

**CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**BAPTISMAL PRACTICE AND TRINITARIAN BELIEF IN JOSEPH  
BINGHAM'S *ORIGINES ECCLESIASTICAE*: A STUDY IN THE HISTORICAL  
AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF PATRISTIC SCHOLARSHIP AT THE  
CLOSE OF THE ERA OF ORTHODOXY**

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**BY  
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This dissertation entitled

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For the memory of my mother and father,  
who, even though they never had the chance to see the completion of this dissertation,  
always knew in their hearts that their son would one day get his degree, and therefore  
ceaselessly prayed for God's strength for him.



The blessing of God be upon those, who have ability and will to undertake great and useful works for the promotion of piety and religion, and to stand in the gap against all the enemies of the truth.

Joseph Bingham, in the preface to the tenth volume of his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*.

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## List of Abbreviations

ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
NPNF	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
OUA	Oxford University Archives

## ABSTRACT

Joseph Bingham belonged to a group of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Anglican scholar-clergymen that endeavored to provide their contemporaries with a comprehensive picture of the practice and worship of the early church. Bingham's historical study is unique, since he presents the ancient church in a non-chronological method, but through a systematic and thematic investigation of the rites and ceremonies, together with other dynamic aspects of Christian antiquity.

This dissertation proposes to situate Bingham in the context of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English church, its scholarship, and its theological controversies. This understanding of Bingham will, in turn, reveal hitherto unexamined aspects of the development and alteration of Christian teaching in the midst of the political turmoil following the Glorious Revolution of 1688. A central thesis of this study is that the use of the church fathers as a secondary norm of Protestant teaching – indicative of the churchly orthodoxy of Protestantism – is characteristic of the Protestantism of the Church of England. This use of the church fathers, moreover, stands in continuity with many of the models for theological formulation found among the Reformers and the orthodox Protestants, both British and Continental, of the seventeenth century. In discussing baptism in the *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, Bingham used the church fathers objectivistically, avoiding polemics as much as he could. However, as he approached the patristic material topically, he often had a theological solution in mind. Most of the time, he used the material to justify the practice of the Church of England.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation traces the life and scholarship of Joseph Bingham, with a focus on the investigation of his education at Oxford University and his years as a fellow and tutor at the university, as well as the Trinitarian controversy that occupied the history of Oxford University in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Chapter 2 provides historical background of Bingham's ministry and scholarship. Chapter 3 discusses Bingham's patristic scholarship and its reception among historians and theologians in the early eighteenth century. In chapter 4 the dissertation focuses on Bingham's explanation of the formulae of baptism in the early church and their connection with the practice of the Church of England. Chapter 5 discusses Bingham's view of infant and adult baptism in the ancient church and the Church of England. Chapter 6 discusses the issue of controversy regarding lay baptism and Bingham's use of the patristic material in his *Scholastical History* as a refutation against Roger Laurence who considered lay baptism invalid.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades there has been an increased interest in the study of the influences of the Church Fathers on the thoughts of the Reformers. By way of example, studies of how the Church Fathers played a considerable role in the development of Calvin's thought have been done by various scholars.<sup>1</sup> Significant scholarly work on the Reformers' use of the Fathers has been done by Irena Backus.<sup>2</sup> Other historians whose research focuses on similar topics include Heiko Jürgens,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The earliest twentieth-century study of this kind is perhaps J. Koopmans' *Het oudkerkelijk dogma in de reformatie, bepaaldelijk bij Calvin* (Wageningen: H. Veenman & zonen, 1938). Other works include Luchsius Smits, *Saint Augustin dans l'oeuvre de Jean Calvin* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956-1958); R. J. Mooi's 1965 University of Utrecht Th.D. thesis, "Het kerken dogmahistorisch element in de werken van Johannes Calvin"; A. N. S. Lane, "Calvin's Sources of St. Bernard," *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 67 (1976): 253-283; and also his "Calvin's Use of the Fathers and the Medievals," *Calvin Theological Journal* 16 (1981): 149-205; W. N. Todd's 1964 Union Theological Seminary Th.D. dissertation, "The Function of the Patristic Writings in the Thought of John Calvin"; J. R. Walchenbach's 1974 University of Pittsburgh Ph.D. dissertation, "John Calvin as Biblical Commentator: An Investigation into Calvin's Use of John Chrysostom as an Exegetical Tutor"; J. M. J. Lange Van Ravenswaay, *Augustinus Totus Noster: Das Augustinverständnis bei Johannes Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); E. P. Meijering, *Calvin wider die Neugierde: Ein Beitrag zum Vergleich zwischen reformatorischem und patristischem Denken* (Nieuwkoop: B. deGraaf, 1980); and Irena Backus, "Calvin's Judgment of Eusebius of Caesarea: An Analysis," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991): 419-437. Also note Jean Boisset, "La Réforme et les Pères de l'église: les références patristiques dans *L'Institution de la religion chrestienne* de Jean Calvin," in *Migne et le renouveau des études patristiques*, ed. A. Mandouze and J. Foulheron (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), 39-51; Johannes Van Oort, ed., *De kerkvaders in Reformatie en Nadere Reformatie* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1997); and A. N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Irena Backus, "Martin Bucer and the Patristic Tradition," in *Martin Bucer and Sixteenth Century Europe*, ed. Christian Krieger and Marc Lienhard, *Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 1991* (New York, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 55-69; *The Disputations of Baden, 1526 and Berne, 1528: Neutralizing the Early Church* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1993); "The Bible and the Fathers according to Abraham Scultetus (1566-1624) and André Rivet (1571/3-1651): The Case of Basil of Caesarea," in *Die Patristik in der Bibellexegese des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. David Steinmetz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 231-58; "Irenaeus, Calvin, and Calvinist Orthodoxy: The Patristic Manual of Abraham Scultetus (1598)," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 1 (1999): 41-53; and also the two-volume work she edited, *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Heiko Jürgens, "Die Funktion der Kirchenvaterzitate in der Heidelberger Disputation Luthers (1518)," *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 66 (1975): 71-78.

Pierre Fraenkel,<sup>4</sup> A. Schindler,<sup>5</sup> Leif Grane,<sup>6</sup> and Scott H. Hendrix.<sup>7</sup> Despite this rise of scholarly interest in Reformation era patristic scholarship, much work remains to be done: Johannes Van Oort has remarked that the study of Calvin's use of the Church Fathers is still a promising field of research.<sup>8</sup> Van Oort's opinion is shared by David Steinmetz. Observing what has been done by scholars so far, Steinmetz mentions that not much work has been done to illuminate the relationship of Calvin to the exegetical tradition of the early church.<sup>9</sup>

This interest in the reception of the church fathers by Protestant theologians ought, arguably, to be extended into the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This point finds a support in Jean-Louis Quantin's and A. N. S. Lane's studies of the publication of the patristic writings from the late sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Quantin's list begins with the 1586 publication of Bellarmine's

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<sup>4</sup> Pierre Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum: The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melancthon* (Geneva: Droz, 1961).

<sup>5</sup> A. Schindler, *Zwingli und die Kirchenväter* (Zurich: Kommissionsverlag Beer, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Leif Grane, "Some Remarks on the Church Fathers in the First Years of the Reformation (1516-1520)," in *Auctoritas Patrum. Zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15 und 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Leif Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (Mainz: Verlag Phillipp von Zabern, 1993), 21-32.

<sup>7</sup> Scott H. Hendrix, "Deparentifying the Fathers: The Reformers and Patristic Authority," in *Auctoritas Patrum. Zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15 und 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Leif Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (Mainz: Verlag Phillipp von Zabern, 1993), 55-68.

<sup>8</sup> See Johannes Van Oort, "John Calvin and the Church Fathers," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 661-700.

<sup>9</sup> David Steinmetz, "Calvin and the Patristic Exegesis of Paul," in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David Steinmetz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 68-82.

<sup>10</sup> Jean-Louis Quantin, *Les Pères de l'église au XVIIe siècle. Actes du colloque de Lyon 2-5 octobre 1991* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1993); A. N. S. Lane, "Early Printed Patristic Anthologies to 1566: A Progress Report," *Studia Patristica* 18, pt. 4 (1990): 365-70. See also Lane, "Justification in Sixteenth-Century Patristic Anthologies," in *Auctoritas Patrum. Zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15 und 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Leif Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (Mainz: Verlag Phillipp von Zabern, 1993), 69-95.

*Disputationes de Controversiis Fidei Christianae* and ended with Pope Clement XI's Bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius* of 1713 and this list is a clear demonstration of the wide variety of patristic material available during that era. Even though Lane's project so far does not go beyond the year 1565, from what he has compiled one can get a sense of the large number of patristic anthologies in the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Richard Muller has argued that patristic materials were widely appropriated by Protestant theologians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as sources of their theology.<sup>12</sup> The numerous gatherings of the patristic materials, editions of the Church Fathers, and analyses of their doctrine printed during that period offer an indication that these sources were significant to the Protestant orthodox.<sup>13</sup>

Efforts to draw on the teachings of the Church Fathers were also characteristic of seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century English theology. This patristic interest is found not only in debates between the Anglican Divines and the Roman Catholic Church, but also between the Anglicans, and the Puritans, and other dissenting groups. At the same time this era saw the publication of numerous English translations of the writings of the Church Fathers.<sup>14</sup> A very limited number of modern works have been devoted to the examination of the use of patristic material in British theology. Some of the most important ones are Stanley Greenslade's inaugural lecture

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<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, the tables of the authors and the frequency of the Fathers cited in Lane, "Justification in Sixteenth-Century Patristic Anthology," 94-95.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Muller, *Ad Fontes Argumentorum: The Sources of Reformed Theology in the Seventeenth Century* (Utrecht: Faculty of Theology, Utrecht University, 1999), 13.

<sup>13</sup> Muller, *Ad Fontes Argumentorum*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> See Mark Vessey, "English Translations of the Latin Fathers 1517-1611," in *The Reception of the Fathers in the West*, vol. 2, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 775-835.

at the University of Oxford, May 1960,<sup>15</sup> William Haaugaard's study of patristic scholarship in sixteenth-century England,<sup>16</sup> and Henry Chadwick's study of tradition and the Church Fathers.<sup>17</sup> D.W. Dockrill<sup>18</sup> and Thomas Pfizenmaier<sup>19</sup> have researched the use of the Church Fathers in British Trinitarian debates.

Joseph Bingham remains one of the foremost British patristic scholars of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. His massive ten volume work on Christian antiquity, entitled *The Origines Ecclesiasticae, or, the Antiquities of the Christian Church*, was published between 1708 and 1722.<sup>20</sup> This work, praised by many critics from both England and the Continent as the very first – and perhaps also the last – complete work in the archaeology of the Christian church,<sup>21</sup> enjoyed several

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<sup>15</sup> Stanley L. Greenslade, *The English Reformers and the Fathers of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); also his "The Authority of the Tradition of the Early Church in Early Anglican Thought," in *Tradition im Luthertum und Anglikanismus. Herausgegeben vom Institut für Ökumenische Forschung in Strassbourg*, ed. Günter Gasmann and Vilmos Vajta (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 9-31.

<sup>16</sup> William Haaugaard, "Renaissance Patristic Scholarship and Theology in Sixteenth-Century England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 10, no. 3 (1979): 37-60.

<sup>17</sup> Henry Chadwick, "Tradition, Fathers and Councils," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes and John Booty (London: SPCK, 1988), 92-105.

<sup>18</sup> D.W. Dockrill, "The Authority of the Fathers in the Great Trinitarian Debates of the Sixteen Nineties," in *Studia Patristica* 18, pt. 4 (1990), 335-47.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), especially the introduction.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Bingham, *The Origines Ecclesiasticae, or the Antiquities of the Christian Church*, in ten volumes. In writing this dissertation I consult the 1840 edition of Bingham's works under the title *Origines Ecclesiasticae, or the Antiquity of the Christian Church and Other Works*, in nine volumes, published in London by William Straker and Oxford by J. H. Parker. Quotations from Bingham's work will be taken from this edition, unless otherwise noted. Reference to Bingham's work will be indicated as *Works*, followed by volume and page numbers of this particular edition.

<sup>21</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *DNB*), vol. 5, ed. Sydney Lee (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1885-1901).

reprintings well into the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> In recent scholarship, however, Bingham's work has been generally ignored. The only articles dealing with his work are those of Leslie Barnard.<sup>23</sup> There are also some authors who briefly mention Bingham and his contribution to British patristic scholarship. Among these authors are Jean-Louis Quantin,<sup>24</sup> George Every,<sup>25</sup> Robert Cornwall,<sup>26</sup> Frederick Bussby<sup>27</sup> and Philip Dixon.<sup>28</sup>

This dissertation is an exposition of Bingham's use of patristic material in his view of baptism as he wrote in volume four of his *Origines*<sup>29</sup> and in his *Scholastical History of the Practice of the Church in Reference to the Administration of Baptism by Laymen*.<sup>30</sup> The *Origines* was Bingham's positive work, in which he carefully

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<sup>22</sup> The last traceable publication of Bingham's *Origines* is the two-volume 1878 edition published by Reeves and Turner, London. See *The National Union Catalogue*, vol. 58 (Chicago: Mansell Information / Publishing Limited, 1969), 60.

<sup>23</sup> See Leslie W. Barnard, "Joseph Bingham and the Early Church," *Church Quarterly Review* 169 (1968): 192-205; "Joseph Bingham and Asceticism," in *Monks, Hermits and Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W. J. Sheils (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 299-306; "The Use of the Patristic Tradition in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," in *Scripture, Tradition and Reason: A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Benjamin Drewery (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 174-203; and "Patristic Study in England in the Early Eighteenth Century," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 23, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1989), 211-14.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Louis Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth Century Anglican Theology," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, vol. 2, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 987-1008.

<sup>25</sup> George Every, *The High Church Party, 1688-1718* (London: SPCK, 1956).

<sup>26</sup> Robert D. Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic: The Constitution of the Church in High Church Anglican and Non-Juror Thought* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> Frederick Bussby, *Winchester Cathedral 1079-1979* (Southampton: Paul Cave Publication Ltd., 1979), 181.

<sup>28</sup> Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 133.

<sup>29</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 256 ff.

<sup>30</sup> This treatise was originally published in London by W. Downing, 1712. See *Works*, vol. 8, 1-362.



explained the practice and rituals of the Early Church, without engaging himself too much in polemics with his contemporaries. However, this multi-volume work was also the product of its time. While explaining what the Early Church did, Bingham quietly demonstrated that the Anglican Church was faithful to the teaching and practice of Christian antiquity. Thus, through this work Bingham defended the Church of England against criticism from the Dissenters and other non-conforming groups that its practice and rituals, especially those of the sacrament of baptism, were remnants of Roman Catholic novelty. Set against its historical background, the *Origines* emerged as a powerful tool for Bingham to express his support of the doctrine and worship of his church, specifically for the High Church party, as advocated by his Episcopal patron, while all the time adopting a tone of objectivity.

One must read the *Origines* within its historical context in order to understand what Bingham sought to achieve through this work. In his effort, Bingham often approached patristic texts with particular theological result or dogmatic solution in mind. His approach is usually non-polemical and frequently assumes that the particular position he advocated could be framed as a logical conclusion from general statements of the Fathers. This method of argument – the drawing of “good” and necessary conclusions” (*bona consequentiae*) – has affinities with the standard sixteenth- and seventeenth-century approach to Scripture using the *analogy of faith*.<sup>31</sup> Bingham’s patristic scholarship, therefore, was situated in a context of Protestant scholarship and polemic, identifiable as belonging to the patterns of arguments found among the Reformers and the Protestant orthodox: his analysis of historical

documents has affinities with the methods of pre-critical exegesis, particularly the pre-critical technique of eliciting theological *loci* from the text.<sup>32</sup> His results, founded on historical and linguistic erudition, but also on ecclesial and theological interest, belong to a form of Protestant argumentation designed to claim catholicity and orthodoxy, and, at the same time, intended to distance Protestantism both from Rome and from radical and iconoclastic versions of reform. The method followed by Bingham, thus, looks retrospectively toward the older patterns of erudition, toward the late Renaissance and post-Reformation version of *ad fontes* rather than toward the historical-critical patterns heralded by Spinoza and Richard Simon. Bingham's early patristic scholarship and his orthodoxy are illustrated by his role in the Trinitarian debates of the late seventeenth century – his striving to find specific, defensible location for both scholarship and orthodoxy is illustrated by his study and his debate over baptismal practice. In that study and debate, he positioned himself as an Anglican whose Trinitarian orthodoxy framed his views on baptism, and whose views on baptism illustrated the catholicity of his party against its adversaries.

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<sup>31</sup>See the description of this method in Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 515-21.

<sup>32</sup> See Robert Kolb, "Teaching the Text: The Commonplace Method in Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Biblical Commentary," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 49 (1987): 576.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Joseph Bingham

#### I. The Man and His Work

##### 1. Bingham's Education and Early Oxford Career

Joseph Bingham was born in September 1668, at Wakefield in Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup> His father was Francis Bingham, a poor but well-respected person in the town.<sup>2</sup> He received his early education at Wakefield Grammar School under the care of Edward Clarke, who regarded him as an exceptional student.<sup>3</sup> The school proudly listed his name together with its other distinguished pupils who were later admitted to study at the University of Oxford and afterwards held important positions.<sup>4</sup>

On May 26, 1684, Bingham matriculated at the University College, Oxford.<sup>5</sup> The *Book of Registration and Admission* of University College, Oxford records Bingham's matriculation:

May 26. 1684

Serviens.

Ego Josephus Bingham filius natu minimus Francisci Bingham de Wakefeldia in

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Bingham, "The Life of the Rev. Joseph Bingham, M.A.," in *Works*, vol. 1, iii. See also *DNB*, vol. 5, 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, iii. See also, Matthew Henry Peacock, *History of the Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth at Wakefield* (Wakefield: W. H. Milnes, The Radcliffe Printing Works, 1892), 208.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, iii.

<sup>4</sup> This list ranks Bingham in the same level as John Radcliffe, who later became the Royal Physician to William III and then was elected M.P. of Buckingham in 1713, and also John Potter, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1737. See Peacock, *History of Wakefield Grammar School*, 129, 208.

<sup>5</sup> Peacock, *History of Wakefield Grammar School*, 208.

Cornitatu Ebarasensi lubens subscribo.<sup>6</sup>

This method of record keeping, according to John Ayliffe, was uniform throughout the university.<sup>7</sup> All incoming students were also required to take the oath to keep and maintain the privileges, customs, and statutes of the university. This oath included the students' agreement

... to subscribe the 39 Articles, and to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and also an oath to bear true fidelity to the University, in the observance of its statutes, customs and privileges.<sup>8</sup>

Upon entering the University College, Bingham was also required to identify his social status, by way of providing his father's name and his place of birth. For the rest of his time as a student of the university, Bingham would be categorized as belonging to the social class of his father. Commenting on this practice John Pruett says that Oxford officials were very thorough in maintaining records of the social status of each student's father.<sup>9</sup> Ayliffe points out that after the oath-taking process has been completed, the new

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<sup>6</sup> University College, Oxford University Archive, *Registrvm Admissionvm AB Anno 1660*, shelf mark: UC: J1/A/1, page 7. Many thanks to Dr. Robin Darwall-Smith, the archivist of the University College, Oxford, for his helpful assistance in finding archival material related to Bingham's days at the college when I did research at Oxford University, May 25-June 7, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> John Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State of the University of Oxford*, vol. 2 (London: Printed for E. Curll, 1714), 114.

<sup>8</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State of the University of Oxford*, vol. 2, 114.

<sup>9</sup> John H. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Later Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 34.

student, along with his appointed tutor, must give account of the “condition and quality of the person to be matriculated, viz. whether the son of a Nobleman, Knight, Doctor, Esquire, etc.”<sup>10</sup> G. V. Bennett confirms this understanding of the university records.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Bennett indicates that the students who were not directly admitted to the “foundation” would be given the description of servitor, batteler, commoner, gentlemen-commoner, or nobleman.<sup>12</sup> The very bottom of the social scale was the title *pauperes pueri*, given to a student who entered as servitor or batteler.<sup>13</sup>

As a *Serviens* or *Servitor*, Bingham had to work as a servant, most likely to another student in order to earn money for his tuition.<sup>14</sup> Servitors were often humiliated because they had to do the menial work, cleaning staircases, halls and the kitchen in return for food and small wages. Bennett writes that the work of servitors was little better than slavery, and was dreaded by those who were not fortunate enough to have their

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<sup>10</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, vol. 2, 114.

<sup>11</sup> G. V. Bennett, “University, Society, and Church, 1688-1714,” in *The History of the University of Oxford: The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 5, ed. L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 362.

<sup>12</sup> Bennett, “University, Society, and Church, 1688-1714,” 363.

<sup>13</sup> Bennett, “University, Society, and Church, 1688-1714,” 363.

<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Darwall-Smith, archivist of University College, Oxford, for his explanation of the position of Servitors among Oxford University students during the seventeenth century. This explanation agrees with Bennett’s statement. Bennett made a study of the parental status of matriculants at ten colleges of Oxford—namely Balliol, Brasenose, Christ Church, Lincoln, Magdalen, New College, Pembroke, Trinity, University College, and Wedham—of the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century. The parental status of the matriculants was divided into seven strata, of which *pauperes pueri* lies at the very bottom of the strata, followed by plebeians, clerks in holy orders, gentlemen, esquires, knights and

education paid for.<sup>15</sup>

Categorization of students according to their social status was also reflected in the style of their academic gowns. An archival record in the Bodleian Library, dated April 28, 1690, and renewed on June 22, 1696, meticulously describes servitors' and commoners' gowns:

Servitors gowns to have round capes and sleeves hanging behind the shoulders without buttons... The Commoners gowns to be distinguished from the former by having halfe a dozen of buttons on each sleeve... Commoners are permitted to wear round caps made of cloth with heads and tufts, in the same manner as square caps. Battelars and Servitors to wear the same caps as formerly.<sup>16</sup>

The same was also noted by Bennett:

Central to it was the peculiar mystery of academic costume, on the subject of which vice-chancellors orated regularly and with passion and issued numerous directives. . . . The dress regulations of the Laudian statutes, reissued (with additions) by convocation in 1689, decreed in solemn detail the gown appropriate to each degree and undergraduate status and ordered that patterns should be deposited in the registry so that Oxford robe makers should be in no doubt.<sup>17</sup>

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baronets, and finally peers at the top of the strata. See Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 362.

<sup>15</sup> Note the letter of a student by the name of George Fothergill, who wrote to his parents: "I cannot tell well how to give you a notion of what we Servitors do. We are seven of us, and we wait upon the Batchelors, Gentlemen Commoners, and Commoners at meals. We carry in their Commons out of the kitchen into the Hall, and their bread and beer out of the buttery. I call up one Gentlemen Commoner, which is ten shillings a quarter when he's in town, and three Commoners, which are five shillings each, on the same condition. My Servitor's place saves me, I believe, about thirty shillings a quarter in battels, one quarter with another." See Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 375.

<sup>16</sup> Oxford University Archives, Bodleian Library, *Register of Convocation 1683-93*, shelf mark: NEP/SUBTUS/Bb, back part, folio 8; cf. *Register of Convocation 1693-1703*, shelf mark: NEP/SUBTUS/Bc, back part, folio 15.

<sup>17</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 368. See also Oxford University Archives, *Register of Convocation 1693-1703*.

A drawing of David Loggan, the university's engraver who lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century, highlights the social gap between the *pauperes pueri* and those of higher social rank. Picturing the academic community in a procession, Loggan shows the students and officials of Oxford in order of precedence, each person wearing the robes according to his rank or degree. At the front is the lowly servitor, and towards the end is a nobleman, whose place is even above a doctor of divinity and right before the vice-chancellor and bedels. In the drawing the servitor is pictured as wearing a very simple gown, without any decoration, and with only a round-flap collar and a "streamer," or strip of cloth, instead of a sleeve.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the hard life Bingham had to undergo as a student from a low social rank, he was an exceptional student at the university. During his years as an undergraduate at the college, he devoted a great portion of his time studying the writings of the church fathers, familiarizing himself with the doctrines and opinions of the Fathers, and making him fully able both to explain and defend the Fathers' interpretation of the Scriptures.<sup>19</sup> The curriculum of the university supported Bingham's study of the patristic writings, particularly those of Augustine, and prepared him for debate on the meaning of texts. Three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from one to three o'clock in the

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<sup>18</sup> David Loggan, *Oxonia Illustrata* (Oxford, 1675), plate 10, "Habitus academici." See also Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 369.

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, iv. See also *DNB*, vol. 5, 48.

afternoon, students were required to do the “generals,” or disputations on three logical questions. They had to do this throughout all the terms, for three years.<sup>20</sup> This was done in conjunction with four terms of Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic.<sup>21</sup> After completing these requirements, the students had to go through “determinations,” where each student must, in four hours, orally answer three questions given to him by the Dean. The “determinations” were concentrated in the area of Natural Philosophy, in which the student was required to quote verses from the text and explain the meaning of the texts in reply to the question directed to him.<sup>22</sup> After completing the determinations, the student had to have a full term of debates based on passages taken from Augustine, commonly called the “Austin Disputations,” held every Saturday.<sup>23</sup>

Bingham received his Bachelor of Arts degree on June 28, 1689, together with three other students, by way of the usual procedure of final examination. The record of his examination says that it had been conducted in the strictest way possible,<sup>24</sup> covering questions on philosophy and philology, with a focus on the knowledge of Latin.<sup>25</sup> The

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<sup>20</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, 117.

<sup>21</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, 118.

<sup>22</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, 122.

<sup>23</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, 124.

<sup>24</sup> University College, Oxford, *Registrum*, vol. 1, 117, shelf mark: UC: GB3/A1/1. See also appendix 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, vol. 2, 141.



examination was administered by three Masters and recorded in the book kept by the proctor. After the candidate had been examined, the Masters were required to give him a testimonial of the result.<sup>26</sup>

On July 1, 1689, Bingham was elected fellow of the university.<sup>27</sup> This appointment to a position of a fellow in an Oxford college was a very prestigious opportunity for a person like Bingham, who had started his life at Oxford as a servitor. Not many students who started at Oxford as servitors were fortunate enough to be appointed fellows at the university. According to the data presented by Bennett, over two-thirds of servitors and battelers left the University after they received their B.A., and almost all of them became country priests, even though they were only given little training in theology, and virtually none in pastoral care.<sup>28</sup> Taking his sample group from five colleges – Balliol, Brasenose, Pembroke, University College and Wadham – Bennett discovered that out of the 156 appointments to fellowships between 1690 and 1719, 110 were taken from among the scholars, 42 from the commoners, 3 from the servitors, and 1 from another college.<sup>29</sup> Bennett also comments about the difficulty of servitors to get a

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<sup>26</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, 141-42.

<sup>27</sup> *DNB*, vol. 5, 48.

<sup>28</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 376.

<sup>29</sup> Bennett's point in presenting this data is to show that during the period he was studying, it was very uncommon for a college to appoint a fellow from outside one particular college. However, taken from a slightly different angle, Bennett's data also shows that servitors did not usually make it to the point of being appointed a fellow, either. See Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 365.

fellowship:

A very small group of poor boys, by showing exceptional talent, mounted the ladder of academic promotion but the great majority of their kind found that their lot was an undergraduate existence as a servitor or batteler, followed by departure from Oxford for some ill-paid curacy. Scholarships, demys, studentships and fellowships were not for them.<sup>30</sup>

Bingham's appointment to the fellowship at the University was, therefore, based on academic distinction.<sup>31</sup> The Archives in the University College record Bingham's appointment as a fellow<sup>32</sup> with seven other previously appointed fellows nominating and electing him to the position,<sup>33</sup> and not less than fifteen leaders of the University, including the Vice Chancellor, approving his appointment.<sup>34</sup>

After his appointment as fellow, Bingham continued his study toward the M.A. at the same college. This was another significant development in Bingham's academic training, because a person with his social status did not normally get the opportunity to

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<sup>30</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 368.

<sup>31</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, iv.

<sup>32</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>33</sup> Some of the people who recommended Bingham to the position of a fellow are very important persons in the history of Oxford University whose names are listed at the end of Ayliffe's book with the posts that they held. They are: Thomas Bennett, Proctor of Oxford from University College since 1686; Edward Pockocke, Royal Hebrew Professor since 1648; Gilbert Ironside, Vice Chancellor of Oxford in 1687 and 1688; John Hall, Margaret Professor since 1676; William Jane, Professor of Divinity since 1680; and William Levintz, Royal Greek Professor since 1665. See Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present History*, vol. 2, 306-311.

<sup>34</sup> University College, Oxford, *Registrum*, vol. 1, 118, shelf mark: UC: GB3/A1/1.

take up on the further degree. Bennett notices that at the end of the seventeenth century, the large majority of the students who had the opportunity to be in the M.A. program were the sons of gentlemen or the better-off clergy, and more than half were entered as commoners.<sup>35</sup> The curriculum for this program included participation in the elaborate sequence of ceremonies, as well as debates over certain texts from Augustine's work, together with the required two Latin declamations.<sup>36</sup> Ayliffe explains that the general requirement for the degree of Master of Arts was an elaboration of that of the Bachelor's degree, plus the so-called "Quodlibet disputations," sessions of questions and answers in which the Master brought forward three questions of his own choice and the student had to respond extemporaneously. These disputations were done after students had finished the Lent determinations. Moreover, the students had to present six lectures before they could be granted the Master's degree.<sup>37</sup>

Bingham received his Master of Arts degree on June 23, 1691. Soon afterwards he was appointed a tutor of the University.<sup>38</sup> The fact that Bingham was able to stay in Oxford after he received his M.A. degree demonstrates his accomplishments: it shows that he was on his way to a better social status. Ayliffe comments on the difficulty of

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<sup>35</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 371.

<sup>36</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 371.

<sup>37</sup> Ayliffe, *Antient and Present State*, vol. 2, 120.

<sup>38</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, iv. See also *DNB*, vol. 5, 48.

becoming a tutor:

And no one may be a tutor, unless a graduate in some faculty, a person of learning and probity, and also of sound religion, to be comprov'd of by the Head of the House wherein he lives.<sup>39</sup>

The main duty of a tutor was to instruct the students committed to his care in all manners of scholarly instructions, together with the principles of the Christian Religion, the study of the Holy Scripture, and to supervise the daily behavior of the students who were his responsibilities.<sup>40</sup> A tutor usually had a very close relationship with his students.<sup>41</sup> One of the students that Bingham tutored was John Potter,<sup>42</sup> a student from his own home-town,

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<sup>39</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, 115. Bennett notes that "those who remained in Oxford after receiving the degree of M.A. were socially an even more select group." See Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 372.

<sup>40</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, 116. Ayliffe also notes that if one of his students was found guilty of any misbehavior, the tutor would be fined by the university a significant amount of money, 6s. 8d., for the first three charges. If the same student was found guilty for the fourth time, the tutor would be expelled from his office.

<sup>41</sup> A record from the diary of Thomas Brockbank (1671-1709), who was a student of Queen's College, Oxford, from 1687 to 1692 shows that Brockbank as well as his parents had a very high regard for his tutor. His parents often sent some money as a token of their appreciation to the tutor, beyond the agreed amount of payment as a tutor. See the letters dated May 23, 1688; June 21, 1689; and an undated letter sometime between June and August 1690, when Brockbank was sick and the tutor communicated with his parents, etc. Thomas Brockbank, *The Diary and Letter Book of the Rev. Thomas Brockbank 1671-1709*, ed. Richard Trappes-Lomax (Manchester: Printed for the Chetham Society, 1930).

<sup>42</sup> John Potter completed his study at Wakefield Grammar School in 1688. Afterward he entered the University College, Oxford, and received his B.A. in 1692. Potter's most important works are his *Archaeologia Graeca*, a dictionary of Greek antiquity that was considered an important dictionary until the middle of the nineteenth century, and also his *Church Government*. See Peacock, *History of Wakefield Grammar School*, 208. See also *Works*, vol. 1, v.

Wakefield, who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>43</sup>

Four years after Bingham received his Master's degree, a Trinitarian controversy arose at Oxford.<sup>44</sup> The main point of the controversy was about the meaning of *essence* and *substance*.<sup>45</sup> Bingham was called to preach on the Trinity before the learned body of Oxford in his capacity as a Master of Art, on October 28, 1695 in the University Church.<sup>46</sup> His presentation was far from well-received. The ruling members of the University considered his sermon as asserting false doctrine, impious, and heretical.<sup>47</sup> This accusation was soon followed by a public announcement in printed form, identifying

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<sup>43</sup> Peacock, *History of Wakefield Grammar School*, 208. Bennett also observes that John Potter is another example of the very few men who entered Oxford as a servitor but ended up in a very esteemed position. See Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 376.

<sup>44</sup> For more detailed discussions of the Trinitarian controversy during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in England, see, for instance, Roland N. Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954); H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951); Martin Grieg, "The Thought and Polemic of Gilbert Burnet, c. 1673-1704," Ph.D. dissertation (Cambridge, 1991); and also Grieg's "Reasonableness of Christianity? Gilbert Burnet and the Trinitarian Controversy of the 1690s," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44, no. 4 (October 1993): 631-651; D. W. Dockrill, "The Authority of the Fathers in the Great Trinitarian Debates of the Sixteen Nineties," *Studia Patristica* 18, pt. 4 (1989): 335-347, and Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>45</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, v.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony à Wood, in his *Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695*, vol. 3 (Oxford: printed for the Oxford Historical Society, at the Clarendon Press, 1891-1900), 492, records that Bingham preached at St. Peter's in the East. *DNB*, vol. 5, 48, gives a different account, saying that Bingham delivered his sermon at St. Mary's. It is possible that the editor of the dictionary misquoted the account given by Richard Bingham, that Bingham had heard an erroneous statement on the Trinity delivered by another learned person at the pulpit of St. Mary's, and that his sermon was intended as an explanation of what he believed to be the position of the Church Fathers on the meaning of the Persons of the Trinity. See *Works*, vol. 1, v.

<sup>47</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vi.

Bingham's teaching with Arianism, Tritheism, and the heresy of Valentinus Gentilis.<sup>48</sup> Because of this condemnation, Bingham had to resign from his fellowship at Oxford on November 23, 1695.<sup>49</sup> According to many of his contemporaries, Bingham was "sent down to the country because some of his teachings were thought to be dangerous."<sup>50</sup>

Not long afterwards, Dr. John Radcliffe offered Bingham the position of rector of Headbourn-Worthy, about one mile from Winchester.<sup>51</sup> Bingham was thankful for this offer and expressed his gratitude to Radcliffe in the preface to the first volume of his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*.<sup>52</sup> Radcliffe, who was born in 1650, was also a native of Wakefield and received his early education at Wakefield Grammar School. He was later a student of the University College, Oxford.<sup>53</sup> Around the time of Bingham's forced resignation, Radcliffe was one of the most important benefactors of the University of Oxford.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vi; see also *DNB*, vol. 5, 48.

<sup>49</sup> See Richard Bingham's account of the life of his great-grandfather in *Works*, vol. 1, vi, footnote 1.

<sup>50</sup> See Bussby, *Winchester Cathedral*, 181. Bussby also notes that "being sent down to the country" was a serious sentence to a scholar, because outside Oxford and Cambridge very rarely could the person find a library in which to conduct a study.

<sup>51</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vi. See also Peacock, *History*, 207-208.

<sup>52</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lix.

<sup>53</sup> See *DNB*, vol. 5, 129.

<sup>54</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vi.

On May 12, 1696 Bingham was invited to preach a visitation sermon at Winchester Cathedral.<sup>55</sup> He used this opportunity to preach on the doctrine of the Trinity and, in so doing, to vindicate himself from the accusation directed against him at Oxford.<sup>56</sup> In this sermon he connected the theme of the Divinity of the Godhead and the Divinity of Christ.<sup>57</sup> This first invitation to preach at Winchester Cathedral was then followed by another. Bingham preached the second time on September 16, 1697.<sup>58</sup> On this second occasion he delivered his sermon, entitled "Buy the Truth."<sup>59</sup> Again in this sermon he addressed the issue of the doctrine of the Trinity, with a specific focus on refuting the Anti- Trinitarians of his day.<sup>60</sup> This last sermon brought to conclusion all the disagreements he had with the leaders of Oxford University.<sup>61</sup> When he had the sermons printed, Bingham dedicated them to the clergy of the deaneries of Winchester.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Works*, vol. 1., vi

<sup>56</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vii.

<sup>57</sup> This sermon is incorporated in Bingham's *Works*, vol. 9, 359-82.

<sup>58</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vii.

<sup>59</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 383-404.

<sup>60</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 384.

<sup>61</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vii.

<sup>62</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 349-58.

## 2. Bingham's Ministry and Scholarship

As the rector of Headbourn-Worthy, Bingham received a stipend of one hundred pounds a year and a place to live.<sup>63</sup> The stipend was considered a good income for a clergyman according to the standard of that time.<sup>64</sup> The best thing about living at Headbourn-Worthy, however, was the accessibility of Winchester Cathedral's Morley Library. Even though the holdings of this library were not as extensive as the Bodleian Library, Bingham was nevertheless very grateful for them.<sup>65</sup> In his preface to the first volume of his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, he acknowledges his indebtedness to Morley and the library:

The chief assistance I have hitherto had is from the noble benefaction of one, who, "being dead, yet speaketh"; I mean the renowned Bishop Morley, whose memory will for ever remain fresh in the hearts of the learned and the good; who among many other eminent works of charity and generosity ... has also bequeathed a very valuable collection of books to the church of Winchester, for the advancement of

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<sup>63</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vii. An archive kept in the Hampshire Record Office, Diocese of Winchester, records that by the will of Robert Fishwick, the late rector of Headbourn-Worthy, Bingham and four other clergymen in the diocese of Winchester were entitled to a yearly rent of £4 for the place they lived in, for the rest of their lives. The place, called the Rotherly Coppice, was formerly a part of the manor of Easton, and was 28.25 acres in size, and was a good place to live. According to the will of Fishwick, the annual rent from these four clergymen should be used to help the poor who lived in Headbourn-Worthy. See Hampshire Record Office Archives, shelf mark 50 M89/14. See also appendix 5.

<sup>64</sup> A study done by Pruett in the county of Leicestershire between 1670 and 1714 shows that one-fifth of Leicestershire's parishioners received an annual income between £160 and £400; below them came another quarter with between £100 and £160, followed by another quarter with between £60 and £100; the rest were clergymen who received less than £60 annually. See Pruett, *The Parish Clergy*, 96. Pruett's study here shows the fact that Bingham's annual income of £100 places him right in the middle of the curve.

<sup>65</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lix.



learning among the parochial clergy...<sup>66</sup>

Even so, Bingham still felt the need of adding more books to the library. This he expressed in his preface to the first edition of his work where he invited his readers to be more generous and to add new supplies of modern books to the library so that it could be of better service to the public.<sup>67</sup>

The Morley library, established mainly because of the provision given by Bishop Morley,<sup>68</sup> was known to scholars all over Europe.<sup>69</sup> In his letter to the Dean and Chapter of Winchester, dated December 3, 1667, the Bishop clearly stated that it was his will that his books be donated to the library. Morley realized that the clergy in the parishes needed libraries, because once they left Oxford or Cambridge, they could not find a suitable place to study.<sup>70</sup> The letter that the Bishop wrote reads:

I wish you had a Library too, I mean a convenient Receptacle for such books as will probably from tyme to tyme be bestowed upon you. I am sure you are likely to have all or most of mine, and I hope mine and your successors will follow mine and your example. I have already for the honour of your Body acquainted y<sup>e</sup> Howse of L<sup>ds</sup> with what you have heretofore layed out for pious and publick uses,

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<sup>66</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lviii.

<sup>67</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lviii.

<sup>68</sup> George Morley was the Bishop of Winchester from 1662 to 1684. See Bussby, *Winchester Cathedral*, 336.

<sup>69</sup> Bussby, *Winchester Cathedral*, 181.

<sup>70</sup> Bussby, *Winchester Cathedral*, 153.

w<sup>ch</sup> they heard w<sup>th</sup> great approbation...<sup>71</sup>

The Chapter of Winchester executed the wish of Bishop Morley at their meeting on June 26, 1685, when they sent two of the Prebendaries to inspect Morley's books which were then kept at St. Cross. The books were brought to the library of Winchester Cathedral the following month.<sup>72</sup>

In 1702 Bingham was married to Dorothea, the daughter of the Rev. Richard Pococke, at that time rector of Colmere, in Hampshire.<sup>73</sup> From this marriage the couple had ten children, two sons and eight daughters.<sup>74</sup> The modest amount of money that he received as the rector of Headbourn-Worthy, and a fairly large family that he had to support caused Bingham to live very humbly. Purchasing books was a luxury for him. On one occasion Richard Bingham related the story of how his great-grandfather carefully reconstructed his copy of a folio edition of Pearson's *Exposition of the Creed*, which was badly torn. Joseph Bingham restored it by transcribing with his own hand eight whole

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<sup>71</sup> This letter of Bishop Morley, Bishop of Winchester, is incorporated in *Documents Relating to the History of the Cathedral Church of Winchester in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. W. R. W. Stephens and F. T. Madge (London: Simpkin and Co., Limited, and Winchester: Warren and Son, 1897), 141.

<sup>72</sup> Frederick Bussby, *Winchester Cathedral Library* (Winchester: The Dean and Chapter Winchester Cathedral, 1975), 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, viii; cf. *DNB*, vol. 5, 49, which states that Rev. Richard Pococke was rector of Elmer.

<sup>74</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, viii.

pages, even though the price of that volume was only a few shillings.<sup>75</sup>

In 1712 Sir Jonathan Trelawney, at that time Bishop of Winchester,<sup>76</sup> appointed Bingham to the rectory of Havant, a city not far from Portsmouth.<sup>77</sup> The letter of appointment was signed by Bishop Trelawney, Johannes Wukart who was at that time professor of theology and the dean of the Cathedral of Winchester, and Thomas Brathwaite who was a Doctor of Theology of the College of the Blessed Mary, Winchester.<sup>78</sup> The position of rector of Havant, together with the sum of money he received from the sale of his books for a short while gave Bingham some relief from financial worries.<sup>79</sup> However, this financial relief did not last very long. Bingham lost almost all of his savings speculating on the "South Sea Bubble" stock.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, viii.

<sup>76</sup> Sir Jonathan Trelawney was the Bishop of Winchester from 1707 to 1721. See Bussby, *Winchester Cathedral*, 336.

<sup>77</sup> *DNB*, vol. 5, 49, cf. *Works*, vol. 1, xi.

<sup>78</sup> See Archive of Hampshire Record Office, Winchester, shelf mark: 21m65/E4/4/14. See also appendix 6.

<sup>79</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xii.

<sup>80</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xii; see also *DNB*, vol. 5, 49. The so-called "South-Sea Bubble" itself was a name given to a speculation mania that destroyed many British investors in 1720. This hoax grew from the fortunes of the South Sea Company founded by Robert Harley in 1711. The company held the monopoly to trade (mostly slaves) to South America and the Pacific. The company offered to loan money against stock deposited on what was actually an installment plan. A person depositing £100 was entitled to a loan of £250 at 5 percent. This operation was repeated three times, until at last "its efficiency failed." The "Fourth Money Subscription" also failed, and the promise of the director to pay a 50 percent dividend for the next ten years was just "a probable modest yield of people's investment." The price of stock fell rapidly. By mid-September 1720 paper fortunes disappeared overnight, and people who had purchased stock on the installment plan, or who had promised to buy when prices were high, had to deal with their commitments,

Still, this loss in the stock market did not greatly affect Bingham's studies. Only a few months after the publication of the tenth volume of his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, Bingham was ready to prepare materials for the publication of other works.<sup>81</sup> His zeal for study was reflected through his own statement:

... [I] give the world a proof that great and laborious works are not always so frightful as sometimes they are imagined. I have given a little specimen of what the industry of a single person may do, in whom there is neither the greatest capacity nor the strongest constitution.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, in the postscript of the tenth volume of his book he said:

... [a] supplement to my *Origines*, in a book of Miscellaneous rites: which if God should be pleased to give me better health, I should be glad to pursue myself, though I think it now the least part of what is wanting.<sup>83</sup>

Among Bingham's manuscripts are many collections of patristic materials relative to the preparation for this work.<sup>84</sup> Bingham's main intention before he died was to prepare a new edition of his *Origines*, in which he planned to insert many more observations and

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which brought ruin to their financial situation. See Dorothy Marshall, *Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Longmans, 1968), 120-21.

<sup>81</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xii.

<sup>82</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 450.

<sup>83</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 446-47.

<sup>84</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xii. See also Oxford University Archives: MS Eng. th. e. 156, which contains Bingham's plan to revise book 5 of the *Origines*, where he planned to expand his discussion on the "privileges, immunities, & revenues of the clergy in the Primitive Church."

additional notes.<sup>85</sup> His health prevented him from fulfilling this intention. Bingham's physical condition decayed very rapidly a few months before his death.<sup>86</sup> He died on August 17, 1723, at the age of fifty-five. His life, according to Richard Bingham, was a life "spent in honourable and useful pursuit."<sup>87</sup> He was buried in the churchyard of Headbourn-Worthy.<sup>88</sup>

## II. Trinitarian Controversy at Oxford in the Late Seventeenth Century

The Trinitarian controversy at Oxford in the last decade of the seventeenth century is significant for understanding Bingham and his scholarship. For Bingham the initial result of the controversy was ejection from the University; the long term result was his placement as rector in two small parishes where eventually he was able to rehabilitate himself as an orthodox member of the Church of England, a defender of the party interests of his ecclesiastical patrons, and a proponent of traditional, Trinitarian baptism. The controversy started outside of the University circle, when Stephen Nye and Thomas Firmin endeavored to spread the teaching of Socinianism. Stephen Nye was openly

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<sup>85</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xiii.

<sup>86</sup> Richard Bingham comments on the condition of his great-grandfather as follows: "These circumstances combined brought upon him, at comparatively an early period of life, all the symptoms and infirmities of very advanced age." See *Works*, vol. 1, xiv.

<sup>87</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xiv.

<sup>88</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xiv; see also *DNB*, vol. 1, 49.

antitrinitarian.<sup>89</sup> Stromberg reports that Nye's works continually attacked the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>90</sup> In a letter to his friend, Nye affirmed the teaching of Socinus.<sup>91</sup> He believed that Christ was subordinated to God the Father, because Christ was the creature of God, the possession and the servant of God. Only the Father was God.<sup>92</sup> Citing the biblical passages about Christ's life on earth as obeying the will of God the Father and thus subjecting himself to the Divine plan for salvation, Nye concluded that Christ's obedience was proof that he was subordinated to God in his Divinity.<sup>93</sup> What Nye presents in this book was more than just the history of Unitarianism or Socinianism as the title suggests, but, as McLachlan observed, it was an argument to support Socinianism.<sup>94</sup>

Thomas Firmin was a student of John Bidle,<sup>95</sup> who is commonly called the

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<sup>89</sup> See, for instance, Nye's most famous work, but published anonymously: *A Brief History of the Unitarians, also Called Socinians. In Four Letters, Written to a Friend* (n.p., 1687).

<sup>90</sup> Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism*, 36.

<sup>91</sup> There is substantial evidence to believe that the friend whom Nye addressed here was his close acquaintance Thomas Firmin, with whom he had constant communication and whom many believe funded the publications of Nye's works. See, for instance, "Nye, Stephen (1648?-1719)" in *DNB*, vol. 41, 282. See also "Firmin, Thomas (1632-1697)" in *DNB*, vol. 19, 46.

<sup>92</sup> Nye, *A Brief History of Unitarians*, 5.

<sup>93</sup> See for instance, Nye, *A Brief History of Unitarians*, 9, 11, 12, 13, etc.

<sup>94</sup> McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, 294.

<sup>95</sup> John Bidle (or Biddle), 1615-1662, from Gloucestershire, matriculated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, in 1634, received his B.A. on June 23, 1638, and received his M.A. on May 20, 1641. He became tutor in his college for a few years, but then received a call to be the master of the free school in the parish of St. Mary le Crypt, also in Oxford. He later became more and more outspoken in his antitrinitarian view, and was imprisoned several times because of his doctrinal position. See *DNB*, vol. 5, 13-15.

“founder of modern English Unitarianism.”<sup>96</sup> Firmin had an early conviction that the unity of God was both a unity of Person and Nature.<sup>97</sup> Firmin’s later contact with Nye caused him to modify the theological views that he earlier learned from Bidle.<sup>98</sup> Being a successful businessman, Firmin was able to provide Nye funds to print books.<sup>99</sup> The appearance of Nye’s *A Brief History of the Unitarians* marked a major development in the British antitrinitarian movement. Before this, even in Bidle’s lifetime, the term “Unitarianism” was unknown.<sup>100</sup> Nye’s book ushered in the shift from the original teaching of Socinus to Unitarianism. Firmin’s association with Nye brought the movement to a new level, where, as McLachlan comments, the English Socinians — rightly called Unitarians by the last decade of the seventeenth-century — found themselves moving farther and farther from the original teaching of Socinus.<sup>101</sup> Because of the controversy, Dockrill observed, between 1660 and 1690 there were many different views of the doctrine of the Trinity within orthodox ranks, to the point that the doctrine

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<sup>96</sup> Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism*, 35, footnote 2.

<sup>97</sup> McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, 296.

<sup>98</sup> *DNB*, vol. 41, 282; see also McLachlan’s *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, 296. McLachlan notes that Bidle, through his own method of literally interpreting the Scriptures, believed that God possessed a body, not unlike the body of human beings, and therefore God could not be omnipresent.

<sup>99</sup> The editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* never hesitated to mention this fact. Compare, for instance, *DNB*, vol. 41, 282, and *DNB*, vol. 19, 46.

<sup>100</sup> *DNB*, vol. 19, 48.

<sup>101</sup> McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, 297.

"had been seriously eroded" which resulted in acrimonious divisions.<sup>102</sup> At Oxford, the young Bingham found himself in the middle of these divisions. For the rest of his life he rehabilitated himself by way of careful and detail expositions of a patristic orthodoxy for the Anglican Church.

### 1. Arthur Bury's *The Naked Gospel*

The publication of *The Naked Gospel* in 1690, believed to be the work of Arthur Bury,<sup>103</sup> sparked the Trinitarian controversy at Oxford.<sup>104</sup> This small book of only 64 pages was published anonymously without the imprimatur of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford.<sup>105</sup> Though published anonymously, the work pointed to Bury as its author.<sup>106</sup> The

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<sup>102</sup> Dockrill, "The Authority of the Fathers in the Great Trinitarian Debates of the Sixteen Nineties," 335.

<sup>103</sup> Arthur Bury was a student of Exeter College and received his B.A. in 1642. In 1643 he was elected Patreian fellow of the college, and in 1645 he was appointed full fellow. In 1666 he was appointed rector of Exeter. Five years later he received his D.D. See *DNB*, vol. 8, 20-21.

<sup>104</sup> Arthur Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, 1690. The title page of this work merely says: "By a true Son of the Church of England. Printed in the year 1690." This book was not carefully and professionally printed as was normally done for regular publication. The title page is very plain and cheaply done, the collation and page numbering are irregular, and no printer's name is mentioned either on the title page or colophon. There are neither decorative ornaments nor woodcut initials that usually mark the care and elegance of carefully printed works of the time.

<sup>105</sup> Anthony Wood, the Antiquarian of the University of Oxford, has an entry in his diary, noting that around the end of March or early April of 1690 Bury published his *Naked Gospel*, and he persuaded young Mr. Lichfield to print the book, even without the license from the Vice-Chancellor, arguing that since Bury himself was a pro-vice chancellor, he had liberty to license the book. See Anthony Wood, *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, described by Himself*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), vol. 3, 329.

<sup>106</sup> *DNB*, vol. 8, 22.



problem with Bury's book, as Bennett observed, was that it was an attack on both the traditional doctrine of the Trinity and on Oxford University.<sup>107</sup> Bury's basic idea was that the decline of Christianity during his time was caused by those who perverted the Gospel through logic, metaphysics and other Scholastic arts, all of which he called Natural Religion. He criticized Modern Theology as having gotten "a vast army of new doctrines of faith; and the Gospel is become a science of all others most perplexed."<sup>108</sup> Bury stated that what he planned in this book was:

... to compare the Primitive Gospel with the Modern, not by Retail in Particular Doctrines, (which were a work to great for the Longest and Busiest Life), but by the Great, in General, whence the Particulars proceeded: For if it appear that our Lord's and his Apostles teaching were both for Matter and Manner, apt to Prevail; but what hath since been added, be apt only to perplex or worse; then ought we to impute the decay of Christian Religion, not to any defect of God's Providence, because it doth not change the Nature of things, but to those who have perverted the Gospel.<sup>109</sup>

Bury thought that those who perverted the Gospel are "those who so require implicit faith in any other authority, as to contradict reason [and they] give God, the lie by making him contradict himself."<sup>110</sup> In Natural Religion, faith is a duty, "a cardinal virtue,

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<sup>107</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 394.

<sup>108</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, G2 r.

<sup>109</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, A3 v (wrongly collated; should be A2 v).

<sup>110</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, D1 r.

justice toward God, to whom it payeth what is due.”<sup>111</sup> Moreover, he also accused the clerics of the Church of England of preaching neither Jesus Christ nor faith in Christ, but only morality.<sup>112</sup> In this little book Bury presented his idea of true faith, the one he called “The Naked Gospel.”<sup>113</sup>

Bury criticized the traditional formula of the doctrine of the person of Christ. This doctrine was “impertinent to our Lord’s design, fruitless to the contemplators own purpose [and] dangerous.”<sup>114</sup> In his view the first four Ecumenical Councils did not bring anybody to salvation. He was convinced that “the poor, i.e. the greatest and (perhaps the) best part of the world may be saved without it [the knowledge of the councils].”<sup>115</sup> He accused those who held to the decree of Nicea of elevating the decree to the level of Scripture.<sup>116</sup> He believed that doctrinal description of the person and nature of Christ did not bring salvation, because:

It is to the Gospel, and to the Gospel alone, that this Saving and Damning Power is given by our Saviour; and therefore whoever ascribeth it to any other doctrine, however true, yea, however revealed, maketh himself equal to Christ in Authority,

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<sup>111</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, B3 r.

<sup>112</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, G3 r.

<sup>113</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, G3 r.

<sup>114</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E3 r.

<sup>115</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E2 v.

<sup>116</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E3 r

and Superior in faithfulness; Equal in Power, by granting or denying salvation...<sup>117</sup>

Bury concentrated his arguments on the excellence and loftiness of the person of Christ, as, Bury believed, the Bible presented him. Even when the Old Testament talks about Abraham's faith, the Scriptural lesson leads people to believe in Christ who is the same God of Abraham, because Christ claims that if "ye believe in God, [ye] believe also in me."<sup>118</sup> Several times Bury repeats the importance of seeing the greatness and excellence of Christ with the emphasis on Christ's divine nature, while neglecting his humanity.<sup>119</sup> Bury also used the metaphor of light for Christ, but in the use of the metaphor he tended to blur the distinction between Christ and God the Father. The following is an example:

For as we therefore believe in the Light, because the same brightness which dazleth our eyes if we fix them directly upon its fountain, plainly sheweth us every thing that it shineth on; so our Lord, whose Divinity maketh the Dignity of his Person unintelligible, is for that very reason to be believed in with our utmost confidence. And thus himself expreseth.<sup>120</sup>

For Bury the titles given to Jesus in the New Testament pointed to God himself,

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<sup>117</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, F1 v.

<sup>118</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E2 r.

<sup>119</sup> See, for instance, Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E1 v - E2 r, where Bury lists the excellence of Christ and the biblical names and attributes given to Christ.

<sup>120</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E2 r.

and they all showed the most excellent and most eminent titles one can think of.<sup>121</sup> The coming of Jesus into the world was to fulfill a great expectation for somebody who excelled Moses in miracles, Joshua in victories, Solomon in wisdom, all prophets in knowledge, and kings in power.<sup>122</sup> Bury consistently called Christ “our Lord,” affirming his role as the Mediator for the world’s salvation.<sup>123</sup> Jesus is the Mediator because

... every man needed a *Mediator* between a holy God and himself, every man’s own guilty conscience convinced him that *the Son of God came into the world* to perform that necessary office, promoting pardon and everlasting life to those that would believe in him as such . . .<sup>124</sup>

Considering the limited ability of human beings to explain the Trinity, Bury insisted that one could not use human nature to explain God. Human nature is finite while divine nature is infinite. For example, “three persons among us are three men, because they agree in one common nature; but the Divine nature is not a common one, but a singular, and therefore three persons do not make three Gods.”<sup>125</sup> We also have difficulty understanding Christ’s two natures. If one cannot understand the mystery of the three persons of the Trinity in one divine nature, then one will find it equally hard to

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<sup>121</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E1 v.

<sup>122</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E1 v.

<sup>123</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, F2 v ff.

<sup>124</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, H1 v, emphasis his.

<sup>125</sup> Bury, *Naked Gospel*, E1 v.

understand Christ's two natures, human and divine. Two possible solutions have been presented in the history of Christianity, namely Nestorianism and Euthycianism, and both failed.<sup>126</sup> In conclusion Bury could only call his readers to remain in love with one another, and to help each other in faith. He emphasized that those in "the household of faith" were "all which confess the Lord Jesus, and believe that God hath raised him from the dead."<sup>127</sup>

Oxford reacted very strongly against Bury's book, calling it heretical.<sup>128</sup> The University published a printed proclamation on August 19, 1690 against the treatise without specifying Bury's errors.<sup>129</sup> The title page of the proclamation merely accuses this book as:

Contra Propositiones quasdam impias, & haereticas, exscriptas & citatas ex Libello quodam infami haud ita pridem intra dictam Academiam perfide Typis mandato, ac divulgato, Cui Titulus est, *The Naked Gospel*. Quae praecipua Fidei nostrae Mysteria in Ecclesia Catholica, ac speciatim Anglicana, semper retenta & conservata, impugnant ac labefactant.<sup>130</sup>

The text of the proclamation repeated what the title page said. In addition, it also

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<sup>126</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E1 v.

<sup>127</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, H4 v.

<sup>128</sup> See *DNB*, vol. 8, 22. See also Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 395.

<sup>129</sup> Oxford University Archive records, shelf mark: WP γ 28/8, folios 28r-32v.

<sup>130</sup> Oxford University, *Judicium & Decretum Universitatis Oxoniensis. Latum in Convocatione habita* (Oxonii: Theatro Sheldoniano, 1690), A1 r.

condemned the book for contradicting both the decree of the Nicene Council and the teaching of Athanasius with regard to the person of Christ.<sup>131</sup> The University then commanded that the book be burned. The end of the printed proclamation contained citations from Bury's book. These citations were not so much heretical statements concerning the doctrine of Christ or the Trinity, as statements attacking some of his opponents in the University.<sup>132</sup> In one citation Bury was misrepresented and his statement taken out of context: his sentence was excerpted and then finished by the University.<sup>133</sup> In its summation, the proclamation charged Bury with not committing himself to the Trinitarian doctrine of the orthodox Christianity: God the Trinity who is "*unum esse vivum & verum Deum, atque in unitate hujus nature tres esse personas ejusdem essentiae potentiae ac aeternitatis, Patrem, Filium, ac Spiritus Sanctum.*"<sup>134</sup>

Arthur Bury was suspended and excommunicated from his post as rector of Exeter College.<sup>135</sup> Still, the University never adequately explained its problem with Bury's work. While Bury had a non-traditional view of the Council of Nicea, and he charged his

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<sup>131</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, A2 v.

<sup>132</sup> *Judicium & Decretum*, B1 v.

<sup>133</sup> Compare Bury's statement, "There is danger of Blasphemy, for tho' the question appear silly upon the two accounts now mentioned, yet is the decision formidable, because of the concern which our Lord's person hath in it," in Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E2 v., with this statement: "There is danger of blasphemy in examining the silly question (as he calls it) concerning the Godhead of Christ," in *Judicium & Decretum*, B1 v.

<sup>134</sup> *Judicium & Decretum*, B1 v.

contemporaries with having elevated the decree of the Nicene council so that it was equal to the Scriptures, he did not advocate Socinian teaching. Rather, against the belief of Socinianism that Christ was not the Son of God who came to the world to save fallen humanity,<sup>136</sup> Bury believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who was appointed Mediator to save sinful humanity.<sup>137</sup> Socinianism dismissed the doctrine of atonement through the sacrifice of Christ's blood on the cross, and emphasized morality: Bury did not.<sup>138</sup>

The identification of Bury as a Socinian was at best a very broad generalization,<sup>139</sup> given Stromberg's comment that "the word Socinian came to be loosely used to mean an excessive rationalizer, generally."<sup>140</sup> This accusation also illustrates how chaotic the theological situation at Oxford was at the time of the Trinitarian controversy. In Stromberg's words, in the last decade of the seventeenth century the doctrine of the

<sup>135</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 345.

<sup>136</sup> See, for instance, Stromberg's description of Socinianism in his *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England*, 38, note 1.

<sup>137</sup> See Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, H1 v.

<sup>138</sup> Note Stromberg's quotation from Sherlock's criticism of the Socinian position that "a good life is of absolute necessity to salvation, but a right belief in those points that have always been controverted . . . is in no degree necessary." See Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism*, 38.

<sup>139</sup> It is surprising to see that every time Arthur Bury's name is mentioned in the secondary literature, he is almost always called a Socinian. See, for instance, Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism*, 40, and *DNB* vol. 8, 22, which notes that "a charge of Socinianism was brought against him [Bury] by his enemies."

<sup>140</sup> Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism*, 41.

Trinity “was to become the most perplexing problem of all that plagued the Church in this era of rationalism.”<sup>141</sup>

There might have been another reason beyond doctrinal disagreement that caused the University to depose Bury. Around the time of the controversy, Bury had personal problems with the University. As the rector of Exeter College, in 1689 Bury expelled a fellow by the name of James Colmer on a charge of fornication.<sup>142</sup> The University did not see Bury’s act as acceptable and several of the men from the University thought that this discharge was injurious, or at least too severe.<sup>143</sup> Bury wrote a letter on February 16, 1690 defending himself for the decision.<sup>144</sup> On March 21, 1690, Edward, the chancellor to the Bishop of Oxford and commissary to the Archbishop visited Exeter to discuss the matter with Bury, but there was no apparent result from this visitation.<sup>145</sup> Finally on July 24, 1690 Jonathan Trelawney, the Bishop of Exeter, decided to visit Exeter College to take care of the matter. Bury did not welcome him, rather he locked the front gate of the college.<sup>146</sup> This rude behavior resulted in Bury’s suspension from the rectory of Exeter.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism*, 36.

<sup>142</sup> Bennett, “University, Society, and Church,” 395. See also *DNB*, vol. 8, 22.

<sup>143</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 325.

<sup>144</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 325.

<sup>145</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 328.

<sup>146</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 338.



Bury's unacceptable behavior as a leader of the College might have caused tensions between the University and himself. It could have been that when *The Naked Gospel* was published some men from the University looked at the work as a suitable vehicle to excommunicate Bury from the Church. On August 5, 1690 sixty Masters of Arts of Oxford sent a petition to the vice-chancellor that Bury's *The Naked Gospel* be condemned and Bury be expelled for this book and other misdemeanors.<sup>148</sup> According to Wood "they endeavoured to pull him downe as far as they could."<sup>149</sup> This petition was delivered to the vice-chancellor just before the convocation on August 15, 1690.<sup>150</sup> The final decision of the vice-chancellor was then proclaimed on August 19, 1690 in which Bury's book was charged as heretical and copies of the book were to be burned at the school's quadrangle.<sup>151</sup>

The case of Bury's book did not stop with the burning on August 19. The petition from the Masters of Arts of the University was considered an anomaly. This irregular

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<sup>147</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 334; cf. Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 396, who notes that Bury was not just deposed but also excommunicated for "heresy, taking of bribes, and grievous incontinency."

<sup>148</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 337.

<sup>149</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 337.

<sup>150</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 338.

<sup>151</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 338; see also *Judicium & Decretum*.

procedure was criticized by Jonathan Edwards,<sup>152</sup> the vice-chancellor, in his reappointment speech on October 6, 1690. Wood recorded that Edwards' speech "reflected much on 'The Naked Gospell' and blamed the Masters much for taking the way of petitioning to have it censured by the Convocation."<sup>153</sup> As Bennett observes, Bury's work continued to provoke much bitter polemic and acrimonious writing from radicals and anticlericals.<sup>154</sup>

## **2. Further Controversy at Oxford: William Sherlock's Trinitarianism and Robert South's Reply**

By the time Bingham preached his sermon on the Trinity there had been major Trinitarian debate not only between the Anglicans and the anti-trinitarians, but also between two influential theologians, both of whom claimed to represent orthodoxy: Robert South, dean of Christ Church, and William Sherlock. As we will see later in this chapter, Oxford's strong reaction against Bingham's sermon was mainly caused by similarity between his definition of a "person" and that of Sherlock, and by his seeming advocacy of Sherlock's views, perceived as heretical by the University.

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<sup>152</sup> Jonathan Edwards was the vice-chancellor of Oxford for two consecutive years: 1689 and 1690. See Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, vol. 2, 289-90.

<sup>153</sup> Wood, *The Life and Times*, vol. 3, 341.

<sup>154</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 398.

William Sherlock (1641?-1707),<sup>155</sup> the dean of St. Paul's, London, and Master of the Temple was a man of literary power.<sup>156</sup> He wrote his *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity*<sup>157</sup> to defend the doctrine against the anti-trinitarian views of Nye and Firmin. His aim was to "vindicate the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation from those pretended absurdities and contradictions . . . [in] a very easie and intelligible notion of a Trinity in Unity."<sup>158</sup> He hoped that by explaining the doctrine intelligibly, the charge of contradictions would vanish.<sup>159</sup> Sherlock believed that the heart of Christianity was the mystery of God's love in giving his only begotten Son for the redemption of mankind.<sup>160</sup> His refutation of the anti-trinitarians focused on the Divinity of Christ, the Son of God. If the anti-trinitarians were correct, it would then be the case that:

God did not give us any Son he had before, but made an excellent Man, whom he

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<sup>155</sup> Sherlock was born in Southwark around 1641, studied at Cambridge, received his B.A. in 1660, and earned his M.A. in 1663. He was collated to the rectory of St. George's, Lower Thames Street, London in 1669. In 1680 Sherlock received his Doctor of Divinity degree. He was appointed the prebend of St. Pancras in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1681. See *DNB*, vol. 52, 95.

<sup>156</sup> Sherlock published no fewer than 43 individual works, several of which enjoyed multiple reprints, between the year 1674 and his death in 1707, not to mention his numerous sermons, which saw their fourth reprint in a two-volume octavo in 1755. See *DNB*, vol. 52, 96-97. See also Donald Wing, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries 1641-1700*, vol. 3 (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1988), 359-62.

<sup>157</sup> William Sherlock, *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God* (London: W. Rogers, 1690).

<sup>158</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, A2 r.

<sup>159</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, A2 r.

<sup>160</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, Hh3 v.

was pleased to call his only begotten Son, (though he might have made as many such only begotten Sons as he pleased) and him he gave for us; that is, made a Man on purpose to be our Saviour.<sup>161</sup>

But, such doctrine is absurd. Sherlock thus attacked the central belief of the anti-trinitarians that Jesus was just a man, created by God and given the honorary title of the Son of God. He generally labeled his opponents Socinian, even though what he criticized was the position of later anti-trinitarianism.

The problem with the anti-trinitarians, as Sherlock recognized, was their emphasis on the use of reason in their effort to understand the Scripture and by the use of reason they found it hard to explain the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>162</sup> His opponents think that the doctrine of the Trinity is contrary to reason, since they think that a Trinity of persons implies three distinct substances and therefore three divine beings rather than the one God of the Bible. The anti-trinitarians concluded that the church worshipped three gods.<sup>163</sup> To this attack on the doctrine of the Trinity Sherlock answers that even natural reason told us that there was and could be but one Supreme God, and believing in this one God while at the same time trying to say that the Scripture teaches the existence of three gods was a contradiction. But Scripture does not teach us so. Since Scripture teaches us that there is

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<sup>161</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, Hh3 v.

<sup>162</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, A2 v.

<sup>163</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, V2 f.

but one God, and that there are three who are this one God, this is not a contradiction to the natural belief in one God.<sup>164</sup> Following the Athanasian Creed, Sherlock explains that what the Scripture means by the threeness of the Trinity is three divine persons and not three gods as the anti-trinitarians think:

Reason tells us, that three Gods cannot be one God, but does Reason tell us, that Three Divine Persons cannot be One God? If my Reason be like other mens, I am sure, my Reason says nothing at all about it, . . . and therefore when the Scripture assures us, that there is but One God as Natural Reason teaches us, and that this One God is three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, this contradicts nothing which Reason teaches. . .<sup>165</sup>

Sherlock explains that in the case of finite, created spirit, numerical oneness is found in the spirit's unity with itself, a distinct and separate subsistence from other created spirits. This self-unity of the spirit is none other than self-consciousness, in which the spirit is conscious of its own thoughts, reasoning, and passions, and this makes the finite spirit numerically one.<sup>166</sup> There are three of these spirits, so united as to be conscious of each other's thoughts and passions as they are of their own. The three such persons are numerically one, since they are as much one with each other as every spirit is one with itself.<sup>167</sup> The unity of God is not unity of body, but of an infinite mind, and the

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<sup>164</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, V2 r.

<sup>165</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, V2 v.

<sup>166</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, G4 v.

<sup>167</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H1 r.

oneness of the infinite mind in God lies on the self-consciousness of the three persons. This self-consciousness, even though present everywhere, is still intimate with itself, and thus, for the very same reason, the three divine persons, who are as intimate to each other and as mutually conscious to each other, as any one person can be to itself, are truly and numerically one.<sup>168</sup>

This understanding of self-consciousness of the divine persons is Sherlock's own new approach to what the church fathers called the *perichoresis* or the circumincession. Sherlock does not like the church fathers' use of the term *perichoresis*. He thinks that the term *perichoresis* or circumincession might cause confusion to many people, as if the divine substance is material just like human bodies so that they can touch physically in every point.<sup>169</sup> For him, circumincession means that the unity of the divine mind or Spirit reaches as far as its self-consciousness does, because the Spirit knows and feels itself, and therefore the three persons who are so intimately related to each other are numerically one.<sup>170</sup>

In this case, however, Sherlock departs from the view of the church fathers. The fathers did not understand *perichoresis* as a matter of personal self-consciousness. As a

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<sup>168</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H1 r.

<sup>169</sup> See Sherlock, *Vindication*, H1 v. Whether Sherlock's dislike of the term *perichoresis* is what Bennett thinks as the reason that Sherlock's contemporaries did not like his definition of a person, as I have mentioned above, is still an open question.

<sup>170</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H1 v.

matter of fact, as Kelly remarks, *perichoresis* for the fathers meant co-inherence, where the hypostasis of the Son is the form or presentation by which the Father is known, and the Father's hypostasis is recognized in the form of the Son.<sup>171</sup> Following Basil, Kelly further explains that the one Godhead exists in three hypostases, so that everything that the Father is, is seen in the Son. At the same time, everything that belongs to the Son also belongs to the Father. The Son entirely abides in the Father, and also possesses the Father entirely in himself.<sup>172</sup>

Sherlock takes Augustine's concept of the three persons of the Trinity as the distinction between memory, understanding and will to mean the same as his concept of Trinity as self-consciousness.<sup>173</sup> In this case, too, he misreads what Augustine meant. When Augustine used memory, understanding, and will, he tried to explain that each of these revealed three real elements which were coordinate, and therefore equal, and essentially one. Each of them showed the mutual relations among the three persons of the Trinity.<sup>174</sup> Augustine did not use the analogy of memory, understanding, and will to show that the three divine Persons are three self-consciousnesses, the way Sherlock explains his doctrine of the Trinity. For this reason alone one can see why Oxford University, as represented by Robert South, reacted so strongly to Sherlock.

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<sup>171</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 264.

<sup>172</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 264. See also Basil, *Epistles*, 38, 8.

<sup>173</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H1 v.

In Sherlock's view the three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three infinite Minds, distinct from each other.<sup>175</sup> But he also realizes that even though the three persons are three distinct minds, the unity of the Godhead must be given equal emphasis. Sherlock takes the Scriptural passages that talk about the statements of Jesus that he and the Father are one, such as John 10:30, 38; 1 John 1, etc as his basis.<sup>176</sup> He then explains that the intimate union between the Son and the Father (or an "in-being") is the essential union of pure and infinite minds. He interprets this intimate union as a mutual consciousness and an "inward sensation of each other, to know and to feel each other, as they know and feel themselves."<sup>177</sup> As for the unity between the Father and the Holy Spirit, Sherlock takes the passage from 1 Corinthians 2:10 to mean that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who knows God the Father so intimately inspired, the prophets and the apostles to reveal God and His will.<sup>178</sup> Then, taking the statement from John 16: 13-15, he explains the most intimate relationships between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

... how intimately the Holy Spirit is acquainted with all the secrets both of Father and Son, whatever things the Father knows, that the Son knows, and what the Son knows, that the Holy Spirit knows; that is, whatever the Father knows, which is first said to be the Father's, then the Son's, and then the Holy Spirit's, according to the order of the Persons in the adorable Trinity.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 278. See also Augustine, *De Trinitate*, book 14, chap. 11.

<sup>175</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H2 r.

<sup>176</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H2 r.

<sup>177</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H2 v.

<sup>178</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H3 v.

<sup>179</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H3 v.



For Sherlock, the aspect of the self-consciousness of each person in the Trinity is at the same time the uniting principle of the oneness of the Godhead, since each person knows each other perfectly. The knowledge that the three Persons share together unites all three of them. The three Persons are united in knowledge, will and love, not in the same way three human beings — such as Peter, James and John — are united with each other by an external likeness, conformity, agreement or consent, in knowledge, will and affection, but the three Divine Persons are so united to each other, as every human person to himself or herself, and not as one person to another.<sup>180</sup> Here, even though Sherlock talks about the unity of the Godhead, he seems to argue only a generic unity, and not numerical unity of essence. His idea of self-consciousness of the three Persons only goes as far as explaining the three Persons as knowing each other fully. Based on this statement, one cannot see that Sherlock sees the oneness of the Trinity as the oneness of substance.

Sherlock's view elicited a very strong reaction from Oxford University, especially through the writings of Robert South (1634-1716) the Canon of Christ Church, Oxford.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H4 r.

<sup>181</sup> Robert South was born at Hackney on September 4, 1634. He was admitted to Westminster School as a king's scholar when he was thirteen years old, and then he matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1651. He received his B.A. from Oxford in 1655 and his M.A. in 1657. He then traveled to the continent, and in 1658 he received Episcopal ordination. Upon coming back to England, he was incorporated M.A. at Cambridge in 1659. Subsequently he was chosen as orator of Cambridge in 1660, and

South launched his attacks against Sherlock anonymously, about three years after Sherlock published his *Vindication*, in a work entitled *Animadversions upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*.<sup>182</sup> In the preface of this *Animadversions* South directly attacks Sherlock's presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity. According to South, Sherlock's doctrine implies the existence of three gods and therefore heretical.<sup>183</sup> South's problem with Sherlock's presentation is that Sherlock does not follow the tradition of the church, but tries to formulate his own definition of the persons as three distinct infinite Minds or Spirits.<sup>184</sup> Commenting on the debate between South and Sherlock, Edmund Fortman states that South's objection to Sherlock was mainly his "new notion" and that if God was only Infinite Mind, he was not a substance but he was nothing.<sup>185</sup>

The way South presented his objection to Sherlock was very unfriendly:

I find creeping under his feet with the title of Very Reverend, while they are charging him with such qualities and humours, as none can be, justly, chargeable

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elected prebendary of Westminster in 1663. On October 1, 1663 he was created B.D. and D.D. From there he was installed canon of Christ Church on December 29, 1670. See *DNB*, vol. 53, 275-76.

<sup>182</sup> The complete title of this anonymous work is *Animadversions upon Dr. Sherlock's Book, Entitled A Vindication of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity, &c.* (printed in London for Randal Taylor, 1693). The author of this work identifies himself only as "A Divine of the Church of England." It has been commonly agreed, however, that Robert South is the author. See *DNB*, vol. 53, 276.

<sup>183</sup> South, *Animadversions*, A2 v.

<sup>184</sup> South, *Animadversions*, A2 v.

<sup>185</sup> Edmund Fortman, *A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 245. Fortman, however, was inaccurate in saying that Sherlock's doctrine was condemned by the Heads of Colleges in Oxford, since Sherlock was not related to the University at all, and the University never condemned Sherlock for his view. As we can see in this dissertation, it was Bingham who was condemned, because there was a similarity between Bingham's position and that of Sherlock.

with, and deserve reverence, too. For my own part, I frankly own, that I neither reverence nor fear him; that is, I reverence none, who gives whole communities and churches such words, . . . I can hardly believe my eyes while I read such a pettit novellist charging the whole church as fools and hereticks for not subscribing to a silly, heretical notion solely of his own invention. Does he, (I would fain know) in this speak his judgement, or his breeding? Was it the school, or the University, or gravel-line, that taught him this language?<sup>186</sup>

South looked at Sherlock as an unworthy opponent. Over and over he made it clear that he did not respect any statement of the doctrine that did not follow the traditional formulation.<sup>187</sup> For South, the doctrine of the Trinity must be presented only in traditional terms: "three distinct Persons, all united in one and the same numerical Divine Nature," a definition which he considers "wonderfully plain, easie and obvious to be known."<sup>188</sup> South's attack on Sherlock here is, perhaps, an echo of Oxford's reaction to Bury's non-traditional approach.

South took Sherlock's effort to explain the distinctiveness of each person of the Trinity as self-consciousness and the unity of the three divine persons as mutual consciousness which he considered "plain and intelligible"<sup>189</sup> as an oversimplification of

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<sup>186</sup> South, *Animadversions*, A3 r.

<sup>187</sup> In a similar tone he says that had Sherlock lived in the time of the early church, his neglect of the use of the standard terminology for God, such as essence, nature, substance, person, hypostasis, subsistence, etc., would have resulted in a condemnation by the Councils. South equalizes Sherlock with Arius, Urcasius, and Valens, people whom he calls "furious disturbers of the church." See South, *Animadversions*, A4 r.

<sup>188</sup> South, *Animadversions*, D1 r.

<sup>189</sup> Sherlock, *Vindication*, H4 v.

the doctrine. He considered the doctrine a great mystery and he seemed to want to make it stay a mystery. He opened his *Animadversion* with a long discussion on the meaning of the word “mystery” and how the Trinity was so mysterious that no one could easily say that the doctrine was plain and intelligible.<sup>190</sup> South criticized Sherlock for having taken the doctrine too lightly:

So that by this time we see here all things relating to the Trinity, made *plain, easie, and intelligible*; and that since this man has shewed his skill upon it, all knots and difficulties are wholly cleared off; so that now none are to be found, though a man should beat his brains as much to find them, as Divines did heretofore to solve them.<sup>191</sup>

South's reluctance to accept Sherlock's doctrinal formulation reflected the way Oxford University preserved tradition, and illustrated Oxford's claims to excellence in patristic learning.<sup>192</sup> Still, in his polemic against Sherlock he kept his name hidden: as with the publication of his *Animadversion* he published the translation of Benedictus Aretius' *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis* anonymously in 1696.<sup>193</sup> As the title page indicated, the translation was intended as an attack on Sherlock's doctrine of the Trinity as three

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<sup>190</sup> South, *Animadversions*, chap. 1, *passim*.

<sup>191</sup> South, *Animadversions*, D2 r, *emphasis South's*.

<sup>192</sup> Bennett, “University, Society, and Church,” 396.

<sup>193</sup> The complete title of this book is *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis the Tritheist, Tried, Condemned, and Put to Death by the Protestant Reformed City and Church of Bern in Switzerland, for Asserting the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity, to be [Three Distinct, Eternal Spirit, &c]. Wrote in Latin, by Benedictus Aretius, a Divine of That Church; and Now Translated into English for the Use of Dr. Sherlock* (London: E. Whitlock, 1696).

distinct eternal Spirits. In his dedicatory epistle to the Archbishops of the Church of England, South indicated that he charged Sherlock as a heretic because Sherlock divided the unity of the Godhead, a heresy that he thought much more serious than Sabellianism and Arianism.<sup>194</sup>

South dedicated his translation of Aretius to the Archbishops of the Church of England to persuade them to react quickly and to condemn Sherlock openly as a heretic. He was distressed by Sherlock's popularity as an author and teacher – and perturbed by rumors that Sherlock was soon to be made bishop.<sup>195</sup> In a very urgent, pressing tone, he pleaded:

Hitherto I am sure there has been a profound silence in this matter; and I heartily wish, the enemies of our religion may not pass that nicking reflexion upon it, . . . For in good earnest it is very hard that heresy should over-run a Church, only because we must not call it heresie.<sup>196</sup>

South thought that he needed to go to a higher authority in his effort to censure the teaching of Sherlock and his followers. In his dedication he indicated that Oxford had done what was necessary to prevent the teaching of Sherlock from spreading, and to reject

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<sup>194</sup> For South, Socinianism and Sabellianism were not as problematic as Sherlock's teaching because the two heresies still maintained the unity of the Godhead. The teaching of Sherlock is worse than that of Arius since, even though Arianism denied the essential Deity of the Son, this heresy, too, still preserved the unity of the Godhead. See South, *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis*, A5 v (wrongly collated as B5 v).

<sup>195</sup> South, *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis*, A4 v (wrongly collated as B4 v), and A5 recto (wrongly collated as B5 r).

<sup>196</sup> South, *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis*, A6 r (wrongly collated as B6 r).

this teaching,<sup>197</sup> but then, should there be any defect with the censure from the University, South hoped that the Archbishops would supply the defect and prevent Sherlock's future advancement.<sup>198</sup> South's intention in translating the history of Valentinus Gentilis was not to show the parallel between Sherlock's view and that of Gentilis, but to show that just as much as Gentilis had been condemned as a heretic during the Reformation era, Sherlock and his followers must also endure the same condemnation.<sup>199</sup>

### III. Bingham's Sermon on the Trinity and Its Aftermath

#### 1. Bingham's Sermon

At the same time that the tension between South and Sherlock was reaching its height, Bingham who was a fellow of University College, accepted his turn to preach before the learned body of the university. On October 1695, on the Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude,<sup>200</sup> he preached at St. Peter-in-the-East<sup>201</sup> a sermon on the Trinity. The reason he

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<sup>197</sup> South, *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis*, A7 v.

<sup>198</sup> South, *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis*, A8 r.

<sup>199</sup> South, *A Short History of Valentinus Gentilis*, B1 v.

<sup>200</sup> It was an established custom since the sixteenth century that a fellow from University College was selected to preach at St. Peter-in-the-East on the morning of the feast of these two saints. A stipend was secured by Simon Perrot, sometime fellow of Magdalen College, to be taken from the profit of his land in Oxfordshire and to be used for this purpose. See Ayliffe, *Antient and Present State*, vol. 1, 257.

<sup>201</sup> The church was built in the twelfth century, and is still extant today, even though it is no longer used as a place for worship. Today the building serves as the library building of St. Edmund Hall. See Geoffrey Tyack, *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11, 328.

chose to preach on this doctrine was that he had seen the doctrine presented in erroneous statements from people whose learning was inferior to his, but who held more elevated positions.<sup>202</sup> Bingham did not specify who these people were. At first glance, one might think that Bingham had in mind anti-trinitarians such as Firmin and Nye. Firmin never received a university education,<sup>203</sup> and Nye only held a B.A from Cambridge.<sup>204</sup> As a fellow of the University College with an M.A. degree, Bingham may have been inclined to preach against the anti-trinitarians and to present to the University what he believed to be the right understanding of the doctrine. This, however, is unlikely. With Bury, the Socinians stand in the distant background of the sermon. Almost certainly, given the content, impact, and eventual result of this sermon, Bingham had decided to attack Robert South – whose degrees were higher than Bingham's but whose learning Bingham may have questioned, and whose elevated position Bingham may have viewed as undeserved. In this case, the indirectness of Bingham's remarks was a matter of necessary caution – and perhaps a reflection of South's anonymity in the attack on Sherlock. Beyond this, it was Sherlock, not the Socinians or Bury, who was accused of tritheism, the re-definition of which lay at the heart of Bingham's sermon.

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<sup>202</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, v.

<sup>203</sup> *DNB*, vol. 19, 46.

<sup>204</sup> *DNB*, vol. 41, 282.

Bingham based his sermon<sup>205</sup> on the text of 1 John 5:7: "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." It is rather curious, why Bingham chose this much disputed text. The Socinians' rejection of this text was the central issue of their anti-trinitarianism.<sup>206</sup> Perhaps Bingham chose this text in order to show his orthodox position and that he was against the Socinians. His intention in delivering this sermon, he said, was to explain what the notion of three persons in the Trinity meant.<sup>207</sup> The approach that he takes in this explanation is by using the Boethian definition of a person as "individual substance of a rational or intelligent nature."<sup>208</sup> Bingham argues that this definition of a person is generally accepted by the church fathers, and the Schoolmen of his time also agree with this definition. Taking this Boethian definition a little further, Bingham then says that in the case of the Trinity, three Persons mean "three individual substances in the Unity of the Godhead," because this is "certainly the natural consequence of allowing three Persons, whereof every one is an

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<sup>205</sup> The manuscript of this sermon is now kept in the Collection of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, shelf mark: MS. Eng. th.e. 156, fols. 1-72. The printed form of this sermon is incorporated by Richard Bingham in *Works*, vol. 9, 318-47. Citations from this sermon in this dissertation will be taken from the printed text.

<sup>206</sup> See Nye, *A Brief History of the Unitarians, Called also Socinians. In Four Letters*. (n.p, 1687), letter 4, 43. Nye openly rejects this verse as not originally in the Bible, since it is not found in the most reliable Greek manuscripts, as well as in other manuscripts.

<sup>207</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 327.

<sup>208</sup> *Rationalis naturae individua substantia*. See *Works*, vol. 9, 327.



individual substance.”<sup>209</sup> In using this Boethian definition for the Trinity, Bingham intends to avoid any hint of departure from older orthodoxy, such as a tritheistic concept of the doctrine. He is careful enough to emphasize that within the Unity of the Godhead there is but one undivided substance.<sup>210</sup> In this unity of the Godhead, moreover, “there are three Persons and every one of those an individual substance, in that sense there are three distinct substances, too, that is, three minds or spirits in the Unity of the Godhead.”<sup>211</sup> The unity of the Godhead, he says, is by virtue of the community of nature and inseparable union, while the three persons are three individual substances by virtue of real distinction.<sup>212</sup>

Bingham takes an example of three angels to explain how this definition might work. Three angels are three distinct substances when one looks at them individually, but when one looks at the three angels by virtue of the common angelic nature that they partake, one can say that there is one substance of angel.<sup>213</sup> When applied to the Trinity, this analogy means that there are three infinite and eternal beings, distinct from each other without confusion, but in an exquisite manner they are one, because their union is

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<sup>209</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 328.

<sup>210</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 328.

<sup>211</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 328.

<sup>212</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 328.

<sup>213</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 328.

“absolutely natural, necessary and eternal; they are as necessarily three as one, and as necessarily one by union as three by distinction, without separation or division.”<sup>214</sup> The three distinct individual substances do not mean three different natures, but only three numerical substances agreeing in one common nature.<sup>215</sup> These three distinct substances are not actually divided or separated from each other, but three who “by virtue of their infinity must be conceived most inseparably and eternally united into one, yet with distinction without confusion.”<sup>216</sup> Bingham is aware that he uses the term “substance” for both the individual person of the Trinity and for the one substance in the Godhead. He therefore clarifies that when he says the three divine Persons are of one nature and one substance, he takes the word substance “in a larger sense, for nature and essence in general which never subsists but in particulars.”<sup>217</sup> This substance in a larger sense is what makes the three persons of the Trinity *homoousios* with each other. He concludes that when the early church distinguished between *ousia* and *hypostases*, they meant the distinction between a general substance and particular substance or subsistence.<sup>218</sup>

‘ Taking the testimony of the early church that the substance of the Son is begotten

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<sup>214</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 328.

<sup>215</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 333.

<sup>216</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 334.

<sup>217</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 335.

<sup>218</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 336.

from the substance of the Father, Bingham holds that one must be able to say that the three persons of the Trinity are three individual substances.<sup>219</sup> Because in the eternal generation of the Son the substance of the Father generates the substance of the Son, there must have been two numerically distinct substances between the Father and the Son.<sup>220</sup> Furthermore, if the substance or essence of the Son is begotten from that of the Father, then it will naturally follow that the Father and the Son are two individual substances, and together with the Holy Spirit the three persons are three individual substances numerically distinct from one another, and this view is perfectly in line with the belief in the indivisible unity of the Godhead.<sup>221</sup>

For the hearers of this sermon, this explanation was problematic. If hypostasis is the primary substance and there are three hypostases, then there must be three distinct beings, and the one God is only unified as secondary substance, namely as a genus. For the Oxford divines, it is the *ousia* that must be the primary substance. The concept of a secondary substance does not apply to God. In other words, one cannot say that there is a genus "God." Traditionally, *ousia* is understood as substance or essence, and *hypostasis* is understood as subsistence. By not making this distinction carefully in English, Bingham was unable to declare numerical unity of substance. That is why his statement could be

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<sup>219</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 337.

<sup>220</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 338.

<sup>221</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 338.

read as heretical. He did not distinguish *ousia* from *hypostasis* the way the church fathers taught. For example, as Kelly explains, Basil thought *ousia* and *hypostasis* are differentiated as universal and particular. Therefore, each *hypostasis* is the *ousia* of the Godhead determined by its appropriate particularizing characteristic.<sup>222</sup> For Basil, therefore, the *ousia* of the Godhead is still numerically one. There is no separation of the *ousia* (or substance) into three individual substances the way Bingham explains his view of the doctrine.

Bingham says that in the writing of Gregory of Nazianzus there is an explanation that God the Father is the author and the cause of the deity that is in the Son and also in the Holy Spirit.<sup>223</sup> According to him, Gregory believed that the Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit means “the peculiar numerical substances of the Son and the Holy Ghost, as distinct from the Father, which was the eternal cause of them both.”<sup>224</sup> Bingham interpreted Gregory to mean that there are three numerical substances in the Triune God, while at the same time the three numerical – or individual – substances agree in one common nature.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 265. For Basil, these particularizing characteristics are paternity, sonship, and sanctifying power. See also Basil, *Epistles*, 38, 5.

<sup>223</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 338.

<sup>224</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 339.

<sup>225</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 339; cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, who says: “... a Monarchy that is not limited to one Person, for it is possible for Unity if at variance with itself to come into a condition of plurality; but one which is made of an equality of Nature and a Union of Mind, and an identity of motion, and a convergence

Bingham's explanation could be seen as problematic as that of Sherlock. He does not argue for a numerical unity of essence. By affirming three numerical substances in God, he could be charged as undermining the simplicity of God, a doctrine that was always used to safeguard the orthodoxy of the church. For the church fathers, the doctrine of simplicity always meant indivisibility of the divine essence. As Kelly says, Gregory of Nyssa explained that number can only be used to indicate the quantity of things. It can never give any clue to the real nature of things. While for Basil, one must be very cautious and reverent in using number of deity, since even though each Person is designated one, they cannot be added together. The reason, Kelly says, is that the divine nature each Person shares is simple and indivisible.<sup>226</sup> Bingham's idea of three Persons as three distinct individual substances also distanced his doctrine from that of Augustine. Augustine insisted that it is the simple, immutable nature or essence that is the Trinity, and therefore, whatever is affirmed of God is affirmed equally of each of the three Persons.<sup>227</sup> This means that no Person of the Trinity is less than the Trinity itself. Kelly points out that Augustine's emphasis on the oneness of the divine nature clearly demonstrates that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three separate individuals, the

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of its elements to unity ... so that though numerically distinct there is no severance of essence. Therefore Unity having from all eternity arrived by motion at Duality found its rest in Trinity". See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 29. 2.*, in *PNF*, second series, vol. 8.

<sup>226</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 268.

<sup>227</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, book 5, chap. 9.

same way as three human beings who belong to one genus.<sup>228</sup>

Bingham observes that in *De Synodis* Hilary of Poitiers spoke of the particular substance of the Son as begotten, and that the particular substance of the Father begat the particular substance of the Son. He thinks that this statement indicates that for Hilary there must have been two distinct individual substances in the Godhead.<sup>229</sup> He is also sure that for Hilary everything that is begotten has its nature from that which begets it, and therefore the one single substance must have begotten another.<sup>230</sup> With this argument Bingham wants to prove that it is right to assume that there are two distinct substances of the Son and the Father, and when it is applied to the whole Trinity, it is safe to say that there are three individual substances in the Unity of the Godhead.

Cyril of Alexandria was another Church Father whom Bingham cites. In his first dialogue on the Trinity, Cyril called the Son “the fruit or natural offspring of the Father’s ineffable nature.”<sup>231</sup> Bingham interprets Cyril’s statement to mean that one can distinguish between the particular nature (or substance) of the Father and the nature (or substance) common to the whole Trinity. Because Cyril asserts that the Son is the offspring of the

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<sup>228</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 272.

<sup>229</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 340.

<sup>230</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 340; cf. Hilary, who, in defending the Divinity of the Son, affirms that the Son is the only begotten Son of God and the image of the invisible God, so that the Son must necessarily be of an essence similar in species and nature as the Father. Furthermore, Hilary says, “For though God begat Him of Himself, in likeness to His own nature, He in whom is the unbegotten likeness did not relinquish the property of His natural substance.” See Hilary, *On the Councils*, 4, 16.

<sup>231</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 337.

Father's nature and not of the nature of the whole Trinity, Bingham believes that it is not wrong to say that in terms of the personhood of the Father and the Son there are two distinct substances, while together with the Holy Spirit the three persons are the same in the whole nature of the Trinity. In other words, says Bingham, Cyril was one of the church fathers who allowed three particular substances in the Trinity united in one common nature.<sup>232</sup> In this sermon, however, Bingham does not provide explanation of what he means by "particular substances" and "one common nature." His language would be orthodox if by "three particular substances" he meant three hypostases and by "one common nature" he meant one *ousia*. But for many of his hearers he could be viewed as confusing the issue by exchanging "substance" and "nature." He uses both terms equivocally as translations of both *ousia* and *hypostasis*. By so doing he neglects to maintain the singleness of the divine *ousia*, and the result is fatal. It is not surprising that Oxford charged his statement as heretical. What Bingham did in his sermon seems to be an indication of general confusion of the Trinity in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Bingham and Sherlock both used similar language and caused South and others to react strongly to both formulations.

The oddity of Bingham's definition of the doctrine of the Trinity reflects a general trend in trinitarian thinking in England around the end of the seventeenth century. Bingham seems to participate in the increasing interest of developing trinitarian language and sense that pre-nicene trinitarianism was different from post-nicene trinitarianism. Arthur Bury's willingness to depart away from the Nicene formula and his insistence that

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<sup>232</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 337.

the Nicene Creed should not be seen as the basis for salvation is one example.<sup>233</sup> In the early eighteenth century Samuel Clarke defended similar thesis. With the publication of his *Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1712 Clarke developed a thought that there was a difference between pre-nicene and post-nicene fathers with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>234</sup> In citing Hilary and Cyprian Bingham proves that prior to Constantinople, *ousia* and *hypostasis* sometimes meant the same thing and the standard Latin translation of both terms was *substantia*. This indicates that Bingham advocates a pre-nicenoconstantinopolitan approach and was a defender of Sherlock's approach and definitions. In contrast to this approach, Bishop Bull in his *Defensio Fidei Nicaenae* defends the thesis that there was continuity between pre and post Nicene fathers.<sup>235</sup>

In Bingham's view, some church fathers agreed that the proper substance of the Father is unbegotten, the proper substance of the Son is begotten, and the proper substance of the Holy Spirit is neither unbegotten nor begotten, but proceeds from both.<sup>236</sup> Thus, he says, there must be two single or numerical substances, really distinct but not divided or separated from each other.<sup>237</sup> In explaining the distinction of each person as unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding, Bingham correctly represents the positions of the majority of the church fathers, especially the Cappadocians. Kelly explains that for the Cappadocians, ingenerateness, generateness, and mission or procession were the terms

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<sup>233</sup> Bury, *The Naked Gospel*, E2 v.

<sup>234</sup> Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke*, 103.

<sup>235</sup> *DNB*, vol. 7, 237.

<sup>236</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 337.

<sup>237</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 343.



the fathers commonly used. For the fathers, the distinction of Persons was grounded in their origin and mutual relation.<sup>238</sup> But then, Bingham argues that whenever one speaks of *substantia genita et ingenita* one must believe in two distinct numerical substances, and consequently one must believe that “the three Persons in the Trinity to be three distinct individual substances, not only notionally, or modelly, but really distinct from one another.”<sup>239</sup> Here again, Bingham confuses *hypostasis* and *ousia*. It seems that he is trying to emphasize the distinction between the Persons of the Trinity. But the way he emphasizes the distinction is problematic, not just linguistically in confusing *ousia* and *hypostasis*, but also theologically. He does not follow the church fathers who, in emphasizing the distinction, used the idea of “modes of coming to be” or *τροπος ὑπαρξεως*, since that’s how the fathers explained the way in which the one indivisible divine substance distributed itself and presented itself in the three Persons.<sup>240</sup> Prestige explains that for the majority of the church fathers, while the one undivided substance is identical with the whole being of each Person, the individuality of each Person is only the manner in which the substance is objectively presented in each distinct Person.<sup>241</sup>

Bingham claims that he does not fall into tritheism. In order to prove this he offers four possible different definitions of tritheism. First, tritheism can be defined as a belief that the three Beings are of a different nature, and unequal to each other. Secondly, tritheism can mean three beings who are actually separated from each other, such as three

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<sup>238</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 265.

<sup>239</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 344.

<sup>240</sup> Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 266.

<sup>241</sup> George Leonard Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952), 244.

different human beings. Thirdly, another version of tritheism can mean that the three Beings as three parts of one whole, with each part possessing Divine perfection among them, but none of them possess all perfection. Fourthly, tritheism can be identified as a heresy that looks at the three infinite Beings as existing equally absolute and independent of each other.<sup>242</sup> Bingham's definitions of tritheism, however, do not take into consideration the only extant definition of tritheism, the one decided at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.<sup>243</sup> What he does is just to define the heresy in such a way as to vindicate Sherlock's position.

Bingham rejects any charge of heresy that could have been directed against him, and, by extension, against Sherlock. He believes that he does not divide the essence of the Godhead. He affirms that the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal to God the Father in infinity of nature and all Divine perfection. The persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit possess this equality not unoriginate from themselves, but necessarily and eternally from the Father, but at the same time the three Persons are of one will and operation.<sup>244</sup> The three Persons are:

three infinite Beings, i.e. persons or individual substances numerically distinct from one another, but under these several limitations, i. e. neither of a different nature, nor divided from one another, nor united as parts that make up a whole, nor collateral and co-ordinate, nor of a different will and operation, but on the contrary one by unity of nature, one by mutual περιχωρησις, . . . and one by unity of will and action . . .<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 345-46.

<sup>243</sup> See Fourth Lateran Council, "Canon 2," in H. J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (St. Louis: Herder, 1937), 236.

<sup>244</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 347.

<sup>245</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 347.

This quotation shows that Bingham emphasizes the three distinct Persons of the Trinity. However, with regard to the unity of the divine essence, his explanation is not very different from that of Sherlock. The unity of the Godhead that he presents here is just a generic unity, and not a numerical unity of essence.

Anthony Wood reported that after Bingham preached the sermon, some men of the University complained and considered him very bold. They gathered that Bingham sided with Sherlock against South. A certain Mr. John Beauchamp from Trinity College complained to the vice-chancellor.<sup>246</sup> The reaction did not just stop there. Charges of Bingham being a heretic soon followed. Bingham was publicly called an Arian, tritheist, and a follower of the heresy of Valentinus Gentilis.<sup>247</sup> The accusation as a follower of Valentinus Gentilis was very significant. It was an indication that South tried to place Bingham on the same level as Sherlock. This public accusation seemed to come from a recognition of the political nature of the debate.

The party reacting against Bingham was very powerful. In particular, Robert South saw his own doctrine as threatened by Bingham – and the merit of his attack on Sherlock called into question. In his Epistle Dedicatory directed to the Archbishops of the Church of England in his translation of *History of Valentinus Gentilis*, South singled out

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<sup>246</sup> Wood, *Life and Times*, vol. 3, 492.

Bingham, labelling Bingham's sermon before the University on October 28, 1695 as tritheistic and calling Bingham a follower of Sherlock.<sup>248</sup> South opposed any description of the doctrine based on the statement of three persons as three distinct minds or spirits. He demanded that the Archbishops take care of the matter immediately and declare Bingham's statement a heresy. South had not been successful in declaring Sherlock a heretic, partly because Sherlock was not within the reach of Oxford University. With Bingham the case was different, since Bingham was bound to the University.<sup>249</sup>

The Hebdomadal Board of Oxford soon issued its official statement condemning the statement: "There are three infinite distinct minds and substances in the Trinity, that the three Persons in the Trinity are three distinct infinite minds or spirits and three individual substances."<sup>250</sup> In their printed proclamation, dated November 25, 1695, the University specified that this statement was preached before the University at St. Peter-in-the-East on the Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude.<sup>251</sup> It is interesting to note that Bingham's

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<sup>247</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vi.

<sup>248</sup> Aretius, *A History of Valentinus Gentilis*, A2 v (wrongly collated as B2 v).

<sup>249</sup> As I have indicated before, South's intention in printing the English translation of the history of Valentinus Gentilis was to try to persuade the Archbishops to condemn Sherlock since South believed that Sherlock taught a heretical doctrine. Just as much as Gentilis was condemned during the time of the Reformation, South wanted Sherlock also to be condemned now. See Aretius, *The History of Valentinus Gentilis*, A5 r.

<sup>250</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>251</sup> The printed proclamation is kept at the Oxford University Archive, shelf mark: WP γ 28/8, folio 32 r. There is also the handwritten draft of this printed proclamation, both in Latin and in English, and

name was not mentioned anywhere on the printed or hand-written proclamation. The proclamation indicated that the vice-chancellor and Heads of Colleges and Halls declared the above mentioned words as *falsa, impia & haeretica*, false, impious and heretical, contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and particularly to the received doctrine of the Church of England. By adopting this general form of condemnation they were able to reach others outside the University who held the same position – potentially, William Sherlock.

The language of this condemnation bears close resemblance to the charge against Arthur Bury's *The Naked Gospel*. Even though Bingham's name is not mentioned in this proclamation, the university had clearly made a connection between Bingham and Bury. Bingham's trinitarian position – notably, its assumption of discontinuity between the fathers before and after Nicea especially related to the use of *ousia* and *hypostasis*, together with his definition of "person" in support of Sherlock's view – was opposed to the stance of the university. Just as Bury was considered heretical, Bingham, too, was charged with the same offense. Oxford did not need to elaborate its trinitarian position in the charge, since it has been made clear, in the case of Arthur Bury, that it strongly supported a traditional reading of the Nicene formula.

The absence of any record of the meeting of the Hebdomadal Board from Oxford

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signed by Benjamin Cooper, the Public Notary and Register of the University of Oxford, kept in the Oxford University Archive, shelf mark: NEP/SUB/BC, the back part, page 12. See appendix 4.

University Archive is also worth mentioning. Richard Bingham notes that even though the printed proclamation was issued, records about the meeting are nowhere to be found.<sup>252</sup> The only record was a little note written by Thomas Tanner from All Souls College in his account of the death of Anthony Wood. On November 24, 1695, Tanner visited Wood, the historian of Oxford, who was gravely ill and was about to die. Toward the end of this account Tanner writes: "The meeting about Mr. Bingham is tomorrow morning at nine of the Clock."<sup>253</sup> From this short note one could assume that there must have been a meeting about Bingham's case. As to why there is no written record about this meeting, we just do not have an answer.<sup>254</sup> Leslie Barnard indicates that the absence of the Hebdomadal record might indicate that Bingham withdrew voluntarily from the University.<sup>255</sup> A similar opinion is held by Bennett who thinks that Bingham resigned from his position at the University College in order to avoid the loss of his degrees.<sup>256</sup> In

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<sup>252</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, v, footnote 1. I also conducted my own research at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, to try to find if there is anything written about the Hebdomadal meeting, but I discovered that nothing was written about the meeting.

<sup>253</sup> Wood, *Life and Times*, vol. 3, appendix 1, 502.

<sup>254</sup> It is rather surprising to see that the university does not have a record (or lost the record) on such an important case. For a university that recorded even small cases such as students who requested dispensation for not graduating on time because of family hardship (see, for instance, Oxford University Archive, NEP/SUB/BC, front part, which is full of records of such small cases), one might expect that the university would record carefully the meeting about a case where heresy is involved.

<sup>255</sup> Leslie W. Barnard, "Joseph Bingham and Asceticism," 300.

<sup>256</sup> Bennett, however, is not very careful in the detail of the historical evidences. In this article he mentions the date of Bingham's sermon as October 28, 1693, while in fact the event happened in 1695. Bennett uses only Anthony Wood's *Life and Times* vol. 3, 492, as the support of this statement. The entry

light of the fact that Tanner wrote that there was going to be a meeting about Bingham's case on 25 November 1695, and also considering that the printed proclamation was dated on the same day, I am inclined to say that there was a formal meeting discussing Bingham's case, and that in the meeting he was asked to resign. Besides, we also have the record in the University College Archive Register, dated November 23, 1695, where in his own handwriting Bingham had to confess that he had irritated the whole community of Oxford University. Therefore, before the whole Body of the University, he had to resign and surrender all the privileges he held as a fellow of the College.<sup>257</sup>

## 2. Sherlock's Response: Defense of Bingham

Not long after Bingham's expulsion from the University, Sherlock examined the decree against Bingham's sermon.<sup>258</sup> Sherlock criticized the decree passed by the Hebdomadal Board, arguing that even though the publication of the decree or the proclamation was occasioned by the sermon of Bingham, it was quite clear that the Board had aimed its decree at him. He was sure that the Board "knew very well what work there

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that Wood has about Bingham, however, is only about the event of the preaching on October 28, 1695, and does not say anything about Bingham's voluntary resignation. See Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 397.

<sup>257</sup> University College Archives, *Registrum Admissionum Ab Anno 1660*, 132, shelf mark: UC: J1/A/1. See appendix 6.

<sup>258</sup> William Sherlock, *A Modest Examination of the Authority and Reasons of the Late Decree of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, and Some Heads of Colleges and Halls; Concerning the Heresy of Three Distinct Infinite Minds in the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity* (London: W. Rogers, 1696).

has been made with *Three distinct infinite Minds or Spirit*.<sup>259</sup> Sherlock openly mentioned South by name as the one who used the opportunity to condemn his teaching by condemning Bingham's sermon.<sup>260</sup> Sensing the unfairness of the judgment of the University upon Bingham, Sherlock pointed out that the statement from Bingham's sermon was taken out of context, without considering in what sense the statement was used.<sup>261</sup> Sherlock defended Bingham, arguing that the young preacher did not mean any harm by defining three persons of the Trinity as three Infinite Minds, and if the University thought that the term was unacceptable, it could have corrected Bingham's mistake, especially because Bingham used the Boethian definition of a "person" to come to the definition.<sup>262</sup>

Sherlock also noted that there had been a strange procedure in the publication of the decree. He had information that in the meeting some of the most important Heads who were most concerned about a decree of heresy were not present, and some who were present thought that the proceedings were irregular and not according to the regulation of the University. However, some influential figures who had interest in this case overruled

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<sup>259</sup> Sherlock, *Modest Examination*, 2, emphasis Sherlock's. Sherlock cited the whole decree in his *Modest Examination*, 4.

<sup>260</sup> Sherlock, *Modest Examination*, 3.

<sup>261</sup> Sherlock, *Modest Examination*, 9.

<sup>262</sup> Sherlock, *Modest Examination*, 19.



the rest and passed the decree.<sup>263</sup> An anonymous work was published in answer to Sherlock's criticism of the Oxford decree.<sup>264</sup> The writer acknowledged that there were some members of the Board who were not present in the convocation because they happened to be out of town,<sup>265</sup> but that the decree was valid because there were at least six Heads of Houses, Doctors of Divinity and Professors of Divinity in the meeting.<sup>266</sup> The author also said that Bingham was summoned and did appear before the Board, and that he gave an answer in writing that he owned the words.<sup>267</sup> As for Sherlock's charge that Bingham's name was not explicitly mentioned in the Decree, but only a third person singular pronoun was used,<sup>268</sup> the writer replied that the fact that Bingham had written in his own handwriting<sup>269</sup> and that he had appeared before the Vice-Chancellor and Head of Houses<sup>270</sup> made it legitimate for the University to condemn his doctrine and to forbid that

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<sup>263</sup> Sherlock, *Modest Examination*, 19.

<sup>264</sup> The answer was published under the title *An Answer to Dr. Sherlock's Examination of the Oxford Decree: In a Letter from a Member of that University, to His Friend in London* (London: M. Whitlock, 1696).

<sup>265</sup> Anonymous, *An Answer to Dr. Sherlock's Examination*, 7.

<sup>266</sup> Anonymous, *An Answer to Dr. Sherlock's Examination*, 7.

<sup>267</sup> Anonymous, *An Answer to Dr. Sherlock's Examination*, 13.

<sup>268</sup> Sherlock, *Modest Examination*, 5.

<sup>269</sup> This author could have referred to the University College Archive Register dated November 23, 1695, UC: J1/A/1, page 132.

<sup>270</sup> We are not sure, however, whether Bingham was summoned on November 25, 1695, when the Hebdomadal Board had the meeting and then issued the decree, or if he had been summoned before the

the doctrine be preached either by Bingham or any body else.<sup>271</sup> Then, laying all the blame on Bingham, the author simply mentioned that Bingham had left the University as the dispute was still going on and that he hoped that Bingham would be more careful and avoid the problem in the future.<sup>272</sup>

The polemic between Sherlock and Bingham's anonymous detractor indicates the difficult situation with regard to the trinitarian controversy at Oxford at the end of the seventeenth century. Bingham, a younger preacher and scholar, had offered an explanation of persons in the Trinity by using a variant interpretation of the classic definition of Boethius. He had been condemned and charged with heresy by a decree which did not mention his name or precisely define his heresy. Even though Bingham was guilty in making separation between pre and post-Nicene trinitarian positions and only refers to the earliest church fathers who used *substantia* for both *ousia* and *hypostasis*, this anonymous charge of being heretical was a reflection of the politics of the day in the larger context of Oxford University. Bingham had dared to criticize the Oxford-based South as an inferior mind, in a fairly blatant defense of the Cambridge-

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meeting itself. The fact that the anonymous author of *An Answer to Sherlock's Examination* does not give us any clear documented date of the event, and the absence of other existing record, make it rather hard for us to decide whether this account is reliable. On the one hand we have Sherlock's statement that Bingham was never summoned to appear before the board, while on the other, the anonymous author wrote that Bingham was summoned. Each of the men has his own reason to present his own account, and we are left without a definitive answer. See also Sherlock, *Modest Examination*, 6.

<sup>271</sup> Anonymous, *An Answer to Sherlock's Examination*, 16.

<sup>272</sup> Anonymous, *An Answer to Sherlock's Examination*, 16.

trained Sherlock.

The year 1695-96 was the culmination of the Trinitarian controversy in Oxford. After the anonymous publication replying to Sherlock's *Modest Examination* was printed,<sup>273</sup> King William commanded that all preaching writing and disputing over the doctrine of the Trinity be put to an end.<sup>274</sup> This royal statement ended the controversy, but Bingham lost his position in the university, and his reputation as a scholar had been tarnished. Later in his life, Bingham was able to rehabilitate his name. He owed his success, however, to certain individuals who helped him. They did this right after his forced resignation from Oxford, and continued until the successful publications of his books. Radcliffe appointed him rectory of Headbourn-Worthy. Bishop Trelawney remained his benefactor for years, during his most productive time as an author. Later on Bishop Charles Trimmell took over Trelawney's place, and he, too, became Bingham's patron. Sherlock, with whom he shared a similar Trinitarian position in his early years, did not get the chance to see his success as a published scholar. Sherlock died in 1707,<sup>275</sup> before the *Origines* was published. There is no indication that Sherlock was instrumental in the restoration of Bingham's name. Bingham never mentioned Sherlock's name in any

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<sup>273</sup> The date printed on this work was January 3, 1695, but this could have been an error in the printing. It could have been that the author had meant to write a transition date of 1695/96, as it was the custom of the day to mention dates of the first two or three months of the transition into the new year. See, for instance, Wood, *Life and Times*, passim.

<sup>274</sup> Bennett, "University, Society, and Church," 398.

<sup>275</sup> *DNB*, vol. 52, 95.

of his books.

As Bennett pointed out, with clear hindsight of the later age, Oxford lost the presence of the man who published his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, perhaps “the most learned work of early ecclesiastical history published before the nineteenth-century.”<sup>276</sup> From Bingham’s own perspective and from the perspective of his contemporaries, the young scholar had far to go before his ecclesiastical life could be restored to order and his reputation as a significant scholar regained. The truth in Bennett’s retrospective verdict is that the *Origines* were the means by which Bingham regained what he could of his position. Bingham’s success in this effort and the contemporary success of the *Origines* stemmed in no small part from the brilliant mixture of objectivistic patristic scholarship, orthodox trinitarian assumption, and usefulness of his patristic studies to the justification of the Book of Common Prayer and of a High Church *via media*. They are all characteristic of Bingham’s scholarship.

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<sup>276</sup> Bennett, “University, Society, and Church,” 397.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Historical and Ecclesiastical Backgrounds of Bingham's**

#### **Scholarship and Ministry**

##### **I. The Remote Ecclesiastical Background**

###### **1. Anglican, Puritan, Roman Catholic, and the Focus of Bingham's Scholarship**

At the time when Bingham began his work, several divergent forces were affecting the religious life of the English people. It is not hard to see the effect of these forces in his work and writings, even though he strove for a tone of objectivity. His objectivistic style itself can be seen, in part, as a device used to establish the validity of his own position in the Anglican Church. Bingham was writing to a specific audience to whom he wanted to deliver his message. His audience was the members and hierarchy of the Anglican Church. His message was for them to stand in the church and to defend its doctrine and practice against other confessional bodies of his time. In addition, he arguably had a focused audience within the Anglican Church, namely the High Church and the anti-Romanist groups or parties.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Church of England had been burdened with controversies that would have significant lingering effects in Bingham's time. The Reformation of the sixteenth century brought with it tensions with

the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> Even though the Roman Catholics were pushed aside, they did not abandon hopes to regain their position in England. So, the Reformation in the sixteenth century did not mean that Romanizing tendencies had been banished – or on the other hand that all English Protestants could accept the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles.

In many county districts, especially in the north and west, away from the towns which were the hot-beds of Protestantism, the influence and the domination of Roman Catholic squires were still strong.<sup>2</sup> Michael Mullett attests that the early English Catholic recusant communities were largely rural in location, with Catholic aristocrats leading a predominantly working-class people.<sup>3</sup> In these parts of the country, Roman Catholicism was tenacious and rebellious, so that the British Crown and its officials had to struggle for mastery with hostility.<sup>4</sup> In the struggle against Rome, the Anglican divines sought to base their arguments on the teachings of the early church. This became the characteristic of several British ecclesiastical writings in the following centuries. The emergence of the fine tradition of patristic scholarship as part of the justification of the Church of England since the time of the Tudor church demonstrated the conviction that the Anglican Church had a strong foundation in the teachings of the first centuries of Christian history, long

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Plummer, *English Church History from the Death of Archbishop Parker to the Death of King Charles I* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914), 4.

<sup>2</sup> R. M. Patterson, *A History of the Church of England* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), 317.

<sup>3</sup> Michael A. Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558-1829* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>4</sup> A. T. P. Williams, *The Anglican Tradition in the Life of England* (London: SCM Press, 1947), 12.

before the establishment of the medieval type of Roman primacy.<sup>5</sup> Bingham's patristic scholarship was a clear example of this tradition. While he explicitly stated that his work was not intended as polemic, he nevertheless engaged himself in showing disagreements with the Roman Catholic Church and, thereby, also with those of Romanizing sentiments within the Anglican Church.<sup>6</sup>

There were also tensions between the Anglicans and the Puritans. It was the goal of the Puritans to make a clean sweep of nearly everything that had been retained from the Roman Catholic practices, in order to achieve a satisfactory Reformation.<sup>7</sup> Patrick Collinson illustrates Puritans' demands for simple and biblical teaching of the church through what the author of *The Country Parson* required: the church must be adorned with "fit and proper texts of Scripture," and the painting must be "grave and reverend, not with light colours or foolish anticks."<sup>8</sup> Because the Puritans highly valued the role of ministers in bringing the Word of God to the people, they also saw preparations and education for those who wanted to become clergymen had to be done carefully and thoughtfully. Collinson mentions that even as early as the 1580s, a representative conference of puritan clergy made a formal resolution that ministers should train students of divinity sufficient knowledge in the arts and languages.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Fox, 1534-1690*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 15.

<sup>6</sup> See Bingham, preface to the first volume of his *Origines*, in *Works*, vol. 1, li.

<sup>7</sup> Plummer, *English Church History*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 109.

<sup>9</sup> Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants*, 119.

As a clergyman of the Church of England, Bingham highly valued his role as a leader. His goal in all his published works, including the multi-volume *Origines Ecclesiasticae* was to promote the High Church Anglican view, based on the teaching of the early church. His approach is marked by a significant divergence from that of the Puritans: linguistic study undergirds a traditional Anglicanism, justified on grounds of the early church as opposed to the mere biblistic approach of Puritans and later Dissenters. In addition, he was also very serious in carrying out his task as a preacher. The numerous sermon manuscripts now housed in the collection of Western Manuscripts, Oxford serve as a testimony to these efforts – and to the strong patristic accents of Bingham's theology.<sup>10</sup>

The poles of debates that the Anglicans had with the Roman Catholics on one side and with the Puritans on the other served to frame the middle ground argued by Anglican traditionalists. Bingham, too, saw the opportunity and used the fathers to establish a moderate High Church model to defend the Book of Common Prayer. All along he utilized the Anglican tradition of apologetic patristic argumentation.

## **2. Puritan and Anglican: The Initial Debates**

Puritanism itself was not a single movement.<sup>11</sup> There were the conforming and the

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<sup>10</sup> See Oxford University, Western Manuscript Bodleian Library, shelf mark: MS. Eng. th.e. 156, fols 1-72. and MS. Eng.th.e.157.

<sup>11</sup> Collinson notes that for a less anachronistic categorization, a distinction between "puritans" and "formalists" is more suitable than a distinction between "puritans" and "Anglicans." See Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants*, 108.



non-conforming Puritans. The conforming Puritans wanted the reformation according to the Word of God and the examples of the best Reformed churches, but expected the change in the context of the nation. This group was the one commonly called “the Anglican Puritans.”<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, there were also the non-conforming Puritans, namely those who thought that the church only consisted of committed and covenanted Christians who organized themselves independently of the national church.<sup>13</sup> However, even though Puritanism in its earlier history presented itself in different forms, it is still possible to take the term “Puritan” or “Puritanism” in a singular way, based on the commonality among the differing groups. Following Collinson, it suffices to say that the substance of Puritanism was “the rejection of conservative, retrogressive elements in the politically enforced Reformation.”<sup>14</sup>

The so-called “Vestarian Controversy” of the 1560s is illustrative of this Puritan approach and remained emblematic of the Puritan problem against which Bingham also posed his scholarship. The controversy was centered on the question of how worship must be carried out.<sup>15</sup> The Puritans’ dissatisfaction was reflected through several protests directed to both the Parliament and the Church. In 1572 they published their treatise

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<sup>12</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 44.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Browne, with his insistence on “Reformation without tarrying for anie,” was one of the non-conforming Puritans. See Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 44, especially footnote 15.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Collinson, “Puritanism,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, vol. 3, 365.

<sup>15</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 1, 41.

entitled *An Admonition to the Parliament*.<sup>16</sup> In the eyes of many historians the *Admonition* was a methodical document that reflected a statement of complaints with the use of strong and violent language which was considered a normal feature of controversy of that time.<sup>17</sup>

As early as its opening paragraph, the *Admonition* showed how the Church of England was far from the religion of the Reformation.<sup>18</sup> With the view that the Church of the Reformation was very faithful to the teaching of the Gospel, this treatise criticized the English Church by making a comparison between the Church during the era of the apostles and the contemporary practice of the Church of England:

Then ministers were not tyed to any forme of prayers invented by man, but as the spirit moved them, so they powered forth hartie supplications to the Lorde. Now they are bound of necessitie to a prescript order of service, and booke of common prayer in which a great number of things contrary to Gods word are contained, as baptism by women, private Communions, Jewish purifying, observing of holy dayes, etc, patched (if not all together, yet the greatest peece) out of the Popes portuis.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the *Admonition* considered the Book of Common Prayer

... an unperfected booke, culled & picked out of that popishe dunghil, the Masse booke full of all abominations. For some, & many of the contents therein, be suche as are againste the woord of God, as by his grace shall be proved unto you.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> This admonition was published anonymously. Frere and Douglas note that in its first edition this treatise did not even have a formal title page. See W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas, *The Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt with a Reprint of the Admonition to the Parliament and Kindred Documents, 1572* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), xxviii.

<sup>17</sup> Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, xxi.

<sup>18</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 12-13.

<sup>20</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 21.

This disapproval accompanied the critique of the administration of the sacraments, both baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Puritans demanded that the sacraments be conducted according to the purity and simplicity of the New Testament church.<sup>21</sup> They criticized all aspects of the liturgy of the Lord's Supper: from the introit, the reading of the portions from the Gospel and the Epistle, the recitation of the Nicene Creed, the use of wafer cake, and to kneeling when the people received the Communion.<sup>22</sup> They insisted that, in all faithfulness to the Apostolic era, the Eucharist must be done simply, first of all by examining each of the communicants, the practice that the English Church had neglected. Then they emphasized the use of ordinary bread. The communicants must only receive the Communion sitting down. Furthermore, they also demanded the removal of the words of invitation to the sacrament supposedly borrowed from the Roman Catholics such as "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given to thee, etc" as well as the use of "Gloria in Excelsis."<sup>23</sup>

The criticism spelled out by the *Admonitions* started early in Elizabeth's reign. The Queen preferred a celibate clergy, clothed in eucharistic vestments, who communicated the sacrament using unleavened bread with the symbol of the cross clearly seen.<sup>24</sup> The debate over the sacraments carried on into the following centuries. As we will see later in this chapter, Bingham defended the practice of the Church of England against

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<sup>21</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 14.

<sup>22</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 13.

<sup>23</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants*, 31.

the accusations and demands of the Dissenters of his time, the seeds of which had already been planted in the publication of the *Admonition*. As a defender of the practice of the Church of England, Bingham also demonstrated that he defended the British Crown. His defense of the monarchy, especially during the reign of Queen Anne, was closely associated with the way Trelawney, his ecclesiastical patron, supported the Queen.<sup>25</sup> The tensions between Queen Elizabeth (and thus the Church of England) and the Puritans of the sixteenth century were still reflected in the tensions between the Anglican Church (now under the leadership of Queen Anne) and the heirs of the Puritans in the early eighteenth century. Through his writings Bingham tried to demonstrate that he was a true member of the established church, and therefore, a true defender of his Queen.

Because of the demands presented by the Puritans, many clergy saw the need to alter the way they administered the sacraments. The most noticeable was the different ways communion tables were placed in different parts of the church building, either “altar-like” about a yard from the wall, or facing north and south in the middle of the chancel, or even in the nave of the church. Various ways on how the surplice was worn by the clergy in celebrating the sacraments were also noticeable. Some wore surplice and cope to celebrate the Communion, others only wore surplice, and still others wore neither vestment.<sup>26</sup>

The authors of the *Admonition* also reacted to the administration of baptism. Consistently following the same method of comparing the practice of the New Testament Apostles and that of the Church of England, the *Admonition* sharply criticized the custom

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<sup>25</sup> On the relationship between Bingham and Trelawney, bishop of Winchester, see the last section of this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 1, 46.

of baptizing infants in private homes, not by ministers but by midwives or deacons.<sup>27</sup>

They were convinced that the practice was an adoption of the practice of Rome:

Nowe, we must have surplusses devised by Pope Adrian, interrogatories ministred to the infant, godfathers and Godmothers, brought in by Higinus, holy fonts invented by Pope Pius, crossing and suche like peces of poperie, which the church of God in the Apostles times never knew (and therefore not to be used) nay (which we are sure of) were and are mannes devices, brought in long after the puritie of the primitive church.<sup>28</sup>

The Puritans saw private baptism, especially when administered by women, as unfaithfulness to Christ's Great Commission. In their eyes private baptism did not fulfill this command, since this practice separated the teaching of the Gospel from the communion and the sacrament. If women were allowed to baptize privately, while at the same time not allowed to teach in the church, such practice of private baptism would contradict this basic Protestant assumption.<sup>29</sup> The specific worry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was that the crypto-Romanists would continue to employ midwives to baptize infants into the Roman Catholic faith.

The *Admonition* presented four basic criticisms of the practice of Anglican baptism. First it charged the statement in the prayer that the baptism of Jesus sanctified the water of Jordan and all other waters was superstition. Next, it rejected the required promise of a godfather or a godmother as the interrogation of the infant himself or

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<sup>27</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliaments," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 13.

<sup>28</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliaments," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> "An Admonition to the Parliaments," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 26.

herself, as if the infant was an adult, and the sign of the cross.<sup>30</sup> As we will see later in this dissertation, Bingham defended the practice of the Church of England through his studies of the church fathers. He demonstrated that the sign of the cross in baptism was a very common practice in the early church. The *Origines* served as his tool to argue, based on the practice of the ancient church, that the Anglican practice was as old as the Christian church itself. Therefore, the Puritans' accusations that the practice of the Church of England was a popish novelty was groundless.

The controversy over the sign of the cross in baptism became stronger with time, and it put many of the parish ministers in an awkward position. Davies comments that because the sign of the cross was so objectionable, many ministers thought of some ways to escape, by not actually touching the baby's forehead, and only pretending to do so.<sup>31</sup> The latter part of the seventeenth century witnessed the fact that public baptism went out of fashion and was often replaced by the practice of private baptism at home.<sup>32</sup> We find that the question of the validity of such private baptism by lay-people became a public debate in the early decades of the eighteenth century. In Bingham's time this controversy laid the foundation of his scholarly work. His historical studies of the ancient form of baptism provided answers to the challenge directed to the English Church by the later Puritans.

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<sup>30</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 2, 209.

<sup>31</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 2, 210.

<sup>32</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 2, 210.

### 3. Religious Tensions during the Reign of the Stuarts

During the early time of the reign of James I, the Church of England had been divided between the High Church and the Low Church parties. The High Church took their stand on the Bible, the Creeds and the Church. For them, the Bible was intended to prove doctrine, but to this end the Bible needed interpretation, and the interpretation was to be given by the Church.<sup>33</sup> Robert Cornwall maintains that the High Churchmen,<sup>34</sup> together with the Non-Jurors, posited a theology with a focus on the centrality of the church to salvation, equality between church and state, and the hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons as divinely ordained and authorized to administer the sacraments as the means of grace.<sup>35</sup> To a certain extent, Bingham defended the position of the High Church party very strongly. His extensive discussion on the offices of bishops and other clergy in the *Origines* served as a tool by which he supported the view of the High Church.<sup>36</sup> His view of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of baptism, was a clear demonstration of how he upheld the Anglican position.

James' relationship with the Roman Catholics was not one with complete harmony. Early in his reign, the House of Commons represented militant Protestantism. It

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<sup>33</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 319.

<sup>34</sup> Following Cornwall, in using the term *High Churchmen* to refer to the people who adhered themselves to this party in the Anglican Church, I do not mean to ignore the importance of using gender-inclusive language. It is only because the term was used during that time period and is in line with the common use of printed sources dealing with this part of Anglican history that I use this term. See Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 12.

<sup>35</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 12.

<sup>36</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, books 2-3.

demanded stricter enforcement of the penal laws.<sup>37</sup> James agreed, and even demanded rigorous implementation of the penal laws. This resulted in the persecution of the Roman Catholics. Mullett notes that the Roman Catholic communities had to face the fact that they were minorities composed of deeply committed individuals and families.<sup>38</sup>

James also had a tense relationship with the Puritans, despite his effort to show toleration. In 1603 the Puritans presented the "Millenary Petition."<sup>39</sup> In this petition they expressed their main objections to the worship service and rituals of the Church such as the cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, the use of the surplice, reading from the Apocrypha, as well as the abuse of excommunication.<sup>40</sup> James saw the need to address the matter. In 1604 he called for the Hampton Court Conference.<sup>41</sup> In this Conference James showed that he was able to hear the demands of the Puritans, while at the same time making clear his position with regard to the practice of the Anglican Church. He agreed with the Puritans that England needed a new English translation of the Bible to replace the "Bishop's Bible" as the royally authorized version, but he was unwilling to move in the direction of the Genevan Bible and its marginal glosses. The result was the new translation of the Bible we now commonly call "The Authorized Version" or the

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<sup>37</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 24.

<sup>38</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 25.

<sup>39</sup> Patterson, *History of the Church of England*, 323.

<sup>40</sup> Plummer explains that the name of the petition implied the signatures of 1,000 supplicants, while in fact there were only 825 Puritan clergy who presented the petitions, and there seem to have been no signatures. See Plummer, *English Church History*, 52.

<sup>41</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 2, 330.



King James Version.<sup>42</sup> But as to Puritan demands to remove the “power of the Church in things indifferent” such as the sign of the cross and the surplice, James decided that they should stay.<sup>43</sup> James’ position is a clear demonstration of the King’s Anglicanism.<sup>44</sup>

Again, we see that the issue of the sign of the cross in baptism became a controversy. Whenever discussion about baptism between the Dissenting groups and the established Church appeared, this question surfaced. This lasted until the time of Bingham. In his own way, however, Bingham demonstrated that he supported the position of the Church of England. In the *Origines* he argued that this practice was rooted in the early church, and therefore a suitable practice for the Church of England.<sup>45</sup>

By the time Charles I accessed to the throne, the High Church party had gained more power. This mainly happened under the influence of Archbishop William Laud.<sup>46</sup> Laud was more interested in maintaining the uniformity of practice in the Church of England than in theological matters.<sup>47</sup> One of his most famous decisions to impose unity was the instruction to move the communion table in every church to the East end of the

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<sup>42</sup> By that time, in England there were two current versions of the Bible. One was the Bishop’s Bible of 1568; the other, the Genevan Bible of 1560. The revision of the Scriptures under James I, however, did not begin before 1607. Six companies – two at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge – were appointed to revise different portions of the Bible. The text of the Bishop’s Bible was used as the basis of this new edition. The Bible was finally out of the press in 1611. See Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 326.

<sup>43</sup> Patterson, *History of the Church of England*, 326.

<sup>44</sup> Plummer, *English Church History*, 59.

<sup>45</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572-73. See also discussion on this topic in chapter four of this dissertation.

<sup>46</sup> Patterson, *History of the Church of England*, 333.

<sup>47</sup> H. G. Alexander, *Religion in England 1558-1662* (London: University of London, 1968), 151.

church, and to protect the table with rail.<sup>48</sup> His rationale to put a rail around the altar was to protect it from profanation.<sup>49</sup>

Under the rule of Charles I, the High Church became increasingly strong in emphasizing royal authority. The High Church always demonstrated eagerness to go back to the teaching of the early church. At the same time High Churchmen considered the office of bishop as divinely instituted, and at times they even went further not considering Protestant, non-Episcopal churches as a part of the true church of Christ.<sup>50</sup> Together with its emphasis on the great importance of episcopacy and the authority of bishops and priests, the High Church believed in the supremacy of the Bible as interpreted in the light of the Prayer Book and the Creed.<sup>51</sup>

The High Church tried to establish an ordered church with a focus on the church as a visible society of people who confessed their faith in God.<sup>52</sup> Because they saw the church as a visible society, they placed importance on church government and church membership.<sup>53</sup> The High Church insisted that true Christian worship must be authorized by apostolically commissioned bishops.<sup>54</sup> Not only did the High Church find the

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<sup>48</sup> Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II*, vol. 1 (London: SCM Press, 1996), 152.

<sup>49</sup> William Laud, *A Speech Delivered in the Starr-Chamber, on Wednesday, the XIVth of Iune, MDCXXXVII* (London: Printed by Richard Badger, 1637), 52-53.

<sup>50</sup> Alexander, *Religion in England*, 130.

<sup>51</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 2, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 60.

<sup>53</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 61.

<sup>54</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 63.

apostolicity of the church rooted in its doctrine, but they also emphasized the apostolicity of church government and liturgy while at the same time affirming that salvation could only be found in a church that was founded on apostolic succession.<sup>55</sup> Bingham's support of the High Church doctrine of the divine right of episcopacy and apostolic succession was evident through the way he treated the discussion of the office of higher clergy in the first part of his *Origines*.<sup>56</sup> Using history as his vehicle, he demonstrated how the Ancient Church saw the office of Bishop flowing out of the authority of the New Testament Apostles. For this reason Cornwall categorizes Bingham, together with other Anglican divines such as Francis Brokesby and John Potter, as an example of a High Churchman who did apologetics for the historic episcopate and made it an important element of his historical scholarship.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. Mid-Seventeenth-Century Sectarianism

The Presbyterians arose from a basic plea for a particular form of church government, where individual congregations would come under a church session consisting of a minister or ministers, together with lay elders who met once a week.<sup>58</sup> Above this was a district presbytery of ministers and representative elders who met monthly under the supervision of a provincial synod of representative ministers who met twice a year, topped by a national or general assembly meeting once a year. Some of the

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<sup>55</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 72.

<sup>56</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 436 ff.

<sup>57</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 106.

Presbyterians were extreme, viewing the Presbyterian system was divinely instituted and therefore essential to the true Church. Others were not as extreme and merely stated that it was the best system.<sup>59</sup> The first statement of a revived Presbyterianism came in 1641. Five Puritan clergy in their reply to Bishop Joseph Hall's defense of the divine right of episcopacy argued from the practices of the Early Church that bishops and presbyters were originally the same. They maintained that no one bishop became chief bishop or president, since the presidency was in many, with parity among them.<sup>60</sup>

Along with the Presbyterians, the Independents evolved as the middle way between what was called Brownism and the Presbyterial government. It is not easy to identify this group precisely, or to know in detail how this group was related to the Separatists who preceded it and the Congregationalists who emerged in the 1640s.<sup>61</sup> Hylson-Smith finds it legitimate to use the term to include both groups, since they were together in asserting the independence of the local congregation from any higher ecclesiastical authority, while at the same time they also believed in the church as the gathering of true believers, bound together by covenant. They also placed church powers in the hands of believers rather than in giving this authority to any secular magistrate.<sup>62</sup> It is not possible to find any belief that was distinctive only to the Independents' standpoint.

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<sup>58</sup> Alexander, *Religion in England*, 177.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander, *Religion in England*, 177.

<sup>60</sup> Hylson-Smith mentions the name of the five Puritan clergy, namely, Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstowe. See Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 1, 170.

<sup>61</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 1, 199.

<sup>62</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 1, 199.

Some of them were willing to keep a parish system with tithes, others advocated gathered churches with their ministers relying on the voluntary contribution of the congregation.<sup>63</sup>

As far as the relationship between Church and State is concerned, Alexander notes that for the Independents:

... there was no clear view either on toleration or on Church-State relationships. The original Congregationalist view was that the civil magistrate has a right and a duty to act as a 'nursing father to the Church' and to 'exercise a defensive power for religion both at home and abroad'.<sup>64</sup>

The Independents did not believe in the divine right and the coercive jurisdiction of the Presbyterian regime, and they realized the fact that England had passed beyond the stage in which it would tolerate an inquisitorial system desired by the Presbyterians.<sup>65</sup> In themselves the Independents contained different shades of opinions. Typically, independents did not believe in any form of ordination and very firmly maintained the independence of each individual congregation. They believed that no congregation or group of congregations could lawfully possess any authority over another congregation.<sup>66</sup>

Bingham's scholarship became a significant means for him to show how he whole-heartedly supported the constitution of the Church of England against these dissenting groups, especially with regards to the Independents. Bingham maintained the divine authority of ordination of bishops and the importance of hierarchy. Even though he did not explicitly write on this key issue of the difference between the Anglican and the

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<sup>63</sup> Alexander, *Religion in England*, 178.

<sup>64</sup> Alexander, *Religion in England*, 178.

<sup>65</sup> Patterson, *History of the Church of England*, 347.

Dissenters, his discussion of the position of bishops and other higher ranking clergy in the Early Church demonstrated that he defended the Anglican position.

In the period of the 1640s and 1650s there was a sense of denominational coherence and exclusiveness among the Baptists. Both the Particular and General Baptists dramatically demonstrated their distinctiveness by administering baptism by total immersion.<sup>67</sup> The Baptists insisted on the establishment of a pure church by baptizing only the ones who were able to profess their faith and conversion. In order to keep themselves pure, the Baptists even ejected those who were proved unworthy according to their standard of belief.<sup>68</sup> They did this, because they perceived the individual churches as the gatherings of people who had been sanctified by the grace of God and called out to be the fellowship of believers. They considered themselves to be “an egalitarian, democratic and consensus society.”<sup>69</sup> Before they baptized new members, they examined prospective members very carefully. They used elaborate procedure to guarantee that only those who could demonstrate their faith and Christian experience were admitted into the church. According to Watts, a prospective member had to undergo a series of interviews, so that the church could be sure that the person repented from past sins, accepted Jesus as Lord, and demonstrated a new Christian life-style, before the person could be baptized.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Patterson, *History of the Church of England*, 347-48.

<sup>67</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 1, 201.

<sup>68</sup> William Edward Collins, *The English Reformation and Its Consequences* (London: SPCK, 1908), 196.

<sup>69</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 1, 201.

<sup>70</sup> Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 316.

The two Baptist groups, even though sharing a very similar position on many of their doctrinal teachings such as the visible church as the gathering of believing people baptized by immersion, actually formed two separate organizations.<sup>71</sup> The General Baptists, the older of the two, was so named following their basic Arminian theological tenet that Christ died for all people thus providing “general redemption” for all. The Particular Baptists were so named on the basis of their Calvinistic heritage and belief that Christ died only for the elect.<sup>72</sup> The difference between these two groups of Baptists, Hylson-Smith observes, outweighed their common views so that friendly communication, let alone co-operation, was impossible. The Particular Baptists condemned the view of general redemption as a heresy.<sup>73</sup>

Bingham’s discussion on Infant Baptism became an important issue with regard to the relationship between the Anglican and the Baptist churches. By the time he wrote his *Origines* the Baptists had become well established as a denomination. Bingham defended the doctrine of Infant Baptism based on the patristic teaching of the doctrine. In the *Origines*, Bingham did not openly attack the position of the Baptists, but he defended the Anglicans’ practice of infant baptism through the writings of the church fathers. He used the earliest patristic documents such as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers to prove that Infant Baptism was an accepted custom even at the time when the Canon of the New

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<sup>71</sup> B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 7.

<sup>72</sup> White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 7.

<sup>73</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 1, 201.

Testament was just closed.<sup>74</sup> Through this historical study he defended the practice of the Church of England and at the same time silently demonstrated his disagreement with the Baptists.

### **5. Relationship between the Dissenters and the Anglicans toward the End of the Seventeenth Century**

The restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 was the time when several religious denominations in England experienced growth and changes. According to Patterson, the events of 1660 meant more than just the restoration of the monarchy and the rejection of the democratic ideals of the Commonwealth. It was also the restoration of the Church of England to its own.<sup>75</sup> If the old Anglican Church was established as the State Church, the church settlement might take any one of three possible forms: toleration might be extended to the Nonconformists, an attempt at enforcing uniformity could be made, or the Anglican communion could be widened by making concessions so that the Dissenters might be comprehended within the church's fold.<sup>76</sup>

With the coming of the Act of Uniformity in 1662 the Puritan clergy had to choose between total submission to episcopacy, or loss of their livings.<sup>77</sup> The Act of Uniformity specified that the use of any service other than the revised Prayer Book was

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<sup>74</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 451.

<sup>75</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 357.

<sup>76</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 358.

<sup>77</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 218.



forbidden:

... every person within this realm may certainly know the rule to which he is to conform in public worship, and administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church of England and the manner how and by whom bishops, priests and deacons are and ought to be made, ordained, and consecrated; be it enacted by the king's most excellent majesty, by the advice and with the consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and of the Commons, . . . that all and singular ministers in any cathedral, collegiate, or parish church or chapel or other place of public worship . . . shall be bound to say and use the Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, celebration and administration of both the sacraments, and all other public and common prayer, in such order and form as is mentioned in the said Book of Common Prayer. . .<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, the Act also required that all clergy take an oath of "unfeigned assent and consent," in front of their congregation, to all and everything that was prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer before the feast of St. Bartholomew's day of that year.<sup>79</sup> Nearly a thousand clergy decided to give up their positions that year, followed by more than two thousand others in the next two years.<sup>80</sup> According to Watts, the clergymen were very reluctant to give up their ministry within the Church of England. They also hoped that the Act would soon be modified to enable them to conform. But this expectation was never realized.<sup>81</sup>

Many of the Dissenters noted that the Book of Common Prayer lacked authority: even when it did not teach incorrect doctrine, it did not and could not have confessional

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<sup>78</sup> "The Uniformity Act A.D. 1662," incorporated in Henry Gee and William John Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 603.

<sup>79</sup> Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 604.

<sup>80</sup> For a detailed description of the number of clergy leaving their ministry and those forced to resign for refusal to accept the act, see Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 219.

<sup>81</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 219.

or biblical authority. The Dissenters reacted strongly to Parliament's attempt to impose the Prayer Book on the nation in the year 1662. This reaction resulted in hostility from the Presbyterians and the Separatists to Anglican liturgy and to set prayers.<sup>82</sup> What is more, the Prayer Book continued to contain disputed practices and assumptions concerning baptism. The debates between the Anglicans and the Dissenters over the 1662 revision of the Prayer Book were reflected in Bingham's arguments from the fathers. In his patristic studies Bingham often made an implicit ratification of the Book of Common Prayer and its revisions.

Charles II favored Roman Catholicism. However, this support was put to an end with the issue of the so-called popish plot. This plot was a rumor of an upcoming second "St. Bartholomew" in England to assassinate the king and to massacre all Protestants. Charles did not want to sacrifice his throne in order to aid Roman Catholicism, and he also saw that it was not possible to re-establish Roman Catholicism in England.<sup>83</sup> According to Mullett, the popish plot was a last attempt to re-invent popery as an incitement to rebellion.<sup>84</sup> During this period, there emerged the two parties in England: the Whigs and the Tories. The Whigs asserted the reality of the popish plot, and intended to exclude a Roman Catholic king from the succession to the throne. They also advocated toleration for the Protestant Nonconformists, while the Tories were the supporters of Anglican supremacy and religious uniformity.<sup>85</sup>

The restoration of the monarchy brought new changes in worship styles. This was

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<sup>82</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 306.

<sup>83</sup> See Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 365.

<sup>84</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 78.

<sup>85</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 366.

partly caused by some leniency given to the Catholics from the secular authorities.<sup>86</sup> If during the time of persecution the Catholics had to conduct their worship in secrecy, using rooms in houses as house-chapels, after 1660 they became more open. In 1672 Charles II issued the Declaration of Indulgence designed to help the Roman Catholics by remitting the penal laws against them. Through this Declaration the Catholics were given permission to continue worshipping in their private houses.<sup>87</sup> In order to gain support from the Dissenters, in this Declaration Charles also granted them the right for public worship. But the Dissenters received the Declaration with mixed feelings. According to Watts, many Dissenters were worried that the information they had to submit about their meeting places and preachers in order to get licenses would one day be used against them. Many Quakers, as well as Baptists and Congregationalists refused to take out their licenses.<sup>88</sup> Thus, according to Gregory, the number of licenses taken out in response to the Declaration of Indulgence in the diocese of Canterbury was not a good indicator to measure the size of dissent.<sup>89</sup> What the Declaration actually did, Gregory adds, was that it encouraged less-committed members of dissenting groups to be more active in supporting nonconformity.<sup>90</sup>

Arguably, the Roman Catholics were the ones gaining the most benefit. Because of this Declaration, Catholic Masses became less streamlined, and the house-chapels were more elaborately furnished, so that while the Mass was celebrated simply, and even

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<sup>86</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 2, 465.

<sup>87</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 76.

<sup>88</sup> Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 248.

<sup>89</sup> Jeremy Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform, 1660-1828. Archbishop of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 193. Gregory concentrates his study on the diocese of Canterbury. However, we can also assume that his conclusion is also indicative of other diocese throughout England.

<sup>90</sup> Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform*, 193.

shabbily, the people celebrated it with great dignity.<sup>91</sup> Mullett notes that because of this royal favor, there was a big increase in the number of Roman Catholics in certain areas considered as the heartlands of Roman Catholicism.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, Mullett also observes that after the king issued the Declaration, many Catholic schools were opened in many parts of England and Scotland.<sup>93</sup>

The Parliament disliked the Declaration of Indulgence. In order to force the withdrawal of the Indulgence it passed the Test Act in 1673.<sup>94</sup> This Act specified that anybody in the military service or working for the civil office living within thirty miles of London must take the Lord's Supper following the rites of the Church of England, within three months of their admittance into the office, or they would lose their employment.<sup>95</sup> The Test Act was a demonstration of the fact that the Parliament prevented anybody from a Roman Catholic background and household from joining any military and civil services.<sup>96</sup> However, the Test Act also caused problems to the Dissenters. As Watts says, over the next thirty years, the High Churchmen and the Dissenters kept on disagreeing on what to do with some Presbyterians and Congregationalists who took the Anglican sacraments in order to qualify for office. Theologically, the Presbyterians did not see this as a problem.<sup>97</sup> In fact, as Gregory demonstrates, many Presbyterians attended both a parish church and a dissenting meeting house. He classifies them as "occasional

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<sup>91</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 2, 465.

<sup>92</sup> Just in Lancashire alone, there was an expansion of recusants from 5,216 in 1667/8 to 5,782 in 1678/9, and to 6,206 in 1682. See Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 76.

<sup>93</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 127.

<sup>94</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 251.

<sup>95</sup> "The Test Act, A.D. 1673," in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 633-34.

<sup>96</sup> "The Test Act, A.D. 1673."

<sup>97</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 265.

dissenters.”<sup>98</sup> Charles II died in 1685, professing to be a Roman Catholic on his deathbed. He received the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>99</sup> James II was crowned as the successor of his brother. According to Tumbleson, the accession of James II was facilitated by the extravagancies of the popish plot. The proponents of the so-called “Protestant Succession” were discredited by the plot.<sup>100</sup>

## II. Bingham’s Immediate Historical Background

### 1. The Reign of James II

James II accessed the throne with the establishment of Roman Catholicism as his main goal. James’ efforts to achieve his goals were vigorous but tactless. He ignored the Test Act, employed Roman Catholics in military and civil service, and brought in Jesuits and Catholic Monks. According to Spurr, James believed that the English people would be eager to embrace Catholicism again, if only they were given a chance. James hoped to establish the Roman Catholic Church on an equal balance with the Anglican Church.<sup>101</sup> Prall, however, disagrees with such a view. He thinks that subsequent events during the reign of James II proved otherwise. According to Prall, the Declaration of Indulgence and the use of the Court of High Commission did not bring about Roman Catholic equality; the significant infiltration of strong proponents of Catholicism into public office brought

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<sup>98</sup> Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform, 1660-1828.*, 195.

<sup>99</sup> Stuart Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution: England, 1688* (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 89.

<sup>100</sup> Raymond D. Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination: Nationalism, Religion, and Literature, 1660-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 84.

<sup>101</sup> John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 92.

about the change.<sup>102</sup>

Early in James' reign there was a rise in the publication of Catholic pamphlets, covering significant issues in Catholic theology such as the relationship between tradition and Scripture, the defense of transubstantiation, and the questioning of the validity of Anglican orders.<sup>103</sup> These publications, according to Tumbleson, received acrimonious attacks from Anglican theologians. The attacks were mostly directed against the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>104</sup> James II openly demonstrated that he supported Roman Catholicism. Some of his actions, as Mullett mentions, included the liturgical splendor of his Whitehall chapel, the establishment of the Birmingham Franciscan Chapel with its humongous structure and the painting of the resurrected Jesus and Mary Magdalene, and the building of other comparably spectacular Roman Catholic churches in other regions.<sup>105</sup> According to Gregory, during the reign of James II, many gentry families maintained the Catholic cause in the diocese of Canterbury, even though they remained in the rural areas.<sup>106</sup>

James II issued the Declaration of Indulgence in April 1687 to grant complete religious toleration. This Indulgence was then republished in April of 1688 with an order that bishops should instruct the clergy to read it after services on Sundays May 20 and 27

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<sup>102</sup> Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 128.

<sup>103</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 79.

<sup>104</sup> Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination*, 117.

<sup>105</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland*, 79.

<sup>106</sup> Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform*, 206.

in London, and June 3 and 10 in the villages.<sup>107</sup> The language of the Indulgence demonstrated that James II deliberately disregarded the Test Act of the Parliament. It stated that the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, as well as several tests and declarations mentioned in the Acts of Parliament “shall not at any time hereafter be required to be taken, declared, or subscribed by any person or persons whatsoever, who is or shall be employed in any office or place of trust, either civil or military.”<sup>108</sup>

The Declaration of Indulgence lifted all the execution of penal laws in ecclesiastical matters for people who did not attend worship services in the Church of England and receiving the sacrament there, or for any other nonconformity to the established religion.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, it also guaranteed that the government would freely let everybody

... meet and serve God after their own way and manner, be it in private houses or places purposely hired or built for that use, so that they take especial care that nothing be preached or taught amongst them, which may any way tend to alienate the hearts of [the] people from [the] government, and that their meetings and assemblies be peaceably, openly and publicly held, and all persons freely admitted to them ...<sup>110</sup>

From what it stated the Indulgence sounded friendly to all religious groups in England. However, looking at the specific statement about meeting in private houses one can infer that this document was targeted specifically to aid the Roman Catholics. Prall

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<sup>107</sup> Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 641.

<sup>108</sup> “The Declaration of Indulgence, 1687,” in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 643.

<sup>109</sup> “The Declaration of Indulgence, 1687.”

<sup>110</sup> “The Declaration of Indulgence, 1687.”

states that the Dissenters only showed lukewarm response to the Declaration.<sup>111</sup> James' move in issuing the Indulgence was his fall back on Charles' old idea of restoring Roman Catholicism under the mask of complete toleration to all parties. Detecting the king's motivation behind the Indulgence, the Protestants were alarmed and the majority of the Dissenters, even though relieved from difficulty, refused to support the Indulgence.<sup>112</sup> According to Watts, the decision also enabled an establishment of an ecclesiastical commission to enforce a Catholic-friendly policy on the Church of England.<sup>113</sup>

James' abandonment of the Test Act enabled the Roman Catholics to hold high office. In fact, as Kenyon notes, as early as 1685, James had taken a step to relieve Roman Catholic army officers from compliance with the Test Act.<sup>114</sup>

Clergymen's expression of dislike of the Declaration of Indulgence was made open when they protested James' command that the Declaration be read in churches after the Sunday morning services. These clergymen were in a difficult situation. There had been a long standing tradition that the clergy could be required to read public documents in the church. James had the right to require the clergy to read the Declaration. In this case, however, James was using his right as the supreme head of the church to order the clergy to do something that was equivalent to the destruction of the Anglican Church,

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<sup>111</sup> Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 146.

<sup>112</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 369.

<sup>113</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 257.

<sup>114</sup> J. P. Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution: Documents and Commentary 1603-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 402.



which, by law, they were called to defend and protect.<sup>115</sup>

Seven bishops refused to comply with the king's instruction with the result that the Indulgence was read only in a very few churches. Where it was read, congregations often left the church without listening. The seven bishops were: Sancroft of Canterbury, Lloyd of St. Asaph, Turner of Ely, Lake of Chichester, Ken of Bath and Wells, White of Peterborough, and Trelawney of Bristol.<sup>116</sup> In response, the king imprisoned the seven bishops in the Tower of London. They were tried for "seditious libel."<sup>117</sup> However, to the delight of Protestants and the Parliament, they were found not guilty. According to Spurr, a big crowd cheered when the "not guilty" verdict was read by Sir Roger Langley, on Saturday, June 30.<sup>118</sup> Watts notes that the bishops' refusal to publicize the Indulgence was preceded by an agreement with the Dissenting ministers in London. In their petition to the king, the bishops rejected "any want of due tenderness towards the Dissenters."<sup>119</sup> Watts also adds that after the incident, there was much sympathy directed toward the Dissenters. He remarks that after Sancroft was released from the Tower, the Archbishop urged his clergy to be friendlier to the Dissenters, and to assure them that Anglican bishops were against the errors and superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church. Watts concludes that the unfortunate reign of James II not only gave the Dissenters freedom of worship, but also broke the Anglican intolerance. When William III accessed the throne, more permanent toleration toward the Dissenters was possible.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 184.

<sup>116</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 370.

<sup>117</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 259.

<sup>118</sup> John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689*, 96.

<sup>119</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 259.

<sup>120</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 259.

Of these seven bishops, Trelawney became a significant figure in Bingham's ministry and scholarly works. The point is of church political interest, since, unlike the majority of the seven, Trelawney did not become a non-juror, but swore allegiance to the new monarchy. Trelawney later became the bishop of Winchester at the time when Bingham actively published his books. The close relationship between Bingham and his bishop was indicative that Bingham supported the bishop's position. Among other things, Bingham's dislike of the Roman Catholic practices, and, by extension, of the catholicizing tendencies of the non-jurors, appeared in his *Origines* despite the claim to objectivity found in the "Preface" of the first volume of his masterpiece.<sup>121</sup>

## 2. The Church of England under William and Mary

The breaking-point of the loyalty of the British people toward James II was reflected through the decision of both the Whig and the Tory parties to invite William of Orange, the king's son-in-law and the stadholder of the Netherlands, to bring an army that would protect English freedom and Protestantism in the country. William and his army landed in England on November 5, 1688, and James fled to France. James' flight to France was the sign that a revolution had been accomplished, and on February 13, 1689 William III and Mary were proclaimed joint sovereigns of England. The coronation was held on April 11. According to Claydon, in that coronation, the reformation was used to reinforce the dignity and authority of the nation's new masters.<sup>122</sup> In their decision made on February 22, 1689, the Convention Parliament decided that after March 1 of the same year all members of both Houses must take the Oath of Allegiance to William and

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<sup>121</sup> See "Preface," in *Works*, vol. 1, i ff.

<sup>122</sup> Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 61.

Mary.<sup>123</sup> This decision was written in “The Bill of Rights, 1689”.<sup>124</sup> This oath of allegiance and supremacy required that all subjects receive William and Mary as their sovereign and reject all the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>125</sup>

Not all bishops and clergy of England agreed to take this oath of allegiance and supremacy to William and Mary because they had previously taken the oath to James II. They believed that their oath to James had been given under divine sanction and nothing could release them from its consequences.<sup>126</sup> Claydon notes that it was not easy for many British people to transfer their oath to William III. They accepted direct inheritance as the only acceptable and legitimate way of accessing the throne. Even if one accepted that James II had abandoned the throne by fleeing the country, the succession should have been passed to his infant son. If one thought that it was impossible to pass the throne to the infant son, then Mary, James’ daughter should have been the queen, and William should only gain power as his wife’s husband.<sup>127</sup>

Interestingly, of the bishops who refused to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, five were from the famous seven bishops who opposed James’ command to read the Declaration of Indulgence in their churches. These five bishops were: Archbishop Sancroft, Ken of Bath and Wells, Turner of Ely, Lake of Chichester, and

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<sup>123</sup> S. C. Carpenter, *Eighteenth-Century Church and People* (London: John Murray, 1959), 56.

<sup>124</sup> See “The Bill of Rights, A.D. 1689,” in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 645-54.

<sup>125</sup> “The Bill of Rights, A.D. 1689,” in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 645-54.

<sup>126</sup> J. W. C. Wand, *The High Church Schism: Four Lectures on the Nonjurors* (London: The Faith Press, 1951), 8. Wand sees that the bishops were willing to accept William as Regent, but they could not receive him as king, since it would break their oath.

<sup>127</sup> Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*, 10.

White of Peterborough.<sup>128</sup> These five were joined by four other bishops, namely Cartwright of Chester, Lloyd of Norwich, Thomas of Worcester, and Frampton of Gloucester.<sup>129</sup> Thomas, Lake and Cartwright died before the time required for the oath of allegiance came, and this left six of the bishops to refuse the oath to the new sovereigns.<sup>130</sup> The Act of the Parliament regulated that all Ecclesiastical persons had to take the oath before the first of August 1689, with the risk of suspension of their posts. They were given six months after suspension before the deprivation, so that the final date for them to comply was the first of February 1690, before they were finally deposed from their ecclesiastical responsibilities.<sup>131</sup>

Sancroft and the other bishops were soon joined by about four hundred more clergy. They formed the Nonjuror party. Spurr comments that these Nonjurors were insulted by the violation of the divine right of the monarchy, by the Toleration Act, by the illegal and uncanonical removal of the bishops, and by the weakening of the liturgy.<sup>132</sup> The Nonjurors affirmed that the church relied exclusively on the independent succession of the episcopate. Therefore, they began to consecrate their own bishops.<sup>133</sup>

The one question remaining about the deprived bishops and clergy of this Nonjuror party was their relationship to the Church of England. Were they to continue in

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<sup>128</sup> Carpenter, *Eighteenth-Century Church and People*, 56.

<sup>129</sup> Thomas Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors: Their Controversies and Writings; with Remarks on Some of the Rubrics in the Book of Common Prayer* (London: William Pickering, 1845), 45.

<sup>130</sup> Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors*, 45.

<sup>131</sup> Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors*, 45.

<sup>132</sup> Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, 104.

<sup>133</sup> Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, 164.

communion with the Anglican Church as private persons, or were they to exercise their office as they might be able, or were they to separate themselves from the Church completely?<sup>134</sup> Lathbury finds that the answer to this question varied, depending on the reason of their dissent. Those who dissented for political reasons did not disturb themselves with the religious point. Some expressed their disruption publicly on the churches at the prayers for the new sovereigns, while others thought such a practice unlawful.<sup>135</sup> Still others attended parish churches on the ground of necessity, and some remained at the public assemblies. Many continued to worship in the parish churches, though they did not approve of the changes that had been made. However, the more strenuous Nonjurors disagreed with such compromise, since they argued for a separation from the established church.<sup>136</sup> This development is particularly important for understanding Bingham's politics, given that his patron, Trelawney, favored the accession of William and Mary over against the other seven (excepting Lake of St. Asaph).

The revolution of 1688 also brought with it limited toleration to Protestant Dissenters. By the Toleration Act of May 24 1689, all those who swore or affirmed the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, rejected Roman Catholicism including attending the Mass, and subscribed to the Thirty Nine Articles would be granted freedom of worship.<sup>137</sup> However, according to Claydon, even with the Toleration Act, the nonconformists' place in society was still ambiguous.<sup>138</sup> The measure of toleration granted to the nonconformists was so worded that it simply suspended the penalties for

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<sup>134</sup> Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors*, 92.

<sup>135</sup> Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors*, 93.

<sup>136</sup> Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors*, 94.

<sup>137</sup> "The Toleration Act, A.D. 1689," in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 655.

<sup>138</sup> Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*, 179.

dissent. But the Test Act remained to exclude non-Anglicans from holding public office.<sup>139</sup>

The Toleration Act nullified the Act of Uniformity issued under Charles II. It also guaranteed that the nonconformists who had pledged the oath were free to worship “provided that such person shall not at any time preach in any place, but with the doors not locked, barred or bolted...”<sup>140</sup> The Act also secured freedom to the Baptists, even though they had a different view with regard to infant baptism as governed by article twenty seven of the Thirty-Nine Articles. The Act says:

And whereas some dissenting Protestants scruple the baptizing of infants; be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that every person in pretended Holy Orders, or pretending to Holy Orders, or preacher, or teacher, that shall subscribe the aforesaid Articles of Religion, except before excepted, and also except part of the seven-and-twentieth Article touching infant baptism, and shall take the said oaths, and make and subscribe the declaration aforesaid, every such person shall enjoy all the privileges, benefits, and advantages which any other dissenting minister, as aforesaid, might have or enjoy by virtue of this Act.<sup>141</sup>

According to Watts, the Glorious Revolution gave orthodox Dissenters legal freedom to worship, but still, it did not give them civil equality.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, as Prall mentions, even though the Toleration Act made Dissenting worship legal, it now required that the services not be conducted behind closed doors. So, the Dissenters still had to pay a price. Previously, they had to do their services behind closed doors, now the Act forbade them

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<sup>139</sup> Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*, 179.

<sup>140</sup> “The Toleration Act, A.D. 1689,” in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 655.

<sup>141</sup> “The Toleration Act, A.D. 1689,” in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 655.

<sup>142</sup> Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, 260.

from closing the doors.<sup>143</sup>

There also remained another dimension with the Toleration Act. As Gregory remarks, the Act marked a break in the relationship between Anglican clergy and the nonconformists only in legal terms.<sup>144</sup> At the parish level the distinction between the Anglicans and the dissenters remained blurry. In the minds of parish clergy, Gregory further says, the ideal of a national church still continued, and they never gave up the claim that they were responsible for the pastoral care of the whole parish. In this context, many dissenters were won over through the efforts of individual clergy.<sup>145</sup>

Bingham did not react directly to the Toleration Act. However, through his discussion of the ancient form of baptism, especially his elaborate description of the practice and rituals of infant baptism in the Early Church one can see that he wholeheartedly defended the significance of infant baptism. As will be clear in chapters four and five of this dissertation, Bingham valued the efficacy of infant baptism very highly, the same way the early church fathers saw it.

During the reign of William and Mary, the Dissenters made up about ten percent of the population of England and were divided mainly among the three “old denominations,” namely the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and the Baptists. Even though they were still bound to pay tithes and responsible to other parochial duties,<sup>146</sup> the nonconformists had received some religious freedom through this Act. Claydon notes that the Dissenters seemed to be thriving under the new regime. This was caused by the fact that toleration removed nonconformists’ need for discretion, so that their size, wealth, and

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<sup>143</sup> Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 283.

<sup>144</sup> Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform*, 207.

<sup>145</sup> Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform*, 207.

<sup>146</sup> “The Toleration Act,” in Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 657.

influence became clearly seen.<sup>147</sup> The religious settlement brought by the Glorious Revolution had a significant impact on the Anglican Church. It reduced the Church of England from the national church to just the established church.<sup>148</sup>

The only ecclesiastical body who did not benefit from the Toleration Act was the Roman Catholic Church, whose relief came much later, in 1778 and was completed in 1828.<sup>149</sup> What the Act created, in Scott Mandelbrote's view, was "a religious marketplace in eighteenth-century England even if it did not end the search for genuine freedom of conscience."<sup>150</sup> Cornwall observes that the Act of Toleration still required the dissenting groups to register their meeting places, to subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles, to take an oath of allegiance to William and Mary, and to reject the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, Cornwall concludes:

It is a mistake to believe that the passage of the Toleration bill marked a glorious new age of religious freedom. Any freedom granted to the Nonconformists by the establishment was done grudgingly, and it did not include the Roman Catholics, who were seen as a threat to the state. While the Toleration Act of 1689 made it easier for Dissenters to meet for worship, and strictures against publishing gradually disappeared, the Dissenters remained second-class citizens in the new English state.<sup>152</sup>

The mixture of feeling of insecurity and of liberty produced by the Toleration Act was reflected in both the growth of the number of Dissenters' meeting houses, especially that of the Presbyterians, and the locations of these houses. Hylson-Smith reports that

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<sup>147</sup> Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*, 188.

<sup>148</sup> Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, 104.

<sup>149</sup> B. Norling, "Nonconformist," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, 490.

<sup>150</sup> Scott Mandelbrote, "Religious Belief and the Politics of Toleration in the Late Seventeenth Century," *Dutch Review of Church History* 81 (2001): 101.

<sup>151</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 34.



while the Presbyterians rapidly built their places of worship all over the country, those meeting houses were hidden away from the main streets, so that they did not create unnecessary provocation from their opponents.<sup>153</sup> The same was also true for the Congregationalists. Their meeting houses were mostly hidden behind rows of big houses and the congregations entered through narrow alleys between the houses. From the outside these houses did not look any different from domestic houses.<sup>154</sup> The Baptists' experience was not so much different. Even though they were not insignificant among the group of the Nonconformists, both the General and the Particular Baptists still could not respond freely to the challenge of the new opportunity.<sup>155</sup>

In contrast to the meeting places of the Dissenters, the architectural designs of the Anglican churches remained grand and elaborate. Davies records that the architecture was reflective of the emphasis on the dramatic altar and the significance of symbolism.<sup>156</sup> Bingham's description of the architecture of the primitive church buildings was another example of how he viewed the faithfulness of the Anglican Church to the Church of antiquity. At the same time it also shows that the established church of England had the freedom of maintaining the traditional form as well as the grandeur of the church buildings from ages past, since they, unlike the Dissenting parties, are the more privileged

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<sup>152</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 35.

<sup>153</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 2, 57.

<sup>154</sup> Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England*, vol. 2, 61.

<sup>155</sup> Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 12.

<sup>156</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 4, 45.

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Throughout this period of change and development in the British ecclesiastical arena, Bingham remained faithful to the established Church of England. The *Origines* was his tool by which he demonstrated his support of the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles. It was necessary for him to show his total support of his church, given his tainted past at Oxford. The only way he could demonstrate his orthodoxy was through a complete loyalty to the Church of England. Through the study of the church fathers he defended the practices of the Church of England against the charges of the Dissenting groups. In so doing, he, too, regained his reputation as a true and trustworthy servant of his church and approval of his authority.

### **3. Early Eighteenth-Century Ecclesiological Background to Bingham's Scholarship**

Queen Anne ascended the throne in 1702, and many saw that the new Queen would bring hope for permanent gain in the Church of England.<sup>157</sup> Anne herself was a devoted, intelligent churchwoman.<sup>158</sup> As a devoted Christian, Anne maintained the Church in full privilege and she practiced her religion with passion, with a habit of receiving Holy Communion every first Sunday of the month.<sup>159</sup> In contrast with Mary

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<sup>157</sup> Carpenter, *Eighteenth-Century Church and People*, 71.

<sup>158</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 375.

<sup>159</sup> Carpenter, *Eighteenth-Century*, 73.

before her, Anne was not over-shadowed by a Calvinist husband. Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark, was a Lutheran who had his own chapel, but in public he was conformed to the Church of England.<sup>160</sup>

At the beginning of Anne's reign, when the New Parliament was called, the majority were the Tories. However, according to Lathbury, at that time there were four parties in the state, all possessing somewhat equal influence: the Tories, the Whigs, the Roman Catholics and the Nonjurors.<sup>161</sup> Lathbury further mentions that the Tories were the friends of the Church of England, while the Whigs were more inclined towards the Dissenters.<sup>162</sup> Jeffrey Chamberlain argues that to be a High Churchman one was also a Tory, and vice versa, because at the time of Anne's reign religious and political lives were so interwoven that people called High Churchmen "Tories at Prayer."<sup>163</sup> Anne was by nature a Tory.<sup>164</sup> In the early years of the eighteenth century, the Nonjuror party was divided. Some saw, after the death of James II, that they could rejoin the Church of England and accept Anne as their Queen, while others held that their oath to James II bound them to support his descendants.<sup>165</sup>

The High Church Tories were loyal to the church. As Chamberlain argues, this

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<sup>160</sup> Carpenter, *Eighteenth-Century*, 72.

<sup>161</sup> Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors*, 188.

<sup>162</sup> Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors*, 188.

<sup>163</sup> Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen: The Clergy of Sussex, 1700-1745* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 13.

<sup>164</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 376.

<sup>165</sup> Norling, "Nonjurors," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, 491.

loyalty was focused on a particular vision of the church as episcopal, sacramental, liturgical and uniform.<sup>166</sup> Moreover, Chamberlain notes, many High Churchmen at the beginning of the eighteenth century held that episcopacy was the correct polity for the church to the point that it was the *jus divinum*, “the law of God,” and when some were not as doctrinaire about it, they always maintained a high view of episcopacy.<sup>167</sup> Bingham probably was this second sort of High Churchman. In his writings he did not go so far as asserting the divine origin of episcopacy, but he maintained that the office of bishops in the Early Church was in unbroken continuity with the New Testament Apostles, and that some bishops in the earliest history of Christianity were even called “apostles.”<sup>168</sup>

For early eighteenth-century High Churchmen, divine-right episcopacy was based on the Great Commission. They saw the unbroken connection between Christ’s command to the disciples to spread the Gospel and to baptize believers and the authority held by bishops in the present day. On this topic Cornwall notes that for some High Churchmen the divine standing of the episcopate was closely connected to the understanding that the welfare of the church depended on the bishops who were the guarantors of efficacious sacraments.<sup>169</sup> On matters concerning baptism this issue later on developed into the controversy over lay baptism. Since only the Church of England retained the divinely ordained episcopate, the argument went, the Dissenters were excluded from this institution, and thus their ministries and sacraments were invalid.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen*, 14.

<sup>167</sup> Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen*, 14.

<sup>168</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 65.

<sup>169</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 107.

<sup>170</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 108.

Because of Anne's support, the Tories were in power as long as she ruled, especially in the last four years of her reign 1710-1714.<sup>171</sup> During this time the Anglicans and the Tories used their power to proscribe their political opponents. The Parliament passed the Occasional Conformity Act in 1711, regulating that all officials who attended nonconformist places of worship would be fined and deprived of their offices. The Occasional Conformity Act was a struggle for power. Before Anne became Queen in February 1702, the Parliament introduced a Bill compelling all officials to remain in the communion of the Church of England. The Bill was defeated by the combined votes of the Whigs and the moderate Tories.<sup>172</sup> But in the first Parliament in Anne's reign, the same amendment was reintroduced. Both the Anglicans and the Dissenters disagreed on the usefulness of the Act. Some Anglicans saw it as an important step to defend the sacraments from profanation by enemies. But, as Every mentions, some Anglicans considered it "a healing custom" in order to bring the Dissenters back to communion.<sup>173</sup> Some Dissenters, however, regarded it as betrayal of the very foundation upon which their separation was founded. Other Dissenters, seeking moderation, maintained that as long as they stayed in communion with the parish churches they were not schismatic. They thought that they were only irregular ministers who could not agree with the Anglicans' requirements for ordination. They did not object to lay communion with the Church of England. The High Churchmen, however, used this argument to charge the

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<sup>171</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 377.

<sup>172</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 109.

<sup>173</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 110.

Dissenters as schismatics, and as far as divine right of episcopacy was concerned, they were lay people, and their ministrations, especially baptism were considered invalid.<sup>174</sup>

Roger Laurence used this line of argument as he argued for the invalidity of lay baptism.<sup>175</sup>

Bingham distinguished between the invalidity and irregularity of such baptism.<sup>176</sup> Here we find in him an example of a High Churchman who held a high view of episcopacy, but coupled it with the ability to see the right way of distinguishing the issue.

The years of Anne's reign were also the time when Bingham was in a very productive stage in publishing his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*. Between the years 1708 and 1714, he published the first four volumes of this book.<sup>177</sup> These volumes dealt with the clergy, ordination, and the rites of the ancient church respectively. Looking at the religious and political situation of the time when these three volumes appeared, we can assume that Bingham wrote them as a reinforcement of what the Anglican Church stood for. It was so fitting for him to teach his congregation, given the political tone of his day, that the Anglican Church supported by her Queen stood together with the Ancient Church, and that the teaching of the Church that he upheld was the teaching of the one true church rooted in antiquity.

As the elite groups of the country were busy with religion and politics, clergymen struggled with their daily living. There was poverty in the lower ranks of country parsons.

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<sup>174</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 110.

<sup>175</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 67-69.

<sup>176</sup> See the discussion in chapter six of this dissertation.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the majority of the lower clergymen received only thirty pounds a year as their typical income; in some cases the stipends were even lower.<sup>178</sup> This was caused by the fact that many of the clergymen in the country came from a very low social status. However, the clergy of the towns and the bishops were able to enjoy better living. In comparison, we find that Bingham was in a better position than the majority of these country clergy. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, Bingham received a stipend of one hundred pounds a year when he was appointed the rector of Headbourn-Worthy after his forced resignation as a fellow at Oxford. This stipend, even though not a very large amount of money, enabled him to live well and be productive in his writing. In his *Origines* Bingham expressed his concerns about the lower clergy. He devoted volume two to a discussion of the ministry and the devotion of the lower clergy in the Early Church as an encouragement for those faithfully serving the Anglican Church with such minimum stipend.

The brightest feature of church life at the turning of the century was the emergence of some societies which were concerned with morality, the gospel, and mission.<sup>179</sup> Of these societies two deserve special attention for their contribution to the mission work of that era. One was the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (abbreviated SPCK), established in 1698 with an aim of spreading the gospel, diffusing Christian education, and supplying good literature. Williams notes that the Society made

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<sup>177</sup> See chapter three of this dissertation.

<sup>178</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 378.

<sup>179</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 378.

a tremendous success in establishing charity schools at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.<sup>180</sup> Gregory suggests that the SPCK gained much support from the more High Church and Tory Clergy, even though he also notes that the Society was supported by all shades of Churchmanship.<sup>181</sup> The other was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, founded in 1701.<sup>182</sup> Bishops and clergy were hopeful that the founding of these societies would bring growth in zeal and Christian devotion.<sup>183</sup> Besides, they also hoped that these societies would prevent the flow of scandalous books printed at home and imported from abroad, as well as immoralities of the stage.<sup>184</sup> The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts even had more significance in relation to Bingham's work. As we shall see in chapter three of this dissertation, the summary of Bingham's *Origines*, published by Blackamore, was dedicated to this society, without the permission of the author.<sup>185</sup> Bingham was not pleased with this situation. In his view Blackamore used the opportunity to gain wealth for himself.

Meanwhile, issues about sacraments, both the Lord's Supper and Baptism remained heated ones during this time period. Some dissenters who considered themselves "non-conforming members of the Church of England" from time to time took

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<sup>180</sup> Basil Williams, *The Whig Supremacy 1714-1760*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 141.

<sup>181</sup> Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform*, 243.

<sup>182</sup> Patterson, *A History of the Church of England*, 379.

<sup>183</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 136.

<sup>184</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 136.

<sup>185</sup> See chapter three, sub-section 3A.



the Holy Communion and heard Anglican sermons in the Parish Church.<sup>186</sup> This practice was considered a legal condition for holding office, but the problem was that these people did it only for formality and often insincerely so that it was thought of as a dirty trick. The practice also caused some division among the Nonconformists.<sup>187</sup> This was an illustration that there was a gradual decay of sacramental life in the Church of England. There was uncertainty as to how often the communion had to be celebrated. Some High Churchmen, and also some Nonjurors wanted a daily celebration of the Eucharist, but there is no proof that this ever happened.<sup>188</sup> Some churches celebrated it once a month and pious Anglicans often felt that was enough. Most people in the country parishes celebrated the sacrament only four times a year: at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and after the collection of the harvest.<sup>189</sup> High Churchmen emphasized the importance of the sacraments, since they believed that God's grace came through the sacraments. Chamberlain comments that early eighteenth-century High Churchmen derived this emphasis from Laud, and they held that the administration of the sacraments had to be offered "with decorum and high ritual."<sup>190</sup>

Compared to the Anglicans, the celebrations of sacraments among the Dissenters, especially the Independents and the Presbyterians, were much simpler. Celebrated once a month, the Eucharist was always led by the minister. The Eucharist started with the institution taken either from the Gospel of Matthew or from 1 Corinthians, then the breaking of the bread and the declaration of the remembrance of the body of Christ

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<sup>186</sup> Carpenter, *Eighteenth-Century*, 81.

<sup>187</sup> Carpenter, *Eighteenth-Century*, 81.

<sup>188</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 3, 62.

<sup>189</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 3, 62.

<sup>190</sup> Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen*, 14.

broken for His people followed, and finally the minister distributed the bread to the deacons who carried it to the congregation. After the bread was distributed and eaten, the minister poured the wine into a cup, asked the blessing for the cup, and then distributed the cups to the deacons who brought them to the congregation. Following the celebration of the Eucharist, the people sang a psalm or a hymn suited to the sacrament.<sup>191</sup> Davies notes that the celebration of the sacrament in these churches was a combination of fixity and fluidity. The fixed elements were the institution narrative, the breaking of bread and the pouring of wine, the distribution and the offertory. The varying elements were the choice of the institution narrative, and the content of the prayers suited to the condition of the congregation.<sup>192</sup>

Baptism in the dissenting churches was marked with equal simplicity. The most essential elements in their baptismal service were the explanation of the meaning of baptism and its biblical basis. These two elements were then followed by explicit or implicit charge to the parents that they would instruct the child in the rudiments of Christian belief, behavior and worship. A prayer for the child that he or she may receive the blessing of the covenant was offered prior to the baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The ceremony was concluded with the declaration that the child was accepted into Christ's church.<sup>193</sup> In contrast to the simplicity of this baptismal rite, the baptism ceremony in the Anglican Church was more elaborate. Bingham's lengthy

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<sup>191</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 3, 102.

<sup>192</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 3, 103.

<sup>193</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, vol. 3, 104.

explanation of how the Early Church performed baptism, both of infants and adults, was his way of demonstrating the fact that the Anglican baptismal rite was rooted in antiquity.

The last three years of Anne's reign saw yet another issue of Trinitarian controversy. Under the influence of Samuel Clarke, the rector of St. James's Westminster, the expression of "one substance" in the Trinity was again questioned.<sup>194</sup> Clarke presented his objection to the traditional doctrine of the Trinity in his book, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, published in 1712.<sup>195</sup> Clarke caused a scandal by not celebrating the Holy Communion on Trinity Sunday 1713.<sup>196</sup> The matter was discussed in Convocation on June 2, 1714. In the Convocation the House of Commons asked the bishops to take action. The bishops took action by asking for more detailed censure. Clarke defended himself in a letter in which he cited the church fathers as well as the work of Sherlock.<sup>197</sup> In a more formal way, on July 2 of the same year, he also promised that he would not preach on the subject again and that should he offend again, he agreed to be censured. Every notes that Clarke's case took a great deal of time in the Parliament.<sup>198</sup> This is a reflection of how the churchmen were worried about the threat of heresy. The Trinitarian controversy during the last decade of the seventeenth century was still fresh in the minds of many of the churchmen.

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<sup>194</sup> For an elaborate discussion of Clarke's anti-trinitarianism, see Thomas Pfizenmaier's *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>195</sup> Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity. In three parts. Wherein all the texts in the New Testament relating to that doctrine and the principal passages in the liturgy of the Church of England, are collected, compared and explained* (London: printed for J. Knapton, 1712).

<sup>196</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 154.

<sup>197</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 154.

<sup>198</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 155.

Bingham was silent on all these issues in the Trinitarian controversy, even though there is no doubt that he followed the matter closely. As somebody who had been in such controversy before, he must have preferred staying away from the problem. His reaction was probably best seen in the way he defended the necessity of having the Trinitarian formula in baptism, following the tradition of the Ancient Church.<sup>199</sup> In his *Origines* not only did he attempt to show that the Trinitarian formula was the only accepted form in the Early Church, but he also argued with some contemporary authors who indicated that some church fathers accepted a non-Trinitarian formula.<sup>200</sup> In this way he was able to show that he upheld the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity without entangling himself in lengthy debate over the matter.

#### 4. The Immediate Context of Bingham's Ecclesiastical and Scholarly Work

Tensions between the Anglican and the dissenting groups were still very sharp when Bingham devoted his life to church ministry and scholarly work. Bingham's defense of the Anglican position against the Dissenters was mainly demonstrated through his book, *The French Church's Apology for the Church of England*, published in 1706.<sup>201</sup> He wrote this treatise as a reaction to the work of John Quick, a Presbyterian minister

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<sup>199</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 425 ff.

<sup>200</sup> For a more elaborate discussion, see chapter five of this dissertation.

<sup>201</sup> Joseph Bingham, *The French Church's Apology for the Church of England; or, the Objections of Dissenters against the Articles, Homilies, Liturgy, and Canons of the English Church, Consider'd and Answer'd upon the Principles of the Reformed Church of France. A Work Chiefly Extracted out of the Authentick Acts and Decrees of the French National Synods* (London: printed for R. Knaplock, 1706). See also *Works*, vol. 9, 1-314.

from London.<sup>202</sup> In his book, Quick, as many other Presbyterian ministers of his age, blamed the Anglican Church for not following the teaching of the Reformation in matters concerning doctrine, worship, discipline and government.<sup>203</sup> Quick's accusation is but one example of the Dissenters' distaste for the Anglican Church, a distaste rooted in the *Admonition* and still alive at the end of the seventeenth century. In Quick's opinion the Reformed Church of France set the best example of how the Anglican Church should be reformed. In reply to Quick, Bingham held that there was no fundamental doctrinal difference between the Church of England and the Reformed Church of France.<sup>204</sup> If there were things which were different in the French Church, it was because each had its unique practices and no church should follow the example of the other:

In most things they are agreed: and in such things wherein the French Church differs from ours, she owns there is no necessity our Church should be tied to follow her example. For in some things, she freely owns our church to be more happy and perfect than herself: and in other points, wherein they have different usages, that our Church's practice is no more to be condemned than her own; because every Church has power in such things to prescribe for herself, and is not bound to take her model from the example of any other.<sup>205</sup>

A proper comparison between the Church of England and the Reformed Church of France would in the end prove, in Bingham's opinion, that a nonconformist in England would be a nonconformist in France as well.<sup>206</sup> Bingham did not want to debate the issue of separation with the Dissenters. He argued that he only sought peace for the church and

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<sup>202</sup> John Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata* (London, 1692).

<sup>203</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 6.

<sup>204</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 6.

<sup>205</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 7.

that he was willing to sacrifice his own interests as long as it worked toward reuniting the Dissenters into communion albeit without sacrificing the Book of Common Prayer and its rubrics.<sup>207</sup> By using the writings of the church fathers, Bingham was able to demonstrate that both churches came from the same root. Here again, the patristic justification of Anglican practice as normative was crucial to Bingham's stance.

In order to show that both churches were not so different from each other, Bingham drew similarities between the two, mentioning significant points of similarity such as ecclesiastical synods to preserve the unity of the church<sup>208</sup> and required subscription and oaths.<sup>209</sup> He took time to explain that both churches closely followed well-developed liturgies and that strict liturgical orders as reflected in the Prayer Book were not exclusively practiced in the Anglican Church.<sup>210</sup> Moreover he pointed out that:

... conformity and uniformity is no less strictly required by the rules of the French Church than it is by the English. The same subscriptions and oaths, and assent and consent, and vows and covenants, and canonical obedience, are exacted of the French ministers, as are of us here; and he that will not or cannot, comply with those conditions, can regularly be no minister of the French Church.<sup>211</sup>

The question of the sign of the cross in baptism reappeared with the publication of

<sup>206</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 7.

<sup>207</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 8.

<sup>208</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 13.

<sup>209</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 19.

<sup>210</sup> Bingham discussed this issue in book 3 of the *French Church's Apology*. See *Works*, vol. 9, 103-214.

<sup>211</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 307.

Richard Baxter's *English Nonconformity*.<sup>212</sup> As an added argument to the Dissenters' standard charge against this practice, Baxter held that the sign in itself was a new sacrament and that it contradicted the fundamental law of Christianity.<sup>213</sup> Bingham defended his church by saying that Anglican baptism used this sign only to demonstrate that the person being baptized truly professed the Christian faith. By this sign the person declared to the world that as a Christian he or she was not ashamed of the cross of Christ. The sign of the cross was comparable to the cross on top of a prince's crown which showed that the prince upheld Christianity.<sup>214</sup> In justification of his own Protestantism, Bingham appealed to Peter Martyr who compared the cross on a king's crown with the sign of the cross in baptism. Both demonstrated faith in Christianity and neither was superstitious.<sup>215</sup> Also, as a reaction to the Puritans' charge that the Anglican Church was popish, Bingham demonstrated that the sign of the cross in baptism was as old as Christian Antiquity itself. He boldly showed that this practice was common at the time of Tertullian, Ambrose and Augustine.<sup>216</sup>

The use of the surplice was again questioned at Bingham's time. Baxter represented the Nonconformists who restated the issue.<sup>217</sup> In his reply Bingham pointed

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<sup>212</sup> Richard Baxter, *The English Nonconformity, as under King Charles II and King James II, truly Stated and Argued* (London: printed for Tho. Parkhurst, 1689).

<sup>213</sup> Baxter, *English Nonconformity*, 73.

<sup>214</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 175.

<sup>215</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 175. Here Bingham quotes from Peter Martyr, *Loci Communes*, class 2, chap. 5, note 20.

<sup>216</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572.

<sup>217</sup> Baxter, *English Nonconformity*, 102.

out that the Nonconformists were divided on this matter. Some said that the use of the surplice was absolutely unlawful, superstitious, and popish while others said that they were not against its use but only against the enforcement of its use and the expulsion of ministers who did not wear it.<sup>218</sup> In his answer to those who saw the use of surplice as popish and anti-Christian, Bingham took the example of Calvin who was never against the use of the scholastic habit.<sup>219</sup> He believed that Calvin did not think that the surplice or bishop's alb was unlawful.<sup>220</sup> He also thought Beza and Peter Martyr held the same opinion. For them the choice to use or not to use the surplice should not be a cause of division among Christians.<sup>221</sup> By referring to the Continental Reformers on this matter, Bingham demonstrated to the Dissenters that they should not sharpen the controversy over the vestments since the Reformers themselves did not see it as something so fundamental as to cause division.

Sponsors or surety in baptism received sharp criticism from Baxter. First of all, Baxter criticized the Anglican Church for not allowing parents to be the godparents of the child.<sup>222</sup> Bingham replied that this was not entirely true. The Anglican Church did not allow parents to be the only sponsors of the child, but allowed the parents together with a godparent to dedicate their children to Christ.<sup>223</sup> This regulation did not “supersede the

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<sup>218</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 132.

<sup>219</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 133.

<sup>220</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 134.

<sup>221</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 135. Here Bingham quotes Beza's Epistle 12 and Peter Martyr's Epistle 41.

<sup>222</sup> Baxter, *English Nonconformity*, 59.

<sup>223</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 188.



obligation of parents, but only superinduced a further obligation upon other persons for greater security of performance."<sup>224</sup> He also disagreed with Baxter who accused the Anglicans of allowing non-Christians, even atheists and infidels, to be godparents.<sup>225</sup> Baxter's statement was wrong and Bingham challenged him to show if there was any canon that permitted such a thing to happen.<sup>226</sup> He insisted that both the Church of France and the Church of England emphasized that the godparents had to keep the promise they made in baptism and that the parents must choose sponsors who were well-instructed in Christianity, upholders of the godly life, and people who the parents knew very well so that should the parents die while the child was still young, the godparents would assure that the child would get religious education.<sup>227</sup>

Bingham also reacted negatively to the Dissenters' charge that the Anglicans made indifferent rites and ceremonies necessary. He said that the Church of England did not make these things necessary for salvation. What the church did was to regulate the outward act without imposing any doctrinal necessity.<sup>228</sup> Besides, the Church of England did not impose these rites on all churches in all places. What the church required was conformity from its own members for the sake of peace, union and order.<sup>229</sup> He made it clear that each church had its own set of regulations for certain rites and that none of

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<sup>224</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 188.

<sup>225</sup> Baxter, *English Nonconformity*, 69.

<sup>226</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 191.

<sup>227</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 192.

<sup>228</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 74.

<sup>229</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 74.

those was necessary for salvation. He illustrated this by saying:

Suppose any man desires to be admitted to baptism, or the communion, in any church: is it not necessary for him to comply with the particular orders of that church, as to the time when, and the place where, those sacraments are to be administered? He must go to a church and not to a river, or a pond, to be baptized; and he must meet the assembly in a church, not in an upper room; in the morning precisely at a stated hour, if he will hold communion with them.<sup>230</sup>

In cases where the Church England denied communion to those who refused to follow the rules, such as refusing the sign of the cross in baptism, or receiving the communion kneeling, or receiving communion from a minister who wore a surplice, Bingham said that it was within the power of the church to impose the rules.<sup>231</sup> It was ridiculous to say, he added, that the church made those rules with the aim to exclude those who would not follow them.<sup>232</sup> Bingham thought that Baxter was among those who believed that the church made the rules to exclude those who would not follow them.<sup>233</sup>

In the Anglican Church, people received communion kneeling. The Nonconformists misunderstood this ritual, thinking that the Anglicans had claimed that the rites and rituals, including kneeling in the communion, were necessary for salvation. Bingham noticed that there were different views among people who disputed this matter. Some completely condemned the practice as sinful and unlawful since it was contrary to the practice of Christ and the Apostles who celebrated the last Supper sitting, while others

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<sup>230</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 76.

<sup>231</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 78.

<sup>232</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 78.

<sup>233</sup> See also Baxter, *English Nonconformity*, chap. 14.

were not so rigid and considered kneeling when receiving the Eucharist, lawful.<sup>234</sup>

Bingham demonstrated that the French Church did not condemn kneeling as unlawful, though they received communion standing. In his opinion there was no substantial difference between England and France.<sup>235</sup> He also incorporated Beza's and Peter Martyr's views on this matter. Beza thought that kneeling demonstrated godly and Christian reverence and was therefore beneficial.<sup>236</sup> Peter Martyr did not have any objection either with kneeling, sitting, or standing in receiving communion, as long as Christ's institution was observed and all superstition removed.<sup>237</sup> Bingham saw no difference between kneeling and standing in communion:

If kneeling be a deviation from the institution and example of Christ, standing is so, too. If to enjoin kneeling be to add a new term of communion, to enjoin standing must be an imposition of the same nature.<sup>238</sup>

He questioned the Dissenters' insistence that everything must follow the practice of Christ. After all, there was a possibility that Christ and the disciples did not sit or stand, but lay alongside the table. Then sitting is as much a deviation as kneeling.<sup>239</sup> Through this argument he showed that the Dissenters were as different from the French Church as they were from the Church of England:

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<sup>234</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 156.

<sup>235</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 157.

<sup>236</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 157. Here Bingham quotes from Beza's Epistle 12 (1582 Geneva edition, p. 219-20).

<sup>237</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 157. Here Bingham quotes from Peter Martyr, *Loci Communes*, class 2, chap. 4, no. 39.

<sup>238</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 160.

But Dissenters cannot thus account for their practice upon their principles: for it be a necessary rule, as they say it is, to receive in the same posture which our Saviour used; and that be true which the French writers maintain, that he used not sitting but lying along; then their practice contradicts their own rule, and they condemn themselves in going contrary to the example of Christ, whilst they think themselves obliged to follow it.<sup>240</sup>

### 5. Bingham and Trelawney: The Ecclesiastical Context

As mentioned above, Bingham had a very close relationship with Trelawney, the Bishop of Winchester.<sup>241</sup> In the dedication of the first volume of the *Origines*, Bingham openly requested the approval of the bishop for the first fruit of his labor:

... and if I can but so far obtain your Lordship's good opinion, as to be thought to have designed so well; as I am already conscious of my good intentions to consecrate all my labours to the public service of the Church; that will inspire me with fresh vigour, notwithstanding these difficulties, to proceed with cheerfulness and alacrity in the remaining parts of this work, which are yet behind, and which I shall be the more willing to set about, if I can perceive it has your Lordship's approbation.<sup>242</sup>

Trelawney's term at Winchester coincided with the period when Bingham was actively publishing his works. It was Trelawney who in 1712 appointed Bingham to the rectory of Havant after he served as the rector of Headbourn-Worthy for a number of years.<sup>243</sup> Trelawney was known to have made very thorough examinations of candidates for ordination. He kept his own book in which candidates signed their subscription to the

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<sup>239</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 161.

<sup>240</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 162.

<sup>241</sup> *DNB*, vol. 57, 182.

<sup>242</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xlviii.

<sup>243</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xi. See also appendix 6.

*Thirty-Nine Articles* and their oaths.<sup>244</sup> We may conclude that when he appointed Bingham to Havant, he approved Bingham's ecclesiastical and political stance.

Bingham wrote the dedication of the first volume of his *Origines* only one year after Trelawney became the bishop of Winchester. He therefore used this dedication as an opportunity to congratulate the bishop with a prayer and wish that the diocese of Winchester may become "one of the shining glories of the present Church, and a provoking example to the future."<sup>245</sup> This dedication reflects how through his writings Bingham intended to serve the Church of England as directed by the bishop.

Trelawney was a High Church bishop. This can be seen through the way he upheld episcopal authority and apostolic succession. Trelawney believed that a Protestant church without a bishop was still a true church, but an errant branch of the true, Catholic Church.<sup>246</sup> The integrity of the church, he maintained, had been sustained by Christians who understood the centrality of apostolic succession. He did not go so far as to say that episcopacy had a basis in divine revelation, but he believed that it was sanctioned by divine providence. Smith is sure that for the bishop, once apostolic succession was undermined, England would be back to the spiritual anarchy of the period of Commonwealth when "each parochial church had its particular faith."<sup>247</sup>

Trelawney's first sermon preached at his visitation at Winchester, based on 1 Timothy 3, was a clear statement of the High Church view of apostolic succession.<sup>248</sup> There he charged the clergymen of the diocese of Winchester to completely devote

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<sup>244</sup> M. G. Smith, *Fighting Joshua: A Study of the Career of Sir Jonathan Trelawney, Bart, 1650-1721, Bishop of Bristol, Exeter and Winchester* (Trewolsta, Cornwall: Dyllansow Truran, 1985), 141.

<sup>245</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xlix.

<sup>246</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 103.

<sup>247</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 103.

<sup>248</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 141.

themselves to the defense of the Church of England. He also declared equal hostility to the Roman Catholics and different kinds of Dissenting groups.<sup>249</sup> Smith records that in this visitation sermon, Trelawney even commanded the clergy not to omit prayers or alter the order of worship simply to accommodate the Dissenters. He also ordered them not to criticize the government publicly.<sup>250</sup> His support of the High Church party was also shown through his approval of building fifty new churches in London. This was decided in the summer of 1712. For the entire summer, Trelawney regularly attended the meeting that discussed the building of these churches. The committee finally drew up instructions for the architectural design for the churches. The design reflected the High Church sacramental emphasis with the altar raised up and railed off.<sup>251</sup> It is not too difficult for anyone who remembers the decision of Archbishop Laud with regard to how churches should treat altars or communion tables to identify this decision as a demonstration of High Churchmanship in the Laudian fashion.

Bingham affirmed that the Ancient Church had always had an altar in the church building.<sup>252</sup> The altar was not placed close to the wall at the upper end of the sanctuary, but at some distance from the wall so that the bishop's throne could be placed behind it, leaving enough room for one to walk around the altar.<sup>253</sup> As to the name, he found that both "altar" and "holy table" were used without any particular preference.<sup>254</sup> He criticized his contemporaries who spent too much time fighting over the right name for the altar.

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<sup>249</sup> *DNB*, vol. 57, 182.

<sup>250</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 141.

<sup>251</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 142.

<sup>252</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 432.

<sup>253</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 433.

<sup>254</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 434.

For him the most important thing was the understanding that an “altar” in the early church was not used according to a Jewish or heathen concept, a place for bloody sacrifices, or a place to be adorned with images of idol-gods.<sup>255</sup>

There is no doubt that Bingham heard Trelawney’s first visitation sermon because he was already the rector of Headbourn-Worthy in the diocese of Winchester when the bishop made the visit. He could have sensed that the bishop held the High Church view of apostolic succession. It is not a coincidence that Bingham discussed the orders of the high-ranking clergy in the Ancient Church as early as the second book of the first volume of the *Origines*.<sup>256</sup> Indirectly he was showing his support for the view of the new bishop. Due to the historical character and purpose of these writings, Bingham did not explicitly mention that he was a member of the High Church party. Evidence from the way he structured the *Origines*, however, showed that he had this inclination. For instance, he did not explicitly talk about apostolic succession, but at the very beginning of the book he pointed out that the earliest name used for bishops in the early church was apostles. He realized that this name was used “in a large and secondary sense”<sup>257</sup> and did not place them in the same category as the original twelve apostles of Jesus. The name “Apostles,” given to bishops, was chosen because the early church distinguished them from mere presbyters. He found this reference first of all in Theodoret who called Epaphroditus, Timothy and Titus “apostles” to the places they served according to the New Testament.<sup>258</sup> Similarly Ambrose and Amalarius distinguished between bishops whom they called “apostles,” from presbyters, who by rank were lower than bishops. He

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<sup>255</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 436.

<sup>256</sup> In the first book of volume one he introduced the meaning of the name “Christian” as used in the early church. See *Works*, vol. 1, 1-50.

<sup>257</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 66.

<sup>258</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 66.

concluded:

This is what those authors infer from the identity of the names, bishop and presbyter, in the first age: they do not thence argue (as some who abuse their authority, have done since) that therefore bishops and presbyters were all one; but they think that bishops were then distinguished by a more appropriate name, and more expressive of their superiority, which was that of secondary apostles.<sup>259</sup>

By distinguishing bishops from presbyters, Bingham indirectly reacted to the view of the Presbyterians. As has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Presbyterians rejected the divine right of episcopacy. They said that in the early church bishops and presbyters were equal. Bingham argued that this was not the case. He mentioned three points of difference between bishops and presbyters. First, bishops acted by absolute and independent power, while presbyters derived their power from the bishops. Second, only bishops ordained bishops and presbyters, and third, presbyters reported to the bishops but not the other way around.<sup>260</sup>

Bingham indicated another meaning of apostolic succession. He pointed out that anciently the bishop's area of authority was given the lofty title "sedes apostolica" or an apostolic see, without necessarily connecting it to the bishop of Rome.<sup>261</sup> He believed that this name was given to all bishops in general because they derived their origin and counted "their succession from the apostles."<sup>262</sup>

The topic Bingham discussed in the second volume of the *Origines* was the clergy

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<sup>259</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 67.

<sup>260</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 80.

<sup>261</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 68.

<sup>262</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 68.



of the lower ranks. In his judgment there were five such inferior offices: subdeacons, acolythists (i.e., acolytes), exorcists, readers and doorkeepers.<sup>263</sup> However, he did not believe that the early church uniformly had all five. Some churches mentioned only three, while others mentioned more.<sup>264</sup> Over against some who thought that these inferior offices were instituted by the apostles, Bingham insisted that they were only put in place by the church.<sup>265</sup> He maintained that only the three superior offices: bishop, presbyters and deacons were of the apostolic institution and that was why the two ranks differed. Both ranks were legitimate, but only the first had apostolic sanction<sup>266</sup>

As was the case with the first volume of the *Origines*, Bingham dedicated the second to bishop Trelawney. The bishop evidently warmly accepted and approved the first volume. Therefore, Bingham hoped that this new volume would receive “no less kind acceptance and approbation.”<sup>267</sup> He was convinced that the topic of lower-ranking clergy was very significant for his peers and that by reading examples from the early church, they would serve the church as hard as low-ranking clergy in the early church did.<sup>268</sup> He also expressed his confidence that the bishop possessed the ability to revive the ancient discipline among his clergy since the bishop had already given “some convincing proofs” that it was his intention to do so.<sup>269</sup> Notably, Bingham was disturbed by the unacceptable conduct of some of the clergy in the diocese of Winchester. He knew that

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<sup>263</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 346.

<sup>264</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 349.

<sup>265</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 349.

<sup>266</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 349.

<sup>267</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 341.

<sup>268</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 341.

<sup>269</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 343.

Trelawney disliked their conduct, too.<sup>270</sup> Therefore, he hoped that this second volume would terrify clergy whose character did not conform to the piety of those in the ancient time.<sup>271</sup> In this case Bingham was trying to please his bishop. He must have had the Bishop's visitation sermon in mind when he wrote this volume.<sup>272</sup> Besides, he intended this work to reach the lay people as well, since he thought that by explaining the strict discipline among the clergy in the ancient time, lay people of his time would be challenged to live a Christian life the way the ancient church did.<sup>273</sup>

The controversy over lay baptism was another demonstration of the close relationship between Bingham and his bishop. Writing against the position of Roger Laurence, Bingham published the first part of his *Scholastical History*<sup>274</sup> without the command and direction of Trelawney. He admitted that he did not know Trelawney's position on this matter. However, Bingham was pleased to receive a letter from the bishop showing the bishop's approval of his book and telling him that the bishop shared the same view.<sup>275</sup> In his letter to Bingham, Trelawney also said that all the bishops in both provinces held the same opinion, rebaptism was not necessary for those who had been baptized by lay persons.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> In his 1708 visitation address Trelawney made a passing comment about corrupt vicar-generals. Smith speculates that this comment might have been directed against Sir Peter Mews, the chancellor of the diocese and son of Trelawney's predecessor. See Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 140.

<sup>271</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 343.

<sup>272</sup> Trelawney made it clear through his visitation sermon that he was going to exercise strict supervision of his clergy. He openly rebuked disobedient clergy to show that he was not to be disobeyed with impunity. See Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 141.

<sup>273</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, 343.

<sup>274</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 1-142.

<sup>275</sup> See Bingham's epistle dedicatory to Trelawney in the publication of the second part of his *Scholastical History*, in *Works*, vol. 8, cxlvi.

<sup>276</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, cxlvii.

While on the surface the lay baptism controversy was ecclesiastical in nature, it reached into political life in the early eighteenth century. Some members of the High Church party held that the Dissenters were not part of the true church. They held that baptism by the Dissenters was schismatic baptism and therefore invalid.<sup>277</sup> Already in 1703 the Lower House expressed the view that baptism in private houses lacked reverence for the sacrament and opened the door for intruders to administer it.<sup>278</sup> The rubric in the Prayer Book stated that private baptism should be performed by a lawful minister and that if the Dissenting ministers were considered lawful ministers, more problems would arise. Laurence held that a nonconformist minister did not have episcopal ordination, and he insisted that they be regarded as lay people.<sup>279</sup> He did not have a problem with Roman Catholic baptism, but foreign Protestants and the Dissenters he considered no more than catechumens.<sup>280</sup> In the political arena, these ideas raised the question of the validity of the baptism of George I who was from the Hanoverian family. If his baptism was not valid, could he rightly be the king of England?<sup>281</sup> If Laurence was right, German Protestants, including George I, could at best be regarded only as catechumens. In comparison to George I, James III had a better position since he was

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<sup>277</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 117.

<sup>278</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 117.

<sup>279</sup> Robert Cornwall, "The Politics of Baptism: Roger Laurence, Thomas Brett, and the Lay Baptism Controversy 1708-1715," unpublished paper, presented for the American Church History Association, San Francisco, California, January 9, 2002, 7.

<sup>280</sup> G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 153.

<sup>281</sup> Cornwall, "The Politics of Baptism," 14.

validly baptized in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>282</sup> At the time of the controversy, Laurence had not become a Nonjuror. He only became one after the coronation of George I in 1714.<sup>283</sup> Even though Laurence did not openly try to overthrow the government, his writing aroused some doubts concerning the Hanoverian succession.<sup>284</sup> Some extreme High Churchmen even regarded the Church of England under the Elector of Hanover, an unbaptized layman, to be “in a state of persecution.”<sup>285</sup>

Trelawney faced a dilemma on account of this controversy. As a High Churchman, who held a high doctrine of episcopal authority, he could not hold a low view on the doctrine of sacerdotal power.<sup>286</sup> He disapproved of giving licenses to midwives to baptize babies in case of an emergency, but he also knew that the lay people in England would not permit Laurence’s view to gain ground.<sup>287</sup> At the same time, as evident from Bingham’s dedicatory epistle, Trelawney did not agree with Laurence’s insistence on rebaptism.<sup>288</sup>

Archbishop Tenison of Canterbury wanted to issue a declaration against rebaptism of any person who was baptized in or with water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy

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<sup>282</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 130.

<sup>283</sup> Cornwall, “The Politics of Baptism,” 2.

<sup>284</sup> Cornwall, “The Politics of Baptism,” 18.

<sup>285</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 132.

<sup>286</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 108.

<sup>287</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 108.

<sup>288</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, cxlvi.

Spirit.<sup>289</sup> Tenison crowned both Anne and George I and supported the Hanoverian succession, but he was disliked by the extreme Tories.<sup>290</sup> Tenison's proposed declaration was brought up in a meeting of thirteen bishops at Lambeth Palace on Easter of 1712.<sup>291</sup> But Archbishop Sharp of York objected to it. The matter was then raised in the Convocation on May 14 of the same year. The majority of the bishops in the Upper House supported the declaration, but the Lower House rejected it.<sup>292</sup> Disappointed that the Convocation was not able to resolve the matter, extreme High Churchmen enthusiastically accepted Laurence's position that any baptism not administered by an episcopally ordained priest or deacon was invalid.<sup>293</sup>

Meanwhile, Trelawney, who was busy with the visitation of his diocese when the matter was discussed in the Upper House, did not get the chance to counter attack Sharp. He, however, wrote a letter to Francis Atterbury urging him to "guide the Lower House in coming to no decision on the issue."<sup>294</sup> In the long run Bingham's position prevailed.<sup>295</sup> However, at that point in history, the whole Church of England, and not just the High Church party, tended to be more tolerant of the position of Laurence.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Every, *High Church Party*, 143.

<sup>290</sup> William Marshal, "Tenison, Thomas," in *The Oxford Companion to British History*, 914.

<sup>291</sup> Every, *High Church Party*, 143.

<sup>292</sup> Every, *High Church Party*, 143.

<sup>293</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 108.

<sup>294</sup> Smith, *Fighting Joshua*, 109.

<sup>295</sup> Bennett, *The Tory Crisis*, 152.

<sup>296</sup> Every, *The High Church Party*, 144.

These contexts for historical analysis all impinged on Bingham's scholarship.

Both the remote debates on the identity of the Church of England and the more recent polemics with the Dissenters framed the historical backgrounds in which Bingham did his scholarship. The following exposition of Bingham's approaches to baptism will illustrate his indebtedness to these contexts and his sense of his own immediate task – both as a loyal High Churchman and as a scholar seeking to reclaim his reputation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Bingham's Work and Its Acceptance

#### I. Bingham and Patristic Scholarship in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries

##### 1. Bingham's Scholarly and Churchly Intentions

Bingham devoted about half of his life to the study of the teaching and practice of the early church. He carried out this scholarly examination hand in hand with his parochial duties as the Rector of Headbourn-Worthy and of Havant. Richard Bingham testified that Bingham's zeal for study never caused him to neglect his parishioners, but that he always showed the greatest concern for the church and his duties as a clergyman.<sup>1</sup>

The *Origines* and Bingham's other treatises were published primarily because he wanted to provide suitable teaching and instruction for the church, based on the teachings of the church fathers. It was his intention that the practice of the church of his time be as orthodox as that of the church of antiquity, even though at the same time he realized that there would also be differences.<sup>2</sup> Bingham points out this intention in the dedicatory epistle addressed to the Bishop of Winchester in the first volume of the *Origines*. There he said that in writing this book, he consecrated all these hard works to "the public service of the Church."<sup>3</sup> Through this statement we can see that Bingham intended to support the position of the Anglican Church. In the *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, he often

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<sup>1</sup> See "The Life of the Author," in *Works*, vol. 1, xix.

<sup>2</sup> See Bingham's preface to his *Scholastical History*, in *Works*, vol. 8, v.

approached the patristic text with a theological intention in mind. Through historical studies he wanted to defend the teaching and practice of the Church of England as they were explained in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Therefore, throughout the ten volumes of the *Origines*, one can find Bingham justifying the Anglican practice by means of his treatment of the patristic material.

The entire design of the *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, as well as that of his other works, was aimed at providing the church with a reliable source of the history and practice of the early church. In the preface to the first volume of *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, Bingham said that there were some works on the ancient Church, but those works were intended for scholars only. It was therefore his intention to present his work for the use of common people.<sup>4</sup> He thought that he could achieve this intention if he wrote in English.<sup>5</sup> Leslie Barnard points out that Bingham was the first author who provided a collection of the history of the early church for general readers, since before Bingham, the works on the Fathers and Canons of Councils were “scattered far and wide and were often inaccessible.”<sup>6</sup>

Bingham’s patristic scholarship was also a reflection of British patristic studies in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Contrary to what many people

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<sup>3</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xlviii.

<sup>4</sup> See *Works*, vol. 1, lii.

<sup>5</sup> Bingham understood that most works on Church antiquity were written in Latin and therefore inaccessible to many of the uneducated lay people in his parish. Therefore, since the very beginning, he determined that he must write in English for the sake of his general readers. See *Works*, vol. 1, lvi.

<sup>6</sup> Leslie W. Barnard, “The Use of Patristic Tradition in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Scripture, Tradition, and Reason: A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine. Essays in*



believe, British patristic studies did not die out in the seventeenth century.<sup>7</sup> The flourishing of British patristic studies during this era was also the focus of Jean-Louis Quantin's over-arching article on the church fathers and Anglican Theology. Quantin notes that divines of the Church of England of the era were known to have developed a specific style of theological reasoning characterized by careful consideration of the church fathers.<sup>8</sup> In his article Quantin explains that the Anglican divines were more willing than their continental counterparts to use the Fathers to buttress their arguments, but they were also clear that the Fathers did not replace the Scriptures. For them the Fathers were the best interpreters of Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

The seventeenth century witnessed the publication of Jean Daillé's *Traicté de l'employ des Saints Peres*.<sup>10</sup> In this work Daillé expresses his objections to patristic teachings. Quantin comments that Daillé's arguments were used by the Tew circle to express their dislike for the reliance on the authority of the church fathers. The majority of the Anglican divines, however, did not agree with the Tew group.<sup>11</sup> Daillé's book was

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*Honour of Richard P. C. Hanson*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Benjamin Drewery (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 182.

<sup>7</sup> Leslie Barnard, "Patristic Study in England in the Early Eighteenth Century," 211. In this article Barnard argues against the common belief that patristic studies in England reached a low watermark in the early eighteenth century. Using Bingham as one of his examples, Barnard demonstrates the contrary.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Louis Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West. From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, vol. 2, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 987.

<sup>9</sup> Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," 990.

<sup>10</sup> Jean Daillé, *Traicté de l'employ des Saints Peres, pour le jugement des differends, qui sont aujourd'huy en la Religion: par Jean Daillé, Ministre du Sainct Evangile en l'Eglise Reformée de Paris* (Geneva: 1632).

<sup>11</sup> Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," 992.

translated into English in 1651.<sup>12</sup> In criticizing Daillé's view of the church fathers, Jekyll, the English translator, points out that Daillé misrepresented the Fathers as absurd interpreters of the Scripture.<sup>13</sup> Quantin says that many other authors in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries reacted strongly against Daillé.<sup>14</sup> According to Quantin, the traditionalists of the late Stuart era saw that Daillé endangered the Fathers just as much as he did the Church of England.<sup>15</sup> Bingham represented those within the Church of England who defended the importance of patristic teaching in his time.

Various works on the theology of the church fathers were published in the seventeenth century, proving the scholars' zeal for a right understanding of the early church. An important work was Henry Savile's edition of the works of John Chrysostom in eight volumes in folio.<sup>16</sup> According to the editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, this magnificent work was the "first work of learning on a great scale published in England."<sup>17</sup> Quantin observes that this multi-volume work received warm reception in England, from both Anglicans and Roman Catholics.<sup>18</sup> The success this edition of Chrysostom enjoyed might have been the reason why Bingham did his own

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<sup>12</sup> In writing this dissertation I consulted the 1843 revised edition: Jean Daillé, *A Treatise on the Right Use of the Fathers in the Decision of Controversies Existing at This Day in Religion. Re-edited and amended with a preface by G. Jekyll* (London: Henry Bohn, 1843).

<sup>13</sup> Jekyll, in his preface to Daillé's *Treatise*, xi.

<sup>14</sup> Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," 994.

<sup>15</sup> Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," 994.

<sup>16</sup> John Chrysostom, *S. Ioanis Chrysostomi Opera Graecé octo voluminibus* (Etonae: Norton, 1610-1613).

<sup>17</sup> *DNB*, vol. 17, 857.

<sup>18</sup> Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," 995.

translation of some of Chrysostom's discourses. Bingham's translation was never published, but the manuscript of this translation is now in the Department of Western Manuscript, Bodleian Library, Oxford.<sup>19</sup> The manuscript contains fourteen discourses of Chrysostom which Bingham planned to publish but never found the chance to do so, very likely because of his premature death. This manuscript does not mention the date when Bingham did the translation, but it provides references to the sources that Bingham used, including the volumes and page numbers of the Paris edition as well as the Savile edition of Chrysostom's works.<sup>20</sup>

Other editions of the church fathers appeared within the first half of the seventeenth century. It is interesting to see that the earliest of the church fathers, namely the Apostolic Fathers, received notable attention. Patrick Young's *Editio Princeps* of the first epistle of Clement of Rome was published in 1633.<sup>21</sup> More important was the work of Archbishop Ussher, who published the letters of Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp.<sup>22</sup> Ussher's work was a masterpiece of seventeenth-century Anglican patristic scholarship, especially because of his ability to reconstruct the genuine text of the letters of Ignatius free from the interpolations of the so-called Long Recension.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The Bodleian Library, shelf mark: MS. Eng.th.e.157.

<sup>20</sup> See the Western Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, shelf mark: MS. Eng.th.e.157.

<sup>21</sup> Clement of Rome, *Klementos pros Korinthios Epistole prote Clementis ad Corinthios epistola prior. Ex laceris reliquiis vetustissimi exemplaris Bibliothecae Regiae, eruit, lacunas, Latine vertit, et notis brevioribus illustravit Patricius Junius* (Oxford: Iohannes Lichfield, 1633).

<sup>22</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *In polycarpianam epistolarvm ignatianarvm syllogen annotationes numeris ad marginem interiorem appositis respondentes: in quibus geæcorum ignatii exemplarium, & inter se, & cum utrâque vetere Latinâ interpretatione, comparatio continetur* (Oxford: Henricus Hall, 1644).

<sup>23</sup> Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," 997.

Later in the seventeenth century, John Fell, Dean of Christ Church and concurrently bishop of Oxford and a distinguished patristic scholar, published his edition of First Clement.<sup>24</sup> Quantin explains that Fell's project started in 1668 when he initiated the practice of giving New Year Books. Fell was ashamed that he had not given his students anything for New Years, while many of the students brought him presents together with their New Year's wishes. This and other subsequent books were his way of thanking his students.<sup>25</sup> Fell's work was complemented by one written by John Pearson, bishop of Chester, and Isaac Vossius on the epistles of St. Ignatius.<sup>26</sup> Together with the work of Ussher, Pearson's and Vossius' *Vindiciae Epistolae S. Ignatii*<sup>27</sup> was refutation of Daillé's skeptical view of the authenticity of the writings of the Ancient Fathers, especially the earliest of them.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. Bingham's Approach to Extant Patristic Scholarship

Most patristic scholarship in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries centered around universities. Learned men published the books; the distribution of the books was more or less restricted to their own circles. Bingham's publication took a

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<sup>24</sup> Clement of Rome, *Tou en hagios patros hemon kai hieromartyros Klementos pros Korinthious epistole S. patris & martyris Clementis ad Corinthios epistola* (Oxford: Lichfield, 1669).

<sup>25</sup> Quantin remarks that Fell also published some other works on the church fathers, namely *De Mortibus persecutorum of Lactantius* in 1680, *the Quis dives salutem consequi posit of Clement of Alexandria* in 1683, *Barnabas' epistles* in 1685, and Origen's *Treatises on Prayer* in 1687. See Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth Century," 997.

<sup>26</sup> Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," 998.

<sup>27</sup> John Pearson and Isaac Vossius, *Vindiciae Epistolam S. Ignatii* (Cambridge: Ioan Hyes, 1672).

radical turn. He was no longer a part of the university. His aim in writing *Origines* was not to reach the people within the walls of great universities in England, but the common people. Bingham's works, in fact, became a bridge connecting the academics and the common readers.

The first two octavo volumes of Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae* were published by Robert Knaplock, London, in 1708.<sup>29</sup> The research for this project, however, was started about six years before the appearance of these first two volumes.<sup>30</sup> When Bingham decided to put these two volumes into print, he already realized that these would be only a part of a much larger work.<sup>31</sup> In his preface to the readers in the first volume, Bingham said that he wanted to present what he called "the methodical account of the Antiquity of the Christian Church."<sup>32</sup> What he meant by "a methodical account" was a systematic explication of early church history, arranged topically, on the worship practice, rituals, ceremonies and the general life of the ancient church. He intended to

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, the discussion in chapter three of Daillé's *Treatise on the Right Use of the Fathers*, in which he argues against the authenticity of the writings of the church fathers, thinking that a great number of these writings were either superstition or forgery.

<sup>29</sup> A copy of the first edition of this book, presented personally by Bingham to Oxford University, is currently kept at the Bodleian Library. On the front fly-leaf of the first volume in his own handwriting Bingham wrote, "For the Bodleian Library. From the Author. 1 Jan. 1707/8." On the title page of this particular copy, right below the name of Bingham as the author, there is a handwritten description of him as "formerly fellow of University College. Oxon." See Bodleian Library, shelf mark: 8°Q. 40-41 Th. By presenting this copy to Oxford University, Bingham was able to show that even though he had a bitter history with his alma mater, he was able to stand tall and publish a work that could make Oxford proud of its alumni.

<sup>30</sup> In the preface to the tenth volume of the *Origines* finally completed in 1722, Bingham comments that he worked hard for twenty years compiling the *Origines* for the use of the Church. See *Works*, vol. 9, 420.

<sup>31</sup> See Bingham's preface to the first volume in his *Origines*, vol. 1, A4 r.

<sup>32</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, li.

focus on how the early church, especially in the first four or five centuries of Christianity, existed as a community of believers.<sup>33</sup>

To achieve the goal, Bingham emphasizes that he has tried as carefully as possible to study and analyze the “original records of antiquity.”<sup>34</sup> Going directly to the original sources is one of the key factors for the success of his works, and the quality of his writings. Because he studied the original sources, he was able to criticize other authors who did not study the ancient church from the original sources.

Besides analyzing the original writings of the early church, Bingham also used the writings of contemporary authors, dialoguing with them, and thus “unfolding points of great difficulty.”<sup>35</sup> In the organization of his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, Bingham did not follow a chronological method. Since there were other books that followed that method, he saw no need to publish another of this kind.<sup>36</sup> What he considered more important was to provide his audience with explanation and discussion of the customs and practices of the Christian Church in worship and ritual during the first four or five centuries. He chose this method after observing that some scholars of his time had written similarly on ancient Greece and Rome. Nothing of the sort had been done for the Christian Church.

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<sup>33</sup> Leslie Barnard says that Bingham's works contain references to more than a thousand authors whose writings comprised about 4,000 volumes, mostly in folio or quarto formats. The citations from the Fathers, Councils, Canonists and other authorities amount to some 16,000 passages, mainly in Greek and Latin. See Leslie W. Barnard, “Patristic Study in England in the Early Eighteenth Century,” in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 23, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1989), 211.

<sup>34</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lviii.

<sup>35</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lviii

<sup>36</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, li

Bingham singled out the works of Gronovius and Graevius as excellent examples of this methodology.<sup>37</sup>

The works of Gronovius and Graevius were relatively new at the time. The last volume of Gronovius' *Thesaurus Graecarum antiquitatum*<sup>38</sup> had been available for about six years by the time the first volume of Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae* appeared. Graevius' *Thesaurus antiquitatum Romanorum*<sup>39</sup> had been completed about nine years earlier. By observing the publication of these massive works on Greek and Roman antiquities, we can understand why Bingham is so eager to publish his own works. He was zealous to present to his readers a careful and detailed analysis of the antiquity of the Christian church as those authors did for ancient Greek and Roman history.

Bingham noticed that the books available on the history of the Christian church only here and there took notice of the worship practices and rituals as they described church history chronologically. When a reader needed to study a particular custom or ritual practice of the ancient church, he had to collect the information scattered in several volumes.<sup>40</sup> Bingham mentioned particularly the works of Cardinal Caesar Baronius<sup>41</sup> and

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<sup>37</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lii. Jacobus Gronovius (1645-1716) was born in Deventer from a well-known family of intellectual excellence. His father, J. Frederic, was a notable critic and scholar of his time. Jacobus himself was a well-known scholar and historian whose thirteen-volume folio edition of *Thesaurus Graecarum antiquitatum* was widely used by scholars of his time. See Lud. Lalanne, L. Renier, et al., *Biographie portative universelle* (Paris: J. J. Dubochet, 1844), col. 695. Joannes Georgius Graevius (1632-1703) was born in Nürnberg and became a notable philologist, scholar, and author. He published his twelve-volume folio edition of his famous *Thesaurus antiquitatum Romanarum* between 1694 and 1699. See Renier, et al., *Biographie portative universelle*, col. 679.

<sup>38</sup> Jacobus Gronovius, *Thesaurus Graecarum antiquitatum*, 12 vols. (Leiden: Excudebant Petrus & Baldinus Vander Aa, 1697-1702).

<sup>39</sup> Joannes Georgius Graevius, *Thesaurus antiquitatum Romanorum* (Leiden: Apud Franciscum Halmam, 1694-1699).

<sup>40</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lii.

the Magdeburg Centuries<sup>42</sup> as examples of excessively long and difficult sources to use because a person must “digest and methodize their scattered observations.”<sup>43</sup>

Flacius Illyricus' *Ecclesiastica Historia*, or the *Centuriators*, were not just works in Church History, but also the teaching of the church, refutations of heresies in the early church, schisms, and discussions of martyrdom and the persecution of the church under the Roman government. These were presented in great detail. For example, the explanation of the method employed and the headings of the chapters occupied twenty

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<sup>41</sup> Caesar Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 12 vols. (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1588-1607). Caesar Baronius (1538-1607) was born of ordinary parents in Sora in the Campagna. After receiving an elementary education at Veroli, he studied philosophy, theology, and law at Naples until 1557. The French invasion forced him to continue his studies at Rome, where he received his doctorate in law in 1561. In Rome, Baronius met Philip Neri, who became his spiritual mentor. Philip had begun the oratory exercises for both clergy and laity with the aim of drawing souls closer to God through plain sermons and mental prayers. The polemic with the Lutheran Church, especially after the publication of the *Centuriae Magdeburgenses*, raised the concerns of Pius V and Gregory XIII. The Roman Catholic Church saw the need for a refutation by a keen historian. Recognizing young Baronius' potentials, Philip encouraged him to deliver sermons on the history of the church. Thus began the long research that became the foundation for Baronius' twelve-volume *Annales Ecclesiastici*. This massive work was originally published in Rome between 1588 and 1607. Baronius' original plan was to publish one volume a year, but he soon realized that this was impossible. He completed the entire work in nineteen years. Baronius was ordained in 1564. Following his ordination he lived at St. John of the Florentines together with other priests who followed Philip. Baronius' scholarship has always been highly esteemed for its accuracy and clarity. He achieved these qualities through reading innumerable sources and investigating countless coins and inscriptions, as well as by corresponding with other scholars of his time. See J. Wahl, “Baronius, Caesar, Ven,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967), 105.

<sup>42</sup> Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Ecclesiastica Historia* (Basel: Ionaem Opporinum, 1559-1574). The *Centuriators of Magdeburg* is the famous sixteenth-century Lutheran account of church history that came mostly from the pen of Matthias Flacius Illyricus. The work was started in 1559 and completed in 1574. The original title of this book was *Ecclesiastica Historia*, but the third edition printed in Nürnberg in 1577 used the title *Centuriae Magdeburgenses*. This is how the work has been known ever since. Flacius Illyricus received help from several prominent Protestant authors, such as Aleman, Wigand, Judex, and Copus. Together they made this work a comprehensive study of church history in order to prove the truthfulness of the Lutheran church and to refute the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The *Centuriators* was highly polemical. At its completion this work consisted of thirteen volumes, each representing a century of church history. See C. L. Hohl, Jr., “Centuriators of Magdeburg,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967), 402.

<sup>43</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lii.



pages of the first volume in this folio edition.<sup>44</sup> It is easy to see why Bingham thought that these works, even though they had been used for over a century, did not educate the people in the parish churches. Besides, these two works were written for different purposes. The *Centuriators* were written in a highly polemical tone against the Roman Catholic Church, and, as Hohl mentioned, the central purpose of the *Centuriators* was to demonstrate that the pure, faultless doctrines of Apostolic Christianity had been distorted by the Roman Catholic Church, while the Lutherans had recovered the true teaching that came from God.<sup>45</sup> Bingham, however, was more interested in presenting the history and the life of the early church with its practices and rituals in such a way that his readers might be able to learn the facts of history for themselves.<sup>46</sup>

There were other respectable authors, Bingham observed, who had written on certain aspects or particular themes in Church antiquity and used his method. However, because these were first attempts in such publication, the authors of these books did not have a general audience in mind.<sup>47</sup> Bingham did not mention explicitly why he thought these works were not intended for a general audience, but their length might have been one important reason, then too, ordinary readers did not have easy access to them. Bingham intended his writings for the use of ordinary readers.<sup>48</sup> To make his works easily

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<sup>44</sup> Flacius Illyricus, *Ecclesiastica Historia*, vol. 1 (Basel: Joannem Oporinum, 1560), fols. β3 r - γ6 r.

<sup>45</sup> Hohl, "Centuriators of Magdeburg," 402.

<sup>46</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liv.

<sup>47</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lii. Bingham mentions the names of some of these authors without giving the titles of their works: Albaspinacus, Justellus, Valesius, Balusius, Gothofred, and many others.

<sup>48</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lii.

accessible to his readers, Bingham also wanted his works to sell at low prices. He observed that earlier works were very costly.<sup>49</sup> The first two volumes of his *Origines Ecclesiasticae* were printed in octavo size. They look simple and plain without woodcut initials or decorative borders and were thus available at a reasonable cost.<sup>50</sup>

Bingham wanted to make clear that his presentation was different and better than that of earlier scholars. He presented the practices, rites and customs of the early church under clear headings so that it was easy for his readers to follow his thought. Other authors did not present concentrated discussions just on the worship and rites of the early church. Therefore, the discussions on these topics “lie scattered in so many and so large volumes, without any other order, than as the authors on whom they commented, would admit of.”<sup>51</sup> Of these authors Bingham mentions several names such as Alaspinaeus, Justellus, Petavius, Valesius, Gothofred, Fabrotus, and some others.<sup>52</sup> It could very well be that he had direct access to these works in the collection of the Morley Library at Winchester Cathedral.<sup>53</sup>

Besides the various lengthy works on church antiquity, there are also shorter treatises to which Bingham refers. These works come mainly from Roman Catholic

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<sup>49</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liii.

<sup>50</sup> See the first edition of the first two volumes of *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, which Bingham presented to the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Shelf mark: 8o Q 40, 41, Th (v1 and v2).

<sup>51</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lii.

<sup>52</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lii. In this preface Bingham does not comment on the particular works of these authors. He only mentions their names to illustrate how the works of these authors did not concentrate on the ceremonies and rites in the ancient church. Later in the body of the *Origines* itself, however, Bingham comments on and discusses the works when necessary.

<sup>53</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lviii.

writers such as Gavantus<sup>54</sup> and Durantus.<sup>55</sup> In Bingham's evaluation, these treatises are not of good quality for a number of reasons. First of all, the accounts of those authors are imperfect because they are only concerned with the liturgy of the early church.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, these treatises are not of good quality, because in presenting the material, these authors depend too heavily on the writings of Gratian<sup>57</sup> and the spurious letters of some

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<sup>54</sup> Bartolommeo Gavantus, *Thesaurus sacrorum rituum seu Commentaria in rubricis Missalis et Breviarii Romani* (London: Hor. Boissat & George Remeus, 1664).

<sup>55</sup> Guillaume Durand, or William Duranti the Elder (c. 1230-1296), was one of the most influential canonists in the Middle Ages. Durand earned his doctorate in Bologna, taught briefly there and in Modena, and then moved to Rome around 1260. He was elected Bishop of Mende in 1285 and was consecrated in 1286. He did not take possession of his see until 1291. He published the *Pontificale Romanum*, consisting of instructions and constitutions for clergy. This work became the model for the official Roman text in 1485. He also wrote many other books centering on canon and civil law in general, such as *Speculum iudiciale* (1271, revised around 1289) and *Repertorium sive Breviarium*. His other widely known book, *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, written between 1285 and 1291, was his great contribution to liturgy. It became a standard treatise on liturgical symbolism. The *Rationale* exists in forty-four incunabula (first in 1459), and in many later editions. See, S. Kuttner, "Duranti, William, the Elder," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, 117. It is important to note that Bingham is most likely commenting upon Durand's *Rationale divinorum officiorum* in this preface, since it is in this book that Durand discusses the liturgy of the church. Republications of Durand's works in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made the book popular in Bingham's time. Therefore, Bingham saw the need to comment on this book. There is a clear indication that Bingham uses the 1584 Lugduni edition of Durand's *Guillelmus Durantes sive Durandus, Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*. See "Index Auctorum" in *Works*, vol. 9, 551. For the various reprintings of Durand's work in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, readers can consult, for instance, the 1510 edition of the *Rationale diuinorum officiorum*, (Lugduni: Iacobo huguetan eiusde ciuitatis, 1510), or the 1568 publication of the same book (Venetiis: Apud Gratosum Perchacinum, 1568). For the twentieth-century edition of the *Rationale*, readers can consult the 1995 edition of *Corpus Christianorum, Gvillelmi Duranti Rationale Divinorum Officiorum I-IV*, ed. A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau (Turnholt: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1995).

<sup>56</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liii.

<sup>57</sup> It is very likely that what Bingham means here is the famous *Decretum Gratiani*, which is considered one of the most important canonical collections in the history of Canon Law. There is not much information available about Gratian, the composer of this collection, other than the fact that he was a Camaldolese monk who lived in the twelfth century. The *Decretum* remains foundational to the study of canon law, a study separate from the study of theology. In the earliest manuscripts, this work is known by the title *Concordia discordantium canonum*. The *Decretum* of Gratian consists of several different texts from various origins: apostolic constitutions, canons of the councils, decretal and patristic texts, all of which constitute what is generally called the *auctoritates*. See J. Rambaud-Buhot, "Gratian, Decretum of (Concordia Discordantium Canonum)," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4 (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967), 706-707.

popes without consulting the writings of the church fathers directly.<sup>58</sup> The wide distribution and use of Gratian's *Decretum* in major editions from 1472 onward made it a readily available source of patristic materials.<sup>59</sup>

The most important reason why Bingham considered the works of the above mentioned Roman Catholic authors unsatisfactory is that they were designed to put "a face of antiquity" on the novel practices of the Roman Catholic Church of his time.<sup>60</sup> In other words, Bingham criticizes the authors' own agenda behind the writing of those historical treatises:

... they many times represent ancient customs in disguise, to make them look like the practices of the present age, and offer them to the reader's view not in their own native dress, but in the similitude and resemblance of modern customs.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, Bingham says, the readers cannot "expect any exact accounts of antiquity from any writers of that communion."<sup>62</sup> This method of tailoring the discussion of church antiquity to support contemporary church practice finally brings deception and false persuasion to the people in the church, giving the allusion as if the practice of the church had never changed.<sup>63</sup> For Bingham, it is very important that Christians know of

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<sup>58</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liii.

<sup>59</sup> See, for instance, the 1559 edition of *Decretum D. Gratiani, universi iuris canonici Pontificias constitutiones, et canonicas, brevi compendio complectens* (London: s.n.), the 1601 Paris edition of *Decretum Gratiani* (Paris: [Compagnie du grand navire], 1601), or the 1582 Roman edition of Gratian's *Decretum* with the Ordinary Gloss, which finally became the authoritative version for later canon law. See also Augustine Thompson in his preface to the English translation of Gratian, *The Treatise on Laws (Decretum DD. 1-20) with the Ordinary Gloss* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), vii.

<sup>60</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liii.

<sup>61</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liii.

<sup>62</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liv.

<sup>63</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liv.

the continuity and discontinuity between the early church and contemporary Christian life and practice. In agreement with Cardinal Bona,<sup>64</sup> who also disliked the practice of those Roman Catholic authors,<sup>65</sup> Bingham underlines the fact that “whereas we retain many words in common with the ancient Fathers, . . . in a sense [our words are] as different from theirs, as our times are remote from the first ages after Christ.”<sup>66</sup> But then, Bingham says, even Bona himself, after criticizing what other writers have done, falls into the same mistake.<sup>67</sup>

Besides the works on liturgy done by the Roman Catholic authors on the ancient Latin church, Bingham also examined older works on Greek liturgies. Specifically, he comments on the work of Habertus<sup>68</sup> whom he considers “a very learned and ingenious person.”<sup>69</sup> However, Bingham can still find weaknesses in Habertus’ writing. It is tainted with prejudice and Habertus is often carried away by the common failure of other writers

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<sup>64</sup> Cardinal Giovanni Bona (1609-1674) was a Cisterian monk, liturgist, and ascetic writer. He became a Cistercian monk when he was sixteen years old. After studying in Rome, he became professor of theology (1633-1636), prior, abbot, and then abbot general (1651). He was made a cardinal in 1669. He is famous for his liturgical writings, and through these writings he was placed among the founders of modern liturgical studies. His *Rerum liturgicarum* is his work on the Mass. In this work he explains the origins of the Mass, different ways of celebrating the Mass, its structure, and its constituent elements. *Rerum liturgicarum* gains praise from a wide range of readers because it is free from symbolic interpretation and the polemic tone that generally characterized the same genre in his time. See T. Boyd, “Bona, Giovanni,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, 655.

<sup>65</sup> Cardinal Bona, *Rerum Liturgicarum, libri duo* (1671), book 1, chap. 18, note 1. See also *Works*, vol. 1, liii.

<sup>66</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liv.

<sup>67</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liv.

<sup>68</sup> Isaac Habert (c.1600-1668), a theologian from Paris. Early in his life he wrote poetry, but then he studied theology, and in 1626 he became doctor of theology at Sorbonne. His most famous work is the Latin version of the Greek liturgy, *Archieratikon Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae graecae*, first published in Paris in 1643. He was later named theologian and canon of Notre Dame and preacher of the royal court. See C. R. Meyer, “Habert, Isaac,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, 878.

from the Greek side, who often cover the faults of their own tradition.<sup>70</sup> This critical sensibility was one of the most important factors in Bingham's success as a church historian. He achieved his scholarly excellence through a comprehensive reading of the writings of the church fathers themselves, as well as making very good observations on the scholarship of his own time.

Bingham insisted that the most exact accounts of church antiquities would need to come from the hands of Protestant authors. He believed that Protestant authors were able to write "with greater freedom and less prejudice concerning the usage and customs of the primitive Church."<sup>71</sup> Still, only a few Protestant authors had done such study. The few works that were available were mostly polemics against the Roman Catholic Church and were burdened with attempts to show the errors and novelty of popery.<sup>72</sup> He believed a Protestant author should go beyond the differences between the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and avoid any controversy. They need to see that both churches came from a common heritage.<sup>73</sup> Of the Protestant writers surveyed, Bingham first mentioned Hospinian,<sup>74</sup> who, in the time of the Reformation, wrote several volumes on the origin of

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<sup>69</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liv.

<sup>70</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, liv. In commenting upon Habert's works, Bingham used the 1676 folio edition of the *Archieratikon*. See the "Index Auctorum" in Bingham's *Works*, compiled by Grischovius in *Works*, vol. 9, 555.

<sup>71</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv.

<sup>72</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv.

<sup>73</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv.

<sup>74</sup> Rudolf Hospinian (1547-1626) was a Reformed preacher and theologian. He studied at the universities of Marburg and Heidelberg. In 1568 he taught at Zurich and preached in the area churches. In 1576 he became the head of the *Schola Carolina* and held this position for nineteen years. In 1588 he was appointed archdeacon, and in 1594 he became pastor of the cathedral of Our Lady. He studied church

temples, festivals, and the sacraments.<sup>75</sup> Even though Bingham considered Hospinian's works acceptable, he still found them loaded with "modern relations," so that the works themselves are too tedious for ordinary readers and lack a complete discussion on church antiquities.<sup>76</sup>

Polemics with the Roman Catholics was also his main criticism of the works of Spalatensis.<sup>77</sup> He criticized Spalatensis for depending too heavily on Gratian's Canon Law.<sup>78</sup> Bingham refers to the 1617 edition of Spalatensis' *De Republica Ecclesiastica*<sup>79</sup>

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history very extensively, and through his writings he tried to demonstrate the irrelevance of the Roman Catholic Church and its appeal to the supposed harmony of its doctrines and institutions with the primitive church. Some of his most important writings are *De origine et progressu rituum et ceremoniarum ecclesiasticarum* (Zurich, 1585), *De templis* (1587; revised edition 1603), *De monachis, seu de origine et progressu monachatus* (1588; 1609), *De festis Judaeorum et Ethnicorum* (1592-1593), and *Historia sacramentaria* (1598-1603). E. F. Karl Müller, "Hospinian, Rudolph," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. 5, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), 375.

<sup>75</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv. We have reasonable proof that Bingham had consulted at least four books by Hospinian at the time he wrote his own book. These four books were the 1687 Geneva edition of *de Templis*, 1674 folio edition of *de Festis Christianorum*, 1669 Geneva edition of *De origine Monachatus*, and the 1681 folio Geneva edition of *Historia Sacramentaria*. See "Index Auctorum," in *Works*, vol. 9, 555.

<sup>76</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv.

<sup>77</sup> Georg Spalatin (1484-1545). His family name was Burkhardt, which he changed to Spalatin, after his birthplace. He was educated at the universities of Erfurt (1498-99, 1505) and Wittenberg (1502-03). In 1505 he began teaching at the monastery in Georgenthal, and in 1508 he was ordained as a priest. His association with Luther changed his life forever, since he found in the Wittenberg theologian an acceptable advisor. It is commonly understood that Luther's facilitating tactics during the earlier years of the Reformation were traceable to Spalatin. In 1518 Spalatin accompanied Elector Frederick the Wise to the Diet of Augsburg. In 1526 he accompanied Elector John to the Diet of Speyer, and in 1530 he attended the Diet of Augsburg. Spalatin was known as a prolific writer, even though some of his works still remain unpublished. However, his only original works are historical studies on Saxon and contemporary studies, especially his *Chronicon et annales*, edited by J. B. Mencke in *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum* (Leipsic: 1728-1730). See T. Kolde, "Spalatin, Georg," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. 9, 31-32.

<sup>78</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv.

<sup>79</sup> George Spalatensis, *Historia vitae Georgii Spalatini theologi, politici, primque historici Saxonici, viri de ecclesia et republica infinitis modis meriti*, 3 vols. (London, 1617). See also the 1693 Jena edition of the same. See also *Works*, vol. 9, 564.

and to Spalatensis' concentration mainly on the history of the Saxons and his own time. Bingham did not think that the work of Spalatensis could be considered an authentic history of the early church.<sup>80</sup>

Another Protestant work that received Bingham's attention is Suicerus' *Thesaurus ecclesiasticus*.<sup>81</sup> Bingham praised the work of Suicerus as the best treasure of the study of the early church that had ever been published, but at the same time he also regretted that this work concentrated on the Greek Fathers.<sup>82</sup> Besides, the method that Suicerus employed, namely lexical methodology, was not the method that Bingham wanted to present to his own readers.<sup>83</sup>

The only work on the antiquity of the church that employs a method similar to that of Bingham was *The Primitive Christianity* by William Cave.<sup>84</sup> Bingham spoke very

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<sup>80</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv.

<sup>81</sup> Johannes Caspari Suiceri, *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus, E Patribus Graecis Ordine Alphabetico*, folio (Amsterdam: J. Henricum Wetstenium, 1682). Johannes Casparus Suicerus, or Hans Kaspar Schweitzer (1620-1684) was a philologist. He was originally from Zurich and received early education in his native town, but later studied at Montauban and Saumur. For a while he was a pastor in Thurgau, but then was called to teach at Zurich in 1644. He became professor of Hebrew in 1646, professor of catechetic in 1649, Latin and Greek in the Collegium humanitatis in 1656, and retired for health-related problems in 1683. He is well known mostly for his works in philology, such as *Sylloge vocum Novi Testamenti* (Zurich, 1648), *Novi Testamenti dictionum sylloge Graeco-Latina* (published by Hagenbuch in 1744 as *N.T. Glossarium Graeco-Latinum*). Most importantly, he is famous for his celebrated *Thesaurus ecclesiasticus*. See P. Schweizer, "Suicerus, Johannes Casparus," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. 11, 131.

<sup>82</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv.

<sup>83</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lv. This method, however, is exactly what Suicerus wants to present to his readers. In this lexicographical work Suicerus arranges biblical and theological words or phrases and explains them carefully by using the definitions or explanations given by the Greek church fathers. See also *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*, passim.

<sup>84</sup> William Cave (1637-1713), Anglican divine, was born in at Pickwell in Leicestershire. Cave was first educated at Oakham school, and then at St. John's College, Cambridge. He received his B.A. in 1656, and his M.A. in 1660. In 1662 he was ordained into the vicarage of Islington, and in 1679 he was collated as the rector of Allhalows the Great, London. In 1681 he received his D.D. from Oxford. He then



highly of this book, especially its methodology and the clarity of the account of many ancient customs and practices.<sup>85</sup> The book itself is a relatively short work of just one volume consisting in three parts.<sup>86</sup> In the first part Cave discusses the challenges and persecutions faced by the early church, as well as the worship and rituals of ancient Christianity. In the second part Cave focuses his discussion on the virtue of the early Christians, and in the third part Cave shows how early Christians lived in relation to other people, in justice, love and honesty.<sup>87</sup> Cave was one example of a British historian prior to Bingham who worked on the patristic theology in English. The first edition of Cave's *Primitive Christianity* appeared in 1672. It was reprinted several times.<sup>88</sup> Cave's purpose in writing this book was to demonstrate the mistakes of Roman Catholics, even though he avoided polemic. He expressed this in his preface:

In some few instances I have remarked on the corruption and degeneracy of the Church of Rome from the purity and simplicity of the ancient church; and more I could easily have added, but that I studiously avoided controversies.<sup>89</sup> However, while expressing his admiration and high regard for Cave's *Primitive*

*Christianity*, Bingham also noted that Cave focused too much on the explication of the

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became the chaplain to Charles II and in 1684 was installed canon of Windsor. William Cave was known mostly through his writings in the area of church history. The *Primitive Christianity*, first published in 1672, is his most noted work, and enjoyed several reprintings. As a writer, Cave was very thorough in his research, and very clear in his explanation. See *DNB*, vol. 9, 341-42.

<sup>85</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lvi; cf. the comments on Cave's work in *DNB*, vol. 9, 342.

<sup>86</sup> William Cave, *The Primitive Christianity: or the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel. In Three Parts* (London: printed by J. M. for Richard Chiswell, 1673). In writing this dissertation I consulted the 1840 reprint of the same work by J. Vincent.

<sup>87</sup> The design and structure of Cave's work are clearly seen through the part and chapter division of his book. See Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, passim. See also *DNB*, vol. 9, 342.

<sup>88</sup> *DNB*, vol. 9, 342.

<sup>89</sup> Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, vii.

morality of the early Christians so that he did not have space to discuss other important aspects of the Ancient Church.<sup>90</sup> Bingham thought that his own works would be most helpful in providing his readers with the study of ancient Christianity and in a way that other authors had not done before.

The similarity of Bingham's methodology to that of Cave deserves some attention. Just as Cave had before him, Bingham dealt with the early church topically as opposed to chronologically. The main difference between the two concerns the way they approached differences with the Roman Catholicism. Cave's main intention was to show the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, even though polemic was not his main intention. For Bingham, education and instruction for his people were his main concerns. In Bingham's case, historical study became the vehicle to support and defend the High Church practice.

Bingham also mentioned other authors who dealt with Early Christianity, but whose works he had not had the opportunity to read, namely: Bebelius' *Antiquitates Ecclesiasticae*,<sup>91</sup> Martinay's *De Ritibus Ecclesiae*,<sup>92</sup> Quenstedt's *Antiquitates Biblicae et Ecclesiasticae*,<sup>93</sup> and Hendecius' *De Antiquitatibus Ecclesiasticis*.<sup>94</sup> This admission

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<sup>90</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lvi.

<sup>91</sup> Balthasar Bebelius, *Antiquitates Ecclesiae in tribus prioribus post natum Christum seculis* (Argent, 1669).

<sup>92</sup> Edmond Martène, *De Antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus libri quatuor* (France and Rouen, 1700).

<sup>93</sup> Johann Andreaes Quenstedt, *Antiquitates biblicae et ecclesiasticae: accedit ejusdem auctoris tractatus de antiquis ritibus sepulchralibus Graecorum, Romanorum, Judaeorum & Christianorum* (Wittenberg, 1699).

<sup>94</sup> Despite all efforts to find information about Hendecius and his works, I could not gather any information about this particular author.

demonstrates two things. First, it shows that Bingham was not afraid to admit that he is not familiar with certain works by significant authors. Second, and more importantly, it indicates the limitation of sources that Bingham had when he was writing his book. In his dedicatory epistle to Bishop Jonathan Trelawney, he said that if there were any defects in his work, it was partially caused by his “own difficult circumstances, under which [he] was forced to labour, for want of proper assistance of abundance of books.”<sup>95</sup> In the preface to the readers, we hear Bingham expressing similar lament about the lack of immediate access to recently published books because the books were not yet in the library and his financial situation prevented him from purchasing the books for his personal use.<sup>96</sup> However, the fact that he had not had the opportunity to study the works of the four above-mentioned authors, Bingham comments, did not restrain him from working on his own project, since these works were written in Latin and it was his intention to address an English audience.<sup>97</sup>

Bingham’s topical approach, even though devoid of elaborate polemic with the Roman Catholic Church, still participates in the general seventeenth century dogmatic locus model. This model does not just have similarity with Cave’s methodology, but also

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<sup>95</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xlviii.

<sup>96</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lviii. Bingham’s tight financial situation that prevented him from purchasing books is highlighted in Richard Bingham’s account of the life of his great-grandfather. On one occasion Richard relates a story of how Bingham carefully hand-copied eight folio pages of Dr. Pearson’s “Exposition of the Creed” because the pages of his own copy had been mutilated. A new copy of this book, Richard says, would have cost Bingham only a few shillings, but because of the narrowness of his financial situation, Bingham was willing to devote so much time to restore the torn pages. See *Works*, vol. 1, x.

<sup>97</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, lvi.

with other patristic manuals of the day, such as that of Abraham Scultetus.<sup>98</sup> These works were published to argue the orthodoxy of Protestantism against the Roman Catholic church. This is why Bingham's work ceased to be of much interest after the nineteenth century. Harnack and Seeberg put an end to that model because they consider it as too dogmatically invested.

### 3. The Structure of *The Origines Ecclesiasticae*

The first volume of Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, published in 1708, consists of two books in which he presents the earliest emergence of the church in the first century of Christianity.<sup>99</sup> He begins with an explanation of various names given to Christians and several distinctions among believers, such as catechumen, laity, and clergy. In the second book of volume one, he deals extensively with the clergy in the early church. Here he writes about clergy as superior officers of the church and examines in detail their election, ordination, qualifications, as well as the laws and rules that govern their functions.<sup>100</sup> This volume was reprinted two years after its first appearance, suggesting its wide acceptance.

Volume two of Bingham's *Origines* contains books 3, 4, 5 and 6, and was published in 1709. In this volume Bingham discusses the offices of the inferior clergy. He meticulously discusses several different offices such as subdeacons, exorcists, lectors or

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<sup>98</sup> For Irena Backus' discussion of Scultetus' patristic methodology, see her article, "Irenaeus, Calvin and Patristic Orthodoxy: The Patristic Manual of Abraham Scultetus (1598)," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 1 (1999): 41- 53.

<sup>99</sup> Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, vol. 1, book 1, 1st ed. (London: Robert Knaplock, 1708). The Bodleian Library keeps a copy of this first edition, shelf marked: 8o Q40. Th. v1.

<sup>100</sup> Bingham, *Origines*, vol. 1, book 2, 1st ed.

readers, door-keepers, singers, and the like. Just as he discusses the rules and regulations for electing the superior clergy in the previous volume, here, too, Bingham shows with great accuracy the manner by which these inferior clergy were elected and installed. In this volume he demonstrates sensitivity to accuracy because he has hopes that his readers will learn from his studies and apply what they learn from this book in their own lives.<sup>101</sup> Even though Bingham does not explicitly mention that he has specifically his clerical audience in mind when he addresses this issue, we can infer from his epistle that he was probably thinking of his fellow clergy. In a sense this volume might be an encouragement to his fellow clergy, especially those living in rural areas where life was hard and stipends for the lower clergy were not high.

Following the long and careful presentation of the ancient clergy, Bingham discusses the ascetics in the early church. This topic is then followed by an explanation of different parts, utensils and sections of the church building. These subjects appear in the third volume of his *Origines*.<sup>102</sup> This volume consists of books 7, 8 and 9, and was published in 1711. In the last part of the third volume Bingham describes the geographical alignments of the Ancient Church, namely, how the provinces, dioceses and parishes were formed. His description is so exhaustive and precise that, according to Barnard, Bingham's work was only superseded at the end of the nineteenth century by Harnack.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Bingham, *Origines*, vol. 2, 2nd ed., A2 v.

<sup>102</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 234 - vol. 3, 255.

<sup>103</sup> Barnard, "Patristic Study in England in the Eighteenth Century," 213.

Volume four appeared in 1715. In this volume containing books 10, 11 and 12, Bingham presents the ancient practices of baptism.<sup>104</sup> He begins the volume with a close look at the catechumenate and at the same time he shows the earliest use of the creeds in the ancient church. In book 10 he gives his extensive treatment of the sacrament of baptism, dealing with different names and terminology, heretical practices of baptism, infant and adult baptism, times to administer the sacrament, and the manner of ancient baptism. The focus of book 12 is on confirmation and other ceremonies following baptism before people were made partakers of the Eucharist.

Bingham devoted volume five of his *Origines* entirely to the study of worship in the early church.<sup>105</sup> This volume, consisting only of book 13, was first published in 1719. It is interesting to see that Bingham pays special attention to the way ancient church worship centered on the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. The worship of the ancient church was never directed to creatures, saints, nor angels.<sup>106</sup> In explaining the fact that the early church never worshipped saints, he did not criticize Roman Catholic practice by using his investigations. However, as I have suggested in chapter two, Bingham wrote at a time when tensions among several Christian denominations reached a very critical point. Even though his tone in writing was not polemical, the content of his book indicated that he defended the position of the Anglican Church over against the Roman Catholics.

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<sup>104</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 256 - vol. 4, 71.

<sup>105</sup> *Works*, vol. 4, 72-416.

<sup>106</sup> *Works*, vol. 4, 101-57.

In volume six Bingham concentrates on the service and liturgy of Communion.<sup>107</sup>

He divides this volume into two books, books 14 and 15. In book 14 he deals with the service called the *Missa Catechumenorum*, or the service of the Catechumen, or the ante-communion service. Here he discusses psalm singing, hymns, the manner of reading the scriptures, preaching and prayers for the Catechumens. In the following book he discusses the *Missa Fidelium* or the Communion Service. He explains the ancient prayers preceding the Oblation, the consecration of the Eucharist, the Communicants, the manner of celebrating the Communion and the post-communion service as well as the time and frequency of communion. This volume first appeared in 1719.

Following the volume on the Communion Service, Bingham examines the unity and discipline of the ancient Church. This presentation appears in volume seven which was published in 1720 and consists only of one book, book 16.<sup>108</sup> In this volume he studies the way the early church maintained obedience to the law of Christ, several kinds of church discipline and the methods employed by the ancient church in administering discipline. Then he continues with a closer look at the objective of ecclesiastical censure, the persons on whom censures might be inflicted and the crimes for which censures were inflicted. In examining these crimes, Bingham demonstrates how the early church saw these crimes as transgressions of the Ten Commandments.

Moving from the study of church discipline for lay people, Bingham then examines the discipline for the clergy. This appears in book 17 of volume eight of his

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<sup>107</sup> *Works*, vol. 4, 417 - vol. 5, 368.

<sup>108</sup> *Works*, vol. 5, 369 - vol. 6, 336.

*Origines*.<sup>109</sup> This volume, published in 1720 also contains books 18 and 19. In book 18 Bingham investigates the orders of penitence and the method of public penance in the early church. It is interesting to see that in the discussion of this particular book, Bingham takes some time to compare the differences between the penitential confession of the ancient church and the practice of private or auricular confession in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>110</sup> In this section he argues that it is a mistake to make the *exomologesis* of the early church the auricular confession introduced by the Roman Catholic Church. Here we find that even though Bingham's explicit intention in writing his *Origines* was not to attack the Roman Catholic standpoint, he nevertheless indicated what was wrong with the practice of the Roman Catholic Church of his era. Book 19 carries on the discussion of the absolution or the manner in which the early church readmitted penitents into the communion of the church.

Volume nine was published in 1722 and it contains books 20, 21 and 22.<sup>111</sup> In book 20 Bingham explores the ancient festivals. He begins with the meaning of the Lord's Day and how the ancient church observed the Sabbath. He continues with observations on the celebration of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the festivals of the Apostles and Martyrs. In book 21 he writes about fasting, and in book 22 he explains the marriage rites observed by the early church. Here he also takes time to explain the views of some heretics who condemned marriage, as well as the way the early church looked at divorce.

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<sup>109</sup> *Works*, vol. 6, 337-580.

<sup>110</sup> *Works*, vol. 6, 464-93.



Bingham concludes his long study of the customs and practices of the early church with a discussion on funeral rites. This discussion appears in volume ten of the *Origines* and contains only one book, book 23.<sup>112</sup> In this volume he starts by describing the cemeteries, the manner, time and custom of burying the dead, preparation of the body for the funeral and the way the ancient church generated laws to secure the graves from the violence of robbers.

In this vast study of the ancient church, Bingham seems to be dividing the entire structure of the *Origines* into two main divisions.<sup>113</sup> In the first major division he discusses the church as an institution and all aspects of its life, from the meaning of what it is to be a Christian Church, to the government of the church and the “fabric of the church”<sup>114</sup> necessary for the operation of the church. In this first major division he starts with the study of the names used to refer to Christians in the first century and lays a foundation for what it means to be Christians. He then discusses the calling and ministry of clergy, since the clergy hold a very important role in the life of the church. By so doing, he hopes that his study on the office of the clergy would influence the ministry of the clergy in his own time.

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<sup>111</sup> *Works*, vol. 7, 1-361.

<sup>112</sup> *Works*, vol. 7, 362-463.

<sup>113</sup> Readers need to understand that Bingham did not specify that he wanted to make these two major divisions. This is just my own way of examining the whole structure of Bingham's *Origines* in order to see how he can successfully carry out the methodical account of church antiquity.

<sup>114</sup> I use the term *fabric of the church* here in a very broad understanding of the physical, material, non-human, non-spiritual elements of the church, such as church buildings, utensils, and so on.

In the second major division, Bingham follows the life-cycle of human beings, from birth to death, as it is related to the ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies. He starts with the study of ancient baptism and goes on with the study of other aspects in life, connecting daily life very closely with ecclesiastical and spiritual practices and ceremonies to demonstrate that there is no separation between what is sacred and what is ordinary. Then he moves on to the marriage rites. He ends the work with rites for burial. This method of non-chronological presentation of the history of the early church is certainly a unique and interesting one. By arranging his material using this method, Bingham was able to successfully reach his intention, namely to present a methodical account of Christian antiquity. By presenting his study following these two major divisions, Bingham demonstrated freedom to explore the topical headings of each aspect of Christian antiquity without having to bind himself to the chronological order of church history as was the common practice of many scholars of his time.<sup>115</sup>

Looking closely at how Bingham arranges the subject matter of his writings, we can see that the first division centers on the church as an institution and how this institution is founded and operated in the first five centuries. The second division, in contrast, centers upon the life and worship of individual Christians. The life of early Christian men and women was looked at in the light of the church as the center of their activities. Between the two divisions, Bingham places baptism as the axis, connecting the

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<sup>115</sup> Among other scholars is Dionisius Petavius with his multi-volume *The History of the World: or an Account of Time* (London: J. Streater, 1659), which is a strict chronological order of world history, based on the history of the Old Testament. It goes all the way through the early church period and ends in the middle of the seventeenth century. Another author of the same category is Lewis Ellies DuPin with his thirteen-volume publication of *A New History of Ecclesiastical Writers* (London: Abel Swalle and Tim Childe, 1692).

church as an institution and the Church as the communion of believers. Baptism, then, in the entire structure of Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, becomes the focal point and the link between the church as an institution and the people, the individuals who make up the entire body and whose lives depend on the church.

Finally, at the end of the tenth volume of this great work, Bingham writes a postscript, indicating to his readers that he intends to write a supplement to his *Origines* in a book about miscellaneous rites.<sup>116</sup> He hopes that God will grant him better health so that he can carry out this plan.<sup>117</sup> In this postscript he also encourages his readers to spend more time in studying early church history, as well as the readily available biblical commentaries. He lists several titles of books from various authors that he thinks are useful for his readers.<sup>118</sup> Bingham closes his presentation by pointing out that the highest degree of excellence can be achieved by anybody who seeks it. He relates his own experience in writing this ten volume work. Upon publishing the first volume of the *Origines*, some people came to him and told him that a single person would never be able to undertake such a great task. But he is very thankful to God that he has lived to confute such an objection, and

... give the world a proof that great and laborious works are not always so frightful as sometimes they are imagined. I have given a little specimen of what

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<sup>116</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 446.

<sup>117</sup> Bingham actually started the plan for this project. Richard, his great-grandson, found manuscripts for this enterprise, together with other manuscripts as preparation for a new edition of the *Origines*. But Bingham died only a few months after the tenth volume was published. See *Works*, vol. 1, xiii.

<sup>118</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 447-50.

the industry of a single person may do, in whom there is neither the greatest capacity nor the strongest constitution.<sup>119</sup>

## II. The Acceptance of the *Origines Ecclesiasticae*

Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae* received a very warm acceptance not only during his life time, but also more than a century after he died. The earliest evidence that this work was well received by the public was the 1710 reprint and revised edition of the first volume, published by Robert Knaplock in London.<sup>120</sup> It appeared only two years after the first edition was released.

### 1. The Acceptance of the *Origines Ecclesiasticae* in England

Of all public acceptances of Bingham's works, acceptance from Oxford University was perhaps the most important for him personally. Looking at his past experience, Bingham had some regrets for having to leave the University early in his career. On one occasion he said: "... providence [was] removing me early from the University, (where the best supplies of learning are to be had)."<sup>121</sup> Besides, the fact that he had to leave his fellowship at Oxford under the charge of being a heretic must have placed a heavy burden on his shoulders. Therefore, an acceptance from the University would very likely mean restoration of his name. Bingham tried to do his best in gaining

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<sup>119</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 450.

<sup>120</sup> Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. In writing this dissertation I consulted this particular edition of the *Origines* in the collection of Huntington Library in Pasadena, California (call number: 359920).

this restoration. He personally presented the first two volumes of his *Origines* to the Bodleian Library, Oxford. From these presentation copies, we can see that he wanted to prove to the University that he was able to stay true to the church. The provenance on the title pages of these presentation copies, identifying Bingham as “formerly fellow of University College, Oxon,”<sup>122</sup> shows some indication of the willingness of the University to acknowledge the fact that Bingham was once a fellow at the University College.

We can also see that Oxford University was willing to acknowledge Bingham as one of its own by comparing the description of Bingham on the title pages of the first and second editions of the first volume of the *Origines*. In the first edition, Bingham is only described as: “Rector of Headbourn-Worthy near Winchester.”<sup>123</sup> In the second edition of the same, however, Bingham is described as: “Rector of Headbourn-Worthy near Winchester and sometime fellow of University College, Oxford.”<sup>124</sup> This additional information about Bingham suggests that by the time the second edition was ready for print, there must have been some approval from Oxford University, so that Bingham was then able to add this information, indicating that he had a tie with the University. Even though he was a fellow at the University only for a short period of time, this tie is a part

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<sup>121</sup> Readers need to understand that Bingham expressed this statement in the context of his gratitude to Dr. Radcliffe, who immediately arranged for him to be the rector of Headbourn-Worthy near Winchester right after he was forced to resign from his fellowship at Oxford. See *Works*, vol. 1, lix.

<sup>122</sup> As far as I can tell, the handwriting of this provenance is an eighteenth-century handwriting, suggesting that it was written when the copy was presented to the library. See Bodleian Library, shelf mark: 8o Q. 40. Th. v1.

<sup>123</sup> See the title page of Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, 1st ed., 1708, in Bodleian Library, shelf mark: 8o Q. 40. Th. v1.

<sup>124</sup> See the title page on the second edition of the *Origines*, 1710.

of his identity. And his former position as a fellow at Oxford must have added very significantly to people's acknowledgement of his scholarly work.

After the publication of the first volume of his *Origines*, Bingham corresponded with some influential individuals within the circle of Oxford University concerning his publication. Had the University not accepted Bingham's works as orthodox, these people would not have been willing to correspond with Bingham, let alone discuss his book. The most interesting letters accessible to us that highlight this fact are the ones between Bingham and Dr. Arthur Charlett.<sup>125</sup> Charlett was an important figure in the history of Oxford University, and the relationship between Bingham and this eminent doctor went all the way back to the time when Bingham was a student at the University College. Charlett was the proctor of Oxford University in 1683,<sup>126</sup> and Master of the University College in 1692.<sup>127</sup> This was the period when Bingham was still active as a fellow at the college. When the Trinitarian controversy at Oxford reached its height in the 1690s, as the Master of the University College, Charlett must have been involved in the decision to remove Bingham from his post following the controversy.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> The original letters were compiled by John Aubrey, esq., in his *Letters Written by Eminent Persons in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. See the 1813 reprint of the same, published by Longman. See also *Works*, vol. 1, xxvii-xxx.

<sup>126</sup> Ayliffe, *The Antient and Present State*, vol. 2, 305. See also *DNB*, vol. 10, 119.

<sup>127</sup> University College Archives, *Registrum Coll. Universitatis Oxon.* Shelf mark: UC: J1/A/1. See also *Works*, vol. 1, xxvi.

<sup>128</sup> A letter from Thomas Tanner of All Souls College, Oxford, to Arthur Charlett, Master of the University College, Oxford, dated November 24, 1695, and describing the death of Anthony Wood, antiquarian of Oxford University, has a one-sentence note saying: "The meeting about Mr. Bingham is tomorrow morning at nine of the O'Clock." This suggests that Charlett took part in the whole consideration of Bingham's case. See Wood, *Life and Times*, vol. 3, 502.

In his letter to Charlett, dated All Saints' Day 1710, Bingham thanked the Doctor for remembering him when he was in London. Bingham also reported to him the purchase of his books by a certain Sir P. Sydenham.<sup>129</sup> In the same letter, Bingham told Charlett that he had planned to add maps of Ecclesiastical Geography, about ten or twelve, in the next volume of the *Origines*, but that his bookseller was not willing to venture it, for business reasons. Bingham was disappointed since he thought that the maps would have been very useful for those who read the ancient Church history.<sup>130</sup>

In another letter to Charlett, dated November 9, 1713, Bingham sent an accompanying copy of the second part of his *Scholastical History of Lay Baptism*, hoping that this gift might become a testimony of his respect for Charlett.<sup>131</sup> In the same letter Bingham relates his latest visit to London to meet Lord Treasurer Harley and to present the latter with his book. Harley accepted Bingham very warmly, invited him to dinner and, much to Bingham's surprise, the Lord Treasurer presented him with a bank-bill of 100 pounds,<sup>132</sup> as an encouragement to go on with writing the antiquity of the church, about which the Lord had been very pleased.<sup>133</sup> At the end of this letter Bingham asks Charlett to send his regards to the Dean of Christ Church<sup>134</sup> and John Potter, as well as his

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<sup>129</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xxviii.

<sup>130</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xxviii.

<sup>131</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xxviii.

<sup>132</sup> This was a large sum of money, considering that the same amount of money was Bingham's annual salary when he was first appointed to the rectory of Headbourn-Worthy in 1696. See the discussion on this matter in chapter 1.

<sup>133</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xxix.

<sup>134</sup> The Dean of Christ Church is Dr. Robert South, who was a key figure in the Trinitarian controversy at Oxford in the last decade of the seventeenth century. The disagreement between South and

respects to all the Society.<sup>135</sup> These personal greetings indicate that the relationship between Bingham and the University had come back to that of mutual respect. This kind of relationship could not have been maintained had the University still considered Bingham a Trinitarian heretic. These correspondences are very good evidences how in the end Bingham gained a good reputation in the eyes of the University, and this, in no small measure, was established through the publications of his *Origines*.

On September 22, 1712, a certain gentleman from London by the name of True Darbyshire, whom Bingham never met, sent him a letter, expressing his and others' appreciation of Bingham's efforts in publishing his *Origines*. The opening of this letter says:

Sir; You will, perhaps, wonder to receive this from one that never saw you, and perhaps never may. But it is out of kindness to you to let you know what opinion the true Church<sup>136</sup> of England men have of you about us. Your *Origines* & c. gained you a great reputation, and, notwithstanding some mistakes incident to all mankind, you were looked upon as a member of the church both willing and able to serve her.<sup>137</sup>

As the opening of this letter indicates, Bingham's work must have reached its intended aim, namely, to educate and inform people in England of the history of Christian antiquity. At the same time this letter also informs us of the expectation of Bingham's readers of his next scholarly publication, especially with regard to the problem of lay-

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Sherlock resulted in the unhappy resignation of Bingham from his post as a fellow at the University. See chapter 2. It means that there had been a restoration not only of Bingham's good name but also of the relationship between Bingham and South.

<sup>135</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, xxix.

<sup>136</sup> The underlining of certain words in this letter is original in the manuscript.

<sup>137</sup> The manuscript of this letter is kept at Bodleian Library in the special collection of Western Manuscripts, shelf mark: MS. Eng. Hist. c. 273, folio 201 r.



baptism. Darbyshire heard the news that Bingham had just published his *Scholastical History* and he said that this news:

... caused great joy to several about me, hoping so able a pen as yours would have set that matter in a clear light, and have ended a dispute which has caused so much trouble to the church, triumphs to its adversaries, and a staggering in several well meaning men ...<sup>138</sup>

From Darbyshire's letter to Bingham, we can also learn that many of his readers hoped that his explanation and clarification on the questions concerning lay-baptism would shed light on the solution of the controversy. This means that Bingham's scholarship had gained acceptance from his audience, and that his patristic studies had already been considered a good source of authority in overcoming controversial matters.

The popularity and acceptance of Bingham's *Origines* also brought with it the desire from profit-oriented men to gain some wealth by being hangers-on to Bingham's fame. This became the case with A. Blackmore, or Blackmore, who ingeniously published an abridged version of the first eight volumes of Bingham's *Origines* in 1722. This two volume abridged version appeared under the title: *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia; or A Summary of Christian Antiquities*.<sup>139</sup> In the preface to the readers for this abridged version, Blackmore acknowledges that this work is an abridgment of the famous works of Joseph Bingham. He praises Bingham's careful study and research, and the great

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<sup>138</sup> Bingham included this letter in his dedicatory epistle to Bishop Jonathan Trelawney in the publication of the second part of his *Scholastical History*. See *Works*, vol. 8, cliii.

<sup>139</sup> A. Blackmore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia: Or, A Summary of Christian Antiquities. . . To Which is Prefix'd an Index Haereticus, Containing a Short Account of All the Principal Heresies, Since the Rise of Christianity. . .* (London: Printed for E. Bell, J. Darby, A. Battersworth, F. Fayram, J. Pemberton, J. Hooke, C. Rivington, F. Clay, J. Bateley, and E. Symon, 1722).

source of historical study the eight volumes had become.<sup>140</sup> What drives him to publish this digested version, Blackamore says, is the expensive price of the eight volumes of Bingham's *Origines*. Common people, Blackamore argues, found it too expensive to have to pay forty or fifty shillings for the whole eight volumes of Bingham's *Christian Antiquities*.<sup>141</sup> Inferior clergy, who would no doubt be very glad to be able to receive as much benefit as possible from reading these works, Blackamore says, are "depress'd by the narrowness of their fortunes, and kept under water by an insuperable weight of poverty hanging at their feet."<sup>142</sup> In order to help these poor clergy, Blackamore and ten booksellers<sup>143</sup> decided that they launch this shortened version:

We have endeavour'd to reduce this larger work of Mr. Bingham into as narrow a compass as we could, with the greatest care always had to every material circumstance by him insisted on.<sup>144</sup>

The readers can see from this quotation that Blackamore uses the first person plural pronoun, indicating that this enterprise is not just his own, but a joint effort with some other people, very likely his booksellers.

Blackamore realizes that Bingham's *Origines* is an exceptional work, an "incomparable collection of Christian Antiquities."<sup>145</sup> He also commends Bingham for having done so careful a study of Church Antiquity:

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<sup>140</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A3 r.

<sup>141</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A3 v.

<sup>142</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A3 v.

<sup>143</sup> This publication is unique in the sense that there are ten booksellers working together in publishing an abridged version of a work. This situation suggests that business is the primary motive rather than efforts in educating the people or advancing scholarship.

<sup>144</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, vol. 1, A3 r.

... for this his most labourious and useful undertaking, having observ'd how assiduous and careful most of the learned world were to improve themselves in the knowledge of the Antiquities of the Gentile World; and how remiss in their searches after the more noble and advantageous acquirement of a thorough skill in Church Antiquities. To excite the present and succeeding ages to that study, with indefatigable industry set himself about this work, which, whosoever shall allow himself the time and pleasure to peruse, I dare believe he will conclude it one of the most compleat Bodies of Antiquities in any Kind.<sup>146</sup>

Another reason why it is necessary to produce an abridged version of the

*Origines*, according to Blackamore, is to help missionaries abroad to be able to purchase a more economical version. Blackamore dedicates this condensed version to the Venerable Society for the Propagating of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.<sup>147</sup> He asks for the willingness of the society to patronize this publication.<sup>148</sup> In the dedicatory epistle, dated April 25, 1722, Blackamore also requests the society's protection of this publication because he believes that the society will do it "for the publick good of our most Holy Religion."<sup>149</sup> By so doing, Blackamore is actually making a strategic move to gain the protection and approval of the society. If the society gives an endorsement of this work, it means Blackamore has gained good market for his work, because then the society will promote this book to its missionaries.

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<sup>145</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A3 v.

<sup>146</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A3 r.

<sup>147</sup> The Society was founded in 1701, receiving its first charter from King William III. The purpose of founding the society was for the "promotion of the Christian Religion in the Plantations and Colonies beyond the Seas." The society consisted of ninety-six members, and the king's charter provided that the two Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of London and Ely, the Lord Almoner, the Deans of St. Paul's and of Westminster, the Archdeacon of London, and the two Regius and the two Margaret Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge should always belong to the Society. See *The Encyclopedia of Missions*, vol. 2, ed. Edwin Munsell Bliss (London, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1891), 348.

<sup>148</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A2 v.

<sup>149</sup> Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A2 v.

The publication of this condensed form of the *Origines*, even though driven by a business motivation on Blackamore's part, is evidence that the original work itself was widely accepted by 1722, even though only eight volumes had appeared.<sup>150</sup> The fact that Blackamore and his ten booksellers were willing to launch this work is a good indication that the demand was high for the *Origines*. Because of the expensive price for the original work, Blackamore saw an opportunity to gain profit by producing the shorter, less expensive version.

Upon seeing the appearance of the *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia* Bingham became enraged. In the preface to the tenth volume of his *Origines*, he made it clear that he felt very offended by Blackamore's endeavors. First of all, by printing such an abridged version of this work, Blackamore had not shown respect to the twenty years of hard labors that he had engaged himself in to publish the complete version of his *Origines*.<sup>151</sup> Blackamore's condensed version gave the impression that his complete works were not useful, while the shorter version was more valuable.<sup>152</sup>

Bingham detected the profit-oriented motivation behind the publication of the *Ecclesia Primitiva*. He charged Blackamore and his booksellers with exploiting the poor clergy for their inability to purchase the complete volumes of the *Origines*, while actually gaining some profit for themselves. Bingham's main argument was that the two volume

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<sup>150</sup> Blackamore was mistaken when he thought that Bingham had completed all he wanted to write in these eight volumes. In the preface of this shortened version, Blackamore clearly says that Bingham had completed the entire work in eight volumes. See Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A3 r. Later Bingham responded to Blackamore, pointing out how Blackamore was completely mistaken. See also *Works*, vol. 9, 421.

<sup>151</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 420.

<sup>152</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 421.

octavo version of the *Ecclesia Notitia* was still too large for an abridged version. The poor clergy would still have to buy two volumes.<sup>153</sup> Besides, Blackamore added two long discourses of his own at the end of the abridged versions.<sup>154</sup> These two long additions, Bingham said, defeated the purpose of producing the cheaper version of the *Origines*, since the reading public must eventually pay for the printing costs.<sup>155</sup> Bingham also pointed out the untruthfulness of Blackamore's promise to help the poor clergy because Blackamore summarized only eight volumes out of the intended ten volume complete set of the *Origines*.<sup>156</sup> Blackamore had been deceitful in saying that Bingham "had happily completed [his] whole work in eight volumes"<sup>157</sup> while, in fact, Bingham had previously announced to his readers that he still intended to write two more volumes.<sup>158</sup>

Bingham openly stated his assessment that this short edition of his *Origines* had been printed not for the interest of the readers, but for the interest of the booksellers.<sup>159</sup> He also questioned the lawfulness of such a publication, since he believed that he held all the rights to his own books, even though he did not want to press any charges against

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<sup>153</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 421.

<sup>154</sup> The "Index Haereticus" and the "Brief Account of the eight first General Councils" at the end of the *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia* are Blackamore's own work, added to this publication as "additional piece to this great work of Mr. Bingham." See Blackamore, *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, vol. 1, A4 r.

<sup>155</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 421.

<sup>156</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 421.

<sup>157</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 421; cf. *Ecclesia Primitiva Notitia*, A3 r.

<sup>158</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 421.

<sup>159</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 422.

Blackamore.<sup>160</sup> Bingham regretted Blackamore's impolite conduct in publishing this work without asking for Bingham's permission in the first place. Had Blackamore approached him in a genteel way, asking permission, he would certainly have given him not only permission, but also encouragement.<sup>161</sup> Even if Blackamore had not asked for permission but had done the publication to achieve the end that he pretended, Bingham would be willing to give his pardon. In Bingham's opinion, Blackamore actually:

...defeated his own design, both by unnecessary and hurtful additions of his own, which will not only incommode and incumber his books, but render them dangerous and pernicious to unwary readers, unless timely antidoted and corrected by some more skilful hand.<sup>162</sup>

## 2. The Acceptance of the *Origines Ecclesiasticae* Outside England

The *Origines Ecclesiasticae* enjoyed international acceptance even before the entire work was completed. In his dedication to Bishop Charles Trimnel,<sup>163</sup> Bingham related an occasion on which a noble lord told him that he had sent the book to Scotland.<sup>164</sup> In the same letter Bingham also told Trimnell that the late Bishop Jonathan Trelawney, Trimnel's immediate predecessor, had sent the available volumes of the *Origines* to Geneva, and that the pastors in Geneva returned him their thanks, together

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<sup>160</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 422.

<sup>161</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 422.

<sup>162</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 422.

<sup>163</sup> Bishop Charles Trimnel was the Bishop of Winchester from 1721 to 1723. See Busby, *The Winchester Cathedral*, 336. Bingham and the bishop had a very good relationship. The bishop had nominated Bingham to be the first prebend in the Cathedral Church of Winchester. This nomination was never carried out because both Bingham and the bishop died on the very same day in August 1723. See *Works*, vol. 1, xi.

<sup>164</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 418.

with their approval.<sup>165</sup> Upon seeing that the pastors in Geneva received his book with approbation, Bingham started to hope that his work would also be accepted by other Protestant churches in Europe. He saw that such acceptance could bring other Protestant churches on the continent closer to the Church of England at some point. He said that the union of Protestant churches was also his intention in writing this book.<sup>166</sup>

In order that the *Origines* might be received by an even wider audience in the academic world, the book needed to be translated into Latin. Bingham understood this necessity, and expressed this in his dedication letter to Bishop Trimnel, in connection with his dissatisfaction of what Blackamore did in publishing the shortened version of his works:

But if he, [Blackamore] or any other person of ability would undertake to translate the whole into Latin, now that it is finished and completed, that might perhaps be of more general use to all Protestant Churches.<sup>167</sup>

The subject matter and organization of Bingham's book attracted the attention of theological scholars on the continent. Only two years after the last English volume was published, a Latin translation was released, fulfilling Bingham's last wish. The translation for this edition was done by Grischovius, or Grischow, a clergyman at Halle.<sup>168</sup>

Grischovius also added his own notes to the authors cited by Bingham.<sup>169</sup> In this *index*

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<sup>165</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 418.

<sup>166</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 418.

<sup>167</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 418.

<sup>168</sup> Johannes Henrichus Grischovius (d. 1754), a German translator. Besides translating Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae* from English into Latin, he also translated other works from English into German, and from Latin into German. See *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, vol. 22, ed. Firmin Didot Freres (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1966), 118.

<sup>169</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 545-67.

*auctorum*, Grischovius added his own notes to the editions of the patristic writings available to him at the time of translation. Grischovius also added a list of all the church councils, together with their dates, that Bingham cites in his work.<sup>170</sup> Grischovius' version came out in separate volumes between 1724 and 1729.<sup>171</sup>

The Latin translation was accompanied by a preface written by Johannes Franciscus Buddaeus.<sup>172</sup> In his preface Buddaeus expressed the opinion that Bingham's *Origines* was useful for the education of the people, and said that Bingham presented a deep study for the explanation of early Christianity, resulting in exact and closely examined arguments with careful attention to detail.<sup>173</sup> Not only was this undertaking useful to educate the readers, Buddaeus added, but this was also done for the glory of God, who has blessed his people with knowledge, as well as sanctified life and pure doctrine.<sup>174</sup>

In his own preface Grischovius mentions that this Latin translation will be beneficial to the readers.<sup>175</sup> He comments that Bingham has been very careful in

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<sup>170</sup> See "Index Conciliorum alphabeticus et chronologicus cum numero canonum," in *Works*, vol. 9, 568-71.

<sup>171</sup> The first volume of the Latin translation of this work appeared under the title *Origines sive Antiquitates Ecclesiasticae. Ex Lingua Anglicana in Latinam Vertit Io. Henricus Grischovius, Halbertadiensis. Accedit Praefatio Io. Franc. Buddei, Theol. D. Et. P.P.O.* (Hala: Sumtibus Orphanotrophei, 1724).

<sup>172</sup> Johannes F. Buddaeus (1667-1729), a German Lutheran theologian, was a professor of philosophy at Halle and later a professor of theology at Jena. He was known as a modest author, and his writings are considered clear. Buddaeus is famous for his philosophical and moral writings. See *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, vol. 7, 717.

<sup>173</sup> Buddaeus, "Preface," in *Works*, vol. 9, 452.

<sup>174</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 453.

<sup>175</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 465.



analyzing the writings of numerous authors of the early church, with citations directly from their original writings.<sup>176</sup> He then adds:

Clarissimus videlicet Binghamus ad calcem cujusque paginae bene multa auctorum loca notavit, quibus relationes suas superstruxit. Ex his quidam nonnulla, praesertim ea, quae ex patribus et auctoribus Latinis citavit, lectoris conspectu plene interdum, ut plurimum autem carptim descripta, exhibuit.<sup>177</sup>

Grischovius published an additional volume to Bingham's *Origines* in 1738. This additional volume consisted of other writings that Bingham had published during his lifetime, namely *The French Church's Apology for the Church in England*, originally published in 1706, *The Scholastical History of the Practice of the Church in Reference to the Administration of Baptism by Laymen*, together with *The Scholastical History of Lay-Baptism*, second part, *Dissertation on the Eighth Canon of the Council of Nice*, and *A Discourse Concerning the Mercy of God to Penitent Sinners*.<sup>178</sup> The ten volumes of the *Origines*, together with this additional volume are commonly designated as 11 volumes quarto, 1724-38.<sup>179</sup> This valuable Latin translation by Grischovius was again reprinted in 1751-1756.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, another abridged version of Bingham's *Origines* was published in Venice.<sup>180</sup> This edition, however, was printed without due acknowledgment, under the title: *Lucii Paleotimi Antiquitatum s. Originum*

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<sup>176</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 466.

<sup>177</sup> *Works*, vol. 9, 466.

<sup>178</sup> The title page of this volume says *Josephi Binghami, Quatuor Dissertationes, Quarum Tribus Prioribus Certae quaedam materiae in iam editis Originibus Ecclesiasticis* (Hala: Sumtibus Orphanotrophei, 1738).

<sup>179</sup> See J. R. Pitman's "Advertisement" in *Works*, vol. 1, vi.

<sup>180</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, vii.

*Ecclesiasticarum Summa*, 1766, quarto.<sup>181</sup> The publication of this abridged edition is another proof that the academic circles on the continent really valued Bingham's works.

Despite the fact that Bingham hated the publication of the abridged version of his works done by Blackamore, German speaking countries enjoyed Bingham's works through this version. In 1768-69 the first German translation of Blackamore's version was published in Breslau under the title *Anton Blackmore Christliche Alterthümer; aus dem Engl. übersetzt*.<sup>182</sup> This edition was translated by F. E. Rambach, a Lutheran preacher and philologist from Breslau.<sup>183</sup> Another German translation of selections from Bingham's works was published in Augsburg by an anonymous Roman Catholic under the title: *Jos. Bingham's Alterthümer der Kirche; ein auszug aus der Engl. ausgabe*, 1788-96.<sup>184</sup> It is interesting to see that later in the eighteenth century, even Roman Catholics were interested in translating this work into German. This is perhaps an indication that the Roman Catholic Church in Germany saw the need to learn what Bingham had to offer. Given the non-polemical tone of Bingham's *Origines*, it is very likely that the Roman Catholic Church did not see any threat from Bingham's writings.

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<sup>181</sup> Joseph Esmond Riddle, *A Manual of Christian Antiquities*, 2nd ed. (London: John W. Parker, 1843), 9. Despite all efforts, I am still unable to locate this edition of the abridged version of the *Origines*.

<sup>182</sup> Riddle, *A Manual of Christian Antiquities*, 9. See also *Works*, vol. 1, vi.

<sup>183</sup> Friederich Eberhard Rambach (1708-1775) was born in Gotha. After studying at the Gymnasium at Gotha, he went to Halle to study theology. Upon finishing his theological study, he was appointed teacher of Pedagogy in 1730. In 1734 he became pastor adjunctus in Cötern. Later he was appointed Deacon at Marktkirche in Halle. He was then chosen as the senior pastor at Marktkirche in 1756, and then finally in 1766 he was appointed "Oberkonsistorialrat" and "Inspektor im Fürstentum" in Breslau. He died in Breslau on August 16, 1775. His love of philology was reflected through his many translations of theological and historical treatises from English and French into German. Through these translations he bridged the German theology with that of other parts of Europe. See Carl Bertheau, "Rambach," in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*. vol. 16, ed. Albert Hauck (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichsische Buchhandlung, 1905), 425.

The earliest Dutch translation of the first volume of the *Origines* was published in 1711, only three years after the English version was published in London.<sup>185</sup> This translation demonstrates the fact that this book was well-received in the Netherlands even before Bingham had finished all the volumes. The translator was Simon Vander Pyl, a minister of the English and Scottish Church in Flushing (Vlissingen), the Netherlands, from 1700 to 1732.<sup>186</sup> Around the time when Vander Pyl became the pastor of Flushing, which coincided with the first publication of Bingham's *Origines*, there had been a drastic decline in the membership of the Puritan congregation and a steady rise in the Dutch portion of the congregation.<sup>187</sup> This situation could very well have been an ideal time for a translation of the *Origines* into Dutch.

The first volume of the Dutch translation of the *Origines* was dedicated to Baljuw, the Burgemaster of the city of Flushing, and to Petrus Gribius, Lambertus Zegers and Antonius Harduyn, three men who were the ministers and preachers of the Word in the English churches in Delft, Amsterdam and Bekerke.<sup>188</sup> This dedication shows that Vander

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<sup>184</sup> Riddle, *Manual of Christian Antiquities*, 9.

<sup>185</sup> Joseph Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticae; of, Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk, in Twee Boeken. . . in 't Nederduitsch vertaalt door Simon Vander Pyl* (Delft: Andries Voorstad, 1711). I am greatly indebted to Dr. Fred Van Lieburg of the Free University, Amsterdam, for providing me with the necessary information with regard to the Dutch translation of Bingham's *Origines*, as well as sending me photocopies of relevant material in this area.

<sup>186</sup> Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 444. The British churches in the Netherlands became small links in the network of Protestant churches in England, Scotland, and the United Provinces in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The religious ties between England and the Netherlands, as Sprunger has explained, sprang from the time of King James I, who took the side of the Reformed against the Arminians during the time of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619). See particularly pages 354-77.

<sup>187</sup> Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 445.

<sup>188</sup> Pyl, "Opdraght," in Bingham, *Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk*, folio \*2 r.

Pyl wanted to keep a close relationship with the British churches in the Netherlands.<sup>189</sup>

The recipients of his dedication were all from cities where there were British churches. In this dedication Vander Pyl expressed his confidence in the ability of the recipients to be good leaders of the church and soldiers of Christ.<sup>190</sup> In the dedication Vander Pyl expressed his hopes that the readers would accept this translation as a gift for they had worked hard for the church.<sup>191</sup>

Vander Pyl explained that even though many books have been written on the subject of early church history and many had been translated into Dutch, he saw the need to translate Bingham's work into Dutch, most of all, because of its detailed explanation of the early church, something no one else had done.<sup>192</sup> Matching Bingham's discussion of the ancient clergy in the first volume of the *Origines*, Vander Pyl elaborately discussed church government in the early church in his preface to the readers.<sup>193</sup> He focused especially on the office of Bishop in the New Testament era and during the Early Patristic time<sup>194</sup> in order to emphasize the hierarchical structure of church government. He concluded the preface by reminding his readers to walk in the footsteps of the church

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<sup>189</sup> Sprunger notes that with the dawn of the eighteenth century, there were only twelve British-Netherlands churches surviving. Among these churches are the ones in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leiden, Delft, the Hague, Dort, Flushing, Middleburg, Veere, and Utrecht. See Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 399.

<sup>190</sup> Bingham, *Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk*, \*6 v.

<sup>191</sup> Bingham, *Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk*, \*7 v.

<sup>192</sup> Bingham, *Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk*, \*\*\* 1 r.

<sup>193</sup> Bingham, *Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk*, \*\*\*3 r - \*\*\*8 v.

<sup>194</sup> Bingham, *Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk*, \*\*\*\*2 r - \*\*\*\*3 r.

fathers.<sup>195</sup> By emphasizing the office of Bishop, Vander Pyl seemed to have tried to bridge the gap between the Dutch churches and the churches of England, in matters of church government. As Sprunger observed, even though the churches of England, Scotland and the United Provinces had a common Reformed heritage, there were also differences that were difficult to bridge:

... the presbyterial churches of Scotland and the Netherlands had the closest kinship but not excluding the Episcopal Church of England. The clergy of the Dutch reformed Church accepted the Church of England as orthodox in doctrine albeit somewhat less "reformed" in matters of ceremony and liturgy. The English clergy from their side also expressed reservations about the Dutch church because of some things not to their liking.<sup>196</sup>

The *Origines* also enjoyed another translation into Dutch. The second Dutch translation was published in 1716 by an anonymous translator.<sup>197</sup> In the preface of this edition, the commentator argued the importance of studying ecclesiastical history, especially for ministers in the church. He then presented the uniqueness of Bingham's *Origines* as a good work in church history.<sup>198</sup> However, he also presented possible objections to the work of Bingham because other scholarly authors had dealt extensively with the ancient church.<sup>199</sup> The advantage of Bingham's work, this commentator said, was its conciseness. Another objection to Bingham's work was the fact that Bingham was

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<sup>195</sup> Bingham, *Oudheden van de Kristelyke Kerk*, \*\*\*\*3 v.

<sup>196</sup> Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 354.

<sup>197</sup> Joseph Bingham, *Kerkelijke Oudheden of Staat en Kerkregeering van 't Eerste Christendom; in 't Engelsch beschreven; met aantekeningen opgeheldert, en met eenige byvoegzels vermeerderd, door N.N.* (Leyden: Vermey, 1716).

<sup>198</sup> See "Voorrede van de aantekenaar," in Bingham, *Kerkelijke Oudheden*.

<sup>199</sup> The commentator mentions several names such as Baronius, Petavius, Suilerus, Cotelerius, DuPin, etc., all of whom Bingham also mentions in his works. At the same time, Bingham is also aware of the different angle he presents in his own work. See "Voorrede van de aantekenaar," in Bingham, *Kerkelijke Oudheden*.

from another denomination. However, this commentator defended Bingham by saying that in Bingham's writings, the differences were not evident.<sup>200</sup>

These Dutch translations of Bingham's *Origines* show us how the Dutch churches saw the benefit of these translations. In all these translations Bingham's intention of educating the church through the study of Christian antiquity seemed to reach its goal. The Dutch translations of the *Origines*, done at an early stage of the publication of the book in its original language, seem to fulfill Bingham's eagerness to educate the people in the church. The German and the Latin translations, done many years after the completion of the whole and after the death of the author, served the purpose of academic education. The Latin translation fulfilled Bingham's wish that his works might be presented to the academia. The several reprintings of this great undertaking demonstrate the warm acceptance this book enjoyed even long after the death of the author.

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<sup>200</sup> I am very thankful to Dr. Van Lieburg for his valuable information on this matter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Understanding Baptism: Formulae, Practice, and Debate in the Early Church and the Church of England

Bingham discussed baptism in volume four, Book XI, of the *Origines*, with the title: “Of the Rites and Customs Observed in the Administration of Baptism in the Primitive Church.”<sup>1</sup> He clarified that his intention was not to discuss the theology or the doctrine of baptism, since this doctrine had already been elaborated in many didactical and polemical writings available.<sup>2</sup> Another topic that he intentionally left out was the question of lay-baptism, since he had discussed this in the *Scholastical History of Lay-Baptism*.<sup>3</sup> Here he concentrated on the practice and rituals of the Ancient Church regarding the sacrament of baptism, a topic that did not receive much attention from his contemporaries.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Origines* Bingham mostly used the patristic material as a source of information, almost as a “text-book” description of the ancient practice of baptism. He clearly stated that he did not write a chronological history of the early church, but only on the administration of baptism, since topical or systematic discussion was what his

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<sup>1</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 396-607.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 396.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 396. See also the discussion in chapter six of this dissertation.

<sup>4</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 397.

audience needed.<sup>5</sup> In thus using the material, he carefully selected the church fathers who discussed the administration and ritual of baptism. He would then explain what the Father said. For his research he used both the treatises of the church fathers and the records of the ecclesiastical councils in the first five centuries of Christianity. He did not make much of a distinction in terms of their authority as sources of information.<sup>6</sup>

Whenever Bingham quoted a statement from the church fathers, he provided his readers notes referencing the source. In the notes he always mentioned the name of the author, the title of the book in abbreviated form common to the readers of his day, and whenever possible, the book and chapter numbers in which he found the quotation.<sup>7</sup> Occasionally he would add the page number of the particular edition he consulted.<sup>8</sup> We have adequate reason to believe that he mostly used the copies which were in the

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<sup>5</sup> Bingham's method of non-chronological presentation of church antiquities received criticism from Riddle in his *Manual of Christian Antiquities*. In his criticism Riddle said that, despite the fact that Bingham's arrangement of these topics and subjects of his discussion was tolerably clear, Bingham confused dates or frequently intermingled topics in different periods of history. See J. E. Riddle, *A Manual of Christian Antiquities; or, an Account of the Constitution, Ministers, Worship, Discipline, and Customs of the Ancient Church* (London: John W. Parker, 1843), 9. This criticism, however, missed the very center of Bingham's intention in writing the *Origines*. The chronological description was not what Bingham wanted, since he had seen many such works. The *Origines* was written for the readers who wanted to learn about the custom and practice of the early church. See *Works*, vol. 1, lii.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term *patristic material* to indicate both the treatises of the church fathers that Bingham cites in his works, and the records of ecclesiastical councils mentioned in the *Origines*. I do not distinguish between the two because Bingham treated both equally.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, in the very first quotation, he quotes a statement by Privatianus of Suffetula about baptism at the Seventh Council of Carthage under Cyprian. In his note Bingham writes, "Conc. Carth. ap. Cyprian. n. xix," and then he gives the whole quote in Latin. See *Works*, vol. 3, 397. Upon closer examination, this is a reference to the Seventh Council of Carthage under Cyprian, and the number xix shows us the number where Privatianus' statement appears in Cyprian's record of the council. See also *ANF*, vol. 5, 568.

<sup>8</sup> The difficulty in analyzing Bingham's work is that sometimes it is hard to find the exact reference to Bingham's source because he just mentions the page numbers of the book without giving a reference to the book, chapter, and paragraph numbers of the classical sources.



collection of Morley Library at Winchester Cathedral.<sup>9</sup> The archival record of the library supports this assumption. In its seventeenth and eighteenth centuries catalogues, the library listed all books it owned in careful detail. These catalogues listed all the books according to the language, size and author, and arranged them alphabetically. Thus one finds first of all Latin books in folio, followed by quarto, octavo and duodecimo; then books in other languages arranged in a similar fashion.<sup>10</sup>

## **I. The Names Used to Refer to Baptism**

### **1. Baptism as *Indulgence***

In Christian antiquity baptism was sometimes called “indulgence” or *indulgentia*, focusing on the idea of absolution and remission of sins.<sup>11</sup> Bingham finds the term in Cyprian’s record of the Seventh Council of Carthage. There Cyprian quoted Privatianus of Suffetula who called baptism “divine indulgence.”<sup>12</sup> However, Bingham realized that the early church saw a problem in calling baptism “remission of sin.” People might have the wrong impression that the absolution depended on the worthiness of the administrator or the recipient of baptism. For this reason he preferred to follow Augustine in calling baptism “the sacrament of grace” or “the sacrament of absolution.”<sup>13</sup> Bingham saw that

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<sup>9</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, ix.

<sup>10</sup> I am thankful to Dr. John Hardacre, Curator of the Library at Winchester Cathedral, for allowing me to see this catalogue during my short visit to the library on May 31, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 397.

<sup>12</sup> Cyprian, “The Seventh Council of Carthage,” in *ANF* vol. 5, 568.

<sup>13</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 398.

this term emphasized that baptism was a sacrament of grace rather than “grace” or “absolution” itself.<sup>14</sup> Like Augustine, Bingham believed that God granted the grace of baptism, which is the remission of sins, only to those who turn to him with sincere faith and true repentance.<sup>15</sup> The act of baptism does not save people, and for the Ancient Church, “indulgence” means “God’s pardoning sin by the ministerial application of his sacraments, which are the seals of his covenant, granting remission of sins.”<sup>16</sup> He then concluded by saying that the sacrament of baptism brought people into the covenant of grace.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Baptism as *Regeneration*

The effect of baptism upon the individual was regeneration. Bingham recognized that in the early church baptism was often referred to as *παλιγγενεσία* or the “regeneration of the soul.” He found reference to this in Cyril’s Preface to his Catechism.<sup>18</sup> The relationship between baptism and regeneration is closely related to the idea of cleansing and washing away of sins. For this reason the water of baptism, signifying being born again, received much attention in the early church. Tertullian referred to Christians as *ἰχθῦς* or “fish” when he said: “But we, being little fishes, as

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<sup>14</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 398.

<sup>15</sup> Bingham quotes Augustine’s “On Baptism,” book 5, chap 21. See *Works*, vol. 3, 398. See also *NPNF*, vol. 4, 474.

<sup>16</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 398.

<sup>17</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 398.

<sup>18</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 399. The edition that Bingham used mentioned that this statement appeared in Cyril’s preface to the Catechism, no. x.

Jesus Christ is our great Fish, begin our life in the water, and only while we abide in the water are we safe and sound.”<sup>19</sup> The sign of the fish was a symbol for Christians during the time of persecution in Early Christianity. The initial letters of the words in Greek were also taken acrostically to refer to Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτὴρ or Jesus Christ, Son of God the Savior.<sup>20</sup> Bingham noted that Optatus also connected the idea of Christians as “fish” with baptism.<sup>21</sup> In his third book against the Donatists, Optatus pointed out that in baptism this “fish” was introduced at the baptismal font. Highlighting the symbol of fish and the acronym from the word ἰχθὺς, Optatus linked the person who is baptized to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.<sup>22</sup>

Since the new birth of Christians can never be separated from the work of the Holy Spirit, the new birth was also called the “spiritual birth.”<sup>23</sup> Optatus connected the Fatherhood of God and the Motherhood of the Church in bringing Christians to spiritual birth. Bingham quoted Optatus who said: “. . . the one who was born to the world may be reborn spiritually to God. Thus, God becomes the Father of human beings, and the church their holy mother.”<sup>24</sup> Without baptism people are not properly adopted into God’s family,

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<sup>19</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 398. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 1, in *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism. The Text edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, trans. Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1964), 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 398.

<sup>21</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 399.

<sup>22</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 399. See also Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, book 3, ch. 2. For the English translation of Optatus, see *Optatus: Against the Donatists*, ed. and trans. Mark Edwards (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 399.

<sup>24</sup> Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, book 2, chap. 10.

and therefore they do not yet have the right to call God their Father and the church their mother.<sup>25</sup>

Because regeneration cannot be separated from the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and because the works of the Holy Spirit in the grace of sanctification are sometimes called the unction or the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the early church sometimes called baptism “chrism” or “unction.”<sup>26</sup> Bingham finds this expression in Gregory of Nazianzus who called baptism “the Gift, the Grace, and Baptism, Unction, Illumination, the clothing of immortality, the Laver of regeneration, the Seal and everything that is honorable.”<sup>27</sup> Bingham thought that Nazianzus paid special attention to the term “unction” because this term had a sacred and royal meaning. An unction, or anointing, signifies that a person is made a priest or a king. In baptism, we are made kings and priests to God by Christ.<sup>28</sup>

### 3. Baptism as *Illumination*

The relationship between baptism and human knowledge of God is another important point that the early church emphasized.<sup>29</sup> The effect of baptism in enlightening

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<sup>25</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 399.

<sup>26</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 399.

<sup>27</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400. Here Bingham quotes Nazianzus, “Oration 40: The Oration on Holy Baptism,” chap. 4:

Δωρον καλούμεν Χάρισμα, βαπτισμα, χρισμα, φωτισμα, άφθαρσιας ενδυμα, παλιγγενεσιας, σφραγιδα, παν ότι τιμιον. See also *NPNF*, second series, vol. 7, 360.

<sup>28</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400. See also Nazianzus, “Oration 40,” chap. 4.

<sup>29</sup> David Gordon Kitts, in his Southern Baptist Theological Seminary doctoral dissertation, devotes the introductory chapter of his dissertation to the explanation of the use of the term *illumination* or

the human understanding with divine knowledge, Bingham explained, led the Ancient Fathers to call baptism φωτισμος or “illumination.”<sup>30</sup> He found allusions to baptism as illumination mostly in the writings of Chrysostom, Nazianzus, and Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>31</sup> John Chrysostom often called baptism illumination or enlightening, and sometimes he connected this illumination with the forgiveness of sin.<sup>32</sup> Chrysostom talked of the immediate urgency of baptism and criticized some who waited for baptism until the end of their lives, in order that they might sin throughout their lives and still receive the “illumination” just before they died.<sup>33</sup> Chrysostom insisted that God gave baptism for the forgiveness of sins, that God took away sins through it, and that, therefore, people should not delay baptism.<sup>34</sup>

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φωτισμος in connection with baptism in the New Testament and the church fathers. This dissertation, with its focus on the analysis of the use of “illumination” in the writings of some of the sixteenth-century reformers, tries to trace the use of this word in the early church. However, in selecting only three Church Fathers—Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine—Kitts fails to present a more complete idea as well as the richness of how the early church understood baptism as “illumination.” Besides, he also shows some lack of analytical clarity in his argument, because he says that Justin Martyr is the first Father to use the term “illumination,” while at the same time he discusses the use of this word in the Apostolic Fathers. See David Gordon Kitts, “Baptismal Imagery: An Analysis of ‘Illumination’ in the Writings of Select Sixteenth-Century Reformers” (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 3, 6-7.

<sup>30</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400.

<sup>31</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, Chrysostom, “Homilies on Hebrews,” hom. XIII, 9, 10, etc.

<sup>33</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400.

<sup>34</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400; cf. Chrysostom, who said:

“Πολλους οίδα τουτο παθοντας εγω, δι προσδοκια μεν του φωτισματος πολλα ημαρτανον; προς τη ημερα της τελευτης απελθον κενoi; ο γαρ Θεος δια τουτο το βαπτισμα εδωκεν, ινα λυση πας αμαρτιας, ουχ ινα αυξηση.” See “Homilies on Hebrews,” 13, par. 9. *NPNF*, first series, vol. 14, 431.

Bingham attests that Gregory of Nazianzus understood this illumination as the greatest and most magnificent gift of God.<sup>35</sup> Nazianzus saw illumination as the most wonderful of all the best terms used in the Bible. For him this gift was more important than the Holy of Holies and the Song of Songs.<sup>36</sup> This gift of Christ, called a gift because it was free, brought exceeding gladness.<sup>37</sup>

Dionysius the Areopagite also taught that illumination and the forgiveness of sins were connected. Baptism was the sacred symbol of divine regeneration and, thus, baptism illuminated the human mind with divine knowledge.<sup>38</sup> The main reason that illumination was connected with divine knowledge in baptism was related to the instruction the catechumens received while preparing for baptism. Justin Martyr called baptism “illumination” because he thought that the minds of those who learned these things were enlightened.<sup>39</sup> Through baptism the Divine knowledge would grow in degrees so that it came into greater perfection in the person’s life.<sup>40</sup> Clement of Alexandria held a similar view. He thought that at baptism Christians started to be enlightened. Bingham quoted Clement who said:

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<sup>35</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400. See also Nazianzus, “Oration on Holy Baptism,” oration 15, chap. 3. *NPNF*, second series, vol. 7, 360.

<sup>36</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400.

<sup>37</sup> Nazianzus, “Oration on Holy Baptism,” chap. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 400. See also Dionysius the Areopagite, “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy,” chap. 2, part 3, par. 1. For the English translation of this work, see *Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, trans. Thomas L. Campbell (London, New York: University Press of America, 1981).

<sup>39</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. 16; *ANF*, vol. 1, 183.

<sup>40</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 401.

This ceremony is often called free gift, enlightenment, perfection, and cleansing... enlightenment since by it we behold the wonderful holy light of salvation, that is, it enables us to see God clearly.<sup>41</sup>

Dionysius the Areopagite viewed baptism as the bearer of the first light and this first light, received at baptism, introduced the person to all other divine illuminating mysteries.<sup>42</sup> Through this illumination the baptized were then admitted into the mysterious part and hidden knowledge of Christianity, knowledge which was still hidden when the baptized were catechumens.<sup>43</sup> While noting that Dionysius was not a genuine early church father, Bingham interpreted this statement to mean that for the church, this mystery are the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues and prophecy, gifts given during the apostolic era, and immediately conferred at baptism by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. Baptism Called *Σφραγίς* or *Seal*

The early church often called baptism a “seal.” In Bingham’s time, however, this term was often misunderstood as the sign of the cross and the unction used in confirmation.<sup>45</sup> Bingham pointed out Cardinal Bellarmine’s mistake in interpreting

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<sup>41</sup> Bingham quotes Clement:

“Καλεῖται δι’ ὀλίγα τοῦτο ἔργον χάρισμα, καὶ τελειόν, καὶ λουτρόν. . . φωτισμὰ δὲ, δι’ οὗ τὸ ἄγιον ἐκεῖνο φῶς τὸ σωτερίον ἐποπτεύεται, τοῦτεστιν δι’ οὗ τὸ θεῖον ὁζυώπομεν. See *Works*, vol. 3, 401. See also Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos*, I, VI, 26. English translation: Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the Educator*, trans. Simon P. Wood (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 26.

<sup>42</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 401. See also Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, chap. 2, part 3, par. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 401.

<sup>44</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 401.

<sup>45</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 402.

την σφραγίδα του Κυρίου, “the seal of the Lord,” found in the story of Clement of Alexandria and recorded also by Eusebius,<sup>46</sup> to mean “confirmation.”<sup>47</sup> Bingham also showed the mistake of a certain Mr. Seller who took the term to mean the sign of the cross.<sup>48</sup> But at the same time, Bingham also recognized the correct understanding of this term, expressed by Valesius<sup>49</sup> and Daillé<sup>50</sup> who interpreted it to signify the covenant between God and human beings.<sup>51</sup>

The *Shepherd of Hermas* held a similar understanding of baptism as seal. The Shepherd said that those baptized, but who then died, were with the Lord. They had been sealed with the seal of the Son of God and had entered into the Kingdom of God.<sup>52</sup>

Bingham quoted Hermas who said:

For before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is consigned over to death; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and consigned over to life. Now, that seal is water; into which men descend bound over to death; but rise out of it marked out, or sealed unto life. This seal, therefore, was preached

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<sup>46</sup> Eusebius, *Church History*, 3. 3. 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 403.

<sup>48</sup> Bingham does not give the complete name of Mr. Seller, but in the footnote he refers to Seller's work as “Life of Justin Martyr.” I have tried to identify who this Mr. Seller is, but I am unable to find a connection between the name and the title of the work. However, I have been able to identify a person by the name of Abednego Seller (1646?-1705), who wrote a book titled *The Devout Communicant, Assisted with Rules for the Worthy Receiving of the Blessed Eucharist* (London: printed for R. Chiswell, 1686).

<sup>49</sup> Henricus Valesius, or Henri de Valois (1603-1676), *Eusebii Pamphili ecclesiasticae historiae libri decem* (Paris: Petri Le Petit, 1677). Bingham quotes de Valois from book 3, chap. 23 of this work.

<sup>50</sup> Joannes Dallaeus, or Jean Daillé (1594-1670), *Confirmatione [et] Extrema ut vocant Uncione, Disputatio* (Geneva, 1659). Bingham gives a very lengthy quotation from Daillé, taken from book 2, chap. 1 of this particular work.

<sup>51</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 403.

<sup>52</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 404.



unto them, and they made use of it, that they might enter into the Kingdom of God.<sup>53</sup>

Even though the word “baptism” is not explicitly mentioned here, Bingham believed that the Shepherd used the term “seal and name of Christ” to replace it, because, baptism set the mark and gave the name “Christians,” so that Christians were distinguished from Jews and Gentiles.<sup>54</sup>

Tertullian frequently called baptism *signaculum fidei* or the “signature of faith.”<sup>55</sup> In Bingham’s opinion, Tertullian used this term to distinguish Christians from the Jews.<sup>56</sup> What Tertullian meant was that the Jews had the mark of circumcision upon their body, but Christians had the signature of baptism upon them.<sup>57</sup> The term “seal” to refer to baptism signifies that Christians belong to Jesus Christ. Bingham used the testimony of Gregory of Nazianzus who called baptism “the seal of the Lord” because it showed “to whose dominion we belong.”<sup>58</sup> Not only was baptism the seal that Christians belong to Jesus, baptism also consigned or marked one for eternal life.<sup>59</sup> To illustrate this Bingham

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<sup>53</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 404. This quotation is taken from *The Shepherd of Hermas*, book 3, similitude 9, no. 16.

<sup>54</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 404.

<sup>55</sup> Tertullian, *Spectacles*, chap. 4, par. 1: “Ad principalem auctoritatem convertar, ipsius ‘signaculi’ nomen.” And also chap. 24, par. 2: “Hoc erit pompa diaboli, adversus quam in ‘signaculo fidei’ ejeramus.”

<sup>56</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 404.

<sup>57</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 404. See also Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 21, par. 2: “Neque de ipso ‘signaculo corporis’ neque de consortio nominis, cum Judaeis agimus.”

<sup>58</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 404. See also Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 40. De Baptismo*, par. 4.

<sup>59</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 405.

used the story of Constantine's baptism. Taking his source from Eusebius,<sup>60</sup> he described how Constantine, when he was near to death, requested baptism so that he could "enjoy the seal of immortality" because it was time for him "to obtain the seal of salvation."<sup>61</sup>

The early church made a distinction between the internal and external seal of baptism. Bingham notes that John Chrysostom called baptism "the seal of the Spirit," indicating that in baptism the believer received the "earnest of the Spirit." This was the internal seal of the Spirit.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, the rite of baptism was understood as the external seal.<sup>63</sup> According to Chrysostom, just as a mark was set upon a soldier, the Spirit was also put upon a true believer.<sup>64</sup> Chrysostom also made a comparison between Christians and Jews. The Jews had circumcision upon their bodies, while Christians had this seal of the Spirit inwardly.<sup>65</sup>

The early church emphasized the distinction between this inward and outward sealing of baptism because history demonstrated that not all who received the sacrament of baptism were true believers. Some received the external seal of baptism, but not the internal seal of the Spirit. Bingham takes the example of Simon Magus to prove this point.<sup>66</sup> Simon was baptized and thus received this seal, but only outwardly. Nobody in

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<sup>60</sup> Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*, book 4, chap. 62.

<sup>61</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 405.

<sup>62</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 405.

<sup>63</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 405.

<sup>64</sup> Chrysostom, *Homily on 2 Corinthians*, hom. 3, par. 7, the last part.

<sup>65</sup> Chrysostom, *Homily on 2 Corinthians*, hom. 3, par. 7, the last part.

<sup>66</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 405. See also *Constitution of the Holy Apostles*, book 6, chap. 7.

the Apostolical Constitutions believed that Simon received the true inward seal, or the grace of the Spirit.<sup>67</sup> Augustine said:

For Simon Magus also was born of water and of Spirit, and yet he did not enter into the kingdom of heaven; and this may possibly be the case with heretics as well.<sup>68</sup>

Optatus also dealt with the inward and outward seal of baptism. Bingham was sure that Optatus did not distinguish between the Catholic Church and the Donatists with regard to the outward seal, but there was a striking difference between the two when it came to the inward seal of the Spirit.<sup>69</sup> Bingham was positive that for Optatus heretical and schismatical baptisms could not confer the internal seal or the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.<sup>70</sup> The internal seal of baptism could only be conferred by the ministry of the Holy Catholic Church because:

. . . though they are commonly joined together, as in all true believers, yet they are sometimes separated, as in such hypocritical or unworthy receivers, as Simon Magus, and others of the like complexion.<sup>71</sup>

### **5. Baptism Called the *Sacrament of Faith and Repentance***

In Christian antiquity baptism was often referred to as “the sacrament of faith and repentance.”<sup>72</sup> This designation was not given only to adult baptism, but, as Bingham

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<sup>67</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 405.

<sup>68</sup> Bingham quotes Augustine from the 1569 Basel edition of Augustine's *de Baptismo*, book 7, page 461: “Nam et Simon ille Magus natus erat ex aqua et Spiritu, et tamen non intravit in regnum coelorum.” See *Works*, vol. 3, 405. See also Augustine, *On Baptism, against the Donatists*, book 6, chap. 12, par. 18. NPNF, vol. 4, 485.

<sup>69</sup> Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, book 3, chap. 9.

<sup>70</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 406.

<sup>71</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 406.

noted in Augustine's letter to Boniface, the term was applied even to infant baptism.<sup>73</sup>

Baptism was the sacrament of faith, and whoever received this sacrament received faith.

Augustine emphasized that infants were not baptized because they had faith, but that

infants had faith because of the sacrament of faith. Bingham quotes Augustine:

Sicut, secundum quemdam modum, sacramentum corporis Christi corpus Christi est, et sacramentum sanguinis Christi sanguis Christi est, ita sacramentum fidei fides est . . . Ac per hoc, quum respondetur parvulus credere, qui nondum fidei habet adfectum, respondetur, fidem habere propter fidei sacramentum, et convertere se ad Deum propter conversionis sacramentum.<sup>74</sup>

Fulgentius used the same term, "the sacrament of faith and repentance," for baptism.<sup>75</sup> Bingham noted that Fulgentius connected believing and repenting of sins, with being baptized. According to Fulgentius, only people who had turned from their sins and received this sacrament of faith and repentance would have eternal life.<sup>76</sup> Bingham explained that when the ancient Church spoke of the sacrament of baptism as penance, absolution or remission of sins, they meant that as a sacrament, baptism required

<sup>72</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 407.

<sup>73</sup> Bingham refers to this letter of Augustine as "Epistle 23 to Boniface," without giving the reference of the source or edition that he used. The editors of *NPNF* list this same letter as Letter 98. The Latin quotation that Bingham provides in the *Origines*, however, is exactly taken from Augustine's Letter to Boniface. See *Works*, vol. 3, 407, footnote q.

<sup>74</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 407, ellipses Bingham's. English translation: "As, therefore, in a certain manner the sacrament of Christ's body is Christ's body, and the sacrament of Christ's blood is blood, in the same manner the sacrament of faith is faith. Now believing is nothing else than having faith; and accordingly, when, on behalf of an infant as yet incapable of exercising faith, the answer is given that he believes, this answer means that he has faith because of the sacrament of faith, and in like manner the answer is made that he turns himself to God because of the sacrament of conversion, since the answer itself belongs to the celebration of the sacrament." See Augustine, "Letter to Boniface," letter 98, par. 9, in *NPNF*, vol. 1, 410.

<sup>75</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 407.

<sup>76</sup> Fulgentius, *De Fide ad Petrum*, 73 (30), in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. 91A, page 755. The quotation that Bingham provides is exactly the same as the *Corpus Christianorum* edition of the same work.

repentance as a condition; absolution was an effect and privilege for those who were worthy to receive it.<sup>77</sup>

## 6. Other Names Given to Baptism

There were other less known names that the early church used to refer to baptism. These names were taken from the more remote effects of baptism. An example was χαρισμα Κυριου, was called δωρον, which meant “the gift of the Lord.”<sup>78</sup> Bingham found that sometimes baptism was called δωρον without any modifier in order to show that baptism was a gratuitous and singular gift of Christ. Gregory of Nazianzus called baptism “the gift” because he believed that baptism was given to all, with nothing in return from our part.<sup>79</sup>

Another name for baptism was εφοδιον or *viaticum*, which basically meant “the preparation of all things necessary for a journey.”<sup>80</sup> Bingham recognized that sometimes the early church called both sacraments *viatica*, because both the Lord’s Supper and baptism provided people with the necessary provision and proper protection and safety on life’s passage through this world to eternal life.<sup>81</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus called the

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<sup>77</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 407.

<sup>78</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 409.

<sup>79</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 40 on Baptism*, chap. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 409.

<sup>81</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 409.

minister's act in baptizing a person εφοδιαζειν, or giving the person the *viaticum*, or "provision for their journey."<sup>82</sup>

Baptism was also thought to bring people into complete membership in the church. The early church called baptism τελειωσις and τελεση or "the consecration and consummation."<sup>83</sup> It was so called because it gave people perfection as Christians. Bingham also observed that this name was connected with the Eucharist since, after being baptized, people were allowed to take part in the Lord's Supper, which was sometimes called to τελειον.<sup>84</sup> Baptism was referred to as μυησις, μυσταγωγια or "initiation" because it admitted the baptized to the sacred rites and mysteries of the Christian religion.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, Bingham discussed the name "sacred symbol," "symbol of salvation" or "symbol of sanctification," for baptism. He explained that this name was commonly given to the Eucharist, because the Eucharist represented the death of Christ through the outward elements of bread and wine. However, he noticed that baptism was sometimes called "symbol of salvation" as well. He found his sources for this language in the writings of Isidorus and Athanasius. Isidorus, in arguing that the effect of baptism remained the same even though the priest baptizing the person was wicked, called

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<sup>82</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 410. Here Bingham quotes Gregory of Nazianzus from *Oration 40 on Baptism*: "Έως ου μαχη Βαπτιστου και χρηματιστου του μεν όπως εφοδιαση φιλονεικουντος του δε όπως γραφη κληρονομος."

<sup>83</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 410.

<sup>84</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 410.

<sup>85</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 410.

baptism the symbol of salvation.<sup>86</sup> Athanasius in his dispute with Arius defended the idea that the Holy Spirit was of the same substance as the Father and the Son. He said that in the command to the disciples to go and evangelize and baptize the people in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Jesus showed that all three persons of the Godhead were of the same substance.<sup>87</sup> Bingham saw in Athanasius' use of the term "symbol of sanctification" a reference to baptism.<sup>88</sup>

## II. The Patristic Formulae for Baptism

### 1. The Accepted Formula: Trinitarian Formula

Even though the *Origines* were written objectivistically, with little sign of the polemic of the day, Bingham at times disagreed overtly with his contemporaries over the practice of baptism in the early church. In such cases he often argued that they had misrepresented the church fathers. Using the patristic sources, he explained carefully how the misrepresentation had occurred. He typically appealed to the texts in their original languages. Bingham's method reflected the common hermeneutic of the time, namely drawing logical conclusions from the texts. This method was widely used by traditional, orthodox authors, both Anglican and Puritan, mostly to interpret the Scripture doctrinally.

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<sup>86</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 410. Bingham quotes Isidorus Hispalensis, *de Divinis Officiis*, book 2, ep. 37.

<sup>87</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 411.

<sup>88</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 410, footnote c. Bingham quotes Athanasius, who says: "Εἰ οὖν οὐκ ἐστὶ τὰς τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ οὐσίας τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, τίνος ἐνεκεν συνεριθμῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν τῷ συμβολῶ τοῦ ἁγιασμοῦ φησὶ γὰρ ὁ Κύριος πρὸς τοὺς μαθητάς, Πορευθέντες, ἀθητεῦσατε, κ. τ. λ." The note that Bingham provides says: Athanas. Disput. cont. Arium in Conc. Nic. tom. i. p. 141. The index auctorum provided by Grischovius in the Latin translation of the

In discussing the ancient rite of baptism, Bingham consistently maintained that the early church considered the Trinitarian formula for baptism the only acceptable one. The early church maintained this formula in order to guard the orthodoxy of its teaching over against several heretical sects that threatened the early Christians. Thus, in holding strongly to the Trinitarian formula in baptism, the ancient church not only kept the biblical teaching, but it also demonstrated that the unity of the church could be maintained through this practice. Bingham understood this principle well. In the *Origines* he wanted to demonstrate how he upheld the orthodox teaching of the church. By showing that the early church rejected non-Trinitarian formulae for baptism, he did not just tell his readers the ancient practice. He wanted his readers to know that he, too, strongly held this position. By so doing, he vindicated himself. It was necessary for him to clear his own name, after what he experienced early during his Oxford career. As a man charged a tritheist by the university, he needed to assure his readers that he was not a heretic as the university had once declared.

Bingham's affirmation of the ancient church's insistence on the Trinitarian formula for baptism served another purpose. Even though Bingham kept the objectivistic tone of his presentation, he used this discussion to defend the practice of the Church of England. One could see that in writing on this subject, Bingham already had an agenda behind what he discussed. Most of the time he used the ancient texts to defend the Anglican Church from the Dissenters. Accusations from dissenting groups on several practices of the Church of England were commonly heard in Bingham's time. The

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*Origines* shows that Bingham uses Athanasius' *Opera*, Greek and Latin, the two-volume folio 1627 Paris edition. See *Works*, vol. 9, 546.



Dissenters thought that the Church of England was too close to the novelty of the Roman Catholic Church. For Bingham the discussion on the Trinitarian formula of baptism was a very good opportunity to defend his church. By showing that the Church of England baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he was able to demonstrate that on this very fundamental practice the Church of England kept the practice of the early church. Therefore, the Dissenters should not continue their accusations. The practice of the Church of England was orthodox, and deeply rooted in the tradition.

Bingham noted that some of his contemporaries held that non-Trinitarian formulae for baptism were acceptable. He strongly disagreed. Therefore, in the *Origines* he used the writings of the church fathers as a textual argumentation. Here Bingham handily combined his textual studies of the church fathers with his defense of the practices of the Church of England. He pointed out that sometimes some sects baptized only in the name of Christ.<sup>89</sup> He believed that in the early church baptism in the name of Christ only was an exception, and not the general rule. The majority of the church fathers rejected this formula. However, he realized that Vossius and Petavius thought that Basil allowed the use of this formula. Bingham explicitly referred to Vossius' *De Baptismo*<sup>90</sup> disputation II, thesis number 5, and Petavius' *De Theologicis dogmatibus* Book II, chapter XIV, section VI.<sup>91</sup> He indicated that Basil wrote directly against the practice.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 425.

<sup>90</sup> Gerardus Joannes Vossius, *De Baptismo disputationes* 20 (Amsterdam: Apud Ludovicum Elzevirium, 1648).

<sup>91</sup> Dionysius Petavius, , *De Theologicis dogmatibus* (Antwerp: Apud G. Gallet, 1700), 426.

Bingham was sure that Basil believed that baptism should be in the name of the Trinity and that baptism was not valid unless it was done in the name of the Triune God. He referred to Basil's *On the Holy Spirit*. In this work Basil had a chapter entitled "Against those who assert that baptism in the name of the Father alone is sufficient."<sup>93</sup> Bingham also said that Theodoret<sup>94</sup> and Gregory of Nazianzus<sup>95</sup> insisted that the only acceptable baptism was Trinitarian baptism.<sup>96</sup>

Petavius and Vossius, Bingham noted, thought Ambrose agreed with Basil in allowing baptism in the name of Christ alone.<sup>97</sup> Bingham argued that Petavius and Vossius were mistaken. While it was true that Ambrose allowed for baptism in only one name whether that of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, Ambrose clearly understood that when only one person of the Trinity was mentioned, the other two were implied.<sup>98</sup> Bingham's disagreement with Petavius and Vossius regarding Ambrose was another example of argumentation justifying the practice of the Church of England. He believed that only Trinitarian formula for baptism was right. This was the formula used by the

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<sup>92</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 426.

<sup>93</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 426. See also Basil, *On the Spirit*, chap. 12.

<sup>94</sup> Theodoret, *Letter 146 to John the Oeconomus*. Here Bingham quotes Theodoret, who says: ΔΙΑ ΤΟΤΟ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΤΕΤΑΧΟΤΟΣ ΒΑΠΤΙΞΕΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΥΙΟΥ, ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ.

<sup>95</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 24*.

<sup>96</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 427.

<sup>97</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 429.

<sup>98</sup> Ambrose, "Of the Holy Spirit," 1. 3. 41.

Anglican Church. Therefore, he made an effort to explain that Ambrose did not exclude the other two Persons of the Trinity when he baptized only in the name of one Person.

Vossius also claimed that Justin Martyr allowed baptism “in the name of all things, who was Lord and God, and in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>99</sup> Vossius thought that this form was orthodox and that using it would not destroy the essence of baptism.<sup>100</sup> On the contrary Bingham thought that Justin did not teach that such a formula could be used in baptism, but was merely explaining to non-believers what Christian baptism meant. In his explanation he paraphrased the formula of baptism. Justin pointed out that Christians were baptized in the name of the Triune God. This God was God and Lord of the whole universe.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, Bingham appealed to *the Constitution of the Apostles* that elaborately explained the meaning of the formula of baptism. Like Justin, the *Constitutions* explained the intra-Trinitarian relationship. It said, “The Father is the person who sent, Christ the person who came, and the Paraclete or Comforter, the person who bears witness.”<sup>102</sup> The *Constitution* did not explicitly state that the Trinitarian formula was universally accepted, but given the explanation, it may be reasonably assumed to have been.<sup>103</sup> Bingham’s historical analysis, thus, supported the Church of England’s practice and catholicity. It also confirmed his personal orthodoxy.

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<sup>99</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 442.

<sup>100</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 443. Here Bingham refers to Vossius' *De Baptismo*, disputation 2, thesis 5.

<sup>101</sup> See Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. 61.

<sup>102</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 443. See also *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, book 7, chap. 22.

<sup>103</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 442.

Bingham believed that the church thought it was important to use this Trinitarian formula because Jesus commanded to his disciples to use it in the Great Commission.<sup>104</sup> In the writing of Pseudo-Clement entitled the *Recognitions*, Bingham twice found the term “triple mystery” for Baptism.<sup>105</sup> One called baptism “trine invocation,”<sup>106</sup> the other “trine beatitude.”<sup>107</sup> Bingham interprets “triple mystery” as the Trinitarian formula for baptism.<sup>108</sup>

Tertullian also discussed the Trinitarian formula.<sup>109</sup> He followed closely the Great Commission and stated that the law of baptism was imposed. The Trinitarian name was prescribed by Jesus:

Lex enim tinguendi imposita est, et forma praescripta: Ite, inquit, docete nationes tinguentes eas in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 422.

<sup>105</sup> Pseudo-Clementine, *Recognitions*. For the English translations of the Syriac and Latin editions of this text, see Pseudo-Clementine, “Recognitions 1. 27-71,” in *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source on the History of Christianity. Pseudo-Clementine “Recognitions 1.27-71,”* ed. F. Stanley Jones (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

<sup>106</sup> Pseudo-Clementine, “Recognitions, 1. 63. 3.” Bingham translates the Latin term used by Pseudo Clementine *triplicis sacramenti* as “triple mystery,” while Jones translates this term as “trine invocation.” Jones recognizes that this term is unique and hard to translate. The original Greek used by the author, Jones says, is τρισμακαρια επονομασια, and the early Syriac and Latin translators of this work found it difficult to translate this term. See Jones, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source*, 151. See also *Works*, vol. 3, 423, footnote a.

<sup>107</sup> Pseudo-Clementine, “Recognitions,” 1. 69. 5. The Latin text that Bingham uses as his source says, “nomine Trinae beatudinis invocatio super se.” See *Works*, vol. 3, 423, footnote b.

<sup>108</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 423.

<sup>109</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 423.

<sup>110</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 423, footnote c. See also Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, chap. 13, and *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism. The Text Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1964).

In his *Against Praxeas* Tertullian strongly defended the divinity of all three persons of the Godhead. He maintained that in Jesus' command to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, he showed that God was Trinity, and not a unipersonal God.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, Tertullian said, the person being baptized was not just immersed once, but three times and that this meant that the baptized was immersed into the three Persons, whenever the name of each person of the Trinity was mentioned.<sup>112</sup> A similar statement was given by Cyprian who held strongly to the Trinitarian formula for baptism.<sup>113</sup> Bingham said that Cyprian defended the doctrine of the Trinity as the basis of the mystery or sacrament.<sup>114</sup>

The unity of the Godhead was an important doctrine that the early church defended very strongly. It was emphasized in baptism when a new convert was accepted into the community of believers. Cyprian, Bingham noted, denied heretical baptism administered only in the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>115</sup> He maintained that those who did not baptize in the name of the Triune God denied God the Father whom Christ himself confessed, and did not receive remission of sins through baptism.<sup>116</sup> Similarly Optatus taught that baptism must be done in the name of the Trinity. Baptism was commanded to

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<sup>111</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, chap. 26.

<sup>112</sup> Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, chap. 26.

<sup>113</sup> Cyprian, *Epistle 73, to Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics*, par. 5.

<sup>114</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 423.

<sup>115</sup> *Works* vol. 3, 423.

<sup>116</sup> Cyprian, *Epistle 73, to Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics*, par. 18.

be celebrated in honor of the Trinity. The water was sacred water, flowing from the fountain of the three names.<sup>117</sup>

The early church strongly rejected heretical baptism that denied the Trinitarian formula. Augustine disagreed with those who did not baptize in the name of the Triune God.<sup>118</sup> Agreeing with Augustine, Bingham affirmed that without the Trinitarian language of the Creed, baptism could not be consecrated effected:

And hence it appears that St. Austin, and those other writers, thought this precise form of words necessary to be used in the administration of baptism, by virtue of the original appointment and institution.<sup>119</sup>

The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* also stressed that baptism must be done in the name of the Trinity. The *Constitutions* even stated that bishops or presbyters who did not baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost had to be deposed.<sup>120</sup> Athanasius also held strongly to the Trinitarian formula for baptism. He believed that without the Trinitarian name, baptism was void:

...he that takes away one person from the Trinity, and is baptized only in the name of the Father, or only in the name of the Son, or only in the name of the Father and the Son, without the Spirit, receives nothing, but remains void and uninitiated.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> *Works* vol. 3, 424. See also Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, book 5, chap. 3.

<sup>118</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 424.

<sup>119</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 424.

<sup>120</sup> *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, par. 49, in *ANF*, vol. 7, 503. Bingham quotes from the original Greek of this document, saying:

“Εἰ τις ἐπίσκοπος, ἢ πρεσβύτερος, κατὰ τὴν Κυρίου διαταξὶν μὴ βαπτισῇ εἰς Πατέρα καὶ Υἱόν, καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα . . . καθαιρεῖσθω.” See *Works*, vol. 3, 424, footnote i.

<sup>121</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 424, footnote k. Here Bingham takes the statement of Athanasius in his Epistle to Serapion:

Ὁ ὑπεξαίρουμενος τι τῆς τριάδος καὶ ἐν μόνῳ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὀνοματι βαπτίζαμενος, ἢ ἐν μόνῳ τοῦ ὀνοματι τοῦ Υἱοῦ, ἢ χωρὶς γὰρ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ, οὐδὲν λαμβάνει, ἀλλὰ κενὸς καὶ ἀτελής αὐτὸς τε καὶ ὁ δοκῶν δίδοναι ἐν τῇ Τριάδι γὰρ ἡ τελειώσις ἐστίν.

## 2. Non-Trinitarian Formulae Debated

The early church strongly maintained that leaving one or two persons of the Trinity out of the baptismal formula meant not believing in the unity of the Divine persons.<sup>122</sup> Bingham explained that there were two instances in Christian antiquity that allowed or approved of variations from the Trinitarian baptismal formula.<sup>123</sup> The first was reported by Gennadius about an African monk by the name of Ursinus.<sup>124</sup> The monk asserted that it was not lawful to rebaptize people who had been previously baptized either in the name of Christ alone, or in the name of the Father alone, or in the Holy Spirit alone. It was sufficient, said the monk, just to lead the person into a confession of the Trinity and of Christ. With the confirmation of the bishop, the person could obtain eternal life.<sup>125</sup> Bingham commented that this author, in distinguishing between the forms of baptizing, one explicitly mentioning the three persons of the Trinity, the other in the name of Christ alone, thought that both were lawful and equivalent.<sup>126</sup>

Another case was presented by Ambrose. Ambrose said that baptism in the name of Christ alone was acceptable, since this still meant that the whole Trinity was implied in it.<sup>127</sup> He believed that a person who was blessed in Christ was blessed in the name of the

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<sup>122</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 424.

<sup>123</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 428.

<sup>124</sup> Bingham's source is taken from Gennadius Massiliensis, *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis, inter Opera Hieronymi*, chap. 27. See "Index Auctorum," in *Works*, vol. 9, 553.

<sup>125</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 428. See also *Jerome and Gennadius*, chap. 27, in *NPNF*, second series vol. 3, 391.

<sup>126</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 428.

<sup>127</sup> Ambrose, "Of the Holy Spirit," 1. 3. 41.

Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit because the name was one and the power was one.<sup>128</sup> He took the scriptural story of the Ethiopian eunuch who was baptized in Christ, and pointed out that his baptism was complete.<sup>129</sup> Ambrose insisted that the faith of the person was more important than explicitly mentioning the three persons of the Trinity in baptism. He added that if somebody just mentioned one person of the Trinity explicitly, as long as this person did not deny the other two, the sacrament of faith was complete. However, if somebody mentioned all three persons of the Trinity but did not really have faith in the Triune God, thereby diminishing the power of God, the sacrament of baptism for that person was void.<sup>130</sup> However, Bingham reminded his readers that this opinion was uniquely held by Ambrose and was a departure from the general agreement among the rest of the church fathers.<sup>131</sup>

### 3. Heretical Forms of Baptism

Bingham demonstrated that heretical doctrines regarding the Trinity resulted in heretical formulae of baptism. Some of the ancient heresies he mentioned were tritheistic, while he also commented on Sabellianism and its formula of baptism. In reading his discussion of heretical forms of baptism, we get an impression that he correlated tritheistic heresies with non-Trinitarian formulae of baptism. As he did elsewhere in the *Origines*, here he used the topic to justify his own orthodoxy. Previously he demonstrated

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<sup>128</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 429.

<sup>129</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 429. See also Ambrose, "Of the Holy Spirit," 1. 3. 41.

<sup>130</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 429. See also Ambrose, "Of the Holy Spirit," 1. 3. 42.



that he believed only the Trinitarian formula for baptism was orthodox. Now, in making the correlation between tritheistic views and heretical forms of baptism, he, once again, showed that he was not a tritheist. His strong adherence to the patristic practice was his proof.

As heresies increased in the early church, some innovations were added to the practice of baptism among these sects.<sup>132</sup> Some heretical groups retained the old formula of baptism, but mixed it with their own inventions, teachings, novelties, and fancies. Without being specific as to which heretical groups he is referring, Bingham said that some turned the doctrine of the Trinity into Tritheism. Instead of believing in the three divine persons under the economy of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they taught three collateral, coordinate, and self-originated beings. They thus made them three absolute and independent principles, without any relation to one another as the orthodox church taught.<sup>133</sup> Instead of baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, they brought in a strange form of baptism, “in the name of three unoriginated principles.”<sup>134</sup> The text of the *Apostolical Canons* mentioned this practice without calling these heretical groups by name.<sup>135</sup> Bingham could only assume that the Gnostic heretics introduced this kind of Tritheism. Some heretics later were called the Priscilianists, who were described

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<sup>131</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 429.

<sup>132</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 430.

<sup>133</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 430.

<sup>134</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 430.

<sup>135</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 431.

and condemned by the Council of Bracara.<sup>136</sup> The statement of the *Apostolical Canons* threatened to depose bishops or presbyters who did not baptize according to the command of Christ, but baptizing “into three beings without beginning, or into three Sons or three Comforters.”<sup>137</sup> Consequently, the Council of Bracara anathematized heretics that introduced strange names for the Diety. The council insisted that in the Godhead there is a Trinity of Trinities. The council singled out the Gnostics and the Priscillianists as the two main groups that taught false doctrine.<sup>138</sup>

Menander, a disciple of Simon Magus, corrupted the baptismal formula.<sup>139</sup> According to Tertullian, Menander insisted that in order to be saved one had to be baptized in Menander’s own name.<sup>140</sup> The reason Menander so boldly claimed this was because he claimed himself to be the Messiah, the one sent for the salvation of people and for gathering the church by mysteries of his own choosing. According to Irenaeus, Menander claimed that he himself was the primary power, a power unknown to other people, but known only to himself. He was sent forth to be the savior for the deliverance of people. Furthermore, Menander claimed that his disciples obtained the resurrection by being baptized into him.<sup>141</sup> Tertullian added that Menander told his followers that

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<sup>136</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 431. Bingham relies on the statement from the Council of Bracara, 1, canon 2.

<sup>137</sup> *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, par. 49; *ANF*, vol. 7, 503. See also Bingham's quotation from the Greek text of the *Constitutions* in footnote b in *Works*, vol. 3, 431.

<sup>138</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 431.

<sup>139</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 432.

<sup>140</sup> Tertullian, *Against All Heresies*, chap. 1.

<sup>141</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 23. 5.

whoever was baptized with his baptism would become immortal, incorruptible and instantaneously invested with the resurrected life.<sup>142</sup>

The Montanists, known as the Phrygian heresy, also introduced a new form of baptism. Montanus claimed himself to be the Holy Spirit and appointed two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla. These two women pretended that they had written books by inspiration. The followers of Montanus corrupted the old form of baptism and baptized it in the name of Father, Son, and Montanus or Priscilla.<sup>143</sup> Basil rejected the baptism of the Montanists. He commanded that people, who had been baptized by the Montanists, be rebaptized when they enter the Catholic Church. In his judgment, they had not been baptized at all.<sup>144</sup> Bingham referred to the decision of the Council of Laodicea that ordered the followers of Montanus to be rebaptized, even though some of them had been ordained as bishops.<sup>145</sup> A similar decision was taken by the First Council of Constantinople. The council told the followers of Montanus that they had to be rebaptized if they decided to join the orthodox Church, since they were received as heathens.<sup>146</sup> Here Bingham clearly showed that the Montanists were not orthodox, and therefore the early church required rebaptism if they joined the orthodox church. Had they been regarded orthodox, their rebaptism would have been questionable. This discussion is useful to understand Bingham's position in his controversy with Laurence over the validity of lay-

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<sup>142</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 432. See also Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 50.

<sup>143</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 433.

<sup>144</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 433. See also Basil, *Letter 188, Canonica Prima*, chap. 1.

<sup>145</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 434. Here Bingham refers to the Council of Laodicea, canon 8.

<sup>146</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 434. See also Council of Constantinople I, canon 8

baptism. Bingham strongly held that rebaptism of those baptized by lay-people was not necessary since, even though not correctly administered, the baptism was not invalid. Only people baptized by heretics, as it was the case in the case of the Montanists, needed rebaptism.

Following Jerome, Bingham considered the Montanists Sabellians.<sup>147</sup> Jerome explained that contrary to the teaching of the orthodox church which asserted that Father, Son and Holy Spirit were distinct persons, but united in substance, the Montanists and the Sabellians brought the Trinity into the narrow constraints of one person.<sup>148</sup> Jerome further said that the Montanists blasphemed God, teaching that God first determined to save the world by Moses and the Old Testament Prophets, but then, finding himself unable to fulfill this purpose, he took to himself a body from a virgin. Then, preaching under the form of the Son in Christ, God underwent death for human salvation. Even with these two steps God was unable to save the world. At last, he descended by the Holy Spirit upon Montanus, Prisca and Maximilla.<sup>149</sup> Bingham concluded that the Montanists believed only in one person in the Godhead. This one God had different manifestations called *προσωπα*, or "persons."<sup>150</sup> Because the Sabellians had introduced a new form of baptism, the First Council of Constantinople ordered the Sabellians to be rebaptized when

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<sup>147</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 434.

<sup>148</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 435; cf. Jerome, *Letter 41 to Marcella*, par. 3.

<sup>149</sup> Jerome, *Letter 41 to Marcella*, par. 4.

<sup>150</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 435.

they entered the Catholic Church.<sup>151</sup> The Montanists were considered Sabellian and therefore subject to the same law.<sup>152</sup>

The Eunomians practiced another form of baptism. The early church considered them Arians, since they did not believe in the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, the Eunomians did away with the traditional formula of baptism, disregarded the name of the Trinity, and baptized their followers into the death of Christ. They also did not immerse the baptized three times<sup>154</sup> The *Apostolical Canons* rejected this formula of baptism.<sup>155</sup> The Canons did not mention the Eunomians by name. The Canons did, however, repudiate bishops and presbyters who baptized people in one immersion into the death of Christ rather than with three immersions in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>156</sup> Bingham assumed that the Canons targeted the Eunomian formula and practices.<sup>157</sup>

To explain Romans 6:3, where Paul speaks of baptism into the death of Christ, Bingham went to Origen's Commentary on the Book of Romans.<sup>158</sup> In his commentary, Origen explained that Paul did not introduce a new form of baptism. The only form of

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<sup>151</sup> Council of Constantinople I, canon 7.

<sup>152</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 435.

<sup>153</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 438.

<sup>154</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 438. See also Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, book 5, chap. 24.

<sup>155</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 437.

<sup>156</sup> *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, par. 50.

<sup>157</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 437.

<sup>158</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 437.

baptism ever considered lawful was the one prescribed by Christ. Origen maintained that Paul was talking about what baptism signified, conforming to the death of Christ, not a method of baptism.<sup>159</sup>

Bingham's strong defense of the legitimate formula for baptism had two aims. First, he used the discussion to demonstrate that the practice of the Church of England was faithful to the earliest history of Christianity. Bingham believed that before Nicea there was only one formula. This, of course, was a debatable point. But his goal was to establish historically the sole, legitimate use of the standard Trinitarian form of baptism. He did this with a largely topical, or dogmatic argument. Secondly, he wanted to condemn variant practices in his day, thus establishing his own Trinitarian orthodoxy on a churchly model and indicating his loyalty to the established church. It was necessary for him to defend the Trinitarian formula not only because he believed that it was the only acceptable formula in the early church, but also to vindicate his own orthodoxy. By strongly holding on to his position, he was able to show that he was not the heretic Oxford once called him early in his career.

#### **4. The Sign of the Cross in Baptism**

Some of Bingham's contemporaries, particularly William Cave, thought that in the early church the sign of the cross was made on the forehead of the person being

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<sup>159</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 438. Here Bingham quotes from Origen's *Commentary on the Book of Romans*, chap. 6.

baptized.<sup>160</sup> Bingham did not contest this opinion. At the same time he was also aware that the ancient texts that Cave used did not directly prove the practice.<sup>161</sup> Cave said that this practice was in use at the time of Tertullian and Cyprian and that therefore should not be omitted from baptism.<sup>162</sup> Following Tertullian Cave said:

... that upon every motion, at their going out or coming in, at their going to bath, or to bed, or to meals, or whatever their employment or occasions called them to, they were wont *frontem signaculo terere*, 'to make the sign of the cross upon their forehead.'<sup>163</sup>

Bingham commented that in the ancient fathers the sign of the cross did not refer only to the sign in baptism. Many of the fathers, he explained, related the sign of the cross to unction or confirmation.<sup>164</sup> Augustine taught that "the cross is always joined with baptism."<sup>165</sup> Cyprian held that the sign indicated that those, so marked, were born again.<sup>166</sup>

The *Constitutions of the Apostles* explained that:

The water is to represent Christ's burial; the oil, to represent the Holy Ghost; the sign of the cross, to represent the cross; and the ointment or chrism, the confirmation of men's professions.<sup>167</sup>

By discussing and defending the ancient practice of making the sign of the cross, Bingham demonstrated that it was not just a Roman Catholic practice. As we saw in chapter two, the Puritans required that the practice be removed from the baptismal liturgy

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<sup>160</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572.

<sup>161</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572.

<sup>162</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572.

<sup>163</sup> William Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, part 1, chap. 10.

<sup>164</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572. See also chapter 4, section 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>165</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 573. Here Bingham quotes from Augustine's *Sermon 101*, "De Tempore."

<sup>166</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 573.

since they considered it a papal novelty. The sign of the cross in baptism was one of the most sharply debated issues from the time the Puritans first expressed their concerns.<sup>168</sup> Bingham strategically defended the practice of the Church of England without ever explicitly engaging in polemic against the Puritans. The Anglican practice of making the sign of the cross in baptism is explained in the *Book of Common Prayer*. It is a sign that the baptized infant would not be ashamed to confess faith in Christ crucified, to fight against sin, the world and the devil, and to continue to be a soldier of Christ always.<sup>169</sup>

### 5. Baptism of Inanimate Objects

The Roman Catholic Church had the custom of baptizing inanimate things, especially bells. Bingham strongly disagreed with this practice.<sup>170</sup> In his refutation he explicitly said that the Church only recognized the baptism of human beings.<sup>171</sup> Bingham described how ridiculous the baptism of bells was. The bells were baptized, godfathers responded to questions, and then the bells were named. Afterwards the bells were clothed just as adults were dressed after their baptism.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 574. See also *The Constitutions of the Apostles*, book 3, chap. 17.

<sup>168</sup> See "The Admonitions to the Parliament," in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 14.

<sup>169</sup> "On Baptism," in *The Book of Common Prayer 1549*. The rubric on public baptism stated in the 1552 edition of the Prayer Book does not indicate any change in making the sign of the cross after the infant was baptized. The rubric concerning the sign of the cross was also present in the 1661 edition of the Prayer Book. See Lighton Pullan, *The History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), 197.

<sup>170</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 444.

<sup>171</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 445.

<sup>172</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 445.



Bingham demonstrated that bells were not found or used in churches during the first three Christian centuries.<sup>173</sup> He pointed out the errors of some Roman Catholic theologians such as Amalarius and Cardinal Bona who claimed that the early church used loud sounding instruments to call people to worship.<sup>174</sup> Bingham argued that at the time of persecution, Christians did not use such instruments since their sound would only tell the Roman persecutors where they would meet for worship.<sup>175</sup> Bingham explained that according to Polycarp, the early church had terms such as θεοπρεσβυτας, “divine ambassadors,” or θεοδρομοι, “couriers,” who were sent from place to place to call the congregation to worship. The Greek words did not refer to sound-producing instruments.<sup>176</sup> Only centuries later were bells introduced and used for calling people to a religious assembly.<sup>177</sup> Before bells were used, Bingham said, some monasteries in Egypt and Mount Sinai used trumpets to call the monks to quickly gather.<sup>178</sup> Some monasteries in Palestine called the monks together by knocking on a hammer-like instrument.<sup>179</sup> Here

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<sup>173</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 486.

<sup>174</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 487, footnotes h and i. Here Bingham refers to Amalarius’ *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*, book 4, chap. 21, and also Cardinal Bona’s *Rerum Liturgicarum*, book 1, chap. 22, no. 1.

<sup>175</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 487.

<sup>176</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 488, footnote o. Here Bingham refers to Polycarp’s *Epistle to the Philippians*, par. 13.

<sup>177</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 488.

<sup>178</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 488.

<sup>179</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 489.

Bingham followed John Cassian who described the night-calling and the use of the instrument.<sup>180</sup>

In the Western churches Bells started to be used to call Christians to worship in the early seventh century.<sup>181</sup> In the Greek churches bells were first used around the year 865, when Ursus Patriciacus, duke of Venice, presented some bells to Michael, the Greek Emperor. The Emperor built a tower on the Church of Sancta Sophia and hung the bells there.<sup>182</sup> As to the use of bells in the Latin Church, Bingham was not very certain. He mentioned that some ascribed their use to the time of Pope Sabinianus, the successor of Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome.<sup>183</sup>

Bingham disagreed with Cardinal Bona who taught that the early church adopted pagan rituals and used “tintinnabula” or “lesser sorts of bells” to call people to worship. Bingham said that it was a mistake to infer that because the pagans used bells, the early Christians must have used bells as well.<sup>184</sup> Bingham was sure that baptizing bells in the Roman Catholic Church was a new invention, not the practice of the early church. He referred to Baronius’ statement that the practice started around the time of John XIII, 968 A. D. John consecrated the bell of the Lateran church and named it, John.<sup>185</sup> Supporting

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<sup>180</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 488, footnote r. See also John Cassian, *The Institutes*, book 2, chap. 17.

<sup>181</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 490.

<sup>182</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 490. Bingham does not provide a bibliographical reference for the historical event that he presented here.

<sup>183</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 490.

<sup>184</sup> *Works*, vol. 3 491.

<sup>185</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 491, footnote z, in which Bingham quotes from Baronius' 1610 Antwerp edition of the *Annales Ecclesiastici*, book 10, 810.

the decision taken by the German Church during the diet of Nuremberg, known as the *Centum Gravamina*, Bingham declared that the practice of baptizing bells was “a superstitious practice, . . . contrary to the Christian religion, and a mere seduction of the simple people.”<sup>186</sup>

Bingham’s rejection of Roman Catholic practice of baptizing bells reflects the Anglican position on the value of baptism. The Thirty Nine Articles declares that baptism is “a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church.”<sup>187</sup> This means that as a sacrament baptism is intended for people in order to unite them with Christ. Cornwall explains that for the High Church party the sacraments were marks of God’s covenant, the means to enter and maintain a relationship with God and the church. Thus, Cornwall believes that for the High Church baptism affected the lives of the recipients in two ways. It brings them into the covenant with God and remits their sins.<sup>188</sup> It is not surprising that Bingham wrote strongly against baptizing bells, since, according to his theology, baptism was intended only for people, to bring them into relationship with God. Since the Roman Catholic Church relied heavily on tradition in supporting its practice, Bingham demonstrated its misrepresentation of tradition by using the authority of the early church.

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<sup>186</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 445.

<sup>187</sup> Article 27, *Thirty Nine Articles*.

<sup>188</sup> Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic*, 130.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Infant and Adult Baptism in the Early Church and the Church of England:

#### Bingham's Use of Patristic Materials for Contemporary Debate

##### I. Modes of Baptism

###### 1. Immersion and Aspersions

Bingham states that the early church did not express a preference for the manner of baptism. It could be by immersion or by sprinkling. Either mode fully answered the purpose of baptism, namely, to purify the soul by washing away sin.<sup>1</sup> However, he also observed that baptism by immersion more vividly displayed the symbolic meaning of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Baptism by sprinkling, however, was more practical. When the sick were baptized or when water was scarce, sprinkling was most appropriate.<sup>3</sup> Here Bingham's statement indicates how his reading of the patristic material is shaped by his own theological agenda in support of the Book of Common Prayer. The rubrics of both infant and adult baptism do not indicate that one mode of baptism is more preferable than the other. The rubric for adult baptism states that at baptism the priest should hold the candidate's hand and place him or her in front of the font. After the candidate states his / her name, the priest must then "dip him [or her] in the water, or pour water upon him [or her]..."<sup>4</sup> Indeed Bingham goes against the majority of the earliest

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<sup>1</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 588.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 589.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 589.

<sup>4</sup> *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 287.

church fathers who indicated strong preference of immersion. The Didache, for instance, says that immersion in running water is best. Immersion in regular water comes next, and in the rare case that neither mode is possible, pouring water three times is acceptable.<sup>5</sup>

In the event of baptism by immersion, the persons to be baptized took off their clothes, symbolizing the putting-off of the old person. At the same time, standing naked, they imitated Christ who was naked upon the cross.<sup>6</sup> Baptism by immersion was done for both men and women.<sup>7</sup> However, the church made sure that no indecency might be committed by separating the baptism of men from that of women.<sup>8</sup> According to Augustine, churches usually had two baptisteries, one for women and the other for men.<sup>9</sup> Churches with only one baptistery simply baptized men and women on different occasions.<sup>10</sup>

Bingham showed that the Ancient Church believed the symbolizing of dying and rising with Christ in the sacrament of baptism was taught in New Testament passages such as Romans 4:4, Colossians 2:12, etc.<sup>11</sup> Chrysostom believed that being baptized and immersed in the water and rising again out of it symbolized descending into hell and

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<sup>5</sup> *Didache*, 2. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 590. See also Cyril of Alexandria, *Mystagogical Lectures* 2, no. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 591.

<sup>8</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 592.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, book 22, chap. 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 592. It is interesting to note here that Bingham relies on Vossius' explanation of the matter in his book *De Baptismo Disputatio*. Here is one very rare case in which Bingham is satisfied with the explanation of a contemporary author.

<sup>11</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 593.

returning again from it.<sup>12</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem explained it differently. He taught that just as the person was physically surrounded by water, the Spirit incomprehensibly baptized or washed the interior soul.<sup>13</sup>

Even though immersion was widely practiced, the early church did not rule out baptism by sprinkling. The baptism of very sick persons by sprinkling was never considered unlawful or imperfect.<sup>14</sup> The early church understood the biblical statement that God “will have mercy and not sacrifice” to mean that it was the significance of baptism and not the method that mattered. Bingham states that Cyprian taught baptism by sprinkling.<sup>15</sup> According to Bingham, Cyprian emphasized that baptism was valid as long as there was no defect in the faith of either the one giving it or the one receiving it. Bingham concluded that sprinkling was as effective as washing, since the sacrament was completed by the power of God. The effectiveness of the sacrament depended on the truth of the faith of the person.<sup>16</sup>

In quoting Cyprian, Bingham overemphasizes baptism by sprinkling beyond what the church father actually wrote. Cyprian did not actually teach baptism by sprinkling. He only defended the efficacy of sprinkling in the case of clinic baptism. In his letter to Januarius Cyprian quoted a passage from Ezekiel 36: 25-26 that says: “Then will I

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<sup>12</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 593 footnote p. See also Chrysostom, *Homily on 1 Corinthians*, homily 15, where he says:

“Το γὰρ βαπτίζεσθαι καὶ καταδυεσθαι, εἰτα ἀνανεῦναι τῆς εἰς αἰῶνος καταβάσεως ἐστὶν ὁ συμβολὸς, καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν ἀνοδοῦ διὸ καὶ τὰ φωνοῦν τὸ βαπτισμᾶ.”

<sup>13</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 594. See also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* 17, no. 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 596.

<sup>15</sup> Cyprian, *Letter 69 to Januarius*, in *ANF*, vol. 5, 376.

<sup>16</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 598.

sprinkle water upon you, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness..."<sup>17</sup> Bingham uses this quote to argue for the primacy of sprinkling. Quite possibly he has the Baptists in mind. In order to demonstrate his disagreements with them, he needs to find a voice from the early church that he can use to show that the Baptists are wrong in insisting that only baptism by immersion is acceptable.

In baptism by immersion, the person was dipped in the water three times. Each time the name of the three persons of the Trinity was spoken.<sup>18</sup> Of all the church fathers, Ambrose gave the most complete description of how immersion was performed.<sup>19</sup> He said:

Thou wast asked "Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?" and thou repliedst, "I believe;" and wast dipped, that is, buried. A second demand was made, "Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, and in his cross?" thou answeredst again, "I believe"; and wast dipped. Therefore, thou wast buried with Christ; for he that is buried with Christ, rises again with Christ. A third time the question was repeated, "Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost?" and thy answer was, "I believe". Then thou wast dipped a third time; that thy triple confession might absolve thee from various offences of thy former life.<sup>20</sup>

Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa, and Pope Leo I taught that being immersed three times symbolized the three days of Christ's death.<sup>21</sup> This trine immersion also represented belief in the Triune God. Augustine and Jerome combined both ideas in their

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<sup>17</sup> Cyprian, *Letter 69 to Januarius*, in *ANF*, vol. 5, 376.

<sup>18</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 600.

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 601.

<sup>20</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 601. See also Ambrose, *The Sacraments*, book 2, chap. 7, par. 20, in *Saint Ambrose, Theological and Dogmatic Works*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963).

<sup>21</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 601.

view of baptism.<sup>22</sup> Bingham could not find a definite answer to where the practice of immersing the baptized three times originated. He speculated that it might have been derived from apostolic tradition. Others said that it was from the institution of baptism by Jesus himself. Yet others did not care where it originated. They thought that it might be used or omitted without any damage to the sacrament itself.<sup>23</sup> In Bingham's opinion, Tertullian, Basil and Jerome placed the origin of this practice in the tradition of the apostles, while Chrysostom made it a part of the institution of Jesus.<sup>24</sup> Bingham reported that Gregory in a letter to Leander, Bishop of Seville, stated that whether baptism should be done with three immersions or just one was not a matter of significance because what was important was the unity of faith. Diversity in this practice did not do any harm to the church.<sup>25</sup> Three immersions, said Gregory, may signify the three days of Christ's burial. It may also represent the three persons of the Trinity. One immersion, Gregory thought, symbolized the unity of the Godhead.<sup>26</sup>

Through the discussion of different modes of baptism in the early church, Bingham tried to paint a picture that for the early church one mode of baptism was not to be preferred over another. Even though this was not always true, since some church fathers clearly indicated that immersion was preferable, Bingham consistently weighted the evidence in support of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. If he were to be true to the

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<sup>22</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 602.

<sup>23</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 602.

<sup>24</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 603.

<sup>25</sup> Gregory, *Epistles*, book 1, epistle 43, to Bishop Leander of Seville.

<sup>26</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 604.



majority of the church fathers, he would have had to admit that the Baptists were right: immersion should be the main mode of baptism. But he is not willing to admit it. So, he chooses to compromise, following what the Book of Common Prayer prescribes for both infant and adult baptism. Arguing that the early church accepted both modes of baptism helps him demonstrate that he is in harmony with the Book of Common Prayer, while also shows that the Baptists are not completely right in insisting that only immersion is acceptable.

## 2. Consecration of Baptismal Water

Baptismal water was an important issue in the early church. The church considered the prayers consecrating the water for baptism were as important as the water itself. Bingham thought that the early church believed that the efficacy of the prayer consecrating the water of baptism did not depend on the worthiness of the person offering the prayer.<sup>27</sup> He found that Augustine, in the controversy with the Donatists, said that the water of baptism was not made sacrilegious or profane even if the invocation was spoken by a profane person.<sup>28</sup> Augustine believed that even if a wicked person or a heretic prayed for the consecration of the water, the wickedness of the person would never affect the truthfulness of the sacrament itself.<sup>29</sup> Bingham found that Augustine even believed that an

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<sup>27</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 578.

<sup>28</sup> Augustine, *On Baptism*, book 3, chap. 10. Bingham quotes Augustine, who said: "*Non est aqua profana et adultera, super quam nomen invocatur, etiamsi a profanis et adulteris invocetur.*"

<sup>29</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 579.

error in the prayer of consecration did not destroy the essence of baptism.<sup>30</sup> For the Bishop of Hippo, only the absence of the promise of the Gospel would destroy or take away the essence of baptism.<sup>31</sup> Bingham interpreted Augustine's statement to mean that the Trinitarian formula for baptism, as instituted by Christ and given to the Apostles, was the most important part in baptism.<sup>32</sup> Bingham added that at the time of the Donatist controversy both the orthodox church and the Donatists must have done the consecration in the same way.<sup>33</sup> He was sure that Augustine was not too concerned about what kind of person offered the consecration prayer, since the very being and essence of baptism did not depend on the prayer. The fact that Augustine did not require the Donatists to be rebaptized indicated that, for him, who consecrated the water of baptism was not very significant.<sup>34</sup>

In this discussion Bingham supported another practice of the Anglican Church. The *Book of Common Prayer* included the consecration of the water in the baptism of both adults and infants. The priest was required to pray: "... sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that the persons now to be baptized therein may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children..."<sup>35</sup> At the same time, Bingham's use of Augustine's position is significant in its early eighteenth-century context. The anti-Donatist solution is genuinely catholic and

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<sup>30</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 579.

<sup>31</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 579. See also Augustine, *On Baptism*, book 6, chap. 25.

<sup>32</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 579.

<sup>33</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 579.

<sup>34</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 580.

orthodox. Therefore, over against the Dissenters, who required the omission of such consecration, Bingham brilliantly demonstrated that the consecration was rooted in church history. On the other hand, against the Roman Catholics who might deny the legitimacy of Anglican clergy offering the prayer, Bingham demonstrated that they should not argue about who consecrated the prayer. The effect of baptism did not depend on who offered the prayer. In either case Bingham was able to argue from history that the Church of England was justified in its practice. The prayer to consecrate the water was significant in the entire theology of the church. The remission of sins and the inclusion of the baptized into the kingdom of God mystically happened through the ritual of baptism. The water of baptism as an element of baptism played an important role. Therefore, Bingham deemed it necessary to maintain this doctrine. Making a direct reference to Augustine was his best strategy.

## **II. Infant Baptism**

### **1. Earliest Christianity to Tertullian**

Bingham defended the thesis that the early church baptized infants. He disagreed with Suicerus who said that during the first two centuries of Christianity, no one received baptism without first being instructed in the faith and doctrine of Jesus Christ. He insisted that the baptized were able to answer for themselves that they believed in Christ, in keeping with the statement: "He that believeth and is baptized."<sup>36</sup> However, Bingham did

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<sup>35</sup> *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 273 and 287.

<sup>36</sup> Bingham quotes Suicerus, who says: "Primis duobus saeculis nemo baptismum accipiebat, nisi qui, in fide instructus et doctrina christiana imbutus, testari posset, se credere, propter illa verba, 'Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit'". *Works*, vol. 3, 452, footnote e. See also Johannes Caspar Suiceri, *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus E Patribus Graecis Ordine Alphabetico concinnatus* (Amsterdam: Henricus Wetstenius,

not want to spend much time refuting Suicerus, since many of his contemporaries had written on this subject, most notably, William Wall.<sup>37</sup> In Bingham's judgment, Wall had carefully considered almost every writer in the early church who had discussed infant baptism. Bingham did not want to repeat what Wall and other authors had written. He wanted to complement them, so that his readers could still learn about infant baptism in the early church even though they did not have access to the writings of the church fathers.<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to note, given the politics of Bingham's career, that he chose specifically to single out Wall, a fellow Oxford scholar, as a model for the defense of orthodox doctrine. Bingham clearly had learned his lesson. By agreeing with Wall, he showed that his position was an orthodox one. In the past, during the Trinitarian controversy at Oxford, he took side with Sherlock, a Cambridge graduate, and he fell into trouble. As he became more mature and was able to regain his good name and re-establish his orthodoxy, he chose to be more cautious. Taking side with Wall was very helpful for him to affirm his position.

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1682), vol. 2, 1136. In writing his *Origines*, Bingham used the same 1682 two-volume folio Amsterdam edition that is used for this dissertation.

<sup>37</sup> William Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism* (London: Joseph Downing, 1702). The second edition of this work was printed in 1707, in quarto, enlarged with an addition. The third edition was printed in London in 1720, together with Mr. Gale's *Reflections and Walls' Defense*. The edition followed here is the 1862 two-volume reprint of Wall's *History of Infant Baptism*, 2 vols., ed. Henry Cotton, published by Oxford University Press. William Wall (1647-1728) was a divine and biblical scholar, a native of Chevening. He matriculated at Queen's College, Oxford, on April 1, 1664, received his B.A. in 1667 and his M.A. in 1670. After taking orders, he was admitted to the vicarage of Shoreham. In 1708 he accepted the rectory of Milton-next-Gravesend, and in the same year he was appointed chaplain to the bishop of Rochester. He was most well known for his *History of Infant Baptism*. He received his D.D. from Oxford in 1720. See *DNB*, vol. 59, 97.

<sup>38</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 453.

To demonstrate that the earliest of the church fathers practiced infant baptism, Bingham used the writings of Clement of Rome.<sup>39</sup> He acknowledged that Clement did not directly mention infant baptism. However, he took Clement's statement that even infants were born with original sin to mean that Clement must have seen the necessity of baptizing infants. Clement's view of original sin was expressed in his statement about Job who said that there was none who was free from sin, not even if the person was just one day old.<sup>40</sup> Bingham concluded that Clement must have believed that everybody, including infants who had lived only for one day, was born with original sin. Therefore, if Clement taught that infants were born with original sin, then it would not be incorrect to say that Clement believed that even infants "have the need of baptism to purge them from it [original sin]."<sup>41</sup>

In his effort to describe the early church's practice of infant baptism, Bingham used the patristic texts in order to defend his own theological position. Bingham's treatment of Clement exemplifies this method. It was certainly true that the logical conclusion, derived from Clement's teaching that infants were born with original sin, would be the need of regeneration, and thus the need of baptism, for infants. This conclusion is more indicative of Bingham's theologizing than a plain explanation of what the text said. In addition, one can also see that Clement does not develop an expanded definition of original sin. He merely cites Job that nobody is free of sin, not even a person

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<sup>39</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 453.

<sup>40</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 453, footnote 1. See also 1 Clement 17.

<sup>41</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 453.

who only lives for one day. Bingham, therefore, reads his own understanding of original sin into the writing of Clement.

Bingham used other texts from the Apostolic Fathers in a similar fashion. After discussing Clement of Rome, he turned to *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Because Hermas lived at approximately the same time as Clement of Rome, he, too, could testify that from the earliest time of the Christian Church, infant baptism had been the common practice.<sup>42</sup> Besides, Hermas spoke about the necessity of baptism by water for all people.<sup>43</sup> Bingham came to this conclusion from his interpretation of Hermas' vision of a tower built on the water. In this vision Hermas asked a woman about the meaning of the tower built on the water. The woman said that it signified that everybody must be saved through water.<sup>44</sup> Bingham also referred to Hermas' other vision of the stones of the tower that had to come out of water in order to be made alive.<sup>45</sup> He interpreted the stones in this vision to be souls. He said that Hermas must have believed in the necessity of the souls ascending by water so that they might be at rest, since they would not be able to enter the kingdom of God unless they put off the mortality of the former life.<sup>46</sup> Bingham concluded that for Hermas the water must have worked as a seal by which the soul was delivered from death. The seal must have meant baptism.<sup>47</sup> The water in Hermas' vision might have both

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<sup>42</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 453.

<sup>43</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 453.

<sup>44</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 453. See also *The Shepherd of Hermas*, *Vision* 3, no. 3, verse 5.

<sup>45</sup> *The Shepherd of Hermas*, *Similitude* 9, no. 16, verse 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 454.

<sup>47</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 454, see also, Hermas, *Similitude* 9, no. 16, verse 4.

spiritual and literal meanings.<sup>48</sup> If it is to be taken spiritually, it must signify spiritual baptism in which the souls of the people, including those from the Old Testament era, were baptized. But the water in this vision could also be taken literally as the water in baptism which is necessary for everybody who is still alive and thus, able to receive real baptism by water. Through this baptism, people may partake of eternal life.<sup>49</sup> In Bingham's opinion, Hermas was just repeating the teaching of Jesus that unless one was born of water and the Spirit, the person could not enter the Kingdom of God. If Hermas believed that everybody, including the people who lived in the Old Testament dispensation, needed baptism, Hermas must also have believed in infant baptism.<sup>50</sup> Upon closer reading of Hermas, one can see that the Shepherd does not argue for infant baptism in this treatise. Bingham makes this inference because he needs another voice from the past that helps him build his argument that the earliest of the church fathers supported infant baptism.

Similarly, Pseudo-Clementine literature provided material that Bingham could use to prove his point regarding infant baptism. *Recognitions*, commonly attributed to Clement of Rome, spoke indirectly about infant baptism. Bingham thought the author of the *Recognitions* spoke of the necessity of baptism in order to purge away original sin. The author said that first of all baptism fulfilled the will and the pleasure of God. Secondly, baptism regenerated people by water and brought them a rebirth to God. By it

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<sup>48</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 454.

<sup>49</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 454.

<sup>50</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 456.

the person was freed from the weakness of the first birth.<sup>51</sup> Bingham realized that this author did not speak specifically about infant baptism. However, he said that if this author believed in the necessity of baptism to cut off concupiscence or original sin and to qualify a person for the kingdom of God, then infants as well as adults must necessarily be baptized.<sup>52</sup> In using the *Recognitions*, Bingham again demonstrated a similar pattern of using an ancient text to support his theological plan. The *Recognitions* were hardly orthodox. He even indicated that the authorship of these works was questionable. But Bingham chose to use these texts, regardless of their curious context. His purpose was to find the earliest document that he could use to endorse his view of infant baptism.

Bingham was aware that he could not find a direct statement indicating that Justin Martyr practiced infant baptism.<sup>53</sup> However, he saw that Justin, as many other church fathers, believed very strongly in the doctrine of original sin. He said that if Justin taught that everybody was born with original sin and thus, needed regeneration through baptism, then for Justin infants, too, must be baptized so that they may receive redemption from original sin.<sup>54</sup> Bingham used Justin's explanation in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. He pointed out that Justin drew a parallel between baptism and circumcision and said that baptism was a spiritual circumcision by which Christians received the mercy of God for

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<sup>51</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 458, footnote y. See also *Recognitions*, book 6, chap. 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 459.

<sup>53</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 457.

<sup>54</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 457.



sinners.<sup>55</sup> He concluded that Justin must have believed that infant baptism was necessary, because:

... then, as infants were admitted to circumcision, so they were to be admitted to baptism, that being the ordinary means of applying the mercy of the Gospel to them, and cleansing them from the guilt of original sin.<sup>56</sup>

There is an indication that Bingham imposes his own theological agenda on Justin Martyr. Justin does not make a connection between circumcision and infant baptism. Later theologians do. But here, since he sees a possibility to connect infant baptism and circumcision, he makes Justin say what the father does not actually intend to say. Bingham also argued that Justin Martyr strongly implied that infant baptism had been practiced since the time of the Apostles.<sup>57</sup> In his *Apology* Justin mentioned old people, both male and female, some sixty, some seventy, who had been disciples of Christ from their infancy. They were uncorrupted virgins all their lives. Such persons must have been baptized as infants.<sup>58</sup> Bingham calculated that Justin wrote this *Apology* around the year 148 A.D., and thus those people must have been born in the first Christian century. Therefore, it was a mistake to teach that the church did not baptize infants in the first two centuries.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, chap. 19, in *ANF*, vol. 1, 204. See also *Works*, vol. 3, 457, footnote x.

<sup>56</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 458.

<sup>57</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 456.

<sup>58</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 456. See also Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. 15.

<sup>59</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 457.

The way Bingham used Justin Martyr showed what he had been doing very often: he had a theological point to make, and he looked for support in the patristic text. In the text that Bingham used, Justin did not make an argument for infant baptism. Justin discussed the purity of the faith of the old people who lived in his time. But here Bingham took the text as his proof of infant baptism in the earlier era of Christianity. It was possible that Bingham had the Baptists in mind. He tried to convince them that infant baptism was practiced in the early church. Since he did not find a patristic text that convincingly proved the theological point he wanted to make, he went around Justin's text and used it to support his own position.

Next, Bingham attempted to prove that Irenaeus, too, taught the importance of baptizing infants as well as adults.<sup>60</sup> In Bingham's view, Irenaeus taught that Christ came to save all people and that Christ's work of regeneration was potentially universal.<sup>61</sup> This regeneration included infants, children, and youths as well as adults.<sup>62</sup> Wall shared this view and, in fact, his argument underlied Bingham's. Quoting the same passage from Irenaeus, Wall argued that Irenaeus firmly taught infant baptism.<sup>63</sup> Bingham held that Irenaeus wrote his *Against Heresies* around the year 176 A.D. Therefore, in Bingham's (and Wall's) view, the testimony of Irenaeus served to justify the antiquity of infant baptism.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, by connecting arguments for infant baptism in Irenaeus with

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<sup>60</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 460.

<sup>61</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 461.

<sup>62</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 461. See also Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book. 2, chap. 22, par. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, vol. 1, 45.

<sup>64</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 460.

Irenaeus' understanding of the regeneration of children, Bingham also found patristic justification for the baptismal rite in the *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>65</sup>

In dealing with the writing of Irenaeus, Bingham also used the patristic text to support his own theological agenda. In the section of *Against Heresies* that Bingham cited, Irenaeus did not argue for infant baptism. He explained the power of Christ's regeneration that embraced all people, including infants and youths. Bingham, however, did not place the text in the context of Irenaeus' argument. He creatively steered the text to provide him an orthodox, ancient foundation for his strong defense of infant baptism. At the same time, Bingham also made an effort to interact with and even to agree with Wall, the Oxford graduate and presumably a man from the High Church party, in reading Irenaeus. In so doing, he handily demonstrated that his position was as orthodox as that of Oxford. This attempt not only gave him a stronger basis to refute the positions of those disagreeing with infant baptism, but also placed him in a better relationship with Oxford.

Bingham recognized that Tertullian had a different view. He preferred delaying infant baptism when there was no danger of death until the children came to the age of discretion. He knew of the practice of infant baptism and disapproved of it in general. In Bingham's view, Tertullian wanted to protect the sponsors or godparents from punishment, just in case the baptized child strayed away from the church.<sup>66</sup> However, Tertullian taught that no one should die without baptism. Any one in danger of death

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<sup>65</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer* 1662, 269.

<sup>66</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 460. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 18.

should be baptized, and, under life-threatening circumstances, any Christian could administer the sacrament.<sup>67</sup>

In cases where the sponsors or sureties were not the parents of the children, they did not have to assume full responsibility to take care of them. When abandoned children were taken to baptism by the virgins of the church, for instance, their care was the responsibility of the church and not the sponsors.<sup>68</sup> According to Tertullian, the sponsors had to promise that they would instruct the baptized infants in the way of God. If they failed to fulfill this promise, they were in serious danger of death.<sup>69</sup> Since Tertullian placed an emphasis on the role of the sponsors in baptism, he viewed infant baptism as dangerous to the sponsors. The absence of faith in the infant and the possibility that the child would later fail to fulfill promises made, endangered the sponsors. Indeed, Tertullian fully disapproved of the practice of baptizing infants. Bingham assured his readers that Tertullian's approach was not universally accepted in the early church.<sup>70</sup> According to him, the common practice of the church was that:

... she baptized infants as soon as they were born, though without any imminent danger of death, as appears from Tertullian's discourse itself, who laboured to make an innovation, but without any success; for the same practice continued in the Church in the following ages.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 463.

<sup>68</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 553.

<sup>69</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 554. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 18.

<sup>70</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 462. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 18.

<sup>71</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 462.

Bingham must have realized that Tertullian placed heavy emphasis on adult baptism. In chapter 18 of his treatise *On Baptism*, Tertullian strongly indicated that people must ask for their salvation.<sup>72</sup> This action was only applicable to adults. In addition, in his treatise *On Chaplet* he addressed only adult baptism. In this treatise he discussed such matters as the renunciation of the devil and his power, the three-time immersion, the eating of milk and honey, and refraining from taking a bath for a whole week after baptism.<sup>73</sup> So, it must have been clear to Bingham that Tertullian had no problem with delaying the baptism of infants. Bingham must have also noticed that in the early church there were different positions with regard to infant baptism. Some churches quite possibly agreed with Tertullian. Other churches practiced infant baptism. But for his own purpose in defending the practice of the Church of England, Bingham did not hesitate to disagree with Tertullian. He clearly sided with the *Book of Common Prayer*.

The rubric on infant baptism in the Prayer Book stated that ministers must admonish people to baptize their children as soon as they were born. The rubric even regulated that baptism should not be delayed longer than four or five weeks after birth. This statement clearly contradicted Tertullian. Therefore, it was necessary for Bingham to argue against the church father. In this argument Bingham did not mention Tertullian's association with Montanism. Given his own past, Bingham must have tried to avoid any possible reason for people to associate Tertullian's heterodox connection with his own tainted past. Bingham's treatment of Tertullian indicated that he could only argue from silence in finding the proof for infant baptism in the early church. There were no strong, explicit statements teaching infant baptism in the earliest church fathers. Still, Bingham used the texts to press his own point. He had no difficulty disagreeing with Tertullian.

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<sup>72</sup> Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 18.

<sup>73</sup> Tertullian, *The Chaplet*, chap. 3.

## 2. Issues in Later Baptismal Practice

As was the case in the earlier era, original sin and infant baptism were closely related to one another in the teaching of the church fathers after Tertullian. Bingham cited Origen, who said that infants needed forgiveness of sin, even though they had not committed any actual sins.<sup>74</sup> They were polluted by original sin; by baptism the pollution was taken away.<sup>75</sup> According to Bingham, this position did not just prove that the early church practiced infant baptism, but it also demonstrated that the Great Commission applied to little children. The practice and the reason for it also agreed with the practice and explanation for it found in the *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Origen held that the church received the order to baptize infants from the apostles. The apostles were the original recipients of Christ's Great Commission, and they understood very well that all persons were born with the natural pollution of original sin, a pollution that had to be washed away by water and the Spirit.<sup>77</sup>

Cyprian provided Bingham another opportunity for an interpretive argument to work his theological system into his patristic writings. In talking about the wickedness of those who lapsed during persecution, Cyprian said that these people also brought their infants with them into condemnation. Cyprian described how these little infants were led or carried in their parents' arms. Furthermore, Cyprian said that these little children "lost

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<sup>74</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 463.

<sup>75</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 463. See also Origen, *Homilies on Luke*, homily 14, par. 5.

<sup>76</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer* 1662, 292.

<sup>77</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 464, footnote i.

that which they obtained at their first coming into the world.”<sup>78</sup> Bingham interpreted Cyprian’s statement to mean that the infants lost the benefits of baptism.<sup>79</sup> Cyprian described a scene of the judgment day. In it these little children spoke out and defended themselves, saying that they did not forsake “the meat and cup of the Lord” by their own will, but that their parents brought them into this condition.<sup>80</sup> Based on this story Bingham said that the meat and cup of the Lord must have referred to the Eucharist. The fact that the infants talked about the Eucharist must have meant that infants in the time of Cyprian must have received infant baptism, because the church would never have allowed the infants to partake of the Eucharist if they had not been baptized.<sup>81</sup>

As was the case with other church fathers described above, here Bingham did not actually explain Cyprian’s main point. He must have been aware that Cyprian actually wrote about parents who lost their faith and dragged their children into condemnation. Based on Cyprian’s statement, he then drew the conclusion that Cyprian, too, must have believed in infant baptism. In so doing, Bingham, once again, let his own theological purpose control his reading of Cyprian.

In terms of the age for the infants to be baptized, Bingham related the question that Fidus, a bishop from Africa, once asked Cyprian. Fidus wanted to know, whether infants should be baptized as soon as they were born, or whether one should wait until the

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<sup>78</sup> *Works*, 466. See also Cyprian, *The Lapsed*, chap. 9.

<sup>79</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 465.

<sup>80</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 465. See also Cyprian, *The Lapsed*, chap. 9.

<sup>81</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 466.

eighth day in keeping with the Old Testament law of circumcision.<sup>82</sup> Cyprian answered that all infants were polluted with original sin, and therefore in need of baptism. There was no need to wait two, three, or even eight days.<sup>83</sup> Like Cyprian, a number of ancient writers such as Optatus, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine thought that it was not necessary to wait until the eighth day to baptize a baby. Bingham did not say much about when an infant should be baptized, because many of his contemporaries, most notably Wall, had discussed this.<sup>84</sup> Here Bingham silently pointed out his disagreement with Tertullian as discussed above. By mentioning these church fathers, who thought that one should not wait to baptize infants, Bingham demonstrated that Tertullian's view should not be followed. What Bingham failed to do in this case, however, was to acknowledge the differences in the Father's opinions in a scholarly manner, and to explain why one opinion was preferable to the others.

Bingham disagreed with Gregory of Nazianzus regarding the right age to baptize infants.<sup>85</sup> In the earlier part of this chapter, we saw how Bingham rejected Tertullian's view of delaying baptism for infants. Tertullian did not specify how long the delay should be. Gregory, however, said that for healthy infants, baptism should be delayed until they were three years old. Gregory hoped that the child might then have some knowledge of the faith and be able to understand and to answer questions with regard to the sacrament. A complete comprehension of the meaning of the sacrament, however, should not be

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<sup>82</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 465.

<sup>83</sup> Cyprian, *Epistle 57 to Fidus*, par. 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 467.

<sup>85</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 469.



expected from the child.<sup>86</sup> Bingham insisted that Gregory's preference never gained any acceptance in the early church.<sup>87</sup> Here again, we see another example of how Bingham rejected a certain view of a particular church father because it did not fit in his theological framework. Considering the fact that the *Book of Common Prayer* urged people to baptize their children as soon as they were born, Bingham plainly rejected Gregory's view. Instead of acknowledging the possibility of different practices among the church fathers, and thus noticing some variations in the practice of the early church, he simply stated that Gregory's view did not gain majority approval.

There were special days that the early church considered right times to celebrate the baptism of both infants and adults.<sup>88</sup> Easter was the most common one. Augustine described very vividly how on Easter infants, little children, and sucklings were carried to church for baptism.<sup>89</sup> Because of the church's tradition to baptize infants on Easter Sunday, Bingham noted that Palm Sunday was commonly called *octavae infantium* or "the octave of infants."<sup>90</sup>

Discussion about the time for baptism was a significant issue in Bingham's day. The 1662 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* removed an earlier rubric (from 1549) noting the practice of the early church to baptize infants on certain days, especially Easter. The new edition of the Prayer Book allowed children to be baptized at all times.

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<sup>86</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 40 on Baptism*, chap. 27.

<sup>87</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 469.

<sup>88</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 469.

<sup>89</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 469. See also Augustine, *Sermon de Tempore*, 160.

<sup>90</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 470.

The new rubric on baptism simply mentioned that baptism should be administered on Sundays, or other holy days, when many people could attend the service. The rubric even added that, under certain circumstances, children may be baptized on any day.<sup>91</sup>

Other problems concerning infant baptism also attracted Bingham's attention. The first problem Bingham dealt with was what to do with children born from one Christian parent and a non-believer. Such mixed marriages were often between a Christian and a Jew.<sup>92</sup> Bingham saw that the decision of the Fourth Council of Toledo was very clear on the matter. The children of such mixed marriages should be baptized on the basis of the faith of the Christian parent.<sup>93</sup>

Another question raised in the early church was whether the children of excommunicated parents should be baptized. Augustine criticized bishop Auxilius, who in excommunicating a certain Classicianus, did not allow the man's son to be baptized. Augustine argued that it was not right to inflict spiritual punishment on innocent souls because of another person's crime, even if the person committing the crime was the person's father.<sup>94</sup> Bingham argued that the church ought to agree with Augustine that the excommunication of a parent should not deprive a child of the right to baptism. In effect, Bingham was again arguing for the practice of the Church of England against the position of the Puritans and the Reformed churches who assumed that church membership in good

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<sup>91</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 269.

<sup>92</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 471.

<sup>93</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 471, footnote x. Here Bingham takes the decision of the Fourth Council of Toledo, canon 63.

<sup>94</sup> Augustine, *Letter 250, to Auxilius*, par. 2. *NPNF* vol. 1, 589.

standing was a prerequisite for baptism.<sup>95</sup> In 1661 the *Book of Common Prayer* was criticized for obligating the church to baptize children of unbaptized or ungodly parents. The Dissenters refused to sign because they thought that the parents of the baptized children had to demonstrate true Christian faith for their children to be baptized. Bingham, however, whole-heartedly support the position of the Church of England. By making reference to Augustine, he held a firmer ground. No orthodox, tradition-honoring person would argue against Augustine. If Augustine thought that even the children of excommunicated parents should be baptized, others had to agree with him. Therefore, Bingham made it clear in this argument that the Dissenters should not have refused to baptize the children of unbaptized parents.

Bingham thought that the children of pagan slaves, whose masters were Christians, also should be baptized. Because the masters were believers, they could become sponsors for these children. Again, Bingham followed Augustine. Augustine thought that such children must be baptized because through the secret providence of God, they fell into the hands of pious Christians.<sup>96</sup> Bingham noted that sometimes children of slaves were redeemed with money, and sometimes they were lawful captives of war. Sometimes, Bingham also noted, children were taken up by pious persons when they were abandoned by their parents.<sup>97</sup> In these cases, the faith and promise of the

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<sup>95</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 473.

<sup>96</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 473. See also Augustine, *Grace and Free Will*, chap. 22.

<sup>97</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 475.

sponsors or the faith of the church, their common mother, was sufficient to entitle these children to Christian baptism.<sup>98</sup>

There were cases in the early church where children were left or deserted by their family, and some kind-hearted Christians took care of them. These children were then baptized and raised as Christians by those who took care of them. In *De Vocatione Gentium*, often attributed to Ambrose, the baptism of a deserted child adopted by Christians is discussed.<sup>99</sup> Bingham agreed with his contemporaries, who wrote the *Synopsis purioris theologiae disputationibus*,<sup>100</sup> that children adopted into Christian families had a right to baptism just as Abraham's servants received circumcision.<sup>101</sup> Bingham also noted that Augustine supported and even used it as an uncontested argument against the Pelagians to prove free grace and election.<sup>102</sup>

Bingham also addressed the role of sponsors in infant baptism. Once again, he followed Augustine's practice. Bingham thought that in most cases the parents should be the sponsors for baptism. Indisputably, parents were responsible for their children's education and instruction in the faith. They were obligated to do this by natural law—not because they were sponsors, but because they were parents.<sup>103</sup> Augustine also insisted that

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<sup>98</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 475.

<sup>99</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 475.

<sup>100</sup> Johannes Polyander, Andreas Rivetus, Antonius Walaeus and Antonius Thysius, *Synopsis purioris theologiae disputationibus I. II.* (Leiden, 1643). The edition I consulted is the 1881 Leiden edition of the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, edited by H. Bavinck.

<sup>101</sup> Polyander et al., *Synopsis*, disputatio 44, num. 49.

<sup>102</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 475.

<sup>103</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 552.

ordinarily, parents must offer their children for baptism and answer the questions for them.<sup>104</sup> In special cases, children could be presented by others. This was true especially if their parents were dead and the children were brought up by a care-giver. Children, who were “exposed”<sup>105</sup> by their own parents, and adopted by the holy virgins of the church, could also be presented to baptism by these women.<sup>106</sup>

In a letter to Boniface, Augustine said that the questions asked of the sponsors when the children were baptized, should be similar to those asked of the adults in adult baptism.<sup>107</sup> He mentioned two most important questions: “Does the child believe in God?” and “Does this child turn to God?”<sup>108</sup> These two questions, Bingham said, were equivalent to an adult’s renouncing the devil and entering a covenant with Christ in adult baptism.<sup>109</sup> Again, Bingham supported the practice of the Church of England and its Prayer Book. According to the Prayer Book, the sponsors respond for the child as the adult is required to respond for himself.<sup>110</sup> In rejecting Pelagianism, Augustine emphasized that children, too, carried the guilt of original sin and needed pardon. He said that at baptism the questions were asked of and answered by the sponsors on behalf of the children. If

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<sup>104</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 552. See also Augustine, *Letter to Boniface*, Letter 98, par. 1.

<sup>105</sup> Bingham does not specify what he means by children being exposed by their parents. A possible contemporary explanation of this term is abused children. From the way Bingham talked about the baptism of these children, requiring sponsors other than the children's parents, we can get the impression that the children had been abandoned by their own parents.

<sup>106</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 552.

<sup>107</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 555.

<sup>108</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 555. See also Augustine, *Letter to Boniface*, Letter 98, par. 7.

<sup>109</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 555.

<sup>110</sup> See *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 271, cf. 286.

properly answered, the children, through baptism, were freed from guilt and power of Satan.<sup>111</sup> Quoting Augustine, Bingham also emphasized that infants were baptized not because they already had the knowledge of good and evil in their young minds, not because they believed in God with their own knowledge, but because of the nature of the sacrament itself. Baptism was called the sacrament of faith and infants were said in some sense to believe. Even though they did not yet have the knowledge or habit of faith, they nevertheless were capable of believing and should be included in this sacrament.<sup>112</sup> In his treatment of infant baptism, Bingham specifically was able to bring the authority of Augustine and, by extension, the church fathers to bear positively on the Church of England's accepted doctrine and liturgical practice.

### **III. Adult Baptism**

#### **1. Persons Eligible for Baptism**

The early church baptized adults only after they had spent some time as catechumens. Bingham was sure that without personal profession of faith, no adult should be given the privilege of baptism.<sup>113</sup> However, this did not mean that the early church denied baptism to people with mental or intellectual limitations. There were special cases. Adults with some kinds of disabilities, rendering them incapable of answering for themselves the questions with regard to their faith, were baptized. They were baptized on

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<sup>111</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 555.

<sup>112</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 555. See also Augustine, *Letter to Boniface*, letter 98, par. 9.

<sup>113</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 477.

the basis of the testimony of others. In cases of mute people, the church was satisfied with answers given through gestures.<sup>114</sup>

There were certain groups of people that the early church refused to baptize. This rejection, Bingham said, was mainly related to certain occupations or trades that the persons held. They were persons whose livelihood came from scandalous professions which were contrary to the teaching of Christianity such as prostitution and idol or image-making.<sup>115</sup> The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* had a list of occupations whose holders should not be baptized.<sup>116</sup> Tertullian also considered idol-making inconsistent with Christianity. Thus people practicing this occupation were denied baptism.<sup>117</sup>

Actors and stage players were also denied baptism. The reason, Bingham said, was that this occupation involved a great deal of lewdness and idolatry.<sup>118</sup> Bingham referred to the decision of the Council of Eliberis which explicitly said that if an actor or a stage-player wanted to be baptized, the person must leave the profession forever.<sup>119</sup> The Third Council of Carthage also ordered that Christians, who were still working as stage-players, were to be excommunicated and were not to be reconciled or received back into the church without a conversion.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 478.

<sup>115</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 487.

<sup>116</sup> *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, book 8, chap. 32.

<sup>117</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 487. See also Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, chap. 11. See also *Works*, vol. 3, 487.

<sup>118</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 487.

<sup>119</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 488. Here Bingham takes his source from the Council of Eliberis, chap. 62.

<sup>120</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 488.

The baptism of actors and stage-players was a big issue in Bingham's time. These professions were closely associated with immorality. The Puritans disliked these professions. Many of them thought that actors should not be baptized. In the Anglican Church, there was a strong emphasis on repentance. As was clear from the statement in the Prayer Book, people must show true repentance in order to be baptized.<sup>121</sup> True repentance included leaving behind the old life and embracing the new life, characterized by high moral standards. Thus, the Church of England must require such actors and stage-players to leave their profession before they could be baptized. This requirement, however, made an impact on the livelihood and financial situation of the actors. Bingham's strong statement that the early church did not allow actors to be baptized indicated that the Church of England would not compromise its position.<sup>122</sup>

The early church also excluded charioteers, gladiators, racers, curators of the common games, participants in the Olympic Games, minstrels, harpers, and dancers from baptism.<sup>123</sup> These arts were considered instrumental in carrying on idolatry, lewdness and profaneness. Therefore the ancient church thought they were improper for Christians. Ancient games, the church thought, honored heathen gods.<sup>124</sup>

All practitioners of curious arts such as magicians, enchanters, astrologers, diviners, magical charmers, makers of amulets, soothsayers and fortune tellers were not

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<sup>121</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer* 1662, 284.

<sup>122</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer* 1662, 285.

<sup>123</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 489.

<sup>124</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 490.



allowed to be baptized.<sup>125</sup> Bingham's source of information regarding these occupations was the *Constitution of the Holy Apostles*. The *Constitution* considered these occupations unmistakably idolatrous.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, Chrysostom rejected people practicing these professions from the church, because what they did was contrary to Christian faith in God alone.<sup>127</sup>

The question of whether or not the early church allowed people in the military to be baptized also received Bingham's attention. What he wrote on the subject provided an example of the way his objectivistic analysis of the Fathers often quietly or covertly served a contemporary purpose. He noted that some of his contemporaries believed that the ancient church hated military life so much that it excommunicated those who became soldiers after their baptism.<sup>128</sup> Bingham did not mention his contemporaries by name. He only said that in their view the Nicene Fathers prohibited soldiers from being baptized based on the teaching of John the Baptist.<sup>129</sup> Bingham was sure that the Fathers did not condemn military life in general. They condemned only unlawful practices and certain unchristian conduct in the military.<sup>130</sup> The First Council of Nicea stated that those who had made confession of faith and cast away military weapons but who then were bribed

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<sup>125</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 491.

<sup>126</sup> *Constitution of the Holy Apostles*, book 8, chap. 32.

<sup>127</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 491. See also Chrysostom, *Homily 8, in Colossians*.

<sup>128</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 494.

<sup>129</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 495.

<sup>130</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 495.

to return to the old life were to be condemned.<sup>131</sup> Bingham believed that bribery was the problem for the council and not military life itself. The canon of the council specified that it was necessary for the church to closely examine the repentance of these people. Only after they demonstrated genuine conversion in deeds, with sincerity of heart and good works, could they be properly received in the church.<sup>132</sup>

Bingham surmised that bribery in the military happened during the time of Licinius<sup>133</sup> when the emperor had ordered that Christian soldiers must sacrifice to the Roman gods. Because of this edict, many Christian soldiers left the military, but afterward some of them returned, betraying their faith and sacrificing to the pagan gods.<sup>134</sup> Bingham believed that the canon of the Council of Nicea specifically targeted these soldiers.<sup>135</sup> The prohibition, Bingham said, was only for special cases:

There is, therefore, no reason to conclude from hence, that they esteemed the vocation of a soldier simply unlawful: especially considering that Constantine himself allowed the soldiers, who were cashiered by Licinius, to return to their ancient employment again.<sup>136</sup>

Bingham also believed that the *Constitutions of the Apostles* specified that a soldier, when he desired baptism, should be instructed not to do any violence to people,

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<sup>131</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 495.

<sup>132</sup> The First Council of Nicea, Canon 12.

<sup>133</sup> Licinius (ca. 250-324) was an Eastern Roman emperor (308-324). At first Licinius and Constantine joined in publishing an official letter for toleration of Christianity, but after tensions and conflict arose between the two emperors, Licinius withdrew his recognition of Christians and renewed the persecution. See Robert M. Berchman, "Licinius," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990), 538-39.

<sup>134</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 495.

<sup>135</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 495.

<sup>136</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 496.

nor to make false accusations. He should also be told to be content with what he earned. If the soldier consented to these instructions, he was to be received.<sup>137</sup> Bingham was certain that this was the position of the early church. No one was denied baptism simply because he was a soldier.<sup>138</sup>

Bingham's treatment of military service had contemporary relevance. As we saw in chapter two, during the reign of Charles II the Parliament issued the Test Act of 1673. It remained in force until 1828. This Act aimed to prevent Roman Catholics from becoming soldiers. It required all servicemen to take the Eucharist according to Anglican worship. The Church of England rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>139</sup> While this act was created to exclude the Roman Catholics from military service, it protected Anglican soldiers. Bingham's explanation that the early church baptized soldiers if they remained faithful to the teaching of the church, would have been an encouragement for the Anglican soldiers to serve their country. In the context of an established church, Bingham's discussion of the baptism of soldiers served as a necessary justification for military service and a support of the state.

Some congregations in the ancient church had what they called "the book of the church," a registry of the names of adults who had just been baptized. Bingham, however, was not sure if the early church universally asked the baptized to register their own

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<sup>137</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 496. See also *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, book 8, chap. 32.

<sup>138</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 496.

<sup>139</sup> Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative*, 633.

names in the book of the church.<sup>140</sup> There was a reference in the writings of Ambrose that might have alluded to such a practice. Ambrose mentioned that upon making confession of faith, Christians had their names “recorded not only in earth, but in heaven.”<sup>141</sup>

Bingham thought that this statement could be taken either literally, meaning that the early church provided this book for the baptized, or figuratively, meaning that the names of believers were known to God.<sup>142</sup> He was also aware of a statement of Chrysostom which seemed to testify to the contrary. Chrysostom said: “. . . Christ requires no witnesses, nor handwriting of us, but only our bare word . . .”<sup>143</sup>

Bingham acknowledged that this practice was not widely used. Chrysostom’s statement could be interpreted as an indication that he did not see the need of such book. Therefore, Bingham said that the custom was not universal. In this case he chose not to insist upon it, and left this matter to those who had done more research on the topic.<sup>144</sup> In this case, we see that he did not need to emphasize the need for such a book, since the *Book of Common Prayer* did not require the registering of the name of the person baptized as a part of its baptismal rite. Such registration is necessary for church administration and civil records, but not directly related to the sacrament itself. In this case, Bingham dismissed a patristic issue for the sake of his support to the practice of the Church of England. Here Bingham chose not to deal in more depth with other church

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<sup>140</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 544.

<sup>141</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 544, footnote o. Bingham quotes Ambrose: “*Chirographum tuum tenetur, non in terra, sed in coelo.*” See also Ambrose, *The Mysteries*, chap. 2, par. 5.

<sup>142</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 545.

<sup>143</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 545, footnote q.

fathers in different geographical locations to find out if there were other churches keeping such books.

## **2. Waiting for Baptism: The Catechumenate and Patristic Cautions Concerning the Delay of Baptism**

The early church preferred waiting a certain period of time before baptizing a catechumen. Generally the period was two or three years.<sup>145</sup> The purpose for this waiting was to allow people to be sufficiently instructed in the practice of the Christian life. The early church made some wait even longer, for example, those with previous criminal records. They waited five, ten, or even twenty years.<sup>146</sup> A longer period of waiting was also required of female catechumens who were divorced from their husbands. From a decision of the Council of Eliberis, Bingham indicated that if adultery was involved on the part of the women, or if they underwent an abortion, the church ordered that they not be baptized the rest of their lives. They could only be baptized at the hour of death.<sup>147</sup>

Bingham also noted that catechumens' incorrect views or wicked lives could delay their baptism. The most common reason people had for delaying baptism was their unwillingness to renounce the world and to submit themselves to Christianity. These people were still in love with the pleasures of the world and were unwilling to take the

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<sup>144</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 546.

<sup>145</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 500.

<sup>146</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 451.

<sup>147</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 501. Here Bingham cites the Council of Eliberis, chap. 68.

yoke of Christ. They thought that they could spend their lives in pleasure and yet be baptized at the very moment of death, thus gaining salvation.<sup>148</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus accused them of being unwilling to come to repentance.<sup>149</sup> The early church generally regarded these people as still holding the idol of infidelity in their hearts.<sup>150</sup>

Another reason why people delayed their baptism was fear of again falling into sin after their baptism. While holding the view that a second baptism was not allowed, they wanted to wait until just before they died, so that the door of heaven would be immediately opened for them and they could enter heaven pure and undefiled.<sup>151</sup> Basil was against this practice. He pointed out that nobody could be assured of a long and old age. Many people died when they were still young.<sup>152</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus called this practice “the riddle of an unbaptized person,” which erroneously depended on God’s mercy yet neglected baptism.<sup>153</sup> Gregory of Nyssa plainly called this postponing of baptism a vain hope, because those doing so were filling their souls with false pretensions.<sup>154</sup>

In Bingham’s time, the teaching of the Church of England with regard to adult baptism was clearly stated in the *Book of Common Prayer*: baptism must be preceded by repentance. The Prayer Book placed heavy emphasis on regeneration and putting on the

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<sup>148</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 502.

<sup>149</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 502. See also Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism*.

<sup>150</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 503.

<sup>151</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 503.

<sup>152</sup> Basil, *Concerning Baptism*, book 1, chap. 1.

<sup>153</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 504. See also Gregory of Nazianzus, *On Baptism*, oration 40.

new-self, while also acknowledging that people could not cleanse themselves from their sins. Only the power of God through the Holy Spirit could bring people into the kingdom of God.<sup>155</sup> At the beginning of its baptismal liturgy for adult, the Prayer Book included a prayer that could serve the baptized as a reminder that through baptism one may receive remission of sins through spiritual regeneration. By carefully observing this statement one could see that baptism was not a superstitious act that would magically bring people to heaven. At the same time, people could also see that repentance, regeneration, and baptism went together. Therefore, unlike some misconceptions that Bingham described in the early church, no one should delay their baptism. The Prayer Book clearly demonstrated that repentance brought the forgiveness of sins and that in baptism one may enjoy the eternal blessing of this “heavenly washing” and enter the eternal kingdom promised by Christ. The rubric on adult baptism explicitly stated:

For (as the same Apostle testifieth in another pleace) even Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flech, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Doubt not therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will favourably receive these present persons, truly repenting, and coming unto him by faith; that he will grant them remission of their sins, and bestow upon them the Holy Ghost; that he will give them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of his everlasting kingdom.<sup>156</sup>

When Bingham showed how Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil strongly called people to repent and be baptized, he could have had this particular view of the Church of England in mind. Repentance was required from the people. In baptism, as was plainly stated by the Prayer Book, one received the remission of sins. Therefore, people should

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<sup>154</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On Baptism*, book 2; *Works*, vol. 3, 504.

<sup>155</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 284.

<sup>156</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 285.

not hesitate to come to baptism, let alone waiting until the last end of their lives. Baptism brought the eternal blessings promised in the Scripture.

The early church generally baptized the catechumens at the celebration of Christian festivals such as Easter, Pentecost, and Epiphany or on the day when Christ was supposedly baptized.<sup>157</sup> Bingham said that Easter and Pentecost were the favorite times for baptism.<sup>158</sup> This clear preference of the early church created an issue in Bingham's time. The general practice of the Church of England was to baptize at any time. Just as infants were allowed to be baptized at all times, adults, too, could request baptism at any time. The 1662 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* stated that adults may be baptized on any Sunday, other holy days, or other times when many people could attend the service. What was more important was that the bishop be notified at least one week in advance for the purpose of properly examining the catechumen.<sup>159</sup> From this statement, we can see that certain times or seasons for baptism was no longer a big issue. But, in keeping with the ancient tradition, catechumens must still be examined, so that the church may be assured that the catechumens had been properly instructed in the basic teachings of the Christian church and that they could prepare themselves with prayers and fasting to receive the sacrament of baptism.

Tertullian thought that it was fitting to baptize people on Easter because it was the day of Christ's resurrection and on Pentecost because it was the time when Christ

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<sup>157</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 509.

<sup>158</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 510.

<sup>159</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer* 1662, 283.



manifested his resurrection to his disciples by giving them the grace of the Holy Spirit.<sup>160</sup> Bingham noted that what Tertullian meant by Pentecost was not just one particular Whitsuntide day, but the whole fifty days between Easter and Whitsuntide or Pentecost.<sup>161</sup> The *Constitution of the Holy Apostles* also said that the whole fifty days were set apart as the solemn season for baptism.<sup>162</sup> Bingham explained that when the ancient writers referred to baptism at Easter, generally they meant this fifty day period.<sup>163</sup>

Bingham said that some churches in Spain baptized new members on Christmas, while others did so during Epiphany.<sup>164</sup> However, the majority of early churches and especially the church in Rome, thought that the practice of these Spanish churches was against the rule.<sup>165</sup> Bingham presented an example from the time of Pope Leo. The church in Sicily had the custom to baptize during Epiphany. The Pope disagreed with the practice, calling it an “unreasonable novelty.” He then appointed Easter and Pentecost as the only lawful times to baptize catechumens.<sup>166</sup> Leo’s disagreement with the church in Sicily and some of the Spanish churches, Bingham explained, was because they confused

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<sup>160</sup> Tertullian, *On Baptism*, par. 19; *Works*, vol. 3, 510.

<sup>161</sup> Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, chap. 14, last sentence; *Works*, vol. 3, 511.

<sup>162</sup> *Constitution of the Holy Apostles*, book 5, chap. 18; *Works*, vol. 3, 512.

<sup>163</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 513.

<sup>164</sup> Bingham finds support from a letter by a certain Siricius in his epistle to Himerius, bishop of Tarraco, in Spain. See *Works*, vol. 3, 513.

<sup>165</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 514.

<sup>166</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 514.

the time when Jesus was adored by the Magi with the time when he rose from the dead. For Leo, this was a serious error.<sup>167</sup>

Bingham deemed it necessary to explain that in the time of the apostles there were no certain times or day devoted to baptism. The apostles made no laws about the day for baptism; they baptized anytime as the occasion required and they left this matter completely to the judgment of their successors.<sup>168</sup> After the church had spread to many parts of the world and its organization in offices became more complex, the church established regulations for the administration of baptism and appointed certain days or seasons for it.<sup>169</sup> However, the church never waited for a certain day to baptize a sick person.<sup>170</sup> In this discussion, Bingham showed how the current practice of the Church of England was justified. By going back to the time of the apostles, he plainly demonstrated that the church should not appoint certain seasons to baptize catechumens. The former editions of the *Book of Common Prayer* may want to follow the ancient practice of devoting Easter and Pentecost for baptism. But the new version of the Prayer Book gave people more flexibility. The 1662 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* provided an explanation of the reason why some of the ceremonies in the former editions – both 1549 and 1552 – were eliminated. The main reason was to avoid superstition. The Prayer Book said that even though these ceremonies came to the church through people with sincere

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<sup>167</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 514. See also Pope Leo, *Letter to the Bishops of Sicily*, October 21, 447, in *The Fathers of the Church. St. Leo the Great. Letters*, Edmund Hunt, trans., 68.

<sup>168</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 517.

<sup>169</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 518.

<sup>170</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 519.

motives, the ceremonies were abused in the later time. The result was that they blinded the people, and prevented the people to see the glory of God.<sup>171</sup>

### 3. Adult Baptismal Rite

There were certain rules that the early church held with regard to the rites of baptism. The early church more or less uniformly included three elements in the sacraments, namely, a formal or solemn renunciation of the devil, a profession of faith following a certain form of creed, and a promise or engagement to live in obedience to Christ.<sup>172</sup> Here the *Book of Common Prayer* followed the early church's pattern. Bingham, often arguing against heretical practices, established the orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and catholicity of the Church of England. The renunciation was stated in the *Constitutions of the Apostles*: "I renounce Satan, and his works, and his pomps, and his service, and his angels, and his inventions and all things that belong to him, or that are subject to him."<sup>173</sup> Bingham was aware that there were variations to this renunciation. For instance, Cyprian wrote that the renunciation of Satan was combined with a renunciation of the world.<sup>174</sup> Similarly, Ambrose charged the person baptized, saying: "You renounced the devil and his works, the world with its luxury and pleasures."<sup>175</sup>

The renunciation of Satan and the world had a practical aspect to it, connecting it to the daily life of new Christians. Tertullian said that when Christians renounced Satan and his works and the world, they promised to refrain from attending the Roman theatres

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<sup>171</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer* 1662, 5.

<sup>172</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 524.

<sup>173</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 525. See also *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, book 7, chap. 41.

<sup>174</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 525.

<sup>175</sup> Ambrose, *The Mysteries*, chap. 2, par. 5; *Works*, vol. 3, 525.

as well as refraining from idolatry.<sup>176</sup> Bingham explained that for Tertullian the devil, his pomps, and his angels were all categorized as idolatry. The clearest forms of idolatry were the shows in the Roman theatre. That is why Tertullian required baptized persons to renounce these at their baptism.<sup>177</sup> Bingham explained that this renunciation originated with the Apostles, especially in Paul's charge to Timothy in 1 Tim 6: 12.<sup>178</sup> Tertullian and later Basil based their judgment on tradition and old customs.<sup>179</sup> Basil considered the renunciation a mystical rite received by the church. It came not from the words of Scripture, but from the apostles by private direction and tradition.<sup>180</sup>

In talking about the renunciation of Satan, Bingham indirectly defended the position of the Anglican Church against the Puritans. As we saw the preceding chapter, the Puritans charged the Anglicans with having inserted Roman Catholic practices in its rites, including baptism. The Puritans demanded that only those practices stipulated by the apostles in Scripture could be used in worship. By showing that the renunciation of Satan had a biblical basis as well as one rooted in the practice of the ancient church, Bingham tried to demonstrate to the Puritans that this practice was acceptable in the Church of England.

The liturgy of adult baptism in the *Book of Common Prayer* followed the ancient practice very closely. In the liturgy, the priest was required to ask the baptized:

Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 526.

<sup>177</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 527. See also Tertullian, *The Shows, or De Spectaculis*, chap. 4.

<sup>178</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 528.

<sup>179</sup> Tertullian, *The Chaplet, or the Corona*, chap. 3.

<sup>180</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 529.

<sup>181</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 286.

The baptized was then required to answer: "I renounce them all." This part of question and answer was a very important part in the liturgy of adult baptism in the Church of England in Bingham's time. Together with the understanding that baptism followed repentance and regeneration, the candidate's willingness to renounce the devil and his followers demonstrated that he would leave the old, sinful life. In addition, it also served as a reminder that Christians should not pursue all kinds of witchcraft and other satanic worship.

The renunciation was usually done with the person standing, facing West.<sup>182</sup> Church buildings were designed to accommodate the ceremony of baptism.<sup>183</sup> The catechumens first entered the anteroom of the church. There they renounced the devil and then, also professed their faith. The ceremony of baptism itself was performed in the inner room, the second room one entered in the church.<sup>184</sup> Bingham explained the process of renouncing the devil as follows:

When the catechumens were brought into the former of these<sup>185</sup> they were placed with their faces to the west, and then commanded to renounce Satan, with some gestures and rite, expressing an indignation against him, as, by stretching out their hands, or folding them, or striking them together, and sometimes by exsufflation, and spitting at him, as if he were present.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 530.

<sup>183</sup> Bingham discusses church architecture in book 8, chap. 7, sect. 1 of his *Origines*.

<sup>184</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 530.

<sup>185</sup> The former of the two rooms, or the ante-room.

<sup>186</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 530.

In this symbolic act, West signified a place of darkness, the place of Satan and the power of darkness. Bingham said that Cyril of Jerusalem,<sup>187</sup> Ambrose,<sup>188</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus<sup>189</sup> and Dionysius all held this view.<sup>190</sup>

The second ritual required in baptism was taking a vow.<sup>191</sup> This vow demonstrated a willingness to submit oneself to Christ. This vow had to be taken before one could be baptized.<sup>192</sup> Quoting Justin Martyr, Bingham said that baptism was given only to those who added to their confession of faith a vow that they would live according to the rules of Christianity.<sup>193</sup> The usual words of this profession in Greek are:

συντασσομαι σοι, Χριστε, or "I lift myself up to Thee, O Christ"; in Latin it is usually *promissum*, *pactum* and *votum*, a promise, a covenant or a vow.<sup>194</sup> Bingham saw that the renunciation of the devil and the world and the profession of faith in Christ and obedience to him virtually included one another. Somebody who had renounced the devil had at the same time professed a vow to be a soldier of Christ and a servant, devoting his or her own life only to Christ.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Lectures*, 1, par. 1.

<sup>188</sup> Ambrose, *The Mysteries*, chap. 2, par. 7.

<sup>189</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Baptism*, 40.

<sup>190</sup> Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, chap. 2, sect. 3, par. 5.

<sup>191</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 533.

<sup>192</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 533.

<sup>193</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 535; cf. Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*.

<sup>194</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 535.

<sup>195</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 536.

Next, the catechumen had to make a profession of faith. This profession was made following the creed. The catechumen had been privately instructed; now the person had to say the creed publicly. Afterwards, the catechumen had to answer questions that the minister asked.<sup>196</sup> Cyprian mentioned that the questions included belief in eternal life and remission of sins in the Holy Church. They were then asked questions regarding the Trinity.<sup>197</sup> Tertullian also specified that the catechumens answer questions regarding the Trinity.<sup>198</sup> This question and answer format was so necessary that it was never omitted, not even when the sick were baptized at home or in clinics. If the catechumen was too sick, a sponsor had to answer on her / his behalf.<sup>199</sup> Bingham also added that Augustine emphasized the need to make a public confession, so that the whole congregation could hear it.<sup>200</sup>

In this case, too, Bingham used the lesson from the early church to demonstrate that the adult baptismal liturgy in the *Book of Common Prayer* was faithful to the tradition of the ancient church. In the Prayer Book, after the candidate renounced the devil and his powers, he was required to recite the Apostles' Creed.<sup>201</sup> The use of the creed was somehow an elaboration of the simpler creed mentioned by Cyprian and Tertullian. However, the basic principle remained the same. Belief in the Trinity was

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<sup>196</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 538.

<sup>197</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 540. See also Cyprian, *Letter to Magnus*.

<sup>198</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 538. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, par. 6.

<sup>199</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 539.

<sup>200</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, book 8, chap. 2.

<sup>201</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, 286.

emphasized in the ancient baptismal rite, and in the liturgy of the Prayer Book, the Apostle's Creed was used to affirm the same confession of faith.

The ancient church included unction in baptism. It could be performed before baptism as a way of preparation for it, immediately after the confession of faith or between the renunciation and confession.<sup>202</sup> The *Constitutions of the Apostles* placed the unction immediately after the confession.<sup>203</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem placed it between the renunciation and the confession.<sup>204</sup> Cyril spoke of this unction as the anointing of the person with consecrated oil in order to make the person a partaker of the true olive tree, Jesus Christ. At the same time it symbolized the destruction of the power of evil.<sup>205</sup>

Bingham identified two different kinds of unction. One came before; the other after the baptism.<sup>206</sup> The first unction was commonly called *χρισιν μυστικου ελαιου*, or "the unction of the mystical oil;" the other was called *χρισιν μυρου*, or *χρισμα*.<sup>207</sup> The *Constitutions of the Apostles* and Cyril of Jerusalem made this distinction.<sup>208</sup> The unction before baptism was generally performed by a deacon or deaconess, while the one after

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<sup>202</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 567.

<sup>203</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 567. See also *Constitutions of the Apostles*, book 7, chap. 41.

<sup>204</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Lectures*, 2, no. 3 and 4.

<sup>205</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 570. See also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Lectures* 2, no. 3.

<sup>206</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 568.

<sup>207</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 568.

<sup>208</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 569. See also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Lectures* 2, no. 3 and also *Constitutions of the Apostles* book 7, chap. 42.



baptism was most commonly performed by either the bishop or, in special cases, a presbyter.<sup>209</sup>

The sign of the cross was frequently used in the ceremony of baptism. Bingham observed that there were four different times when the sign of the cross was made on the forehead.<sup>210</sup> The first was when the catechumens were admitted to the catechumenate, the second at the time of exorcism and the imposition of hands, the third at the time of unction before baptism, and the last at the time of unction in confirmation.<sup>211</sup> Bingham did not spend much time discussing the sign of the cross in ancient baptism. But from what he presented one gets an impression that his purpose was to demonstrate to the Puritans that the early church did not object to this practice.

Bingham's treatment of the adult baptismal rite in the early church functioned as a foundation of his theologizing method. He approached the ancient text already with a purpose in mind: to find support for the practice of the Church of England. The adult baptismal liturgy in the Prayer Book mirrored the ancient practice. This means that Bingham's patristic investigation of the practice of baptism in the *Origines* served as historical and theological background for his own theology. His theology was the theology of the Church of England and he strongly upheld it.

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<sup>209</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 569.

<sup>210</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572.

<sup>211</sup> *Works*, vol. 3, 572.

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Use of Patristic Material in the Controversy

#### Regarding Lay Baptism

##### I. The Background of the Controversy

The controversy over lay baptism arose when Roger Laurence<sup>1</sup> published his first edition of *Lay Baptism Invalid* in 1709.<sup>2</sup> Laurence rejected the validity of private baptism administered by unordained persons. He insisted on rebaptizing those who were so baptized. Bingham disagreed with Laurence and published his *Scholastical History*<sup>3</sup> as a separate volume mainly to provide an historical account of the early church's position on lay baptism.<sup>4</sup> In so doing, he used patristic material as the source of authority in his polemic with Laurence.<sup>5</sup> In Bingham's judgment, the controversy was based on Laurence's inexact representation of the early church's view. Bingham's intention was to

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Laurence (1670-1736) was admitted to the royal mathematical foundation of Christ's Hospital in 1679. In 1688 he was discharged and bound for seven years to a merchant vessel. Afterwards, he was employed by a merchant in London to work in Spain for several years. He then studied divinity, became dissatisfied with his own baptism among the dissenters, and was informally baptized in Christ Church, in 1708, by John Bates, reader at that church. See *DNB*, vol. 32, 207.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 1709. In writing this dissertation I use the nineteenth-century reprint of this and other works of Laurence, edited by William Scott. See Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid: To Which Is Added Dissenters' Baptism Null and Void, Reprinted from the Fourth Edition of 1723*, ed. William Scott (London: James Burns, 1841).

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Bingham, *A Scholastical History of the Practice of the Church in Reference to the Administration of Baptism by Laymen* (London: R. Knaplock, 1712, 1714). See also *Works*, vol. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Bingham mentioned that initially he planned to discuss the matter of lay baptism in the ancient church as a part of his treatment of the sacrament of baptism in his *Origines*. But as the controversy grew stronger, he thought that he needed to devote a separate volume to answer the controversy. See *Works*, vol. 8, iv.

<sup>5</sup> As I mentioned in chapter three, in his *Origines* Bingham avoided polemic as much as he could, but in this case he was compelled to explain why Laurence's view was unacceptable. See also Leslie W. Barnard, "The Use of Patristic Tradition in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," 187.

demonstrate that Laurence “has committed several great mistakes in point of ancient history.”<sup>6</sup> In Bingham’s judgment, another mistake that Laurence made was confusing lay baptism, unauthorized baptism, and invalid baptism. Bingham saw that for Laurence these terms were equivalent, while in fact, they were used differently in the early church.<sup>7</sup> Bingham hoped that by writing this discourse, he could achieve two goals, namely, to explain the practice of the ancient church and to vindicate the Church of England for not ordering rebaptism.<sup>8</sup>

The arguments centered around two questions, namely, whether or not private baptisms by lay people could be considered legal in the eyes of the Church of England, and if they were illegal, would this also mean that such baptisms were null and void and thus needed to be repeated.<sup>9</sup> Anglican divines were divided on the first question. Some thought that the rubric in the Prayer Book regarding private baptism did not allow unordained people to baptize. They held that the rubric only allowed baptism at private homes, but ministers had to perform the ceremony. Others thought that even though the church did not approve of lay baptism, the church intended and permitted it for a limited time.<sup>10</sup> Bingham noted that John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury (confirmed September 23, 1583) held the first opinion, that private baptism according to the Prayer

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<sup>6</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, vi.

<sup>7</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, vi.

<sup>8</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, vii.

<sup>9</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 113.

<sup>10</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 113.

Book should be performed by a minister, certainly not by a woman.<sup>11</sup> Those who held the second opinion thought that the church could tolerate baptism performed by unordained people because the church had to take into consideration the ignorant and unlearned, and the fact that some people were incapable of understanding the teaching of the church. Archbishop Abbot supported this view.<sup>12</sup> Abbot took the example of Moses who endured the Israelites' hard heartedness and permitted bills of divorce. Abbot applied this principle to lay baptism. He said because of the weaknesses of some people and the hardness of others, lay people were allowed to baptize.<sup>13</sup>

The *Book of Common Prayer*, in the first edition of 1549, in the 1559 Elizabethan edition and in the revised 1662 edition,<sup>14</sup> said that the private baptism of infants, who were in immediate danger of death, was acceptable. It specified:

The pastors and curates shall oft admonish the people that they defer not the baptism of infants any longer than the Sunday or other holy day next after the child be born, unless upon a great and reasonable cause declared to the curate, and by him approved. And also they shall warn them, that without great cause and necessity they baptize not children at home in their houses. And when great need shall compel them to do so, that then they minister it on this fashion.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John Whitgift, *The Works of John Whitgift*, edited for the Parker Society, vol. 3 (Cambridge: University Press, 1853), 493.

<sup>12</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 114.

<sup>13</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 114

<sup>14</sup> For a descriptive historical development of the *Book of Common Prayer*, readers can refer to Frances Procter, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer with a Rationale of Its Offices* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898). In this book Procter puts the editions of the prayer book side by side and notes the changes made from one revision to the next.

<sup>15</sup> "Of Them That Be Baptized in Private Houses, in Time of Necessity," in *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, ed. John E. Booty (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 277.

The Prayer Book's directions for private baptism at home are much simpler than for baptism at church. There is no consecration of the water of baptism, only a calling on God's grace, followed by the Lord's Prayer. Then the child is dipped in the water or sprinkled with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost:

First let them that be present call upon God for his Grace and say the Lord's Prayer, if the time will suffer. And then one of them shall name the child, and dip him in the water, or pour water upon him, saying these words: "N, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."<sup>16</sup>

The Prayer Book stipulates that if the child recovers and lives there is no need to rebaptize. What the parents must do is to bring him or her to church, so that the priest may examine whether or not the baptism is lawful.<sup>17</sup> If, upon examination, the minister is convinced that the baptism is acceptable, he must not rebaptize the child, but must rather receive the child as a member of the church with these words:

I certify you, that in this case ye have done well and according unto due order concerning the baptizing of this child, which being born in original sin and in the wrath of God, is now by the laver of regeneration in Baptism, received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life: for our Lord Jesus Christ doth not deny his grace and mercy unto such infants, but most lovingly doth call them unto him, as the holy gospel doth witness to our comfort on this wise.<sup>18</sup>

The minister then follows the usual baptismal rites normally performed at church, including questioning the godparents, reciting the Lord's Prayer, renouncing the devil and all his works and giving exhortation.<sup>19</sup> If the minister finds that the private baptism was not performed properly or if he has any doubt, the minister must baptize the child

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<sup>16</sup> Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer* 1559, 277.

<sup>17</sup> Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer* 1559, 277.

<sup>18</sup> Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer* 1559, 278.

<sup>19</sup> Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer* 1559, 279-80.

according to the rules for public baptism, with one exception. Before he dips or sprinkles the infant, he must say: "N, if thou hast been baptized, I baptize thee not; but if thou hast not yet been baptized, I baptize thee: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."<sup>20</sup>

The Prayer Book's regulations for private baptism, however, do not give any clear directions as to who is authorized to perform private baptism. The rubric merely says: "... when great need shall compel them so to do [private baptism], that then they minister it on this fashion . . ."<sup>21</sup> This statement does not exclude lay-people from baptizing the child. Bingham commented that because the term used in the rubric was so general, and that there was no limitation that only ministers were allowed to perform private baptism, very often lay-people, including women, performed these baptisms.<sup>22</sup>

During the reign of King James I, the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 emphasized that only a lawful minister could perform baptism anywhere in the country.<sup>23</sup> King James strongly disliked lay baptism, especially if administered by women. He urged that the rubric of the Hampton Court Conference be altered so as to allow baptism only by a lawful minister.<sup>24</sup> Barnard says that in the seventeenth century there was a tendency

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<sup>20</sup> Leighton Pullan, *The History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), 198. See also *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, 281.

<sup>21</sup> Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, 187.

<sup>22</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 112.

<sup>23</sup> See William Barlow, *The Summe and Substance of the Conference, Which It Pleased His Excellent Majestie to Have with the Lords, Bishops and Other of His Clergie* (London: W. Law, 1604), 174.

<sup>24</sup> Procter, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 418.

to put a stop to the practice of lay baptism. At the same time, however, the church did not absolutely deny the validity of lay baptism.<sup>25</sup>

The importance of having a minister perform private baptism was affirmed in the 1662 revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*. If the parish minister was not available, another lawful minister should perform the ceremony.<sup>26</sup> The minister and all others present must:

... call upon God, and say the Lord's Prayer, and so many of the Collects appointed to be said before in the form of Publick Baptism, as the time and present exigence will suffer. And then the childe being named by someone that is present, the Minister shall pour water upon it, saying these words: ...<sup>27</sup>

Barnard noted that the declining frequency of public baptism in the church was due to tensions between Anglicans and Puritans.<sup>28</sup> As we saw in chapter two, making the sign of the cross was a main difference between the two camps. In order to avoid the sign of the cross, Barnard said, people chose to baptize their babies at home. Later, however, baptism at homes brought other excesses. It became a mere social occasion often followed by partying and drunkenness. Consequently, many people lost reverence for the sacrament.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Procter, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 190.

<sup>26</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, in F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite. Being a Synopsis of the Sources and Revisions of the Book of Common Prayer*. vol. 2 (London: Rivingtons, 1921), 749. In this two-volume work, Brightman carefully sets side by side the three editions of the *Book of Common Prayer* – namely, the 1549, 1552 and 1662 editions. He also includes the medieval source of each rubric so that the readers are able to see the development and changes in the history of the prayer book.

<sup>27</sup> Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer 1661*, 749.

<sup>28</sup> Barnard, "The Use of Patristic Tradition," 187.

<sup>29</sup> Barnard, "The Use of Patristic Tradition," 187.

## II. The Position of Roger Laurence with Regard to Lay Baptism

Toward the end of the seventeenth century there was an ever growing effort from the High Churchmen to deny the validity of lay baptism. According to Barnard, the basis for the denial was a conception that the early church condemned lay baptism.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, efforts on the part of representatives of the Low Church party to readmit the Dissenters to the church caused some in the High Church party to require the Dissenters to be rebaptized. High Churchmen argued for this especially because some of the Dissenters were foreign Protestant refugees who had been baptized by lay-people.<sup>31</sup> The Low Church, however, defended the validity of lay baptism and contended that those readmitted to the church did not need to be rebaptized.<sup>32</sup> In his *Lay Baptism Invalid*, Laurence vigorously defended the position of the High Church party.

Roger Laurence had a problem with his own baptism. According to William Scott, Laurence was born, baptized, and brought up a Dissenter. When he was converted to the Church of England, he declared that his baptism was invalid, and he requested to be rebaptized by the curate of Christ Church, Newgate Street, London. He made the request without the consent of the bishop or an order from the parish priest.<sup>33</sup> In the preface to his *Lay Baptism Invalid*, Laurence described his baptism as an adult on March 31, 1708. He said it was public baptism because he believed that before he had not been

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<sup>30</sup> Barnard, "The Use of Patristic Tradition," 191.

<sup>31</sup> Barnard, "The Use of Patristic Tradition," 191.

<sup>32</sup> Barnard, "The Use of Patristic Tradition," 191.

<sup>33</sup> See William Scott, "Editor's Preface," in Laurence's *Lay Baptism Invalid*, vii. See also *DNB*, vol. 32, 206.



validly baptized.<sup>34</sup> He emphasized the fact that this time he was baptized in public, in a Wednesday evening service during passion-week after the second lesson at evening prayer.<sup>35</sup> Laurence held a very high view of baptism as a sacrament instituted by Christ. Therefore, he thought it must be performed with strict adherence to all the rules without exception. He stated that baptism and all things essential to this sacrament were fundamental to Christianity because baptism was a “positive institution made by God Himself.”<sup>36</sup> He believed that lay baptism was not valid, since the lay person administering the baptism did not have the authority to perform the “divine positive institution.”<sup>37</sup> For him, a valid baptism required a “divine authority of the administrator”:

... that commission which God at first gave to men, and which they have ever since handed down to others, by His order and appointment, to administer in His holy ordinances.<sup>38</sup>

He defined lay administration as:

... that which is performed by one who never was commissioned or empowered for that act, by those whom God has appointed to be the conveyers of His authority and commission to men for that purpose.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, baptism performed by anybody without divine authorization would never bring the recipient supernatural gifts. Such baptisms were thus invalid. According to Laurence, if just one part of the divine, positive institution was removed, the whole act

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<sup>34</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxiii.

<sup>35</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxii.

<sup>36</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxvii.

<sup>37</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 2.

became null and void.<sup>40</sup> He did not consider baptism administered by a presbyter or deacon as valid either, because presbyters and deacons did not have the same authority as bishops who received their authority from God himself.<sup>41</sup>

Laurence held that each component of baptism, the divine authority of the administrator, the water as element, and the Trinitarian formula, were essential parts of the divine, positive institution. He maintained that this view had never been disputed by orthodox Christians, only by heretics.<sup>42</sup> He held that the entire Bible showed how people must obey the divine, positive institution.<sup>43</sup> He began with Moses and Korah, Dathan and Abiram's rebellion against the divine positive institution that God gave to Moses.<sup>44</sup> As a result, these three men were punished by God. Contrasting this story with the New Testament, he took the example of Jesus who obeyed God's command completely, and therefore demonstrated obedience to the divine, positive instruction. When Jesus Christ gave the Great Commission to his disciples, Jesus was actually delegating the divine positive command to the disciples. The Church of England received this divine, positive instruction from Jesus through the disciples so that it, too, had the authority to baptize.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Roger Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> As it turns out, however, the custom of using the example from Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their rebellion against Moses is not Laurence's original thought. Letters of Cyprian and to Cyprian mostly used the story of the rebellion of these three people in the Old Testament. Laurence uses the letters to and from Cyprian very heavily to prove his case. In so doing he is accustomed to use this argument. See, for instance, *Letters of Cyprian*, letter 73 from Cyprian to Jubaian, letter 75 from Firmilian, etc.

<sup>45</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 10-15.

Laurence believed that Christ's direct command to the apostles meant that only the apostles and their successors were commissioned to disciple the nations and to baptize them.<sup>46</sup> In order that the promise of Christ may be fulfilled, he said, "as long as the world shall last, there must be baptising, there must be such a one to perform it as Christ has promised to be with, viz. a successor to the apostles, or his substitute, to the utmost bounds of that duration."<sup>47</sup>

Laurence worried that the world would not receive the blessings and promise of Christ if baptism was performed by unauthorized persons. He interpreted Christ's promise to be "with *you* always"<sup>48</sup> to mean that Christ would be with the disciples in baptizing the nations. If the one who baptized was not "one of the *you*," namely, a person with authority from Christ, not only would the person's act lose claim of any right to the promise, but it would also contradict the sacred institution.<sup>49</sup> The great privilege of true Christian baptism, or the supernatural benefit of baptism, was the forgiveness of sins.<sup>50</sup> Because only God could forgive sins, only baptism performed by people ordained by God would have the ability to bring forgiveness of sins.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 16.

<sup>47</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 18, emphasis Laurence's.

<sup>49</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 18.

<sup>50</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 26.

<sup>51</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 26.

Another great privilege of Christian baptism, Laurence contended, was all the heavenly gifts coming from God.<sup>52</sup> Human beings were strangers and aliens to the kingdom of heaven, but baptism brought them to the kingdom of heaven. Using the metaphor of the naturalization of a foreigner to a new country, Laurence illustrated that only a person authorized to do the naturalization could declare that the stranger was now a citizen of the country.<sup>53</sup> This principle also applied to baptism. Baptism required that the one administering the sacrament must be an authorized person in order for the one being baptized to enjoy the benefit of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>54</sup> Following tradition, Laurence called baptism a sign and seal, but he also added that baptism was a means to convey and to pledge the supernatural advantages, namely, to incorporate one into the household of God and to make one a member of Christ and an heir of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>55</sup>

Laurence used article twenty three of the *Thirty Nine Articles* to argue against the validity of lay baptism.<sup>56</sup> This article said:

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 27.

<sup>53</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 27.

<sup>54</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 28.

<sup>55</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 28.

<sup>56</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 32.

<sup>57</sup> *The Thirty Nine Articles*, article 23, in Edgar C. S. Gibson, *The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England, Explained with an Introduction* (London: Methuen & Co., 1902), 573.

Laurence took the phrase “it is not lawful” in this article to mean that it was sinful or against the divine law in the Holy Scriptures. Without specifying the scriptural texts, he said that an unordained person performing sacraments sinned against the law which treated the sacraments.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, he said, “it is contrary to the very institution of these sacraments for any man to take upon him ‘the office of administering them, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same.’”<sup>59</sup> He added that the twenty-sixth article of the *Thirty Nine Articles* taught that the administrators of the sacraments serve not in their own names but in the name of Christ.<sup>60</sup> He concluded that according to this article, lay-baptism was invalid, because it was performed by someone who did not have the power of the name of Christ.<sup>61</sup>

Laurence was aware that some of his contemporaries held that in the early church the use of the Trinitarian formula was considered sufficient to render a baptism valid. Anybody baptized this way did not need to be rebaptized, even if the baptism was performed by heretics or schismatics. When those who had received baptism in heretical or schismatic communities joined the Catholic Church, they needed only perfection from the bishop in order to get the benefits of Christian baptism.<sup>62</sup> In response to those holding this position, Laurence said that even requiring the bishop to lay his hands on the person demonstrated that in essence those baptisms were not considered valid. He referred to

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<sup>58</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 32.

<sup>59</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 32

<sup>60</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 33.

<sup>61</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 33.

<sup>62</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 45.

canon 38 of the Council of Eliberis in 305 A. D., which stipulated that persons baptized by lay-people must have their baptism perfected by the laying on of hands. He said that the council must have declared this kind of baptism partially invalid and later made fully valid only by the imposition of hands.<sup>63</sup>

Laurence held that the word “perfected” used in the Canon of Eliberis indicated that the council required the confirmation of the bishop, because all valid baptisms were consummated and finished by confirmation or imposition of the bishop’s hands. Thus, the church did not consider lay baptisms valid because they were not concluded with the laying on of the bishop’s hands.<sup>64</sup>

Cyprian and the Eastern Churches, Laurence believed, affirmed the invalidity of lay baptism and so they required rebaptism.<sup>65</sup> Without giving a clear reference to Cyprian’s writing,<sup>66</sup> he pointed out that Cyprian required a second baptism of the Montanists, despite the fact that they were baptized with water and in the name of the Trinity. He also insisted that Basil, Chrysostom, and other Catholic authors, after Nicea,

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<sup>63</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 46.

<sup>64</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 46.

<sup>65</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 46.

<sup>66</sup> A possible reason Laurence does not give a clear reference is that he has dealt with Cyprian several times in the “Preliminary Discourse” to his *Lay Baptism Invalid* and therefore he does not see the need to provide his readers with clear reference. However, Laurence is generally not careful in providing references to his sources, and, as Scott rightly comments, he receives criticism from Bingham for this carelessness. We will see Laurence’s explanation about the Cyprianists’ argument for rebaptizing the Novatians later in this section. See Scott, in his note on Laurence’s *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxx, footnote 1.

declared lay baptism null and void, even though it was done with water and in the name of the Trinity.<sup>67</sup>

According to Laurence, the belief that there was but one baptism did not provide room for lay baptism. A valid baptism must be administered exactly according to the essentials of the institution. He considered lay baptism, whatever other people may call it (imperfect or partly invalid), a different kind of baptism, entirely removed from the one true baptism.<sup>68</sup> He believed that if the church did not reject lay baptism, it would, in effect, destroy the whole ministry of the Christian priesthood, give way to licentiousness, allow intruders to enter the sacred office of the priesthood and would ultimately bring dishonor to God who had declared that only his ordained ministers were chosen to administer the sacrament.<sup>69</sup> He worried that eventually:

... if it be allowed that such their sacraments are valid, then any excommunicated person—though never authorised by a divine commission—if he can but gather a congregation to himself, may set up for a valid minister; and even they who know this may receive valid sacraments at his hands, if the want of a divine mission in the administrator does not invalidate the sacraments; — which is a consequence so horrid, and attended with such infinite confusions, that it should make sober Christians even tremble to think of it.<sup>70</sup>

In Laurence's estimation, the reason why Cyprian rejected the baptism of Novatianus was because Novatianus was not a bishop.<sup>71</sup> Cornelius was the only bishop of Rome at that time and therefore only baptisms performed by Cornelius and his presbyters

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<sup>67</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 47.

<sup>68</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 47.

<sup>69</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 48.

<sup>70</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, 49-50.

<sup>71</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxxii.

were valid. He believed that Novatianus pretended to be the bishop of Rome in opposition to Cornelius and that, therefore, the sacraments performed by Novatianus could not be true, Christian sacraments.<sup>72</sup>

Laurence also insisted that some bishops agreed with Cyprian in requiring the rebaptism of heretics. For example, Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, disagreed with Stephen, bishop of Rome, for not requiring the rebaptism of heretics.<sup>73</sup> He found that Firmilian was very firm in rejecting the baptism of schismatics. Firmilian gathered the support of some bishops at the Synod of Iconium against the Montanists and they declared that those baptized by schismatics should not be considered baptized. More than that, Firmilian and his followers also declared that bishops, who either heretically or schismatically separated themselves from the Catholic Church, lost their authority to do ministerial functions.<sup>74</sup>

Recognizing the closeness of Cyprian's and Firmilian's view, Laurence concluded that Cyprian and his colleagues, too, considered the ministerial acts of schismatics null and void. Consequently, all sacraments done by these schismatics and those ordained by them were equally invalid and ineffectual.<sup>75</sup> Laurence also presented Cyprian and his followers' opposition to the view of Stephen, bishop of Rome, who accepted the baptism

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<sup>72</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxxiii. Here Laurence refers to Cyprian's letter to Jubaian concerning the baptism of Novatian. For the English translation of Cyprian's letter, see letter 73 of Cyprian to Jubaian, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 51, *Saint Cyprian, Letters 1-8*, trans. Sister Rose Bernard Donna (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 268-85.

<sup>73</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxxv. See also Cyprian, letter 75, from Firmilian to Cyprian.

<sup>74</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxxviii.

<sup>75</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxxviii.



of schismatics.<sup>76</sup> While Cyprian did not want to break with Stephen, he could not accept his view. Stephen came to the point where he would not let his congregation show any hospitality to Cyprian's followers.<sup>77</sup> Stephen simply excommunicated those who opposed accepting the baptism of heretics and schismatics.<sup>78</sup>

Sometimes the early church distinguished between heretics and schismatics and, consequently, their baptisms. For example, against the Donatists, Optatus held that the holiness, or lack thereof, of the ministers administering the sacraments did not contribute to or detract from the validity and efficacy of the sacrament. The effect of the sacrament depended only on God. According to Laurence, Optatus did not require the Donatists, who came back to the Catholic Church, to be rebaptized. Optatus considered Donatus a schismatic, not a heretic.<sup>79</sup> But with regard to heretics, Laurence believed that Optatus seemed to think that they needed rebaptism.<sup>80</sup> Laurence, however, thought that Basil did not make any distinction between schismatics and heretics. Based on Basil's letter to Amphilochius, Laurence stated that Basil demanded that those baptized by lay-people be rebaptized.<sup>81</sup> Laurence added that for Basil the baptism of heretics was absolutely void. At the same time, Basil also preferred to subject schismatics to the same law since the schismatics, because of their separation from the Church, did not have the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>76</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxxix.

<sup>77</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, lxxxix.

<sup>78</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, xc.

<sup>79</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, xciii.

<sup>80</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, xcv.

<sup>81</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, ci.

Thus, according to Laurence, Basil considered baptism by lay-people the same as baptism by heretics and schismatics, and therefore null and void.<sup>82</sup>

Laurence did not hesitate to take issue with Augustine. He realized that in the controversy against the Donatists, Augustine did not require them to be rebaptized, since he believed that as long as baptism was in the name of the Trinity, the baptism was valid, regardless of the character of the one administering it.<sup>83</sup> He understood that Augustine believed that God, not the minister, gave the Holy Spirit and remission of sins in baptism.<sup>84</sup> Even so, Laurence raised the question of the authority of the minister. He realized that the faith or the holiness of the minister did not contribute anything to the validity of the baptism, but that did not mean that the authority of the minister was also irrelevant.<sup>85</sup> If the authority of the minister was not important, then any one may stand up and claim that he was appointed by God to administer the sacrament:

Can it be reasonably expected that God should concur with the usurpations of those who act therein without His commission, nay, and in opposition thereto (as is the case with us)? Certainly no; it cannot; for however He may dispense with the want of the sacrament, yet He has no where promised to give efficacy to those administrations which are in any respect contrary to the essentials of His own institutions.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, ci. See also Basil, "Letter 199, to Amphilochius, Concerning the Canons," in *NPNF*, vol. 8, 240. In this case Basil is talking about the followers of Marcion and the Novatians.

<sup>83</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cvii.

<sup>84</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cvii.

<sup>85</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cvii.

<sup>86</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cvii.

Laurence also challenged Augustine's view of baptism administered by an unbaptized person.<sup>87</sup> He admitted that for Augustine<sup>88</sup> baptism was valid, regardless of the place it was administered or the character and status of the one administering it, as long as the person receiving it did so in faith and sincerity.<sup>89</sup> But he regretted that Augustine did not distinguish the baptism of heretics from that of schismatics. If he had, he would have clearly seen that heretics and schismatics acted as excommunicated persons, and, consequently, because they were both separated from the church, they no longer had the authority to administer Christian sacraments.<sup>90</sup>

In Laurence's view, Tertullian, too, saw baptism as the privilege of bishops, and therefore, heretics were not allowed to baptize since they did not have the privilege.<sup>91</sup> Laurence was sure that Tertullian said that the church had rule to rebaptize heretics.<sup>92</sup> He affirmed that Tertullian's opinion was not a personal one, but the law and practice of the

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<sup>87</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cviii.

<sup>88</sup> Augustine placed the emphasis on the heart of the person. He was even willing to accept the baptism of a person in a play. As long as the person had a sincere heart, the baptism was acceptable. He thought this was better than baptism administered in the church to a mocking recipient. See Augustine, "On Baptism," book 7, chap. 53, in *NPNF*, vol. 4, 512.

<sup>89</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cix.

<sup>90</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cx.

<sup>91</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxx. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 15.

<sup>92</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxi. It is important to note that this statement did not come from Tertullian's treatise on baptism, as Laurence said. In this treatise, Tertullian only mentioned that heretics were deprived from the fellowship of the Catholic Church, because they were outsiders and because they were not one with the church. Heretics did not have the same baptism. See Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 15. Laurence might have read another treatise by Tertullian that stated that the Catholic Church had a rule to rebaptize heretics. However, given the fact that Laurence was not precise with his sources, it is difficult to evaluate the accuracy of his patristic interpretation. William Scott thinks that this statement may have come from Tertullian's "De Pudicitia," chap. 19. See Scott, in Laurence's *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxi, footnote.

church of his time.<sup>93</sup> Laurence was aware that his statement of Tertullian's position gave him some difficulties. In his treatise on baptism, Tertullian indicated that lay baptism was acceptable under extreme circumstances. He said Tertullian had "strange odd notions."<sup>94</sup> Tertullian said that the supreme right to baptize belonged to the bishop. With the commission of the bishop presbyters, and then also deacons could baptize. But Tertullian added that although this was the rule, lay people also had the right to baptize. Jesus' disciples were not bishops, presbyters, or deacons. Lay baptism, however, must only be done in emergencies, if the conditions, places, times, or persons demanded it.<sup>95</sup> Still, trying to defend his interpretation of Tertullian, Laurence remarked that this was only a "particular sentiment" of Tertullian. What Tertullian said about lay baptism did not state the practice and position of the early church. When Tertullian talked about lay baptism, he was not stating the law or rule of the early church, as he did when he said that the church had the rule to rebaptize heretics.<sup>96</sup>

In Ignatius' letter to the Smyrnaeans, Laurence thought he found a clear reference to the Father's view of baptism. He said that Ignatius held firmly to the necessity of bishops in baptism.<sup>97</sup> Laurence thought that Ignatius' and Cyprian's views were the same and that their position was right. Anything contrary to this opinion, Laurence added, would lead to monstrous heresy and schism. Similar to what happened in the Roman

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<sup>93</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxii.

<sup>94</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxii.

<sup>95</sup> Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 17.

<sup>96</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxiii.

<sup>97</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxiii.

Church.<sup>98</sup> Laurence also accused those in his own church who accepted lay baptism with still having the leaven of the Roman Church. Eventually they would swallow the other errors of the Roman Church, in allowing midwives to baptize infants in danger of death or even in allowing anybody to baptize anyone.<sup>99</sup>

### III. Bingham's Reply to Laurence's View

In replying to Laurence, Bingham began by clarifying the authority and the commission to baptize. He saw that Laurence placed heavy emphasis on who was authorized by Christ to baptize. Therefore he started with the question of whether or not presbyters and deacons had that authority. First, he went to the Great Commission. He made clear to his readers that Jesus in Matthew 18 sent the disciples not only to baptize, but also to transmit the authority to baptize others since, as was clear from the command, the authority to baptize was not "to die with them, but to continue to the end of the world."<sup>100</sup> Bingham then asked who will receive the authority to baptize. He took Philip, who baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts chapter 8, as an example. Philip was a deacon, but he baptized the eunuch. So it may be said that the apostles gave the commission to others and these others may include bishops, presbyters, and deacons.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxiv.

<sup>99</sup> Laurence, *Lay Baptism Invalid*, cxxiv

<sup>100</sup> Bingham, *Scholastical History*, incorporated in *Works*, vol. 8, 14.

<sup>101</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 15.

Moving to the early church after the apostolic era, Bingham explained that the ancient writers generally considered bishops the apostles' immediate successors and gave authority to administer baptism solely to them. However, he also found that under special circumstances bishops conveyed this authority to others, either ordinary ministers or extraordinary ones, in times of great crisis in the church.<sup>102</sup> In many small dioceses bishops ordinarily ministered baptism in the cathedral or mother church which had only one baptistery. But in larger cities where the need for baptism was greater, and there were more baptisteries, the bishop authorized others to baptize, since he alone could not baptize all the people.<sup>103</sup> Bingham cited a statement of the author of the Pontifical, the Life of Marcellus. In that statement Marcellus reported that while he was the bishop of Rome, he established twenty-five churches as small dioceses to make it easier to baptize converts. Marcellus also appointed the same number of presbyters to minister in the dioceses. Marcellus made it clear that these presbyters were subordinate to the bishop and acted only on the authority and commission given them by the bishop.<sup>104</sup> Under bishop Cyprian, the Council of Carthage stated as a rule that "Christ gave the commission to his apostles, and to them alone the power which was given him by his Father, and that bishops were the apostles' successors, in governing the Church with the same power, and granting baptism to believers."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 16.

<sup>103</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 17.

<sup>104</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 17.

<sup>105</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 17. Council of Carthage under Cyprian, no. 79. Bingham also provides the Latin text: "*Manifesta est sententia Domini nostri Jesu Christi, apostolos suos mittentis, et ipsis solis potestatem*

Like Laurence, Bingham said that Ignatius taught that it was not lawful either to baptize or to celebrate the Eucharist without the bishop.<sup>106</sup> However, contrary to Laurence, who held that for Ignatius baptism was not valid if performed by anybody other than a lawful bishop, Bingham did not believe that Ignatius considered all baptisms other than the ones administered by bishops invalid.<sup>107</sup> Instead, Ignatius' rule simply meant that the sacrament was not regularly done without the authorization or commission of the bishop, since the bishop was the chief minister of baptism and other celebrations in the church.<sup>108</sup> Bingham thought that bishops as chief priests had original rights of authority to minister independent of anybody else. He also believed that Tertullian taught that the bishops' authority was independent, while the authority and rights of presbyters and deacons, including to baptize, depended on that of the bishop.<sup>109</sup> Jerome, too, he said, valued highly the authority of the bishop upon whose dignity the welfare of the church depended. Jerome believed neither presbyters nor deacons had any right to baptize without the command of the bishop.<sup>110</sup> As long as presbyters and deacons subordinated themselves under the bishop, he concluded, the baptisms they administered were lawful, because they were performed in conformity with the established rules of the church.<sup>111</sup>

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*a Patre sibi datam permittentis, quibus nos successimus, eadem potestate ecclesiam Domini gubernantes, et credentium fidem baptizantes"*

<sup>106</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 18. See also Ignatius, "Letter to the Smyrnaeans," chap. 8.

<sup>107</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 18.

<sup>108</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 18.

<sup>109</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 18. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 17.

<sup>110</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 19. See also Jerome, "Dialogue against the Luciferians," chap. 4.

<sup>111</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 19.

Unlike Laurence, Bingham very carefully interpreted the church fathers. He stated that it was true that the church fathers assumed the authority of bishops to baptize, and that the ancient writings required baptism with the bishops' authority. However, the early church also made room for the commissioning of the authority under special circumstances as was the case in baptism by unordained persons. Following Augustine, Bingham believed that the status of the administrator of baptism did not affect baptism.<sup>112</sup> Here he distinguished the irregularity from the invalidity of such baptism.<sup>113</sup> The lack of a lawful commission and authority caused the administration of baptism to be irregular, even sinful, but this did not make the baptism absolutely invalid.<sup>114</sup>

Having established that the early church recognized the derivative power and authority of presbyters and deacons to baptize and, therefore, having shown that there was no reason to call the baptisms invalid, Bingham moved on to the question of baptism administered by lay-people. He was certain that ordinarily no lay person was allowed to baptize.<sup>115</sup> The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* explicitly said so.<sup>116</sup> However, some church fathers said that exceptions may be made in emergencies. In his letter to Fortunatus, Augustine said that in times of necessity, when a bishop or even a presbyter, deacon or other minister could not be found, and when a person desiring baptism was in

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<sup>112</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 19.

<sup>113</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 20.

<sup>114</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 20.

<sup>115</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 32.

<sup>116</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 32. See also *Constitution of the Holy Apostles*, book 3, chap. 10.



danger of death, a lay person could be allowed to baptize.<sup>117</sup> For Augustine baptism was holy in itself as long as it was given in the name of the Trinity. Augustine also thought that the authority of the Great Commission lay in the sacrament itself. From the Great Commission the authority to baptize went to bishops, to other priests and then finally to lay-people. This was possible because the authority came from a single source.<sup>118</sup>

Against Laurence who used Basil to support his argument that all heretics needed to be rebaptized,<sup>119</sup> Bingham contended that Basil was not as rigid as Laurence presented him. Basil had some flexibility for people to comply with the rules of one's particular church where the person lived. Bingham quoted Basil who said that some of the Asian churches thought that baptism should not be repeated.<sup>120</sup> Bingham said:

Whence I think, it may be inferred, that though St. Basil, in his own opinion, did not approve of the baptism either of schismatics or by laymen, yet he thought it might stand good, if the Church thought fit to receive and confirm it: and this he seems to assert, upon the common principle of the ancient, that a latitude of power was left with the rulers and governors of the Church to ratify such baptisms, when they found it necessary for the benefit and edification of the Church.<sup>121</sup>

A bigger question Bingham dealt with was the validity of baptism performed by an unauthorized lay person, not in an emergency. He realized that not many church

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<sup>117</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 41. Here Bingham talks about Augustine's epistle to Fortunatus, which is preserved in Gratian, *Decretum sive concordantia discordantium Canonum*, in *Corpore Juris Canonici*, dist. 4, chap. 21 (Rome 1582). See "Index Auctorum," in *Works*, vol. 9, 554.

<sup>118</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 41. Bingham cited Augustine as printed in Gratian's *Decretum*, dist. 4, chap. 36.

<sup>119</sup> Basil, "Letter 199, to Amphilochius, Concerning the Canons," in *NPNF*, vol. 8, 240. See also Laurence's argument above.

<sup>120</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 45.

<sup>121</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 45.

fathers discussed this.<sup>122</sup> From the little support that he could find, Bingham concluded that the early church ordinarily distinguished the administrator from the recipient of baptism. Bingham pretty much followed Augustine. Augustine thought that a lay person, baptizing another person without there being an emergency and without authorization from the bishop, was a usurper of the bishop's authority. He firmly held, however, that the baptism was not wholly null and void and of no benefit to the receiver.<sup>123</sup> Augustine, therefore, did not require the baptism to be repeated, since it was still a true baptism:

Though it [the baptism] be usurped without necessity, and given by any men to another, that which is given, cannot be said not to be given, though it may be truly said to be unlawfully given.<sup>124</sup>

Bingham added that Augustine required that such a usurper should be corrected and make a sincere repentance. If the usurper did not repent, he would be punished. But the fact that baptism itself had been given could not be denied.<sup>125</sup> Bingham found in Alexander of Alexandria a view similar to that of Augustine.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 46.

<sup>123</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 47.

<sup>124</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 47; see also footnote c of the same page, where Bingham provides his readers with the quote from Augustine's *Contra Parmenianus*, book 2, chap. 13: "*Et si nulla necessitate usurpetur, et a quolibet cuilibet detur; quod datum fuerit non potest dici non datum, quamvis recte dici possit illicite datum.*"

<sup>125</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 48.

<sup>126</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 47. This is one of the very rare occasions when Bingham does not provide any reference to his source from the church fathers.

Optatus, Bingham said, believed that Christ's commission to his disciples to baptize all nations did not mean that baptism performed by someone other than the apostles was invalid.<sup>127</sup> Quoting Optatus he says that Jesus:

gave commandment in whose name the nations should be baptized: but he did not determine, without exception, by whom they should be baptized. He said not to his disciples, "This shall ye do, and no other shall do it."<sup>128</sup>

Furthermore, Bingham noticed that according to Optatus, it was the Triune God, not the administrator that sanctified the mystery of baptism. The administrator was just a laborer and not lord of the action. Optatus considered the baptisms of schismatics and heretics valid, even though he also realized that they were not in every way legally authorized.<sup>129</sup>

Bingham disagreed with the practice of the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church in allowing women to baptize in an emergency.<sup>130</sup> He thought that allowing lay persons to baptize did not mean that women should be allowed to baptize.<sup>131</sup> He also believed that Tertullian strongly forbade women to baptize because only men were called to the sacerdotal or priestly office, not women. Therefore, when the situation

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<sup>127</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 47.

<sup>128</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 49. See also Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, book 5.

<sup>129</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 48. This is the statement of Optatus with regard to baptism in the name of the Trinity: "... he [Jesus] indicates that whatever has been done in Trinity is well done. This is the reason why we have accepted those who come from you without reservation. When he says, 'He has no need to be washed again,' this statement is general, not particular. ... Hence whenever anyone baptized by you has elected to cross over to us, we have received his arrival without reservation, according to this authority and example." See Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, book 5.

<sup>130</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 50.

<sup>131</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 49.

required baptism, only men might perform it.<sup>132</sup> Jerome, Augustine and Isidore held the same position, forbidding women to baptize whatever the circumstances.<sup>133</sup>

In order to help Laurence understand his position, Bingham explained what he meant by “lay person” in this controversy. He said he distinguished the administrations of baptism by heretics, schismatics and unauthorized lay persons from one another. To explain better, he first asked whether or not a heretic was a Christian. The answer, he said, depended on what one meant by “Christian.” The most obvious answer was that a Christian was not a heathen, but a person who had received a firm and valid baptism.<sup>134</sup> He held that if the person later became a heretic or schismatic, or was excommunicated from the church, the person’s baptism remained inviolable. The person would never need a second baptism if he went back to the church.<sup>135</sup> But, if by “Christian” one meant only a person who was and always remained in the Catholic and orthodox faith, then heretics were not Christians, just as pagans were not Christians. They were enemies of true religion and destitute of the means of salvation.<sup>136</sup>

Bingham applied the same thought to ordained clergy who turned heretic or schismatic.<sup>137</sup> If by a bishop or a priest one meant a person who had received an ordination from the church into a certain office, then even if the person became a heretic

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<sup>132</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 49. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, chap. 17.

<sup>133</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 51.

<sup>134</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 51.

<sup>135</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 83.

<sup>136</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 84.

<sup>137</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 84.

or schismatic, or was excommunicated, he retained his ordination. Consequently, if he repented, came back to the church, and the church accepted him, he did not need a new ordination to return to office.<sup>138</sup> Bingham realized that the ancient church did not always readmit schismatic or heretical bishops, but he was sure that nobody in the early church ever said that if the church allowed them to hold their offices again, they must necessarily be reordained.<sup>139</sup> However, if by “priests” one meant only presbyters who acted by the just and lawful authority of their bishop, in due subordination to the bishop and in the unity of the church according to the Catholic laws and rules, then presbyters who left the communion of the church were no longer priests. They no longer had any lawful authority in the church but were in opposition to the rules of the church.<sup>140</sup>

The early church’s position concerning heretics, schismatics and degraded clergymen was very clear – they all acted in opposition to the lawful authority of the church and therefore, did not have lawful authority to baptize. Nonetheless, the baptisms of these clergy, if properly performed, were still valid.<sup>141</sup> Their baptisms, however, were deficient, because they were administered outside the unity of the Catholic Church and independent of its authority. These baptisms did not minister remission of sins and other invisible graces from the Holy Spirit.<sup>142</sup> If the recipients of such baptisms repented and

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<sup>138</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 84.

<sup>139</sup> Bingham did not give detailed quotations from the church fathers because he had elaborately discussed ordination of clergy in his *Origines*. See, for instance, *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, book 1, chap. 3, sect. 4.

<sup>140</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 85.

<sup>141</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 85.

<sup>142</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 86.

returned to the Catholic Church, these deficiencies in their baptism could be removed through the priestly imposition of hands and invocation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>143</sup>

Bingham thought that the position of the ancient church on heretical or schismatical baptisms was correct and that it should be maintained in the Church of England. He also believed that the ancient church's position could be applied to the present relationship between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. Historically speaking, Bingham said, the Church of England was a "heretical and schismatical Church, under the slavery of Roman yoke."<sup>144</sup> The Church of England, however, freed itself from the yoke by reforming from its previous errors. In so doing it returned to the unity of the Catholic Church. The reformation of the Church of England met the standard for repentance to which the Council of Nicea had called the followers of Novatianus: "...that upon their return to the Church they should continue in the same station and clerical degree they were in before, only receiving a reconciliary imposition of hands, by way of absolution."<sup>145</sup> The Church of England now possessed the full power and license of the Church universal to authorize clergy to officiate. The return of the Church of England to the teaching of the ancient church, after freeing itself from the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, Bingham said, was the return to the unity of the Holy Catholic Church, whose chief principle of unity was the faith expressed in the creed and Scripture. Therefore, even though the Church of England originally received its

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<sup>143</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 86.

<sup>144</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 87.

<sup>145</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 87.

baptism from the heretical Church of Rome, it now had the authority to baptize because it had come back to the unity of the Catholic Church.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> *Works*, vol. 8, 88.

## CONCLUSION

The patristic scholarship of Joseph Bingham serves as a proof that interest in the writing of the church fathers, both scholarly and polemical or disputative, did not fade away at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. This interest remained a significant element in Protestant theology and churchmanship. As clearly seen through Bingham's hard labor, patristic scholarship was one of the most important ways in which Anglican divines defended the doctrine and practices of their church. Writing in a time when religious tensions and attacks from several dissenting groups hit the established church hard, Bingham demonstrated through his patristic studies that the Anglican Church had been faithful to the teachings and practices of the early church and thus maintained the truth in Christian worship, and by extension, that he was himself a faithful Anglican.

Bingham's Oxford education, with its emphasis on critical analysis and skillful rhetoric, prepared him for his future undertaking in patristic studies. The *Origines Ecclesiasticae* was a proof of his excellent scholarly work. Through the topical analysis of the writings of the church fathers, he was able to demonstrate that the Church of England had deep roots in Christian antiquity. This work also served as a verification of his own orthodoxy. Early in his Oxford career he was accused of being a Trinitarian heretic by the university. By writing such a massive historical work in support of the teaching of his church, he showed that he was a true son of the church.



After he was dismissed from Oxford, Bingham became rector of Headbourn-Worthy and later also of Havant, both places within the diocese of Winchester. As a clergyman, he demonstrated adherence to the High Church party, even though he could be classified as a “moderate” sort of High Churchman. He supported the divine authority of episcopacy, not by writing and campaigning vigorously for it, but by modestly using historical studies in which he traced the development of the office of bishop from its beginning in the apostolic era through the period of the early church. Bingham enjoyed a close relationship with Jonathan Trelawney, the bishop of Winchester, during the time he wrote his *Origines*. Trelawney was a High Churchman, and Bingham’s closeness to, and support for Trelawney indicated his loyalty to the High Church party.

The *Origines Ecclesiasticae* was a product of its time. It put an objectivizing historical scholarship in the service of a particular churchly perspective. Bingham believed that the doctrine and practice of the Anglican Church in his time were firmly based on the teaching of the church fathers. The issues he addressed and his manner of treating them in his ten-volume work bore out this fact and conviction. His discussion on the sacrament of baptism was perhaps the best example of how he used history as a vehicle to defend the position of his church. He wrote from a particular churchly perspective and with a clear purpose in mind: to show his support of the practice and rites of the Anglican Church as expressed in the 1662 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. In order to do so, he maintained a tone of objectivity throughout the volumes of the *Origines*. He avoided polemics as much as he could and only engaged in overt debate with his contemporaries when he thought they had

seriously misinterpreted or misrepresented the church fathers in order to support their own views. In so doing, he was able to demonstrate that the Puritans' objections to the baptismal rituals practiced in the Church of England and their contention that these rituals were no more than Roman Catholic novelties simply were not true. However, in his effort to support the Church of England, Bingham sometimes read his own theological agenda into the writing of the fathers. In order to provide a voice of authority for the Anglican practice, he was willing to tweak the views of the church fathers in such a way that they sounded as if their practice was not different from that of the Church of England. In other cases he pressed his arguments beyond what the text could bear. This was mostly seen in his discussion of the modes of baptism and the practice of infant baptism in the early church.

Bingham's decision to use English rather than Latin was a strategic attempt to provide his readers with a scholarly presentation of the historical practice and worship of the early church in language that literate laity could read and understand. His method of non-chronological, thematic presentation based on detailed analysis of early church practice was ingenious and practical. It was ingenious because this method did not burden his readers with a chronologically arranged presentation and survey of the history in which theological points could only be made through scattered arguments. It was practical because through this method he was able to present his perspective on early church practice in a way that would enable any reader to find the parallel between the practice of the early church and that of the Church of England presented in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Bingham did this following a

moderate High Church model. The method was designed to help the reader recognize that the Church of England faithfully stood in a very old Christian tradition.

In the *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, Bingham typically used patristic material as source of authority, with the clear understanding that the teaching and practice of the early church were normative for the church in all times. In keeping with this purpose, as a critical historian, he worked with the sources and carefully explained them. He based his writing solely on primary sources, consistently presenting the original writings of the Fathers. He wrote in English, but he also meticulously provided his readers with the quotations from his sources in the original languages in the footnotes. His method of using and treating the original sources not only demonstrated the depth of his knowledge of them but also his interest in arguing for his own theological position, rooted, as he saw it, in the thoughts of the early church. This method provided Bingham a voice of authority, and rendered oppositions to his views more difficult.

Even with the objective tone Bingham maintained in the *Origines*, one can not deny that he had a certain audience in mind. This was true, among other places, when he described the practice of baptism in the early church. Tension between the Anglican Church and the Puritans with regard to baptism, especially making the sign of the cross, had been going on for over a century by the time Bingham published his first volume of the *Origines*. The Puritans kept charging that the Church of England was too close to the Roman Catholic practice. By simply showing that the early church actually made the sign of the cross on the forehead in baptism, Bingham quietly proved that the charge was not true. Early eighteenth-century England also

witnessed the growth and development of the Baptists with their denial of infant baptism. Authors, both for and against infant baptism, fought each other. Bingham did not choose to join this polemical battle. But his discussion of the patristic practice of infant baptism established the fact that infant baptism was never a problem in the early church.

Bingham used patristic material as sources of authority when he had to argue with his contemporaries on other issues concerning baptism. He often found that those with whom he disagreed had not read the church fathers sufficiently or had interpreted them incorrectly. The question of the formula for baptism, for instance, brought him to point out that the Trinitarian formula was the only acceptable one. Baptism only in the name of one person of the Trinity was a departure from ancient tradition and unacceptable. Disagreements between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church at times surfaced in the *Origines*. When this happened, Bingham used the authority of the Fathers to show where the Roman Catholic Church was mistaken. A good example was the Roman Catholic practice of baptizing bells.

Insistence of the importance of baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit as the only acceptable formula becomes his best vehicle in restoring his name. Being charged as a trinitarian heretic early in his career at Oxford University must have left a deep mark in his churchly and scholarly activities. For the rest of his life Bingham never wrote any work on the doctrine of the Trinity. Nor did he ever attempt to publicly restore his name. His *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, particularly the section on the baptismal practice of the early church, served his purpose well. By showing that he fully supported the practice of the Anglican Church he quietly

demonstrated that he was not a heretic. More importantly, by defending the trinitarian formula as the only one formula for baptism he showed that he was one with the Church of England in his trinitarian belief.

Patristic material as a source of authority was very important in Bingham's controversy with Roger Laurence regarding lay baptism. Laurence argued that the early church rejected all baptisms by heretics and schismatics, and that thus, the church fathers required all who were not baptized by episcopally ordained bishops to be rebaptized. In contrast, Bingham argued and showed that Laurence misrepresented the church fathers. Bingham maintained that a distinction must be made between invalid and irregular baptism. The church fathers did not require rebaptism of those irregularly baptized by non-ordained persons. They required only the laying-on of hands of the bishop. Laurence's argument that baptism performed by clergy who were not episcopally ordained was invalid was politically motivated. He opposed the Hanoverian succession to the British monarchy. Laurence thought that the baptism of George I was invalid, because it was performed by a non-episcopally ordained clergyman. Laurence thought that George I should not be crowned king of England. Bingham's reply to Laurence was not politically motivated. He merely demonstrated, based on the authority of the church fathers, that Laurence inaccurately represented the Fathers. In his *Scholastical History*, Bingham carefully reacted to Laurence's statements by showing the inaccuracy of Laurence's reading of the Fathers.

Bingham followed a typically seventeenth-century interpretive pattern in interacting with the church fathers. When the fathers did not give a straightforward statement that could be used as source of information, Bingham used the patristic

material as a basis for drawing theological conclusions. This was seen most clearly when he wanted to prove that the Apostolic Fathers believed in infant baptism. He argued that since they believed in original sin and, in their opinion baptism washed away original sin, he concluded that the fathers must have believed in infant baptism as well. Bingham also juxtaposed the patristic materials in his own theological argumentation when he discovered that one father disagreed with another or that a particular father could not be used to support the Church of England. Tertullian, for example, held that delaying baptism for healthy infants was acceptable. Bingham used the testimonies of other fathers to show that Tertullian's position was an exception to the general rule followed in the early church. Bingham was concerned to show that the majority of the church fathers in this matter supported the position of the Church of England expressed in the *Book of Common Prayer*. This was also Bingham's personal view.

Through the publication of the *Origines*, Bingham was able to prove that he was a loyal defender of the Church of England. By way of historical study of the rites and practices of the early church, he also rather quietly and unobtrusively demonstrated that he was a moderate High Churchman. As the *Origines* gained increasing acceptance from the high-ranking Anglican clergy, his reputation as an orthodox defender of the church, too, became more established. He was also ecclesiastically rehabilitated after his regrettable past at Oxford. Thus, the *Origines* affirmed his orthodoxy and, at the same time, offered one of the most exhaustive presentations of patristic materials in his time.

## **Appendix 1**

Transcription of University College Archive:

*Registrum* vol. I. 1509-1722.

College Register UC: GB3/A1/1, page 117.

Record of Bingham's Examination for His B.A. Degree  
University College, Oxford, 1689

## **Appendix 1**

Transcription of University College Archive:

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Record of Bingham's Examination for His B.A. Degree  
University College, Oxford, 1689



1689

## Candidatorum Nomina

Dio 28no Junij pro examino Candidatorum designato, coram sorijs in communi camera questioni se subjecene.

Prenobilis Jusenis Albemarleus Bertie Honoratissimi de Linsey Comiis Supremi Angliae Camararij & filius quintus cui tam in gratiam praestantis et explorati sui ingenij, quam Illustrium Natalium, ulterior solennis disquisitio a sorijs Examinatoribus est remissa.

Johannes Siser Am mr. cui etiam indultum sine solenni examine decedere, utpote qui priori examine pro sodalitie subeundo de suo in bonis literis profectu exploratores certiones fecerit.

Quatuor rero sequentes tam in transferendis a lingua vernacula alienis quam in conficiendis de proposito themate proprijs compositionibus necnon in alijs Philologicis et Philosophicis aequum strictumque examen subiere,

Hisuere

Richardus Starrer	}	
Josephus Bingham	}	
Johannes Wigglesworth	}	Astm. Baccal Smi. Anni (unclear)
Christopher Granderge	}	

## **Appendix 2**

Transcription of University College Archive:  
*Registrum*, vol. I. 1509-1722  
College Register UC: GB3/A1/1, pages 118, 120.

Record of Bingham's Nomination to be a Tutor of  
University College, Oxford, 1689

page 118.

Julij jmo 1689

Electio novi sorij Magna Aulae Universits: Oxon in Locum et exhibitionem Dni Hon:  
Percy vacantome morte Mri. Hinckliffe.

Left margin:

Electio Josephi Bingham A. B. in Locum et exhibitm Dni. Hon: percy.

Main text:

Ego Johannes Hudson Am Mr & Collii Mage Aulae Unive. Oxon Socius nomine et  
eligo Josephum Bingham in At Cacallm in perpetuum sorium diict colij in locum et  
exhibitionem Dni Hon: Percij.

Ego Tho: Bennet Am Mr et Collii Magd Aule Unive Oxon Socius nomine et eligo  
Josephum Bingham in det: Bacca in expotunni socium dicti Collij in Locum et  
Exhibitionem Dni Hon: Percij.

Ego Tho: Bateman Am Mr et Collii Magd Aule Unive Oxon Socius nomine et eligo  
Josephum Bingham in det: Bacca in expotunni socium dicti Collij in Locum et  
Exhibitionem Dni Hon: Percij.

Ego Johannes Naylor Am Mr et Collii Magd Aule Unive Oxon Socius nomine et  
eligo Josephum Bingham in det: Bacca in expotunni socium dicti Collij in Locum et  
Exhibitionem Dni Hon: Percij.

Ego Guil. Smith Am Mr et Collii Magd Aule Unive Oxon Socius nomine et eligo  
Josephum Bingham in det: Bacca in expotunni socium dicti Collij in Locum et  
Exhibitionem Dni Hon: Percij.

Ego Johannes Giles Collij M.A. Un. Socius nomine et eligo Jos: Bingham A.B. in  
Locum e fundatione Dni Hon: Percij.

Ego Edwardus haurer Mr Collij Mage Aule Unive nomine et eligo Jos: Bingham in  
Act: Baccalmi in expectuum socium dicti Collij in Locum et exhibitionem Dni  
Honnici Percij unanimi omenium fulsumgantium consensu legitime electum  
pronuncio.

Ego Pfitzherb: Adams approbo Edv: Pococke . Ego Gilb: Ironcide Vicecon: Oxon  
approbo hon electionem

Ego Tho: Bayloy S.T.D. approbo  
(two names unreadable)

Jo: Meare

Joh: Hammonds

Jo: Hall

W. Jane

Guil Levett

Ego Johanes Wallis approbo

Timo: Halton

Tho: Burnett

Page 120.

Left margin note:

Admissio Honorabilis Albemarleii Bertie Johannes Sifer A. Mri. & Josephi Bingham A.Bm.

Main text:

Dec 23o 1689. Honorabilis Albemarleus Bertie coram tota comitiva adj jura et privilegia Socij solenniter admissus est: eodem tempore Mr Johannes Sifer et Josephus Bingham A.B. adj predicta jura et privilegia soleniter sunt admissi.

### **Appendix 3**

**Oxford University Archives**

**Collection of Western Manuscript: O.U.A. WP γ 28/8, folio 32 r.**

**Printed Proclamation against Statement from Bingham's Sermon,  
November, 1695**



In Conventu D. Vice-Cancellarii & Præfectorum  
Collegiorum & Aularum Universitatis Oxon.  
Die Vicefimo quinto Novembris. A. D. 1695.

CUM in Concione nuper habitâ coram Universitate  
Oxon. in Templo S. Petri in Oriente, ad Festum  
S.S. Simonis & Judæ proxime elapsum, hæc Verba, inter  
alia, publice prolata & asserta fuerunt. viz. [There are  
Three Infinite distinct Minds and Substances in the Tri-  
nity.] Item [That the Three Persons in the Trinity  
are Three Distinct Infinite Minds or Spirits, and Three  
Individual Substances.] Quæ verba multam justam offen-  
sionis Causam & Scandalum dedere:

Dominus Vice-Cancellarius & Præfecti Collegiorum &  
Aularum, in generali suo Conventu jam congregati,  
Judicant, Declarant, & Decernunt, prædicta Verba esse  
*Falsa, Impia, & Hæretica*; Diffona & Contraria Doctri-  
næ Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, & speciatim Doctrinæ Ecclesiæ  
Anglicanæ, publice receptæ.

Quapropter præcipiunt & firmiter injungunt Omni-  
bus & Singulis, eorum fidei & curæ commissis, ne tale  
aliquod Dogma, in Concionibus, auralibus, in posterum  
proferant.

Per Decreto Domini Vice-Cancellarii & Præfectorum

Ben. Cooper Not. publicus  
& Registrarius Universitatis Oxon.

#### **Appendix 4**

Oxford University Archives  
Collection of Western Manuscript: O.U.A. NEP/SUB/BC, page 12 (rev).

Manuscript of Proclamation against Statement from Bingham's Sermon,  
November, 1695

In Conventu D: Vicecancellarij et Praefectorum Collegiorum et Aularum  
Universitatis Oxon Die Vicesimo quinto Novembris An: Dni 1695

Cum in Concione nuper habitâ coram Universitate Oxon in Templô S: Petri in Oriente, ad Festum S: Simonis et Judæ proxime elapsum, hæc Verba, inter alia, publicè prolata et asserta fuerunt. viz: [There are Three Infinite distinct Minds and Substances in the Trinity] Item [That the Three Persons in the Trinity are Three distinct Infinite Minds or Spirits and Three Individual Substances] Quæ Verba multis justam Offensionis Causam et Scandalum ededere:

Dominus Vicecancellarius et Praefecti Collegiorum et Aularum, in generali suo Conventu jam Congregati, Judicant, Declarant et Decernunt, prædicta Verba esse Falsa, Impia et Hæretica; Dissona et Contraria Doctrinæ Ecclesiæ Catholice, et specialim Doctrinæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, publicè receptæ.

Quapropter præcipiunt et firmiter injungunt omnibus et singulis eorum - fidei et curæ commissis, ne tale aliquod Dogma in Conciombus, aut aliis in posterum proferant

Ex Decreto Dni Vicecancellarij et Praefectorum

Ben: Cooper Not publicus et Registrarius  
Universitatis Oxon.

At a Meeting of the Vice-Chancellor and the Heads of Colleges  
and Halls of the University of Oxford on the 25<sup>th</sup> Day of November  
in the year of our Lord 1695

Whereas in a Sermon lately Preached before the University of Oxford in the Church of S<sup>t</sup>. Peter in the East on the Feast of S<sup>s</sup>. Simon and Jude last past - these Words, amongst others, were delivered and asserted viz [There are Three Infinite distinct Minds and Substances in the Trinity] Item [That the Three Persons in the Trinity are Three distinct Infinite Minds or Spirits and Three Individual Substances] Which gave just cause of Offence and Scandal to many Persons.

The Vicechancellor and Heads of Colleges and Halls at their generall Meeting this Day assembled, do judge and declare the said Words to be False, Impious and Hæreticall, contrary to the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and particularly to the received Doctrine of the Church of England

And do therefore strictly forbid all manner of Persons under their Care and Charge, to Preach or publish any Such Doctrine for the future.

By order of M<sup>r</sup> Vicechancellor & the Heads of Houses

Ben: Cooper Notarie publick and  
Registrar of the University of Oxon



## **Appendix 5**

**Hampshire Record Office Archives, Winchester.  
Shelf Mark: 50 M89/14**

*Signed & sealed enclosed*  
*in the presence of*

*James Gordon*

*D. Carter*

*Robert Moulton*

*27-1-1889*  
*James Gordon*  
*D. Carter*  
*Robert Moulton*



**Appendix 6**

**Hampshire Record Office Archives, Winchester.  
Shelf Mark: 21m65/E4/4/14.**

**Ecclesiastical Letter from Jonathan Trelawney, Bishop of  
Winchester  
to Appoint Joseph Bingham as Rector of Havant**





## **Appendix 7**

### **Propositions**

## Propositions

### Propositions Related to Dissertation

1. Even though Bingham strives to maintain the tone of objectivity throughout his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, the work is a clear demonstration of his wholehearted support of the teaching and practice of the Church of England against the criticisms of the dissenting groups.
2. In the *Origines Ecclesiasticae* Bingham often approaches certain patristic text with a theological idea in mind. He would then make analytical argumentation of the text to support his theological idea. In his discussion of baptism the method of theologizing the patristic text is mostly seen in the discussion on infant baptism, since he tries to find earliest support for the practice of infant baptism in the Early Church.
3. Bingham's lengthy discussion on the Trinitarian formula of baptism as the only accepted formula in the Early Church serves twofold purposes: as a defense of the orthodoxy of the Anglican Church and as a demonstration of his own orthodoxy, given his tainted past involving the Trinitarian controversy at Oxford.
4. The distinction that Bingham made between invalid baptism and unauthorized baptism, together with his solid understanding of the church fathers, enables him to place the issue of lay-baptism in the right perspective, by not requiring rebaptism, against the position of his opponent, Roger Laurence.
5. The vagueness of Oxford's charge against Bingham's sermon on the Trinity indicates that he was a victim of a larger, more politically-driven controversy between Robert South of Oxford and William Sherlock. Bingham's sermon was charged as heretical since it endeavored to defend Sherlock's definition of "Person" as "Infinite Mind or Spirit."

### Propositions from Graduate Work

6. Clement of Rome's view of the church as God's elect has a deep root in his understanding of the calling of Abraham.
7. Augustine's treatise on the *Immortality of the Soul*, even though written early in his life right after his conversion, has shown indication of his Christian faith, and not just a neo-Platonic treatise.
8. Calvin's Reformation in Geneva covered both reformation of doctrine and Christian conduct. On matters concerning marriage, it was relatively easier for



him to lay out doctrinal teaching about Christian marriage than changing the minds of the people on how they should show their Christian faith through their marriage.

9. Upon closer look, Francis Turretin's doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures has a close similarity with article three of the Belgic Confession, demonstrating that during the time of Reformed Orthodoxy the doctrine was widely accepted by the Protestant Scholastics.
10. When understood within his own theological system, Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Trinity should be considered the climax of his theology, and not just as an appendix.

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