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Irish Baptist Historical Society



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Editor

Pastor John Gault

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The Irish Baptist Historical Society

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EDITORIAL

The Historical Society Meetings planned for 2020, like the majority of, if not all, Christian services and meetings, had to be cancelled or re-scheduled because of Covid 19. The particular anniversaries planned for 2020 were the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower and the settling of a Christian community in the New World and the 150th anniversary of Brannockstown Baptist Church. The meetings were re-scheduled for 2021, but again restrictions prevented the Society from meeting, requiring the presentations to be delivered via YouTube. In March Pastor Stephen Murphy told the story of the Mayflower and in May Pastor Richard Blayney presented the history of Brannockstown Baptist Church. Although not ideal, this medium has enabled the presentations to reach a large and growing audience (at the time of writing the Mayflower has had 428 views and Brannockstown has had 363).

In 2019 Dr Micah Caswell published a book entitled *Thomas Patient: The Father of the Irish Baptist Church* and having received news that Dr Caswell was visiting Ireland in October 2021 it was agreed to invite him to address the Society on the work and life of Thomas Patient. Family responsibilities prevented Dr Caswell from travelling to Ireland but he was also able to use YouTube to facilitate his presentation. The meeting planned for Autumn 2020, Edwin Ewart,

A Theology of Worship: Historical & Contemporary Reflections, has been rescheduled for Autumn 2022.

The major historical anniversary in 2021 was the 500th anniversary of the Diet of Worms conducted from 28 January to 25 May 1521 in the city of Worms in South West Germany. The disruption caused by Covid 19 meant that a formal meeting could not be held. There is, however, an article included in the Journal to record how the assembly in Worms and the faith and courage of Martin Luther in the face of strong and fierce opposition served to promote the Reformation and to advance the gospel in Europe.

John Gault

CONTRIBUTORS

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Stephen Murphy has been pastor of Dundalk Baptist Church since its founding in 1988. From 1983–1988 he studied History, Economics & Politics and Library Science at University College Dublin. Stephen also worked as a Librarian with Dublin City & County Libraries. More recently he graduated with an MA in Theology from the University of Chester through the Irish Baptist College. Stephen is married to Marie and they have two grown up sons both married and living in the USA.

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Richard grew up in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, attending Coleraine Baptist Church where he was baptised and admitted to membership. He studied engineering in England and worked for a consultancy firm in Newcastle upon Tyne before taking up a full-time role with his church. He and his wife, Stephanie, and their three children moved back to Coleraine as Richard studied at the Irish Baptist College and took up the role of assistant pastor for Coleraine Baptist Church. In 2016 he accepted a call to pastor the church in Brannockstown, Co. Kildare.

Micah Caswell MDiv MABS MACE MTS ThM DMin

Micah Caswell is married to Kristen and the father of Mason and Kenlee. He pastors Redeemer Church in Denton, Texas, USA. His family launched the church in 2014. Micah holds the Doctor of Ministry from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the Master of Theology from Toronto Baptist Seminary, the Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Seminary, the Master in Biblical Studies and Master in Christian Education from Dallas Seminary, as well as the Master Theological Studies in Christian Counseling from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He recently published *Thomas Patient: The Father of the Irish Baptist Church*. Micah also trains and coaches church planters through SEND Church Planting.

John Gault BD

John Gault and his wife, Hazel, have three children, Kathy, Graham and Martin and five grandchildren, Emma, Ciara, Reuben, Ezra and Martha. John studied at the Irish Baptist College and pastored Grace Baptist Church, Onchan, Isle of Man before moving to Larne where he was Pastor of Larne Baptist Church from September 1993 until September 2016. He served previously on the Irish Baptist College Management Committee, is Secretary of the Irish Baptist Historical Society and Chairman of the UK Committee of Evangelize China Fellowship.

THE MAYFLOWER

STEPHEN MURPHY

INTRODUCTION

In September 1620, a merchant ship called the Mayflower set sail from Plymouth, on the south coast of England. Normally, the Mayflower's cargo was wine and dry goods, but on this trip the ship carried 102 passengers—all hoping to start a new life on the other side of the Atlantic.

Nearly 40 of these passengers were Protestant Separatists—they called themselves "Saints"—who hoped to establish a new church, and a new society around that church, in the New World. Today, we know these colonists who crossed the Atlantic on the Mayflower better as "The Pilgrims."

After two miserable months at sea, the ship finally reached the New World. There, the Mayflower's passengers found an abandoned Native American village and not much else. They also found that they were in the wrong place: Cape Cod was located at 42 degrees north latitude, well north of the Virginia Company's territory. Technically, the Mayflower colonists had no right to be there at all!

This "mistake" was, as we shall see, highly significant—indeed providential—for them and the history of the New World.

In order to establish themselves as a legitimate colony under these dubious circumstances, "Plymouth," named after the English port from which they had departed, 41 of the male Saints and Strangers (the name given by the Separatists to the non-separatist colonists) drafted and signed a document they called the "Mayflower Compact." This Compact as well as swearing allegiance to King James, promised to create a "civil Body Politick" governed by elected officials and "just and equal laws."

It was the first document to establish self-government in the New World. From these unlikely beginnings began a vision for the New World that would have profound consequences—both spiritually and politically—not only for America but the "Old World" as well.

WHY DID THEY LEAVE?

This and many other key questions are best answered by one of the key Pilgrims himself—William Bradford. Bradford was involved in all the key events. He became the long serving Governor of the colony. (When he began as Governor, James I was on the throne. When he died in 1657 James' son Charles I had been executed eight years before, and Oliver Cromwell, Charles' great nemesis would die the following year in 1658).

Bradford wrote his personal history of the venture in his book *Of Plymouth Plantation*:

> First I will unfold the causes that led to the foundation of the New Plymouth Settlement, and the motives of those concerned in it. In order that I may give an accurate account of the project, I must begin at the very root and rise of it; and this I shall endeavour to do in a plain style and with singular regard to the truth—at least as near as my slender judgment can attain to it.

Throughout his account he weaves together not just an historical

account as he recollects events, but filters these events through the prism of Scripture and in particular the doctrine of God's providence. The pilgrims were Separatists. They were a small group—or sub set—of Puritans who came to believe not only that the Reformation had not been allowed to reach its full potential in the Church of England, but that separation from that church—the State Church—was the only conscientious remedy to this failure.

Many of the Separatists came from Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. One of the Separatists was William Brewster who had been inspired by the radical preaching of Richard Clifton, then rector of the nearby village of Babworth. It is believed that Brewster founded a Separatist church in his family home, the manor house at Scrooby. He was respected as an elder and spiritual guide, and played a significant role in the congregation's later journeys. It was Brewster who strongly influenced William Bradford from Austerfield, near Doncaster. And Bradford—as we have noted—went on to become Plymouth Colony's Governor, serving the colony for more than 30 years. His journal, *Of Plymoth Plantation*, records everything that happened to the group, including how they had become so persecuted in England by the Ecclesiastical and political Establishment that they could no longer live peacefully there.

John Smyth, well known to Baptists, the preacher of a Separatist group in Gainsborough, decided that he and his congregation would emigrate in pursuit of their religious freedom. They slipped quietly away from Gainsborough, later reappearing in Amsterdam. The Scrooby congregation—no doubt inspired by the example of Smyth and his congregation—made their first attempt to escape to Holland via Boston in Lincolnshire. In the autumn of 1607, they travelled secretly to Scotia Creek near Boston, where they had charted a ship to smuggle them out of the country. But the captain betrayed them and they were held and tried at Boston's Guildhall. After a month's imprisonment, most were released.

Undeterred, the following year, the Scrooby Separatists travelled north to board a ship at Immingham. Again, though, they were pursued. This time the men escaped to Holland. The women and

children, however, were on a separate boat and were caught. They were freed eventually, and all were reunited in Amsterdam before settling in nearby Leiden—a liberal city of free thinkers.

What are we to make of this? It reminds us of a number of things. Firstly 17th Century England was more like Iran or other religiously totalitarian states than the England we know today. Secondly—and following from this—religious dissent was costly. Fines for not attending worship in the Parish Church could be financially ruinous -even for the gentry. (Fines of £2 were not uncommon—at least £2,000 in today's value.) The famous Separatist preacher John Greenwood was hanged in 1593 in Queen Elizabeth's reign on a charge of "devising and circulating seditious books." So faithfulness to one's conscience and practical efforts to live and prosper, all pointed to the need to leave England.

LIFE IN THE NETHERLANDS

So what was life like in the Netherlands? After all their main purpose in leaving England was to secure religious liberty and pursue spiritual goals. How then did they fare? Bradford describes the growth of the church in the peaceful context of their Dutch exile:

> Under the able ministrie, and prudente govemmente of Mr. John Robinson, and Mr. William Brewster, who was an assistante to him in the place of an Elder, unto which he was now called and chosen by the church. So as they grew in knowledge and other gifts and graces of the spirite of God, and lived togeather in peace, and love, and holines; and many came unto them from diverse parts of England, so as they grew a great congregation. And if at any time any differences arose, or offences broak out—(as it cannot be, but some time ther will, even amongst the best of men)—they were ever so met with, and nipt in the head betims, or otherwise so well composed, as still love, peace, and communion was continued; or els the church purged of those that were incurable and incorrigible, when, after much patience used, no other means would serve, which seldom came to pass.

They were, it seems, well thought of by their Dutch hosts:

> Againe; the magistrats of the citie, aboute the time of their coming away, or a little before, in the publick place of justice, gave this comendable testemoney of them, (in the reproofe of the Wallons, who were of the French church in that citie.) "These English, said they, have lived amongst us now this 12. years, and yet we never had any sute or accusation came against any of them;"—but your strifs and quarels (The Wallons) are continuall, etc.

Interestingly, the Separatists were in Holland at the height of the Arminian controversy and Bradford describes their interaction with it:

> In these times allso were the great troubls raised by the Arminians, who, as they greatly moUested the whole state, so this citie in particuler, in which was the cheefe universitie; so as ther were dayly and bote disputs in the schooles ther aboute; and as the studients and other lerned were devided in their oppinions hearin, so were the 2. proffessors or devinitie readers them selves ; the one daly teaching for it, the other against it. Which grew to that pass, that few of the discipls of the one would hear the other teach. But Mr. Robinson, though he taught thrise a weeke him selfe, and write sundrie books,—besids his manyfould pains otherwise, yet he went constantly to hear ther readings, and heard the one as well as the other;. by which means he was so well grounded in the controversie, and saw the force of all their arguments, and knew the shifts of the adversarie, and being him selfe very able, none was fitter to buckle with them then him selfe, as appered by sundrie disputs; so as he begane to be terrible to the Arminians; which made Episcopius (the Arminian professor) to put forth his best stringth, and set forth sundrie Theses, which by publick dispute he would defend against all men.

Life in Holland—the Protestant Northern portion of the Netherlands—was however not idyllic. The Separatists all came from rural agricultural backgrounds and found that since they mostly—apart from Bradford and a few others—spoke no Dutch—their employment prospects were at the lowest rung of the ladder. They toiled in Amsterdam and later Leiden in textile shops at often the most basic type of labouring work.

Many were not used to the change in labour and earned very little money. The parents also became particularly concerned that their children were being influenced by the Dutch and would forget about their English roots and spiritual priorities. William Bradford echoes these concerns. According to Bradford the key reason the Puritans chose to leave Holland for the New World was the negative spiritual effects the culture of the Netherlands had on the Puritans' children. Bradford says,

> But that which was more lamentable, and of all sorrows most heavy to be borne, was that many of their children, by these occasions, and the great licentiousness of youth in that country and the manifold temptations of the place, were drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses

It was however in Holland that Bradford met and married his first wife in a Dutch Civil Ceremony—which would have been impossible in England where only marriages contracted before a Church of England minister were recognised.

PLANNING THE TRIP

Nick Bunker[1] describes the environment in Europe and Holland in particular just before the Pilgrims departed:

[1] Nick Bunker, *Making Haste From Babylon: The Mayflower Pilgrims and Their World: A New History* (Random House: London, 2010).

> At the end of 1618, a blazing green star soared across the night sky over the northern hemisphere. From the Philippines to the Arctic, the comet became a sensation and a symbol, a warning of doom or a promise of salvation. Two years later, as the Pilgrims prepared to sail across the Atlantic on board the Mayflower, the atmosphere remained charged with fear and expectation. Men and women readied themselves for war, pestilence, or divine retribution. Against this background, and amid deep economic depression, the Pilgrims conceived their enterprise of exile.

In fact very soon Europe, and the Netherlands in particular, would be plunged in to the horrors of religious warfare: "The 30 Years' War".

After living in Holland for nearly 12 years, and having decided that they needed to move again, they spoke with the congregation that was still back in England and decided that they would all travel together to the Virginia colony, in America, and start a new community. They would build a new commonwealth where they would be able to live and worship as they pleased.

But how? The trip would be expensive. So, to help raise the money, the Separatists made an agreement with the Virginia Company, a company created to establish colonies on the coast of North America. The Company needed people to settle in their colonies in America and send back goods for trade. The Separatists would be committed to returning the investment to the Company.

The Separatists in Holland sold their personal belongings in order to buy a ship called the Speedwell. They set sail in August 1620 from Delfshaven, Holland. They then headed to England to meet the soon to be famous Mayflower. Those in England had hired the ship. It was a three-masted, armed merchant ship, about 100 feet long and 25 feet at her widest. The ship was built in Harwich, and commanded and part-owned by her Master, Captain Christopher Jones.

Many dissenters from the London Borough of Southwark had fled to Holland but others continued to meet in secret. In 1620, they

were given permission to sail to America. They joined the Mayflower and set sail for Southampton, to meet the Speedwell. There were already concerns about the Speedwell, which required repairs after developing a leak. This would prove a major difficulty very soon, but on the 15th August, the two ships weighed anchor and set sail.

Southampton had established trading links with Virginia and Newfoundland, so there was an experienced pool of sailors who had previously made the dangerous Atlantic crossing. It is thought that this is where William Brewster slipped aboard, having been in hiding after publishing religious material that angered King James.

THE VOYAGE

They had problems from the start. The two ships had not gone very far when the Speedwell began to take on water again. It may have been because she carried too much sail, straining her timbers, or the direct result of sabotage by a reluctant crew. They changed course for Dartmouth, Devon. It took about a week for the port's skilled craftsmen to make good the damage. Unfortunately, the second attempt did not go as hoped either. The Mayflower and the Speedwell were 300 miles clear of Land's End when the smaller ship yet again began leaking badly and could not risk continuing. The two boats turned about for Plymouth.

By this time, the cramped, damp and miserable passengers had already spent up to six weeks at sea, basically getting nowhere. With a fair wind and good fortune, they would have hoped to be nearing America by then. After a number of false starts the aforementioned "Speedwell" was finally declared unfit for the journey. Some of the Pilgrims dropped out. The remainder crowded onto the Mayflower, which required re-provisioning, despite funds running low. She left Plymouth on 16th September—much too late in the year for the best chances to cross the Atlantic, arrive in spring and have summer and autumn to prepare for winter. But leave they did with up to 30 crew and 102 passengers on board. Just under half of them were Separatists, or Saints. The rest were known as "Strangers"—this is how the Saints viewed all others outside of their group. These

Strangers were a group of skilled tradespeople sent by the investors to help build the new colony.

As can be imagined the attitudes of some of the sailors were in conflict with the strict godliness of the Pilgrims. Here is how Bradford records the attitude and eventual fate of one of the crew:

> And I may not omit here a special work of God's providence. There was a proud and very profane young man [aboard the Mayflower], one of the seamen, of a lusty, able body, which made him the more haughty; he would always be contemning the poor people in their [sea]sickness, and cursing them daily with grievous execrations, and did not let to tell them, that he hoped to help cast half of them overboard before they came to their journey's end, and to make merry with what they had; and if he were by any gently reproved, he would curse and swear most bitterly.
>
> But it pleased God before they came half seas over, to smite this young man with a grievous disease, of which he died in a desperate manner, and so was himself the first that was thrown overboard. Thus his curses light on his own head; and it was an astonishment to all his fellows, for they noted it to be the just hand of God upon him.

By November 1620 they had arrived in Cape Cod, having spent a harrowing 66 days at sea—a perilous voyage that would be matched by the conditions they were about to find. Their first acts would include drawing up the Mayflower Compact, an agreement for how their lives would be governed—a pioneering document that would go on to ultimately inspire the Constitution of the United States of America. It is to that document we now turn:

> In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereigne Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britaine, France and Ireland king, defender of the faith, etc. having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honour of our

> king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just and equall laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for the generall good of the Colonie unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape-Codd the 11. of November, in the year of the raigne of our sovereigne lord, King James, of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fiftie-fourth. Anno Dom. 1620.

LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD

The Pilgrims got off to a hopeful start in one respect at least. A few days after arriving, one of the Pilgrims—Susannah White—gave birth to a son aboard the Mayflower, the first English child born in New England. He was named Peregrine, derived from the Latin for 'pilgrim'.

Having the need for clean water and fertile land, a party went ashore to explore the area for the first time, on 25th November. Having spotted a small group of Native Americans, the Pilgrims tried to follow them but got lost in the woods and stuck amongst some dense thickets. They decided to change course and came across cleared land where corn had been grown. As well as finding corn that they took back to the Mayflower, the colonist would face no resistance in settling there. They departed the bleak shores of Provincetown and arrived, finally, in Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts, on 26th December 1620.

The first winter proved extremely difficult for the Pilgrims; in fact, more than half died in an outbreak of disease. Bradford says: "But it pleased God to visit us then with death daily, and with so general a disease that the living were scarce able to bury the dead."

Thanks, however, in part to help from Squanto—a Native American who acted as an interpreter and provided the Pilgrims with advice on farming—the remaining Pilgrims managed to make it through the first few years of settlement. They were frequently the victims of famine, however, as well as of dishonest dealings on the part of their investors, and it was not until they started to farm according to a system of private ownership that they truly began to succeed. Previously they had—as part of their Utopian vision—experimented with what we would call today Christian socialism. Bradford records:

> The failure of this experiment of communal service, which was tried for several years, and by good and honest men, proves the emptiness of the theory of Plato and other ancients, applauded by some of later times, that the taking away of private property, and the possession of it in community, by a commonwealth, would make a state happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God.

Eventually the settlement not only paid off their debts but became moderately prosperous when they discovered abundant supplies of beaver fur. Providentially this coincided with a greatly increased demand and a tripling of the price back in England.

It also encouraged a far greater willingness of both investors and would be emigrants to see the New World—and New England specifically—as an attractive proposition. This increased further the stability and prosperity of the colony. Bradford reports:

> The settlers, too, began to grow in prosperity, through the influx of many people to the country, especially to the Bay of Massachusetts. Thereby corn and cattle rose to a high price, and many were enriched, and commodities grew plentiful. He was not unaware, however, the dangers that prosperity might bring—especially in keeping the community close knit. But in other regards this benefit turned to their harm, and this accession of strength to weakness. For as their stocks increased and became

> more saleable, there was no longer any holding them together; they must of necessity obtain bigger holdings, otherwise they could not keep their cattle; and having oxen they must have land for ploughing. So in time no one thought he could live unless he had cattle and a great deal of land to keep them, all striving to increase their stocks.

All this growth was, however,—Bradford's reservations notwithstanding—especially important in driving the wave of Puritan settlement that continued throughout the 17th Century. (At one stage Oliver Cromwell had planned to sell up and move to New England. Instead he became MP for Cambridge in what became the Long Parliament and history took a very different course.)

So, what are some of the key lessons we can take from the Mayflower Pilgrims?

THE COST OF CONSCIENCE

To a modern mindset, particularly in our hyper secular age, the question jumps out: "why did they do it?" Why up root yourself twice and face extreme hardship, even death? The answer it seems is that they valued a good conscience above all else. In many ways their arduous physical journey was a living metaphor of the heavenly pilgrimage they knew themselves to be upon. Bradford states in his account: "Nevertheless, to keep a good conscience, and walk in such a way as God has prescribed in his word, is a thing which I must prefer before you all, and above life itself."

It was a theme that he returned to over and over again. Writing after the settlement had been established, the early years of severe struggle were over, and some were worrying over losses yet incurred Bradford wrote:

> There is more in the Lord Jehovah than ever we had in this world. O that our foolish hearts could be weaned from things here below, which are vanity and vexation of spirit; and yet we fools catch after shadows that fly away and are gone in a moment.

This attitude helped form the character not only of the little Plymouth settlement, but of Puritan New England generally.

THE POWER OF PROVIDENCE

Over and over Bradford unsurprisingly quotes from, and alludes to, the Scripture in his framing of the working of providence in the lives of the Pilgrims. Bradford uses biblical allusions throughout *History of Plymouth Plantation* to structure the story of the Plymouth Planation as in line with biblical events and authority.

He alludes to the apostle Paul in asserting his own right to insist on religious conformity in the colony. He later alludes to two Bible verses, from Thessalonians and Peter, to assert that the recently deceased William Brewster's sufferings will be rewarded in heaven

Many times their puny settlement should have died out. It did not. Against all the human odds it survived. As Bradford put it himself:

> Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many.

Eventually this small settlement set the template for the much larger Puritan settlements that arrived soon after them. This in turn formed the Puritan character of New England giving rise to such notables as John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (famous for his "City built on a hill" allusion to the colony); Increase & Cotton Mather, Solomon Stoddard and of course eventually Jonathan Edwards and David Brainard. It is sobering to remember that Harvard, Yale and Princeton were all originally built to educate men for the Puritan ministry.

Here is how Bradford summarised his biblical understanding of what they were ultimately engaged in, and how he hoped it would be remembered:

> May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: "Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice, and looked on their adversity, &c. Let them therefore praise the Lord, because He is good, and His mercies endure forever. Yea, let them which have been redeemed of the Lord, shew how He hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor. When they wandered in the; desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry, and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord His loving kindness, and His wonderful works before the sons of men."

PROTESTANT PLURALISM

The Separatists left an England which would not understand or know Protestant pluralism until Oliver Cromwell faced down the Presbyterian attempts to supplant Episcopal hegemony with Presbyterian hegemony during the Long Parliament. It would disappear again with the Restoration in 1660, and only partially be restored by the Act of Toleration, that followed on the Glorious Revolution in 1688

Their providential landing in the New World outside the Anglican dominated Virginia colony, meant that the Separatists were both free and indeed obliged to carve out their own course in these matters. The basic course was set by the Mayflower Compact, entered into by Saint and Stranger alike, which described the privileges and obligations of a Civil Society apart from church membership.

The opening up of further colonisation throughout the 17th Century enabled the settlement of large tracts of territory by distinct religious groups giving a multitude of Protestant denominational expression in the New World. The Quakers found a tolerant home in Pennsylvania-—named after William Penn, himself a Quaker and its first Governor. The Baptists of course founded the Rhode Island

colony, while Presbyterianism predominated in New York and New Jersey. In Virginia, further South, Anglicanism dominated, though the advent of the Ulster Scots injected a powerful Presbyterian addition to that religious landscape.

This multi-denominational equality, though not always seen within each colony, necessitated a radical new departure when the colonies broke from the mother country in the Revolution. It was the influence of the nominal Episcopalian Thomas Jefferson of Virginia that secured the "non-establishment" clause as part of an Amendment to the American Constitution in 1791. Better known as the Separation of Church and State, this key element of the First Amendment forbade the Federal Government from establishing any of the Churches as a State Church. It was to the spirit of this Amendment that the Danbury Baptist Association appealed when they wrote to the then President Jefferson 10 years later, with their concerns about religious liberty in Connecticut. The seeds of this idea, it can be argued, were sown originally in the Mayflower Compact 150 years earlier.

VIEWS OF AND RELATIONS WITH THE NATIVE AMERICANS

Bradford has remarkably little to say of the Native Americans. I believe it is clear, however, that their involvement in Plymouth Plantation led to the success and survival of the colony whether Bradford directly says so or not. But what he does say shows a development of thought from their views before they left England to their actual dealings with them when they arrived.

The Pilgrims settled in the abandoned village of Pawtuxet. It was a large 2,000 person settlement that had been wiped out by plague a few years before they arrived. Ironically its sole surviving inhabitant—Samoset—was spared the fate of his family and neighbours. He had learned some English from fishermen in his region—an area that would come to be southern Maine. Bradford records: "a certain Indian came boldly amongst them and spoke to them in broken English"

The settlement had been a village of the Wampanoags, a people devastated by the plague, who were consequentially politically weak and militarily vulnerable. This was to prove providential in the relationship that was brokered between the two vulnerable peoples. Eventually a treaty was brokered in which they pledged mutual help if either was attacked, and the Native Americans left the Pilgrims Squanto (or Tisquantum) originally introduced to them by Samoset. Tisquantum spoke even better English. Ironically he was the sole surviving inhabitant of Pawtuxet, and was providentially spared the fate of his family and neighbours. He had been captured and enslaved as a young man by the English explorer George Weymouth; and had subsequently spent time on transatlantic voyages and expeditions with John Smyth and Thomas Hunt, among others. By the time he made it back to New England in 1619, the rest of his Pawtuxet community had been wiped out by a plague (likely smallpox), and he had found a home with Massasoit—a leader of the Wampanoags and his village.

He was the main translator in the Treaty negotiations. He also helped them learn the native skills in cultivating this new land and its different crops. Bradford unsurprisingly saw him as an instrument and gift of Providence, calling him, "a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation."

Some of the earliest efforts to evangelize native people came in the early 1600s, when English settlers established the Jamestown colony in Virginia and made contact with local Algonquin tribes. By 1614, a chief's daughter named Pocahontas was among the most notable converts to Christianity.

There seems to have been similar efforts in New England beginning with the ministry of John Elliot of Roxbury MA—a contemporary of Bradford who came over in the second much larger Puritan emigration.

Ruth A. Tucker writes concerning John Eliot: "One of the first and probably the greatest of all missionaries to the American Indians was John Eliot, often referred to as the 'Apostle to the Indians.' But despite the greatness he achieved as a missionary, Eliot's primary

vocation was his ministry at the Roxbury church. . . . Nevertheless, his devotion to the task of bringing Christianity to the Indians makes him one of the great missionary leaders of all history, and many of his methods carry a timeless quality."[2] Eliot learned the Algonquin language so that he could preach the gospel to the Native Americans of Massachusetts in their own language. This heritage begun by Elliot was continued by the remarkable efforts of David Brainard and Jonathan Edwards a century later.

ENDURING LEGACY

As we have seen already, even in those early days when much of the future could only be glimpsed by faith, Bradford felt that something special had happened here: "Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing."

The establishment of the Plymouth colony—soon to be followed by the greater Massachusetts Bay colony—was indeed providential. Both in its geographical location and its religious character, it proved a pivotal strategic bulwark of English Protestantism in North America. When control of the destiny of North America was successively contested by England and France, New England would prove decisive.

The development of Protestantism in New England and indeed in the later colonies also reflected back to England itself. Although separated by the wide Atlantic, the colonies and Britain saw themselves as a single Protestant family. So when we see the Wesleys and George Whitfield travel to and preach in North America they do not see it as anything strange. There was frequent communication between ministers in New England and Great Britain and they were abreast of the issues of the day be it revivals or controversies.

Protestant New England, indeed North America in general, acted as an "alternate universe" in which the religion and politics of the

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[2] Tucker, Ruth A. *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2004).

home country could exist in an environment that was both geographically remote yet culturally still connected. Even when that link was politically dissolved in the Revolution, the cultural and more importantly, from our point view, the religious interaction and influence continued. In 1858, for example, a remarkable Revival broke out in New York originating in a prayer meeting at a Dutch Reformed Church. By the end of the following year it had spread throughout the British Isles—Ulster being particularly affected—the 1859 revival.

Some 82 years later, on August 9th 1941, Winston Churchill met Franklin Roosevelt onboard the U.S.S. Augusta, anchored off the coast of Newfoundland in Placentia Bay. This would mark the beginning of high-level collaborations that would continue until the end of the war. The stature of the meeting was manifest in the way the two leaders came together for Sunday service on the battleship Prince of Wales. A symbolic moment at war took place when military leaders and sailors of both nations mingled together to sing hymns that Churchill had selected. This was seen as an unforced and an appropriate ceremony. It reflected that fact that these two great nations, were inheritors and products of that Anglo American Protestant culture.

In conclusion then: The English Separatists that left England trusting in divine providence, venturing all for conscience sake, had accomplished under God more than they ever could have understood or dreamed of. Yet perhaps Bradford could glimpse something of it—just as he glimpsed the Eternal city from afar, when he wrote: "as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many."

150 YEARS OF BRANNOCKSTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

RICHARD BLAYNEY

Brannockstown

Brannockstown is tidy little village nestled in the gently rolling pastureland of County Kildare and the River Liffey valley, around 45 minutes' drive south west of Dublin. It is a settlement dating back in some form or other to the 12th Century, which today is a mix of quaint old cottages, stylish newer houses, a school, a church, and many glorious old trees that watch everyone come and go beneath them. The surrounding countryside is home not only to ordinary farms but to studs. The horses of Sallymount Stud can be seen grazing through the trees opposite the church and the adjacent manse, while less than a mile to the west is Gilltown Stud, owned by the Aga Khan, visited in 2011 by Queen Elizabeth, in 2017 by Prince Charles and Camilla, and in 2018 by a Baptist Youth Evangelism team, taking a well-earned break. The Irish name rendered as Brannockstown approximately means 'town of the Welshmen'. But

while the history of the village may have roots in Wales, the story of the church begins instead in France.

HUGUENOTS

The powerful and influential de La Touche family was favoured in the court of King Louis XIV, but the state persecution of Protestant Christians, the Huguenots, in 17th Century France prompted part of the family to flee the country. One young de La Touche arrived in Ireland, settled in Dublin, and formed links with other Huguenot refugees, who deposited cash and valuables with him for safe-keeping. Such were the beginnings of one of the foremost private banks in 18th Century Ireland and the La Touche family became wealthy landowners in Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare. So it was that in 1768 one David La Touche bought Kildare's Harristown estate from the prestigious Eustace family, and it became the La Touche family seat by around the 1780s.

HARRISTOWN

Harristown House was noted as 'the most beautiful seat in that part of Ireland'. The River Liffey winds its way through the land, and formed at that time a large lake in front of the house that was used for boating and other water sport. That lake has since been filled in and is now a field. In fact much about the estate has changed, and the grounds remain largely private, but include farmed and forested land and at least two substantial and handsome old masonry arched bridges, one of which sat on an old railway route that is now long gone.

JOHN LA TOUCHE

The estate passed through the family, reaching John La Touche in 1844. He was a young man in his late 20s, newly married to Maria, an enthusiastic letter writer and author of several novels and other works. The La Touches lived in Victorian times, as wealthy upper-class landowners and landlords. It's a life that could be easily caricatured and even criticised from what are presumed to be more

equitable times today, whether they are or not. Reports infer that John La Touche seems to have been viewed as firm but fair, and even kind-hearted. In his early years as master of Harristown, he followed what had become a family association with the Church of Ireland and was what could probably be fairly described as a church-goer.

CONVERSION

His view of spiritual matters, however, went on to change, and to change him. There were years when the La Touches would spend winter in London, where it seems that John La Touche made the acquaintance of the well-known Baptist preacher the Reverend Charles Haddon Spurgeon. In fact Spurgeon is rumoured to have visited and stayed at the Brannockstown manse, although documentary evidence for this is sadly lacking. Certainly in the winter of 1857 La Touche began listening to Spurgeon preach, and at some point, possibly a few years later, the gospel struck home and changed his life. One writer comments about 'a rich Irish banker, former Master of the Kildare Hounds, who had recently found the light and had been converted and rebaptized by that fire-breathing evangelist, the Rev C. H. Spurgeon'. Another writer enthuses that the Master was rescued 'out of the blighting narrowness of a life entirely given to sport, and [enabled] to see the beauty of things he never gave a thought to when he was young.' That writer goes on with La Touche in mind, saying, 'People may talk of goodness narrowing people, but experience proves that [...] spiritual interest enlarges the nature of a person and widens their life.'

COMPASSION/MISSION WORK

The grace of God in Jesus Christ came to John La Touche and certainly enlarged his nature and his interests. He quickly identified himself with Christian relief work in London, founding a society that helped deliver 500 young women from prostitution, and then taking an interest in the work of the London City Mission. Interestingly until the restrictions of the current pandemic, the church in

Brannockstown enjoyed an annual visit from a couple of London City Mission workers to update us on some aspect of the efforts of that large network, though that present relationship owes more to the interest of some of our current members than to that of John La Touche 150 years ago. Back in Kildare La Touche carried out compassion work in the neighbouring town of Naas, and laid the foundation stone of the new Naas Presbyterian Church building, which is still home to a congregation with whom the Baptist church in Brannockstown has a very friendly relationship today.

BIBLE STUDIES IN BRANNOCKSTOWN

Around 1870 La Touche began to gather a group of tenants and neighbours for Bible studies at Harristown House and later in a cottage in the village in which he and his family lived while Harristown House was rebuilt after a serious fire. The precise date of the church's formation is unknown, which might seem like a remarkable admission to make when marking a sesquicentenary. Documents suggest that a congregation was meeting officially as a Baptist church by 1873, with some correspondence suggesting that regular services had begun at an earlier time. In any case, the centenary celebrations of the church were held in 1970 under the leadership of Pastor Dunlop, who literally wrote the book on the history of the church, so global pandemic aside, there are no reasons to change the dates. It is perhaps a marker of how Ireland has changed that the centenary of the church featured a service broadcast by RTE. One report from the 1880s describes the founding of the church as follows:

> Mr La Touche has even shown an eager interest in the social and moral well-being of his tenantry. Nearly twenty years ago he was led to see the Scripturalness of our views of baptism. Earnestly desiring to serve Christ, he devoted himself for a time to evangelistic work in London; but the spiritual destitution of his own country, and especially of the neighbourhood in which he was most interested, induced him to return to Brannockstown

and endeavour in some way to evangelise the people there. He commenced by holding a prayer meeting in a cottage and giving short expositions of the Bible narratives. At length a cottage was specially fitted for the purpose and services held regularly on Sundays. Several were converted at these meetings and ultimately baptised. In due time a little church was formed to which Mr La Touche continued to minister. At length, finding his strength unequal to the full strain of pastoral work, he obtained for a few years occasional help from various ministers in Great Britain and Ireland. (The Freeman, 5th January 1883)

QUESTIONABLE INFLUENCE

It is worth admitting that there is a lingering question of whether tenants and employees of the Master of Harristown were expected to attend the services in Brannockstown. In the years since then some have maintained that regular attendance of the Baptist church was even a condition of employment at Harristown. These suspicions are probably not without some foundation, and though there is no evidence of religious coercion, it remains a regrettable idea. Evidence is lacking, though there is an anecdote of the Master's landlordly use of authority in church life when it comes to the first few pastors. La Touche apparently took sole responsibility for employing pastors during the early years of the church, and is reputed to have invited one to tea at Harristown House, suggesting afterward a time of prayer together during which the Master asked God 'to open a suitable sphere of service for our brother who is now concluding his ministry amongst us'. Notice was thus served, and the poor pastor went home to pack. It can be confirmed, however, that Baptist patterns of congregational government have since been added to the early foundation of Baptist doctrine and teaching.

BUILDINGS

The early growth of the church congregation in Brannockstown led to the need for a larger place of meeting and in 1882 a little chapel was erected. It was described at the time as an elegant gothic

structure, built of chiselled limestone with arches faced with red sandstone, and a vestibule forming part of a massive tower surmounted by a red sandstone spire. The interior featured a polished pine lining on the walls up to what was described as 'the usual height', along with a tiled baptistry, and windows glazed with, quote, 'a light buff and green tint, which diffuses a very pleasing radiance through the building'. It was regarded as seating 120, though a safer maximum today would be 100.

Next door to the church building, La Touche erected a manse that is still in use today, inhabited by the current pastor and his family. And there is no mistaking the association of the two buildings, sharing as they do several points of connection both of architecture and of building materials.

SCHOOL

In 1880 La Touche oversaw the founding of a school in the village, with a school building erected with the aid of a State grant, opening in 1885 as Brannockstown National School. It operated for 20 years in close connection with the church, then closed and later re-opened in 1928 under the management of the Roman Catholic diocese. The school gained a new building a few years ago, during the construction of which classes were held in portacabin-style modular buildings installed on church grounds and since left to the church as much needed halls. The school recently closed for a year during a further change in management, and has been reopened by the local education board as a multi-denominational 'community national school'.

GATHERING A CONGREGATION

In the early 1880s there were around 30 church members in Brannockstown, with congregations regularly reaching 80, with some folk coming five, six, seven, even eight miles to attend, which was a greater feat then that it is now. Other meetings, both organised and impromptu, were held in those early years in neighbouring towns and villages, and also at the Curragh Camp, home to a large

portion of the armed forces, as it still is today. During the family's time living next door to the church and manse as Harristown House was repaired, Mrs La Touche describes an occasion when two loads of soldiers from the Curragh attended a service in Brannockstown. She writes, "As we sat at dinner I saw all the arrivals, and heard the opening hymn, 'Onward Christian Soldiers', taken so fearfully slowly that one felt the Christian soldiers did not mean to hurry themselves, and evidently wished to remain non-combatants'.

EARLY PASTORS

One of the pastors in those early days was Archibald McCaig, native of Scotland, and recommended to the church by Spurgeon himself, having graduated from Spurgeon's College, where he later returned to teach for many years.

John La Touche died in 1904. At that time the pastor of the church was Ambrose Bury, who was also at a time an assistant pastor at Harcourt Street Baptist Church in Dublin, which meets today in Grosvenor Road. It seems that Bury was the only Kildare native to pastor the church. He went on to become Principal of the Irish Baptist College in Dublin.

Before his death, La Touche wrote to the church at Harcourt Street asking for the church in Brannockstown to be taken into its care. It seems that for a time the members of Brannockstown were welcomed to Harcourt Street, and that the church in Brannockstown may have dissolved for a time. The early 20th Century was certainly a lean time for the church, reflected in a paucity of records, but the dedication of lay preachers and the help of local Presbyterian and Methodist ministers kept services going, and made sure that God's Word continued to be preached. Students of the Irish Baptist College in Dublin also undertook preaching duties for many years.

In 1947, one of these students, J. A. Ritchie, became the first full-time pastor since the death of John La Touche. During Pastor Ritchie's time several new families began to attend and a Sunday School opened with 18 children on the roll. Pastor Ritchie moved on to Limerick, and under subsequent pastors there was a growing

emphasis on youth work and evangelistic outreach.

PASTORATE OF ROBERT DUNLOP

In 1964 the longest pastorate of the church began with the appointment of Robert Dunlop, who served the church until his retirement in 2006, a remarkable service of 42 years. A native of County Monaghan, he served for three years as a Baptist Home Mission worker in Athlone before accepting a call to pastor the church in Brannockstown. Under Pastor Dunlop, the church adopted an updated constitution. A Christian Endeavour Society provided fellowship and service for teens and young couples in the 1960s and 1970s. Extensive work was carried out to the church property, including the installation of central heating and the erection of church halls. Over 20 years attendance on Sunday mornings grew from the mid-thirties to the mid-sixties, with almost thirty children in the Sunday School. A Boys' Brigade Company was formed in 1980, which is unusual in Baptist circles, and was certainly the first in a Baptist church in the Republic of Ireland. An annual summer camp was also established in the early seventies, welcoming and teaching as many as eighty children and Baptist Youth Evangelism teams would come and supplement the evangelistic endeavours of the church in different ways.

1972 saw the establishment of a truly ambitious, creative, and visually striking ministry, the 'Churchmobile'. Services and evangelistic meetings were taken on the road in a bus converted and decorated especially for the purpose, with regular ministry established in places like the neighbouring county of Carlow. Ireland's Church on Wheels operated for 12 years, visiting towns, villages and fairs—a remarkable effort and commitment.

Pastor Dunlop's voice became familiar to RTE radio listeners as he was given opportunity to broadcast, often speaking of God's great salvation. He was also a keen writer, with interest in faith, history, and poetry. Pastor Dunlop retired in 2006 and was laid to rest in the church graveyard after his death in 2014.

THE CHURCH TODAY

The church today in its 150th year, give or take, continues to enjoy God's blessing. It is a group of 27 members, with around 40 adults and 30 children meeting each week, or not meeting as has been the case for much of the time around this anniversary due to the coronavirus pandemic. The congregation is thinly spread in geographical terms, and looks to make the most of times together.

Alongside church-wide midweek prayer meetings and Bible studies, there are groups for the men and women in the church, meeting for fun and fellowship, for outreach, and for reading and discussing books together, the latter continuing online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent years two key ministries of the church in the community have been the youth club, attended by young people of whom most are otherwise unconnected to the church, and the toddler group, welcoming and befriending a small group of mums and young children week by week.

The summer camp that began in the 1970s runs today with the help of Baptist Youth Evangelism Teams. From time to time events have been held alongside the Brannockstown village committee, including a summer fair, a harvest festival and a nativity complete with stalls, actors, scripts, and live farm animals.

One of the opportunities of particular excitement at the moment is that of sending a family from the church to France in partnership with Baptist Missions and our Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland. Just as the history of the church began with Christians leaving France for Ireland, the near future of the church involves sending some back from Ireland to France.

There is more that could be said, but perhaps it would be fitting to end with some sentiments of Pastor Dunlop, written almost 40 years ago but still appropriate today. He wrote:

> By and large we can be humbly thankful that we have a happy and enjoyable church fellowship. In being alerted to our deficiencies, limitations and peculiarities we must not lose sight

of the steady, regular and faithful service rendered week by week within our ranks. We...stand on the threshold of a strenuous advance into that unknown but enriching future which is as bright as the promises of God. May he, through his grace, make us worthy of the honour and equal to the task. (Brannockstown Baptist Church Annual Report, 23rd February 1982)

THOMAS PATIENT'S IRISH MINISTRY

MICAH CASWELL

Thomas Patient was an English Particular Baptist who had a brief ministry in Ireland including planting two of the first Irish Baptist churches. His legacy lives on through those churches. Patient was also part of the first generation of Particular Baptists. Through the *First London Confession* and his book *On Baptism*, Patient's theology and ministry still speaks to Baptists today.

FOUNDING OF THE PARTICULAR BAPTIST MOVEMENT

English Reformation and Civil War

The English Civil War can best be described as a complex clash of ideas and conflicts rooted in both Reformation related convictions and Enlightenment related ideals. The Reformation called for a biblical Protestant faith and thus would not co-exist with any form of popery. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the key figure in the Protestant Reformation. His efforts were in Germany, but spread to the surrounding regions of France, Switzerland, and the

Netherlands. However, even though William Tyndale (1494-1536) translated the Bible into English and smuggled it into England, the Reformation was slow to extend to the British Isles. But, as King Henry VIII (1491-1547) sought annulment from his marriage to Catherine of Aragon the Reformers saw an opportunity. The end result of Henry VIII's spat with the Pope was the formation of a new Church of England with the monarch (not the Pope) as the head of the church.

As Henry VIII's, Edward VI's and Elizabeth I's Protestant settlement solidified in the hearts of the English, any whiff of popery from the monarch produced great suspicion from the people. The Enlightenment called for a reexamination of the role of government for the benefit of the people rather than the monarch. Especially in light of Charles I's incompetence and abuses of power, the English began to desire a monarch that was answerable to a representative Parliament.

The English Civil War was a series of bloody conflicts between those loyal to the Parliament and those loyal to the King. The first of three successive wars broke out in 1642. During this time Thomas Patient embraced semi-separatist Congregationalism while living in the New England colonies. This portion of the war continued until May 1646 when the King surrendered as a result of the New Model Army's victories. The remaining factions could not work together, and none of the factions was strong enough to dominate the other factions; therefore, an outbreak of war began again in 1648. This second stage of the war concluded with the beheading of Charles I on January 30, 1649. At this stage of the conflict, Thomas Patient was serving alongside William Kiffen at what would be later called the Devonshire Square Church in London. After Charles I's death, his son was able to garner support from the Scottish Parliament and thus lead their army against Cromwell's forces. In 1649 as Charles II was solidifying power in Scotland, Cromwell was stamping out rebellion in Ireland. Cromwell landed in Ireland in August of 1649, and left in May, 1650, in order to invade Scotland. It was during this season that Thomas Patient

travelled to Ireland. Cromwellian forces continued battling smaller persistent Irish forces until 1652. Cromwell effectively ended the English Civil War with his victory over Charles II's forces at the Battle of Worcester on September 3, 1651. The Interregnum began when Charles II fled to France and stayed there until his return in 1660.

Cromwellian Ireland

As Cromwell's New Model Army pushed the royalist forces out of England the war spread to Ireland. Cromwell was a pious man who extended religious tolerance to his soldiers. He also recruited John Owen to be his chaplain and join him in Ireland. Owen described the spiritual state of Ireland as a "numerous multitude of as thirsting a people after the gospel as ever yet I conversed withal."[1] When Owen returned, he preached to Parliament on February 28, 1650, a sermon entitled "Steadfastness of Promises, and the Sinfulness of Staggering." In this sermon, he said, "there was, for the present, one gospel preacher for every walled town in the English possession in Ireland. The land mourneth and the people perish for want of knowledge."[2] Parliament responded to Owen's pleadings and invested money and land into Trinity College as well as establishing a college in Dublin. In addition, on March 8, 1649, Parliament resolved to "send over Six able Ministers, to dispense the Gospel in the City of *Dublyn*: And that Two hundred Pounds *per Annum* be allowed to every Minister respectively."[3] As Cromwell conquered Ireland, he encouraged Puritan ministers to follow and spread the gospel to the Irish population. Among those Army Chaplains was a Baptist minister named Thomas Patient.

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[1] John Owen, *Of the Death of Christ.* (1647; Reprint, Carlise, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000). *The Works of John Owen* 10: 479.

[2] Thomas Russell (ed.) *The Works of John Owen, D.D.* vol 1 (London: Richard Baynes, 1826), 91.

[3] House of Commons Journal, Volume 6, 8 March 1649, 379.

JLJ Church

Before focusing on Thomas Patient and his impact on the Baptist movement in Ireland, the origin of the Baptist movement in England must be briefly addressed. The Baptist movement in England had early Separatist origins. Henry Jacob established a church in London in 1616 that welcomed "Separatist and non-Separatist alike"[4] Therefore, Jacob's congregation can be described as semi-Separatist. This church became known as the JLJ church due to the names of its first three pastors: Henry Jacob, John Lathrop, and Henry Jessey. Members of this congregation, however, continued to debate the issue of if and how they should be separate from the Church of England. On September 12, 1633 a group of seventeen people under the leadership of Samuel Eaton left the JLJ church in order to become a fully Separatist congregation. The minutes of the JLJ church read, "desired dismission that they might become an Entire Church, & further ye Communion of those Churches in Order amongst themselves, wch at last was granted to them."[5] There is debate regarding whether this church espoused believer's baptism by immersion initially or not. A note in the church minutes, however, explains, "Mr. Eaton with Some others receiving a further Baptism."[6] Six people left the church in 1638 desiring a firmer break with the established church so that they could practice believer's baptism.[7] Regarding their departure, the church minutes read, "of ye same Judgment with Sam. Eaton."[8] Scholars mark this tiny splinter group as the beginning of the Calvinistic Baptist movement.[9]

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[4] H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness.* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 1987), 42.

[5] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 43.

[6] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 44.

[7] David W. Bebbington states, "Because it nevertheless stood for believer's baptism, it appears to have been the first church that can properly be called Particular Baptist." (*Baptists Through the Centuries: A History of a Global People* [Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010], 46).

[8] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 44.

[9] McBeth argues, "The most tantalizing statement in the old church minutes says that at their withdrawal in 1633, 'Mr Eaton with Some others

Therefore, by 1638 there was a Calvinistic church in London holding to believers baptism by immersion.

First London Confession of 1644

A short time later, seven churches came together to publish a baptistic Confession of faith in 1644. Due to a later baptistic Confession of faith in 1689, the 1644 confession is commonly referred to as the *First London Confession*. The significance of the *First London Confession* is summarized by White when he wrote, "Calvinistic Baptists first appeared as a self-conscious group with the publication of their Confession in London in 1644."[10] The confession established the churches as a group, denomination, and movement. It established theological convictions that continue to distinguish the worldwide contemporary Baptist movement.

The Baptist confession is a partial modification of the Separatist Confession of 1596 (*A True Confession*). The first twenty articles of the 1644 statement closely mirror the first seventeen articles of the 1596 statement. The Baptist confession expands upon the Separatist statement when addressing the *triplex munus Christi*. The Baptists also add articles twenty-one to thirty-two on the nature of faith and the gospel.[11] These articles are not found in the Separatists' version. Both confessions address that nature of the church as God's "spiritual Kingdom,"[12] but White correctly concludes the Baptist statement "laid less stress upon the distinctive functions of the

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receiving a further Baptism'...In 1638 six more members left this church; they were said to be 'of ye same Judgment with Sam. Eaton' about baptism.' Clearly they separated for the sake of baptism of believers...At any rate, historians conclude on the basis of this evidence that definitely by 1638, and possibly by 1633, there was a Particular Baptist church formed in London." (McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 44).

[10] White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 59.

[11] White describes this section as "dealing with the life of the believer as one of God's elect." (*The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 64).

[12] The *First London Confession* includes the statement in article XXXIII (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 165) and the 1596 includes the statement in article XIIV (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 87).

ministry considered apart from the congregation."[13] Article forty-seven from the *First London Confession* mirrors word for word *A True Confession's* Article thirty-eight. The statements advocate the ultimate authority of the local congregation, but also advocate working together. This statement laid the theological ground for future Baptist associations.

In the end, compared to the Separatists' statement, the Baptist confession adds articles and doctrines. First, they define the doctrine of believer's baptism by immersion. They advocated believer's baptism by saying that baptism is "onely upon persons professing faith."[14] They also said the mode or manner of baptism is by "dipping or plunging the whole body under water."[15] Second, the Baptists explained how they believe the church should relate to the civil magistrates. In their explanation, they affirm that "Supreme Magistrate of this Kingdom we believe to be the King and Parliament."[16] No doubt the Baptists were very concerned about being associated with the infamous Anabaptist rebellion in Münster. The *First London Confession* utilizes *A True Confession* as a template for their statement but adds to it.

In summary, the Baptist statement seeks to establish the movement as Calvinistic, Congregational, Baptistic and desiring a submissive relationship with civil authorities. Regarding Calvinism, they say they have been wrongly charged with "*holding Free-will, Falling away from grace, denying Original sin.*"[17] Article V reads:

> All mankind being thus fallen, and become altogether | dead in sins and trespasses, and subject to the eternal | wrath of the great God by transgression; yet the elect, | which God hath loved with an everlasting love, are redeemed, quickened, and saved, not by themselves, neither | by their own works, | lest any man should

[13] White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 63.
[14] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 167.
[15] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 167.
[16] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 169.
[17] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 155.

> boast himself, | but wholly and only by God of his free grace and mercy through Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us | wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that as it is written, He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord.[18]

Article XXII also describes faith as "the gift of God wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Spirit of God."[19] Regarding their Congregationalism Article XLII reads:

> Christ has likewise given power to his whole Church | to receive in and cast out, by way of Excommunication, | any member; and this power is given to every particular | Congregation, and not one particular person, either | member or Officer, but the whole.[20]

This clearly establishes them as Congregationalists, but they also advocate that the particular local congregation has the authority of Christ to "choose to themselves"[21] their pastors and other officers. Differing from the Independent Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, and of course the Anglicans, these English Baptists establish believer's baptism by immersion in Articles XXXIX and XL. The seven churches were incredibly sensitive to being labeled Anabaptists.[22] The churches were appropriately sensitive because all of England was always concerned about anarchy and rebellion. The entire European continent remembered the Anabaptist Münster rebellion of 1534 to 1535 and feared a repeat of history. The Baptists sought to distance themselves from the radical Anabaptists and in so doing laid the groundwork for our modern understanding of the

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[18] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 158.
[19] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 162.
[20] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 168.
[21] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 166.
[22] Even the title of the confession expresses this sensitivity. They say this document is the Confession of faith of "those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called ANABAPTISTS." (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 156).

separation of Church and State. Articles XLVIII to LII address their desired relationship with their government. First, they recognized that the civil government is an "ordinance of God set up | by God for the punishment of evil doers, and for the | praise of them that do well."[23] Second, in Article XLVIII they confessed their desire and obligation to pray for their civil government as well as "live a peaceable and quiet"[24] lives "in all godliness and honesty"[25] under the government's authority. Third, they specifically recognized the authority of King and Parliament in Article XLIX. Fourth, in Article L they humbly ask for protection as religious minorities. Fifth, they also confess God's authority over the civil magistrates and thus confess they will strive to remain faithful to God if the state conflicts with God's teachings. Sixth, they commit to pay their taxes. Seventh, in summary, they confess their "desire to give unto God that which is | God's, and unto *Cesar* that which his *Cesar's*."[26]

Finally, one of the unique features of the *First London Confession* is the foundation it lays for associational partnership. The confession's Article XLVII explains their position on associational partnership and is verbatim to Article 38 of *A True Confession*. Article XLVII reads:

> And although the particular Congregations be distinct | and several Bodies, every one a compact and knit City in itself; yet are they all to walk by one and the same | Rule, and by all meanes convenient to have the counsel | and help one another in all needfull affairs of the | Church, as members of one body in the common faith | under Christ their only head.[27]

This statement recognizes the authority of the local church body, but also advocates for individual churches to seek counsel and help from

[23] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 169.
[24] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 169.
[25] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 169.
[26] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 170-171.
[27] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 168-169.

one another. The Independents did not capitalize on this associational idea to the degree of the Baptists. Partnering for counsel and support became an early mark of the Particular Baptists that survives even into the modern Baptist movement.

Thomas Patient was not just an author and signer of this significant confession, but he also reflected these convictions in his own personal ministry. His involvement in the movement clearly distinguished him as a Calvinist. The seven churches desired to remain under the broader Reformed umbrella. Regarding Congregationalism, when Patient was in Ireland he set up self-governing churches based on the authority given to those churches in passages like Matthew 18. *On Baptism* distinguished Patient as espousing believer's baptism by immersion. As will be shown, his commitment to this doctrine led to great persecution in the American colonies and also caused him great persecution in Cromwellian Ireland. Patient's relationship to the state will be explored later, but he demonstrated a submission to both God and the State as an Army Chaplain. He was actually employed by the State but took advantage of the situation to not only minister to soldiers but also evangelize the Irish and establish the first Irish Baptist churches. We will see that he did not forfeit his prophetic voice even as an employee of the State but also showed respectful restraint. Finally, Patient was committed to associational partnerships. When he founded the Irish Baptist churches, he intentionally engaged the influential London Baptist churches. This engagement included a desire for prayer partnerships but also discussion on other significant issues. For example, upon Kiffen's plea, Patient and the other Baptists tempered their outrage over Cromwell accepting the Lord Protector title.

THOMAS PATIENT

Little is known of Patient's early years or his family of origin. Crawford Gribben correctly comments that much of his life is

"shrouded in mystery"[28] but enough evidence remains to see a man committed to "God's glory and the service of his generation."[29] The best way to understand his life is to track his movements. He travelled physically from England to the American colonies back to England then to Ireland. However, theologically, he travelled from Congregationalism to baptistic convictions culminating in the ministry as a Baptist pastor. While in Ireland he wrote one of the earliest full-length books on the doctrine of believer's baptism by immersion. He also is to be considered the founding pastor of two Irish Baptist churches that continue to exist.

English Puritan

Historically, trying to define the Puritans has been difficult. Most can agree the Puritans held to a Calvinistic soteriology, an evangelical spirituality, and pursued a biblical ecclesiology.[30] As the English Reformation progressed some pastors grew increasingly frustrated as they sought to align the Church of England with their biblical

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[28] Crawford Gribben, *God's Irishmen* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), 88.

[29] Crawford Gribben, *God's Irishmen* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), 88.

[30] John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge: England: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2-3: "Firstly, Puritanism was a variety of Protestantism, and Puritans were heirs of the Reformation inaugurated by Martin Luther's seminal re-reading of Christianity's foundational texts. Puritans affirmed the great slogans of Luther's Reformation – *sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura*; faith alone, grace alone, scripture alone – though there was disagreement over exactly what these slogans entailed...Secondly, Puritanism was a variety of Reformed Protestantism, aligned with the continental Calvinist churches rather than with the Lutherans...Thirdly, however, Puritanism was a distinctive and particularly intense variety of early modern Reformed Protestantism which originated within the Church of England, and was a product of that unique environment and its tensions." Alan Simpson. *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 2: "The essence of Puritanism...is an experience of conversion which separates the Puritan from the mass of mankind and endows him with the privileges and the duties of the elect."

interpretations. Their ecclesiological interpretations spawned denominations that still remain today including the Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Baptists. Largely as a result of not being able to accept the Church of England's ecclesiology, English Puritans began leaving for a new life in the American colonies. Thomas and Sarah Patient were part of this migration during the 1630's.

American Congregationalists ("in the New England way")

Patient was an early English Calvinistic Baptist, but his theological journey passed through the American colonies. Beginning in 1620, Puritans began leaving England to establish colonies in the New World. During the 1630s around 10,000 people migrated from England to New England. The Pilgrims were primarily Puritans that sympathized with the Separatists and Congregationalists. Beginning with the Plymouth Colony and eventually the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Pilgrim Fathers established Congregationalism.

In his preface, Patient reports that upon "being convinced of the unwarrantableness of the *Government of the Lordly Prelates, and the Liturgy in the Church of England, and the mixed Communions in the Parish Assemblies*, I was resolved, God willing, to examine all Religion."[31] This examination led him to leave the Church of England and join the Nonconformist movement.[32] Patient's evolution resulted in him joining what some have called the "Great Migration" of the 1630s to New England.[33] He claims to have gone to New England holding to paedobaptism upon arriving in the colonies. Patient was in New England in the late 1630s and/or early 1640s. A recent discovery confirms these claims. *Records and Files of the Quarterly Court* includes a brief, and rather unique, statement at the Court hearing at Salem

[31] Patient, *On Baptism*, 5.

[32] Crosby describes Patient as "first an *Independent* minister in *New England*." (Crosby. *A History of the English Baptists*, III, 42).

[33] "At this time many godly Christians going to *New England*, and being come up in my judgment to the way of *New England* in Faith and order, went over thither." (Patient, *On Baptism*, 5-6)

on April 27, 1643. The note reads, "Thomas Patience, by a common fame, and upon vehement suspicion, not only of holding, but also of fomenting the error that baptism of infants is no ordinance of God, and hindering his child from baptism. Gone away. Wit: Jno. Ruckman."[34] The New England authorities responded firmly to Patient's and others acceptance of believer's baptism by establishing a law against baptistic beliefs on November 13, 1644.[35] It is unclear exactly when Patient fled New England, but he was gone by 1643.[36] This development in Patient's life will be discussed further in a later section, but it is important to note that Patient left England a paedobaptist and returned a credobaptist. He was even drawn up on legal charges in New England for his position! This persecution was clearly the reason for his return to England. It is also worth noting that the charges were brought against him in 1643, yet only a year later he was serving as an assistant pastor to William Kiffen and signed the *First London Confession.* Patient's American evolution was stark and had a lasting impact on his life.

English Baptist

Again, a group of six had left the JLJ church in 1638 around the issue of believer's baptism, but only six short years later seven churches signed the monumental *First London Confession.* Likely in 1643 Thomas Patient joined one of these seven churches. He became a pastor with William Kiffen at what would become the Devonshire Square Church.

The Devonshire Square Church began around William Kiffen sometime after the start of Spilsbury's congregation in 1638 and before the *First London Confession of Faith* in 1644. Most likely it began

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[34] *Records and Files of the Quarterly Court of Essex County Massachusetts*, Volume 1 1636-1656, (Essex Institute: Salem, Massachusetts, 1911) 52.

[35] Sidney Lee, ed. *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 44. (Smith, Elder, & Co.: London) 1895, 32.

[36] B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (The Baptist Historical Society: Didcot, England) 1996, 72. White notes that Patient left "Massachusetts some time in the late summer of 1642" but does not give documentary support for that date.

in 1640. It is likely the church did not actually begin meeting in Devonshire Square till 1653, but clearly the congregation formed earlier. Many consider the formation of Spilsbury's congregation in 1638 as the first Particular Baptist Church, but the Devonshire Square congregation was one of the first seven churches.

Their pastor truly was a remarkable man.[37] Even his opponents recognized his influence.[38] In addition to this role at the church, he was a wildly successful businessman even though he had grown up in poverty.[39] Kiffen began in the glover business but became wealthy in the wool cloth trade business. His wealth opened many high society doors for himself as well as a level of credibility for the Particular Baptists. Kiffen became influential in the political arena. White notes that Kiffen "became Member of Parliament for Middlesex 1656-58, Master of the Leathersellers Company of London 1671-72, and an Alderman of the City in 1687."[40] A common story is told that King Charles II himself came to Kiffen for a loan of 40,000 pounds! The story goes that Kiffen responded not with a loan of 40,000 pounds but a gift of 10,000 pounds. Nettles reports that "Kiffen remarked privately to a friend that he had saved

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[37] Michael Haykin quotes Ivimey, "When Josephy Ivimey (1773-1834), the nineteenth-century Baptist historian, published the life of William Kiffin in 1833 he did so in the conviction that Kiffin was 'one of the most extraordinary persons whom the [Calvinistic Baptist] denomination has produced, both as to the consistency and correctness of his principles and the eminence of his worldly and religious character." (Michael A. G. Haykin. *Kiffen, Knollys and Keach: Rediscovering our English Baptist Heritage* (Reformation Today Trust: Leeds, England) 1996, 42). The information was taken from Joseph Ivimey. *The Life of Mr. William Kiffin* (London: 1833), xi, ii.

[38] Tom Nettles quotes from Ivimey who quotes Josiah Ricraft commenting on Kiffen's *A Looking Glass*. Ricraft describes Kiffen as "the Author, and grand Ringleader of that seduced sect." See Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity: Volume One, Beginnings in Britain* (Christian Focus Publications: Ross-shire, Scotland, 2005), 132.

[39] White says, "He had been orphaned during the plague of 1625 and had been a near penniless apprentice during the years thereafter" (*English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 70).

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[40] White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 70.

himself 30,000 pounds by such a gift."[41] Kiffen travelled throughout England evangelizing as well as debating Baptist doctrine. McBeth notes:

> Perhaps the most famous Baptist disputation was the one held on October 17, 1642, at Southwark. William Kiffen and three other Baptists disputed against Daniel Featley, a leading minister of the Church of England.[42]

Kiffen also engaged in other debates at Coventry. Patient and Kiffen also participated in an evangelistic tour to Kent.[43] He was also a prolific writer publishing numerous works. Some of his more famous texts include *A Brief Remonstrance*, *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion*, and *The Life and Death of that Old Disciple of Jesus Christ, the Eminent Minister of the Gospel, Mr. Hanserd Knollys*. William Kiffen's influence over the entire movement cannot be overstated. He was influential in the Particular Baptists' vision of developing associations around the country with the purpose of evangelism and the start of new churches.[44] Kiffen's influence was also on display as he diffused tensions over the so-called Fifth Monarchy movement. Bell describes the movement as:

> The Fifth Monarchists were the last manifestation of the most forceful millenarian radicalism unleashed by the Reformation. The movement took its name from members' belief that the fifth monarchy, the rule of Christ, and his saints, was at hand. The

[41] Nettles, *The Baptists*, 133.
[42] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 65.
[43] B. R. White, "Thomas Patient in England and Ireland," *Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal*, 2 (1969/1970): 38.
[44] This article explains in depth the strategy of the Particular Baptists during the early years of the movement. See B. R. White, "The Organization of the Particular Baptists 1644-1666," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 17 (1966): 209-226.

seventh chapter of Daniel served as their primary proof text.[45]

Many Baptists were sympathetic with the movement's claims. When Oliver Cromwell accepted the title of Lord Protectorate many in the movement were outraged, including some Baptists, thus causing tension between the Baptists and the Cromwellian government. In response to the tension, Kiffen wrote a letter to the Irish Baptists on January 20, 1654, pleading with them to be "subject to all Civell powers they being of God."[46] The letter succeeded, and the tensions subsided. Kiffen's influence was once again apparent. Of the seven original churches, Devonshire Square was esteemed due to the stature and notoriety of Kiffen. Patient must have been a gifted man to become Kiffen's co-pastor so quickly upon returning from New England.

Irish Army Chaplain

Understanding how Thomas Patient ended up in Ireland requires a brief explanation of John Owen's rapid rise to influence. Owen is rightly described as the "prince of the Puritans" for his tireless and profound writings. His rise coincides with Cromwell's rise. Oliver Cromwell rose to influence in a power vacuum and ended up the head of the army supporting the Parliamentary cause against King Charles I then II's forces. Cromwell clearly had Puritan sympathies and viewed his cause as just. He desired for his men not just to win battles but practice godly living. Cromwell brought on Owen as his chaplain, even bringing him to Ireland in 1649.[47] Owen described

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[45] Mark R. Bell, *Apocalypse How?: Baptist Movements during the English Reformation* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press:, 2000), 164.

[46] Larry J. Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World (Part 1)* (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage, Regent's Park College, 2010), 39.

[47] Andrew Thomson writes: "On the 19th of April we find Owen once more summoned to preach before Parliament, the chiefs of the army being also present; on which occasion he preached his celebrated sermon, 'On the Shaking of Heaven and Earth,' Heb. xii. 27. Oliver Cromwell was present, and probably for the first time heard Owen preach…Owen's tall and stately figure soon caught the eye of Cromwell as the person whom

the spiritual state of Ireland as a "numerous multitude of as thirsting a people after the gospel as ever yet I conversed withal."[48] When Owen returned, he preached to Parliament on February 28, 1650, a sermon titled "Steadfastness of Promises, and the Sinfulness of Staggering." In this sermon, he said, "there was, for the present, one gospel preacher for every walled town in the English possession in Ireland. The land mourneth and the people perish for want of knowledge."[49] Parliament responded to Owen's pleadings and invested money and land into Trinity College as well as establishing a college in Dublin. In addition, on March 8, 1649, Parliament resolved to "send over Six able Ministers, to dispense the Gospel in the City of *Dublyn*: And that Two hundred Pounds *per Annum* be allowed to every Minister respectively."[50] Thomas Patient was one of the six able ministers.

The Puritans had a desire to evangelize the Irish, and their Baptist sect saw an opening in Cromwell's army. In the late 1640s Patient was closely connected to Kiffen in London. Likely due to this connection he had the opportunity to sail to Ireland as an Army Chaplain. Thomas Patient arrived in Ireland in 1650. His primary duties as a chaplain were with the army, but Patient also had the opportunity to evangelize the general population. His ministry included starting two Irish Baptist churches. By 1651 there is

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he had heard preach with so much delight yesterday; and going up to him, he laid his hands upon his shoulders, and said to him familiarly, 'Sir, you are the person I much be acquainted with.' Owen modestly replied, 'That will be much more to my advantage than yours.' To which Cromwell returned, 'We shall soon see that;' and taking Owen by the hand, led him into the garden, and made known to him his intention to depart for Ireland, and his wish that Owen should accompany him as chaplain, and also to aid him in investigating and setting in order the affairs of the University of Dublin." (*Life of Owen* [Carlise, PA: Banner of Truth Trust], 1965) within the *Works of John Owen* Vol 1, XLII.)

[48] John Owen, *Of the Death of Christ.* (1647; Reprint, Carlise, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000). *The Works of John Owen* 10: 479.

[49] Thomas Russell (ed.) *The Works of John Owen, D.D.* vol 1 (London: Richard Baynes, 1826), 91.

[50] House of Commons Journal, Volume 6, 8 March 1649, 379.

evidence that Patient was being paid as an Army Chaplain. Larry Krietzer cites a warrant that paid Patient "Fivety Two Pounds and Sixteene shillings For one hundred and Thirty-Two Days pay Beinge ye Three Dayes pay in every weeke Respited from ye 22th of Aprill."[51] Kreitzer also shows a warrant for Patient being paid "Forty two pounds"[52] on February 11, 1653. Oxford University's Bodleian Library houses a Cromwellian army accounting book used during the Irish campaign.[53] This record shows eleven payments to Patient between £36:16s to £11:4s from January 1653 to December 1654. Even though Oliver Cromwell's son Henry began limiting the power of the Baptists, Kreitzer lists a payment by Henry Cromwell, "unto Mr Thomas Patience the Summe of Fourty two Pounds for Eighty foure dayes pay for his entertainment as preacher to ye Lord Deputy and gennerall officers of ye Army."[54] This record of payments highlights Patient's role (at least on a part-time basis) as an Army Chaplain.

Irish Church Planter (Waterford Church)

During the spring of 1650, Thomas Patient set about ministering to army leaders as well as evangelizing the Irish population. Waterford is a town on the southern coast of Ireland. It sits directly across the Suir River from Kilkenny. We know, based on his letter to Oliver Cromwell, that Patient was in this region of the country in the spring of 1650. Apparently, his work was effective because by January of 1651 he was pastoring an established church of believers in Waterford.

This church was pastored by Patient and clearly espoused believer's baptism. Therefore, this congregation is one of the first

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[51] Larry J. Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World (Part 2)* (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage, Regent's Park College, 2012), 210-211.

[52] Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World (Part 2)*, 211.

[53] MS Rawlinson A 208, pages 379, 390, 410, 420, 421, 427, 434, 439, 441, and 453. I was able to photograph these pages during the Fall of 2012. Kreitzer also transcribes the records in *William Kiffen and his World (Part 2)*, pages 212-213.

[54] Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World (Part 2)*, 213.

Baptist churches in Ireland, especially of the Particular Baptist vein. The best evidence we have for the existence of this church and its identity is a letter this church sent to Christ Church in Dublin on January 14, 1651. A reprinting of the letter can be found in John Roger's book *Ohel*[55] published in 1653 as well as in an appendix in my recently published book *Thomas Patient: Father of the Irish Baptist Church*.[56] Thomas Patient along with eleven other men signed and sent the letter. First, the fact that twelve men were organized enough to send a letter in January of 1651 means it can be assumed that the church was actually constituted in 1650. Second, the content of the letter was addressing the issue of believer's baptism by immersion. Therefore, it can be reasonably understood that this church in Waterford felt believer's baptism by immersion was a central tenet of their church. Why else would they rebuke another church on their stance on believer's baptism by immersion if they did not feel passionately about the doctrine? They addressed the church in Dublin as "*Beloved Friends*"[57] and recognized they "professedly *put on* the Lord Jesus Christ by Baptism."[58] Patient's Waterford church rebuked this group within the Dublin church because they were "*joined in* fellowship with *such as* do fundamentally differ *in* judgement *and* practice; to *wit, such as agree not with you about the true state of a visible* Church, *nor the* fundamental Ordinances *thereof*."[59] The letter even goes so far as to advocate division from fellowship on the ground of not adhering to believer's baptism by immersion. They wrote:

> *but the* very end of Church-fellowship *is* the observation *of all* Christs command, *as the* Commission *holds forth; but this your* practise, *crosseth in that you* agree to walk with *such as have not, nor*

[55] John Rogers, *Ohel: A Tabernacle for the Sun: or Irenicum Evangelicum, An Idea of Church-Discipline*. (London, 1653).
[56] Micah L. Caswell, *Thomas Patient: The Father of the Irish Baptist Church* (Petersborough, Canada: H&E Publishing, 2019), 129-132.
[57] Rogers, *Ohel*, 302.
[58] Rogers, *Ohel*, 302.
[59] Rogers, *Ohel*, 302.

> practise *the* Ordinance of dipping Beleevers, *and by your* communion *with them in* Church-administrations, *you are made guilty of their sin of* disobedience.[60]

Clearly, Patient organized a church in Waterford around Particular Baptist convictions. This church was one of the first Baptist churches in Ireland. This accomplishment was among Patient's most significant. This congregation was also successful in converting two military governors, an impressive feat for a fringe sect.[61] As Irish Baptists seek to understand their identity, they can look to Thomas Patient as a father of their movement. Jesus taught that even though it is men who preach, it is Jesus who builds his church.[62] It is a delight to report that at the writing of this essay, over 360 years after Patient founded this local church, this church in Waterford continues to embrace biblical doctrine, their Baptist identity, and are shining a gospel light into their city.[63]

Irish Church Planter (Dublin Church)

Thomas Patient's letter and message were successfully received by a small group of seven or eight within Christ Church in Dublin. John Rogers was leading the congregation. He was an Independent minister who held to infant baptism and open communion. Both doctrines were anathema for Particular Baptists like Thomas Patient. Patient wrote a letter rebuked those who sided with Rogers. Regarding the Waterford letter, Kreitzer explains:

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[60] Rogers, *Ohel*, 304.

[61] Barnard explains, "By April 1650 he was in Kilkenny. His preaching had great effect in Waterford and Kilkenny, where the military governors (Lawrence and Axtell respectively) were converted." (Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, 101).

[62] Jesus says to Peter in Matthew 16:18, " And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

[63] To learn more about the first Baptist church in Ireland visit waterfordbaptist.ie.

> The substance of the letter was a stern exhortation to Rogers and his congregation concerning their baptismal theology and their open-membership policy. It called for the members of the church who had been baptized as believers to withdraw fellowship from those who had not.[64]

Patient and his new church in Waterford called for this small group in Dublin to walk no longer with the larger Independent church but rather separate from them.[65] The group heeded the rebuke, and thus Patient's letter caused a church split.[66]

History reports numerous accounts of Baptists being persecuted for their baptistic theology. Thomas Patient himself faced persecution over this issue. The Dublin split, however, is an example of Patient causing division in the church over his Particular Baptist convictions. Baptists today can judge if Thomas Patient was inappropriately divisive over the issue of believer's baptism.

As the Cromwellian programme progressed in Ireland, the Baptists gained political power amongst the Army officers. Patient's influence increased from 1650 to 1652. In December 1652 he was called up from Kilkenny and Waterford to Dublin. He was even provided a house with a small lot to grow his own food.[67] He became a preacher at Christ Church Cathedral, the very congregation he rebuked the previous year.[68] The Puritans believed firmly in the preaching ministry. In the coming decades, they would establish salaries for preaching lectureships. Patient was not what we would understand as the Senior Pastor of Christ Church Cathedral, but

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[64] Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World [Part 2]*, 198.

[65] Rogers, *Ohel*, 302. Patient wrote, "*we hear that you doe not* walke *up* orderly *together, but are joyned in* fellowship *with such as* do fundamentally differ *in* judgement *and* practice."

[66] Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World [Part 2]*, 198. Kreitzer explains, "In the end, the letter caused a split within the Dublin church, and prompted seven or eight of the Baptists to withdraw and form their own fellowship which met privately on Sundays."

[67] White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 41.

[68] Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World [Part 2]*, 198.

rather joined a rotation of preachers. This rotation also included Independent preachers. Kreitzer also explains that he was also a "member of a group of seven ministers deputed to investigate and offer advice about the best way to promote the preaching of the gospel in Ireland."[69]

Closely following Cromwell's takeover of Dublin, two Independent congregations were established. Dunlop explains, "We know that by October 1651 there were at least two gathered congregations of Independents in Dublin. One was established by Samuel Winter and worshipped in St. Nicholas' Church. The other met in Christ Church Cathedral, where John Rogers was a pastor."[70] Out of the congregation that Rogers was leading, Patient took a splinter group and started what would become the first Baptist church in Dublin. The congregation saw quick success. White explains that the congregation "seems to have grown very fast."[71] He also explains that the congregation also attracted some prominent figures in Dublin at the time. White states, "even the wife of the Provost of Trinity College, Dr. Samuel Winter, was almost won over."[72] The church in Dublin also built the first Baptist structure in Ireland. White explains, "In the following year the first Baptist meeting house in Ireland was erected in Swift's Alley, Dublin, under the auspices to house the congregation which had presumably grown from the original splinter from Roger's Independent Church."[73] Even though the congregation saw early growth, not everyone was supportive of the effort. There are reports this Baptist church was harassed. White notes:

> There was certainly a sharp reaction to its initial success and, in 1653, the Council was informed that 'several persons of unquiet

[69] Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World [Part 2]*, 198.
[70] Robert Dunlop, "Dublin Baptists from 1650 Onwards," *Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal*, 21, (1988/89): 6.
[71] White, "Thomas Patient in England and Ireland," 41.
[72] White, "Thomas Patient in England and Ireland," 41.
[73] White, "Thomas Patient in England and Ireland," 41.

> spirits and lewd conversation have of late used many uncivil demeanours towards Mr. Patient and others who walk with him in the worship of God, railing at and cursing them, and casting stones at them, and some of the said evil persons intended to destroy them by shooting at them.[74]

It was during his season pastoring the Dublin church that Patient wrote *On Baptism*. Clearly Patient was addressing hostility towards his views on believer's baptism by immersion. His book is a defence of his position as well as an incredibly early text on the topic that was the Particular Baptists hallmark doctrine. Patient pastored the church until October 1655 when "he handed over the responsibility of the Baptist church in Dublin to Christopher Blackwood, and embarked on a missionary journey up and down Ireland."[75] This first church in Dublin still exists and thrives today.[76]

On Baptism

Thomas Patient's lasting significance is the publication of *On Baptism* in 1654. This was part of his Irish ministry and must be understood in that context. His book is part of his battle for the establishment of Baptist churches in Ireland. The book is one of the first comprehensive treatments of believer's baptism by immersion from the Particular Baptists. *On Baptism* was printed by Henry Hills, a member of Kiffen's church, who published other Particular Baptist books during the Cromwellian era.

On Baptism is made up of 179 pages thus it is larger than a booklet. It includes a clear introduction to the work and a listing of the main sections of the book. These categories have 58 topics. It can, however, be divided into six topical sections. After the introduction, pages 1 to 28 makes up a section devoted to Patient's basic theology of believer's baptism. He developed a theology of two distinct covenants from page 29 to roughly page 44. Next, he delved

[74] White, "Thomas Patient in England and Ireland," 41.
[75] Krietzer, *William Kiffen and his World [Part 2]*, 198.
[76] Cf. grosvenorbaptist.org.

further by addressing the Covenant of Works from pages 44 to 70 including his 7 Arguments. On page 70 he transitioned to discussing the Covenant of Grace. Then, from page 101 to page 168 he provided a lengthy section where he addressed particular passages of Scripture that relate to believer's baptism. He concluded his book with a 10-page section addressing issues related to Baptist ecclesiology.

Patient opened this work with an introduction that explained his purpose in writing the book along with telling his journey to the Baptist faith. He began with an urgency to his life, even citing John 9:4, "*for the night cometh when no man can work.*"[77] His motive for writing was for "Gods glory and the service of his generation in this pilgrimage."[78] Patient explained that many books are written and can play on the fleshly carnal hearts of men, but his plan was to simply provide "clear Scripture-evidence"[79] for his argument.

Patient spent the first five pages of his book essentially examining Pentecost by explaining Acts 2:37-38. Regarding the tongues of fire, he made the observation that what was going on inside them were "signified by the outward sign."[80] He walked through the conversion experiences at Pentecost and noted that preaching the gospel "is a special means to convert Souls,"[81] then noted they were converted by a "prick in the heart."[82] Patient followed the logic of the passage and concluded a "true converted Soul is an obedient Soul,"[83] so the converts then ask what they should do now. Peter is then quoted as saying "*Repent, and be baptized.*"[84] Using this passage Patient concluded, "it is the duty of every man that believes and repents, to be baptized."[85] Patient's first point about biblical baptism is that

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[77] Patient, *On Baptism*, i.
[78] Patient, *On Baptism*, ii.
[79] Patient, *On Baptism*, ii.
[80] Patient, *On Baptism*, 2.
[81] Patient, *On Baptism*, 4.
[82] Patient, *On Baptism*, 4.
[83] Patient, *On Baptism*, 5.
[84] Patient, *On Baptism*, 5.
[85] Patient, *On Baptism*, 5.

genuine believers should be baptized.

Regarding the distinctions between what he described as the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Works his main point was to explain one as absolute and another as conditional. Using Jeremiah 31, Patient began by arguing that there are two distinct covenants. He labeled the Covenant of Grace as the covenant of life (or eternal life) and described it as new and "absolute."[86] Patient said of Jesus Christ that he is "the peculiar Minister of the New Covenant, (unto the Church then gathered all those that are in Christ, being God's *Israel*, *Abraham's* seed)."[87] He placed all of the Old Testament under the Old Covenant of Works and considered it "conditional"[88] in nature.

Thomas Patient closed the final eleven pages of his text by making four theological points about his Baptist Ecclesiology. First, he addressed why he believed the ordinance of Baptism should only be administered once while the ordinance of the Lord's Supper ought to be administered often. Baptism serves to "confirm our Regeneration"[89] therefore should only be administered once. The Lord's Supper serves to aid the sanctification of the believer, therefore, should be "received often."[90] Patient held the position that Baptism should be administered after conversion, and before the Lord's Supper. For Patient, these positions are not irrelevant theologizing, but rather an attempt to faithfully follow the teachings of the Scriptures. He closed this first point by stating:

> I do judge such a man that hath not a tender conscience in such cases, is in that much unlike Christ, and shews much carnality, because, as you have heard, God will have the honour to direct his people, both for the matter and manner of their worship, and

[86] Patient, *On Baptism*, 30.
[87] Patient, *On Baptism*, 30.
[88] Patient, *On Baptism*, 30.
[89] Patient, *On Baptism*, 168.
[90] Patient, *On Baptism*, 168.

order of his house.[91]

Second, Patient addressed the essentials for a biblical visible local church. After referencing Ephesians 4:3-4, he argued that the visible church should be made of those who are converted. The visible church should not be a mixture of believers and unbelievers. According to Patient, the visible church should be made up of those who have the "same glorious Inheritance."[92] He also explained, "it is an essential difference, inconsistent with Communion, that the members of one Church should own two Baptisms, the sprinkling of Infants, and dipping of Believers."[93] Patient believed a true church would side with the Believer's Baptism position. He also made a case that the main purpose of a local visible church is to help one another obey all that Jesus has commanded. Thus, the "main end of Church fellowship and Ministerial power is to destroy sin."[94] Patient explained Jesus had given his church the keys to not only doctrine but also church discipline. He believed in an orderly local church that included biblical practices of the ordinances which were vital to a church holding sound doctrine as well as living obedient lives.

Third, based on his previous arguments, Patient stated unbaptized persons should not be accepted into church membership. Essentially, Patient argued if God commands something (in this case Believer's Baptism by immersion) yet one does not faithfully obey the command, then a local fellowship should not bring them into church membership. For Patient, the issue was total obedience to all that Christ has commanded. He then answered objections to this position. The first objection was that if someone was redeemed, then they have a "*right in all the privileges in God's house.*"[95] Patient replied, "It is true, Faith and Repentance doth intitle a soul, but repentance according to the Gospel is a change of the

[91] Patient, *On Baptism*, 169.
[92] Patient, *On Baptism*, 169.
[93] Patient, *On Baptism*, 169.
[94] Patient, *On Baptism*, 171.
[95] Patient, *On Baptism*, 175.

heart & a resolution to obey God in all his Commandments."[96] Thomas Patient believed that just because someone was converted, it does not automatically mean a local church should let them into membership. He understood an unbaptized convert as not living in faithful obedience. This explanation led to another reasonable objection to the Particular Baptist position. What if someone held to Infant Baptism in ignorance? Even if an individual did not know something to be a sin, the local church does understand it to be sin; therefore, the local church should not allow him into fellowship. Third, some objected to Patient's insistence upon Believer's Baptism for church membership on the grounds that he was resting too much on the Ordinance. The objection said he should not rest upon that Ordinance but should rest only on Christ. Patient stated:

> There is no sound ground for this objection from either our profession or practices; for we do profess salvation, justification and the spiritual welfare to be merely of the grace of God in Christ, and that by faith only; and that our obedience to Christ ought to be performed from a principle of Regeneration and union with Christ by faith; and answerable is our practice in that we dare not put any soul on obedience but from that root.[97]

Fourth, was a final plea to "observe the rules of Christ."[98] For all Patient's perceived harshness, he made this plea "in all tenderness."[99] Thomas Patient closed his work by calling the reader to "obey the word of God's command"[100] then cited the example of the Apostles from Philippians 2:12-15.[101] Thomas Patient's chief concern when

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[96] Patient, *On Baptism*, 175.
[97] Patient, *On Baptism*, 175.
[98] Patient, *On Baptism*, 177.
[99] Patient, *On Baptism*, 177.
[100] Patient, *On Baptism*, 179.
[101] "Phil. 2.12,13,14,15. }Wherefore my Beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure; Do all things

debating his position on baptism was to work out his salvation with fear and trembling as he sought to be obedient to the Law of Christ.

Thomas Patient opened his book with urgency, citing John 9:4, "*for the night cometh when no man can work.*"[102] His urgency was for followers of Christ to truly follow him to the degree of obeying all that Jesus commanded. According to Patient, ordering a church according to the Bible was foundational to the discipleship process. He understood that a biblically ordered church was one that embraced Believer's Baptism by immersion. Modern readers might judge Patient's tone as harsh or intolerant; but he felt a deep urgency for his generation, his position was in the minority, he was facing attacks for his minority position, and he sought genuine faithfulness to the Bible's teachings. Patient worked out his salvation with fear and trembling, and he accomplished his goal of writing a convincing case for the biblical doctrine of Believer's Baptism by immersion.

LESSONS FROM THOMAS PATIENT ABOUT IRISH BAPTIST IDENTITY

Biblical Protestant Christianity

The origins of the Irish Baptists lie within the wider context of the English Reformation and English Civil War. Therefore, Irish Baptist identity is interwoven with the issues of that era. Obviously, much can be said about the theological issues of the Puritan age; but, in the end, the Puritan project was a genuine attempt at a biblical faith. Issues pertaining to soteriology, eschatology, and the spiritual life were all debated according to the what the Bible taught. Further, they attempted to determine what the Bible advocated as the ideal political settlement. Within these debates were also questions of ecclesiology. Again, the Puritans sought the Bible's authority on issues regarding how to organize churches and even the nature of

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without murmurings and disputings, that you may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, amongst whom you shine as Lights in the world." (Patient, *On Baptism*, 179)

[102] Patient, *On Baptism*, 1.

the church itself. Therefore, the Irish Baptists have an origin and identity from Christians who sought a biblical Protestant Christianity. Specifically, this relates to issues of soteriology and ecclesiology.

Calvinistic Soteriology

Thomas Patient was an English Puritan of the Calvinistic Baptist sect. This claim is evident based on the fact that he was one of the fifteen original signers of the *First London Confession.*[103] This confession was the first of two significant early Calvinistic Baptist confessions of faith. The *First London Confession* was intentionally Calvinistic, thus was an attempt to place these seven churches within the broader Reformed movement. Further, they became known as Particular Baptists as opposed to the General Baptists signifying them as holding to particular redemption. Articles XXI, XXII, and XXIII clearly categorize the statement as Calvinistic. Article XXI explains that "Christ Jesus by His death did bring forth salvation and reconciliation onely for the elect, which were those which God the Father gave him."[104] Article XXII goes onto explains that "Faith is the gift of God wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Spirit of God, whereby they come to see, know, and beleeve the truth of the Scriptures, & not onely so, but the excellencie of them above all other writing and things in the world."[105] Article XXIII then says, "Those that have this precious faith wrought in them by the Spirit, can never finally nor totally fall away."[106] The confession explains the reason the elect cannot lose their salvation in Article XXIII is that their faith is "fastened"[107] to Christ. Therefore, no matter what contemporary Irish Baptists believe about the debate over particular

[103] William Kiffen, *The Confession of faith of those churches which are commonly (though falsly) called Anabaptists* (Aldersgate-streete, London: Matthew Simmons, 1644), 3.
[104] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 162.
[105] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 162-163.
[106] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 163.
[107] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 163.

or general election, Thomas Patient held to a Calvinistic soteriology.

Baptistic Ecclesiology

Thomas Patient's four points at the close of *On Baptism* are a helpful summary of his Baptist Ecclesiology. Patient believed Baptism should be administered once in order to "confirm our Regeneration."[108] Second, he argued the visible church should reflect the invisible church because a congregation should help each other obey the Great Commission. Third, therefore, unbaptized people should not be accepted as members of a church, because they are not obeying all that Jesus commanded. Fourth, and finally, was his plea to "observe the rules of Christ."[109] At the heart of Patient's theology on baptism was for Christian to work out our salvation with fear and trembling as he sought to be obedient to the Law of Christ.

Thomas Patient's development of a Baptist Ecclesiology in his book *On Baptism* provides Irish Baptists unique clarity on their Baptist origins. Compared to English Baptists and American Baptists, the Irish Baptists have a book on credobaptism by one of their original forefathers to help them understand what it means to be an Irish Baptist. According to Thomas Patient's Ecclesiology, the Irish Baptists originally practiced credobaptism, established churches of converted members with the end of battling sin together, and help each other obey all that Christ commanded.

Local Autonomy but Committed to Associational Partnerships

From the early years of the movement, Baptists were partnering together. W. T. Whitley explains, "from the beginning Baptists were not 'Independents'; they always sought for fellowship between the different churches, and they were very successful in arranging for permanent organization."[110] Their pattern was to organize into associations of like-minded churches in the same region. The

[108] Patient, *On Baptism*, 168.
[109] Patient, *On Baptism*, 177.
[110] W. T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Charles Griffin and Company, 1923), 53.

purpose of these associations was to foster relational fellowship along with strategizing for evangelistic outreach.[111] Six General Baptists met in 1624 and 1630 to bring into fellowship a group of Mennonites.[112] Patient was part of the next major partnership of Baptist churches. Seven London churches organized for the purpose of defending and defining their movement with the signing of the *First London Confession.*

Patient, of course, signed the *First London Confession.* His confession was modelled heavily after the Separatist Confession of 1596. Article 38 of the Separatist Confession of 1596 reads:

> That though Congregations be thus distinct and severall bodyes, every one as a compact Citie in it self, yet are they all to walke by one and the same rule, & by all means convenient to haue the counsell and help oneof another in all needfull affayres of the Church, as members of one body in the common Faith, vnder Christ their head.[113]

This article was used to create Article XLVII of the *First London Confession.* Thus, partnership was a hallmark of the mid 17th Century Baptists along with their Separatist ancestors.

Patient embraced this concept of partnership. He was involved in the partnership of the seven churches that related so closely together they were able to develop a new Confession of faith. The Confession was likely a defence against wrongful accusations against the movement.[114] The fact, however, that they had common

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[111] Torbet explains, "Their purpose was framed by a desire to have fellowship between local churches and to carry on evangelistic work." (Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 43).

[112] Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 44.

[113] Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 94.

[114] Lumpkin lists publications attacking the London Baptist churches and then concludes, "In order to distinguish themselves from both the General Baptists and the Anabaptist, the Calvinistic Baptists of London determined to prepare and publish a statement of their views." (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith,* 145).

theology and established relationships enabled a partnership that produced the Confession. Further, these relationships remained influential in Patient's life and ministry. Before his ministry in Ireland, he served as an assistant pastor under Kiffen in London. He returned to this post at the end of his ministry. The London churches did not need to financially support Patient's ministry to Ireland because he also served as a chaplain in Cromwell's army. Kiffen, however, was able to influence Patient and the Irish Baptists away from 5th Monarchy thinking.

Patient was also involved in the early working out of this idea of associational partnerships as a broader strategy. Before the English Civil War the Baptists only periodically organized and for specific purposes. Torbet explains, however, that as they watched Cromwell's New Model Army organize using county associations, they adopted the approach as an ongoing strategy. Torbet writes:

> The pattern of the more formal associational organization, as it has worked out, was provided by a military expedient with which Baptists had become familiar during the Civil Wars (1642-49) between King and Parliament. During that first winter, counties were organized into 'associations' for defense purposes. This plan was adapted to the raising of money and troops from the counties. Then Cromwell's New Model Army, thus organized, brought into being a council for political action and protection of communities against plunder, to which each regiment sent representatives.[115]

B. R. White takes some issue with Torbet's leaning on the term "association" as a link to what became the Baptist structure of organizing in counties.[116] The Civil War, however, played some role

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[115] Tobert, *A History of the Baptists*, 44.

[116] White writes, "But the actual word 'association' does not seem to have been much used among the Baptists even during the 1650s: they preferred to use the term 'General Meeting' for the periodic gatherings of their representatives or, as they normally termed them, 'messengers.' The

in Baptists working together. Baptists' strategy of developing associations took cues from these early British efforts. Further, Torbet explains that the strategy was firmly established in Ireland. He writes:

> In 1653 that part of the Army which was disbanded in Ireland, and which was largely composed of Baptists, transferred this plan to church organization as they sought to maintain fellowship between their lonely congregations in a strange country by correspondence and the frequent meetings of delegates. Torbet explains that these Irish Associations sought contact with Welsh, Scotch, and English Baptists who were attempting a similar type of inter-church communication.[117]

Again, B. R. White takes some issue with Torbet's conclusions largely on the grounds that the communications between the Irish Baptists and the others were not advocating associational partnership but rather suggesting a "monthly national fast day."[118] These communications, however, do demonstrate a doctrinal and relational affinity between these churches. Further, these efforts demonstrate a desire to partner for ministry. White correctly criticizes Torbet for connecting historical links that were likely not as firm as he believed. With that said, however, from these early decades the Baptists were seeking to relate with one another and partner when necessary. Patient had been part of inter-church efforts in London, was an important chaplain in Cromwell's army, and was one of the most influential of the Irish Baptist pastors; therefore, it is logical to conclude that he was central to these organizational efforts in Ireland.

Thus, Patient's ministry is a reminder that associational partnerships are a hallmark of the first Baptists. I would not argue it

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Baptist Associations of the 1650s were regional far more than county in their constituency." (*The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 68).

[117] Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 44.

[118] White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 68.

is the one unifying Baptist distinctive, but I do argue that it was part of what it meant to be a Baptist during the first generation of Baptists. Historians only need to look at the life and ministry of Thomas Patient to see that the early Irish Baptists were committed to partnering together for fellowship and ministry.

The Problem of Religious Liberty and Soul Competency

Baptist Identity is a hotly debated topic. George even identifies a "crisis in Baptist life today"[119] as the "crisis of identity rooted in a fundamental theological failure."[120] The debate centres on the question, "What is a Baptist?" One Baptist theologian answered this question by stating, "As Baptists, our distinctive theological identity is an expression of our loyalty to Jesus Christ and His Word."[121] His reply is true, of course; but other denominations with different doctrines could make the same claim. The question about Baptist identity can be answered theologically and historically. A virtuous zeal for the Bible led some Baptists to reject creedalism, meaning they viewed humanly devised doctrinal statements as unequal to the Bible. This virtuous zeal, however, led some of these Baptists to privatize their faith in a way that led them to boast of "their 'right' to believe anything they wanted."[122] Further, these Baptists claimed this right was the essence of what it meant to be Baptist. Some Baptists cite soul competency as the ultimate theological marker of what it means to be Baptist. Baptist's historical advocacy of religious liberty became one of the historical pillars of those advocating soul competency as the primary Baptist distinctive. Thomas Patient's life and theology add to the discussion on Baptist identity because of his early place in the history of the movement as well as his unique relationships with civil authorities.

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[119] Timothy George, *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition* (Nashville: B & H, 2001), 1.

[120] George, *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, 1.

[121] R. Stanton Norman, *The Baptist Way: Distinctives of a Baptist Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2005), 184.

[122] George, *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, 4.

E. Y. Mullins went so far as to label soul competency as the "mother principle"[123] for Baptists. Humphreys defines soul competency as the "freedom, ability, and responsibility of each person to respond to God for herself or himself."[124] Nettles describes followers of Mullins' ideology as the "soul-liberty party."[125] This camp answers the question of Baptist identity by claiming soul competency. Mullins went so far to state the "sufficient statement of the historical significance of the Baptists is this: the competency of the soul in religion."[126] He also taught the "biblical significance of the Baptists is the right of private interpretation and obedience to the Scriptures."[127] Thus, Mullins saw the idea of soul competency as *the* theological Baptist distinctive. Therefore, Mullins would explain Baptist identity as the movement grounded in soul competency.

All Baptist historians understand the historical role Baptists have played in advocating for religious liberty and the separation of church and state. From the movement's earliest days, the Baptists were advocating for religious liberty. For example, Thomas Helwys wrote *A Short Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity* in 1612 advocating for religious liberty. It was sent to King James I resulting in Helwys' imprisonment. Roger Williams in the 1640's was also famously advocating for a wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world.[128] Baptist historian Tom Nettles

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[123] Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion, 79.*

[124] Taken from the chapter "Edgar Young Mullins" by Fisher Humphreys (George, *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, 187).

[125] Nettles links the conviction over soul competency with a rejection of objective doctrinal truth. He writes, "They view a serious confessionalism as contrary to Baptist witness because objectivity in doctrinal formulation tends to overpower subjective experience and individual perceptions of truth. Liberty of conscience, they key to Baptist life, cannot co-exist with the broad and objective doctrinal emphasis of confessions." (Nettles, *The Baptists*, 13).

[126] Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion*, 64.

[127] Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion*, 66.

[128] In 1644 Roger Williams wrote, "When they [the Church] have opened a gap in the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world, God hath ever broke down the wall

states, "Baptists resist any intrusion of civil government into church affairs."[129] Walter Shurden is a more liberal Baptist historian and wrote, "Baptistification is a *spirit* that pervades all of the Baptist principles or so-called Baptist distinctives. It is the spirit of FREEDOM."[130]

In fact, theologians in the vein of E. Y. Mullins established the primacy of soul competency on the historical significance religious liberty played in Baptists' history. Even though Baptists' early convictions over religious liberty are a clue to the Baptist distinctive, it is an oversimplification to argue that religious liberty is *the* Baptist theological distinctive. Patient helps Baptist historians and theologians validate that claim.

Thomas Patient is helpful to all these discussions on Baptist identity because he was such an early leader in the beginnings of the Particular Baptist movement. Further, he is unique in his role of pioneering a new Baptist movement, thus examining how he organized the Irish Baptist churches gives us a clue as to his understanding of what it meant to be a Baptist. Did Thomas Patient embrace soul competency? Did he embrace religious liberty? What was Patient's organizing principles when he planted the first Irish Baptist churches? Upon exploring these questions further, it will be shown that Thomas Patient assists historians and theologians to understand the Baptist distinctive is less about soul competency and religious liberty and more about the ecclesiological principle of regenerate church membership through believers' baptism.

Did Thomas Patient hold to E. Y. Mullins' understanding of soul

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itself, removed the Candlestick, etc., and made His Garden a wilderness as it is this day. And that therefore if He will ever please to restore His garden and Paradise again, it must of necessity be walled in peculiarly unto Himself from the world, and all that be saved out of the world are to be transplanted out of the wilderness of the World." Roger Williams, "Mr. Cotton's Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered," in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams* (New York: Russell & Russell Inc. 1963), 1:108.

[129] Nettles, *The Baptists*, 44-45.

[130] Walter B. Shurden, *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 1993), 2.

competency? If by soul competency one is referring to genuineness of conversion; then, yes, Patient rejected the idea of evangelism by force. In 1645 Roger Williams engaged in the debate over how to evangelize the Native Americans. He wrote *Christenings Make Not Christians* where he made the point that we should not seek the conversion of people by the sword of the government. Patient would agree as evidenced by his understanding of his own conversion as a "change in my heart."[131] He further stated, "true conversion begins with a prick in the heart."[132]

Mullins and the soul competency camp, however, are not speaking just about conversion, but about how to interpret the Bible and if we can embrace objective truth. This fact is supported by this camp of Baptists rejecting creeds and even doctrinal statements as somehow violating someone's soul liberty. Patient embraced genuine personal conversion experiences from the heart, but also embraced objective doctrinal truth even to the degree of being one of the original signers of the robust *First London Confession*. Simply, Article VII[133] of the *First London Confession* is not consistent with Mullins' position on soul competency.

Even though Patient sought conversions from the heart, he did not teach people or organize the Irish Baptist churches around the idea that they had the freedom to believe or interpret the Bible as they saw fit. He understood that individuals, and churches made up of individuals, were not the rules of knowledge, faith, and obedience. Rather, he believed the Word of God was the norm. Thomas Patient was a very early Baptist leader yet does not seem to have held to E. Y. Mullin's idea of soul competency.

Did Thomas Patient embrace religious liberty? Answering this

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131 Patient, *On Baptism*, A3.

132 Patient, *On Baptism*, 4.

133 "The Rule of this Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience, concerning the worship and service of God, and all other Christian duties, is not man's inventions, opinions, devices, laws, constitutions, or traditions unwritten whatsoever, but only the word of God contained in the Canonical Scriptures." (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 158).

question is more complex and likely disappointing to some contemporary Baptists. Patient did not fully work out his position on this issue, but he also did things that would seem at odds with our present understanding of the religious liberty issue. Roger Williams was a contemporary of Thomas Patient, yet Patient simply did not give the space for the topic in the way Williams focused on religious liberty. No doubt Patient would have desired greater religious tolerance when he had to flee America and sat in an English jail as a result of his baptistic convictions. Patient also, however, heeded the call of John Owen's sermon before Parliament that the government ought to fund pastors going into Ireland with the mission of evangelizing the Irish. Contemporary Baptists need to clearly understand this aspect of Patient's ministry. Thomas Patient accepted government funds in order to plant Baptist churches! Further, he sought to influence the Cromwellian Irish government not toward religious tolerance, but toward a more baptistic settlement.[134]

Faced with a similar scenario contemporary Baptists would no doubt do things differently than Patient. If one is attempting, however, to claim religious liberty as the consistent historical identifier of someone as a Baptist, then Thomas Patient is troubling for his or her theory.[135] He is an example of someone who was in a

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[134] McBeth understands the distinction that most Baptists have advocated for religions liberty yet not all Baptist have understood the issue or advocated for religious tolerance. Patient is one who did not advocate for religious tolerance when given the chance. McBeth writes, "A few Baptists, such as Blackwood and Tombes, taught a more limited concept of religious freedom, confirming Ivimey's remark about English Baptists: "Some of them confounded the power of the magistrate with the government of that kingdom which is not of this world." However, these were exceptions which proved the rule. By far the majority of Baptists taught complete religious liberty for all." (McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 121-122)

[135] Mullins seems to claim Baptists did not develop their understanding of religious liberty over time but rather fully embraced it as an understood idea. However, based upon the fact that a leader like Thomas Patient did not develop the idea and advocate for religious liberty, it cannot be

position to influence government officials and chose not to advocate for general religious liberty or tolerance, but rather used his influence to advance a Baptist religious settlement. That settlement did not come to pass in Ireland, but Patient unsuccessfully sought a sort of Baptist religious rule.[136] Again, all conservative as well as liberal Baptist historians and theologians, see the virtues of religious liberty as well as Baptists' righteous and courageous historical advocacy of religious liberty. It is, however, an oversimplification to argue the essence of Baptist identity is religious liberty because someone like Thomas Patient did not organize a new and early Baptist movement around that idea nor did he even advocate religious liberty to the government officials under his influence.

What then were Patient's organizing principles when he planted the first Irish Baptist churches? Answering this question helps theologians and historians more accurately answer the question of Baptist identity generally as well as Irish Baptist identity in particular. If one wants to know what it means to be a Baptist, then one should look to what the early Baptists organized around. In Patient's case, the split he had with Christ Church in Dublin is the key to understanding his Baptist organizing principle. He felt only professing believers in Christ should be baptized members of a local church. Thus, the doctrine of regenerate church membership as identified through believers' baptism by immersion was the issue that sparked the split in Christ Church and launched the Irish Baptist denomination. The organizing doctrines were not soul competency or religious liberty. Rather, Patient organized the first Irish Baptist church on a distinct baptistic ecclesiology.

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understood as a fully understood and embraced idea. Mullins wrote, "There is no evidence that Baptists came to their view of soul freedom and separation of church and state gradually. There is nowhere a wavering note on this great theme. It seems to have been a divinely given prophetic insight into the meaning of the gospel and the implicit teaching of Scripture." (Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion*, 60)

[136] Barnard quotes Henry Cromwell as concluding that even though the Baptists tried to influence leaders they ultimately did not have a "spirit of government." (Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, 107).

Therefore, Thomas Patient's life and ministry teach contemporary historians and theologians that regenerate church membership is the Baptist distinction. He was simply consistent with how previous Baptist churches organized. The pastors who wrote the *First London Confession* also organized their churches around regenerate church membership.[137] Regenerate church membership is also cited in the 1611 Amsterdam Statement.[138]

What does it mean to be a Baptist? Thomas Patient would argue in the 1640s that it was someone who believed the objective teachings of the Bible regarding believers' baptism, which is grounded in the doctrine of regenerate church membership. Patient was advocating that only professing believers who had taken the step of being baptized as believers should become members of the church. Regenerate church membership was the organizing principle of the early Irish Baptist churches.

What role, then, does religious liberty play in Baptists' identity? There is no doubt that the early Baptists advocated for religious liberty. Baptists were also the early proponents of religious liberty including developing the idea. Further, religious liberty should be understood as a natural, logical outworking of regenerate church membership because religious liberty in the end is freedom of conscience. Thus, Baptists should embrace our history of advocating

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[137] Article XXXIII of the *First London Confession* reads, "That Christ hath here on earth a spirituall Kingdome, which is the Church, which he hath purchased and redeemed to himselfe, as a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints, called & separated from the world, by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joyned to the Lord, and each other, by mutuall agreement, in the practical injoymnet of the Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King." (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 165).

[138] Article 10 of the 1611 Amsterdam Statement reads, "That the church off CHRIST is a compainy off faithful people 1 Cor. 1.2 Eph. 1.1 seperated fro the world by the word & Spirit off GOD. 2 Cor. 6, 17. being kint vnto the LORD, & one vnto another, by Baptisme. 1 Cor. 12.13. Vpon their owne confessio of the faith. Act. 8.37. and sinnes. Mat. 3.6" (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 119).

for religious liberty and continue to work today. It is a central part of the history of the Baptist movement. Baptists have blessed the world in our advocacy of religious liberty. For accuracy's sake, however, Patient highlights that believers' baptism by immersion (grounded in regenerate church membership) is actually the distinct Baptist doctrine over religious liberty.

CONCLUSION

Nettles argues, "Baptists must be Christian and Protestant evangelical before they can be Baptist."[139] Patient is significant because his life and ministry serve Baptist historians and theologians who see the truth of Nettles' connections. Baptists are indeed first Christians then Protestants then evangelicals before being Baptists. This framework is modelled in Thomas Patient's Irish ministry. In fact, his ministry can serve Irish Baptists today as a contemporary model. Specifically, as a Baptist, Patient was committed to the doctrine of believers' baptism by immersion. Further, he understood the doctrine pastorally as a means of discipleship and the establishment of new church. Patient also was a committed church planter. For Patient, evangelism and discipleship were not divorced from church planting, but were the purposes of starting new churches. Finally, Patient was a model of partnership. He listened to and learned from other leaders, was supported by other churches, and partnered with other like-minded Baptists.

In the end, Thomas Patient is a model of faithful perseverance. Few, even among the Baptists, know his story. His story is of value to the contemporary church because he is part of a "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) testifying to us that we can indeed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, "lay aside every weight, and sin which clings" (Hebrews 12:1) in order to experience the blessing of enduring towards our goal of "looking to Jesus" (Hebrew 12:2). He opened his book desiring to "run that Christian race"[140] because

[139] Nettles, *The Baptists* , 13.
[140] Patient, *On Baptism*, 2.

"*the night cometh when no man can work*"[141] (John 9:4). Thomas Patient, did indeed, run that race.

[141] Patient, *On Baptism*, 2.

THE DIET OF WORMS

JOHN GAULT

Having come to a clear understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith Martin Luther began to teach that salvation is a gift of God's grace, attainable only through faith in Jesus as the Messiah. "This one and firm rock, which we call the doctrine of justification, is the chief article of the whole Christian doctrine, which comprehends the understanding of all godliness." The response of the papacy was to condemn Luther as a heretic and to deploy a series of papal theologians and envoys against him, leading eventually to a Papal Bull of Excommunication (15 June 1520) and to the Diet of Worms (16-18 April 1521).

Luther's convictions and courage began to awaken Europe from spiritual darkness, motivate the people to search for spiritual truth and inspire others who would themselves become leaders in the

work of Reformation. The Diet of Worms of 1521 (Reichstag zu Worms) was an imperial Diet (a formal deliberative assembly) of the Holy Roman Empire. Imperial diets had taken place at Worms in the years 829, 926, 1076, 1122, 1495, and 1545, but unless plainly qualified, the term "Diet of Worms" usually refers to the 1521 assembly which was conducted at the Heylshof Garden, with the Emperor Charles V presiding. Luther was summoned to the Diet in order to renounce or reaffirm his views in response to the Papal bull Exsurge Domine ("Arise, O Lord") issued by Pope Leo X, on 15 June 1520, which outlined forty-one purported errors found in Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses and other writings related to or written by him. Prince Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, obtained an agreement that if Luther appeared he would be promised safe passage to and from the meeting. This guarantee was essential after the treatment of Jan Hus, who was tried and executed at the Council of Constance in 1415 despite a promise of safe conduct.

On 16 April 1521 Luther arrived in Worms and was told to appear before the Diet at 4 p.m. the following day. Dr Jeromee Schurff, Wittenberg professor in Canon Law, was to act as Luther's lawyer before the Diet.

On 17 April, the imperial marshal, Ulrich von Pappenheim, came for Luther and brought him into the presence of a formidable and intimidating assembly including the Emperor, Charles V, the archduke Ferdinand, six electors of the empire, twenty four dukes, eight margraves, thirty archbishops, bishops and abbots, seven ambassadors, the deputies of ten free cities, a great number of princes, counts and barons. The papal nuncios—all in all two hundred and four persons—before whom Luther stood alone. He was informed that he should speak only in answer to direct questions from the presiding officer, Johann Eck, an assistant of the Archbishop of Trier. Eck asked if a collection of 25 books, probably including The 95 Theses, Resolutions Concerning the 95 Theses, On the Papacy at Rome, Address to the Christian Nobility, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and On the Freedom of a Christian was Luther's and if he was ready to revoke their heresies.

Luther requested more time for a proper answer, so he was given until the next day at 4 p.m.

On 18 April, Luther, saying that he had prayed for long hours and consulted with friends and mediators, presented himself before the Diet. When the same questions were put to him, Luther first apologised that he lacked the etiquette of the court. Then he answered, "They are all mine, but they are not all of one sort." He went on to place the writings into three categories: (1) Works which were well received even by his enemies: those he would not reject. (2) Books which attacked the abuses, lies and desolation of the Christian world and the papacy: those, Luther believed, could not safely be rejected without encouraging abuses to continue. To retract them would be to open the door to further oppression. "If I now recant these, then, I would be doing nothing but strengthening tyranny." (3) Attacks on individuals: he apologised for the harsh tone of these writings but did not reject the substance of what he taught in them; if he could be shown by Scripture that his writings were in error, Luther continued, he would reject them. He concluded by saying:

> Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.

According to tradition, Luther is said to have declared "Here I stand, I can do no other," before concluding with "God help me. Amen." There is, however, no indication in the transcripts of the Diet or in eyewitness accounts that he ever said this, and most scholars now doubt these words were spoken.

Eck informed him that he was acting like a heretic:

> 'Martin,' he said, 'there is not one of the heresies which have torn the bosom of the church, which has not derived its origin from the various interpretations of the Scripture. The Bible itself is the arsenal whence each innovator has drawn his deceptive arguments. It was with biblical texts that Pelagius and Arius maintained their doctrines. When the fathers of the Council of Constance condemned this proposition of John Hus—The church of Jesus Christ is only the community of the elect, they condemned an error; for the church, like a good mother, embraces within her arms all who bear the name of Christian.'

Despite the agreement that he could return home safely, it was privately understood that Luther would soon be arrested and punished. To protect him from this fate, Prince Frederick seized him on his way home to Wittenberg and hid him in Wartburg Castle. It was during his time in the Wartburg Castle he began work on what proved to be one of his foremost achievements—the translation of the New Testament into the German vernacular.

The Emperor issued the Edict of Worms (Wormser Edikt), on 25 May 1521 condemning Luther as "a notorious heretic" and banned citizens of the empire from propagating his ideas also stating that it was a crime for anyone in Germany to give him food or shelter and permitting anyone to kill him without legal consequence. Although the Protestant Reformation is usually considered to have begun in 1517, the Edict of Worms signals the first overt schism. When Luther eventually emerged from the Wartburg, the Emperor, distracted with other matters, did not press for his arrest. Ultimately, because of rising public support for Luther among the German people and the protection of certain German princes, the Edict of Worms was never enforced in Germany. In December 1521, Jacob Proost, prior of the Augustinian monastery in Antwerp, was the first Luther supporting cleric to be arrested and prosecuted under the terms of the Worms Edict. In February 1522, Proost was compelled to make public recantation and repudiation of Luther's teachings. Later that year, additional arrests were made among the Augustinians

in Antwerp. Two monks, Jan van Essen and Hendrik Vos, refused to recant and on 1 July 1523, they were burned at the stake in Brussels.

The 1522 and 1524 Diets of Nuremberg attempted to execute the judgement of the Edict of Worms against Luther, but they failed.

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