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Two Early Propagandists for Believer's Baptism

THE manuscript¹ transcribed in full below affords an interesting early example of a Parliamentarian officer arguing for Believer's Baptism during the summer before the publication of the London *Confession* of 1644, and some months before the first moves, made during the spring of 1645, in the formation of the New Model Army. Whilst W. T. Whitley drew attention in his *History*² to the propaganda work of Baptists in the New Model he seems to have been unaware of this earlier example.

Unfortunately it has not proved possible to set this document and the personalities involved in a full historical context. It seems that William Johnson,⁴ a minister of Ipstones, Staffordshire, complained of the views preached in the village by Captain John Garland⁵ to the Parliamentarian County Committee meeting in Stafford. This manuscript lists Johnson's allegations and Garland's replies together with the similar, if rather more hesitant, affirmations and denials of James Cokayne,⁶ who had apparently supported Garland. The statements were, it seems, all recorded on 3 September 1644.

Garland maintained that his public preaching at Ipstones had concentrated on the subject of Baptism alone but that, in private, he had challenged Johnson to prove the immortality of the soul from Scripture. Furthermore he had, still in private, denied the lawfulness of ministerial calling by bishops and had affirmed that the only holy day ordained in Scripture was the Saturday-Sabbath. He had defended his own lay preaching by an appeal to I Peter 4.10.

What the consequences of this complaint by Johnson and the confessions by Garland and Cokayne were cannot, in the light of the available evidence, be certainly known although it seems likely that both men were imprisoned. In the records of the County Committee⁷ there are references to 'Cockin' and to 'Captain Garland'. In the first case Mr. Cockin was to be released to visit his sick child 'for the space of three weeks giving good security for his return . . . and that in the same tyme he shall not doe any ill office in seducing any of his erroneous opynions.' Then, on 9 December, an entry read: 'It is ordered that Capt. Garland being committed to the custody of Mr Richard Lee shall not depart from him or be released from his imprisonment till such time as he hath payd his Fees and satisfied for his dyet.'

It seems reasonably likely that 'Mr Cockin' was James Cokayne and that both he and Garland were imprisoned for their 'erronious opynions'.

The document as a whole, however, is not merely interesting as an early example of the extra-curricular activities of Army officers holding Baptist views: it also exemplifies once more the radical nature of their appeal to Scripture and something of the range of doctrinal questioning with which they found themselves involved. Later links between Garland and Cokayne and the Baptists have not been found and, while this may of course be due to the paucity of the surviving records, it may equally stem from the fact that this incident marked only one stage in the evolution of their religious convictions.

BODLEY TANNER MS.61

(Folio 110r)

3. Sept.1644 Anab. Preachers articles & answers.

The Answere of Mr John Garland to the Articles objected against him concerning seuerall position pretended to be preached by him at Ipstones.

1. To the first Article he confesseth he deliuered that beleeuers must be baptised. And that there is no warrant in scripture for baptising any but beleeuers.
2. That baptising of Infants because it can not be prooued by scripture is therefore Antechristian.
3. He denieth that he deliuered any such thing in publique as in that Article is expressed: but confesseth that in reasoning with Mr Johnson prooued by Scripture the separation of the soule from the body and the immortality of the soule, and also saith that this can not be prooued by Scripture as he conceyueth. For the Scripture saith expresly that the soule & whatsoever goeth to the compleating of the whole man dyeth.
4. He denyeth the 4th Article but saith that the calling of our Ministers by Bishops as they were formerly called was Antechristian & vnlawfull.
5. He denyeth the 5th Article but saith that it can not be prooued that any command was giuen for the solemnizing of any day (in scripture) but the seauenth day from the Creation.

Being asked who gaue him leaue to preach

at Ipstones he answereth

The scripture which alloweth euery man to preach that hath ability, & for the prooffe thereof

(Folio 110v.)

instanced that in I Peter the 4th at the 10th Euery man as he hath receyued so let him minister &c.

At Ipstones in publique I preached as here is set downe concerning the two first Articles For the last three Articles I did not deliuer them in publique

That which I spake concerning them was in way of conference wth Mr Johnson

(Folio 111r.)

1. I can not yet find Englands baptisme of Infants to be done by vertue of any command from Christ in the gospell. But that such repent & beleue the gospell are to be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, And rebaptisation I find not in the Gospell.
2. This answered in the former.
3. I am in suspence in doctrine of Soules mortality many particulars in this I haue not publicly taught.
4. I find not the calling of a Clergie (as it is in England proceeding from Prelates) allowed of by Christ in the Gospell.
5. I am of the perswasion with those later sort spoken of Rom: 14.5 yet haue hitherto obserued the first day in exercises for edification.

James Cokayne.

(Folio 111v.)

3. Sept. 1644

The examination of me William Johnson of Ipstones, Minister, concerning Articles to me tendred by the Councill of warre at Stafford about Captain Garland, these are the Tenents which he mayntayned in my presence.

1. That baptisme is Antichristian, & without baptisme of no force.
2. That the baptising of Infants till they be able to giue testimonie of their faith is allso Antichristian.

3. That there is no separation of the soule from the body at the day of death, but they both lye in the graue till the resurrection.
4. That the calling of our Clergie is altogether unlawfull and Antichristian.
5. That we may keepe any day for the Sabbath as well as the day we keepe.

By me William Johnson Mnr.
giuen upon oath.

NOTES

1. Bodley MS, Tanner 61 Folios 110, 111. The original spelling has been retained although certain conventional contractions have been expanded.
2. Thomason's copy of the *Confession* was dated 16 October.
3. W. T. Whitley, *History of British Baptists*, London 1932 Edn., 74f.
4. Johnson makes no appearance in either *Walker Revised* or *Calamy Revised*.
5. A Captain John Garland served in the New Model Army with Okey's Dragoons until 1649. C. Firth and G. Davies, *The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army*, Oxford 1940, p.p.296-6.
6. G. K. Fortescue, *Catalogue of the Thomason Tracts* (London 1908) suggests that J. C., the author of *England's troubles anatomizes*, was James Cocksque.
7. D. H. Pennington and I. R. Roots, *The Committee at Stafford* 1643-5, Manchester 1957, pp.205, 222.

B. R. WHITE.

An 1820 Letter on Election

THE LETTER which follows has interest from more than one point of view. The original is now in the possession of Clipston Baptist Church.

It is from the pen of the Rev. John Mack (1788-1831), minister in Clipston from 1814 until his death at the early age of 42. Mack had there succeeded Webster Morris, who printed the earliest of the *Periodical Accounts* of the B.M.S. Morris had himself succeeded Thomas Skinner, from whom William Carey had his copy of the elder Robert Hall's *Help to Zion's Travellers*.

Mack was born in Glasgow and began life as a weaver. He was always of bookish inclinations, but followed an elder brother