Anabaptists taught that Original Sin did not condemn, but only actual sin. As such, children were

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[76] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 180–81.

[77] Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation," 304-06; Carrie Euler, "Anabaptism and Anti-Anabaptism in the Early English Reformation: Defining Protestant Hersey and Orthodoxy during the Reign of Edward VI," in *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture*, ed. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 43.

[78] Church of England, *Articles agreed on by the bishoppes, and other learned menne in the synode at London* (London, 1553), STC 10034.2, a3r.

[79] Ibid., a3v.

innocent, though corrupted, and if they died before the age of reason would be saved by virtue of Christ's mercy.

In arguing for the influence of Zwingli on English Reformation, Euler notes the similarity between the Original Sin in Forty-Two Articles and Zwingli's view, citing the description of Original Sin as a "corruption of nature" and "infection of nature" that remained after baptism.[80] The Forty-Two Articles, however, did not merely describe Original Sin as an inherited corruption or infection, but also as an inherited guilt from Adam.[81] "It is the fault, & corruption of the nature of every manne that naturalie is engendered of the offspring of Adam."[82] Furthermore, the Forty-Two Articles affirmed the necessity of baptism for Original Sin, a position incongruous with Zwingli's thought. While Zwingli might have had some influence on Forty-Two Articles, by affirming an inherited guilt present in all people, the Forty-Two Articles more closely resembled the traditional understanding of Original Sin. They thus directly condemned the Anabaptist view and the indirectly rejected the Zwinglian view.

Followers of Zwingli and Anabaptism were not sizeable in England, but there was concern about their presence and influence. The English Reformation affected the perception of children and Original Sin. The effect, however, appeared to be one of fear, nurtured partly by theological controversies on the continent and partly by the presence

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[80] Euler notes that when the Forty-Two Articles were translated into Swiss-German, the translator used Zwingli's word for original sin, *präst* Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation," 267; Church of England, *Articles agreed on by the bishoppes*, STC 10034.2, a3v.

[81] In speaking of how Original Sin was propagated through intercourse, Erasmus also referred to Original Sin a "contagion & infection." Desiderius Erasmus, *A playne and godly exposytion or declaration of the co[m]mune crede* (London, 1533), STC 10504, h7r.

[82] Church of England, *Articles agreed on by the bishoppes*, STC 10034.2, a3r-v.

of a minority movement in England. The unintended consequences of the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, in the eyes of many, was the rise of ancient heretical movements. For many of the English reformers, the rejection of Original Sin was a Pelagian view that threatened the spiritual life of children. By stressing that Original Sin was an inherited guilt and corruption that condemned everyone, the Forty-Two Articles rejected the Anabaptist and Zwinglian views of Original Sin, and guarded against a theological change in the perception of children.

Baptism

Medieval theology said that baptism was necessary for salvation. Before baptism, children were guilty of Original Sin and outside the grace of God. When Protestantism entered England, the doors for the theological discussion of baptism were opened. As the Lutheran and Reformed theologies of baptism infiltrated the English theological mindset, they challenged and affirmed the spiritual status of children and the necessity of the rite, and as before, many of these were often written in response to Anabaptism.

Lutheran Theology: Richard Taverner and Lancelot Ridley

Many of the Protestant writings published early in the English Reformation were Lutheran in origin. These works retained infant baptism, but they also displayed a tension between justification by faith and infant baptism, while also addressing the perceived threat of Anabaptism. Taverner's translations of Philip Melanchthon's *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* and Lancelot Ridley's commentary on Ephesians demonstrate how Protestant writers affirmed and challenged the traditional understanding of baptism, while also seeking to guard against Anabaptist beliefs.

In his explanation of the ninth article of the *Augsburg Confession*, Melanchthon affirmed the importance and necessity of baptism for salvation. He stated that through baptism the grace of God was offered and received, the recipient being forgiven of sins. Moreover, Melanchthon emphasized that baptism belongs to children, and "is not in vayne, but necessarye and effectuall to saluation."[83] No direct attempt, however, was made to reconcile the baptism of children and the necessity of baptism for salvation with the belief that one is only justified by faith, a topic to which Melanchthon previously had devoted significant attention.[84] However, in expounding upon the number and use of the sacraments, Melanchthon stated that through word and ceremony God moves and stirs "the hertes to believe and to gather faith," the implication being that God gives faith to children.[85] Outside of the tension between infant baptism and justification by faith, these statements on infant baptism would not be incongruous with Catholic teaching. They affirmed the necessity of baptism for salvation and right of children to baptism. For the Catholic laity who heard or read Melanchthon on baptism, his teachings might not have been that objectionable, and thus his teachings did not directly challenge the traditional theological perception of children.

Melanchthon's writings on baptism, however, do testify to the growing concern about Anabaptism. Though the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* was not written for an English audience, Traverner in translating and publishing it contributed to and

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[83] Melanchthon, *The Confessyon of the Fayth*, STC 908, j2r.

[84] Ibid., b2v–d3r.

[85] Ibid., n5v.

reinforced the fear of Anabaptism in England. Melanchthon focused significant attention on affirming the practice of infant baptism against the Anabaptists. Through this negation, the English audience was exposed to a more radical theological picture of children, which also reminded Taverner's English audience of the potential danger of Reformation for theology and children. Melanchthon decried the Anabaptists as a "wicked and sedicious" faction of robbers and thieves, but he especially condemned that "they dispute the baptisme of chyldren to be vnprofitable."[86] Following the rejection of infant baptism to its logical conclusion in his theology, if children are not baptized then they are outside the church of Christ, for "where is neither the worde, neither sacramentes. For the kyngdome of Christ hath the beinge only with the worde and sacraments."[87] Only by receiving baptism are children given the promise of salvation, which comes through the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Melanchthon warned his readers that if the baptism of children was void then "shuld none be saued, and finally there shuld be no churche at all."[88] In denying infant baptism, Anabaptists have placed children outside the church, condemning them to damnation. While Melanchthon was not endorsing the Anabaptists, he provided a voice to their position even if it did not faithfully represent Anabaptist thought. Through the work, English laity were reminded of the necessity of baptism, but were also warned and encouraged to be watchful for a seditious group that showed no regard to the spiritual wellbeing of their children, placing

[86] Ibid., j2r.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., j2v.

them outside salvation and the Kingdom of God. The English reformers acknowledged that there were groups that had arisen that posed a theological threat, one that affected the spiritual lives of their children.

As the Reformation continued in England, works from English reformers increasingly addressed the topic of baptism and children as they sought to move the population away from the Catholic understanding of baptism, while also guarding against the threat of Anabaptism. In 1540, Lancelot Ridley published his commentary on Ephesians in which he argued for the necessity of baptism for salvation, provided a solution to the tension of justification by faith and infant baptism, and warned against the dangers of Anabaptism. A writer of several commentaries, Ridley received his Doctor of Theology from Cambridge in 1540/41, and Cranmer consecrated him as one of the six preachers of Canterbury Cathedral in 1541.[89]

Ridley's commentary on Ephesians displayed a Lutheran influence as he denounced Anabaptism, affirmed justification by faith, and argued for infant faith. He described children as being born in sin, who "shall be damned yf they be nat clensed from theyr synne."[90] Ridley, wanting to affirm the cleansing of sin through baptism while distancing himself from the belief that the water had salvific properties, emphasizes the idea that God cleanses one of sin by using the water of baptism made effective through the word of God. For Ridley, the denial of baptism to children allowed children to remain

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[89] W. A. Shaw, "Lancelot Ridley (d. 1576)," ed. B. Harrison and H. C. G. Matthew, rev. Jason Yiannikkou (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed March 1, 2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23629.

[90] Lancelot Ridley, *A commentary in Englyshe vpon Sayncte Paules Epystle to the Ephesyans* (London, 1540), STC 21038, m4v.

under condemnation. "Children must nedes be christened or ells they can nat be saued."[91] This theme was repeatedly emphasized by Ridley as he sought to counter the rejection of infant baptism by Anabaptists, "a deuyllisshe and a damnable heresye worthy of great punishment."[92] If baptism is needed for salvation, then children need to be baptized. Only by receiving Christ through baptism are children saved. Luther privately believed that baptism was not necessary for salvation, but Ridley greatly emphasized its necessity as a counter to Anabaptism. One the chief fears concerning Anabaptism in England seems to be that the movement would result in the spiritual endangerment of children if it were permitted to gain a foothold.

Ridley thus reinforced the cultural belief in the necessity of baptism for the salvation of children, but he also affirmed justification by faith. Unlike Melanchthon, Ridley sought to resolve the tension between the requirement of faith and the baptism of children. Like Luther, Ridley's response was in reaction to the claims of Anabaptists who questioned the ability of infants and children to have faith. First, he cited Matthew 19 where Jesus calls the children to himself to illustrate that God loved children and that they had faith. In his reasoning, the only way to please God was through faith; therefore, the children in Matthew 19 must have had faith. "Here is tokens that God loued these children, that they please him, and that they had faith, for with out faith no man can please God. Hebru. 11."[93] Anabaptists claimed that faith comes through hearing the word

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[91] Ibid., m5r.

[92] Ibid., m4r.

[93] Ibid., m6r.

of God, but children are unable to hear and understand so they cannot have faith. To this argument, Ridley responds by arguing that children do not have faith by hearing, but by the infusion of the Holy Spirit, a statement in keeping with Luther's argument of infant faith. Citing Ephesians 2, Ridley added that faith is a gift and work of God and as such God can give it to children. "Who shulde let God to gyue his gyftes where he wyll, seynge faythe is the gyft of God….He maye gyue faith aswell to children as to olde men."[94] Even if children cannot express their faith in the same way as an old man, that does not mean that they have no faith. God gives faith to whomever God wills and so God has chosen to give faith to children, as illustrated in Jesus calling the children to himself.

The writings of Melanchthon and Ridley demonstrate the ways in which Lutheran theology influenced English thought, both affirming and challenging the traditional understanding of baptism. In both writings, baptism was necessary for salvation, but the authors also affirmed justification by faith. Traditionally, children had been passive recipients of the rite, but now faith was required for sin to be forgiven. Melanchthon indirectly affirmed infant faith, whereas Ridley directly appealed to infant faith. In both cases, the authors presented children as having the ability to have faith despite their lack of reason. These works also testified to the growing fear of Anabaptism in England. Anabaptism was more prominent on the continent, and Melanchthon's work was written to address the theological concerns raised by them, but what happened on the continent affected English Protestantism. The vernacular publication of *Apology of the Augsburg*

[94] Ibid., m8r.

Confession reinforced the idea that Anabaptists were theologically dangerous. Melanchthon was an external influence on the theological perception of children in England, while Ridley was an internal influence. Both authors presented their comments on children and baptism in the context of the threat of Anabaptism. By affirming the necessity of infant baptism, they reinforced the belief that Anabaptists, in denying infant baptism, placed children in spiritual danger.

Reformed Theology: George Joye and John Calvin

While the Lutheran writings of Melanchthon and Ridley challenged the traditional understanding of children and baptism, they both reinforced the belief in the necessity of baptism for children to be saved. Reformed works published during the Henrician and Edwardian Reformation offered a different view of children and baptism, which increasingly became the dominant view of the Church of England during the reign of Edward. These works argued that children did not need baptism to be included among God's people, but that they received baptism because they already were members. Baptism was not necessary for salvation, but it was a sign and seal of God's promise of salvation to the children of Christian parents.

As with his writings on Original Sin, George Joye's view of baptism was shaped by Zwingli. In his 1541 *A frutefull treatis of baptisme and the Lordis Super of the vse and effect*, Joye stated that baptism was the sign of God's promise of salvation and was in no way salvific, as it testified to God's promise that whoever believes will be saved. "Here is a promyse of our saluacion, not for because we be baptized with water for then shulde we

be saued by the creature of water and not by Crist."[95] As Joye did not believe that Original Sin condemned anyone, he made no mention of baptism cleansing the recipient of Original Sin. Instead, Joye described baptism as external and internal. Externally, baptism testified to the promise of salvation; internally, baptism was the regeneration of the individual by the Holy Spirit through faith in the promise. Joye places greater emphasis on the external baptism, stressing that it teaches Christians through the death, burial, and resurrection to deny their sin, choosing to live a life of repentance. "The effecte of baptyme…is the dethe, buryall and resurreccion of Crist to be exercised and practyzed in vs…the perpetual mortifiyng of our flesshe and of our olde man."[96] For Joye, as for Zwingli, outward baptism was the promise before God to forsake sin and the devil, and to cleave unto God, seeking to live a holy life.[97] Previous authors had stressed the importance of baptism for salvation, but this emphasis was not present in Joye's thought because baptism did not ensure the spiritual safety of the child.

To argue that baptism was not necessary for salvation was a radical assertion, especially when many people feared for the lives of their newborn children, rushing to have them baptized. In *A frutefull treatis of baptisme and the Lordis Souper*, Joye never directly stated that the children were baptized *because of* circumcision, but he did

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[95] George Joye, *A frutefull treatis of baptyme and the Lordis Souper of the vse and effect of them* (Antwerp, 1541), STC 24217, 6r.

[96] In the course of this discussion, Joye uses the term penance and repentance, but does not directly repudiate the former, choosing to reinterpret the term to fit the Protestant understanding of the latter. He first says that the denial of sin is "our perpetual penance," then "repentance therefore is the perpetual mortifying," and finally, that "penance therefore is repentance of our synnes with a changing of our former lyfe into newe and better lyving." Ibid., 10R.

[97] Ibid., 12L.

repeatedly connect baptism and circumcision. For Joye, infant baptism was a foregone conclusion. Children received circumcision as a sign of God's promise; therefore, of course, children now receive baptism as a sign of the promise. If however, baptism was the sign of the promise, but the rite itself was not salvific, what happens to children if they die? Joye directly addresses this issue of "children dying before baptisme with water or aftyr," specifically if children "ere they by hearing the exterior worde conceyve faith be saued or no."[98] Following Zwingli, Joye stated that children of the elect were participants in the God's promise of salvation. "Therfore euery Christen mans chylde contayned vnder the same promise and by goddis eleccion saued, dye it before or after baptisme in his infancye."[99] Like Zwingli, Joye's argument was based on a correlation of circumcision with baptism. God promised to be the God of Abraham and his children and so now this promise extends to the children of Christians. Faith brought forth through the Word is required for baptism to be made effective, but if children died before the rite, they were saved through divine election. While Joye did not go as far as Zwingli in extending salvation even to the children of the non-elect, the appearance of such statements in his 1554 book marks him as one of the first to acknowledge the possibility of infant salvation *sans* baptism in England.

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[98] Ibid., 9L.Joye's position is similar to Cooche, and it is possible that Cooche had read Joye, but because Cooche's document has been lost, a connection between the two men cannot be definitively established.

[99] Ibid.

Joye continued these arguments and expanded upon them in *The refutation of the byshop of Winchesters derke declaration of his false articles* (1546).[100] Written as an attack against his onetime defender, Stephen Gardiner, Zwingli's influence is also detectable in this work. Once again, Joye stressed the salvation of elect children, a topic that was even listed in the work's table of contents. He criticized the Catholic teaching that children who die without baptism are condemned. "Children by your popish doctrine, that dye before baptime, and the infants in Moses laws diying before the aight day, shulde be dampned as ye tech, which is hard to prove, when the scripture is plain agenst you."[101] As Joye declared in his earlier work, the washing of water was the external baptism and a sign of the promise, "testifienge to the congregation that he is incorpored into them."[102] Internal baptism was the regeneration brought by the Holy Spirit through faith. Notably, Joye left ambiguity as to whether these were children of Christian parents or not. He only maked the statements: "the chosen infantes conteined vnder promise" and that children were "withoute circumcision and baptisme of water saued by election."[103] Joye could be operating under the previous assumption of children of the elect or he could be reflecting Zwingli's more generous proclamation of salvation to all children. Previous authors, in response to the threat of Anabaptism, stressed the importance of baptism for the salvation of children. Even though they argued that one can only be justified by faith, they still

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[100] Joye, *The Refutation of the Bishop of Wichesters*, STC 14828.5.

[101] Ibid., CLXIIr.

[102] Ibid., CLXIIv.

[103] Ibid., CLXIv.

affirmed that without baptism a child would be condemned to hell. Joye criticized Catholics for stating that unbaptized children were condemned, but in doing so he also implicitly criticized English authors who made the same assertion. Joye argued that children by virtue of God's promise would be saved. Joye's arguments were a minority position, but they represent the effect that the Reformation, and especially Reformed theology, had on the theological perception of children. Moreover, Joye's writings demonstrate the growing influence of Reformed theology in England and how this external influence modified the religious perception of children.

In 1549, John Calvin's *A short instruction for to Arme All Good Christian People Agaynst the Pestiferous Errours of the Common Secte of Anabaptists* was published in England. The work was an anonymous translation of Calvin's *Brieve instruction, pour armer tous bones fideles contre les erreurs de la secte commune de Anabaptstes* (1549), written as a response to the Schleitheim Articles.[104] Until this point, Reformed theology in England had a distinct Zwinglian flavor, but with this work, Calvin's theology concerning children and baptism began to make its way into England. David Stam has noted that Calvin is especially vitriolic toward the Anabaptists in this work, attacking what he saw as the absurdity of their beliefs.[105] In repudiating the Anabaptists, the work presented to the English audience Calvin's view on baptism and the child's place in the church. Children are baptized because they are participants in the promise of salvation

[104] The work was published in French (15440 and in Latin (1545). Most likely the edition is based off the French edition. Euler, "Anabaptism and Anti-Anabaptism in the Early English Reformation," 46; David Harry Stam, "England's Calvin: A Study of the Publication of John Calvin's Works in Tudor England" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1978), 33–34.

[105] Stam, "England's Calvin," 34.

made by God to their parents. "When a man is receyued of god into the company of the fayethful: the promise of saluation which is made to him: is not onely for hys person, but also his chyldren."[106] With the exception of Joye, the previous works discussed in this chapter emphasized the necessity of baptism for salvation, stressing that without the sacrament children cannot be saved. For Calvin, however, baptism was not salvific, but a sign and seal of the covenant, the promise of salvation. Children do not receive the sacrament because they need it to be saved, but because they have a right to it. The Anabaptists, according to Calvin, ignore the teachings of God in scripture. They argue that children should not be baptized because they cannot hear and understand the gospel, but their understanding is irrelevant. Calvin argued that Scripture states that those who do not work should not eat, but no one applies this to children who are incapable of working. The same reasoning is applied to children and baptism. Scripture says "believe and be baptized," but this only applies to adults. Even though children cannot understand the gospel, as participants of the covenant with their parents, baptism belongs to them.[107] Thus, in the publication of this work, English laity were presented with a different view of baptism than Catholic, Zwinglian or Lutheran theologies.

As previously seen, Lutheran works emphasized that the danger of Anabaptism was its denial of salvation to children, but for Calvin, this is not an issue. Baptism does not save children. Rather, baptismal regeneration offered much pastoral care to parents. While Calvin denied baptismal regeneration, pastoral care is very much present in his

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[106] John Calvin, *A short instruction for to arme all good Christian people agaynst the pestiferous errours of the common secte of Anabaptistes.* (London: Ihon Daye, 1549), STC 4463, a8r.

[107] Ibid., B1r.

baptismal theology. The salvation of children hinges not on the sacrament, but on God's saving activity through the covenant. Through baptism, God declares to parents "that he accepteth their chyldren into the communion of his Church."[108] To deny baptism is to deny parents the assurance of God's promise.

The implication so far has been that Christian parents did not need to worry about their children because as participants in the covenant they were already members of God's church. At one point, Calvin even states that children in the womb are members of God's church. "But touchyng those chyldren whiche are of the church before they issue out of theyr mother bealies."[109] These words would be very encouraging to parents. Calvin, however, just a few pages later undermined these words of comfort. He acknowledged that some children having received baptism when they come to age of discretion "maye alienate them selves from God and adinchillate the vertue of Baptisme."[110] The question of course arises: how can such children alienate themselves from God if they were participants in the covenant? Calvin's solution to this theological query was that those children were never really predestined for salvation. "Yet maye we not therefore saye, that our Lorde hath not chosen theym, and separated theym from other for to present unto them hys saluation."[111] With this statement, Calvin removed for his English readers any assurance as to the salvation of their children. Parents were supposed

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[108] Ibid., B3v.

[109] Though the work does not mention Calvin's rejection of emergency baptism, the statement does support his stance on the topic. Ibid., b1v.

[110] Ibid., B4r.

[111] Ibid.

to find comfort in that their children are participants in the covenant, but then he states that their children might not be of the elect after all. In the seventeenth century, some Reformed English theologians would argue that all children of elect parents who die are members of the elect. Calvin, in contrast, did not make such a statement. By stating that children who reject God were never really predestined for salvation, Calvin undermines his arguments that parents can receive comfort in the belief that their children are participants in the covenant. Christian parents could be faced with the question of whether their child who died was in fact a member of the elect.

Calvin did not present the Anabaptists as a danger to children. They were rather a threat to the church because they neglected the teachings of Scripture. In many ways, Calvin's arguments about children would have been words of comfort for English parents. Children, by virtue of their parents standing in the covenant, were members of the church. They received baptism not because they needed it to be saved, but because they were already numbered among the elect. Baptism testified to this theological truth. This theological of view, shared by Calvin and Zwingli, was a significant change in the theological perception of children, and illustrates the ways in which the introduction of the Reformation into England changed the ways the theological perception of children. English laity were now being taught that children of Christian parents were not outsiders in need of salvation, but insiders who possessed salvation and were owed the sign of that promise. Calvin, however, also introduced doubt into English thought by stating that some children of the elect might not actually be numbered among God's chosen. Catholics could rest assured that their baptized children were saved. The Lutheran works, even with the emphasis on justification by faith, stressed the belief that children are saved

through baptism, as did the Bishops' Book, the King's Book, and the *Book of Common Prayer*, and while Zwinglian writings examined thus far did not endorse baptismal regeneration, they did affirm that the children of Christians are saved. Calvin's *A short instruction* was one of the first Protestant writings to directly introduce doubt regarding the salvation of children born to Christian parents. Protestant theology could offer comfort for children who worried about their parents, but that same theology could also cause great anxiety.[112]

Baptism in Official Theological Statements of the Henrician Reformation

An assessment of baptism in the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations is not complete without an examination of the official theological statements that address the topic. As official statements, these works sought to influence the thought and practice of the English people. Their statements on baptism reflect much of what has already been seen. The Bishop's Book and the King's Book illustrate the tension between the necessity for baptism and the belief in justification by faith, while the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Forty-Two Articles demonstrate the growing influence of Reformed theology in England; present throughout all four works was the need to guard and warn the English people against the threat of Anabaptism.

[112] As discussed below, this anxiety is also seen in the Western Rebellion in which one the complaints of the rebels was the delaying of baptism that was stipulated by the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*. In *A Short and Plaine Proof* (1611), one of Thomas Helwys' main criticisms of Reformed theology was that it left many wondering if they were of the elect and that it condemned millions of children to condemnation. Thomas Helwys, *A short and plaine proofe by the word, and workes off God, that Gods decree is not the cause off anye mans sinne or condemnation* (Amsterdam?, 1611), STC 13055, a8v, b3r.

When the *Bishops' Book* was published in 1537, the work never received official sanction, but its statement on baptism was the same as that of the Ten Articles (1536), and thus the official doctrine of the Church of England. Baptism was integral to salvation: "The sacrament of baptysme was instituted and ordenyed by god…as a thynge necessarie for the attaynyng of everlastynge lyfe…no man can entrein the kyndome of heuen, excepte he be borne agayne of water and the holy gooste."[113] As with the traditional understanding of baptism, the sacrament was offered both to adults and children who possess reason and to "infants, innocents, and children."[114] The Ten Articles and the Bishops' Book illustrate the rising fears of Anabaptism. These fears had been expressed in the works of foreign and domestic works published in England, and now in the official statements of the Church of England. Emphasis was placed on the need for children to be baptized, and a call was placed on all Christians to reject the teachings of the Anabaptists. "All good christen men ought and muste repute…every other mans opinion, agreeable vnto the sayde Anabaptistes..for detestable heresyes, and utteryly to be condemned."[115] Through baptism, children were remised of Original Sin and received the Holy Ghost who cleanses and purifies them, "by his mooste secrete vertue and operation."[116] This statement, of course, contrasts with the emphasis that Bishops' Book and Ten Articles place on justification by faith. Whereas children of

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[113] *The institution of a Christen man*, STC 5164, 35r.

[114] Ibid., 35r.

[115] Ibid., 35r-v.

[116] Ibid., 35r.

reason and adults who are brought to baptism must be "perfitely and truely repentant and contrite of all theyr synnes," expressing belief in all the articles of the faith, children under the age of reason were still passive recipients of salvation.[117] Without baptism, they are not saved. "In so moche, as infants and children dyeng in theyr infancie, shall vndoutedly be saved thereby, and els not."[118] Even with this statement, scholars have noted that the emphasis on justification by faith and the retention of infant baptism placed ambiguity on whether the child was cleansed of sin or might receive forgiveness.[119] Much of this tension would surface during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I with the rise of Reformed theology in England, but such tension was already beginning during Henry VIII's reign.

When the King's Book was published in 1543, the section on baptism it contained was significantly expanded from the Bishop's Book, comprising three quarto leaves compared to the Bishop's Book's one leaf. Much of the added material included greater emphasis upon baptism and Original Sin, concupiscence, and arguments against the Anabaptists. In a return to the traditional understanding of baptism, the effect of baptism through the word and promise of God was viewed as the cleansing of Original Sin. The Bishops' Book had stressed the importance of belief, at least for those with reason, in

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[117] Ibid., 35v.

[118] Ibid., 35r.

[119] Anna Louise French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings: The Reformation of Baptism, Infant Limbo and Child Salvation in Early Modern England," in *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England*, ed. Jonathan Willis (Ashgate, 2015), 158–59; Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 519–20.

salvation, but the King's Book, with its additional material, downplayed this theme.[120] Quoting from Mark 16, the King's Book stated that Christ's statement that whosever believes and is baptized shall be saved should be understood as "of all suche persons, which die in the grace conferred and gyuen to them in baptisme, and do not finally fall from the same synne."[121] This statement was a rejection of justification by faith. Belief was to be understood as connected to baptism, the moment when the sponsors expressed belief on behalf of the child.

Both the Bishop's Book and the King's Book emphasize the importance of baptism for salvation. Some scholars, however, have argued that the King's Book left open the possibility of the salvation of unbaptized infants based the omission of three words. The Bishop's Book stated that children dying in baptism "shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not;" the King's Book, however, omitted the final clause, "and else not." [122] In a footnote in 1973, J. D. C. Fisher first noted this as a significant omission in 1973, but did not elaborate. Citing Fisher, Will Coster drew further implications stating that the omission left "open the possibility that unbaptized children could be saved."[123] Such an interpretation, however, is not tenable. As noted, the King's

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[120] The King's Book still affirms that adults receiving baptism must believe and confess, trusting in the promises of God, but the emphasis is not as prevalent as in the Bishops' Book. Henry VIII, *A necessary doctrine*, STC 5168.7, h2r.

[121] Ibid., g4r–rv.

[122] *The institution of a Christen man*, STC 5164, 35r; Henry VIII, *A necessary doctrine*, STC 5168.7, g4v.

[123] Will Coster, "Tokens of Innocence: Infant Baptism, Death and Burial in Early Modern England," in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 269–70. This

Book was a conservative response to English Protestants, with greater emphasis on the presence of Original Sin and the need for baptism for salvation. Furthermore, the King's Book stressed, in spite of the teachings of Zwingli, that children of baptized parents were still guilty of Original Sin and needed baptism. This paragraph comes directly after the paragraph with the so called significant omission. Coster is correct in arguing that the belief in infant salvation does arise in England, as seen in the writings of George Joye, but it did not begin with the King's Book.

The King's Book was an attempt to roll back many of the doctrinal advancements made by English reformers and its statements on baptism reflect this. The King's Book emphasized that children after baptism remain corrupted by Original Sin, the inclination to sin called concupiscence. While baptism does not purge the child of this inclination, the sacrament does enable the child to resist it better. "And by the same grace also conferred vnto vs in baptisme, we be made more strong and able, to resist and withstande the sayde concupiscences and carnall desyres, than is any other man, which neuer was christened."[124] Not only was baptism necessary for salvation, but through the sacrament, parents ensured that their children were able to resist sin. This assertion was not present in the Bishops' Book. While the Bishops' Book stated that children possessed Original Sin and needed baptism for salvation, the King's Book goes beyond this, underscoring

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statement was then cited by P. M. Kinston in 2009. P. M. Kitson, "Religious Change and the Timing of Baptism in England, 1538-1750," *The Historical Journal* 52 (2009): 273.

[124] Henry VIII, *A necessary doctrine*, STC 5168.7, h1r.

the continual sinfulness of children.[125] Children need baptism to give them the grace and ability to combat the inclination to sin that remains in them.[126] This return to the traditional understanding of baptism probably reflected a similar sentiment among the traditionalists and the laity. The introduction of Protestantism into England introduced new ideas about the religious perception of children, but it did not completely displace the old ones. Instead, it created a clash of competing ideas about children and baptism, as illustrated through the King's Book. As a conservative reaction to the views of the English reformers, the King's Book underscored the necessity of baptism by emphasizing not only was it needed for salvation, but also in helping children combat the sinful nature that remained in them.

Finally, as with the Bishops' Book, the King's Book warned against the dangers of Anabaptism. Included in the work was the same statement from the Bishops' Book about the Anabaptists, but the King's Book addressed this threat in more detail. Stating that "certain heresies haue risen and sprong vp, against the christening of infants," the King's Book emphasized the traditional, historical, and universal practice of infant baptism. [127] Scripture stated that no one could be saved without baptism: "Out of the churche, neyther infants, nor noo man else can be saued, they must nedes be christened and clensed by baptisme, and so incorporated into the churche."[128] Through baptism, sin

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[125] One should note the absence of any statement referencing the innocence of children in the King's Book, as opposed to the Bishop's Book. See, *The institution of a Christen man*, STC 5164, 35r.

[126] Thomas Aquinas also argued this position. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III.69.6.

[127] Henry VIII, *A necessary doctrine*, STC 5168.7, h1v.

[128] Ibid., h1v.

is forgiven, and grace and virtue are conferred. Furthermore, the King's Book argued that infant baptism was a parallel of circumcision. Hebrew children "were made participants of the grace and benefit giuen in circumcision," so now are children recipients of God's grace in baptism.[129] Added to these statements was the affirmation of *ex opere operato* of baptism. Regardless of the morality of the priest, baptism was still effective for infants and those with reason. No excuse existed for denying baptism. The sacrament was necessary for salvation, provided the grace to resist sin, and was effective despite the morality of the priest. The King's Book was clear in its emphasis on the necessity of baptism and the assertion that Anabaptism, with its rejection of infant baptism, placed children in damnation.

The Bishop's Book and King's Book reflect the myriad of voices present as a result of Protestant theology entering England, with the King's Book attempting to provide one single voice, a return to tradition. The Bishops' Book affirmed justification by faith, the necessity of infant baptism, and warned against Anabaptism. The King's Book sought to roll back the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith by emphasizing Original Sin, the necessity and efficacy of baptism, and the dangers of Anabaptism. The King's Book was a conservative reaction to the rise of Protestantism in England that reaffirmed traditional Catholic practice and doctrine, underling the need for the laity to continue to baptize their children. Furthermore, the work was edited by bishops who remained after the November proclamation and the 1539 Act of Six Articles. The work also received Henry VIII's official endorsement and was based on his editorial remarks to

[129] Ibid.

the Bishops' Book. Given these facts, one is hard pressed to argue that the King's Book opened the door for infant salvation *sans* baptism. The impression left on the laity was a return to traditional doctrine and a rejection of radical new innovations such as justification by faith or Anabaptism.

Baptism in the Official Documents of the Edwardian Reformation

The Henrician Reformation was marked by a struggle between English Reformers and the traditionalists, best exemplified through the publication of the Bishop's Book and King's Book, resulting in the proliferation of conflicting views on children and baptism. By the end of Henry VIII's reign, the official and thus, dominant view was the necessity of baptism for salvation. This official view changed when Edward assumed the throne in 1547. Being too young to rule, Edward's uncle, Edward Somerset, the Duke of Somerset, was named his governor and the Lord Protector of England.[130] The reformation initially pursued by the Duke of Somerset and Cranmer was one of caution. Cranmer feared that an accelerated reformation would be rejected by the laity.[131] In 1549, Cranmer published the *Book of Common Prayer*, which received a revised publication in 1552. As the official guide for worship in the Church of England it became a very important tool for the dissemination of Protestant theology and practice.[132] The 1549 edition sought to strike a balance between Protestant and Catholic, retaining certain practices, omitting others,

[130] On Duke of Somerset securing this position, see Haigh, *English Reformations*, 166–69.

[131] While Somerset's reform appeared to side with Protestants, Haigh argues that he only backed their reforms out of political necessity. Ibid., 169–74; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 449–56.

[132] Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship*, 15.

and introducing new ones, such as the performance of all services in English.[133] Approved by Parliament in January 1549, the *Book of Common Prayer* went on sale in March and by June nearly half of the parishes possessed a copy.[134]

Seeking to strike a balance between Catholic and Protestant theology, the *Book of Common Prayer* endorsed baptismal regeneration, through which infants were cleansed of sin, filled with the Holy Spirit, and incorporated into the church. As seen in the Bishops' Book and the King's Book, all children "beeyng Baptysed (yf they departe out of thys lyfe in theyr infancye) are vndoubtedly saued."[135] Anna French argues that the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* placed conditionality on the child's salvation through baptism, leaving the possibility that the child will be saved or at least letting parents believe this.[136] This tension does exist in the emphasis on justification by faith, but only for children past of the age of discretion. For children who died in infancy, parents could have firm knowledge that their children are saved. Justification by faith was resolved through the confirmation of the child who has passed the age of discretion. The *Book of Common Prayer*, in keeping with traditional religion, placed this responsibility on the godparents. Through their instruction, the children, when they reach the age of discretion and understand the promise made on their behalf, "maye then themselfes with their owne

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[133] For how the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* sought to balance Catholic and Protestant religion see, Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 464–67.

[134] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 173.

[135] This comment is made during a discussion on confirmation as assurance that delaying confirmation will not jeopardize the child's salvation. *Book of Common prayer* Church of England, *The booke of the common prayer* (London, 1549), STC 16270, CXXXIIr.

[136] French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings," 164.

mouthe and with their owne consent openly before the churche, ratifie and confesse the same."[137] This emphasis on baptismal regeneration and confirmation can be seen as an attempt to balance both Catholic and Protestant theology.

More significant, however, were the changes that the *Book of Common Prayer* made to the baptismal ceremony. Several items from the *Sarum* rite remained.[138] Traditionally, the baptismal ceremony was performed at the door to the church; this practice remained along with the exorcism and anointing with oil. [139] These would have been elements that would have appealed to the traditionalists. The *Book of Common Prayer*, however, significantly delayed when baptism occurred. Historically, baptism was delayed until Pentecost and Easter, but by the fifteenth century, the danger of infant death prompted English councils to push for quick baptisms, with most evidence indicating that children were only a few days old when baptized.[140] The 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, however, delayed baptism until the next Sunday or feast day. Such a change must have raised concerns for the laity. If infants can only be saved through baptism, then why should the ceremony be delayed? Does the delay not place the infant's spiritual life in danger? The delay came as a result of making baptism a public ceremony, instead of a

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[137] Church of England, *The booke of the common prayer*, STC 16270, CXXXIIr.

[138] For an English translation of the *Sarum* rite of baptism, see Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*, 158–179.

[139] Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship*, 57–58, 68–71; Nathan Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil: The Experience of Temptation in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 43 (2004): 183.

[140] As previously mentioned, priests were instructed to ensure that the laity could perform the baptismal ceremony. Even still, it appears that some laity preferred to wait for a priest. Kitson cites an example of an infant who died without baptism because the priest took too long to arrive. For an overview of the development of baptism from a yearly to almost immediate ceremony, see Kitson, "Religious Change," 270–271.

private one. As a public ceremony, emphasis was placed on the promise made at baptism which then served as a reminder to the congregation of the promises made at their baptism.[141] In this way, the practice mirrored that of the continental Reformers. As a public event, the congregation could celebrate and rejoice in the child who now had been washed of sin and incorporated into the Kingdom of God. This practice signaled a more prominent place for the child in the church.

The delay, however, also brought great for concerns for parents. By June of 1549, rebellion had broken out in the West Country, with smaller disturbances from the West Midlands to Yorkshire.[142] The rebels rejected the prayer book, and demanded a restoration of traditional piety and the *Act of Six Articles*. Among their demands was the restoration of weekday baptisms for "the gates of Heaven cannot be opened without this blessed sacrament of baptism."[143] Through public baptism, the *Book of Common Prayer* affirmed the place of children in the church, but for some of the laity, the delay in baptism signaled a lack of concern. Kitson notes, however, that the rebels' complaints were based on a misunderstanding of *Book of Common Prayer*. Baptism should be delayed until the closest Sunday or feast day, but the prayer book also retained the practice of emergency baptism.[144] If the child's life was in danger, then the laity could

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[141] Ibid., 272.

[142] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 466. For the Western Rebellion see Philip Caraman, *The Western Rising, 1549: The Prayer Book Rebellion* (Tiverton, Devon, England: Westcountry Books, 1994).

[143] Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 34.

[144] Kitson, "Religious Change," 273.

perform the baptism, after which the baptism would be confirmed publicly at the next Sunday or feast day. As per traditional practice, the minister would confirm that the baptism had been properly performed, and if doubts existed, conditionally baptize the child. [145] In delaying baptism, the *Book of Common Prayer* modified the rite, but in endorsing emergency baptism, they retained traditional practice. By making baptism public, God's promise of salvation to children was affirmed to the congregation, and through the retention of emergency baptism, the concerns of fears of parents were acknowledged. Both practices affirmed the importance of baptism for the salvation of children, but the uprisings against *Book of Common Prayer* illustrate that these distinctions were lost on some of the laity who could see only that traditional piety and practice were being attacked and seemingly placing their children's lives in spiritual danger. The Henrician and Edwardian Reformations introduced new ideas about children and baptism, but the introduction of these ideas, even if they were the official position of the English church, did not necessarily mean that the laity were ready to adopt them. A change in the perception of children would take time, and the process of change created conflict. Catholics and Protestants feared for the spiritual wellbeing of their children. Protestants in their works concerning baptism were often responding to the fear that Anabaptism endangered children. The Western Rebellion illustrates that the traditionalist laity feared this too about the Protestants.

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[145] Church of England, *The booke of the common prayer*, STC 16270 r5r–7r. Traditionally the midwife, who would have performed the baptism, would have answered questions about its validity. In the *Book of Common Prayer*, the godparents are given this responsibility. This change presumably can be seen as an attempt to diminish the role of the midwife in the religious. Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship*, 68.

Even though the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* was meant to strike a balance between Catholic and Protestant religion, it actually failed to do so. As seen in the Western Rebellion, it provoked some traditionalists to violence. The prayer book also brought out a strong reaction in Protestants, most probably because Bishop Gardiner, now residing in prison, gave the prayer book his endorsement.[146] When the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* was published in September, all conservative compromises were removed, resulting in a drastic change in the theology and practice the laity would experience.[147]

Several changes were made to the baptismal ceremony, resulting in a Reformed liturgy.[148] Among the items omitted were the christening gown and anointing with oil. One significant change was that the baptismal ceremony, along with the font, was moved from the door of the church to inside the church. Baptism had been a transitional rite; performing the ceremony at the door to the church symbolized the child's entrance into the Kingdom of God.[149] The 1552 *Book Common of Prayer* sought to remove the last vestiges of what would have been considered Catholic, and the abolishing of baptism at threshold served this purpose. The practice can also be seen as reflecting the Reformed

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[146] Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, both Protestant refugees residing in England, each sent to Cranmer a list theological defects present in the first prayer book Haigh, *English Reformations*, 174, 179.

[147] For an overview of these changes, see Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 473–75. Church of England, *The boke of common praier* (London, 1552), STC 16286.2.

[148] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 180–81. For a comparison of the changes made to the administration of baptism between the 1549 and 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* see, Gordon P. Jeanes, *Signs of God's Promise: Thomas Cranmer's Sacramental Theology and the Book of Common Prayer* (London ; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 240–88.

[149] French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings," 165.

belief that infants were already members of the church. Furthermore, if baptism was also supposed to remind the congregation of their baptism, the performance of the ceremony inside the church where everyone could observe it makes logical sense.[150] This practice reinforced that children needed baptism, in opposition to Anabaptism. By making baptism a public event, church leaders guarded against any Anabaptists being in their midst. Placing the ceremony inside the church signaled that children belonged in the church and that the sacrament of baptism rightly belonged to children.

Another significant change was the removal of the exorcism. The rite had been toned down in the 1549 edition, but under the pressure of Bucer and others, it was omitted in 1552.[151] Johnstone has noted that prior to 1548 the baptismal ceremony, though in Latin, represented to the laity a true victory over the Devil. The 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* maintained this triumph, though on a smaller scale. Johnstone argues that the omission of the exorcism in 1552 signaled an implicit denial of the minister's ability to combat the Devil.[152] While this is one perception, the removal of exorcism, as with Zwingli, Calvin, and the Anabaptists, communicated that children were not as vulnerable to the demonic. Children still were defiled by Original Sin and in need of the saving waters of baptism, but the denial of the exorcism told parents that their children were not as threatened by the devil.

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[150] The removal of the ceremony from the threshold could also have signaled to some laity the denial that children were entering the church and that their salvation was now sure.

[151] French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings," 162–63; Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil," 182–83.

[152] Johnstone connects the absence of the exorcism to a Protestant shift away from combating the Devil at the baptismal font to a lifelong conflict within the individual's conscience. Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil," 183–84.

Cranmer also sought to influence English Protestant theology with the Forty-Two Articles.[153] As previously mentioned, the Forty-Two Articles sought to bring a compromise between English reformers and guard against Catholics and Anabaptists; they also along with the *Book of Common Prayer* represented the growing influence of Reformed theology in England.[154] Baptism was described as the sign and seal of the new birth "whereby, as by an instrument thei that receive Baptisme rightlie, are grafted in the Churche, the promises of forgeuenesse of Sinne, and our Adoption to be the sonnes of God, are visiblie signed and sealed."[155] Previous theological statements emphasized the saving nature of the baptism and the need for children to receive the sacrament, a position in keeping with Catholic theology. Instead of stressing the regenerative nature of baptism, the Forty-Two Articles highlighted its covenantal nature. This change better resolved the tension between the necessity of infant baptism for salvation and justification by faith. The Forty-Two Articles maintained the necessity for baptism by emphasizing the historicity of the practice. "The custome of the Churche to Christen young children, is to bee commended, and in any wise to be reteined in the Churche."[156] The need to establish the historicity of infant baptism was born out the continued need to defend the practice against the threat of Anabaptism, and thus, the discussion about children and baptism was motivated in part from completely theologies and partly out of fear.

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[153] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 181; Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642*, 76.

[154] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 180–181; Euler, "Anabaptism and Anti-Anabaptism in the Early English Reformation," 43.

[155] Church of England, *Articles agreed on by the bishoppes*, STC 10034.2, c1r.

[156] Ibid., c1r.

Conclusion

The Henrician and Edwardian Reformations introduced Lutheran and Reformed theologies into England; combined with the fear of Anabaptism, this situation complicated the religious perception of children. The laity were presented with multiple and conflicting ideas concerning the religious view of children. Traditional medieval views were present within England along with Lutheran and Reformed perspectives. The English reformers who wrote about children were often heavily influenced by the external theology of the continental reformers. The English people, however, were presented with more than the Lutheran and Reformed view of children. Anabaptism was a very small movement in England, but the vernacular publication of Lutheran and Reformed works in England served to perpetuate fears about Anabaptism and prompted theological discussions relating to children.

During Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, discussions on Original Sin and innocence in children tended to more heavily emphasize their guilt from Original Sin rather than their innocence resulting from the lack of actual sin. Lutheran and Reformed writers were, for the most part, in agreement on this belief. While these authors would still have affirmed that children were innocent in terms of their lack of actual sin, much of their discussion appears to have been in reaction to theologies of Zwingli and the Anabaptists. Followers such radical movements, such as George Joye, were never sizable in England, but their small presence was perceived as a major threat because it appeared to place children in jeopardy. Often those responding to the denial of Original Sin, while affirming justification by faith, still held that baptism was necessary for salvation. The denial of Original Sin would lead to a rejection of infant baptism, placing children in

spiritual danger. Religious writings do not demonstrate an abandonment of the medieval view of Original Sin and innocence in children, but an entrenchment of the doctrine of Original Sin in response to the competing views of Zwinglians and Anabaptists.

Beyond Original Sin, the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations also saw changes in the way children were perceived in relation to baptism. For English reformers, the rejection of infant baptism meant that the Anabaptists were a threat to the spiritual welfare of all children. Henry VIII's reign saw the rise of Lutheran theology in England which, in reaction to Catholic theology, stressed the importance of justification by faith in salvation. Nevertheless, Lutheran writings and the theological statements published by the Church of England in this period stressed the necessity of infant baptism for salvation, creating a tension between the need for faith and the practice of infant baptism. As with Original Sin, much of the discussion about children and baptism was conducted in reaction to the threat of Anabaptism. In responding to Anabaptist beliefs, Lutheran writers stressed that children needed baptism for salvation.

Reformed theology avoided this tension by emphasizing the covenantal aspect of baptism. Children were baptized not because they would be condemned without it, but because as children of Christian parents, they were participants in God's covenantal promises and therefore, baptism, the sign of the covenant, already belonged to them. George Joye, for instance, argued that God's covenant meant that children without baptism would not be condemned. He supported this radical position he had inherited from Zwingli through a rejection of original guilt and an emphasis on God's predestination. Joye's theology of infant salvation never took hold, but the Reformed view of baptism did come to prominence during Edward VI's reign. With the *Book of*

Common Prayer and the Forty-Two Articles, the Reformed theology of baptism became the official position the Church of England.

By the end of Edward's reign, the laity had been presented with multiple theological views of children. As a result of the introduction of the Reformation into England, external sources directly contributed to discussions on the nature of children and the church. Influenced by the continental Reformation, English reformers wrote on the nature of baptism and Original Sin. Many of these authors affirmed the traditional understanding of baptism and Original Sin. A small minority, however, held dissenting opinions demonstrating that some people, such as Goerge Joye and Robert Cooche, struggled with the view that God would condemn children innocent of actual sin, and as a result of the English Reformation were exploring new theological avenues that resolved this conflict. Additionally, one cannot ignore the laity's resistance to the theological changes brought on by the introduction of the Reformation, as exemplified in the Western Rebellion. By the end of Edward VI's reign, Protestantism was not fully entrenched in England. The next chapter explores the ways in England's return to Catholicism under Mary I, and then its embrace of a modified form of Protestantism under Elizabeth I affected the religious perception of children.

CHAPTER FIVE

Religious Conflict and Children in Marian and Elizabethan England

From 1553-1603, England alternated between Catholicism and Protestantism as the official religion changed with who sat on the throne. Neither Protestants nor Catholics, when dominant, were able to expel each other, but they existed together in England, competing for the adherence of the people. The introduction of Protestant theology into England through the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations affected the religious perception of children through discussions on baptism and Original Sin, often resulting from fear of Anabaptism. Much of this fear was perpetuated through the dependence of English Reformers on works by continental Protestants that were written to counter the actual presence of Anabaptism in their community. The nature of religious change in England from 1553-1603 meant that in terms of the religious perception of children the conflict shifted from a fear of Anabaptism to a fight between English Catholics and Protestants. Under Mary I, Catholicism was endorsed again, reinforcing medieval theological views of children, but these views continued to be challenged as Calvinist Reformed theology retained a foothold in England, eventually gaining dominance under Elizabeth. This chapter argues children became a tool in the conflict between English Catholics and Protestants as they accused each of being a danger to children, and that the resulting conflict of views over Original Sin and baptism furthered parental anxiety over the salvation and place of children in the church that had been present ever since Protestant theology had been introduced into England, as exemplified

in the continuance of emergency baptisms and the rise of exorcism accounts of children throughout this time period.

Innocence and Original Sin

In the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, much of the discussion about children and Original Sin was in response to Anabaptism and Zwinglianism. During Mary's and Elizabeth's reign, the focus of the conflict shifted from what had been primarily an external threat to an internal one. Anabaptism never had a strong presence in England, and Zwinglianism was waning as Edward's reign came to an end. The focus of the conflict then was between Catholics and Reformed Protestants as they sought to counter each other. Both stressed that children were guilty of Original Sin while also describing them as innocent. The image of children as guilty and innocent, therefore, remained, but each group highlighted different aspects of this image in response to the position of their opponent.

Catholic Emphasis on Innocence

When Mary I assumed the throne, Catholicism officially returned to England. As previously shown in Chapter Two, medieval vernacular religious literature often depicted children as innocent. The return of Catholicism thus brought a renewed emphasis on the innocence of children, with Catholic leaders setting the innocence and humility of

children as examples of piety for the laity, encouraging them to turn from Protestantism and return to the Catholic Church.[1]

One of the ways children were displayed as examples of piety for the laity was through the reinstitution of the Boy Bishop celebration. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this practice was extremely popular on the eve of the Reformation, but Henry VIII outlawed it in 1541. In 1554, however, the Boy Bishop celebration received a revival. Only one Boy Bishop sermon survives from Mary's reign; written by Richard Ramsey for Gloucester Cathedral, this sermon was preached December 28, 1558, just a over month after Elizabeth assumed the throne.[2] Ramsey was Benedictine monk at Ramsey Abbey until its dissolution in 1539. At that time, he was at Oxford where he just received his Bachelor of Theology, and seems to have stayed there, receiving his doctorate in 1546 and becoming a chaplain to Henry VIII in March of that same year. Ramsey appears to have been deft at navigating the theological-political landscape of Edward's reign, for he was made a canon and prebrendary of Gloucester Cathedral in 1548.[3] As with John Alock's Boy Bishop sermon discussed in Chapter Two, the child preaching is presented as the vocal author of the sermon and serves as an example of Catholic piety for children

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[1] Warren W. Wooden notes that during Mary's reign Catholics placed children in forefront, giving them prominence in religious ceremonies, festivals, and even entertainment at the royal court. Wooden, *Children's Literature*, 56–61.

[2] Gloucester diocese was the product of Henry VIII establishing himself as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. He created the diocese in 1541 from the territory dioceses of Hereford and Worcester. The cathedral was the church of Abbey of St. Peter at Gloucester which had been despoiled in 1539. Ward, "Richard Ramsey's Sermon for a Boy Bishop," 478.

[3] He was, however, not as successful during Elizabeth's reign, being deprived in 1559. Ibid., 478–479. .

and adults, and in doing so uses the innocence of children as a weapon against Protestantism.

Through the Boy Bishop, Ramsey emphasized the innocence present in young children, setting forth their humility and meekness as an example for all. Young children possess none of the negative virtues, but only that which is good. C[on]sidre well [the] nature of [in]noc[en]t child[er], & yow shall perceive in them…all [the] affections quiet in all paci[en]ce, in all simplicitie, in all puritie, in all tractableness, in all obedience, in all h[um]ilitie, & in all [in]noc[en]cy, & no such s[y]nfull affections reign[yn]g in [them] as c[om]m[yn]ly rageth in m[en] and women of years."[4] Ramsey stated that the righteousness of the Christian life rested upon two points: first, "cease to do evill, & learn to do well," and second, that those who embraced the innocence of young children "hath halfe [the] righteousness & [per]fection of a c[hristian] m[an]s lyfe."[5] This image of children is in stark contrast to the Reformed image of the sinful child bearing the guilt and corruption of Original Sin. While this message was presented through the voice of a child over the age of discretion, Ramsey's examples of innocence were infants. They are described as "liitill child[er], [that] k[an] not tell what s[yn] or malice meanith."[6] The innocence of young children resided in the absence of guilt from actual sin; since their

[4] Ibid., 259–267.

[5] Ibid., 276–277, see also, ll. 42-43.

[6] Ibid., 256–258.

baptism had removed Original Sin, children under the age of discretion were in a state "wythowt gyle, [in]nocent, wythowt harme, and all pure wythowt corruption."[7]

Preached on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Ramsey used the absence of guilt in the martyred children of Bethlehem as the defining characteristic of true martyrdom, and thus an attack on Protestantism. Ramsey greatly esteemed the sacrifice of the Holy Innocents, stating that while many had suffered for Christ, only the Holy Innocents suffered "in [per]son of Christ" because each one of their deaths was thought to be that of Jesus.[8] Ramsey emphasized that their lack of guilt and innocence in the presence of death marked them as not merely examples of piety, but of true martyrdom. Challenging the English Protestant martyrdom identity that had developed during Mary's reign, Ramsey stated that persons who suffered fire, hanging, beheading, banishment received "iust executi[on] for many & diuers enormities in ther faith and maners" and were not martyrs, but heretics who deserved their punishment.[9] Wooden cites Ramsey's sermon as an example of the ways in which Marian authorities used children to reinforce and revive Catholic piety, but one cannot ignore that this sermon was preached forty-one days after Mary's death when Elizabeth, a known Protestant, was sitting on the throne.[10] Ramsey presented the Holy Innocents as the examples to which Catholic laity should aspire in

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[7] Ibid., 40–42.

[8] Ibid., 103–106.

[9] Ibid., 116–120; for the development of the Protestant identity, see Todd Michael Porter, "Obedience to God or Man?: Responses to Persecution in the Reign of Mary I, 1553–1558" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006); and Haigh, *English Reformations*, 219–234.

[10] Wooden, *Children's Literature*, 57–61, 64–72. Seeing that Mary was ill, Elizabeth and her supporters ready to seize the throne, even alerting garrison commanders to be ready to fight, if necessary. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 237–238.

coming days. While the Protestants had suffered justly during the reign of Mary, those who remained faithful to the Catholic faith during Elizabeth's reign, exhibiting the innocence of those infants who died for Christ, would be true martyrs. Through the voice of a child, Ramsey discredited Protestant claims of martyrdom and called Catholic laity to a life of piety willing to suffer and die for the faith in the days ahead.

Catholics emphasized the innocence of children, but they also stressed the presence of Original Sin in them. The introduction of Protestantism into England resulted in an exposure to Zwinglian and Anabaptist views of Original Sin. The Catholic emphasis on Original Sin in this period is a sharp contrast from medieval literature. Of the medieval literature examined, only Richard Whitford's *A werke for housholders*, published during the early years of the Lutheran Reformation, prominently discussed the sinfulness of children. This new Catholic emphasis, therefore, was an attempt to counter the corruption of the doctrine of Original Sin. This new concern can be seen at work in Edmond Bonner's *A profitable and necessarye doctrine*. Bonner was the Bishop of London and had been deprived under Edward VI for refusing, against the direct orders of the king, to preach against religious rebellion, but with Mary's ascension, his bishopric was restored.[11] Published in 1555 and intended for children, *A profitable and necessarye doctrine* was a revision of the King's Book (1543), the conservative response to the Bishop's Book that had enjoyed support among the traditionalists of Edward VI's reign. *A profitable and necessarye doctrine*, therefore, was an attempt to establish continuity

[11] Kenneth Carleton, "Edmund Bonner (d. 1569)," ed. David Cannadine, *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

with a more Catholic past.[12] In Mary I's first proclamation, she sought to suppress the books and the printing industry, complaining of the religious damage perpetuated by them.[13] This suppression resulted in a significant blow to the industry, with printers fleeing the country and a few prominent English printers being put out of business. *A profitable and necessarye doctrine* was among the many Catholic works that flooded the country in an attempt to turn back Protestant theology.[14]

Bonner used *A profitable and necessarye doctrine* to reinforce Catholic theology. The majority of works published during this period were Latin liturgical books. One such book was Bonner's *An honest godlye instruction*, which was intended to replace the *Book of Common Prayer* and featured both Latin and English. As *An honest godlye instruction* was a short liturgical book, *A profitable and necessarye doctrine* provided explanation of doctrines briefly mentioned in the former.[15] In his preface, Bonner spoke of the evil doctrine that had permeated the nation, "sometimes by the procedyng preachers sermons, sometymes by theyr prynted treatyse…somtimes by readyng playing, singynge, and other lyke meanes and new deuises…to the greate dyshonor of God."[16] The infection of

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[12] Underwood, *Childhood, Youth and Religious Dissent*, 53; Carleton, "Edmund Bonner," ODNB.

[13] Mary I issued several proclamations banning books during her reigned. In *A Profitable and Necessary Doctrine*, Bonner mentioned his efforts to counter Protestantism and how her most recent proclamation banning heretical books aided in his efforts Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 58; Edmund Bonner, *A profitable and necessarye doctrine with certayne homelyes adioyned* (London, 1555), STC 3283.3, a2v.

[14] Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 57–62.

[15] Underwood, *Childhood, Youth and Religious Dissent*, 52; Edmund Bonner, *An honest godlye instruction and information for the tradynge, and bringinge vp of children* (London, 1555), STC 3281.

[16] Bonner, *A profitable and necessarye doctrine*, STC 3283.3, a2r.

Protestant theology had blinded the people making them think they had left darkness, but had in fact been "broughte from the good to the bad;" *A profitable and necessarye doctrine*, therefore, was his attempt to bring a "verye pure syncere, and true doctryne of the fayth, and relygion of Chryst" back to his diocese and the nation.[17]

Bonner's discussion of Original Sin in children is brief, located in the section on baptism. As the work was a revision, Bonner's material was copied from the King's Book. In keeping with Catholic doctrine, but also that of the Protestants whom he opposed, Bonner affirmed the presence of Original Sin in all children. The difference between Bonner and the Reformed theology he was trying to counter was located in the emphasis that Catholic theology placed upon infants and children needing baptism to remove the guilt of Original Sin. Reformed theology stated that children possessed the guilt and corruption of Original Sin, but it also affirmed that children of the elect were included in God's covenant of salvation and that baptism was merely the visible sign of this promise. As will be shown, such an emphasis on the covenant led some English Protestants to downgrade the necessity of baptism, delaying baptism until it could be properly administered.

For Catholics, such actions signaled a denial of Original Sin and the necessity of baptism. Bonner included in *A profitable and necessarye doctrine* a passage from the King's Book that stressed that Original Sin flowed from parents to their children even though they had been "clene purged, and pardoned of theyr oryginall synne by baptisme," a passage meant to counter Anabaptism, but could also now potentially be applied to

[17] Ibid., a2v.

Protestants in general.[18] Foxe mentioned Bonner prominently in his *Acts and monuments* and in several stories, Bonner interrogates English Protestants accused of delaying the baptism of their children over the issue of infant baptism and Original Sin, stressing that children who died without baptism would be damned.[19] One can argue that it is possible that Bonner and the other Catholics would have seen no difference between English Protestants who delayed baptism and the Anabaptist position, or at least saw them as just as dangerous to children.[20] From a Catholic viewpoint, both denied the severity of Original Sin and the necessity of baptism. Children, therefore, were caught in the crossfire of the doctrinal battle between Catholics and English Protestants. The need for Catholics such as Bonner to emphasize Original Sin in infants was born partly out of a response to English Protestants who had no issue delaying baptism.

Elizabethan Protestants and Original Sin

As demonstrated previously, the introduction of the Reformation saw the rise of Reformed theology, especially Calvinism, during the Edwardian Reformation.[21] While

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[18] Ibid., n2r.

[19] Foxe characterized Bonner as brutal henchman of Marian Catholicism, often calling him Bloody Bonner. Rory Leitch, "Shakespeare, Foxe and the Idea of Enormity in the English Chronicle Plays" (Ph.D., Dalhousie University, 2006), 198–199; John Foxe, *Actes and monuments* (London, 1583), STC 1225, 1587, 1994.

[20] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 1225, 1994, 1996 cf. 1587. Cressy notes that such claims were made by English Protestants against radical and puritans. David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 101–102.

[21] The writings of George Joye and Zwingli were still published in during Mary I's and Elizabeth I's reign, but the influence of Zwinglianism was on the wane. George Joye, *A fruitfull treatise of baptisme and the Lords Supper* (London, 1584), STC 24217.5; Huldrych Zwingli, *The accompt rekenynge and confession of the faith of Huldrik Zwinglius* (Geneva, 1555), 24140; Huldrych Zwingli, *A briefe rehersal of*

Reformed theology did not represent a consensus in England, the theology did occupy a place of prominence, a hegemony as described by Peter Lake.[22] Previous scholars have argued that the severe view of Original Sin and human depravity held by English Calvinists, namely Puritans, represented a lack of affection on behalf of parents and contributed to the harsh treatment of children.[23] Other scholars, however, have shown that while Calvinists emphasized Original Sin, they did not view their children as evil, vile creatures or that this view led to parents treating their children more harshly than other parents. [24] The emphasis on Original Sin was born from a desire to ensure that children and adults realized their need for salvation.

The emphasis on Original Sin, however, was also an attempt to counter the emphasis that Marian Catholics placed upon innocence in children. English Protestants believed that children under the age of reason were innocent of actual sin, but like Calvin,

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the death resurrection, and ascension of Christ (London, 1561), 26135; Euler, "Religious and Cultural Exchange during the Reformation," 368.

[22] Peter Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635," *Past & Present* 114 (1987): 34.

[23] Ariès did not associate increased severity in discipline with a lack of affection, but with a growing awareness of childhood. Edmund Morgan stated that Puritans viewed children as ignorant and evil, but also argued that parents of the seventeenth century used corporal punishment no more than those of the twentieth century. Lawrence Stone argued that the doctrine of Original Sin encouraged Protestants toward repression instead of encouragement and that Puritans in particular loved and cherished their children, but also "feared and even hated them as agents in their household, and therefore beat them mercilessly." Leah Sinanoglou Marcus argued that Original Sin led Puritans to focus on the negative aspects of childhood, but this negative outlook contributed to their education efforts among children as a path to redemption. John Demos also argued that Puritans saw repression as the answer to Original Sin. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*; Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 97, 103; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 174–75; Leah S. Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair: A Theme and Variations in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), 43-44,50-51; Demos, *Little Commonwealth*, 136.

[24] Piercy, "The Cradle of Salvation," 81–116; Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 96–111; Sommerville, *The Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England*, 28–30.

they objected to the belief that this placed children in a special status different from adults, as if Original Sin did not pertain to baptized children who were under the age of reason. In his only Protestant apologetic, Richard Cavendish wrote that while infants did not possess actual sin, they were still corrupted by Original Sin.[25] "Touchyng actuall sinne in themselues, of theyr owne committyng, they haue none, but touchyng originall sinne, theyr nature therwithall remayneth defiled, seyng theyr nature can be of no other condition, as is sayd before, then the originall nature where of they be bred."[26] William Perkins objected to the Catholic belief that after baptism, Original Sin ceased "to be a sinne properly" and was "nothing els but a want, defect, and weaknes, making the heart fit and readie to conceeiue sinne: much like tinder, which though it be no fire of it selfe, yet it is very apt and fit to conceiue fire."[27] For the English Protestants, no difference existed between the inherited guilt of Original Sin and the inherited corruption of Original Sin; both were sin and brought condemnation.[28] While young children were free

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[25] Simon Adams, "Richard Cavendish (c. 1530-1601)," ed. H. C. G. Matthew, Brian Harrison, and David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed March 30, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/4941?docPos=1.

[26] Richard Cavendish, *The image of nature and grace conteynyng the whole course, and condition of mans estate* (London, 1571), STC 4880, 13v.

[27] William Perkins, *A reformed Catholike: or, A declaration shewing how neere we may come to the present Church of Rome in sundrie points of religion* (Cambridge, 1598), STC 19741, 30.

[28] The manner in which the Original Sin was passed from parents to children was debated in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Traducianism held that soul and the body of an infant both came from their parents and thus Original Sin was passed from Adam to each generation through copulation. Creationism stated that the body was from the parents, but that the soul was created by God at conception and then became infected with Original Sin through contact with the body. For Perkins and Cavendish, the manner in which Original Sin was propagated was not as important as the doctrine itself. Perkins believed that God created the souls of infants and either the soul was corrupted by the body or God at the moment of creation and infusion, "doth vtterly forsake them." Cavendish also held to the creation position, but stated that "surelye thys curious searche of the propagation of originall sinne, as it is very hard and difficulte, so it is more then vaine, and vnto saluation nothyng at all necessary. William Perkins, *A golden chaine, or the*

of actual sin, they were not innocent after baptism and to hold such a position was a rejection of the doctrine of Original Sin.[29] Baptism for the elect removed the guilt of actual and Original Sin, but the corruption remained; thus the potential guilt of sin continued, and the potential guilt of sin was still sin. As Perkins noted, "The actuall guilt is, whereby sinne maketh man stand guiltie before God: and that is remooued in the regenerate. But the potentiall guilt, which is an aptnes in sinne, to make a man stand guiltie if he sinne, that is not remooued: and therefore still sinne remaineth sinne."[30] Citing Romans 5.12 and 6.23, Perkins argued that the corruption of Original Sin must be properly sin because baptized infants still die before they have come to the age of discretion "or else they should not die, hauing no cause of death in them: for death is the wages of sin, as the Apostle saith, Rom. 6. 23. and Rom. 5. 12. Death entred into the world by sinne."[31] This position demonstrates the dependence of English Protestantism upon Calvin. As discussed in Chapter Three, Zwingli believed that the corruption of Original Sin was not enough to condemn a person. The corruption needed conscious

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description of theologie containing the order of the causes of saluation and damnation, according to Gods woord (London, 1591), STC 19657, c3r; Cavendish, *The image of nature and grace*, STC 4880, 14v–15v.

[29] Fulke makes such a statement about Catholics when defending Zwingli against the charge that he had rejected the doctrine of Original Sin. As noted in Chapter Three, Zwingli had labeled upon himself by other Protestants because he emphasized an inherited corruption as opposed to an inherited guilt. William Fulke, *D. Heskins, D. Sanders, and M. Rastel, accounted (among their faction) three pillers and archpatriarches of the popish synagogue (vtter enemies to the truth of Christes Gospell, and all that syncerely professe the same) ouerthrowne, and detected of their seuerall blasphemous heresies* (London, 1579), STC 1143, 31.

[30] Perkins, *A reformed Catholike*, STC 19741, 36. See also William Charke, *An answeare for the time, vnto that foule, and wicked Defence of the censure, that was giuen vpon M. Charkes booke* (London, 1583), STC 5008, I2v; Cavendish, *The image of nature and grace*, STC 4880, 13r–14r.

[31] Perkins, *A reformed Catholike*, STC 19741, 31; see also George Gifford, *Certaine sermons, vpon diuers textes of Holie Scripture* (London, 1597), STC 1148.5, 130.

actions to bring condemnation, and as such Zwingli could talk about infants and young children as innocent. Calvin, on the other hand, stated that the corruption resulting from Original Sin was enough to cause God's wrath, even on children. Elizabethan Calvinists, therefore, magnified the sinfulness of children by refusing to grant them a state of innocence. The lack of reason meant infants and young children were innocent of actual sin, but not absolved of God's judgment because physical death still visited the very young. Ultimately, this position was an effort to counter Catholics and others such as the Anabaptists. By stressing the sinfulness of all people regardless of age, Elizabethan Calvinists sought to ensure that individuals understood their utter dependence on God for salvation.

These Catholic and Protestant writings demonstrate the way in which the introduction of the Reformation into England affected the religious image and spiritual status of children, and how it affected the religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants. While the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations had introduced competing ideas about Original Sin and children, and by the end of the Elizabethan period, the Calvinist view had become rooted in English thought, Elizabethan England was not a country void of Catholicism.[32] Catholic and Calvinist theology affirmed an inherited guilt and corruption, and agreed that children under the age of discretion were not responsible for sin, but each side highlighted different aspects this condition. Catholics were comfortable with the tension of Original Sin and innocence because through baptism the

[32] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 242–267.

guilt of Original Sin had been removed leaving them in a state of innocence until they became responsible for actual sin.

Ultimately, the issue of innocence and Original Sin in children was a matter of salvation. Ramsey's Boy Bishop sermon and Edmund's *A profitable and necessarye doctrine* depicted children who had received the saving waters of baptism as free of all actual sin and thus examples of piety and true martyrdom. English Calvinists believed that salvation depended on God's predestination; to realize their salvation individuals needed to understand their spiritual condition. Nothing about an individual was innocent, even if they were an infant. English Catholics and Protestants were both concerned about doctrinal orthodoxy, but one cannot ignore that each side believed there were real spiritual consequences for their opponents' position.

Finally, these works demonstrate that the medieval view of innocence and Original Sin in children had never disappeared from English thought. This tension had been present in the early church, and it represents the conflict between a desire for orthodoxy and the concern of parents for the salvation of their children. In the early modern period, Catholics still believed in Original Sin and emphasized the innocence of children while Protestants stressed the sinfulness of children even though they admitted that children until a certain age were free of actual sin. In each case, English Catholics and Protestants appropriated the image of the child as possessing Original Sin and yet innocent in their conflicts with each other. Their conflicting views on Original Sin and innocence in children and the accusations made against each other demonstrate the importance of orthodox doctrine for both sides, but also how these doctrines addressed practical concerns. Theology did not develop independently in a vacuum, but rather in

tandem with and in response to cultural concerns. Both sides were concerned about the salvation of children, and both sides saw each other as dangerous.

Baptism and Salvation

During the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, the baptism of children remained an important issue. Writings of this period reveal that the discussion shifted from concerns about Anabaptism to the theological conflict between English Catholics and Protestants. Both groups affirmed infant baptism, but they disagreed on the nature of baptism, and they accused each other of possessing a cruel theology that condemned infants to damnation. Ultimately, Catholic and most Protestant theology excluded some infants from salvation, and for those who fell in the cracks, this exclusion must have caused anxiety. Catholics declared that unbaptized infants would be condemned, and Protestants claimed that some children could be reprobate even if they had been baptized. Even after Calvinist Protestantism became the dominant theology in England, the people still performed emergency baptisms, signaling that the anxiety over an infant's salvation remained despite the claims of Reformed ministers that children of the elect benefitted from God's covenant of grace.

The Necessity of Baptism and the Delay of Baptism

The delaying of baptism had become a contentious issue during the Edwardian Reformation. Parents feared for the salvation of their children, and for Catholics, baptism assured parents that their children were safe in God's hands. As one would expect, during the Marian Restoration and Reformation, there was a continued emphasis on the necessity of baptism for salvation. Bonner wrote in his *A profitable and necessarye*

doctrine that the "virtue, force, and effect" of baptism was the "remyssyon of synnes."[33] Furthermore, he argued that the Catholic practice of baptism was an ancient once based on Scripture and tradition, and objected to the claims of Protestants and Anabaptists who said the Catholic practice was unbiblical. Catholics asserted that while infants were unable to assent baptism, they still received its effects. By this assertion, Catholic theology accommodated the physical and mental condition of children and the anxiety of parents. Catholic writers admitted that infants were incapable of desiring baptism or believing, but that did not bar them from salvation. "The same grace of the almighty, must be beleued to fulfyll that thyng in infantes, who do dye beyng baptised, which they not of wycked or noughtye wyll, but of lacke of age, neyther with hert were able to beleue to iustice, nor with mouth confesse to saluation."[34] Bonner reminded his readers that parents offered their infants in the faith of the church. Citing the King's Book, Bonner declared that baptism "offered in ye faythe of the churche, do both receue the forgeuenes of theyr synne, and also such grace of the holy ghost, that yf they dye in the state of theyr infancy, they shall by the sayd baptisme be vndoutedlie saued."[35]

While Catholics emphasized the need for baptism, English Protestants tended to downplay its necessity. As shown in Chapter Four, Reformed theology softened the necessity of baptism arguing that children through their elect parents participated in

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[33] Bonner, *A profitable and necessarye doctrine*, STC 3283.3, m4r-v.

[34] Ibid., N1v–N2r.

[35] Notably absent is the phrase "or else not." If the absence of the phrase meant the possibility of infant salvation sans baptism, then presumably Bonner who was alive during the publication of the Bishops' Book and the King's Book would have included it. Ibid., N2r; cf. Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1587, 1994.

God's covenant of salvation. Baptism was the sign and seal of this promise of salvation through which one enters the church. This belief continued among English Protestants during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth.[36] Among some English Calvinists, this covenant theology led to them delaying baptism. This practice signals a significant shift in theology.

John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* reveals that some English Protestants delayed baptism during Mary's reign because they objected to the Catholic ceremony. Thomas Hawkes, for instance, refused to baptize his child for three weeks. Lawrence Edwards was arrested because his child remained unbaptized. When questioned about this matter, he stated that he was waiting until he "could fynd one of his religion (meaning a true professor of Christes Gospel)."[37] In the account of John Hallingdale, no mention was made if the child's baptism had been delayed, but Hallingdale had refused to have the child baptized in the Catholic manner, having found a minister who would baptize his child using the Protestant ceremony from Edward's reign, presumably the *Book of Common Prayer*. Hallindale, furthermore, refused to identify neither the place where the rite was performed nor the names of the minister or the godparents.[38] Richard Woodman was accused of delaying his child's baptism for three weeks and then performing the rite himself. In this case, Woodman denied the accusation stating that he was twenty miles

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[36] Perkins, *A golden chaine*, O5r–O6v; William Fulke, *A sermon preached vpon Sunday, beeing the twelfth of March. Anno. 1581* (London, 1581), d2v–d3r; Robert Browne, *A booke which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians* (Middleburgh, 1582), C4r; William Chub, *The true trauaile of all faithfull Christians, hovve to escape the daungers of the vvicked vvorld VVhereunto is added a christian exercise for priuate housholders* (London, 1585), a8v, b1v.

[37] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 2016.

[38] Ibid., STC 11225, 2026.

away when the child was born and that the child was baptized immediately by the midwife because it was sickly. Woodman, however, was asked if he would have brought the child to the church if it had not been baptized, but he avoided answering, stating "that is no matter what I woulde haue yone. I am sure you can not denye but it is sufficiently done, if the Midwife do it, and I hold not agaynst the doing of it, neither did I it my selfe, as you sayd I did."[39]

For all of these men, the Catholic baptism with its additional rituals and performance in Latin represented a corrupt baptism. Their actions also represent a view that a *proper* baptism was more important than the *necessity* of baptism. Foxe used *Acts and Monuments* not only to convince the laity of the cruelty of Catholics, but also to reinforce proper theology.[40] These laymen were presented by Foxe as examples of piety who valued fidelity to the right practice and theology of baptism over the necessity of baptism; death did not matter if orthodoxy was on the line. Their favoring of practice over necessity however, did not mean that these individuals or Foxe went to the extreme

[39] Ibid., STC 11225, 1994.

[40] Kathrin Reist, "Writing the Relic, Fetishing the Written: John Foxe's Actes and Monuments," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 12 (2010): 84; Rachel Helen Clark Byrd, "Narrative, History, and Theology in John Foxe's Actes and Monuments: A Problem in Definition" (Ph.D. Diss, University of Maryland, 1996), 43–45.Foxe opposed execution as punishment for heresy. Catholic persecutors were evil not because they were Catholic, but because they killed heretics. Foxe even defended a group of Flemish Anabaptists in 1575, arguing that while he opposed their beliefs, they should not burned because that was what Catholics did. Foxe contrasted Protestant martyrs with their persecutors. They illustrated the right way to persuade and respond to heresy was not by using force. Porter, "Obedience to God or Man?," 39–41; Byrd, "Narrative, History, and Theology," 110–147. Warren Wooden argues that Foxe wrote *Acts and Monuments* specifically with children in mind for the audience. Foxe cites the repetition of ideas and themes that divided Protestants and Catholics, the woodcuts which would have appealed to the illiterate such as children, and the stories of child punishment as evidence. Wooden, *Children's Literature*, 73–87.

of rebaptism. When accused, Woodman denies that he was an Anabaptist.[41] In another place, Foxe provided a signed apology of sixteen Marian Protestants who were executed. In their apology, they affirmed that while they were baptized by a Catholic priest, their baptism remained valid. "Now marke, that although the minister were of the Church malignant, yet his wickednesse did not hurt vs, for that he baptised vs in the name of the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost…we were baptised not in the fayth of the Chruch of Rome, but in the fayth of Christes Chruch."[42] All baptisms were valid if done in the name of the Trinity, but some baptisms were better than others. The willingness to delay baptism so that a proper one could be administered demonstrates that among some English Protestants baptism was no longer seen as a necessity for their child's salvation; they placed their faith not upon baptism, but upon the covenant promise that baptism represented.

Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* was extremely popular during Elizabeth's reign, and greatly influenced Puritan thought, providing the Separatists with useful arguments for separating from a false church.[43] English Separatists like Robert Browne, Henry Barrowe, and John Greenwood all came to view not only the baptism of the Catholic Church as false, but of the Church of England as well. Baptism needed to be administered in a

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[41] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1996. Several of Foxe's accounts include English Protestants denying the accusation of Anabaptism. David Loades argues that at times Foxe was unwilling or unable to distinguish between individuals persecuted for being Protestants and those disciplined for other reasons. David M. Loades, *Politics, Censorship, and the English Reformation* (New York: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 184.

[42] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1916.

[43] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 2nd ed., British history in perspective (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 66–67; B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 3, 160–161.

church where the word was truly preached and baptism rightly administered.[44] Barrow believed that the baptisms of the Catholic Church and Church of England were false baptism because they were not a true church, but he also stated that those baptisms need not be repeated. "Baptisme as is delivered by an infidel…being afterward repented and sorrowed…outward baptisme may in like manner remaine, and not be repeted when they joine unto the church."[45] Robert Browne, on the other hand, possibly had a more radical position. Browne argued that the lack of the word being duly preached and the presence of a godly minister meant that the baptism of Rome and the Church of England was false. To consent to the baptism was to endorse the ministers who performed the rite. "They…say it is their sinne & not ours, we aske them, doth not the Chruche partake with the Minister."[46] B. R. White notes that Browne's arguments were in the context of children within the covenanted community and that Browne never addressed the baptisms of those baptized under the Catholic Church or the Church of England.[47] Because of these

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[44] White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 64–65, 79–81.

[45] Barrow based his arguments on the stories of the reforms under Hezekiah, Josiah, and Nehemiah in which circumcision was not repeated after turning from apostasy to true worship of God. Greenwood held to the same opinion concerning the repeating of baptism. Leland H. Carlson, ed., *The Writings of Henry Barrow, 1587-1590*, vol. III, Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1962), 444–449; Leland H. Carlson, ed., *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow 1591-1593*, vol. VI (London: Routledge, 2003), 20–21; White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 80.

[46] Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson, eds., *The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne*, vol. II, Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts (London: Routledge, 2003), 214.

[47] White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 64–65. Naturally, such a position would lead to charges of Anabaptism and Donatism. Several of Henry Barrow's and Greenwood's writings centered on refuting charges of Donatism and Anabaptism by George Gifford who between 1589-1591 published several works again them. Peel and Carlson, *The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne*, II:215; Carlson, *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow*, VI:22; Brett Usher, "George Gifford (1547/8-1600)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed March 7, 2017,

beliefs, English Separatists, like Foxe's Marian Protestants, delayed baptism until a godly minister could be found. In 1588, for instance, Widow Katherine Unwen delayed the baptism of her son for over twelve years despite his protest, declaring that the child "was borne of faiethful parentes which was enough for it."[48] White notes that Unwen probably did not think that baptism was unnecessary, but was merely trying to soothe her son's fear that baptism was necessary needed for salvation. Other accounts illustrate that non-conformists were willing to delay baptism until they could join a Separatist congregation. In some cases, the children receiving baptism were between ages of five to seven. John Greenwood delayed his son's baptism for eighteen months because he was in prison and could not take the child to a true church to receive a true baptism.[49]

These English Separatists illustrate the impact that the introduction of the Reformation had upon the perception of children. Reformed theology made such inroads into England that for some the salvific necessity of baptism disappeared. Reinforced through the stories of pious laymen from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, parents

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http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/10658?docPos=1; George Gifford, *A Short Treatise against the Donatists of England, Whome We Call Brownists* (London, 1590), STC 11869; George Gifford, *A plaine declaration that our Brownists be full Donatists* (London, 1590), STC 11862; George Gifford, *A Short Reply Vnto the Last Printed Books of Henry Barrow and Iohn Greenwood* (London, 1591), STC 11868.

[48] Edward Stanhope, Chancellor to the Bishop of London, had the child publically baptized at St. Andrew's in Wardrobe, with a special sermon preached by Arthur Williams. Unwen fled for fear of punishment, but she was arrested again in 1593. Her examination says that the authorities thought she might conform, but wanted guarantees before agreeing. Records show that by 1598 she and her baptized son were members of the Ancient Church in Amsterdam. Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 2:30–31; White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 79; Carlson, *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow*, VI:272–273.

[49] White incorrectly states that Greenwood's son, Abel, was named Adam. Leland H. Carlson, ed., *The Writings of John Greenwood 1587-1590, Together with the Joint Writings of Henry Barrow and John Greenwood 1587-1590*, vol. IV (London: Routledge, 2003), 22; White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 80.

understood their children as benefiting from God's covenant of grace. This belief gave them the comfort they needed to delay their child's baptism until it could be baptized in a true church sans the false ceremonies of the Catholic Church or the Church of England. Moreover, this practice demonstrates the religious conflict waging in England and the way in which this conflict was beginning to shift from a clash between Protestants and Catholics to a debate between Protestant conformists and non-conformists. In many cases, this conflict centered on children, their salvation, and the administration of the true sacrament of baptism. For a small minority in England, the promise of the covenant of grace extending to their children enabled them to make the radical decision to delay their child's baptism, signaling that they had abandoned the medieval belief, and thus some of their fear, that children depended on baptism for salvation.

Baptism, Election and Infant Salvation

The necessity of baptism and whether it was permissible to delay it hinged on the issue of the salvation of an infant without baptism. The Henrician and Edwardian Reformations saw the arrival of new theologies that challenged the traditional medieval view of what placed a child inside or outside God's salvation. During the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, the issue of a child's salvation became one component in the theological conflict between English Catholics and Protestants as each side sought to villainize the other. As discussed previously, English Catholics believed in the necessity of baptism for salvation. In the examinations of Thomas Hawkes and Richard Woodman, who had delayed the baptism of their children, their interrogators stated that all children who died without baptism would be damned. John Harpsfield told Hawkes, "I admit that your child die vnchristened, what a heauy case stande you in" because "mary then are ye damned,

and youre childe both."[50] Woodman was told by Alban Langdale, "If the childe had dyed, it had bene damned, because it was not Christened, and you haue bene damned, because you were the lette thereof."[51] In both cases, the possibility of the child being damned for the lack of baptism was stressed, though it was also noted that their parents would also be condemned. English Catholics, in other words, played to the fears of parents concerning not only the salvation of their children, but also personal salvation. English Protestants who withheld their children from Catholics baptisms were, therefore, vilified and presented as individuals who cared neither for their children's salvation nor their own.

These statements provided in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* are important for understanding how English Catholics viewed their English opponents, but within the context of Foxe's work, they are meant to illustrate the cruelty of Catholics who believed that God condemned infants who died without baptism. Robert Smith in his examination by Bishop Bonner stated, "to iudge children damned that be not baptised, it is wicked."[52] Smith affirmed that children were not condemned because of the passage where Jesus called all children to himself and "that Christ hath cleansed original sinne"; thus, baptism was not necessary for salvation.[53] When Bonner once again affirmed that all Catholics believed that unbaptized children would be condemned, Smith declared, "Well my Lord,

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[50] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1587.

[51] Ibid., STC 11225, 1994.

[52] Ibid., STC 11225, 1693.

[53] Ibid.

such Catholicke, such saluation."[54] In the accounts of Hawkes and Woodman, the examiners' statements form part of a debate in which the salvation of infants without baptism is affirmed. Hawkes argued that salvation came from faith in Jesus Christ and when questioned as to how an infant could believe, he stated that "the deliueraunce of it from sinne, standeth in the fayth of his parentes."[55] Hawkes never used the term election, but he did support his statement by citing 1 Corinthians 7: "the vnbeleuing manne is sanctified by the beleuing woman, and the vnbeleuing woman is sanctified by the beleuing man, or els were your children vncleane," which would have evoked the image of covenant theology for Foxe's readers.[56] Woodman also employed covenant theology to support his belief in infant salvation, but his position bears the obvious influence of Zwinglian theology. Countering the belief that Original Sin would condemn unbaptized infants, Woodman stated that Original Sin was in all people, but it would not "hurt Gods electe people." Furthermore, Woodman, like Zwingli, cited Ezekiel 18 declaring, "The father shall not beare the childes offences, nor the childe the fathers offences: but the soule that sinneth shall dye. What could the child haue done withal, if it had died without baptism?"[57] Foxe's recording of Woodman's debate with Langdale is quite extensive. In the course of the debate, Woodman accused Langdale of blasphemy for holding that all who died unbaptized would be condemned. Foxe used his *Acts and Monuments* to

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., STC 11225, 1587.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., STC 11225, 1995.

demonstrate the cruelty of Catholics and to teach theology. While this theology is not fully explained in the stories of Smith, Hawkes, and Woodman, Foxe did support a belief in infant salvation, one which he sought to propagate to others by arguing that part of the cruelty of Catholics was a blasphemous theology that readily condemned infants.[58]

This view was not confined to Foxe and his Marian Protestants. Many Elizabethan Protestants as well rejected the belief that all unbaptized infants would be condemned to hell or limbo. Christopher Carlile wrote "is it reason to sende infantes, that dye without Baptisme to hell? To Limbus infantium? Are they not foreknowne of God? Did he not love them? are they not in the covenant of the blessed seade of Abraham?"[59] Similarly, William Hubbock wrote in his *An apologie for infants* (1595), "Wherefore these speeches of the childe vnbaptized…are speeches indeede heathenish, full of infidelitie, of rash iudgement, & vncharitablenes; not onely by damnatorie speeches against the dead: but against the liuing God, that hath taken them away as he would. Doth not the spirit speake better things?"[60] Catholics falsely made baptism necessary for salvation and invented a level of hell just for unbaptized children. They ignored the promise of God that extended to the children of the elect, causing undue worry and

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[58] See also Foxe's inclusion of John Philpots' letter arguing against Anabaptism. Ibid., STC 11225, 1839-1843.

[59] Christopher Carlile, *A discourse, concerning two diuine positions* (London, 1582), STC 4654, 159r-v, 121v-122r. See also, William Fulke, *Tvvo treatises written against the papistes* (London, 1577), STC 11458, 110-111. Little is known about Christopher Carlile. See Stephen Wright, "Christopher Carlile (d. in or before 1588)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed April 4, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/4682?docPos=3.

[60] William Hubbock, *An apologie of infants* (London, 1595), STC 13898, 26. For Hubbock see, Brett Usher, "William Hubbock (1560-1631)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed April 4, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/14019.

concern for parents. The salvation of unbaptized infants, therefore, was a weapon in the polemical fight between English Protestants and Catholics.

For most Elizabethan Protestants, the children of elect parents were members of the covenant, and because of this promise, parents could rest assured that their children would not suffer condemnation.[61] Anna French, however, argues that Protestant Reformed theology actually significantly complicated the salvation of infants. While Reformed Protestants affirmed that children of the elect were included in the covenant, they also stressed that the child needed to be baptized as soon as possible for their own spiritual benefit so that the door of salvation was opened to them.[62] Within Elizabethan England, the laity heard conflicting voices. Catholic theology stressed the necessity of baptism for salvation, and while Catholicism was not dominant in England, its theology and practice were still present in English culture. The 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, on the other hand, like its 1552 predecessor, stated that baptism should only be performed on Sundays or holy days, thus creating a delay between birth and baptism, but it also continued to support emergency baptisms.[63] This support reinforced the belief in the necessity of baptism, despite the assertion otherwise by Elizabethan Protestants and the *Book of Common Prayer*. Furthermore, as French notes, Elizabethan Protestants in their attempts to condemn and distance themselves from Anabaptism often argued against the

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[61] Fulke, *A sermon preached vpon Sunday*, STC 11455, drv-d3r; Chub, *The true trauaile of all faithfull Christians*, STC 5211, b1v-b22; Perkins, *A golden chaine*, STC 19657, p3v; Hubbock, *An apologie of infants*, STC 13898, 22-26.

[62] French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings," 157–172.

[63] Church of England, *The booke of common praier* (London, 1559), STC 16292, n3v-o1r.

necessity of baptism while also stating that those who willingly refused baptism for their children caused them to die potentially without the sacrament of regeneration.[64]

While the propagators and adherents of Reformed theology found comfort for themselves and their children in Covenant theology, such a theology also caused anxiety, not only by disrupting established medieval theology concerning baptism and salvation, but also through the doctrine of reprobation. In the section on reprobation in *A golden chaine*, Perkins emphasized that all not all people were called to salvation. Many, in fact, were condemned without ever knowing of Christ, and that included children of the elect. "For many children of faithfull parents haue died before they had any vse of reason at all: ye many thousands of riper yeres, which haue not had so much as a glimmering of Christ."[65] Concerning God's decree of reprobation in infants, Perkins stated that "as soone as they are borne, for the guilt of originall and naturall sinne being left in Gods secret iudgement vnto themselues, they dying are reiected of God for euer."[66] Perkins stated that God did not hate his creation, but only the sin present in them which was the cause of their condemnation. God's hatred, therefore, was not the cause of God's decree of reprobation, but its consequence.[67] For parents grieving the loss of a child and wondering if they were of the elect, these words probably brought little comfort. Other

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[64] French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings," 170; John Whitgift, *Works of Archbishop Whitgift*, ed. John Ayre, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1852), 538.

[65] Perkins, *A golden chaine*, STC 19657, v1r.

[66] Ibid., STC 19657, v2r.

[67] Ibid.; see also, William Perkins, *A case of conscience: the greatest that euer was; how a man may know whether he be the child of God or no* (Edinburgh, 1592), STC 19666, 59-60.

writers acknowledged the difficulty of this doctrine. George Gifford, while emphasizing that God only saved the elect, voiced the question of why did God condemn thousands of infants for Original Sin. "Who can search out and comprehend the iudgmentes of God in this? were they not the worke of his handes? Yet there is no hope offred vnto them."[68]

Notably, the difficulties of the doctrine of reprobation of infants meant that some ministers never discussed it.[69] In his *An apologie for infants*, William Hubbock argued against Catholics that unbaptized children were condemned based on them being participants in God's covenant of election, but absent in the work was any reference to the reprobation of children; however, the possible reprobation of infants would have been counterproductive as his goal was to soothe the fears of anxious parents.[70] William Chub encouraged parents to remember the promise of God concerning the children of the elect and to leave the possibility of their reprobation unto the secret judgement of God. "If among them any be reprobated as some of the godly affirmeth, that is not vnto vs, but we must leaue it vnto God, who hath reserued his secret iudgeme[n]t to him selfe."[71] Essentially, Chub argued that the possibility of reprobation existed for children of the elect, but told parents not to dwell on it, words of comfort that might have been inadequate for some parents. Even English Catholics used criticized Protestants for the doctrine. Richard Bristow, an English Catholic priest who eventually sought refuge in

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[68] Gifford, *Certaine sermons*, STC 1148.5, 105.

[69] Peter Gregg Slater, *Children in the New England Mind: In Death and in Life* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1977), 24–25.

[70] Hubbock, *An apologie of infants*, STC 13898.

[71] Chub, *The true trauaile of all faithfull Christians*, STC 5211, B1r.

Douai, stated "I know you master Caluine teacheth you…that some infants saued, although they be not baptized…and againe that some others be not saued, although they be baptized…What Scripture have you for this geare?"[72] Bristow's comments were in response to the rejection of the necessity of baptism for salvation, but they also demonstrate that just as English Protestants criticized and attacked Catholics for a theology that condemned infants to hell, Catholics could respond in kind.

The issue of infant salvation was not the primary cause of disagreements between Catholics and Protestants, but it was a relevant secondary issue. Both rival theologies sought to provide some comfort to parents concerning the salvation of their children, but both sides also saw the weaknesses in each other's beliefs and used them in their polemical attacks. Moreover, such conflicting theologies concerning the salvation of infants must have brought considerable confusion and anxiety for parents, especially those who were somewhere between Catholic and Protestant. Official endorsement of both Protestantism under Edward VI and Catholicism under Mary I, after all, was short lived; and many of the laity continued to view baptism as necessary for salvation as seen the ongoing practice of emergency baptism.[73] During the Edwardian Reformation, English Reformers objected to the practice, but it was never outlawed. Emergency baptism continued through the reign of Mary, and during Elizabeth's reign, while some

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[72] Richard Bristow, *A reply to Fulke, In defense of M. D. Allens scroll of articles, and booke of purgatorie. By Richard Bristo Doctor of Diuinitie ... Perused and Allowed by Me Th. Stapleton* (Louvain, 1580), STC 3802. 175-76; Peter E. B. Harris, "Richard Bristow (1538-1581)," ed. David Cannadine, *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed April 4, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/3452?docPos=4.

[73] Hubbock, *An apologie of infants*, STC 13898; Piercy, "The Cradle of Salvation," 151.

English Protestants opposed emergency, the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* retained the practice.[74] Archbishop Whitgift endorsed emergency baptism even though he affirmed that baptism was not necessary for salvation, and he also questioned why Christian parents would let their child die without the sacrament of regeneration.[75] As with most English Protestants who supported the practice, Whitgift's support for emergency baptism was borne partially out of fear that the practice would lead to Anabaptism.[76] However, in endorsing emergency baptism, even though he denied the necessity of baptism for salvation, he did play upon the fears of parents, stating that the death of a child without baptism might be a sign of its reprobation. "The lack [of baptism] thereof (though it not be necessary) yet may it seem to be a probable token and sign of reprobation."[77] One wonders how many parents rushed to baptize their children because of such a statement. Will Coster notes that the *Thirty-Nine Articles* placed baptism as not absolutely necessary for salvation, but formally necessary as through it faith was confirmed and grace was given. As late as 1569, a vicar in Kent was preaching that unbaptized children would suffer the pains of hell.[78] Whitgift and others like him contributed to the theological confusion and parental anxiety, and the practice of

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[74] The practice was not abolished until late in the seventeenth century. Cressy notes that part of the objection to emergency baptisms was that women were often ones performing them, and thus efforts were made to limit baptism only to licensed ministers. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 117–123; Hubbock, *An apologie of infants*, STC 13898.

[75] Whitgift, *Works of Archbishop Whitgift*, II:522, 538–540.

[76] Ibid., II:519–5400; French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings," 170.

[77] Whitgift, *Works of Archbishop Whitgift*, II:538.

[78] Coster, "Tokens of Innocence," 270.

emergency baptism continued until late into the seventeenth century, demonstrating that parents, despite the teaching of English Protestants, continued to believe that baptism was necessary for salvation.

As with the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, baptism remained the central doctrine for the discussion of children in the church. Catholics emphasized its necessity for salvation while Reformed Protestants, who still supported infant baptism, stressed that children of the elect were included God's covenant of salvation, though the possibility of reprobation existed. As opposed to the majority of works examined during the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, the works published during this period, though influenced by external theologies, were from English writers, demonstrating that Protestant theology had gained a foothold in English thought. Moreover, whereas the publications from the previous period on baptism reflected the concerns of the continent, namely Anabaptism, these writings represent the internal theological struggles between Catholicism and Protestantism within England. The fear of Anabaptism had not dissipated, but Protestant and Catholic writers were more focused at this time on fighting each other. Part of the rhetoric of both Catholic and Protestants was the accusation that their perspective theologies condemned infants to hell, which in some cases included accusations of Anabaptism. While this rhetoric is polemical, the villainizing of each other's theology by emphasizing that it condemned infants to hell was employed because such language would have an emotional force. Parents deeply cared for their children and feared for their spiritual lives. During the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I, writers exploited these fears to vilify their opponents and win the laity over to their side. While one cannot ignore the fact that each side believed their theology brought comfort to anxious parents,

the presence of conflicting theologies in England, both between Catholics and Protestants and even within Protestantism itself, probably heightened parental concern for the salvation of their children. Catholic practices, rooted in cultural and familial tradition, probably soothed the fears of many parents. Despite the assertions of some English Protestants, the practice of emergency baptism lingered, and while some ministers encouraged the practice as a means of guarding against Anabaptism, the practice was primarily retained because the laity continued to perform them out of their concern for their children. This fact demonstrates that the salvation of infants continued to be an important issue in England and shows both the way in which Catholic theology helped to alleviate parental fears about their children and how Reformed theology struggled to accommodate adequately these fears.

Physically and Spiritually Vulnerable

Medieval exempla often presented children as physically and spiritually vulnerable. During the reign of Mary and Elizabeth, Protestant and Catholic writers began to employ these themes in their conflict with each other. Through Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, the cruelty of Catholics was displayed as they beat children and killed infants. For Catholics, Protestants placed children in spiritual danger by denying them baptismal exorcism. The image presented by Protestants and Catholics further demonstrates the tension caused by the introduction of the Reformation into England.

Victims of Physical Violence

One of the aims of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* was to discredit Catholicism by displaying stories of their cruelty to true followers of God. Foxe accomplished this task

partly through recounting stories in which children were victims of Catholic violence. In one story, a midwife who was twenty-eight weeks pregnant was arrested and placed in Lollard's tower because she refused to attend the "popish church." The whole incident caused great distress for the woman. Foxe states, "that day shee came in, throughe feare and a fal at her taking, she was deliuered of a man child, and could haue no woman with her in that nedeful time."[79] The story continues recounting how the woman was released from prison, and then rearrested because a woman and the child died in childbirth under her care. Foxe concluded the story, noting that ten weeks after she had been freed from prison, the men who originally arrested her died.[80] This story was meant to demonstrate how God punished those who persecuted Protestants. Notably absent is any reference to the fate of the child, but the assumption would have been that the infant being born at twenty-eight weeks died. Through their cruelty, Catholic caused the premature labor of this woman and denied the help of a midwife, resulting in the loss of the baby.

In another story about a Protestant named John Fetty who had been imprisoned by Bishop Bonner, Foxe recounted how Fetty's eight or nine year old son died because of Catholic violence. When the child went to visit his father, he was severely beaten after retorting to the bishop's chaplain, who had called his father a heretic, that "he is no

[79] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 2100.

[80] In *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe emphasized that martyrs would be vindicated by God. He believed that persecutors were punished by having to suffer painful incurable diseases that resulted in death and God's justice was one of the reasons why Mary I's reign was so short. In this way, he portrayed the suffering of martyrs as a positive. Byrd, "Narrative, History, and Theology," 53–54.

heretic but you have Balams mark."[81] Foxe contrasted the piety of the child, who possessed "a bold and quicke spirit, and also godly brought vp and instructed by his father in the knowledge of God," with the cruelty of his Catholic persecutors, who "did most shamelesly and without all pitty, to whip and scourge, being naked, this tender childe, that he was all in a gore bloud."[82] After the beating, the child was taken to Fetty, where before his shocked and horrified father, the boy recounted what happened. Foxe did not conclude the cruelty there but noted that after the boy told his story, he was "violently plucked…away out of his fathers hands" and carried back to the bishop's house.[83] Foxe stated that eventually Bishop Bonner released Fetty and his son, though he wanted to execute Fetty for heresy, because he feared legal repercussions for the beating of Fetty's son. The boy died fourteen days after he and his father's release, though Foxe noted that he did not know if the boy's death was from the beating or some other illness. For Foxe, this child who had suffered such cruelty at the hands of Catholics was a martyr, and his Reformed theology shines through the darkness of this violent story when he declared that the child's death was God's providence so that Fetty could be released. "The Lorde yet vsed this theyr cruell & detestable fact, as a meanes of his prouidence for the deliuery of this good poore man and faythfull Christian, his name be euer praysed

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[81] John Fetty, a tailor, was betrayed by wife to the authorities. He was released from prison so that he could care for his two children. After three weeks under his care, his wife recovered, but she betrayed him again to the authorities. Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 2056.

[82] I. Ross Bartlett notes that this story is one of three stories of beatings that involved Bishop Bonner or his staff. Foxe stated that he was unsure as to whether or not Fetty's was before Bonner, but that it was likely. Ibid.; I. Ross Bartlett, "The Comfort of the Meek: John Foxe as Popular Hagiographer in the Marian Sections of the 'Acts and Monuments'" (Th.D., University of Victoria, 1992), 301.

[83] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 2056.

therefore."[84] Modern readers might find the juxtaposition of the child's suffering and death with God's providence as disturbing, but for Foxe and his readers, and possibly Fetty, the appeal to providence was an attempt to find purpose and meaning from a violent event. By stating that the child had suffered and died a martyr as part of God's providence, they placed him firmly within God's salvation, illustrating the ways in which Reformed theology could offer hope and comfort for grieving people.

Probably one of Foxe's most gruesome stories involving the martyrdom of a child is the story of Guernsey martyrs in the Channel Islands. A mother and two daughters, one of whom, Perotine Massy, was pregnant, were arrested for the possession of a stolen cup. In the course of their examination, they were found innocent of stealing, but it was revealed that they refused to attend the Catholic Church for which they were sentenced to death. As the women were being burned at the stake, the fire caused Perotine Massy's womb to burst and the infant fell to the ground. Foxe then described in detail how the infant, a healthy living child, was "handled," and then spitefully thrown back into the fire to burn with his mother, aunt, and grandmother. "Thereby issued foorthe of her bodye a goodlye man chylde, which was taken vp, and handled by the cruell tormentours, and after they threw most spightfullye the same chylde into the fyre agayne, wher it was burned with the sely Mother, Graūdmother, and Aunt, very pitifully to behold."[85] The description of this event was meant to highlight the cruelty of the Catholic persecutors, and Foxe called it one of the worst stories in his entire work.

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[84] Ibid.

[85] John Foxe, *Actes and monuments* (London, 1563), STC 11222, 1544.

Megan Hickerson-Carery notes that in the 1563 edition of *Acts and Monuments* Foxe was ambiguous in his depiction of three women because of their desperate willingness to recant and follow the law, but he included the story because the murder of the infant furthered his argument for the cruelty of Catholics.[86] By the 1583 edition, Foxe had greatly expanded the account with new background information. The additional material was in response to accusations of Thomas Harding who accused Massy of immorality for having an illegitimate baby and of murder for not requesting a delay of execution on account of pregnancy. For Harding, she alone held the responsibility for the death of her child and not the authorities.[87] Whereas Foxe in the first edition seemed almost embarrassed by these women, only using the story to demonstrate Catholic atrocities, by the 1583 edition, he had come to their defense and elevated them and Massy's child to the level of true martyrs. Foxe provided more details about the execution and the birth of the infant to highlight further the cruelty of the Catholic persecutors. In this account, Foxe stated that the women were tied to post, but the rope broke before they were dead, causing the women to fall in the fire. For described what happened next as "a ruefull sight, not onely to the eyes of all that there stood, but also to the eares of all true harted christians, that shall read this historye: For as the belly of the woman brast a sonder by vehemency of the flame, the Infant being a fayre man childe."[88]

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[86] Megan Lora Hickerson-Carey, "Women Martyrs in a Female Church: Gender in John Foxe's 'Acts and Monuments'" (Ph.D., Syracuse University, 2002), 292–293.

[87] Ibid., 292; Thomas Harding, *A Reioindre to M. Jewels Replie against the Sacrafice of the Masse* (Louvanii, 1567), STC 12761, 184v.

[88] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1945.

The child was rescued by W. House, laid on the grass and then eventually taken to the bailiff who "who gaue censure, that it should be caryed backe agayne and cast into the fire."[89] In this account, the actions of W. House are contrasted with those of the bailiff. House rescued the "faire child" for the bailiff to have it killed. No attempt was made to baptize the infant, a cruelty noted by Foxe when he declared that "the infant [was] Baptised in his own bloud."[90] The 1583 edition also included the original woodcut from the 1563 publication. Thomas Anderson notes that the woodcut does not fit the description of the event as it depicts Massy tied the post and the child flying out of her belly while the officials look on jovially.[91] The differences between the woodcut and the 1583 edition are the result of Foxe's editing, as the image matches Foxe's original recounting.[92] As Anderson argues, the juxtaposition of the image with the written account better conveyed Foxe's theme of Catholic cruelty.[93]

After recounting the execution, Foxe devoted significant material to defending Massy and the legitimacy of the baby. He provided the name of her husband, the name of the minister, and the location of the ceremony. In response to the accusation that she was a murderer because she did not claim the benefit of pregnancy, Foxe stated that Massy probably did not know she could claim this benefit as she had been raised in Ireland.

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Thomas Page Anderson, *Acts of Reading : Interpretation, Reading Practices, and the Idea of the Book in John Foxe's Actes and Monuments* (Newark, US: Associated University Presses, 2009), 104.

[92] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11222, 1544; Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1944.

[93] Anderson, *Acts of Reading*, 104-05.

Furthermore, he stated that if she had mentioned her pregnancy, there is nothing to say that the officials would have followed the law.[94] For Foxe, the officials were at fault because they executed the women even though they had recanted. "The law willeth none to be condemned by sentence of death, for heresye, whiche the first time reuoke theyr opinion, and yet contrary to this law they condemned her vnlawfully."[95] Todd Porter has shown that Foxe's personal manuscript collection contained numerous cases of men and women who recanted and were spared, but Foxe chose not to include them because he wanted to present the image of defiance and martyrdom as the proper response to religious oppression.[96] Foxe originally included the account despite the cowardice of then women because of the cruelty of the Catholic officials. The attack by Harding enabled Foxe to recast the recanting of the women as the desire of a mother to save her unborn child.[97] She "so carefully went about by recantation to saue both her selfe and her childe from the fire."[98] For Foxe, these women were now true martyrs of the faith, but Foxe's greatest praise was to the infant who "was both borne, and dyed a Martyr, leauing

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[94]This assertion was repeated again in the story of Elizabeth Pepper who was eleven weeks pregnant when executed. When asked why she did not claim her pregnancy, she stated "they know it well enough. Oh suche is the bloudy hartes of this cruell generation, that no occasion can stay them from their mischieuous murdering of the saintes of the Lord, that truly professe Christ cucified onely, and alone Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 2145.

[95] Ibid., STC 11225, 1947.

[96] Anderson, *Acts of Reading*, 216.

[97] Hickerson-Carey, "Women Martyrs in a Female Church," 297.

[98] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1948.

behinde to the world, which it neuer saw, a spectacle wherein the whole world may see the Herodian cruelty of this gracelesse generation of catholicke Tormentors."[99]

Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* was extremely popular, and scholars have noted its influence in shaping English religious identity.[100] In 1571, every cathedral was ordered to purchase a copy and make it available to the public along with the English Bible. Scholars have argued that the work was not a product of the English Reformation, but helped to propagate it. The work came to construct and reflect the cultural values of its audience, in much the same way as medieval exempla reflected and reinforced cultural values.[101] Like medieval exempla, Foxe presented children as innocent victims, but whereas the earlier texts depict children suffering for the sins of their parents, Foxe laid the responsibility directly on Catholics. In Foxe's stories, the children suffer not because of their parents, but alongside them, and could legitimately claim the title of martyr. The trope of the child as victim suffering for the sins of adults never departed English culture. As the Reformation became established under Elizabeth, Protestants developed their own narratives that reflected, reinforced, and perpetuated their cultural and theological views. As seen in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, such narratives included the image of child as victim of someone else's sin, demonstrating the ways in which existing cultural views were appropriated by Protestants to support their theology. Just as medieval exempla employed this image for the impact that they might have on the listener and reader, Foxe

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[99] Ibid., STC 11225, 1945.

[100] For an overview of this literature, see Hickerson-Carey, "Women Martyrs in a Female Church," 7–8.

[101] Ibid., 9.

used people like Perotine Massy to emphasize to his audience the cruelty of Catholics.[102] Such stories, which emphasized the Catholic history of killing infants, combined with his support of infant salvation to demonstrate the cultural, moral, and theological superiority of Protestantism.[103]

Protestants and Spiritual Vulnerability

While Protestants portrayed Catholics as cruel abusers and murderers of children, Catholics accused English Protestants of making children spiritually vulnerable. Medieval literature had emphasized the spiritual danger that children were in through the affirmation of emergency baptism and the stress on religious education. While the emphasis on religious education remained consistent among Catholics and Protestants, the conflict between Catholics and Protestants on the spiritual vulnerability of children focused on the exorcism. As previously shown, by rejecting the rite of pre-baptismal exorcism, the continental reformers offered a perspective in which children were not as spiritually vulnerable to the demonic. This viewed was shared by the English Reformers of Edward VI's reign. With the publication of the 1552 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, English Reformers removed the exorcism from the baptismal ceremony, thus severing the connection of a rite long associated with baptism. Scholars believe that the exorcisms associated with baptism evolved from the three examinations used by early Christians to ascertain the faith and doctrine of catechumens before baptism. As baptism was performed on Easter, these examinations (called "scrutinies") took place over the

[102] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, STC 11225, 1735, 1953, 2044, 2045, 2075, 2145.

[103] Ibid., STC 11225, 1947.

three preceding Lenten Sundays.[104] While initially the majority of catechumens were adults capable of answering these tests for themselves, ample evidence exists that children were also baptized at this time. As Christianity became the dominant religion in the west, infants came to occupy the majority of those receiving baptism, but the rituals, for the most part, remained the same, crafted for adults. Susan C. Karant-Nunn argues that this fact probably went unnoticed for the majority of the laity because of the use of Latin in the ceremony and the institution of godparenthood. [105] With the rise of infants receiving baptism, the scrutinies became increasingly associated with the exorcisms to the extent that their purpose changed from examining the faith and knowledge of the catechumens, to ensuring that evil spirits had departed from them.[106]

By the fourteenth century, the exorcisms and baptism had changed from only occurring during the Lenten season to within eight days of the child's birth. This modification was the result of the reality of infant mortality. As baptism cleansed one of Original Sin and opened the gates of heaven, laity and clergy feared that infants would not survive until Easter to receive the sacrament. The shortening of the interval between birth and baptism also meant that the child spent less time exposed to the influences of evil spirits and the devil. By the sixteenth century, the three weeks of scrutinies had

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[104] Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*, 5–11.

[105] Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 43.

[106] H. A. Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama*, Reprint edition. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2004), 114–19.

collapsed into one service that occurred at the church door prior to the baptismal service.[107]

Lessening the time between birth and baptism communicated to the people the danger and severity of Original Sin and the importance and necessity of baptism. The joining of the exorcisms to baptism further strengthened these perceptions and signaled that infants were vulnerable vessels susceptible to demonic forces. Until baptism, they were children of the world, belonging to the devil.[108] A child coming for baptism at the dawn of the Reformation era would have received three exorcisms. First, there was the exsufflation in which the cleric blew upon the child once or three times, for the Trinity, and commanded the devil to come out of the child. The blowing of air pushed the devil out, preparing the way for the Holy Spirit. Then the priest made the sign of the cross over the infant's forehead and chest and said a series of prayers that asked God to break the devil's hold on the child and to fill the child with God's grace. Then, the child was given salt, followed by more exorcism prayers directed specifically for boys and girls, and the sign of the cross was given again. Finally, the priest addressed the devil directly, reminding him of the punishment that awaits him and commanding him by the power of the Trinity to come out of the child because the child was going to receive the Holy Spirit and regeneration through baptism. The priest completed the exorcism ritual by placing spittle on the nose and ears of the child. All of this prepared the infant for baptism.

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[107] Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*, 109–112; for a fuller discussion on the development of baptismal exorcisms, see Francis Young, *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity* (Cambridge: Palgrave, 2016).

[108] Gelis, *History of Childbirth*, 194–196.

Addressing the infant or the godparents, the priest would then ask if the infant had renounced sin, the devil, and his pomps. After the infant/godparents answered, "yes," the priest would then make the sign of the cross over the infant's chest and back with holy oil or chrism. The whole ceremony communicated that the child was infected by evil spirits and needed to be spiritually cleansed to receive the Holy Spirit.[109]

Scholars have noted that when viewed together the exorcism and baptism signaled an extreme view of Original Sin, but they also testify to a culture that viewed the physical world as the dominion of the devil.[110] Even the elements used in the exorcisms and the baptism had to be exorcised. The salt was purified during the exorcism whereas the font, water, and oil used were blessed before the baptismal ceremony.[111] As new arrivals to the world, children were in the possession of the devil and needed to be reclaimed/rescued from his clutches. Parental worries about the necessity of baptism for the salvation of their children are clearly linked to the decreased time between birth and baptism, especially when one takes into consideration the prevalence of emergency baptisms. The exorcisms adjoining baptism possibly heightened parental concerns for their children.[112] These fears were likely exacerbated by English Catholic leaders who advised priests to still perform the pre-baptismal exorcism on infants who had received emergency baptism. While such a practice might not seem theologically or liturgically logical, such actions

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[109] Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 44–49.

[110] Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship*, 70.

[111] Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 45.

[112] Coster, "Tokens of Innocence," 269.

would have reinforced to the laity that children were vulnerable to the demonic.[113] Not only did their infants need baptism to cleanse them of Original Sin and prevent them from going to hell, but the possibility existed that their children were also possessed by evil spirits. Baptism and the exorcisms that accompanied it ensured parents that their children were spiritually protected.

When Catholicism formally returned to England under Mary, the importance of the exorcism and the vulnerability of children to the devil were reaffirmed. In *A profitable and necessarye doctrine*, Bishop Bonner emphasized the importance of children being cleansed of evil spirits before receiving baptism. "This thyng also whiche the holye Churche through the hole worlde uniformelye dothe practyse in persones that are to be baptyled, whether they be litle children, or yong folke…they doo not enter into the funt of lyfe before that the unclene spirite be dryuen awaye by the exorcisines, and exsufflations of the clerkes or ministers"[114] Combined together, baptism and exorcism affirmed to the laity that the baptized child was completely removed from the service of the devil. "The very Sacramentes…do declare yonge chyldren,…deliuered from the seruyce of the deuyll. For besides that they be baptized…there is also fyrst in them exercised…the contrary power (meanynge there by the Deuyll) which contrary power, the childre (by the wordes of them yt did bere them) make aunswere that they do

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[113] Archbishop John Pecham instituted this practice at the Council of Lambeth in 1281. In 1610, Laurence Kellam, in a liturgical manual published in Douai for the English mission, echoed this view in his annotations of the baptismal rite. Pecham and Kellam, however, had different reasons for the practice. Pecham wanted to ensure that the authority of the Church was not diminished by emergency baptisms whereas Kellam believed that the baptismal exorcism would help protect the child from the demonic. Young, *Witchcraft and Magic*, 89–90, 134.

[114] Bonner, *A profitable and necessarye doctrine*, STC 3283.3, N1r.

renounce it."[115] Published in 1555, Bonner's comments must be seen within the context of the removal of the baptismal exorcism by English Reformers in 1552. They represent both a reassertion of Catholic doctrine and practice and a reaffirmation of the spiritual vulnerability of children to the demonic. In stressing that baptism and exorcism together ensured that the children were removed from the devil's grasp, Bonner likely raised doubts among the laity as to the efficacy of a Protestant baptism that omitted the exorcism.

English Protestants, however, spoke disparagingly of the baptismal exorcism rite as practiced by Catholics. Often they described the practice as smearing the child with spittle and oil, all which was an ineffective superstition. John Ponet, writing from exile in Strasbourg, said that Catholics abused the sacrament by adding their "owne rites and supersticions, whether it be salt, spittle, creme, oyle, or any such thinges as may deface the worthines of Christ."[116] According to Protestants, since the need for an exorcism before baptism was completely useless and without profit, the practice diminished the power and importance of the baptism. Thomas Becon, also residing in Strasbourg, stated that Catholic priests "coniureth the deuel out of the poore you[n]ge Infaunt, bespueth the chylde with his vile spitle and stincking slaueringe , putteth salt in the chyldes mouth, smereth it with greasye and unsauery oyle, [ec]t. And withoute these apysh toyes they

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[115] Bonner, *An honest godlye instruction*, STC 3281, N1v-N2r.

[116] John Ponet, *The humble and vnfained confessio[n] of the belefe of certain poore banished men* (London, 1554), STC 5630, d5v-d6r; D. G. Newcombe, "John Ponet (c. 1514-1556)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed April 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/22491.

make the people beleue that the baptisme is nothi[n]g worth."[117] This criticism continued into Elizabeth's reign with William Charke calling the Catholic practice a "creame and spettlein Baptisme."[118]

The conflict over baptismal exorcism illustrates the theological tension in England caused by the Reformation. The debates centered on the correct practice, but they had implications for the religious perception of children. Were children so corrupted by Original Sin and in the grasp of the devil that they needed an exorcism even if they had already been baptized? Or could parents trust that their children were firmly in God's grace and that the exorcism was an unbiblical superstition? Catholics through their emphasis on the exorcism signaled that Protestant baptisms was incomplete and left the child open to spiritual danger. Protestants countered that children were not as spiritually susceptible to the demonic because of God's covenantal promises and that the Catholic exorcism was just a vile and gross superstition that smeared spit and oil on children.

While English Catholics and Protestants disagreed about the necessity of the baptismal exorcism, they both believed in the demonic possession of older children and adults. Demonic possessions had been a part of medieval life, but accounts of them peaked in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Intimately connected to demonic possession was witchcraft, which both Protestants and Catholics believed was one of the ways a person could become possessed (the other way was by divine permission). Among

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[117] Thomas Becon, *An humble supplicacion vnto God for the restoring of hys holye woorde* (Strasburg, 1554), STC 1730, b6r-v3; Seymour Baker House, "Thomas Becon (1512/13-1567)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed April 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/1918.

[118] Charke, *An answeare for the time*, STC 5008, d1r.

Protestants, possession was most commonly associated with witchcraft, and within England, "possessed" came to be associated with "bewitched."[119] The social and economic tensions and confessional conflicts of the Reformation period contributed to a growing believe that people were living in the last days and scholars have noted that the rise in accusations of possession during this period became closely associated with apocalypticism with Protestants and Catholics using the exorcisms as a battleground in which they demonstrated the superiority and divine endorsement of their beliefs and practices.[120] Within England, children were seen as especially vulnerable to possession, and many of the possession accounts focused on them.[121] Marion Gibson argues that often these cases were probably rebellious children. The label of possessed was placed upon them by their parents and teachers as a way of explaining their behavior, but they were also a way for children to challenge and mock established hierarchies.[122] The

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[119] Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 191–194.

[120] Levack argues that apocalypticism was not the cause of increased possession accounts, but it provided context for understanding the possessed and the exorcists, placing them within God's plan for Jesus' Second Coming. Ibid., 65–70; Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, *Devil Theatre: Demonic Possession and Exorcism in English Renaissance Drama, 1558-1642* (Boydell and Brewer, 2007), 91–94.

[121] Gifford, *Certaine sermons*, STC 1148.5, 62; Perkins, *A case of conscience*, STC 1957, g5v; Edward Nyndge, *A booke declaringe the fearfull vexasion, of one Alexander Nyndge, beynge moste horriblye tormented wyth an euyll spirit* (London, 1573), STC 17852; Anonymous, *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three witches of Warboys* (London, 1593), STC 25019; I. D., *The most wonderfull and true storie, of a certaine witch named Alse Gooderige* (London, 1597), STC 6170.7; George More, *A true discourse concerning the certaine possession and dispossession of 7 persons in one familie in Lancashire* (Middelburg, 1600), STC 18070.

[122] Marion Gibson, *Possession, Puritanism and Print: Darrell, Harsnett, Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Exorcism Controversy* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 103–106; see also, J. A. Sharpe, "Disruption in the Well-Ordered Household: Age, Authority and Possessed Young People," in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*, ed. Paul Griffiths (Basingstoke: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 198.

rebelliousness of children is reinforced by the fact that not everyone believed possession accounts to be genuine and children even admitted they had been faking.[123] Building on this, Anna French argues that through possession, children derived agency, providing them a voice in a culture in which they were usually silent; particularly since in many of these possession accounts children took on prophetic roles. Children were seen as especially vulnerable to the demonic, she argues, because their salvation status was in flux as a result of the Protestant emphasis on predestination and de-emphasis on baptism as salvific, leading to questions as to whether children were spiritually pure or demonically corrupt. For English Protestants, especially Puritans, the exorcism of an older child showed that the child indeed was one of the elect and that its salvation was secured.[124]

At the same time, the rise of possession accounts curiously coincided with the ascendency of Protestantism within England, which explicitly minimized the importance of the pre-baptismal exorcism rite. This rise is partly explained by acknowledging that just because English Protestants said that the exorcism was unnecessary did not mean that the people fully believed it. The supernatural still existed. People still believed in

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[123] The most controversial case was that of John Darrel who became a famous Protestant exorcist, only later to be discovered as fraud. Gibson, *Possession, Puritanism and Print*; John Darrel, *An apologie, or defence of the possession of William Sommers, a yong man of the towne of Nottingham* (Amsterdam?, 1599), STC 6280.5; Samuel Harsnett, *A discouery of the fraudulent practises of Iohn Darrel* (London, 1599), STC, 12883; John Darrel, *The Replie of Iohn Darrell, to the Answer of Iohn Deacon, and Iohn Walker, Concerning the Doctrine of the Possession and Dispossession of Demoniakes* (England?, 1602), STC 6284; see also, Saint Chrysostom, *The disclosing of a late counterfeyted possession by the deuyl in two maydens within the citie of London* (London, 1574), STC 3738.

[124] French, *Children of Wrath*, 26, 51–52, 70–79.

demons, fairies, witches, angels, archangels, heaven, and hell.[125] The rise in possession accounts of older baptized children was quite possibly connected to the rejection of the baptismal exorcism. The cultural anxieties that led to a belief in possession persisted and likely found expression in the accusations that witches had caused a child to be possessed. The tension caused by Protestantism was engendered not only by their rejection of baptism as salvific, but also because of their rejection of a part of the ceremony that further ensured that children were spiritually protected.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the resurgence of Catholicism under Mary shifted the polemical discussion of children away from an external fear of Anabaptism to an internal conflict between English Catholics and Protestants. Mary's reign saw the attempts of Catholics to roll back the gains made English Reformers in the previous years. Under Elizabeth, Protestants sought to do the same to their opponents. Anabaptism remained a fear, but in theological discussions that intersected with children, Catholics and Protestants were more likely to focus on each other. The conflict between them further exasperated the confusion about children in the church caused by the introduction of the Reformation into England and illustrates the influence that the disputed doctrines over Original Sin, baptism, and exorcism had on perceptions of children. Catholics and Protestants both esteemed children and presented them as examples of piety and true martyrdom, but they also viewed each other as a danger to children. Catholics propagated the fear that Protestants left children spiritually vulnerable and endangered their salvation

[125] Ibid., 55.

by delaying their baptism. Protestants, on the other, perceived Catholics not only as murderers and abusers of children but as possessing a cruel theology that condemned all unbaptized children to damnation. For both sides, their theology and practice were viewed as the only true source of comfort and surety for parents worried about their children.

Caught in between such Catholic and Protestant writers were the English people. They were bombarded with conflicting theological views about the nature of children and their salvation. The anxiety caused by the conflict between Protestants and Catholics is seen in the continued practice of emergency baptisms and the rise of accounts of possessed children, both of which represent a continued fear about the salvation of children. Children were caught between innocence and Original Sin, baptism and salvation, exorcism and possession. Catholic and Protestant theology sought to address these concerns, but their conflict between each other only further complicated the problem. Moreover, this situation was compounded as Reformed theology became dominant under Elizabeth. Reformed Protestants and their Catholic opponents acknowledged the full implications of the doctrine of election and reprobation in regards to infants. For Catholics, the possibility that an infant could be baptized and still damned was a major criticism against Reformed Protestantism. On the other hand, Protestants acknowledged this part of Reformed theology, but only rarely discussed its implications, most probably out of pastoral concerns. Despite this, the possibility of the reprobation of infants probably caused great anxiety among some parents. Faced with two options, English parents had to choose between a theology that said their children would be saved

if they were baptized and one that said that children did not need baptism for salvation, though some could still be destined for damnation.

Furthermore, the rise of exorcism accounts of children and the continued prevalence of emergency baptisms throughout the late sixteenth century demonstrates that the parental anxieties were not soothed by the ascendency of Protestantism, in particular Reformed theology, in England. The parental anxieties of parents, their concern for the spiritual wellbeing and the salvation of their children, deepened as Protestantism became established. This increase in anxiety was not just a result of the inadequacies of Reformed theology. Such anxieties were present prior to the Reformation. People struggled to accept that their infants and young children were condemned just because of Original Sin. This difficulty gave rise to emergency baptisms and the theory of limbo within medieval Catholic thought. Protestant theology, on the other hand, sought to address these concerns pastorally by arguing that baptism was not required for salvation and that children of the elect were in God's grace. Both made accommodations to alleviate the fears of parents, but ultimately, Catholics and Reformed Protestants inevitably left some children outside God's grace whether through lack of baptism or the inscrutability of divine election.

In Marian and Elizabethan England, parents were surrounded by conflicting views concerning the nature of their children. They were told that their children were guilty and corrupted by Original Sin, yet still innocent. They were told that baptism was necessary for salvation, but also unnecessary. They were told that unbaptized children were outside God's grace, but they were also told that they were already members of the church. They were told that even if their children were baptized, they might still be reprobate. They

were told that baptismal exorcisms were unnecessary, but that their children were still vulnerable to the devil. English clergy, whether Protestant or Catholic, sought to soothe the fears of the English people about their children, but through their conflict with each other, they sowed seeds of confusion and doubt that possibly only worsened the situation.

Finally, while the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth were marked by conflict between Catholics and Protestants, the establishment of Protestantism under Elizabeth saw the spark of internal debate among Protestants. Emboldened by Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and encouraged by Reformed theology, English Separatists challenged the Church of England by withholding their children from the church's baptism. This small minority of individuals demonstrate the comfort that Reformed theology could offer to those who embraced its theological views on election, salvation, and children. Not all, however, found Reformed theology comforting. In the next chapter, this dissertation will examine how such internal conflict in Protestantism resulted in a radical shift in the religious perception of children and the establishment of the English Baptists, a controversy that firmly established the theological discussion of children and the church in the presses and the minds of the English people.

CHAPTER SIX

Children, Separatism, and English Baptists in Stuart England, 1603-1640

When James I assumed the throne in 1603, Protestantism had been the official religion in England for over forty years. During this time, discussions about the religious perception of children centered primarily on combating Catholicism in England, though the fear of Anabaptism remained a concern. A significant shift occurred in the seventeenth century with the rise of English Baptists who rejected infant baptism and extended salvation to all infants who died prematurely. The views of the English Baptists, as expressed through the writings of John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, and John Murton, challenged the dominant religious view of children by rejecting infant baptism and original guilt and advocating for the salvation of all children who died prematurely. While English Baptists never embraced the name, their actions and theology prompted their opponents to label them as Anabaptists.[1] For their opponents, Anabaptism was no longer an external threat, but an internal one that was also publishing its theological views in England. In response to this threat, some Reformed Protestants emphasized the

[1] Because of doctrinal differences and the association with Münster, English Baptists repeatedly denied being Anabaptists. Notably, neither John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, nor their followers ever used the term "Baptists." For much of the seventeenth century, English Baptists called themselves "the brethren." The first possible use of the name was by their opponent, John Etherington in 1644, but the name was not adopted by the movement until the eighteenth century. Despite their protests, in the eyes of their seventeent-century opponents, the act of rebaptizing indviduals who had already been baptized as infants would have constituted one as an Anabaptist. H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 48–49; John Etherington, *The Anabaptists Ground-Work for Reformation* (London, 1644), Wing E3381, 23; see also, James M. Stayer, *Anabaptists and the Sword*, new edition (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1976), 21.

Reformed view of children, baptism, and Original Sin, while others advocated positions that offered firmer certainty as to a child's salvific status. While a minority, the English Baptists had an enduring presence in England with the references to them and their writings being found in the baptismal debates of that spanned the years of the English Civil War and the Commonwealth era. This chapter argues that as a result of the adoption of believer's baptism, English Baptists developed a theology of infant salvation based on the age of discretion and a modified understanding of Original Sin that extended to all children, and that the development of this theology forced their opponents to defend and reexamine their theological views of children on baptism and Original Sin, while also laying the seeds for the baptismal debates of the 1640s and 50s.

English Baptists and Baptism

For Reformed Protestants, baptism was the sign and seal of God's covenant of grace, and elect parents could take comfort that their children were members of that covenant. The Separatists built upon this theology, developing the idea of a covenanted community. This covenant theology combined with a New Testament biblicism resulted in the rejection of infant baptism and adoption of believer's baptism by the English Baptists. Based on their reading of Scripture, English Baptists argued that infants and young children were incapable of making the profession of faith that was a prerequisite for baptism. In rejecting infant baptism, the English Baptists also attacked the core of Reformed Protestantism's pastoral theology for anxious parents, the idea that through baptism, elect parents could be assured that their children benefited from God's promise of salvation. English Baptists questioned Reformed Theology's ability to offer assurance to parents when baptism was administered to the elect and non-elect. English Baptists,

however, were not immune to such attacks themselves. When pressed with the question of the fate of unbaptized infants, they offered a hope, though not fully articulated, that infants would be saved, further demonstrating that often reformers were concerned with other theological issues with the implications for children being addressed at a later time.

Baptism, the Covenant, and Understanding

The adoption of believer's baptism, and thus the denial of infants receiving baptism, by Smyth, Helwys, and their followers stemmed from their Separatist theology of the covenant and a biblicism that was based on a New Testament hermeneutic. The introduction of Reformed theology into England had brought an emphasis on covenant theology. Calvin had emphasized the unconditional nature of God's covenant bond which represented God's gracious and unmerited promise of salvation fulfilled through Christ, known as the covenant of grace. The English Puritans modified this theology, emphasizing the conditional aspect of the covenant. The conditional aspect of the covenant was employed in discussions on the assurance of salvation: a life that displayed visible obedience to the moral laws and doctrines of Scripture could be considered as evidence that one's salvation and election were sure. Stephen Brachlow notes that the contradictions of an unconditional and conditional covenant were probably unnoticed by the Puritans; often, whether they emphasized one or the other depended on the situation. Separatists added another angle to covenant theology by linking it with ecclesiology, linking it with soteriology, and making discipline a mark of a true church. The conditions of the covenant needed to be kept, and if one's assurance of salvation depended on

faithful obedience to doctrines and moral laws, then one needed to ensure they were members of a congregation that faithfully adhered to these things.[2] This theology led to the idea of the covenanted community which B. R. White calls the foundation of Separatist theology.[3] The covenanted community was composed of individuals who through visible obedience displayed themselves to be of the elect. Membership was granted to those who had made "a public profession of the true faith," and they remained members by bringing "forth the fruits of faith."[4] By separating from the apostate Church of England and joining together into a community, individuals guarded against breaching the covenant and were able to have some assurance of their salvation.

Separatist covenant theology was, therefore, a product of the introduction of the Reformation into England, and it was part of the impetus for the adoption of believer's baptism by the English Baptists. Separatists placed great emphasis on a true visible and pure church, and often denied baptism to children of parents who were not members of their church. Before his move to Anabaptism, Smyth had argued in *Principles and Inferences Concering the Visble Church* that a true church should be composed, as much as possible, of a visible elect who endeavored to keep the covenant. "The true matter of the visible church are saints . . . the outward part of the true form of the visible church is

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[2] Stephen Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints: Radical Puritan and Separatist Ecclesiology, 1570-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 31–34.

[3] B. R. White, "The English Separatists and John Smyth Revisited," *Baptist Quarterly* 30 (1984): 131.

[4] Carlson, *The Writings of Henry Barrow*, III:217, see also 223, 249; Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints*, 131.

a vowe, promise, oath, or covenant betwixt God and the Saints."[5] As a covenanted community, the members were required to help keep each other faithful to the covenant. "The care of the whole church jointly must be to keep her powre given her by Christ, and not to suffer any open knowne synne . . ."[6] Keith Sprunger has argued that despite the claims of the time, little evidence exists to suggests that Separatism naturally led to Anabaptism, noting that their preaching on the covenanted community and the scandalous act of rebaptism was enough to keep them from moving to Anabaptism.[7] Brachlow, however, has noted that at least for Smyth and his followers, the emphasis on a covenanted church composed of the visible elect made believer's baptism as the basis for that community the next logical step.[8]

Smyth's biblicism was what facilitated this next step to believer's baptism and the denial of baptism to children. Specifically, Smyth placed a greater emphasis on the New Testament than the Old Testament. In 1607 in *Principles and inferences concerning the visible church*, Smyth wrote that Old Testament was annulled by Christ's death on the cross.[9] For Smyth, like the continental Anabaptists, there was a discontinuity between the

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[5] John Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth, Fellow of Christ's College, 1594-8*, ed. W. T. Whitley, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 253–54.

[6] Ibid., 1:261.

[7] Keith Sprunger, "English Puritans and Anabaptists in Early Seventeenth Century Amsterdam," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 46 (1972): 114, 128.

[8] Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints*, 151. In addition to confirming Brachlow's argument, Diarmaid MacCulloch argues that the Puritan emphasis on the conditional covenant might have also led to quasi-Arminian views without the contributions from Anti-Puritan proto-Arminians.MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 134.

[9] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 1:250.

Old and New Testament. In *Parallels, Censures, Observations* (1609), Smyth wrote that the Old Testament was ceremonial and the New Testament was spiritual. "Ther is as much difference betwixt the Old Testament with the ordinances thereof, and the New Testament with the ordinances thereof…betwixt the ceremony and the substance: the type and the truth: the shadow and the body: Literal and Spiritual: letter and the spirit."[10] Smyth's biblicism focused primarily on the New Testament led him to take radical positions such as rejecting the use of prayer books and Scripture translations in worship.[11] Smyth's New Testament biblicism characterized his theology such to the extent that by the publication of *The Character of the Beast* (1609), he was responding to the accusation that he rejected the Old Testament as Scripture.[12]

In *The Character of the Beast*, Smyth revealed his rejection of infant baptism.[13] In this work, Smyth challenged the practice of infant baptism and the legitimacy of baptisms received from the Church of England and the Catholic Church. The Separatist emphasis on discipline and a covenanted community and Smyth's biblicism had led him to argue that only those who could publically make a profession of faith were to be counted as members of the covenanted church. Smyth's New Testament biblicism facilitated this argument. He argued that since the New Testament contained no direct

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[10] John Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth, Fellow of Christ's College, 1594-8*, ed. W. T. Whitley, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 375.

[11] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 1:273, 278–82.

[12] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:571.

[13] *The Character of the Beast* was compiling of a series of letters between John Smyth and Richard Clifton on the topic of infant baptism. Clifton followed Smyth's publication with his own such work in 1610, entitled *A plea for infants*. Richard Clyfton, *The plea for infants and elder people, concerning their baptisme* (Amsterdam, 1610), STC 5450.

warrant for infant baptism, the practice must be rejected. Circumcision was the carnal seal of the Old Testament, but the New Testament had abolished that carnal circumcision "so the infant is abolished as the subject of that signe or seale."[14] Because the New Testament taught that baptism followed a confession and profession of faith, the rite should only be administered to those capable of confessing and professing their faith, actions that denied infants access to baptism.[15]

In adopting a public profession of faith as a prerequisite for baptism, Smyth moved away from the traditional Reformed position of baptism and the assurances that it offered parents. Within Reformed theology, parents were assured that their children were members of God's covenant of grace, with baptism being the sign and seal of this covenant. For people who became Separatists, the emphasis on assurance of salvation through obedience to doctrine and moral laws must have brought an even stronger sense of assurance concerning their children. For Smyth, baptism was no longer the seal of the covenant of grace, but only a declaration of what one had already received. "Neither doth baptisme with water seale vp any promises to the Faithfull, but onley doth visibly declare what promises they already are partarkers of, viz.: of the Spirit of promise."[16] Smyth defined baptism as more than the washing of water, but it also included "the baptisme of the Spirit, [and] the confession of the mouth."[17] While infants could be washed with

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[14] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:564–67, 583.

[15] Ibid., 2:567–68.

[16] Ibid., 2:587.

[17] Ibid., 2:567.

water, Smyth rejected their ability to receive these other aspects of baptism. As repentance was a part of baptism, Smyth questioned how infants could receive the sacrament. "How then can any ma[n] without great folly wash with water which is the least and last of baptisme, one that is not baptized with the Spirit, and cannot confess with the mouth…?"[18] Smyth stated that one received the baptism of the Spirit because of an "evil conscience" and confessed because of sin, but since infants lacked both of these, they were to be denied baptism.

While Smyth and Helwys parted ways on other theological issues, the belief that baptism came after a public profession of faith, based on a literal reading of the New Testament, remained common between them and their followers. Baptism and membership in the visible church belonged only to those who could visibly profess their commitment to Christ. In *A Declaration of Faith* (1611), Helwys wrote that baptism was the "outward manifestation off dieing vnto sin and walkeing in newness of life" and that "everie Chruch is to receive in all their members Baptisme vpon the Confession off their faith and sinnes."[19] This belief was stressed in *A verie plaine and well grounded treatise concerning Baptisme*, an anonymous work published in 1618 by English Baptists who

[18] Ibid.

[19] As the leader of the congregation, scholars have placed Helwys as the author *A declaration of faith*, but one should note that the document was meant to be a collective statement on behalf of congregation, being written in first person plural as opposed to first person singular. This practice was typical as is the majority of works produced by English Baptists after Smyth. Thomas Helwys, *A declaration of faith of English people remaining at Amsterdam in Holland* (Amsterdam, 1611), STC 13053.5, a5r.

were now residing in England.[20] "Wee are disireuos Christ, ordinance and institution may be made knowne, and observed which is yet vnknowne and neglected, nameles the Baptising of those onely that Confesse their sinnes & fayth."[21] By denying baptism to infants, English Baptists placed children outside the visible church, a radical action given the perception of believer's baptism and Anabaptism at the time. The action was also radical because of the emphasis that Reformed theology placed upon baptism providing elect parents with the comfort that their children were included in God's covenant of grace. This action also illustrates the theme that while children were not a primary focus of theological development, they became an important secondary concern. Smyth, Helwys, and their followers were building upon Separatist theology and practice, which in turn led them to reject infant baptism, placing infants outside the church.

The rejection of infant baptism and the move away from baptism as a sign of God's covenant of grace meant that English Baptists had attacked the foundation of Reformed covenant theology and its views on children. As previously mentioned, English Baptists, like the continental Anabaptists said there were two covenants: the covenant of the Old Testament, which had circumcision as its seal, and the covenant of the New Testament, which had supplanted the former covenant and had baptism as its seal. Smyth argued that the Old Testament was a carnal covenant with a carnal seal, circumcision, and the New Testament was a spiritual covenant with a spiritual seal. "The carnal covenant

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[20] In the preface, the English Baptists states that they were not the authors of this work and that it had originally appeared in Dutch. This work probably came from the Waterlande Mennonites. Anonymous, *A verie plaine and well grownded treatise concerninge Baptisme* (Netherlands?, 1618), STC 13053, 7.

[21] Ibid., STC 24251.7, 6.

and the seale....is taken away by Christs cross."[22] Infants had been included in this covenant because of God's command, but the New Testament covenant contained no such command and infants had been abolished as recipients of that sign.[23] Other writings published by the Helwys and Murton congregation echoed this view. *A verie plaine and well grounded treatise concerning Baptisme* (1618), attacked the infant baptism, calling it the "carnal seed" because of its connection the carnal covenant.[24] In *The Mystery of Iniquity* (1612), Helwys wrote that God had annulled the old covenant and instituted a new covenant. Furthermore, the promise made to parents and their children was not that the children of the elect were included in the covenant as argued by Reformed theologians, but that those adults and children who repented and believed would be saved. While children were included in this promise, it did not apply to infants, but children above the age of discretion.[25] For Reformed theology, baptism brought the infant into the visible church and signified, for the comfort of the parents, that the child was included in God's covenant. English Baptists denied that children had a place in the New Testament covenant and its seal.

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[22] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:580.

[23] Ibid., 2:583.

[24] Anonymous, *A verie plaine and well grownded treatise*, STC 24251.7, 6-7.

[25] Thomas Helwys, *A shorte declaration of the mistery of iniquity* (Amsterdam?, 1612), STC 13056, 166-67, 177.

Attacks against Their Opponents and Infant Salvation

Since English Baptists rejected the assertion that infants had a right to baptism, they also ridiculed the practice of baptizing all infants. In *An advertisement or admonition*, Helwys stated mockingly, "surely it cannot be but that you faithfullie believe that all the infants you Baptise are redeamed by Christ or els you vvill not Baptise them into the name of Christ and acknowledge the[m] members of his bodie."[26] In *The Mystery of Iniquity*, Helwys challenged the difference between doctrine and practice of infant baptism in radical Puritan theology. While they believed that only the infants of the faithful were to be baptized, the infants of the faithful and unfaithful still received baptism. If the radical Puritans were consistent in baptizing only the seed of the faithful, then they would "not have whole Countries and Nations all Christians, as you have."[27] In acknowledging that a church built upon infant baptism was composed of both faithful and unfaithful members, the English Baptists exploited what they perceived as a flaw in Reformed theology, the absence of assurance of one's salvation. For anxious parents, the assurance that came from covenant theology was that children of the elect participated in the covenant, but the peace of God's promise was lacking if one was uncertain of one's salvation. In this way, like Catholics and Protestants before, English Baptists used children as a tool in their doctrinal fights with their opponents. They argued against children being included in the covenant, but they also questioned how one could derive

[26] Thomas Helwys, *An advertisement or admonition, unto the congregations, vvhich men call the new fryelers in the lowe Countries* (Amsterdam?, 1611), STC 13053, 90.

[27] Helwys, *The Mystery of Inquity*, STC 13056, 163.

assurance from the covenant when baptism was given to the children of both faithful and unfaithful people.

To understand how radical this claim really ways, remember that both Catholics and Reformed Protestants viewed baptism as an assurance of an infant's salvation. Catholics believed that through baptism a child was cleansed of original sin and granted salvation. Reformed Protestants saw baptism as the sign and seal of God's promise to include children of the elect in the covenant of grace. In rejecting infant baptism, the English Baptists forfeited a rite that had been used for over a thousand years to soothe parental concerns about the eternal fate of their children. Notably, the issue of infant salvation was not directly addressed by Smyth when he published *The Character of the Beast*. Smyth only began to address the issue after Richard Clifton had challenged him. He stated, "if it be objected that then wee doe condemne al infants dying before be converted: I say No: wee pronounce nothing of infants but leave the secreat of them to the Lord, who hath reserved the secreat things to himself."[28] This view was repeated later in the work when Smyth directly responded to the accusation that to require faith before baptism damned infants. "For infants I say that either they are al saved, though they can not come to faith by hearing, or that they are one of the L. secrets, and so not to be searched into."[29] Smyth's reference to the "secrets of the Lord" refers to the view of God having a revealed will and a secret will and signifies that at this time Smyth still held

[28] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:603.

[29] Ibid., 2:634.

Reformed theology.[30] As will be discussed later, Smyth eventually abandoned Reformed theology and argued for the salvation of infants by stating that they were not condemned by Original Sin. His statements in *The Character of the Beast* further demonstrate that Smyth's adoption of believer's baptism came from his Separatist theology. As seen in Chapter Five, the delaying of baptism by some Protestants until a proper minister could be found illustrates a profound faith in the covenant of God and a diminishing of the fear that a child would be damned without baptism. Undoubtedly, this faith in the covenant enabled Smyth to dismiss the sign and seal of the covenant that according to Calvin and other Reformed theologians should bring comfort grieving parents. If baptism was not necessary for salvation, then the sign of the promise was not necessary. If one was willing to delay baptism, then one's faith was not in the sign, but in God's promise.

Smyth's argument regarding the secret will of God, however, was not sufficient for his opponents, and probably not for grieving and anxious parents. The fact that Smyth did not possess a fully articulate theology of infant salvation at this time demonstrates the way in which the desire for a truly reformed church based on the New Testament took precedent, with the implications for children being addressed later. This delay in development does not indicate a lack of concern about children, but does show that they were not the initial driving force of theological change. As this study has argued, the issue of infant salvation was an important secondary issue. English Baptists and their opponents used the question of infant salvation in their arguments with each other, arguing that each side's theology neglected children and dishonored God. As will be

[30] James R. Coggins, "The Theological Positions of John Smyth," *Baptist Quarterly* 30 (1984): 254.

seen, Smyth and the others provided solutions to this issue by moving away from the traditional view of Original Sin. At the time of *The Character of Beast*, Smyth had some semblance of a theological solution but had not directly addressed the topic. As a Separatist, Smyth came from a tradition that denied the necessity of baptism for salvation and held that children could be saved within the mystery of God's will, positions that prepared him to remove children completely from the rite of baptism and any assurances that the rite might offer them.

The adoption of believer's baptism by Smyth, Helwys, and their followers demonstrates the effect that the introduction of the Reformation had upon the religious image and spiritual status of children. By reigns of James I and Charles I, Protestant theology had enabled some within England to completely abandon traditions, beliefs, and practices that had long been firmly established within England. The emphasis of Reformed theology on faith and the covenant combined with a New Testament biblicism led some to conclude that baptism ultimately belonged only to those who could publically profess their faith. In arguing that only adults could undergo baptism, English Baptists denied that infants had a rightful place inside the visible church. The inclusion of children in the visible church had been a strong source of comfort for anxious parents. English Baptists, however, disposed not only of the sign of an infant's inclusion in the visible church but also the theology of the covenant which the sign represented. Moreover, it was their Reformed theology that facilitated their ability to displace infants from the sign and promise of God's covenant of grace. Infants were outside of baptism and the visible church, but they were not outside God's salvation; in the secret will of God, somehow they would be saved.

English Baptists and Original Sin

The rejection of infant baptism by English Baptists was an abandonment of a theology and practice that had comforted parents. As a result, English Baptists developed a theology of infant salvation that extended to all children based on the age of discretion and a modified understanding of Original Sin. Though they initially viewed children, Original Sin, and infant salvation through the lens of Reformed theology, English Baptists, probably shortly before or after the publication of *The Character of the Beast*, abandoned this theology, downplaying the severity of Original Sin in infants and emphasizing the salvation of all infants who died prematurely. These views represent a significant shift in English thought. Their writings reveal that while the salvific status of infants was not their initial concern, the issue had become an important one for them and one of their main criticisms of Reformed theology.

Original Sin and Infant Salvation

While ecclesiastical and theological differences existed between the Smyth's and Helwys' groups which led to a congregational split, both of their congregations agreed on the innocence and salvation of all children who died. This change in theology was because of their adoption of general redemption, which was itself the result of the influence of the Waterlander Mennonites. Most probably this change in theology occurred before the Smyth and Helwys congregations separated as they were both in agreement on the topic.[31] While Smyth, Helwys, and Murton believed that all children

[31] Other scholars have argued that the Peter Baro controversy at Cambridge in the 1590s probably influenced Smyth since he was there at the time, or that the Arminius controversy underway in the Netherlands might have influenced him. The question of direct influence is always difficult to ascertain.

under the age of discretion were saved, they each had a different theology of how children were saved. Smyth ultimately rejected the existence of Original Sin, arguing that infants existed in the same spiritual estate as Adam before the Fall. Helwys, on the other hand, argued that Original Sin was only an inherited corruption and not an inherited guilt and that infants were saved through the redemption of Christ. Finally, Murton argued that infants were innocent and thus would be saved because the Law had never been given to them.

When Smyth published *The Character of the Beast*, he still possessed a Reformed theology of salvation, even if he believed that infants were not saved through the covenant of grace as traditionally taught. While Smyth believed that infants might be saved by the secret will of God, he also affirmed the presence of Original Sin in them. "For al infants are carnal, being conceaved and borne in sinne, being Children of wrath."[32] Smyth, as will be seen with Helwys and his followers, stated there was no difference between the children of unbelievers and believers. "For our infants are in no better estate than the infants of the Jewes: They are born according to the flesh."[33] The

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Hewlys did reference the influence of the Waterlander Mennonites, but the transition likely came as result of several factors, with the theology of the Waterlander Mennonites serving as the final push. Ibid., 257; James R. Coggins, *John Smyth's Congregation English Separatism, Mennonite Influence and the Elect Nation* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991), 138–141; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 29–58; C. S. Knighton, "Peter Baro (1534-1599)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), accessed August 25, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/1492; Lonnie D. Kliever, "General Baptist Origins: The Question of Anabaptist Influence," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (1962): 316; W. T. Whitley, "Biography," in *The Works of John Smyth, Fellow of Christ's College, 1594-8.*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), cvii; White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 139; Helwys, *An advertisement or admonition*, STC 13053, 5; Helwys, *short and plaine proofe*, STC 13055, a3v.

[32] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:638.

[33] Ibid.

comfort provided by virtually all Protestant and Catholic theology up to this point was that parents could at least take comfort that their children were better off than the children of unbelievers. Smyth, however, like other Anabaptists rejected this elitist theology, widening the salvation of infants to include all children. All infants possessed Original Sin and were children of wrath, but that was "vntill the Lord work his work in them, which when he doth, I know not."[34] At this time, Smyth did not reconcile how infants were saved even though they possessed Original Sin. He believed that they possessed Original Sin, but he also believed that condemnation came from hearing the gospel and not believing, an action that infants were unable to do. "Whosoever (of them that have eares to heare) do believe, & vpon their faith be baptized shalbe saved, whosoever (me[n] that have eares to heare) do not believe…shalbe damned: now I pray you Sir, how doth this sentence include infants to baptisme, or exclude them from Salvation?"[35] At the publication of *The Character of the Beast*, Smyth argued that were saved because they were under the age of discretion. Because they were developmentally unable to respond to the gospel, they were not condemned. Moreover, Smyth objected to the accusation that infants would be excluded from salvation because they were excluded from baptism. Ultimately when confronted with the issue of infant condemnation and salvation, Smyth stated that infants were closer to salvation than adults "for Chr. Saith that he that beleveth not (speaking of them that heare the gospel and do not believe) shalbe condemned, the

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 2:633–34.

Scripture teacheth vs nothing concerning the final estate of infants, except it be the salvation of them al."[36]

In *Propositions and conclusions* (1613), a confession of faith written by Smyth and published after his death, the salvation of all infants was no longer a mystery.[37] Smyth's argument was based upon a renewed emphasis on the innocence of infants and a complete rejection of Original Sin. Concerning Original Sin, he stated, "original sin is an idle terme, and there is not such thing as intended by the word."[38] In this article, Smyth cited Ezekiel 18:20, a passage used by Anabaptists and Zwingli to argue that children did not suffer the guilt of Original Sin. In a previous work, *Argumenta Contra Baptismum Infantum* (ca. 1610), Smyth had argued Christ's death had canceled the effects of Original Sin.[39] Smyth now abandoned that position. While he did state in *Propositions and conclusions* that Christ's death had covered Original Sin, he presented it merely as a

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[36] Ibid., 2:638–39.

[37] Smyth completed the confession of 102 articles shortly before death in 1612. Thomas Pigott edited the confession to 100 articles and published it 1613. Smyth produced several private Latin works between *The Character of the Beast* and *Propositions and conclusions* that address his views of Original Sin and infant salvation, but they have been avoided as this study is focused on vernacular works that the English people would have read. John Smyth, *Propositions and conclusions, concerning true Christian religion, conteyning a confesion of faith of certaine English people, liuinge at Amsterdam* (Ansterdam?, 1613), STC 22877.4, iir-iiiv.

[38] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:735.

[39] Comprised of nineteen syllogism, *Argumenta Contra Baptismum Infantum* argued that baptism belonged only to adults. Coggins notes that the work appears to be a elaboration of the syllogism that Smyth used in the "Defense of de Ries's Confession" (1610). The work was never published. A handwritten copy was presented to the Waterlander Mennonites who preserved it in their archives. Coggins argues that the work was meant to enhance Smyth's credentials among the Waterlander Mennonites or to continue the debate between the Mennonites and the Dutch Reformed Church, but the work was not intended for an English audience as it was not written in English. Having been composed in Latin does not negate an English audience, but the fact that the work was never published signifies that the work was probably produced as part of Smyth's desire to join the Waterlander Mennonites. Ibid., 2:710–15; Coggins, *John Smyth's Congregation*, 93–94.

possibility. "If original sinne *might* have passed from Adam to his posteritie, Christ death, which was effectuall before Caine and Abel birth he being the lambe slaine from the beginning of the world, stopped the issue and passage therof."[40] Smyth's phrasing of this statement and his reference to Original Sin as idle term clearly shows that he himself had by now substantially abandoned this doctrine.

Ultimately, Smyth rejected any description of Original Sin that passed guilt and condemnation unto infants. In *Propositions and conclusions*, Smyth stated that no person suffered punishment for Adam's sin. When Adam "fell from his innocency," he "died the death alone."[41] Instead, Smyth argued that all people were born under the same *condition* as Adam. "All actual sinners beare the image of the first Adam, in innocencie, fall: and restitution, in the offer of grace."[42] Typically, those who rejected inherited guilt retained an inherited corruption. Smyth, however, rejected both, believing that humanity still retained a free will. "For the worke of the devill, which is sinne, cannot abolish gods works or creatures; and therfor being fallen he still retained freedom of the will."[43] Smyth held to a creationist view of the soul, and as God created the soul, it could not be corrupted by sin.[44] Furthermore, the freedom of the will was created by God in the soul of humans, and thus it remained uncorrupted until the individual committed actual sin.

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[40] Emphasis mine. Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:735.

[41] Ibid., 2:717, 735.

[42] Ibid., 2:735.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Stephen Monroe Johnson, "The Soteriology of the English General Baptists to 1630: A Study in Theological Kinship and Dependence" (Ph.D., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1988), 235.

Thus, for Smyth, all individuals mirrored Adam in their innocence, fall, and redemption. Reformed Protestants, citing Romans 6:2, had argued that the death of infants was the proof of Original Sin. Smyth, however, argued that the death mentioned in Romans 6:23 was not physical death, but the loss of innocence. "For the reward of sinne is death. Rom. 5.23, and this that which the Apostle saith, dead in trespasses and sinnes Eph. 2.1, which is the loss of innocencie, of the peace of conscience and comfortable presence of God."[45] Such a position implied that infants were completely innocent, leading Smyth and his followers to state with certainty "that infants are conceiued and borne in innocencie without sinne, and that so dyinge are undoubtedly saued," a position that was "to be vnderstoode of all infa[n]ts vnder heauen[n]."[46] Since Reformed Protestants in the late sixteenth century had magnified the sinfulness of infants by refusing to grant them a state of innocence, Smyth's theology of the complete innocence of infants, existing in a pre-Fall state of Adam, can thus be seen as an extreme reaction to this theological position that characterized infants as subjects of God's wrath and judgment. While Reformed Protestants sought to ensure that people understood their dependence on God for salvation, Smyth instead sought to ensure that people understood the full expression of God's love for humanity, a love that would not condemn innocent infants to hell.

Like Smyth, Helwys and his congregation believed that infants were innocent and therefore, would be saved if they died, but they disagreed as to the nature of this

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[45] Smyth never explained how physical death entered into the world, and thus why infants died. Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:735.

[46] Ibid.

innocence. Whereas Smyth had rejected completely Original Sin, Helwys continued to affirm the doctrine, though he only emphasized an inherited corruption and not an inherited guilt. In *A Declaration of Faith*, Helwys stated that through Adam "all Men sinned Rom 5. 12.19. his sin being imputed vnto all, and so death went over all men" and that "Men are by nature the Children off wrath, Ephes. 2.. born in inquitie and in sin conceived."[47] Nevertheless, in his examination of Helwys' theology, Goki Saito argues that Helwys had rejected Original Sin, citing Helwys' first confession, *Synopsis Fidei* (1610), in which Helwys stated that "there is no sin from our parents through generation."[48] Reacting to Saito's claim, Johnson argued that a comparison of Helwys' two confessions shows there is no evidence that Helwys ever rejected the Augustinian doctrine of depravity, unlike Smyth.[49] Both Johnson and Saito, however, are incorrect. First, *A Declaration of Faith* was a fuller expression of belief than *Synopsis Fidei*, which was a private document of nineteen articles that was sent to the Waterlander Mennonites. *A Declaration of Faith*, on the other hand, published in English, was meant to distinguish Helwys' congregation from Smyth's group for their fellow Englishmen. Second, both Johnson and Saito were working from an incomplete document. *A Declaration of Faith* was published with exposition before and after the articles of faith, but previous modern

[47] Helwys, *A declaration of faith*, STC 13053.5, a3r-v.

[48] Goki Saito, "An Investigation into the Relationship Between the Early English General Baptists and the Dutch Anabaptists" (Th.D., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974), 104, 117–24; Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 2:182.

[49] Johnson, "The Soteriology of the English General Baptists," 264.

publications have only focused on the articles.[50] After the articles of faith, however, Helwys stated that he and his congregation believed that "the Lord creates no man to damnacion, but that men bring it vpon themselves, by their owne sinnes." Like Smyth and the other Anabaptists, Helwys cited Ezekiel 18:20 to argue that no one was condemned because of the sin of Adam, and thus infants dying without actual sin would be saved. Because infants were under the age of discretion, unable to discern right from wrong they would be saved. "Therefore all infants asweel as anie dieing before they have committed actuall sin, are redeamed by CHRIST, there estates and condicions being all one."[51] Helwys' congregation had not rejected Original Sin, nor had he returned to it, but from the beginning, they had rejected inherited guilt, just like the Anabaptists and Zwingli before them.

The key difference between Smyth's group and Helwys' congregation was the exact nature of an infant's innocence. Before his death, Smyth had adopted the view that all infants existed in the same spiritual estate of Adam, purely innocent with an uncorrupted free will. They possessed neither inherited guilt nor corruption, but all people mirrored Adam in their innocence, fall, and redemption. Helwys' congregation, on

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[50] This practice began with Walter Burgess who included the confession in *John Smyth the Se-Baptist, Thomas Helwys and the First Baptist Church in England with Fresh Light upon Pilgrim Fathers*. Burgess included selections of the exposition, but cited them incorrectly. Lumpkin continued the practice of only supplying the articles in his *Baptist Confession of Faith*. Even the recent critical edition of Helwys' works by Joe Early, Jr. continues this practice. Early claimed that the document was unavailable to him so he relied on Burgess for the confession. He also included Burgess' selections, but they are still out order and this document thus incomplete. Walter Herbert Burgess, *John Smith the Se-Baptist, Thomas Helwys and the First Baptist Church in England; with Fresh Light upon the Pilgrim Fathers' Church* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1911), 203–219; William Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Revised edition. (Lexington, Ky.: Judson Press, 1969), 116–123; Helwys, *The Life and Writings of Thomas Helwys*, 64–73.

[51] Helwys, *A declaration of faith*, STC 13053.5, a7r-v.

the other hand, went to great lengths to distance themselves from this view. For this reason, *A declaration of faith* greatly stressed that all people were children of wrath and that no one possessed true free will. Helwys stated "therefore man is not restored unto his former estate . . . having in him himself all disposition unto good and no disposition unto evil."[52] Infants were saved not because they were completely sinless like Adam, but rather because of Christ's sacrifice, so that now a person was only condemned because of actual sin. "Adam being fallen, and in him al mankind, the Lord being equally just and mercifull, hath by Christ redeamed Adam, and in him all mankind (not restored him) yet all actuall transgressors must repent and beleeve."[53]

This view was made more explicit in *A short and plaine proofe* (1611). Christ's death covered the sin of Adam so that all are redeemed from death and therefore, suffer condemnation only because of their own sin. While Smyth had stated that Christ's death could have canceled Original Sin, his actual belief was that it had never existed. Helwys, on the other hand, affirmed the continued presence of inherited corruption but believed that Christ had redeemed everyone from inherited guilt.

Thus for Helwys' congregation, infants were saved through the universal redemption of Christ. Citing the doctrine of the two Adams based on Romans 5, Helwys explicitly connected this passage to the salvation of infants. "And whereas the Holy Ghost Roman. 5.14.15. Speaking off Infants, saith. That death reigned also over them that sinned not after the like manner of thee transgression of Adam the Grace off God and gift

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[52] Ibid., STC 13053.5, a3r-v.

[53] Ibid., STC 13053.5, a7r.

by grace which is by one man Christ Iesus hath abounded much more to the[m]."[54] For Helwys, "those who have not sinned" referred directly to infants; thus, the grace of God through Christ had become the means of salvation for infants. "Hereby also is further confirmed that al infa[n]ts are freed by the vniversall redemption off Christ From that condemnation, which you (by your opinion off perticuler redemption) would cast vpon the most off them"[55] For Helwys and his congregation, therefore, infants were not saved because they were completely innocent, but because of the redemption of Christ. While to his opponents infants were denied membership into the visible church, through Helwys' theology of general atonement, infants could be counted as a member of the invisible church. They existed in a state of redemption until they reached the age of discretion where they would be condemned by their actual sins. If an infant denied before this time, that child, according to Helwys' theology, was in heaven. This placement in the invisible church offers an excellent illustration of how English Baptists reacted to the anxiety which some parents suffered regarding their children. As seen previously, English parents received mixed messages from their Calvinist ministers. Some ministers spoke as if all children of the elect were members of the covenant, while others stated that infants could be of the elect or the reprobate, and still, others stated that one could only hope that God would count them among the elect. The theology of Helwys' English Baptists, on the other hand, denied children a place in the visible church, but it also firmly set them within the invisible church. Parents could rest assured that their

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[54] Helwys, *A short and plaine proofe*, STC 13055, b6r.

[55] Ibid.

vulnerable and innocent children were in the saving grace and mercy of God if they died, at least until their children knew the difference between right and wrong.

Even within Helwys' congregation, there was not complete agreement on how infants were saved. After separating from Smyth, both Thomas Helwys and John Murton were leaders of the English Baptists. After returning to England in 1612, Helwys was quickly arrested and by 1615, had died in prison. After his death, Murton, who had also been imprisoned, became the voice of the English Baptists. Murton, like Smyth and Helwys, affirmed the innocence of infants, but unlike Helwys, he never stated that infants were saved through Christ as the second Adam. Instead, Murton's theology depended solely on the belief that infants were not condemned because the law had not been given to them. In *Objections: answered by way of dialogue* (1615), Murton responded to the question of infants by stating "that they are innocents as Christ teacheth. Mat. 18.3. &c. & 19.14. &c. 1. Cor. 14.20. that they have no knowledge. Deut. 1.39. Ionah 4.11. that God speaketh not to them, requiring any thing at their hands, Deut. 11.2. Mat. 13, 9. Rom.7.9. 1. Cor. 10.15. and therefore they have not sinned, seeing sin is the breach of Gods law. 1. Ioh. 3.4. Rom. 4.15."[56] Like Helwys, Murton believed that condemnation was the result of refusing Christ and not because of Adam's sin. "It was never Gods purpose that any should go to hell, but for refusing Christ. This is conde[n]dation that light (or Christ) is come into the world and men love darkness better…and Christ will condemn the world of sin, because they beleeve not in him."[57] To argue that an infant

[56] John Murton, *Obiections: answered by way of dialogue* (Amsterdam?, 1615), STC 13054, 70.

[57] Ibid., STC 13054, 71. See also, John Murton, *A discription of what God hath predestinated concerning man in his creation, transgression, and regeneration* (London?, 1620), STC 6773, 115.

was condemned because of Adam was to state that Adam's posterity fell deeper in that transgression than Adam because God never said that Adam would be sent to hell for his sin. "God never purposed to condemne Adam to hell: if not him for that, why any of his posteritie for that?"[58] In *A discription of what God hath predestined* (1620), Murton argued based on Romans 4:15 that there was no condemnation without the law; since infants were not under the law, nothing condemned them. "Now wee know that whatsoeuer the law saith, it saith it to them that are vnder the law; Infants are vnder no law, therefore transgression cannot be imputed to them, for where no law is, there is no transgression."[59] Because infants being under the age of discretion lacked knowledge of good and evil, they were not judged by Christ. "None shall appeare before Christ to receiue iudgement, but those that have done works, either good or euill, and in the flesh. Infants dying have done neither good, nor euill in the flesh. Therefore Infants shall receive no iudgment."[60] Murton, in fact, never spoke of Christ redeeming infants. Because they were never condemned, he did not believe that they needed to be redeemed.[61]

In avoiding the idea that infants were redeemed by Christ, Murton's views are similar to Smyth. Murton, however, did not believe that infants were in a pre-Fall Adamic state of innocence as Smyth believed. Rather, he believed that Adam's actions

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[58] Murton, *Obiections: answered*, STC 13054, 71.

[59] Murton, *A discription*, STC 6773, 117.

[60] Ibid., STC 6773, 118-19.

[61] Johnson, "The Soteriology of the English General Baptists," 300.

had affected all of humanity and thus Original Sin had affected all of humanity, a position that Smyth had rejected. Like others before him, Murton cited Ezekiel 18:20 to argue that infants were not condemned because of Adam, but that through Adam, humanity had an inherited corruption, a propensity to sin, which was present even in infants. "Adam brought himself and all his posteritie…into the bondage of corruption….And so Infants have original (as they call it) corruption."[62] This corruption meant that the freewill that humanity possessed was corrupted. Any ability of a person to do good was to be attributed to the prevenient grace of God. "Although of our selues we can doe nothing as of our selues that good is, yet through the strength of Christ wee shall bee able to doe all things."[63] Like Helwys, Murton desired to set his beliefs apart from Smyth and his followers, and so he stressed the inherited corruption of humanity.

In arguing for the innocence of infants, Smyth's views were a radical break from traditional Protestant and Catholic theology. The nature of innocence stressed by Helwys and Murton, on the other hand, was more in keeping with the traditional view of infants as innocent until they reached the age of discretion. Catholic theology said that infants were innocent of actual sin but guilty of Original Sin. Original Sin denied one the beatific vision, while actual sin condemned one to hell. This distinction led some Catholics to argue that infants who died without baptism, being free of actual sin, were not condemned to hell, but consigned to limbo. Helwys and Murton's theology of infant innocence reflects this traditional belief that one was only condemned for actual sin.

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[62] Murton, *A discription*, STC 6773, 116.

[63] Ibid., STC 6773, 107.

These two English Baptists, however, rejected inherited guilt. Helwys argued that Christ had redeemed all of humanity from original guilt through Christ as the second Adam. Murton went one step further by completely dismissing original guilt as ever existing. Notably, Murton argued that infants were innocent based on Matthew 18:3-4 and 19:14, passages traditionally used to argue for infant baptism. In these passages, Jesus stated that the children belonged to the kingdom of heaven. Since Murton had rejected infant baptism, these verses now could only refer to the spiritual status of infants. Christ had declared infants as innocent, and thus they belonged to heaven.[64] Having rejected limbo and inherited guilt, their innocence of actual sin meant that for Murton that there was nothing to condemn infants.

Despite the differences among English Baptists, they agreed that all children were innocent; if they died, their eternal place would be in heaven with God. The basis of their belief was rooted in their soteriology. Christ died not for a select few, but for all people and since condemnation only comes to those who commit actual sin, infants and children were saved until after the age of discretion when they became accountable for sin their sins. Furthermore, the writings of the English Baptists illustrate the tension between innocence and Original Sin and the desire of parents for the salvation of their children. In arguing that all children were innocent and not condemned, the English Baptists advocated for a very radical and minority opinion, but their theology illustrates the concerns of anxious laity who might not have been satisfied by the arguments of

[64] Helwys also used to Matthew 18:3-4 to argue that infants were innocent, but he still believed that infants needed Christ's death on the cross to effect their salvation. Murton never expressed that view. Helwys, *Short and Plaine Proofe*, STC 13055, 91-92.

Catholics and Protestants. This study has focused on the effect that the Reformation had on the religious perception of children. The Reformation opened new opportunities for the theological discussion of baptism, innocence, Original Sin, and infant salvation. The theology of the English Baptists on these topics demonstrates the lasting influence of the English Reformation on the religious perception of children. Influenced by Reformed Theology and a New Testament hermeneutic rooted in the Protestant belief in *sola scriptura*, English Baptists rejected infant baptism and then when challenged developed a theology that emphasized the innocence and salvation of all children.

Original Sin, Infant Salvation, and Polemical Attacks

In affirming the salvation of all infants, English Baptists attacked their opponents for condemning the vast majority of infants to damnation. Like the Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century, English Baptists, therefore, used children as a tool in their arguments with their opponents. Their attack, however, was not just that their opponent's theology condemned innocent children, but that it also maligned the character of God. These accusations reveal the importance of this issue in sixteenth and seventeenth century England and how Protestant theology, specifically Reformed theology, failed to soothe adequately parental fears about their children. In *The Character of the Beast*, Smyth was still a Calvinist, but even by that time, he had extended salvation to all infants, placing it within the secret will of God. When confronted with the notion that God condemned infants, Smyth responded by stating, "God forbid," arguing that condemnation comes only to those can understand the Gospel and choose not to

believe.[65] In another section, Smyth attacked Clifton by stating that Clifton's theology condemned infants not born of elect parents and that it could not declare with certainty that children of the elect parents possessed the covenant. "You condemne al the infants that dye who are not borne of Faithful parents: and yet you cannot prove that the infants of the Faithful are vnder the actual possession of the covenant, which is only by faith."[66] Smyth's statement was part of an argument in which he accused Clifton of holding a position that required him to approve of general redemption of infants, but part of the force of the argument was that Clifton's uncertain theology condemned infants whether inside or outside the covenant whereas Smyth's theology affirmed the salvation of all infants.[67]

Helwys also exploited the uncertainty of the infant salvation through the covenant in *An advertisement or admonition*. He questioned whether Reformed Protestants actually believed that all infants who were baptized were members of Christ's body. "If you do hold, all the infants you Baptise to be readeamed by Christ, then if your rule of perticuler Redemption & perticuler Predestination, be a true rule, you must needs hold that all Dutch-land must be saved, and no one of them can be condemned."[68] Such a view, of course, would have been counter to Reformed theology in general, and

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[65] Smyth, *The Works of John Smyth*, 2:638.

[66] Ibid., 2:642.

[67] Jason K. Lee, *The Theology of John Smyth: Puritan, Separatist, Baptist, Mennonite* (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2003), 172–73.

[68] Helwys, *An advertisement or admonition*, STC 13053, 90. See also, Helwys, *The Mystery of Inquity*, STC 13056, 182.

especially to Separatist theology. The English Baptists, therefore, accused their Calvinist opponents of illogical theology. By stating that all children were to be baptized while also holding that baptism was only effective to a select few, Reformed Protestants had removed any security that baptism offered. The English Baptists essentially argued that baptism must be regenerative, as the Catholics believed, for it to offer any logical assurance of salvation.

Ultimately, English Baptists believed that any theology that condemned infants to hell attacked the character of God. In *A short and plaine proofe*, Helwys accused Reformed theology of condemning infants that Christ had declared as innocent. "Vnder this condemnation are brought so manie thousands off millions of poor infa[n]ts that die before they have done good or evil."[69] Citing Matthew 18:3-4 and Luke 18:16, Helwys stated that "all infants are of one quality and condition, even the infants of the Turks."[70] If Jesus said that Christians "must be of such humble quality and as infants," then how can some "men yet judge some infants condemned"?[71] Helwys accused Reformed Protestants who held this theology of being "men seduced by Sathan."[72] Furthermore, God had decreed that only the soul that sinned shall die; therefore, the claim that God condemned infants because of Adam made God unjust. "Wil you yet charge the Lord to condemne so manie infants and al for Adams sinne, are not your ways unequall thus to say and teach

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[69] Helwys, *short and plaine proofe*, STC 13055, a8v.

[70] Ibid., 13055, a8v–b1r.

[71] Ibid., STC 13055, b1r.

[72] Ibid., STC 13055, a4r.

men to hold and think off God"?[73] In *The Mystery of Iniquity*, Helwys directly attacked John Robinson for holding that children were condemned because of their parents. "And let al se Mr. Ro. great iniquity in this his affirmation[n], in that he blasphemously chargeth the most holy and iust God to punish infa[n]ts to condemnation, for the actual sinnes of their pare[n]ts when they themselves have not sinned, after the same manner of transgression."[74]

In *A Description of what God hath predestined*, Murton made a similar statement about Reformed theology. "That God hath left the greastest number in sinne, without any meanes of reconciliation, because he would have them damned," he argued, "is most horrible blasphmie, in making God to dissemble in all these his sayings."[75] Though Murton never explicitly mentioned infants in this statement, other statements indicate that he included infants among those that Reformed Protestants condemned. Elsewhere, Murton demanded that his opponents prove that God condemned infants.[76] The force of Murton's argument was to convey the injustice of this belief. Murton reasoned that if infants were under condemnation, then salvation required them to repent and believe, actions of which they were incapable. All infants, therefore, would be "left vnder condemnation, not for any law that they have broken, for they could not break the law…but for their Father Adams eating of the forbidden tree, and so are damned for their

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[73] Ibid., STC 13055, b1r.

[74] Helwys, *The Mystery of Inquity*, STC 13056, 179.

[75] Murton, *A discription*, STC 6773, 46-47, see also 58-59.

[76] Ibid., STC 6773, 65.

Fathers sinne, contrary to all these Scriptures."[77] English Baptists characterized God as "gratious and mercifull, full of compassion and mercy," especially in regards to infants who had never committed actual sin, in contrast to the Reformed Protestants who stressed that Original Sin was enough to condemn an infant, with physical death as the sign of God's judgment.

As previously shown, in the sixteenth century, Reformed Protestants had emphasized the sinfulness of humanity and the judgment of God to remind people of their need for salvation. This emphasis was partly a response to Catholics and Anabaptists, but the writings of the English Baptists in the seventeenth century also demonstrate that not everyone was comfortable with such an image of God, particularly when it was applied to innocent infants. For the English Baptists, God was a compassionate God who wished all to be saved and would never punish a person for the sins of another; to say otherwise, in their minds, was to blaspheme against God.[78] Theology is always rooted in the circumstances of the time. The theology of the English Baptists was in response to accusations from their opponents who said that English Baptist theology condemned infants to hell, but one can also not deny that English Baptist theology also developed in response to the reality of high infant mortality rates and thus the concerns that parents had for their children. As this study has shown, parents were fearful for the salvation of

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[77] Ibid., STC 6773, 122.

[78] Helwys cited the story of Jonah as an example of God's compassion toward infants, interpreting those who "cannot descerne between their right hand and their left" in Jonah 4:11 as referring to infants. Murton also interpreted this verse as referring to infants and cited it in his argument that infants were not under condemnation because they did not possess knowledge of right and wrong. Helwys, *Short and Plaine Proofe*, STC 13055, b1r; Murton, *Obiections: answered*, STC 13054, 70.

their children and the writings of the English Baptists must be viewed in this context. As such, they illustrate the growing desire of parents to characterize their children as innocent rather than guilty of Original Sin, and thus more likely to be recipients of God's grace. Leah S. Marcus has noted that the innocence of children had become a battle cry for anti-Calvinists in the seventeenth century.[79] Puritan minister, Richard Baxter claimed that in 1642 his congregation revolted against his assertion that infants were not innocent, but "as hateful in the eyes of God, as any Toads or serpents in ours."[80] By the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the characterization of infants as innocent had become even more common, even among some Reformed Protestants.[81] The English Baptists were, therefore, forerunners of this theological trend, contributing to a cultural mentality that would dominate the later centuries.

Their willingness in practice to extend salvation to all infants signifies the importance of this issue for English Protestants. Many Reformed theologians spoke of infants being predestined for salvation, while briefly mentioning or completely ignoring the possibility that some could be reprobate. This fact illustrates the difficulty of the issue. The introduction of the Reformation had, in fact, caused considerable confusion concerning the salvation of children. Catholics stated that only the baptized were saved.

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[79] Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair*, 70–71.

[80] Richard Baxter, *A treatise of conversion* (London, 1657), Wing B1423B, 71-72; Piercy, "The Cradle of Salvation," 90–91.

[81] Philip J. Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 31, 156–59, https//catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000293650; Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Chilldhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 32–35, 43–44; Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, 177.

Reformed Protestants declared that children of the elect, regardless of baptism, would be saved, but there still was the possibility of reprobation. For some, the idea that God would condemn any children was reprehensible and blasphemous. English Catholics and Protestants struggled with the notion that God would condemn infants who were innocent of actual sin, but they also believed that everyone, including infants, had fallen under the condemnation of Original Sin. To answer this conundrum, Catholics had developed the theory of limbo, while Reformed Protestants denied the necessity of baptism and emphasized the covenant of grace. They all sought to expand the grace and mercy of God but were limited by their theology. The Reformation's spread into England thus enabled some people to find a solution to the problem of not wanting infants to be condemned. The adoption of believer's church ecclesiology as their extension of Reformation ideals provided English Baptists with the ability and opportunity to reflect on the meaning of baptism and the process of salvation, which resulted in them extending salvation to all infants. They embraced the long-held concept of the innocence of children, argued that one was only condemned for actual sins and that Christ either saved infants through his death on the cross or that they were never under condemnation in the first place. In embracing believer's baptism and adopting a soteriology of general atonement, they were "forced" to articulate a new theology of infant salvation, one that they believed reflected the grace and love of God and brought much comfort to anxious parents.

The Effect of English Baptists

Though comprised of a congregation with only ten members, the English Baptists who returned home in 1612 had an outsized effect on the theological landscape of England. While remaining a minority movement, the English Baptists by 1626 had grown

to 150 members that were spread across England.[82] Their presence in England and their ability to publish their beliefs established a stable theological legacy that was still present in the 1640s and 50s, actions that elevated the fear that English society and theology was under siege. Their presence and publications resulted in a reaffirmation of traditional beliefs concerning children, baptism, and Original Sin by their Reformed opponents, but also in the adoption of baptismal regeneration by some individuals who sought to counter perceived English Anabaptist threat.

The Theological Threat of the English Baptists

In 1612, Helwys led his congregation back to England where they settled in Spitalfields in north London.[83] Though they faced religious persecution, English Baptists were able to endure and grow, though slowly.[84] By the mid-1620s, English Baptist

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[82] Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-49* (Boydell and Brewer, 2006), 58.

[83] After Helwys fled England in 1608, his estate was confiscated by the crown. His might have chosen London because he had family there. His uncle, Geoffrey Helwys, was a prominent merchant in London. When Geoffrey died, he included Helwys' wife, Joan, in his will. After Helwys fled England, Joan was arrested and eventually released. The possibility exists that Joan and their children went to London because of Helwys' uncle, which would also explain why Helwys decided to establish his congregation there. Ibid., 46; Stephen Wright, "Thomas Helwys (c. 1575-c.1614)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed May 16, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/12880; Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, & Roberts, 1857), 117; Walter Herbert Burgess, "The Helwys Family," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 3 (1912): 23; J. Stephen Phillips, "Thomas Helwys and the Idea of Religious Liberty" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1998), 18–19.

[84] Both Helwys and Murton were arrested for their beliefs, with Helwys probably dying in prison sometime before 1616. John Graunt and John Wilkinson bother testify to Murton's imprisonment at Newgate. Other English Baptists were also arrested and in 1613, they sent a petition to Parliament request that they be allowed to take the oath of allegiance, as recusant Catholics were able to do, and be released from prison, but the committee rejected their petition. The petition is located in Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/JO/10/1/7. Burrage printed a copy in *The Early English Dissenters* vol. 2. Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 46; John Graunt, *Truths victory against heresie* (London, 1645), Wing G1597, title page, 1; John Wilkinson, *The sealed fountaine opened to the faithfull, and their seed* (London, 1646), Wing 2243, 19;

congregations were in Tiverton, Coventry, Salisbury, London, and Lincolnshire, with members numbering at least 150, and possibly in other places as well.[85] In the 1630s, English Baptists made gains in established territory and possibly made inroads into new areas; even so, their numbers remained small.[86] Richard Baxter seemed to confirm the continued existence of the Coventry congregation, though they appeared to be very small.[87] "The Garison and City of Coventry (where I lived) was almost free from them when I first came hither."[88] The Tiverton and Salisbury congregations also appeared to have endured.[89] In 1645, Daniel Featley, a minister in London, stated that the Anabaptist serpent had "thrust out his sting neer the place of my residence, for more then twenty

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Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 2:115–16; Suellen Mutchow Towers, *Control of Religious Printing in Early Stuart England* (Boydell Press, 2003), 82–83.

[85] Wright provides a listing of some of the person presented for Anabaptism in England in the 1620s and 30s. English Baptists appear to have been especially successful in Lincolnshire. Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 58–61; Benjamin Evans, *The Early English Baptists*, vol. II (London: J. Heaton and Son, 1864), 24–30.

[86] Wright argues that by the late 1630s, they might have spread to Gloucestershire, Somerset, and Sussex. John Tombes spent six months preaching in Bristol in 1643 during which time he debated an Anabaptists about the inclusion of the children of believers in the covenant. This event was part of Tombes' journey to rejecting infant baptism. The records of Broadmead Baptist Church also indicate that by 1643 there were English Baptists in Bristol. Thomas Wynell also reported that the existence of English Baptists in Gloucester in 1641. Richard Baxter stated that he was in Gloucester when Wynell's book was published and that he also spoked against them. Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 71; John Tombes, *An apology or plea for the Two treatises, and appendix to them concerning infant-baptisme* (London, 1646), Wing T1801, 6; Roger Hayden, ed., *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640-1687* (Bristol Record Society, 1974), 98; Thomas Wynell, *The covenants plea for infants: or, The covenant of free grace, pleading the divine right of Christian infants unto the seale of holy baptisme* (Oxford, 1642), Wing W3778, b1r-v; Richard Baxter, *Plain Scripture proof of infants church-membership and baptism* (London, 1651), Wing B1344, b4r.

[87] Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 71, 239.

[88] Baxter, *Plain Scripture proof*, Wing B1344, b4v.

[89] Walter Herbert Burgess, "Salisbury and Tiverton about 1630," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 3 (1912): 1–17; Walter Herbert Burgess, "James Toppe and the Tiverton Anabaptists," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 3 (1913): 193–211; Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 71.

yeers."[90] Of the five congregations, Lincolnshire seemed to have fared the best.[91] Lincolnshire had long been a center of nonconformity, which possibly explains the success of English Baptists in the area.[92]

Given the radical nature of abandoning infant baptism, one is not surprised that English Baptists remained a minority. Moreover, by the 1630s the state and the church were increasingly opposed to Anabaptism. Their anti-Calvinism also probably did not help them in regards to the Puritans, who were becoming increasingly hostile to the Arminianism of Archbishop Laud's church. Despite their small status, the existence and significance of the English Baptists should not be dismissed. Their rejection of infant baptism constituted a threat to the dominant theology and social order. Even though English Baptists denied the name, the act of rebaptism and the rejection of infant baptism constituted them as Anabaptists to their opponents.[93] The presence of the English Baptists

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[90] Featley could have been referring to either Murton's congregation or the one started by Elias Tookey. Wright argues that it was probably Tookey's congregation as the Murton congregation was located in Spitalfields which was in east London and Featley's residence was in Lambethondon and Featley's residence was in Lambeth, central London. B. R. R. White argued that the lack of evidence of the London Helwys-Murton congregation does not necessarily conclude the congregation disappeared. Other underground congregations survived and they may have excelled at hiding from the authorities. Daniel Featley, *The dippers dipt, or, The Anabaptists duck'd and plung'd over head and eares* (London, 1646), Wing F587, b1r; Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 61, 71; Arnold Hunt, "Dainel Featley (1582-1645)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed August 2, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/9242?docPos=1; B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (Didcot, UK: Baptist Historical Society, 1996), 24.

[91] Wright makes this conclusion based on the number of Anabaptists mentioned in the court records of Lincolnshire. Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 69–70.

[92] Ronald A. Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 1560-1642* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1960), 137–66.

[93] Francis Johnson, *A brief treatise conteyning some grounds and reasons, against two errours of the Anabaptists* (Amsterdam?, 1609), STC 14659; Henry Ainsworth, *A defence of the Holy Scriptures, worship, and ministerie, used in the Christian Churches separated from Antichrist* (Amsterdam, 1609), STC 235, 69; John Squire, *A plaine exposition vpon the first part of the second chapter of Saint Paul his*

in England, experienced through personal contact, publications, or arrests, not mention rumors, would have been enough to create the sense that Anabaptism had invaded England and that established society and theology were threatened and needed defending.[94]

Anabaptism had been in England since the beginning of the Reformation, though always in small numbers and usually an immigrant phenomenon.[95] In the late 1590s, some English Separatists joined Anabaptism, but they were few in number and remained in the Netherlands.[96] Significantly, any contact that individuals had with Anabaptists would have been through personal interaction, rumors, or through the lens of anti-Anabaptist publications. All of this would have been enough to instill fear against Anabaptism. When the Helwys' congregation returned to England in 1612, they did not return in secret, but they announced their presence with *The Mystery of Iniquity*.

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second epistle to the Thessalonians (London, 1630), STC 23114, 56-57; Joseph Hall, *A common apologie of the Church of England against the vniust challenges of the ouer-iust sect, commonly called Brownists* (London, 1610), STC 12649, 31; Thomas Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments according to the doctrin of the Church of England* (London, 1638), STC 1789, 32-33; Richard Mather, *Church-government and church-covenant discussed* (London, 1643), Wing M1270, 12; Gerard Langbaine, *A review of the Covenant, wherein the originall, grounds, means, matter, and ends of it are examined* (London, 1644), Wing L371, 49.

[94] Consider the various studies on the threat hypothesis and racism. Caroline J. Tolbert and John A. Grummel, "Revisiting the Racial Threat Hypothesis: White Voter Support for California's Proposition 209," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 3 (2003): 183–202; James M. Avery and Jeffery A. Fine, "Racial Composition, White Racial Attitudes, and Black Representation: Testing the Racial Threat Hypothesis in the United States Senate," *Political Behavior* 34 (2012): 391–410; James Laurence, "Reconciling the Contact and Threat Hypotheses: Does Ethnic Diversity Stregnthen or Weaken Community Inter-Ethnic Relations?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37 (2014): 1328–1349.

[95] Horst, *The Radical Brethern*, 89–99; Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642*, 88; Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 78.

[96] Sprunger notes that until Smyth, English Anabaptism in the Netherlands was an underground movement Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 78–79.

Moreover, that work was just one in serious of publications. While the exact location of their printer remains unknown, most probably it was in Amsterdam.[97] Their residence in the Netherlands had possibly provided the connections needed to publish their belief in a society that was already hostile to Anabaptism.[98] From 1612 to 1620, the Helwys-Murton congregation published five works that expounded their views on religious liberty, baptism, Original Sin, and infant salvation, all which of contributed to the growing sense to their opponents that Anabaptism was on the rise.[99] Arthur Lake, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, complained in a sermon that "our English Anabaptists are become plaine Arminians, as their Pamplets shew which they scatter abroad to corrupt the people."[100] In

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[97] Ibid., 70–71.

[98] Publications of dissenters would not flourish until after 1641. In mid-1620s, the government banned the publication of works on predestination because of the intensity of the debate among "Arminians" and "Calvinists." While the ban was put in place after the publication of Richard Montagu's *Appello Caesarum* (1625), Murton's *Objections Answered by Way of Dialogue* probably in some way contributed to the ban as the state and church had long been opposed to dissent from particular redemption. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 17. On printing and censorship in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, see Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1–41; Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Anthony Milton, "Licensing, Censorship, and Religious Orthodoxy in Early Stuart England," *The Historical Journal* 41 (1998): 625–651; Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635."

[99] A revised version of *A most Humble supplication* was published in 1621. A year after Smyth's death in 1612, Thomas Pygott published Smyth's confession *Propositions and conclusions* which probably contributed to the growing sense of fear. Helwys, *The Mystery of Inquity*, STC 13056; Murton, *Obiections: answered*, STC 13054; Anonymous, *A verie plaine and well grownded treatise*, STC 24251.7; Murton, *A discription*, STC 6773; John Murton, *A most humble supplication of many the Kings Maiesties loyall subiects* (Ansterdam?, 1620), STC 563.5; John Murton, *A most humble supplication of many the Kings Maiesties loyall subiects* (Ansterdam?, 1621), STC 563.7; Smyth, *Propositions and conclusions*, STC 22877.4.

[100] Arthur Lake preached at Oxford, London, in Somerset, and in the courts. He died in 1626, five years after the last English Baptist publication. Per his request, a volume of ninety-nine of his sermons was published in 1629. In a separate sermon, Lake spoke of Anabaptists and Familists as "our stains" that must not be endured, but must be "put away from amongst vs, they must vndergoe the priuative part of

1631, Sir Simonds D'Ewes lamented that while England was enjoying success abroad, "all God's true children had continual cause of lamentation and fear, in respect of the daily growing and far-spreading of the false and blasphemous tenets of the Anabaptists.[101] The presence of the English Baptists in England and their ability to publish their theology heightened the visibility of an Anabaptist threat, even among the authorities, and prompted both published rebuttals and theological self-examination among Reformed Protestants.[102]

Fear was not the only response to the presence of English Baptists and their writings. They also influenced their audience's theological beliefs, creating a theological legacy. Though the first English Baptist congregations were small, they endured. Their theological views were not necessarily new. The writings of Zwingli and George Joye had expressed similar thoughts on infants, Original Sin, and infant salvation, but they still affirmed infant baptism and particular redemption. The ability of English Baptists, on the other hand, to publish their beliefs and thereby provoke reactions, was new. Stephen Wright has argued that there is little evidence of an organic connection between the Helwys-Murton congregations of the early seventeenth century and the General Baptists

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Excommunication." Arthur Lake, *Sermons vvith some religious and diuine meditations* (London, 1629), STC 15134, 405, 455; Kenneth Fincham, "Arthur Lake (Bap. 1567, d. 1626)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed August 3, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/15896.

[101] Simonds D'Ewes, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Bart., during the Reigns of James I. and Charles I*, ed. James Ochard Halliwell, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1845), 64.

[102] In a 1622, Archbishop Abbot and James I had expressed concern over the number of people converting to Anabaptism, Catholicism, and Separatism. Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 2:267; E. Brooks Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 76.

who arose in the 1640s.[103] While an organic connection might not exist, an intellectual one does. In 1648, *A verie plaine and well grounded treatise concerning Baptism* was reprinted, and in 1662, Murton's *Objections Answered by Way of Dialogue* was joined with *A most Humble supplication* and republished under the title of *Persecution for Religion Judg'd and Condemn'd*.[104] In 1646, Christopher Blackwood, a Particular Baptist, cited Thomas Helwys' *Mystery of Iniquity* when arguing against the covenant of grace and baptism. "I will shut up this, with words of Mr. HELWYS."[105] The works of the early English Baptists, therefore, lived on after their initial printing. Since reading in early modern England often occurred in group settings and books were borrowed from friends, neighbors, and ministers, one can safely assume that English Baptists preserved their writings and shared them with each other and that eventually, those writings made their way to other individuals, influencing their thoughts, beliefs, and practices.[106]

Theological Entrenchment of their English Baptists' Opponents

The presence of English Baptists in England and the publication of their view of baptism, Original Sin and infant salvation had a theological effect on their opponents.

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[103] Wright, *Early English Baptists*, 99–102.

[104] Anonymous, *A very plain and well grounded treatise concerning baptisme* (London, 1648), Wing V279aA; John Murton, *Persecution for religion judg'd and condemned* (London, 1662), Wing H143A.

[105] Christopher Blackwood, *Apostolicall baptisme: or, A sober rejoinder, to a treatise written by Mr. Thomas Blake* (London, 1646), Wing B3096, 59-60; Helwys, *The Mystery of Inquity*, STC 13056, 183; Richard L. Greaves, "Christopher Blackwood (1607/8-1670)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed August 4, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/66423.

[106] Green, *Print and Protestantism*, 25, 37–38; Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 270.

Their presence and ability to publish their views prompted both theological entrenchment and development regarding the image and spiritual status of children. Anabaptists had existed in England since before Henry VIII's Reformation, and Protestants had often included arguments against them when discussing baptism and Original Sin. Until 1609, however, they addressed their attacks against Anabaptists in general. Smyth's rebaptism of himself and his congregation coupled with the publications of Smyth, Helwys, and Murton changed the dynamic, as now Reformed authors believed that had a native Anabaptist movement that they needed to combat. From 1610-1625, Reformed Protestants published numerous works that directly sought to undermine the views of English Baptists. In the 1620s alone, five works were published in response to *A discription of what God hath predestined concerning man*, Murton's attack on the Synod of Dort.[107] This period of Reformed rebuttals coincided with the initial publications of the English Baptists, but the infamy of Smyth and Helwys extended beyond the 1620s. In 1630, John Squire, the vicar of St. Leonard's in London, cited Helwys and *The Mystery of Iniquity* in his condemnation of the pride of Donatists old and new.[108] Donatists were to be condemned for believing they were the only true Christians, but Squire declared that the "farre more insolent is the assertion of our owne English Anabaptists, who hold

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[107] Henry Ainsworth, *A censure upon the dialogue of the Anabaptists* (Amsterdam, 1623), STC 226; I. P., *Anabaptismes mysterie of iniquity vnmasked* (London, 1623), STC 19068; Edmond Jessop, *A Discouery of the Errors of the English Anabaptists* (London, 1623), STC 1420; Robert Cleaver, *The patrimony of Christian children* (London, 1624), STC 5389; John Robinson, *A defence of the doctrine propounded by the synode at Dort against Iohn Murton and his associates* (Amsterdam, 1624), STC 21107a.

[108] J. Caitlin Finlayson, "John Squire (c.1587-1653)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/105467?docPos=1.

that The Church hath beene utterly extinguished out of the whole world. This is the doctrine of their Apostle Helwis, in his Treatise termed the Mystery of Iniquity."[109] John Davenport, a nonconformist connected to the English Church in Amsterdam led by John Paget, wrote in 1636 that Thomas Helwys was the only person he had read since Tertullian who argued that one should not flee persecution.[110] In the same work, he also condemned the denial of infant baptism by the Anabaptists but acknowledged that they "complaine, and that justly, of the promiscuous administring of baptisme, even to those whose parents cannot be numbred amongst beleivers. As appeareth in their private discourses, publick disputes and printed bookes."[111] In the 1640s, Richard Mather and Gerard Langbaine both mentioned Smyth and Helwys as Anabaptists, testifying that even thirty years after their deaths, the infamous actions of these two men and their congregations endured.[112] The English Baptists clearly caused concern in England, and

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[109] Squire also criticized Helwys' belief that all Catholics would be condemned. He argued that an honest ignorant Catholic could be saved. Squire, *A plaine exposition*, STC 23114, 56-57, 546-47.

[110] Francis J. Bremer, "John Davenport (Bap. 1597, d. 1670)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/7201?docPos=1; John Davenport, *An apologeticall reply to a booke called an ansvver to the unjust complaint of VV.B.* (Rotterdam, 1636), STC 6310, 103.

[111] Davenport, *An apologeticall reply*, STC 6310, 141, 145.

[112] Mather was a minister in American defending the covenant as the constitution of the church. He objected to Smyth and Helwys' belief that the church should be based on the covenant. *A review of the Covenant* was published anonymously, but scholars believe Langbaine to be the author. *A review of the Covenant* was actually critical of forming a church based on the covenant bred schism and cited the Smyth and Helwys as one example among others, including Francis Johnson, John Robinson, and Henry Ainsworth. Mather, *Church-government and church-covenant discussed*, Wing M1270, 12; Langbaine, *A review of the Covenant*, Wing L371, 49; Michael G. Hall, "Richard Mather (1596-1669)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/18324?docPos=1; A. J. Hegarty, "Gerard Langbaine (1608/9-1658)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/16006?docPos=1.

most likely when other English authors of seventeenth century, such as Daniel Rogers, wrote generically against Anabaptism, they had Smyth, Helwys, Murton, and their followers in mind.[113]

The emergence of English Baptists also had the effect of placing the Separatists on the defensive.[114] Smyth had not only rejected infant baptism, but he called into the question the legitimacy of both Catholic baptism and, more importantly, of the baptisms administered by the Church of England. Separatists had long questioned those baptisms, but none had taken the radical step of rebaptizing themselves. In the eyes of their opponents, however, Smyth's actions had confirmed the common accusation that Separatism led to Anabaptism. Joseph Hall, in his *A Common Apologie of the Church of England* (1610), frequently cited Smyth, whom he called the "stout Anabaptist," in his attacks against Separatism.[115] He told the Separatists "eyther you must goe forward to Anabaptisme, or come backe to vs…..If our Baptisme be good, then is our constitution good."[116] The majority of Separatists, except Francis Johnson, continued to argue that

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[113] Rogers was a Puritan preacher in Wethersfield, Essex. In 1629, he was suspended by Archbishop Laud, but he continued to minister in the area through the support of the local laity and clergy. Daniel Rogers, *A treatise of the two sacraments of the gospell: baptisme and the Supper of the Lord Divided into two parts* (London, 1633), STC 21169; Jason Yiannikkou, "Daniel Rogers (1573-1652)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/23970?docPos=2.

[114] White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 147; Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 76–80.

[115] Hall, *A common apologie*, STC 12649, 103; Richard A. McCabe, "Joseph Hall (1574-1656)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/11976?docPos=1.

[116] Hall, *A common apologie*, STC 12649, 31. The common accusation after Smyth's rebaptism was that Puritanism led to Separatism, and Separatism led to Anabaptism. See for example, John Paget, *An arrow against the separation of the Brownists* (Amsterdam, 1618), (:)r; King of England James I, *A meditation vpon the Lords prayer* (London, 1619), STC 14384, 18-19; Giles Widdowes, *The schysmatical puritan* (Oxford, 1630), STC 25594, b2r.

baptisms from the Church of England and Rome were not true baptisms, but they became true when one joined a true church.[117]

Moreover, the English Baptists had attacked the Reformed belief that children were members of the visible church and recipients of the God's grace through the covenant. Reformed Protestants responded by placing a greater emphasis in their writings on the traditional arguments for the inclusion of children based on circumcision and the covenant.[118] Like Richard Clifton, Reformed Protestants responded to the English Baptists by accusing them of condemning children to hell. Henry Ainsworth, for instance, said that Smyth's Anabaptism came from Satan and that "the babes and sucklings whose soules he would murder by depriving them of the covenant promise and visible seal of salvation in the Church; shal rise up in judgment & shall condemn him in the day of Christ."[119] John Etherington, on the other hand, attacked Smyth for saying that infant baptism was the mark of the beast. He criticized Smyth for condemning infants just because they had a little water splashed on them. "What a monster would you make of a little water, and a little child….that it cannot bee baptized but it receiueth the marke of

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[117] Johnson actually reversed his positon on Catholic baptisms, arguing that baptism was not a part of the Catholic Church's sins. He feared that if Catholic baptisms were illegitimate then articles of the faith, Bible translations, and even marriages could be rejected. White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 148–49, 154; Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints*, 153; Scott Culpepper, *Francis Johnson and the English Separatist Influence: The Bishop of Brownism's Life, Writings, and Controversies* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2011), 202-05.

[118] Timothy George, *John Robinson and the English Separatist Tradition* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1982), 233–34; Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 79; Culpepper, *Francis Johnson*, 198; John Robinson, *A iustification of separation from the Church of England Against Mr Richard Bernard* (Amsterdam, 1610), 431–32; John Robinson, *Of religious communion private, & publique* (Amsterdam?, 1614), STC 21115, 69-70, 90-93; Ainsworth, *A defence*, STC 235, 69; Ainsworth, *A censure upon the dialogue of the Anabaptists*, STC 226, 43-64.

[119] Ainsworth, *A defence*, STC 235, 68-69.

the beast, and is culpable of the wrath of God…poore children, if this bee true, vnhappy be you above all creatures, seeing many of you die in your infancy with the marke vpon unrepented of."[120] Reformed Protestants, therefore, charged the English Baptists with the same charge they had received, that English Baptist theology condemned children to hell.

For Reformed Protestants, it was not the English Baptists' rejection of baptism that potentially caused a child's damnation, but their denial that children were, by virtue of their parents, participants in the covenant. To deny the covenant and baptism meant that God did not care about infants, but a "defect of yeares," stated Robert Cleaver, "maketh not the kindness of God defective vnto them."[121] Ultimately, both the Reformed Protestants and the English Baptists affirmed that God saved infants, but the latter extended this salvation to all infants whereas the former said it pertained only to the children of the elect. The issue came down to equality. In opposition to the English Baptists, Reformed Protestants believed that all children were not of one quality and condition. To deny children of the elect the covenant made them "no better then the vnbeleeving Heathen."[122] Chapter Five noted that children had become a weapon in the theological fight between Catholics and Protestants; as this chapter has shown, this development was now being used by Protestants against each other. These conflicts demonstrate the importance of the salvation of children for people of early modern

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[120] John Etherington, *A description of the Church of Christ* (London, 1610), STC 12567, 55-56. On John Etherington as the author of *A Decription of the Church of Christ*, see Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: "Orthodoxy", "Heterodoxy", and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 86–119.

[121] Cleaver, *The patrimony of Christian children*, STC 5389, 12-13.

[122] Ibid., STC 5389, 12.

England. For Reformed Protestants, baptism and the covenant were joined together. To deny one was to deny the other. One must not, however, forget that while Reformed Protestants endorsed infant baptism, Separatists wanted to administer the sacrament only to those children whose parents were visible members of the church. Baptism might apply to everyone, but the Separatists reminded everyone through their theology and actions that the covenant only applied to a select few and their children.

In response to English Baptists, not only did Reformed Protestants emphasize the inclusion of the children in the covenant, but they also placed a greater emphasis on the condemnation of infants due to Original Sin. English Baptists' views on the innocence of infants enabled them to declare that children until they committed actual sin were not condemned, but would be saved if they died. In response to English Baptists' citations of Ezekiel 18 as proof that God did not condemn infants because of their parents, Reformed Protestants argued that the passage referred not to infants, but to children of years who turned from sin and followed God.[123] They acknowledged that children died every day and cited this fact as proof of God's condemnation. Many Reformed Protestants, however, probably shared the sentiments of John Robinson, who affirmed the condemnation of Original Sin while also desiring that Scripture taught otherwise. "Those that perish, (though I desyre, if such were the will of God, & so could gladly beleev, if the Scriptures taught it, that all were saved) do perish for that originall guilt, and corruption, wherein they are conceaved, and born, being the children of wrath by nature,

[123] Robinson, *A Justification of Seperation*, STC 21109, 283; Ainsworth, *A censure upon the dialogue of the Anabaptists*, STC 226, 29.

and therein lyable to Gods curse, every way."[124] Reformed Protestants accused English Baptists of holding a position that attacked the work and nature of God. Robert Cleaver stated that this belief was "contrary to the Scriptures" and "derogatory to Christ his meditations and merits."[125] Similarly, Edmond Jessop declared that "if children dying before they commit actuall sinne are saued, then Christ died not for children, neither was he promised vnto them, nor yet are they saued by him, but by their owne innocencie."[126] Each side, in other words, accused each other of misinterpreting Scripture and defaming the glory and work of Christ.

The debate between Reformed Protestants and the English Baptists further demonstrates the tension between adherence to a particular theology and a concern for the salvation of children. Reformed Protestants might have desired that all children would be saved, but their adherence to Reformed theology prevented them from believing it. For them, a theology that reckoned all infants saved diminished the work of Christ; salvation could only be understood in terms of the covenant, which required some infants to be of the elect and some to be reprobate. As in the sixteenth century, Reformed Protestants, even after being accused by English Baptists, rarely spoke of infants being reprobate. They acknowledged the presence and condemnation of Original Sin, but this action was to emphasize humanity's utter dependence on God for salvation. This fact illustrates the

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[124] Robinson also stated that Original Sin was not an idle term. The Helwys-Murton congregation never made this statement, only Smyth in *Propositions and conclusions*. Robinson, *Of religious communion*, STC 21115, 96, 107. Consider Joseph Hall's statement that it is

[125] Cleaver, *The patrimony of Christian children*, STC 5389, 70-71.

[126] Jessop, *A discouery of the errors of the English Anabaptists*, STC 14520, 51. See also, Widdowes, *The schysmatical puritan*, STC 25594, b4r.

sensitivity and complexity of the issue. They could easily speak of the reprobation of the children "of the Turks or Heathens," but typically remained silent when speaking of the children of the elect.[127] Most Reformed Protestants tended to speak of the salvation of infants of believers in terms to similar to Joseph Hall's letter to Lady Honora Hay comforting her on the loss of her child. "In these cases therefore of any soules but our owne, it is safe to suspend and dangerous to passe judgment. Secret things to God: Hee…knows what to doe with them…But if we define either way, the errors of charity are inoffensive."[128] Quite possibly for the Separatists, the practice of accepting for membership only those who displayed outward signs of election made it easier for them to believe that their children were elect. Reformed theology had deemphasized the necessity of the baptism, but the ambiguity of election could undermine any assurance that the doctrine might hold for anxious parents. Restricting church membership and infant baptism only to the visible elect more narrowly defined who was an insider and who was an outsider and countered any uncertainty caused by the doctrine of election. Having adopted an even deeper "us versus them" mentality, Separatists, though desiring that God might save all children, could take comfort that at least their children were saved.[129] Finally, the debates between Reformed Protestants and the English Baptists

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[127] Francis Johnson, *A Christian plea conteyning three treatises* (Leiden, 1617), STC 14661, 224.

[128] Three years after the publication this letter, Honora Hays died as a result of complication from a miscarriage. She and her husband had two children, James and Anne, who survived to adulthood. Joseph Hall, *Epistles, The Third and Last volume containing two decades* (London, 1611), STC 12663.4, 53-54; Roy E. Schreiber, "James Hay, First Earl of Carisle (c. 1580-1636)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed June 15, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/12723/?back=,12733.

demonstrate that virtually everyone struggled with the concept that God condemned infants, and possibly as they developed their theology of baptism and church member sought to find solutions that would not be incongruous with their theology while also providing comfort for anxious parents.

Baptismal Regeneration

For most Reformed Protestants, the presence and actions of the English Baptists prompted a re-emphasis of their traditional beliefs about the relationship of children to Original Sin, the covenant, and baptism. For a few, however, the threat of the English Baptists whom they viewed as Anabaptists caused them to adopt the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, the belief that grace was conferred through baptism. The first to articulate this view was Samuel Ward who was a master at Sidney Sussex College and Lady Margaret Professor, and early in his life, he a was fervent puritan having prayed with William Perkins while he was dying and even edited some of Perkins' works. In 1627, in a series of letters and unpublished Latin manuscripts, he argued that infants who died were undoubtedly saved because of baptism.[130] Ward was followed by Cornelius

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[129] Consider Ainsworth's response to Johnson's assertion that Rome was a true church in regards to baptism. "For as the covenant of Christ is to the parent and their seed: so the covenant of the Antichrist is to the parent and their seed; even the covenant of destruction; that their babes be dashed against the Rock…The infants of Iewes, are Iewes, the infants of Turks are Turks; the infants of Christians are Christians: so the infants of Antichristians are Antichristians." Henry Ainsworth, *A reply to a pretended Christian plea for the anti-Chistian Church of Rome* (Amsterdam, 1620), STC 236, 152-53.

[130] Ward was one the five British delegates to the Synod of Dort. His manuscript was not published until 1653, ten years after his death, as part of the baptismal debates of that era. Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed*, 78–83; Todd Margo, "Samuel Ward (1572-1643)," ed. H. C. G. Matthew, Brian Harrison, and David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed August 7, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/28705?docPos=1; Samuel Ward, *De baptismatis infantilis vi & efficacia disceptatio, privatim habita, inter virum celeberrimum* (London, 1653), Wing W810C.

Burges, the vicar of at Watford, Hertfordshire and chaplain to Charles I who in 1629 published *Baptismal Regeneration of Elect Infants* and in 1639, influenced by the writings of Ward and Burges Thomas Bedford, who was appointed by Charles I as lecturer at St. Andrews in Plymouth, published *Treatise of the Sacraments*.[131] These views were expressed by these men represent a significant development in English Reformed Protestantism that was in response to the perceived threat of the English Baptists.

Significantly, both Ward and Burges were articulating their views in the 1620s. At that time, the English Baptists had been in England for over a decade and had published numerous works arguing for believer's baptism and that all infants who died prematurely were saved, the most recent being Murton's *A Description of what God hath Predestined* in 1620. Burges, who cited Ainsworth's *A Censure upon the dialogue of the Anabaptists* (1623) which was written in response to Murton's latest work, wrote that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was needed because "the heresies of the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists were hissed out of the Church of Christ."[132] Bedford, who was convinced of this doctrine after reading Burges' work and a letter written by Ward, expressed the same view. "This I take to be the readier way to deal with the Anabaptists; to say that children are to be baptised, not to confirm grace, but to confer grace upon them."[133] In 1653,

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[131] Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed*, 83–87, 101-04; Joel R. Beeke, "Thomas Bedford (d. 1653)," ed. David Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed June 27, 2017, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/1932?docPos=1.

[132] Cornelius Burges, *Baptismall regeneration of elect infants* (Oxford, 1629), STC 4109, 41.

[133] Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments*, STC 1789. 154.

Richard Baxter stated that the doctrine had gained little ground initially, but was now spreading, and he described the doctrine as the result "of the contrary error of the Anabaptists, which having brought so great disturbances and mischiefs to the Church, many incauteous men…in the heat of option" ran "into the contrary extreme."[134]

Not only was baptismal regeneration a response to the English Baptists, but it was also a reaction to the tendency of Reformed Protestantism to de-emphasize the necessity of baptism for salvation. Burges argued that if baptism was only effective for the elect when the Spirit was given at "their…calling by the Word" then "betweene the time of baptism and effectual calling outwardly by the word, baptisme is but a bare sign."[135] Bedford stated that Anabaptism arose "from the opinion of them who denied the Sacrament to have any instrumentall efficiency in the conveying of grace."[136] Baptismal regeneration, therefore, was the return of the pendelum swing. Reformed Protestants in countering the Catholics had downplayed the necessity of baptism for salvation to such an extent that some abandoned infant baptism and adopted believer's baptism. The rise of baptismal regeneration among some Reformed Protestants, therefore, was a response to what they viewed as Anabaptist excess.

Regarding children, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was also a reaction to the inability of Reformed theology to offer Christian parents assurances that their

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[134] Richard Baxter, *Plain Scripture proof of infants church-membership and baptism* (London, 1653), Wing B1345, 293-94; Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed*, 77, 86, 89.

[135] Burges, *Baptismall regeneration*, STC 4109, 110.

[136] Baxter feared that baptismal regeneration would lead people to Anabaptism because people would respond by moving in the extreme opposite direction. He stated that he was tempted to abandon infant baptism after reading Burges and Bedford. Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments*, STC 1789, 153; Baxter, *Plain Scripture proof*, Wing B1345, 293.

children were in the covenant. While Reformed Protestants argued that children were members of the covenant because of their parents, they also admitted that infants of the elect could be reprobate and that the best course of action was to believe in the promises of God and hope for their salvation. Baptismal regeneration was an effort to offer greater assurance by arguing that baptism conferred grace at the moment of its administration. Burges argued that for elect infants, initial regeneration began with baptism. "That all elect infants, doe, ordinarily, in Baptism receive the spirit of Christ…to be in them as the roote and first principle of regeneration."[137] Baptism, therefore, was more than a sign, but the vehicle through which regeneration began, providing a greater incentive for parents to baptize their children. Burges, however, as with most Reformed Protestants, affirmed that children were baptized with the assumption that they were members of the elect and he acknowledged that "all are not indeed within the couenant, although borne of parent that are members of the visible Church."[138] Uncertainty, therefore, still existed for parents in Burges' theology, but there was greater assurance that if the child was of the elect, parents by presenting their children for baptized could be confident that God was already working salvation in them.

Bedford, on the other hand, completely removed this uncertainty. He believed that through baptismal grace was conferred and Original Sin was not held against infants. Whereas Burges limited baptismal regeneration only to elect infants, Bedford never made such a distinction. For Bedford then, an infant who died before the age of discretion was

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[137] If an elect infant died before baptism, then God secretly worked regeneration in that infant. Burges, *Baptismall regeneration*, STC 4109, 3-4.

[138] Ibid., STC 4109, 148.

saved. "By the Sacrament of Baptisme," he argued, "they are freed from guilt, and dominion of sin. Consequently, there is no reason to doubt their salvation. Nay, good reason to be well assured of the same."[139] Baptism was not just the sign of the covenant, but the way one entered the covenant of grace, both for children and adults. While parents could be assured that their children were saved, Bedford did not believe that baptism worked *ex opere operato*. Nor did he believe that baptismal regeneration saved an adult. Bedford distinguished between the grace required of an infant for salvation and that required of an adult.[140] The grace conferred by baptism was a "seminall, and initial grace, which doth not presuppose faith."[141] This grace was sufficient for an infant who was only guilty of Original Sin. If the child died before the age of discretion, then the child would be saved. If the child lived to commit actual sin, "then they have co[n]tracted a new guilt so they must seeke new grace."[142] The grace, therefore, received through baptism was temporary, but sufficient for the needs of an infant, a point Bedford repeatedly stressed. Bedford understood his baptismal theology as in keeping with federal theology.[143] Infants were not saved because of baptism, but because of the faith of others. Bedford argued that just as an infant was condemned because of another's sin, so an

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[139] Thomas Bedford, "A Ready Made Way to True Freedom, Set down in a Sermon," in *A treatise of the sacraments according to the doctrin of the Church of England* (London, 1639), STC 1790, 48.

[140] Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed*, 102-03.

[141] Thomas Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments according to the doctrin of the Church of England* (London, 1639), STC 1709, 192.

[142] Bedford, "Ready Made Way," STC 1790, 57–58.

[143] Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments*, STC 1790, 151.

infant could be saved because of another's faith.[144] If the parents, sureties, and the church called on God asking and believing in faith that God would apply the benefits of the sacrament to the child, then Bedford declared, "I shall not make any doubt, but the Infant is regenerate in baptism…saved if hee dye in his infancy."[145] On the other hand, he argued that if baptism was performed just as "meer matter of pomp and formality," then the child may receive no benefit at all.[146]

Bedford argued that his baptismal theology would guard against Anabaptism, and thus the English Baptists, but his theology displays an attempt to instill within Reformed theology greater certainty as to the salvation of children who died in infancy. For Bedford, baptismal regeneration was more effective against Anabaptism, then, "to shew it possible, that infants also may have the spirit of grace, and that in charity we may think so of them, and admit them Baptism."[147] Bedford believed that his theology was in keeping with Reformed theology, a position that Richard Baxter challenged, but in reality his theology is a blending of Catholic and Reformed theology.[148] Catholic theology held that baptism was effective for salvation. Bedford held to this position but distinguished himself by placing efficacy not in the words and actions of the rite, but in the faith of the people performing the rite. Bedford also made a distinction between Original Sin and

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[144] Ibid., STC 1709, 193.

[145] Bedford, "Ready Made Way," STC 1790, 50.

[146] Ibid., STC 1709, 51; see also, Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments*, STC 1790, 195-96.

[147] Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments*, STC 1789, 153.

[148] Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed*, 101-04.

actual sin when it came to infants. Reformed Protestants believed that the corruption of Original Sin was enough to stir God's wrath and condemn infants and that their salvation only came through God's election. Bedford argued that federal theology made baptism effective for infants, but he never spoke of elect infants when discussing baptismal regeneration. Furthermore, while Bedford wanted to frighten parents into baptizing their children, his theology is more concerned with the salvation of infants. Moreover, Bedford also commended the English Baptists for holding that all children would be saved. "They of whome we speak defended their practice by the judgement of charity. In which respect I may prais their zeal."[149] When Bedford argued that an infant might not receive the benefit of baptism if faith was not truly present, he also stated that he "hoped God to be more mercifull (there indeed is all the hope in the riches of Gods mercy to poore infants)."[150] A few pages later, he stated that the "act of the whole congregation, yea the whole communion of Saints" in presenting the child was enough to make baptism effective.[151] Bedford took seriously the criticism of the English Baptists, who argued that Reformed theology condemned the vast majority of infants, and he believed that his theology better combatted Anabaptism then the Reformed argument of hoping and acting as if the child was of the elect.

Bedford thus illustrates the tension between inherited theology and the desire that no infant be condemned only because of Original Sin. Bedford understood himself as

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[149] Bedford, *A treatise of the sacraments*, STC 1790, 152-53.

[150] Bedford, "Ready Made Way," STC 1790, 51.

[151] Ibid., STC 1790, 54.

working within the Reformed paradigm, but to offer parents firm assurance of the salvation of their children who died in infancy, he had to modify his theology significantly. Even then Bedford could not extend this salvation to all infants as the Anabaptists had, but he came the closest. Moreover, on the eve of the baptismal debates of the 1640s and 50s, the rise of belief in baptismal regeneration among some English Protestants demonstrates the effect that English Baptists had on theology and the religious perception of children, and further confirms the inability of Reformed theology to provide some parents with the pastoral comfort they desired. Individuals chose their religious affiliation for a variety of reasons: politics, economics, social issues, family, and theology. For some people, it is likely that the manner in which a particular movement viewed children in respect to their spiritual condition and certainty of salvation in death played an important role in this decision. In this way, the social concern of high infant mortality intersected with the theologies of baptism and soteriology. One cannot, however, make windows into men's souls. Catholicism, Calvinism, and English Baptists all offered solutions to the issue of infant mortality and salvation. Why an individual chose one over the other is difficult to ascertain, but as the rise of English Baptists has shown, the religious perception of children and their salvation was clearly an important factor.

Conclusion

For much of the English Reformations, the threat of Anabaptism had been external, propagated through the writings of continental authors. With the rise of English Baptists, this threat became internal and tangible. During the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, theological discussions about children had centered on the conflict between

English Catholics and Protestants. While Protestant authors continued to write against Catholics, by the early 1600s their attention also focused on the nascent English Baptists. Because of their physical presence in England and their ability to publish their beliefs in English, the English Baptists represent a significant shift in the religious perception of children in England, which in turn laid seeds for the baptismal debates of the 1640s and 50s.

Smyth's transition to believer's baptism was a product of the introduction of the Reformation into England. Protestant theology de-emphasized the necessity and importance of baptism while also emphasizing the necessity of faith for salvation. Protestants during the reign of Mary and Separatists during Elizabeth came to view baptism as an essential rite which was valid if performed in the name of the Trinity, but they also believed that some baptisms were better than others. This theological tradition greatly influenced Smyth and his followers. When combined with the doctrine of election and a biblicism that was based in a New Testament hermeneutic, the Separatists practice of offering baptism to only the visible elect put Smyth and his followers on the path to rejecting infant baptism. The adoption of believer's baptism was not an inevitable conclusion of the English Reformation, but for Smyth and followers, it did function as such.

Throughout the English Reformation, the theological place of children in the church had been a secondary issue, the byproduct of theological changes in soteriology and baptism. This aspect held true for the English Baptists, but their presence within England moved this issue significantly closer to being a primary concern. Virtually all of their writings, even those focused primarily on topics such as religious toleration, dealt

with issues revolving around children, baptism, Original Sin, and salvation. Their opponents responded to the rejection of infant baptism by raising the issue of infant salvation and damnation. These attacks prompted the English Baptists to articulate a theology of infant salvation based on the age of discretion and a modified view of Original Sin that extended to all children. Furthermore, the attacks went both ways as the publications of the English Baptists forced their opponents to also focus on those issues. The debates between the English Baptists and their opponents in no way compare to those that would come during the English Civil War and the Commonwealth, but they did set the stage for those debates.

The conflict between the English Baptists and their Calvinist opponents in the early seventeenth further demonstrate the importance of the salvation of infants for people in early modern England. Both sides accused the other of possessing theologies that would condemn children to hell. In so doing, children were presented as victims of theological violence. Coupled with these claims were the accusations that their opponents attacked the character of God. For the English Baptists, to believe that only a few infants would be saved was blasphemy. For Reformed Protestants, to deny infants baptism and thus membership in the church was to deny that God cared for children. Such accusations were certainly meant to challenge their opponents but also functioned to scare individuals who were on the edge of switching sides. The rise of baptismal regeneration, particularly expressed through Thomas Bedford's writings, illustrates this point. Bedford's emphasis on baptismal regeneration was a return to the necessity of baptism for salvation that Protestantism had neglected, and he hoped that this theology would encourage parents to baptize their children and inoculate them against Anabaptism. Even still, Bedford's

baptismal theology was betrayed by his concern for the salvation of infants who died prematurely. A child whose parents, minister, and local church placed no value in baptism could still receive the benefits of baptism through the faith of the church at large.

With infant mortality rates high, people sought a theology that could provide them comfort if their children died prematurely. Reformed Protestantism continued to struggle to address these concerns. The Separatists' practice of restricting church membership to the visible elect and thus also infant baptism to their children was a means of addressing these concerns. Greater confidence in one's salvation directly correlated to greater confidence that one's child was a participant in the covenant of grace. Baptismal regeneration was also an attempt to address a clear weakness in Reformed theology. For Burges, the doctrine gave greater motivation for baptism; if the child was of the elect, then parents could know that God had already planted the seed of regeneration in the child. Bedford, on the other hand, used the doctrine to remove completely any doubt as to the child's salvation. Baptism was no longer a sign and seal waiting to be confirmed, but ensured that all baptized infants would be saved until the age of discretion. Though distinct from Catholic baptismal theology, Bedford's theology of baptismal regeneration was a return to the necessity and efficacy that characterized Catholic thought.

Finally, the rise of English Baptists and its interaction with its opponents further demonstrates the tension between theology and society's view of children. Because of their inability to understand right and wrong, people tended to see children as innocent, but this image of children conflicted with the doctrine of Original Sin. In the case of the English Baptists, and one might include Thomas Bedford as well, the innocence of children won out against Original Sin. While a minority group, the religious image and

spiritual status of children held by the English Baptists reflects issues that were important for people in early modern England. Reformed Protestantism, Separatism, and English Baptists all sought to find a balance between theology and a concern for infants, but this often came with a theological cost. Catholicism stressed the certainty of baptism for salvation but left those unbaptized deprived of God's mercy. Reformed theology argued that elect parents could trust in the promise of God to care for their children, but adopting this theology meant one had to be willing to deemphasize the importance of baptism. Separatism went one step further by offering greater assurance of one's salvation and thus greater certainty that one's child belonged to the covenant, but one had to be willing to separate from the established church, an action that could have deathly consequences. English Baptists had the most generous theology concerning children, but their movement required an even greater theological sacrifice, the abandonment of strongly held theological positions of infant baptism, Original Sin, and limited atonement, positions that in the eyes of their opponents placed them in the shadow of the Münster Rebellion. Because of these difficulties, the vast majority of people rejected the hope of salvation offered to infants, demonstrating that some sacrifices could be too great, even if it meant some infants were condemned to hell.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

This study has argued that parents feared for the spiritual well-being of their children and that the introduction of the Reformation into England provided some with the opportunity to challenge, affirm, and modify existing theologies and thus secure for themselves greater assurance concerning their children's salvation. Traditionally, this assurance came through baptism. Of the sacraments, only baptism could be performed by the laity. This fact combined with the practice of emergency and in vitro baptisms as well as the emphasis on ensuring that midwives knew how to perform the rite correctly, all testify to the importance of baptism. Even after the start of the English Reformation, some laity still clung to the salvific status of baptism. During the reign of Edward VI, some people objected to the delaying of baptism until the following Sunday after the child's birth, and the practice of emergency baptisms continued through the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.

The English Reformation, however, opened up other paths to the certainty of a child's salvation. English Reformed Protestants argued that children were not saved by baptism directly, but rather that children of the elect were in the grace of God. Assurance came not through baptism, but through God's covenant. Separatists went one step further by restricting church membership only to the elect, which provided greater confidence that their children were under divine grace. Other Protestants sought to provide assurance by emphasizing baptismal regeneration. While Reformed Protestants tended to view

baptism as a sign and seal of God's promise of salvation to be confirmed at a later point, Cornelius Burges and Thomas Bedford argued that baptism was more than a sign as it testified to parents that the seed of regeneration had been planted in their children. Indeed, Bedford went one step further when he argued that baptism imparted a grace which was sufficient to save a child who had never committed actual sin. The English Baptists, on the other hand, found their assurance by arguing that all children under the age of reason were saved if they died prematurely, as God would not condemn a child who had never truly sinned.

Simply, parents worried about their children. While Catholics and Protestants made accommodations to alleviate those fears, in both cases, some children were left outside of God's grace whether through the lack of baptism or the mystery of divine election. The English Baptists offered the greatest sense of assurance in that all children were included, but it came at the price of rejecting infant baptism and Reformed theology, actions that brought accusations of Anabaptism. This study has shown that much of the debates in the English Reformation partly revolved around the place of children in the church and various ways to reassure worried parents that their children would not be condemned.

This study has also demonstrated that in the minds of many Christians, children existed in a tension between corruption and innocence. Medieval Christianity had been greatly influenced by Augustine. Children bore the guilt and corruption of Adam, and needed baptism to cleanse and save them. While this view came to dominate western Christianity, the literature examined in this study illustrates that people struggled with the notion that God would condemn a child based solely on the sin of another. This tension is

seen in the theory of limbo that developed in medieval Christianity as well as the emphasis that was often placed upon the innocence of children. Baptism removed the guilt of Original Sin, but the corruption remained. Within medieval England, children were not held responsible for this corruption until they reached the age of reason. As seen in pre-Reformation English sermons, exempla, and devotional literature, the church presented children under the age of reason as examples of purity, and as having a connection to the divine. This tendency to view children as innocent, even though they bore the corruption of Adam, reflects a tension between theology and society's view of children as innocent. This tension between corruption and innocence, the desire that God would punish only those fully responsible for their sin, was heightened with the introduction of the Reformation into England. While English Catholics and Protestants alike affirmed the innocence of children under the age of reason, only the English Baptists were willing to extend this innocence beyond actual sin to include Original Sin and to argue that all children, whether of Christian or non-Christian parents, would be saved if they died prematurely.

While the English Reformation offered greater certainty concerning the salvation of children, one cannot ignore that it also great caused confusion and anxiety about the place of children in the church. The English laity were presented with multiple and conflicting views on the nature of baptism and Original Sin in relation to children, views that competed against each other and the medieval Catholic theology present in England. Initially, much of this material was the result of the publication of continental Reformers in England, but soon after, they also arose in the writings of English theologians and official church publications. Notably, often they were written in response to the threat of

Zwinglian and Anabaptist theologies. As such, Lutheran and Reformed writings published in England heavily emphasized the presence of Original Sin in children. Lutheran writings and the theological statements published by the Church of England also affirmed the importance and necessity of baptism for salvation, but this emphasis also created a tension between baptism, salvation, and children as they affirmed the doctrine of justification by faith. Reformed writings avoided this tension by emphasizing the covenant, but this undermined the necessity of baptism for children. For instance, the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* delayed baptism until the next Sunday or feast day. Furthermore, during the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I, some English Protestants delayed baptism until a like-minded minister could be found to perform the rite; all which indicates that at least for some English Protestants baptism was not seen as necessary as it had once been. By the seventeenth century, English Baptists went one step further by completely rejecting the practice of infant baptism. English Protestants also modified the baptismal ceremony by removing the exorcisms originally in the rite. This action signaled to some that children were less vulnerable to the devil, but this removal also coincided with an increase in accounts of possession in older children, demonstrating that people still believed their children were spiritually vulnerable to the demonic.

Ultimately, as a result of the English Reformation, the laity were presented with conflicting beliefs concerning the nature of their children. They were innocent, but also guilty of Original Sin. Baptism was necessary for salvation, but also unnecessary because of election. Unbaptized children were outside God's grace, but they also could be participants in God's covenant of grace, and baptized children could still be reprobate. The laity were also told that baptismal exorcisms were not needed, but that their children

were susceptible to the devil. These competing beliefs were the product of the English Reformation and the religious conflict it caused, and quite possibly further confused parents and worsened their fears about their children.

These competing and conflicting beliefs concerning the religious status of children were the result of polemical attacks brought on by the English Reformation. Medieval literature often depicted children victims of physical and spiritual violence, a theme that continued after the introduction of the Reformation into England. During the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, much of the discussion about the religious perception of children was centered on the fear of Anabaptism, a movement that never truly gained numerical significance in England. As seen in Chapter Four, English Protestants warned against Anabaptists, whom they viewed as unwittingly condemning children to hell by rejecting Original Sin and infant baptism.

The conflict then shifted to Catholics and Protestants during the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I. As seen in Chapter Five, Catholics criticized Protestants for holding that a child could be baptized and still condemned while Protestants not only accused Catholics condemning unbaptized children but, as illustrated in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, of also being a physical threat to children. By the seventeenth century, the arena had shifted yet again, this time among the Protestants themselves. As illustrated in Chapter Six, English Baptists and Reformed Protestants accused each other of condemning children and maligning the goodness of God.

Children became weapons in these conflicts as each side accused the other of possessing theologies which endangered children. These accusations reveal the importance of the issue of infant salvation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Each side argued that their theology offered the greatest amount of assurance for worried parents, and the harnessing of the image of the child as victim in their polemical attacks further demonstrates the parental anxieties that existed over a child's salvation.

Finally, this study has shown that in the English Reformation, the theological place of children was not an initial concern, but rather an important secondary issue that necessarily developed greater significance once the theological changes in baptism and soteriology were taken up. When Henry VIII opened the door for the Protestant Reformation in England, the English Reformers who took up the cause were concerned primarily with reforming theology and practice, an aspect also true of the continental reformers whose writings greatly influenced English Protestant thought. These reforms, however, necessarily intersected with the destiny of children, causing them to address the issue of children and the church. Furthermore, much of the discussion concerning children by continental reformers was in response to the rise of Anabaptism, and this remained true for the English Reformation. Greatly influenced by the continental reformers, the writings of the English Protestants and official documents of the Church of England sought to combat Anabaptism. As Anabaptism rejected infant baptism and the traditional view of Original Sin, these discussions naturally centered on the salvation of children and their place in the church. Even among English Baptists whose theology was arguably the most generous in terms of children, the salvation of all children was not their original concern; rather, it was a New Testament biblicism combined with an emphasis on covenant theology that initially led them to reject infant baptism for believer's baptism. Only after being attacked by their opponents, who viewed the English Baptists as a form of the long-feared Anabaptists, did the English Baptists develop a theology of

infant innocence and salvation that extended to all children. Furthermore, the development of baptismal regeneration among some English Protestants was in response to the English Baptists.

While the issue of children and the church was a secondary concern, this does not mean that it was an unimportant one. The discussions surrounding children and their relation to baptism, Original Sin, and salvation and the vehemency in which each side attacked each other reveals that the topic of children and their salvation was an important societal issue. Parents feared for the salvation of their children, and the religious groups examined in this study all sought to find a balance between theology and a concern for children. This balance, however, often came at a cost. For Catholicism, this cost meant that parents could be certain of the salvation of their children if they were baptized, but the unbaptized were excluded from God's mercy. The emphasis on covenant and God's promise extending to the children of the elect among Reformed Protestants led to a de-emphasis on the importance and necessity of baptism, but at the cost of admitting that some baptized children could still be reprobate. Separatism offered greater assurance of the laity's salvation and the inclusion of their children in the God's covenantal promises, but with the potentially deadly drawback of separating from the established church. English Baptists extended salvation to all children, but one had to be willing to reject infant baptism, Original Sin, and limited atonement, positions deep entrenched in English Reformed Protestantism. This action also meant that one had to be willing to live under the label of Anabaptism. Each of these movements had their followers who accepted these costs, and for a variety of reasons, but certainly one of those reasons was the greater

sense of security they had concerning the spiritual status of their children, all which was the product of the introduction of the Reformation into England

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