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A COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON ECCLESIOLOGY  
IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

by

ROLF E. LARSEN

A THESIS

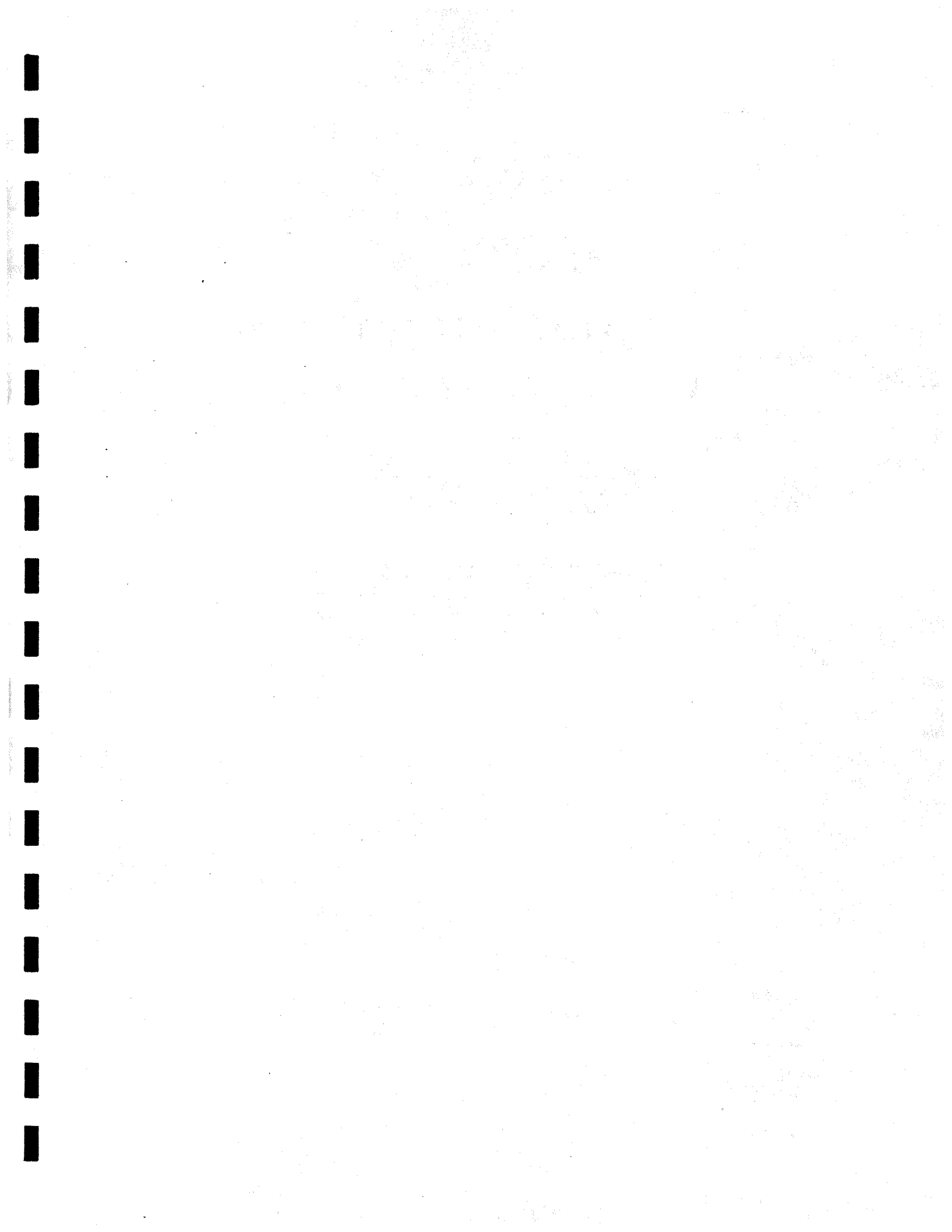
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## PREFACE

In order to retain the original flavor of the quotations, spellings and letter styles have been retained in their sixteenth century usage. Certain inconsistencies may be noticed in the spelling of words. These are not typing errors brought in through the production of this present thesis, but are the original ways in which the quotations were printed. Sometimes the printers were very understocked in their supply of type, thus having to use substitute letters. Though it makes the reading slightly more difficult, the added value of a more direct picture of the times makes it worth the extra effort.

CONTENTS

A COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON ECCLESIOLOGY  
IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
A. Subject Stated and Defined	
B. Subject Delimited	
C. Plan of Procedure	
D. English Reform and Puritan Challenge	
I. THE ANGLICAN INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIOLOGY . . . . .	7
A. Basic Considerations . . . . .	8
1. The identification of main characters	
a) Archbishop Matthew Parker	
b) John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury	
c) John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury	
d) Richard Hooker, parish priest	
2. The Anglican view regarding the Holy Scriptures	
B. The Matters of Ecclesiology . . . . .	13
1. The nature of the church	
a) Its membership	
b) The concept of the local and universal church	
2. Its rites and ceremonies	
3. The government of the church: polity	
a) Anglican determinants in establishing polity	
(1) The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity	
{ a) Facts about this treatise	
{ b) Hooker's basis for his polity	
(2) Whitgift agrees with Hooker	
b) The concept of the ministry	
(1) The three-fold classification of ministers	
(2) Episcopacy	
c) The political relationship between church and state	
C. Summary of Anglican Ecclesiology . . . . .	34
II. THE PRESBYTERIAN INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIOLOGY . . . . .	36
A. Basic Considerations . . . . .	37

- 1. Identification of Cartwright and Puritan theological sources . . . . . 37
- 2. The Puritan view on the authority of the Holy Scriptures
- B. Matters of Ecclesiology . . . . . 43
  - 1. The nature of the church
  - 2. Its rites and ceremonies
  - 3. The government of the church: polity
    - a) Puritan determinants in establishing polity
    - b) The description of Puritan Presbyterian polity
      - (1) The ministry
        - (a) Parity
        - (b) Election
        - (c) Ordination
      - (2) The consistory
    - c) The relationship between church and state
- C. Summary of Presbyterian Ecclesiology . . . . . 67

- III. THE SEPARATING CONGREGATIONALIST INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIOLOGY . . . . . 70
- A. Basic Considerations . . . . . 71
  - 1. The identification of main sources
    - a) Robert Browne
    - b) Other sources
  - 2. The Separatist view on the authority and use of Holy Scripture
- B. Matters of Ecclesiology . . . . . 74
  - 1. The nature of the church
  - 2. Rites and ceremonies
  - 3. The government of the church
    - a) Separatist determinants in establishing polity
    - b) Description of Separatist polity
      - (1) The congregation
        - (a) Its power
        - (b) The relationship with other congregations
      - (2) The Congregational ministry
        - (a) The ministry described
        - (b) The ministry chosen
        - (c) The ministry ordained
      - (3) Church officers
        - (a) Elders
        - (b) Deacons and relievers
    - c) The political relationship between church and state: none
  - C. Summary of Separating Congregationalist Ecclesiology . . . . . 97
- IV. A COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF THE UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE ANGLICAN, PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS OF ECCLESIOLOGY . . . . . 100
  - A. Views Concerning the Nature of the Church . . . . . 101

- 1. Concepts of the visible and mystical church
- 2. Exclusiveness and inclusiveness
- 3. Spatial and organizational aspects
- 4. Contrast by congruencies
- B. Views Concerning the Government of the Church . . . 105
  - 1. Determinants for establishing polity: revelation and reason
    - a) Opposing views: revelation vs. reason
      - (1) Anglican: the reasoned polity
      - (2) Non-conformist: the revealed polity
    - b) Combination of views: revelation and reason
  - 2. Views on various aspects of church polity
    - a) Ecclesiastical authority
      - (1) Its source
      - (2) Its enforcement
    - b) The ministry: spiritual affairs
      - (1) Its nature and function
        - (a) Anglican orders
        - (b) Puritan parity
        - (c) Congregational gifts and callings
      - (2) Examinations
      - (3) Ordination
    - c) The diaconry: practical affairs
    - d) Units of group authority
- C. Summary and Conclusions . . . . . 120
- APPENDIX . . . . . 122
- BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 128

INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

### A. Subject Stated and Defined

The varying concepts of ecclesiology that have existed in the history of the Christian church till the present hour have caused the disciples of Jesus to be separated into groups having little or no fellowship with one another. The existence of these varying concepts is thus a serious matter. It is a situation that demands resolution, one that only clear vision and understanding can bring.

Three basic questions arise as one seeks to find an answer regarding an accurate system of ecclesiology. First, is there in the Holy Scriptures a pattern set down for a concept of the nature and government of the church which Christians of all ages and circumstances must follow? Second, if no such pattern exists, then upon what basis does the church determine the type of polity to be employed in any given time and place? Third, if a pattern can be found which enlightened and obedient Christians are to copy, what is the description of that pattern?

### B. Subject Delimited

In seeking the answers to these questions, the events, writings, and controversies of Elizabethan England will be the ground of research and experimentation. This particular

era of church history seems to best lend itself to the topic at hand for it had a half-century of debate among the three major systems of ecclesiastical interpretation. By analyzing and comparing the arguments that traversed among the parties, it will be possible to crystallize one's vision on the key issues involved in the problem.

Thus, rather than searching in the writings and arguments produced during the two millenia of the church's existence, the work will be concentrated in the era of Queen Elizabeth's reign in England (1558-1603). Nor will all the writings of this period be perused. Rather, the works of the most outstanding and representative men will hold the center of the discussion, since these men were recognized as the most able exponents of their respective parties.

#### C. Plan of Procedure

The first step in solving the problem at hand will be to analyze the views and sustaining arguments of the Church of England as her scholars presented her case. The second step will contain an analysis of the Presbyterian Puritan platform which basically stressed that the Church of England was in need of a further reformation than it had experienced in its departure from the authority and practices of Rome. After devoting a chapter to each of the two foregoing steps, a further chapter will deal with the party variously called "Nonconformists", "Separatists", and "Congregationalists", analyzing their platform in relation to the

Anglican and Presbyterian parties. Within the Congregationalist party there were some who did not wish to separate completely from the Church of England. Thus, for the sake of clarity, the main distinction between the separating and the non-separating Congregationalists will be briefly discussed. Due to the limited space of this paper, only the unique and important emphases of the different parties can be studied, though each has many other noteworthy aspects.

The fourth and final chapter will compare the unique features of each party, evaluating the variant viewpoints in the light of their faithfulness to God's revelation, and of their practicality for their and any other generation. After summarizing, comparing and evaluating the main arguments, certain conclusions will be drawn concerning: (1) the position of the Scriptures as a basis for determining the view of ecclesiology that should be adopted in any given century, and (2) the place of reason and pragmatism as factors in such a determination. Finally, conclusions will be made concerning valuable guidelines for determining a system of ecclesiology fit for this century.

#### D. English Reform and Puritan Challenge

The fires of the reformation, so powerfully lit by the flame in Martin Luther's hand, spread over the continent of Europe to burn the ropes of control held so tenaciously by the Church of Rome. Eventually the fire burned away the connection between Rome and England during the reign of Henry

the Eighth. The seeds of the Anglican Church then began formation. When Edward the Sixth followed as King of England, there was further crystallization of this new church, with his authorized formation of a new prayer book. However, when Mary Tudor took control of the country, the newly formed Anglican Church was repealed and the old ties with Rome were re-established. Under Mary, those who would not be faithful to the pope suffered great persecution, with many exiles fleeing to the continent for protection. Finally, her bloody reign ended in 1558 and Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne of England. The hearts of the reformers were kindled with high hopes of a full reformation establishment in their country since it was well known that Elizabeth was a Protestant. The Elizabethan Settlement firmly established a new church in England.

Not all reformers, however, were pleased with the new settlement of religion. It became evident that there was a growing body of scholarly and godly churchmen who thought of the Church of England as only half reformed, due to its retention of much "popery". Because of their desire to further "purify" the Church of England from within, this party became known as the Puritans. As they grew in size and power, they became a challenge and threat to the peaceable establishment of the nation. Because of this challenge, the scholars who sided with the establishment were forced to defend in writing and theory the position of the Queen and the bishops. As a result, certain literary duels came into existence, and lengthy works on the philosophical basis of the Elizabethan

Settlement were written. Letters, sermons, and many other compositions exist from that era which crystallize the issues in ecclesiology.

The Separating Puritans played an impressive role in the total picture as well. This party defended a system of ecclesiology which in their mind totally eliminated the possibility of purifying the English Church. According to them the Elizabethan establishment of religion could in no way be considered a church in their understanding of the biblical doctrine. These Separatists, under the leadership of Robert Browne and others, contributed to the voluminous body of literature of that era concerning the nature and government of the church of Jesus Christ.

Thus the richness of the sources is evident for the study at hand.

CHAPTER I  
THE ANGLICAN INTERPRETATION  
OF ECCLESIOLOGY

## I. THE ANGLICAN INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIOLOGY

### A. Basic Considerations

Before launching into the study of the Anglican view on the nature and government of the church, it is profitable to look briefly at the main characters of the struggle and to see what their attitude is regarding the authority of God's revelation, the Bible.

#### 1. The Identification of Main Characters

##### a) Archbishop Matthew Parker

When Queen Elizabeth first realized the diversity of practice in rites and ceremonies in the churches of the realm, she wrote to Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, chiding him and the other bishops for this condition and for their lack of power in obtaining uniformity.<sup>1</sup> She wanted an end to non-conformity. Directly, Archbishop Parker set out to draw up a book of articles prescribing uniformity in apparel and other aspects. When this book was distributed it became known as Parker's Advertisements. Archbishop Parker was the right-hand man of the Queen in her actions to achieve

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<sup>1</sup>A. F. Scott Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism: 1535-1603 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1925), p. 17.

uniformity in the church. For sixteen years he was one of the star defenders of the Elizabethan establishment.

b) John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury

It was not without a fight and much disputation that Queen Elizabeth pulled her country away from Rome. The most outstanding apologist of the Church of England defending its position against Rome was the Bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel. He was chosen by the Queen to pen the now famous work, An Apology of the Church of England, written in 1564. The longer title is An Apology or Answer in Defence of the Church of England, with a Brief and Plain Declaration of the True Religion Professed and Used in the Same. The preface to the work was produced by Matthew Parker. In the nineteenth century, one Mandell Creighton wrote of Jewel's Apology, "...the first methodical statement of the position of the Church of England against the Church of Rome, and...the groundwork of all subsequent controversy."<sup>1</sup>

Jewel served as the Bishop of Salisbury from 1560 until the end of his days.<sup>2</sup>

c) John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury

Another outstanding figure in the Elizabethan Anglican scene was John Whitgift. He rose to the challenge of the

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<sup>1</sup>John Jewel, An Apology of the Church of England, ed. J. E. Booty, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), p. xliii.

<sup>2</sup>W. M. Southgate, John Jewel and the Problem of Doctrinal Authority (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 65.



Puritan party writing many volumes in the defense of the church. He is most famous for his literary duel with the Puritan leader, Thomas Cartwright, in answering the Puritan Admonition to the Parliament.<sup>1</sup> The original duel is compiled in the ~~three~~ volumes now called The Works of John Whitgift, D.D.<sup>2</sup>

Whitgift served as the Master of Trinity College at Cambridge, among other academic posts. He then successively filled the offices of Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup>

d) Richard Hooker, parish priest

Richard Hooker became the man who took the main responsibility of defending the Church of England when Whitgift was promoted to the Archbishopric of Canterbury.<sup>4</sup> Through his controversy with the Puritans there was produced the most esteemed work on ecclesiology ever to be written in the history of Anglicanism. Hunt says of him,

Hooker is on all sides admitted to have been the greatest intellect that had yet appeared in the Reformed Church of England, and all parties agree to receive him as the wisest exponent of her doctrines and the truest incarnation of her spirit.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Hunt, Religious Thought in England (London: Strahan and Co., Publishers, 1870), I, 57.

<sup>2</sup>Ed. John Ayre, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1851).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., title page.

<sup>4</sup>Hunt, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Hooker's academic background had much Puritan influence in it, since he had as his tutor at Oxford Dr. John Rainolds, the most learned of the Elizabethan Puritans.<sup>1</sup> His work as a scholar at Oxford was quite distinguished.<sup>2</sup>

His treatise, which stands as a tower of Anglican ecclesiology, is properly called Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.<sup>3</sup>

Hooker's manner of writing, as much as the subject matter, contributed to the masterly quality of the work. It was reported to the Pope that "a poor obscure parish priest" had written this remarkable treatise.<sup>4</sup> Hooker was not high in his ecclesiastical rank but the quality of his insight, spirit, and reasoning gave him a place of esteem that many would covet.

## 2. The Anglican View Regarding the Holy Scriptures

The matter of the authority of the Scriptures is important as a basic consideration for the solving of the ecclesiological problem under review. If the Anglicans had no regard for the authority of God's Word then a whole area of thinking and concern would be nullified. However, it is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Florence Higham, Catholic and Reformed: A Study of the Anglican Church, 1559-1662 (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker, Ed. John Keble, (3 Vols.; Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1888), I, 197.

<sup>4</sup>Higham, op. cit., p. 29.

lucidly clear from the following evidence that the Elizabethan Reformed Church put the Scriptures first. In Jewel's Apology, an attack is made upon "the tyranny of the Bishops of Rome and their barbarous Persian-like pride,"<sup>1</sup> and the papists' lack of regard for the Holy Scriptures. By clear implication in the following passage he claims the Scriptures as the church's first and foremost authority:

What then shall I say here, O ye principal posts of religion, O ye arch-governors of Christ's Church? Is this that your reverence which ye give to God's Word? The Holy Scriptures, which St. Paul saith came "by the inspiration of God," which perfect prints of Christ's own steps, which all the holy fathers, often as was needful, did allege for testimony and proof; will ye, as though they were unworthy for you to hear, bid them avaunt away?...No marvel at all though these men despise us and all our doings, which set so little by God himself and his infallible sayings.<sup>2</sup>

Another powerful statement revealing Anglicanism's esteem for the Bible is also found in Jewel's Apology. He writes,

Wherefore, if we be heretics, and they (as they would feign be called) be catholics, why do they not as they see the fathers, which were catholic men, have always done? Why do they not convince and master us by the Divine Scriptures?<sup>3</sup>

Jewel's Apology was an official publication of his church and therefore speaks for the whole body of Anglicans.

Richard Hooker in his days of academic training read the works of Jewel absorbingly. Hooker also maintained a high regard for the Scriptures but considered his view as a

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<sup>1</sup> Jewel, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 78-79.      <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

middle-of-the-road position, between the Roman Catholics on one side and the Puritans on the other. He felt that the Scriptures were sufficient by themselves without traditions as the Catholics were wont to add for completeness. They contain "all revealed and supernatural truth, which absolutely is necessary for the children of men in this life to know that they may in the next be saved."<sup>1</sup> However, he felt the Puritans went to a dangerous extreme in their emphasis, which claimed that,

Scripture did not only contain all things in that kind necessary but all simply, and in such sort that to do anything according to any other law were not only unnecessary but even opposite unto salvation, unlawful and sinful.<sup>2</sup>

Hooker did not feel that the Scriptures contained all truth, but all necessary truth required for salvation. Thus he felt there were other divine truths that existed apart from the Scriptures.

A balanced synthesis of the views of Jewel and Hooker presents a fair picture of the regard that the Anglicans had for the Bible in Elizabeth's reign.

#### B. The Matters of Ecclesiology

As the actual view on ecclesiology is analyzed one finds a certain difficulty in trying to categorize the sub-

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<sup>1</sup>P. A. More, and F. L. Cross, (Eds.), Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England: Illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century (London: S.P.C.K., 1951), p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

ject according to the nature and government of the church. The Anglican interpretation is very homogeneous in character. The question of the church's nature is at times the same question as one regarding its governmental set-up. Nevertheless, the following treatment is attempted with the thought that this division is distinct enough to warrant separate attention, due at least to the varying emphases of each part.

### 1. The Nature of the Church

#### a) Its membership

The constituency of the church is the most basic consideration at this point. What were the requirements necessary to have a church? The answer to the question of church membership lies in the Anglican idea that England in its secular and sacred aspects is one society. The homogeneity of Anglican thought is here forcefully expressed. To be a citizen of England was to be a member of the Church of England. This one kingdom theory had many other implications as shall be seen in the coming section on polity.

Hooker's thinking on the nature of the church fully expressed the prevalent one kingdom theory. He claims as his first truth that the church of Christ which is properly called his body mystical, is one unified body.<sup>1</sup> However, the actual members of the body cannot be discerned because part of the body has already passed into heaven with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (though their natural bodies are visible)

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<sup>1</sup>Hooker, op. cit., p. 338.

do not make visible to others this supernatural membership.<sup>1</sup>

He says,

Only our minds by intellectual conceit are able to apprehend, that such a real body there is, a body collective, because it containeth a huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense.<sup>2</sup>

Thus God alone is the one who knows the real members of the mystical body. Hooker says further, "...only unto God, who seeth their hearts and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto him they are clear and manifest."<sup>3</sup>

Hooker defines the visible church in this manner.

Just as promises of Scripture belong to the mystical church, so the duties addressed to the church of God are directed to a company of people known by human senses. This visible church is but one, having existed from the beginning of the world, and one which will exist until its end. There was a church before the coming of Christ but the visible group which existed and does exist since he came, which has embraced the Christian religion, is the group we term properly the church of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Hooker states three requirements for practical church membership. The first is a confession from the individual that Jesus Christ is the Lord of one's life. "Christians therefore are not, which call not him their Master and Lord."<sup>5</sup> He gives John 13:13 and Colossians 3:24 and 4:1 as scriptural references in his footnote.<sup>6</sup> The second requirement is that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 339.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

the person also "embrace that faith, which Christ hath published unto the world."<sup>1</sup> Correct scriptural doctrine is therefore necessary. The third, and in Hooker's estimation most important and crucial, a person must enter the visible church "by the door of baptism."<sup>2</sup> He taught that baptism is the only ordinary means of regeneration.<sup>3</sup>

These three requirements being sufficient for membership in the visible church, Hooker specifically indicates that holiness of life and character is not a requirement. He does not mean that he is unconcerned about the morals of church members, but places this area of attention in the category of their being men in general. Regardless of moral virtues then,

in whomsoever these things [requirements] are the Church doth acknowledge them for her children; them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers, in whom these things are not found.... If by external profession they be Christians, then are they of the visible Church of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Hooker, on the basis of these requirements, acknowledges that members of the synagogue of Satan can just as well be members of the visible church as can true Christians (whom God knows as members of the mystical body).

In some parts of his writings it appears that Hooker did not believe in the distinction between the visible and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 340.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>3</sup>William Clark, The Anglican Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), p. 358.

<sup>4</sup>Hooker, op. cit., p. 342.

invisible church. But in reality it seems clear that he does hold to such a concept, using instead the terms visible and mystical. For all practical purposes, however, since only God can make the distinction, men should not attempt such a judgment, but think only in terms of the visible church.

It follows logically that in the Anglican concept the disciplining of church members plays an almost negligible role. This point was one of many that caused the consternation in the minds of churchmen with Puritan leanings. Because Hooker's view on the validity of the visible church was so strong and his feelings about the necessity of holiness so weak, he taught that heretics are part of the church, though they are a maimed part. Profligates, murderers and such like continue as members of the visible church, though they truly cannot be considered part of Christ's mystical body. His most clear illustration is taken from the backslidings of Israel when they worshipped Baal. The seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to Baal were members of the society called the visible church of God, but so were the Baal worshippers while they worshipped this idol.<sup>1</sup>

One of Hooker's most outstanding passages on the nature of the church re-affirms the Anglican concept that the church is a society. He says,

By the Church...we understand no other than only the visible Church. For preservation of Christianity there is not any thing more needful, than that such as are of the visible Church have mutual

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 343.



fellowship and society one with another. In which consideration as the main body of the sea being one, yet within divers precincts hath divers names, so the Catholic Church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct Societies, every one of which is termed a church within itself. In this sense the Church is always a visible society of men; not an assembly, but a Society. For although the name of the Church be given unto Christian assemblies, although any multitude of Christian men congregated may be termed by the name of a Church, yet assemblies properly are rather things that belong to a Church. Men are assembled for performance of public actions; which actions being ended, the assembly dissolveth itself and is not longer in being, whereas the Church which was assembled doth no less continue afterwards than before.<sup>1</sup>

This society manifests itself as one unit, one nation, and thus, as a national church. Hooker clearly rejects the idea of an assembly as being in nature the church, or a church, for the reasons included in the above quotation. The co-terminus idea of one entity being at the same moment both church and state was climaxed shortly after Elizabeth's death by King James' classic statement at the Hampton Court Conference in 1603. While addressing the dissenting Puritans he said, "No bishop, no king."

b) The concept of the local and universal church

Though the scholars and bishops of England believed strongly in the national church idea, there still remained in their ecclesiological outlook the concept of a universal church in the world of which they considered themselves a part. John Jewel, in his Apology of the Church of England,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 351.

says,

We believe that there is one church of God, and that the same is not shut up (as in times past among the Jews) into some one corner of kingdom, but that it is catholic and universal and dispersed throughout the whole world. So that there is now no nation which can truly complain that they be shut forth and may not be one of the church and people of God. And that this church is the kingdom, the body, and the spouse of Christ; and that Christ alone is the prince of this kingdom; that Christ alone is the head of this body; and that Christ alone is the bridegroom of this spouse.<sup>1</sup>

In summary then, it has been shown that the idea prevalent among the Anglican churchmen is that the church consists of all the baptized citizens of the realm, who confess Christ as their Lord and hold to that doctrine which the Lord Jesus sent into the world. The nation and the church are one and the same entity, with both its religious and civil affairs being various manifestations of the same society, existing as a society whether gathered in groups or distributed individually throughout the realm.

## 2. Its Rites and Ceremonies

Anglicanism's theory on rites and ceremonies is important for consideration. The Puritans criticized the Church of England because there seemed to be too much of "popery" remaining in the prayer book. Anything that had been used by Rome in her mass book was contaminated by long association with her. The Anglicans agreed that Rome had abused certain rites and ceremonies, but the abuse did not

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<sup>1</sup>Jewel, op. cit., p. 24.

disqualify these practices of religion. Whitgift claimed they were things indifferent, being neither good nor bad, and had been "appointed in the church by godly and learned men before the pope was antichrist or the Church of Rome greatly corrupted."<sup>1</sup> Thus, because they were allowable and lawful they could be used if good judgment showed them to be helpful in edifying the church. The Puritans further charged the Church of England with using ceremonial practices which were not prescribed in Scripture. Whitgift replied that Christians are not limited to use only those ceremonies mentioned in Holy Writ but could employ anything that proved edifying and reasonable.<sup>2</sup>

Hooker manifested a position of conservatism in regard to the ceremonies of his predecessors. Men should be slow and unwilling to change the ancient ordinance, rites, and long approved customs unless there be a very urgent necessity. The three tests of antiquity, custom, and consent in the church of God are in themselves sufficient reasons to uphold them unless some notable public inconvenience enforce the contrary.<sup>3</sup>

Included in the matter of indifferent and allowable practices is the matter of priests wearing prescribed clerical vestments. While the Puritans rebelled at their simi-

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<sup>1</sup>D. J. McGinn, (ed.), The Admonition Controversy (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949), p. 149.

<sup>2</sup>Hunt, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>More and Cross, op. cit., p. 541.

larity to the popish garments, John Jewel had to agree with them in the undesirability of the practice. However, as much as he himself disliked the vestments, it seemed to him a matter of indifference. He said:

"Everybody is enough convinced, even the prince who commanded these things, that clothing is nothing so far as religion is concerned, that there is in clothing neither any holiness nor any contagion." Therefore let there be some variety in unimportant affairs, as there has always been some freedom concerning such matters in the church even from the beginning of the church.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Government of the Church: Polity.

#### a) Anglican determinants in establishing polity

Now that the order of research has brought us to an examination of the Anglican form of church polity, we are faced with the task not only of describing that polity but also of discovering the manner in which its theory and practice are constructed. Thus the various determinants and basic ideas are under analysis.

#### (1) The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity

(a) Facts about this treatise.--Since Hooker's treatise, The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, is the most comprehensive and lauded work of the Elizabethan Anglicans, it will receive the greatest attention and study in the present analysis, much having already been derived from this work.

The first four books of the eight were published in

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<sup>1</sup>Jewel, op. cit., p. xxxf.

1594.<sup>1</sup> The fifth came out in 1597. There is some doubt as to the genuineness of the last three books. It is thought that the fifth book was Hooker's last before he died and that the last three were finished for him by someone else. There is no conclusive proof of this, but the matter is not so serious when one realizes that the most important parts of the compilation are the first five books. They "form a work of remarkable dignity and power; and illustrate the great capabilities of the noble language in which they are written."<sup>2</sup>

The general plan of the book is to analyze the basic claims of the Cartwrightian<sup>3</sup> Puritans, and to expound the universal principles of church government.<sup>4</sup>

(b) Hooker's basis for his polity.--The most basic relationship to be understood in rightly understanding Hooker is that between revelation and reason. In his thinking they are neither contradictory nor lacking in a positive relationship. Hooker saw the Bible (revelation) as he saw reason; parts of a universal framework of divinely ordained order. If there is any one base upon which Hooker stands it is upon the divine origin of order. Higham says,

Hooker regarded law as being intrinsic to the nature

<sup>1</sup>Pearson, op. cit., p. 371.

<sup>2</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 353.

<sup>3</sup>The claims of this party will be described and elucidated in the next chapter.

<sup>4</sup>Pearson, op. cit., p. 371.

of God, binding upon men not only through the Scriptures, the main source of revelation in matters of faith, but also through the right use of reason and the considered pronouncements of the church.<sup>1</sup>

His emphasis on law and order is aptly summarized in the Scripture verse he paraphrases in his "Preface" to his work; "for God is not a God of sedition and confusion, but of order and of peace."<sup>2</sup>

The line of reasoning in his "Preface"<sup>3</sup> will now be followed. Hooker charges the Puritans with claiming some special illumination from the Holy Ghost which they think not others to have who read the same Scripture. In his rebuttal to their claim he indicates that there are two ways by which the Spirit leads men to all truth, the first being extraordinary and the other common. The extraordinary manner is by revelation. If the Puritans claim to have this then are they all prophets. The common way of finding truth is through reason. If the Puritans take this path then they must be able

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<sup>1</sup>Higham, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Hooker, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>Full Title - "A Preface to Them That Seek (As They Term It) The Reformation of Laws, and Orders Ecclesiastical, in the Church of England." Hooker, op. cit., p. 125.

F. J. Shirley says,

"The general grounds of Hooker's position are to be found in the Preface of the 'Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. Had no more than this ever been written we should have had an answer vital and pragmatically complete to the Puritan criticism of Elizabeth's Church Settlement. For in it Hooker outlines the plan of the eight books of his Laws, and provides a general sketch of the philosophical and logical basis for the constitution of the Church of England."

Richard Hooker and Contemporary Political Ideas (London: S.P. C.K., 1949), p. 59.

to produce for every article of their belief some special reason which is as strong as their earnest persuasion.

Hooker said, "It is not therefore the fervent earnestness of their persuasion, but the soundness of those reasons whereupon the same is built, which must declare their opinions."<sup>1</sup>

The proper handling of reasons derived from Scripture is thus, in Hooker's thinking, the common and usual way in which the Holy Spirit leads men into all truth. Reason is the instrument of the Spirit.

Consequently he reproves the Puritans for violating proper exegetical procedure. It seemed to him that they merely presented conjectures regarding truth meanwhile labeling these teachings as interpretation.<sup>2</sup> Thus the charge was eisegesis.

Next, Hooker claims that the practices of the apostolic age are not to be looked upon as the example and pattern that all subsequent Christians must follow.<sup>3</sup> Thus Christians need not limit their church practices to those employed in the Apostles' day nor should Christians feel obliged to use everything mentioned.

The first reason for denying a strict faithfulness to the apostolic pattern is that the Scriptures do not fully declare what they used. Therefore, to make that age the canon

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<sup>1</sup>Hooker, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 155ff.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 159-161.

of church polity is to create a rule to which obedience is impossible.<sup>1</sup>

Hooker's second reason for denying the apostolic pattern was based upon his claim that there was a development of polity during the apostolic era. If Christians were to follow a pattern, from which point of that development should the pattern be derived (even if the pattern were fully recorded)?<sup>2</sup>

As his third reason he stated that antiquity is not the only test of authority and validity. Patterns and practices of the past must be tempered by their expediency for the present. Generally it is true, says Hooker, that the greater the antiquity of certain ceremonies, the better they are. But here Hooker states the exception:

Howbeit, not absolutely true and without exception; but true only so far forth as those different ages do agree in the state of those things, for which at the first those rites, orders, and ceremonies, were instituted.<sup>3</sup>

From the last statement it is clearly revealed that Hooker's basic ecclesiastical view has at its root the principle of expediency. Therefore the particular type of church polity and ceremonies to be employed in any given age and place must be derived by the combination of a clear understanding of the surrounding circumstances and the use of men's reasoning in the application of God's laws. On the basis of this, the apostolic practice, were it adequately revealed, could only be a pattern if the circumstances of the age in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 158.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 159.



question coincided with the Apostles' circumstances. Hooker's formula for church polity can in a sense be written like a law of mathematics or of physics.

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{"X" CIRCUMSTANCES} & + & \text{SOUND APPLICATION} \\ & & \text{OF DIVINELY OR-} \\ & & \text{DAINED LAW} \\ & = & \text{POLITY FOR "X"} \\ & & \text{TIME AND PLACE} \end{array}$$

Based on this type of reasoning, Hooker felt that apostolic practice is not always binding as the Puritans claimed.

In the first book of his treatise, Hooker claims that there are laws of several kinds existing in the universe which have been revealed to man. The main heading of this section is therefore concerned with God's eternal laws, this being the overall general category. Under that heading he deals with God's own ideas of himself. These are the laws which govern God. Hooker then speaks of laws which govern God's creation. These laws which concern creation are further subdivided into three categories: (A) laws which govern nature (involuntary laws), (B) laws which govern angels, and (C) laws which govern men. The last category of laws then receives further division. They are: (1) the moral law, which is aimed at punishment for sin (also called natural law); (2) the law of society (human and civil law); and (3) supernatural law (having to do with salvation). Still a more detailed division is made of the category of moral laws, namely: (a) ecclesiastical law, (b) international moral law

and local moral law.<sup>1</sup>

Two main ideas of Hooker are inherent in this structuring of existing laws. First of all, he teaches that life has more laws than only those found in the Scriptures. Secondly, the church and its laws are all a part of God's overall plan for the world. This is very significant because it was on this basis that the Anglicans believed in the unity of the church and the state.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Whitgift agrees with Hooker

Whitgift shared the same basic viewpoint as Hooker, that Anglican polity is free from dictation by the Scriptures. He says;

Yet do I deny that the scriptures do express particularly everything that is to be done in the church..., or that it doth set down any one certain form and kind of government of the church, to be perpetuated for all times, persons, and places without alteration....<sup>3</sup>

As Hooker, Whitgift was a rationalist rather than a scripturalist. In answering Cartwright he fell back on broad principles of reason though he certainly did employ the Scriptures in his arguments.

Thus, it can be truly said that the resultant church that came into existence in Elizabethan England was a product

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<sup>1</sup>This analysis of Hooker's treatment is an adaptation of notes taken in the class on "Puritanism", taught by Dr. Norman Baxter, at the Biblical Seminary in New York, in the Fall of 1962.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., p. 191.

of the reasoning of men as they sought to travel the highways of expediency and of God's order in the universe.

b) The concept of the ministry

(1) The three-fold classification of ministers

In the "Ordinal"<sup>1</sup> of the Church of England, located at the back of The Book of Common Prayer, this famous statement is found: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."<sup>2</sup> This expresses most clearly and authoritatively the three-fold concept of the Anglican ministry. Richard Hooker expands this declaration as follows:

Out of Holy Scripture, it clearly appeareth that Churches apostolic did know but three degrees in the power of ecclesiastical order, at the first Apostles, Presbyters, and Deacons, afterwards instead of Apostles, Bishops.... The ancientist of the Fathers mention those three degrees of ecclesiastical order specified and no more.... There are at this day in the Church of England no other than the same degrees of ecclesiastical order, namely Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, which had their beginning from Christ and His blessed Apostles themselves.<sup>3</sup>

There is an evident inequality taught in the term,

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<sup>1</sup>The "Ordinal" is also entitled, "The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

<sup>2</sup>The Book of Common Prayer: With Historical Notes, ed. James Cornford, (London: S.P.C.K., n.d.), p. 312.

<sup>3</sup>Ecclesiastical Polity, V, lxxviii, cited by John Line, The Doctrine of the Christian Ministry (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959), p.12, n.1.

degrees, or, divers degrees, as Jewel speaks of the ministry.<sup>1</sup> Not all ministers of the Church of England could perform the same duties. Whitgift gives some clarification on the idea of non-parity. He indicates that the difference in ministers is functional, having to do with government. "For the archbishops be ministers of the word and sacraments, and quoad ministerium do not differ from other pastors (in respect of whom they are called archbishops) but touching order and government...."<sup>2</sup> Whitgift goes on to say that while "order and discipline are not separated from the ministry of the word"<sup>3</sup> not all ministers have the same authority to execute them. In substantiation of this he cites the fact that "Paul had more large and ample authority than Timothy, and Timothy than the rest of the ministers of Ephesus."<sup>4</sup>

When the prescribed services for ordination and consecration are examined in the "Ordinal" it becomes manifestly evident that the order of deacon is a lesser degree of ministry than is the order of presbyter. It is also clear that the bishop's office is greater than either of the aforementioned. But again let it be emphasized that the difference of degree has to do with function, not kind.

## (2) Episcopacy

The system of polity used by the Anglicans is called

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<sup>1</sup>Jewel, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., vol. II, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-108.      <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

episcopal because the bishop (episcopas) is the ruler and overseer of the church. Invested in these men were the necessary responsibility and authority requisite for the task. According to Hooker's reasoning this was the best possible way to govern the church. He abhorred the thought of a church ruled by the people. In his estimation they did not have the ability and wisdom to rule, and were by nature like sheep, needing the care and authority of a shepherd. The bishop was this shepherd.

Hooker defines a bishop as follows:

A Bishop is a minister of God, unto whom with permanent continuance there is given not only power of administering the Word and Sacraments, which power other Presbyters have, but also a further power to ordain ecclesiastical persons and a power of chieftly in government over Presbyters as well as laymen a power to be by way of jurisdiction a Pastor even to Pastors themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Though Hooker firmly supported the idea of government by bishops, he never claimed that it was of special divine origin. Considering his past expositions he could not possibly hold such a claim, since he had already stated that no one form of church government was divinely given to the exclusion of all others. There were however some in the England of his day who attempted to claim for the office of bishop this divine origin, or right. Dr. Richard Bancroft, who years later became the Archbishop of Canterbury, preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross, in the presence of a large assembly of parliament members, nobility, and the court. In the

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<sup>1</sup>More and Cross, op. cit., p. 351.

sermon he asserted that "bishops are a distinct order from priests or presbyters, and have authority over them, jure divino, and directly from God."<sup>1</sup> This doctrine was a novelty in the kingdom and so caused a stir. Whitgift, who was at the time Archbishop of Canterbury, said that he wished the doctrine were true but that he could find no truth in it.<sup>2</sup>

Hooker, along with Whitgift, was satisfied in maintaining the antiquity and convenience of episcopacy. Consequently, it was not difficult for either of them to recognize non-episcopal churches as real and valid. Note Hooker's comment about Calvin's church discipline in Geneva. "This device I see not how the wisest at that time living could have bettered, if we duly consider what the present estate of Geneva did then require."<sup>3</sup> Though Hooker himself did not like the presbyterian polity of Calvin, he recognized it as the best that expediency and reason could allow, thus considering Calvin's church valid. He felt badly that Calvin had overstepped the bounds of reason, claiming that nothing but presbyterianism is valid.

Another manifestation of the attitude of Anglicanism toward non-episcopal churches took place in the parliament during Elizabeth's reign. An enactment was made to count as valid the ordination of foreign churches.<sup>4</sup>

This brings up the issue of apostolic succession. By

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<sup>1</sup>Lyman Coleman, The Apostolical and Primitive Church (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1871), p. 204.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 205. <sup>3</sup>Hooker, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>4</sup>Coleman, op. cit., p. 203f.

this term it is meant that "the ministry of bishops is traceable back to the Apostles, and is the order and channel through which the apostolic ministry is transmitted and secured to the church age by age."<sup>1</sup> This was not the basis of Elizabeth's episcopacy. Such a doctrine did not come into prominence until about one half of a century after Elizabeth's death. To the Elizabethan reformers the bishop's power to ordain was vested in him by the system of church government which order and reason had produced in England. To them the Bishop's power did not lie in the succession of laying on of hands originating from the Apostles in an unbroken chain.

c) The political relationship  
between church and state

As was mentioned earlier, the Anglican conception of the church and the state is a homogeneous view, seeing England as one society with two faces, as one coin with two sides.

It became clear in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign who was going to rule the society; the magistrate. This policy manifested itself in the Acts of Uniformity that ordered all ministers to comply with one national standard regarding religious practices. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, under the Queen's orders, issued what became known as "Parker's Advertisements," ordering conformity to the standards set by the bishops, who in turn had been commanded by the Queen.

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<sup>1</sup>Line, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

Another manifestation of the power of the magistrate in the church is his authority to appoint bishops.

John Jewel defended the right of the magistrate to govern the church in his realm. He cited the Old Testament as substantiation, and also pointed out that it was a civil magistrate who called together the first four general councils of the church, also taking part in the discussions.<sup>1</sup>

Whitgift recognized Christ as the true head of the church internally, spiritually, and mystically. In harmony with this view he sees no contradiction in claiming the magistrate as the head of the church in the external sense.

He says,

But, if by "the head" you understand an external ruler and governor of any particular nation or church...then I do not perceive why the magistrate may not as well be called the head of the church, that is, the chief governor of it in the external policy, as he is called<sup>2</sup> the head of the people, and of the commonwealth.

Thus we see a church, as interpreted by its most worthy men, which has as its external head the magistrate of the land. In one sense this magistrate has the same responsibilities as the bishops, in that he is to watch over and guard the peace of the land so that right religion may prosper, and that unity may be maintained in all things. However, the magistrate is never, in Anglican thought, to deal with the holy things of God such as the administration of the sacraments

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<sup>1</sup>Jewel, op. cit., p. xxxvi.

<sup>2</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., II, p. 85.



or the preaching of the word. The magistrate has the power to appoint bishops, but only the bishops can ordain and consecrate other bishops.

### C. Summary of Anglican Ecclesiology

The Anglican Church of Queen Elizabeth's reign was a true reformed church as manifested by the godly scholars and bishops who defended her. Particularly outstanding were the characters of John Jewel and Richard Hooker. The spirit that they displayed speaks highly of their church even before one can consider the quality of their writings.

There certainly was a soundness about their regard for the authority of the Scriptures. This basic belief of theirs gives more credence to the rest of their tenets.

The Church of England manifested the symbol of one homogeneous society, and was very consistent in trying to keep all things in harmony with this basic theory. In order to harmonize the idea of a national church with the basic reformed doctrine of justification by faith, it was mandatory for the Anglican theorists to differentiate between the mystical and visible bodies of Christ.

Elizabethan Anglicanism did not see itself as the church which all others must of necessity join. Rather it looked upon itself as a single manifestation of the universal church, and recognized other manifestations of this true catholicism in other countries of the world.

It was a church built on reason as much as on revelation. It was not superstitious and did not therefore care

that the Roman Church had infected certain rites and ceremonies with corruption. Anglican England decided to keep all such rites and ceremonies and count superstitious overtones as things of "indifference" in religion.

Richard Hooker, having been called the father of Anglicanism, stated the church's position on polity. Polity is determined for any time and place by a combination of keen analysis of the situation at hand and by the application of God's divine laws of reason. Properly followed, this path should lead an individual or a group to the right conclusion about the best type of polity to employ. Anglican thinkers did not feel themselves bound by the truth in the Scriptures. They saw the Scriptures as part of the overall truth that God has shown to man either through natural reason or supernatural revelation.

Hooker's reasoning led him to keep episcopacy as the best possible polity for his church and day.

CHAPTER II  
THE PRESBYTERIAN INTERPRETATION  
OF ECCLESIOLOGY

## II. THE PRESBYTERIAN INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIOLOGY

### A. Basic Considerations

#### 1. Identification of Cartwright and Puritan Theological Sources

The impact of any movement is usually dependent upon the kind of men giving the leadership. The impetus for the early Puritan movement in England was found primarily in Thomas Cartwright. It was Cartwright who, by his forthrightness, created the thrust that challenged the established Anglican Church. This challenge caused the national church to sharpen its defenses and thus clarify its position. By his leadership Cartwright created a rallying point for the many in the kingdom who were dissatisfied with the Elizabethan settlement of religion. Consequently a party was formed around him whose purpose it was to "purify" the Church of England of all "popish remains": thus the name Puritan.

The exact date of Cartwright's birth is uncertain but can be approximately established at 1535. He attended Cambridge University. After his studies at Clare Hall he became a scholar of St. John's College in 1550.<sup>1</sup> While there he came under the influence of Thomas Lever, who was the

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, op. cit., p. 3.

Master of the college, an eloquent preacher and a staunch Protestant.<sup>1</sup>

In all likelihood Cartwright graduated from St. John's with a B.A. degree in 1554. His name is listed as the thirty-fourth scholar. Of extreme interest is the name of a fellow graduate that year, twentieth on the list, John Whitgift, his future ecclesiastical opponent.

It is believed that Cartwright studied law<sup>2</sup> for five years following his graduation while Mary was in political power in England. Following her death, with the ascension of Elizabeth to the throne, he returned to Cambridge and was made fellow, first of St. John's (1560), and then of Trinity (1562).

In 1564, while a fellow of Trinity College, Cartwright gave an oration before Queen Elizabeth which became a landmark as the public beginning of his fight against the Crown and episcopacy. In his oration he confuted the position of Thomas Byng, who tried to support the idea of monarchy. This speech occasioned the beginning of the Puritan party, which was being called into existence by the inability of many in England to see that Queen Elizabeth, by her monarchical authority, should be able to force ministers into unbiblical practices. Cartwright's boldness and leadership in objecting formed the uniting point for those of like mind.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957 [originally Cambridge University Press, 1938]), p. 10.

During the early existence of the Puritan party the main issue seemed to be centered on the prescribed use of vestments. In 1565, at St. John's, three hundred men gathered to exclaim their position; no surplice. The fire spread and Trinity followed suit. It became evident that there was a very strong element in England that would not bow to the sovereign will of Elizabeth in ecclesiastical affairs as manifested in her proclamations of uniformity.<sup>1</sup> The center of the opposition was found in the universities.

In 1569 Cartwright was given the Lady Margaret Divinity Professorship. At once he gave a series of lectures on the first two chapters of the book of Acts, stressing presbyterianism as the proper biblical form of church government. If Cartwright was correct in his exposition then the organization of the Church of England must be radically altered and the existing ecclesiastical hierarchy abolished. The lectures produced a sensation in the university as Cartwright gathered many hearers into the auditorium by his eloquence, scholarship, and outspokenness.<sup>2</sup> The official authorities recognized a change of direction in the opposition, pointed no longer at vestments alone but at the very heart and center of the Anglican Church; namely, its ministry and organization.

As the Puritan snowball gained in size and momentum, the events led to the writing of the Admonition to the

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<sup>1</sup>The Act of Supremacy, 1559; The Act of Uniformity, 1559; Parker's Advertisements.

<sup>2</sup>Pearson, op. cit., pp. 26 and 27.

Parliament in 1572. This document stated the Puritan position, asking parliament to use its power in reforming the national church. Copies were distributed throughout the land from its anonymous authors and secret printing press. Shortly after, a Second Admonition to Parliament was produced which expanded on certain details of government. The authorship of this second document is uncertain, but the strongest possibility is that Thomas Cartwright wrote it. Frere and Douglas accept his authorship of the document.<sup>1</sup> The publication of these two manifestoes started the literary duel which flared between Cartwright and Whitgift. The duel lasted approximately five years and produced in succession the following writings: (1) The Answer to the Admonition, by Whitgift, 1572; (2) The Reply, by Cartwright, about one year later; (3) The Defense of the Answer, by Whitgift, 1574; (4) The Second Reply, in two parts, 1575 and 1577. Through this literary barrage most of the ideas and arguments of the Puritan party were presented, creating a rich source of useful material for an analysis of Presbyterian ecclesiology.

In the opinion of H. C. Porter, "Cartwright's teaching was never improved upon in Elizabethan Cambridge, nor were any important additions made to his arguments. Lesser men echoed his voice."<sup>2</sup> John Hunt said of him; "He was the

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<sup>1</sup>W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas, (eds.), Puritan Manifestoes (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), p. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup>H. C. Porter, Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge (London: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 141.

earliest complete incarnation of Puritanism, on its controversial and theological side."<sup>1</sup> Thus because of the outstanding contribution that he made to the theological statement of the Puritan platform, this study will look to Cartwright, along with the anonymous authors of the Admonition, as the sources of Puritan thinking on ecclesiology.

## 2. The Puritan View on the Authority of the Holy Scriptures

There is little need to dwell at length on the Puritans' regard for the authority of the Holy Scriptures. So basic is their dependence on the Word of God as the supreme authority for life and practice that one could be redundant by a treatment of too great length on the subject. However, a number of main points are profitable for notice.

The subject of scriptural authority was not an issue in Elizabethan England among the Protestants. There was a united opinion shared by the Anglicans, Puritans and Congregationalists that God's word was the highest court of appeal. Problems arose however in the differences among the varying interpretations of the three parties.

The Puritans generally looked upon the Scriptures as the only source of truth regarding matters of faith and ecclesiology. The Anglicans were very near to this position except for the view mentioned in the preceding chapter; namely, that truth coming from enlightened reason could be employed

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<sup>1</sup>Hunt, op. cit., p. 49.



in constructing a doctrine of the church (as an addition to the truth revealed in Scripture). The Puritans would have none of this line of reasoning. If a particular practice of the church were not explicitly stated it would at least need to be an application of a general principle of Scripture.

In perusing the main documents of the Puritan body of literature one finds a constant reference to the Bible as the Word of God and thus as the judge of all actions. It was on the basis of their interpretation of the Word of God that the Puritans judged the Elizabethan reformed church as not truly reformed. In the second paragraph of An Admonition to the Parliament<sup>1</sup> this sentence is found:

May it therefore please your wysedomes to understand, we in England are so fare of, from having a church rightly reformed, accordyng to the prescript of Gods worde, that as yet<sup>2</sup> we are not come to the outwarde face of the same.

In the preface to the Admonition the authors are contending for "A right ministry of God and a right government of his church according to the Scriptures set up."<sup>3</sup>

Cartwright, in A Second Admonition to Parliament,<sup>4</sup> clearly states his regard for the Scriptures: "but we say the worde is above the church, then surely it is above the Englishe church, and above all these bookes afore rehearsed."<sup>5</sup>

As a final illustration notice Cartwright's declaration:

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<sup>1</sup>Frere and Douglas, op. cit., p. 3.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 6.      <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-92.

"true religion abideth the triall of the word of God."<sup>1</sup>

The Puritans then, as the Anglicans, looked to the Bible as the supreme authority but the Puritans tended to limit their source of truth to that found in Scripture while the Anglicans felt free to derive and add truth from the creativity and imagination of man's reasoning power.

### B. Matters of Ecclesiology

#### 1. The Nature of the Church

The main argument between Cartwright and the Anglicans had more to do with government and order in the church than with the nature of the church. Though it may seem in his writings that Cartwright negated the validity of the English Church, he actually counted it as a real spiritual entity, but a very sick one. This is clearly revealed in his arguments with Robert Browne, the leader of the Separating Congregationalists. In Browne's opinion the Anglican Church was not a church at all. Against Browne's contention, Cartwright heartily supported the validity of the existing spiritual organization as a true church.<sup>2</sup> His first set of reasons for his claim was that the individual Anglican churches owned Christ as their head, had the true faith professed in them, and the Spirit of God sanctifying many of their members.<sup>3</sup> Then after stating that "the trueth of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 92.   <sup>2</sup>Pearson, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

church standeth not in the number," Cartwright expressed this most startling concept that only one truly faithful member of a church is sufficient to make it a church of God.<sup>1</sup> These statements of Cartwright as a champion of the Anglican Church against its enemies are amazingly different in tone from the criticisms he himself made against it. He said the English established church was a reformable organization because it contained the bare essentials of churchhood just as a man without arms and legs remains essentially a man.<sup>2</sup>

The Admonition in its second page presents the "outwarde markes wherby a true christian church is knowne." The first requirement is the pure preaching of the Word of God. The second is the sincere ministering of the sacraments. The third requirement is an ecclesiastical discipline which consists in the severe admonishing and correcting of faults.<sup>3</sup> Because these were missing the Puritans wanted to bring about complete reform so that the Church of England might come to the full health and vitality they envisaged for it.

The concept of a national church harmonized with Puritan thought as well as with Anglican. Cartwright thus had no quarrel with them about receiving members into the church. However, he did not accept the Anglican idea of the church and the English commonwealth being one and the same society. Whereas the Anglicans based their thinking and practice on

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 219.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Frere and Douglas, op. cit., p. 9.

this one kingdom idea, Cartwright made familiar "the Two Kingdom Theory".<sup>1</sup>

A clear distinction was made between the church and the commonwealth by showing that a man excommunicated from the church did not necessarily lose his citizenship in the state. Likewise, the civil authorities could banish a man from the state without making him lose membership in the church.

Though this clear distinction existed between the two societies, still there was a unique bond which caused each to affect the other. To illustrate this relationship Cartwright likened the church and the state to the twins of Hippocrates. These twins became sick together, and healed together. When one laughed so did the other. When the first cried, the second did also.<sup>2</sup> The two were "always like affected."<sup>3</sup> Thus, those things which hurt the church were harmful to the state. There was no hope of the state flourishing if the church was in a process of decay. Cartwright believed this dependence and affect to be reciprocal. Consequently, the church needed the state.

As indicated earlier, Cartwright continually chided the English Church for retaining too much of the elements of the Roman Catholic Church. In the midst of this chiding,

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<sup>1</sup>A. F. Scott Pearson, Church and State: Political Aspects of Sixteenth Century Puritanism (London: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p. 9ff.

<sup>2</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., I, p. 23. <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

however, he and other Puritans referred to the English Church as the church of God.<sup>1</sup> But their thoughts about the Roman Church were characterized by appellations of Antichrist. They considered the Pope himself to be Antichrist. This then in their eyes was a completely false church, whereas the national Church of England was a true one which could be brought back to health. He considered the Roman communion a false church because its worship was idolatrous and many of its doctrines anti-biblical. Cartwright admitted that sound doctrine was being taught in the Anglican Church. That, along with his patient love for the establishment, caused him to consider it a sufficiently valid church, which had the possibility of becoming completely genuine according to the biblical standard.

## 2. Its Rites and Ceremonies

The beginning of the Puritan movement centered around the remains of popery in the English Church. The Puritans wanted to cleanse the ceremonies of the reformed church from all remembrances of the old papal days. This principle was the basic thinking behind the friction about the use of vestments by the English clergy. The Puritans felt that these pieces of clothing actually were contaminated by their long association with the corrupt doctrines of the Roman Church. Thus their cry was "out with the doctrine--out with the garb which is a symbol of that doctrine." Thomas Sampson, Dean of

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<sup>1</sup>Frere and Douglas, op. cit., p. 10.

Christ Church, and Laurence Humphrey, President of Magdalen College, argued with Archbishop Matthew Parker that though vestments in themselves were indifferent pieces of clothing, their use in the contemporary historical situation could no longer be considered indifferent. Vestments had become "a badge of popery and consecrated to idolatry." At this time the common folk had come to ascribe superstitious power to the doctrine of the mass, of which the Roman garb was a symbol.

Part two of the Admonition of 1572 is entitled, "A view of Popishe abuses yet remaining in the Englishe Church, for the which Godly Ministers have refused to subscribe."<sup>1</sup> In this section the authors described the Book of Common Prayer as "an unperfecte booke, culled & picked out of that popishe dunghil, the Masse booke full of all abominations."<sup>2</sup> The vehement abhorrence of any popish remnants is lucidly expressed by these Puritans. Since the Book of Common Prayer, in their understanding, was more faithful to the Roman mass book than to the Scriptures, they were admonishing the Parliament to retract its use in England. Purity of ceremony was consistent with the name of their party.

One of the cardinal truths expounded in the Admonition is concerned with the importance of preaching. No rites or ceremonies are valid unless they are accompanied by the preaching of the Word. On this principle the "dumb ministry" of the English churches was denounced. "Dumb" ministers were

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<sup>1</sup>Frere and Douglas, op. cit., p. 20.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

those who merely read passages of Scripture or homilies but who did not preach the Word either because they would or could not.

As the Puritans viewed the Anglican practices on rites and ceremonies they saw two basically faulty categories. First, ceremonies were used which were adapted from Rome, a thing to be abhorred. Second, they used the right and good ceremonies in a wrong way.

On purging the English ceremonies from all impure popery, Cartwright had this to say:

Common reason also doth teach that contraries are cured by their contraries: now christianity and anti-christianity, the gospel and popery, be contraries; therefore antichristianity must be cured not by itself, but by that which is (as much as may be) contrary unto it. Therefore a meddled and mingled estate of the order of the gospel and the ceremonies of popery is not the best way to banish popery; and therefore as, to abolish the infection of false doctrine of the papists, it is necessary to establish a divers doctrine, and, to abolish the tyranny of the popish government, necessary to plant the discipline of Christ, so, to heal the infection that hath crept into men's minds by reason of the popish order of service, it is meet that the other order were put in place thereof.<sup>1</sup>

Cartwright's principle as evidenced in this statement was to keep as far away as possible from any infected practice in order to bring about the health of the church. Continuing his argument with Whitgift, he likened the situation unto the case of a man seeking to break the liquor habit. In order to keep him sober it is better to lean in the direction of total abstinence than to mistakenly give

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<sup>1</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., II, 441.

the man too much liquor.<sup>1</sup> Total abstinence from anything that tastes of popery was Cartwright's principle. The best possible rule according to him was to allow only those rites and ceremonies which were prescribed in the Word of God, employing them in the exact manner of their prescription.

### 3. The Government of the Church: Polity

#### a) Puritan determinants in establishing polity

The burden of the Puritan movement was a concern for the right form of government for Christ's church and for the proper scriptural ministry to accompany it. They saw the existing practice as being far from the truth. In the preface to the Admonition, subtitled, "To the Godly Reader," the Puritans say,

We meane the Lordly Lordes, Archbishops, Bishops, Suffraganes, Deanes, Doctors, Archdeacons, Chancellors, and rest of that proude generation, whose kingdome must downe, holde they never so hard: because their tyrannous Lordshippe can not stande wyth Christes kingdome.<sup>2</sup>

A page later they make their classic statement, summarizing their concern for the prosperity of the English Church:

Either must we have a right ministerie of God, & a right government of his church, according to the scriptures sette up (bothe whiche we lacke) or else there can be no right religion, nor yet for contempt thereof can Gods plagues be from us any while differred.<sup>3</sup>

How did the Puritans come to the description of "the right

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 442.    <sup>2</sup>Frere and Douglas, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 6.



government" of the church? The answer to this question is found in the Puritan determinants for establishing polity.

The most basic principle of the Puritan party, the springboard from which the rest of their ideas were formulated, was that the Scriptures set forth the complete plan for the building and ordering of God's church. At this point the primary difference between the Anglican and Puritan viewpoints is most lucidly manifest. Cartwright felt that the Anglicans were not giving to the Scriptures their full sphere of influence that God intended. Thus he charged that Whitgift did "shrink the arms of the scripture, which otherwise are so long and large."<sup>1</sup> The Anglicans differed from the Papists in that they held the Scriptures to be the complete authority in matters of salvation, while the Papists counted them as insufficient for salvation. But the Puritans went further than either the Papists or the Anglicans by ascribing to the Scriptures complete rigid authority in matters of church government.

	Matters of Salvation	Matters of Church Government
Puritans	=====	=====
Anglicans	=====	=====supplemented by human wisdom.
Papists	=====	=====supplemented by human institutions.

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<sup>1</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., I, 190.

Cartwright clearly states his principle: "I say that the Word of God containeth the direction of all things pertaining to the church, yea, of whatsoever things can fall into any part of man's life."<sup>1</sup> As scriptural substantiation for this claim he quotes from the second chapter of Proverbs:<sup>2</sup> "My son, if thou receive my words, and hide my precepts in thee, &c., then thou shalt understand justice and judgement, and equity, and every good way." He implies that the phrase, "every good way," includes church government. This verse in itself, however, only indicates that the Scriptures will give us guidance in church government and practice but does not especially say that there is a definite pattern revealed.

Cartwright then presents an exercise in logic based on First Corinthians 10:31. He quotes, "...whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do it to the glory of God."<sup>3</sup> He claims that obedience is the only way by which a man can glorify God. Based on this claim he draws the argument to the following conclusion:

And there is no obedience but in respect of the commandment and Word of God: therefore, it followeth that the Word of God directeth a man in all his actions; and that which St. Paul said of meats and drinks, that they are sanctified unto us by the Word of God, the same is to be understood of all things else whatsoever we have the use of.<sup>4</sup>

To Cartwright the passage means that the man who would

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. <sup>2</sup>He gives a summary of Proverbs 2:1-9

<sup>3</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., I, 190. <sup>4</sup>Ibid.

glorify God in matters of church government must do so through obedience to the Word of God.

As the third scriptural passage for substantiation, and in his estimation the most clear on the subject, he refers the reader to the fourteenth chapter of Romans. He understands Paul to here be speaking about "those things which are called indifferent."<sup>1</sup> Paul's conclusion on these matters is--"whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Cartwright then says in effect that faith can only exist in relation to God's Word. This being accepted as true he concludes that "whatsoever is not done by the Word of God is sin."<sup>2</sup> Thus far it is clear that Cartwright limits all of human life, including church polity, to what is commanded by Scripture.

Up to this point Cartwright has not proven in any conclusive way that "by the Word of God" means only explicit and limited directives. The phrase could also mean "done in harmony with the principles of Scripture," thus allowing much more freedom of application.

Cartwright asks a question: "How can we persuade and assure ourselves that we do well but where as we have the Word of God for our warrant?"<sup>3</sup> Based on his proofs he sees this conclusion:

Whereupon it falleth out that, forasmuch as in all our actions, even civil and private, we ought to follow the direction of the Word of God, in matters of the church and which concern all there may be

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

nothing done but by the Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately Cartwright qualifies this statement. Had he not done so he would have trapped himself within extremely cramped quarters. Having to answer Archbishop Whitgift's objection, he said this:

Surely I think in this point that you neither understand me nor yourself: my meaning is plain, that nothing is necessary to salvation which is not plainly contained in the Scriptures.

But that no ceremony, order, discipline, or kind of government, may be in the church, except the same be expressed in the Word of God, is a great absurdity and breedeth many inconveniences.<sup>2</sup>

Whitgift added a summary of his objection in an annexed marginal note.<sup>3</sup> "What things the Scripture had not expressed... [are]<sup>4</sup>... left to the ordering of the church."<sup>5</sup>

Realizing the straitness of his statement and the objection raised, Cartwright denies having intended the sense in which Whitgift interpreted him. What Cartwright meant to say was, "that in making orders and ceremonies of the church it is not lawful to do what men list, but they are bound to follow the general rules of the scripture, that are given to

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 191. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 189-190.

<sup>3</sup>Whitgift's works were published with both his and Cartwright's writings in the set, placed intermittently in the format of a debate. In this publication of the texts Whitgift added marginal notes consisting of his comments, explanations, and objections, placing them next to both his own writings and Cartwright's.

<sup>4</sup>For the sake of clarity, I substituted the verb "are" for the conjunction "but" in order to make this side title a declarative sentence.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

be the squire whereby those should be squared out."<sup>1</sup> In Whitgift's marginal note next to that statement of Cartwright's in the text, he says, "Then have you hitherto strived in vain. Hold you here."<sup>2</sup> In other words, if this is what you mean, then I agree, and your argument is meaningless. Whitgift was trying to show Cartwright that the former's position was the only sensible one.

Cartwright's writings then disclose the principles to which he holds in determining what should be done in areas where the Scriptures seem silent.<sup>3</sup> It is by these rules that he would build the church structure and ecclesiological framework of thought in areas where the structure and framework are not explicitly spelled out. Also, by these rules he would have all existing orders and ceremonies tried and examined regardless of their convenience or inconvenience.

He says,

And they are those rules which St. Paul gave in such cases as are not particularly mentioned of in the scripture.

The first, that they offend not any, especially the church of God.

The Second is (that which you cite also of Paul), that all be done in order and comeliness.

The third, that all be done to edifying.

The last, that they be done to the glory of God.

....And so it is brought to pass (which you think a great absurdity), that all things in the church should

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 191.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Up till this point in Cartwright's argument there seemed to be the implication that the Scriptures are silent on nothing, having something expressly clear to say on all matters of import. Now Cartwright lets the reader know that he does see the Scriptures as mute on certain particulars.

be appointed according to the Word of God: whereby it likewise appeareth that we deny not but certain things are left to the order of the church, because they are of that nature which are varied by times, places, persons, and other circumstances, and so could not at once be set down and established for ever; and yet so left to the order of the church,<sup>1</sup> as that it do nothing against the rules aforesaid.

In setting forth these rules and their explanation, Cartwright has brought to the fore a basic distinction. Not only must variables in the Scriptures be considered, (into which category the Anglican thinker is willing to place the majority of matters of ecclesiastical polity), but one must emphasize the invariable nature of many things in the Bible having to do with polity. Cartwright asks how this freedom with variables has resulted in changes of ecclesiastical structures which in the Scriptures are definitely meant to be unchanging. For instance, he asks why there has come into England a new ministry by making such an office as an archbishop, by altering the ministry of a local pastor, by having deacons perform duties foreign to the scriptural description of their duties, and by completely abrogating both the name and the office of elder.

Thus, though Cartwright admits that there is a certain amount of freedom concerning things where the Scriptures are silent, he charges the Church of England with making God's revealed invariables to be variable, taking freedom where it is not man's to take. He asks,

How...do these follow that, because the church hath

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 195

power to ordain certain things, therefore it hath power to do so of these which God hath ordained and established; of the which there is no time, nor place, nor person, nor any other circumstance, which can cause any alteration or change?<sup>1</sup>

In summary, then, Cartwright's determinants for creating a true picture of church ceremonies, order, and government can be divided into two plain categories, of which the first is the most important. First, one must seek out all the plain directives of Scripture concerning church government, being very careful to be comprehensive and accurate. After these have been compiled and applied, the Christian is free to add in those necessary things which pass the test of the four previously mentioned rules, concerning non-offensiveness, orderliness, comeliness, edification, and glory to God.

This sort of thinking formed the basis and reason for the Admonition which was addressed to the Parliament in 1572, and which created the cohesion that held the Puritan party together as a unified force for so many decades. With the preceding analysis of Puritan thought in mind, consider the opening statement of the Admonition:

Seeing that nothyng in this mortal life is more diligently to be sought for, and carefully to be loked unto than the restitution of true religion and reformation of God's church: it shall be your partes (dearly beloved) in this present Parliament assembled, as much as in you lyeth to promote the same, and to employ your whole labour and studie; not onely in abandoning al popish remnants both in ceremonies and regiment, but also in bringing in and placing in Gods church those things only, which the Lord himself in his Word

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

commandeth. Because it is not enough to take paynes in takyng away evil, but also to be occupied in placing good in the stead thereof.<sup>1</sup>

The second paragraph of the same document opens with these words:

May it therefore please your wysedomes to understand, we in England are so fare of, from having a church rightly reformed, accordyng to the prescript of Gods Word, that as yet we are not come to the outwarde face of the same.<sup>2</sup>

Here the Puritan desire is clearly expressed, that the prescripts, the directives, the clear injunctions of the Word of God concerning church order and government be followed by the Church of England instead of allowing the things to exist which were foreign to the Word of God.

Now that the determinants of Puritan polity have been briefly analysed, it is necessary to attempt a description of the framework that these thinkers derived through the use of their determinants. It was revealed through Cartwright's debate with Whitgift that the Puritans believe the Scriptures to contain a well described picture of the church's organizational structure, with some room for elaboration in areas of scriptural muteness. What is the description of the Puritan picture?

b) The description of Puritan presbyterian Polity.

Since this subject is being treated in its historical framework as it relates to the Anglican Church, the most primary topic is that of the ministry, particularly its parity.

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<sup>1</sup>Frere and Douglas, op. cit., p. 8

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9



(1) The ministry.

(a) Parity.--The Puritans proclaimed that there were to be in the church three classes of leaders. First on their list were ministers, otherwise called preachers or pastors.<sup>1</sup> The second class was called elders or seniors. Lastly there was to be the office of deacon. Each of these had different functions to perform in the church. Of them only the first category was considered as that which constitutes the ministry. The Anglicans maintained a three-fold ministry, while the Puritans desired to see a three-fold group of church leaders and servants. The Puritans viewed the ministry as one-fold. In their interpretation all ministers were considered equal in kind and function. Therefore, no room was allowed for a concept of a minister above other ministers such as the Anglicans had in the bishop's office.

As revealed in the Admonition, the Puritans criticized the established church for making the office of deacon the first step to the ministry.<sup>2</sup> To them this was a travesty of what God had revealed to be the duties of a deacon. This office was definitely not an order of priesthood.<sup>3</sup> In the early part of the Admonition the deacon's office is described as follows:

For their dutie in the primative church, was to gather the almes diligently, and to distribute it faithfully, also for the sicke and impotent persones to provide painefully, having ever a diligent care, that the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 15    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

charitie of godly men, wer not wasted upon loiterers and idle vagabounds.<sup>1</sup>

The Admonitioners observed that the Anglicans had assigned to the order of deacon the function of baptizing, ministering the sacraments in absence of the bishop, and many other functions that only ministers should do.

The Puritans plainly declared their position to Parliament: "Now then, if you wyl restore the church to his ancient officers, this you must doe. In stead of an Archbishop or Lord bishop, you must make equalitie of ministers."<sup>2</sup> In order to give the scriptural substantiation of this point the document points in the footnote to four different Bible passages. The first verse is II Corinthians 10:7, in which Paul challenges his readers to remember that as they are in Christ so is he, stressing equality in Jesus. The other three verses are the opening statements of Colossians, Philippians, and I Thessalonians. In these statements Paul refers to Timothy and Silvanus, together with himself, as obviously equal servants of Jesus.

The Puritans said, "But he that hath an office, must looke to his office, and every man muste kepe himselfe within the boundes and limmits of his owne vocation."<sup>3</sup> They believed that neither deacons nor elders should perform functions that were by nature part of the Christian ministry. Inherent in the Puritan interpretation was the concept of the co-operative government of the church by these three classes of leaders.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 16.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

They said: "And to these three jointly, that is, the Ministers, Seniors and deacons, is the whole regiment of the church to be committed."<sup>1</sup>

Within the category of the ministry per se, the Puritan claimed two types. Cartwright (accepting that he penned the Second Admonition) speaks in this document of the offices of the church which were existent in Apostolic days. At that time there were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He considered the first three to be of a rare and extraordinary function, while pastors and teachers were to be found in every well ordered church.<sup>2</sup> Thus he said that there are only two sorts of ministers, "namely pastors & teachers, which doe not differ in dignitie, but in distinction of office and exercise of their gifts, and yet in many things their office is...alike..."<sup>3</sup> The pastors area of responsibility is the oversight and charge of the whole parish. He instructs, admonishes, exhorts, and corrects by doctrine "al and every one in the assemblies, or in the private houses of the same parishe."<sup>4</sup> Finally, he ministers the sacraments.<sup>5</sup> When a teacher has been lawfully called in the same manner as a pastor and has had provision made for him, he may only give lectures and expositions of the Scriptures. But he has a high responsibility, for by these teachings he must set forth and keep a soundness of doctrine,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 97.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 98

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

must provide a right and natural sense of the Scriptures, and finally must give plain and manifest proofs of the articles of the Christian religion. Consequently Cartwright says, "He ought to be an exquisite and mighty man in the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> In Puritan writings the teacher is also referred to as the doctor.

Of these two types of ministers the pastoral office has the priority. That is, if a church is not able to procure two men for the ministry the one chosen must be the pastor and include in his duties and tasks that the teacher would have performed. Every congregation must have at least a pastor, if not also a teacher.<sup>2</sup>

(b) Election.--The manner in which the Puritans would have ministers appointed to congregations differed radically from the Anglican procedure. Whereas the Anglicans placed the power to appoint ministers into the hands of one man, the bishop, the Puritans wanted the choice and appointment of ministers guided by many minds. Thus Cartwright continually argued for the right of the congregation to call and appoint the ministers who were to serve the local parish. He desired for the congregation the privilege of examining a man regarding his doctrine, life, and ability for the task. Cartwright held to the principle that the choice is more safely made by many than by one.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 99

<sup>3</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., I, 301.

In his argument with Whitgift concerning The Book of Ordering Ministers, used by the Anglican Church, Cartwright based his position on both reason and Scripture. Reason told Cartwright that a man such as a bishop has blind spots in his examination of other ministers as does any individual. What one misses, another sees; therefore, many eyes are better. Also, a single individual is subject to emotions such as love and envy. Thus speaks Cartwright: "I say, considering these things, it is very dangerous to commit that to the view and search of one man, which may have less danger and more safety be referred unto divers."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say that even if the church had no scriptural authority for this position, reason alone would be sufficient to substantiate it. He said: "But there is a greater authority."<sup>2</sup> At this point Cartwright cites the first and sixth chapters of Acts. When the replacement for Judas was chosen in the upper room with the one hundred and twenty present, the Scripture says that "they put forward two for election," the antecedent of "they" being "the bretheren." Cartwright continues: "Whereby it appeareth that the examination of their ability was committed to many."<sup>3</sup> He cites then the instance when the Apostles told the bretheren to choose out among themselves deacons. This

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 300

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., This reference serves as a vivid illustration of the relationship in which Cartwright held the authorities of Scripture and human reason.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 300-301

reference, however, does not refer to the ministry in the Puritan framework, so that Cartwright's evidence has only partial value here.

In the Second Admonition the Presbyterian choosing of ministers is described.<sup>1</sup> If a parish should come to need a minister, either pastor or teacher, that parish could make it known to the earliest conference meeting (a local grouping of churches). The conference would then procure from one of the universities a man to fill the post. (The universities were the chief source of ministerial candidates but men could be taken from other places as well).<sup>2</sup> Having sought a learned man with a good reputation and having tested him concerning his ministerial gifts and abilities, the conference would present him to the needy parish. The parish then would keep him in their midst a certain amount of time till they had become acquainted with the man's gifts and behavior. If then they consented to receive him as minister they could not be rid of him unless an alleged cause be justly proved against him.<sup>3</sup>

(c) Ordination.--In the writings of the Puritans the concept of ordaining ministers is contingent to the calling and choosing of them. Basically they viewed ordination as the signification, to the minister being ordained, "that he is lawfully called to that parishe to be pastor there

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<sup>1</sup>Frere and Douglas, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 96.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

or teacher."<sup>1</sup> It is an ordination performed by elders based on the passage (given as a footnote in the original document) which says, "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you."<sup>2</sup> It can be said that to the Presbyterian Puritan, a minister's call takes precedence over ordination. Ordination is significant when related to a definite call to a parish.

(2) The consistory.

The function of the Presbyterian consistory is to rule the church. Thus, it is implied that every parish is to have such a ruling body. As described in the Second Admonition, it is composed of the ministers of the local congregation and of "assistants" selected by the congregation.<sup>3</sup> These assistants were laymen chosen on the basis of their godliness and their good judgment in religious matters. As in the choosing of a minister, there were to be earnest prayers with fasting.

A local consistory had only authority in their immediate congregation. Whatever they did they were to do jointly in any common church matter. The power of excommunication lay in the hands of this body, subject to the common consent of the whole congregation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>I Timothy 4:14, (The Revised Standard Version).

<sup>3</sup>Frere and Douglas, op. cit., pp. 118-119

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

Reference was made to a "conference." Cartwright explained that a conference is

the meeting of some certaine ministers, and other bretheren, as it might be the ministers of London, at some certaine place as it was at Corinth, ...to confer and exercise them selves in prophesying or in interpreting the Scriptures, after which interpretation, they must conferre upon that whiche was done, and judge of it....<sup>1</sup>

This conference was recognized as having authority in the affairs and practices of the various churches. A decision having been made by the combined judgment of all, they were to elect a speaker to express their decision, representing the whole conference.

Cartwright described an organization of judicatory groups which were increasingly more comprehensive in geographical scope. Going from the consistory and the conference, he described a provincial synod as "the meeting of certaine of the consistorie of every parishe within a province, which is of manye conferences...."<sup>2</sup> In these synods, "the great causes of the churches, which could not be ended in their owne consistories or conferences, shall be heard and determined and so they shall stande, ...."<sup>3</sup>

Beyond the provincial synod is the national synod, taking in the whole country, and finally there might possibly be called into being a general synod of all churches in the world to deal with the most extreme matters that concern Christianity. The decisions of the highest judicatories are binding on all churches as long as they are in harmony with

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 108.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.



the Word of God. The purpose of all these consistories, conferences, and synods is to seek a common interpretation and understanding of what God says in the Scriptures on any question brought to the floor.

Because of the Puritans' concept of a national church, wherein the civil magistrate has power to keep order, it is clearly implied that the decisions of the higher synods could be impressed on the local churches by means of civil power. If this implication is correct there is here an inherent danger if the synods make decisions which are not in harmony with the interpretation of God's Word as a local consistory might view it. Then the synods would be in the same position as were the Anglican bishops, using the power of the magistrate, namely police force, to bring conformity in the churches.

c) The relationship between church and state.

The very fact that the Puritans appealed to the Parliament for the reform of the English Church indicates that they held to at least a co-operative relationship between church and state. Cartwright referred to the Christian magistrate not as the head of the church (as did the Anglicans) but as its nurse.<sup>1</sup> The church does not need the Christian magistrate in order to be fully established beyond all shaking. However, it desires such a magistrate in the land for quiet, peace, and outward safety. In Presbyterian thinking the magistrate is a member of the church like any other member and

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<sup>1</sup>Whitgift, op. cit., I, 390.

would thus come under the discipline of the consistory and synods.<sup>1</sup>

As a member of the church the Christian magistrate should do all in his power to maintain in the land the observance of God's laws respecting religion.<sup>2</sup>

Cartwright was firm about ministers not holding civil offices. To him it was against the Word of God. Citing Jesus' refusal to act as a judge in a case of dividing an inheritance, Cartwright said: "For although our Savior Christ doth not there take away from men authority to judge, yet he sheweth thereby sufficiently that it belongeth not unto the ministers of the Word to intermeddle in the judgement of civil causes."<sup>3</sup>

### C. Summary of Presbyterian Ecclesiology

The Puritan party of Queen Elizabeth's reign made a shattering impact upon the ecclesiological thinking of the nation. The anonymous authors of the Admonition to the Parliament, along with Thomas Cartwright, presented such a view of the church's order and ministry that the established church was forced to come out with a defense of the Elizabethan settlement. Thus began a struggle which was to last a century.

In the thinking of the Puritans the English Church was not fully reformed according to biblical standards, re-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup>McGinn, The Admonition Controversy, p. 350.

taining too much of Romanism. It was their regard for the scope of the Bible's authority in church matters that formed the basis of their platform. Though all Protestants in England looked to the Bible as the only source of salvation, the Puritans subjected more areas of life to its authority than did the Anglican thinkers. The Puritans wanted to see a full reformation in England according to "the prescripts of the Word of God."

Basically the Puritan view of the nature of the Church was similar to the view of the established church. Thus the Puritans were not seeking to abolish the established church and create a new one, but rather they wanted to heal the illness of the church in the land. That illness they saw as the cancerous remains of Roman ceremonies and the absence of a right ministry according to God's Word.

To the Puritan mind, that which determined the right government and ministry of the church was the model revealed to Christians in Scripture. The church is obliged to follow all that Scripture shows in this area. If there be any areas of silence or indifference concerning government then the general principles of Scripture were to be followed. The Puritans basically said that church government had to be limited to what was revealed in Scripture.

Their description of the right ministry according to the prescripts of the Word of God came out to be presbyterian type government. The leaders of the churches could be classed in three categories of which only the first was considered the ministry: ministers, elders, and deacons. These share

the government of the church. The ministers perform the spiritual functions of feeding, guiding, and correcting the flock of God, while the elders' responsibility is to rule in co-operation with the ministers. The deacon's responsibility is to care for the poor.

A cardinal Puritan tenet was the parity of all ministers. No minister was to be placed above any other minister, thus doing away with the thought of a bishop. In each church there were to be two kinds of equal ministers each emphasizing different aspects of the work. The pastor was the overall shepherd to care for the sheep in general way, while the teacher labored in presenting and preserving sound doctrine in the church through lectures and other means. The teacher had to be a man mighty in the Scriptures.

The keeping of order in the local parish was committed to the consistory, composed of the ministers, along with lay elders chosen from the congregation by the people themselves, and ordained by the minister. The power of excommunication lay in the hands of this body of men.

The Puritans presented the concept of a series of geographical councils each having greater authority than the more local ones. Thus they presented plans for conferences, provincial synods, national, and world-wide synods. In these councils Christians were to decide together what the Word of God had to say on any topic in question.

It was to this sort of regiment that the Puritan party wished to reform the Church of England.

CHAPTER III

THE SEPARATING CONGREGATIONALIST INTERPRETATION  
OF ECCLESIOLOGY

### III. THE SEPARATING CONGREGATIONALIST INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIOLOGY

#### A. Basic Considerations

##### 1. The Identification of Main Sources

###### a) Robert Browne

Though Robert Browne was a very peculiar person, his writings are extremely valuable. Due to limited space a full description of his life is not possible. However, anyone undertaking such a study would find it very helpful in understanding better the writings of the man.

He received his education at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge, and graduated the same year that the Puritans issued the Admonition to the Parliament. During his postgraduate years he engaged himself in preaching wherever he could find an audience. By refusing to accept Episcopal ordination or to obtain a bishop's license to preach he defied the ecclesiastical authority of the established church. An increasing awareness of faults in Anglican church government gripped his thinking.

Due to his uniquely obstinate nature, Browne continually found himself in trouble with the authorities, many times landing in jail. He was fortunate that Lord Burghley was his relative. Frequently his trouble with the law was

ironed out by Burghley's intervention. Trouble arose even between Browne and his friends as a result of his self-willed stubbornness. Robert Harrison and he found it impossible to continue together as teacher and pastor respectively of the Middleburg congregation because of the divisive spirit that sprang up between them.

Browne was a prolific and orderly writer. Through his numerous books he stated in full his position of separatism and his criticisms both of the established Anglican Church and of the Puritans for not relinquishing all connections with that church. Among the most famous of his works are A Treatise of Reformation Without Tarying for Anie, A Treatise Upon the 23. of Mattewe, A Booke Which Sheweth the Life and Manners of All True Christians, all of which were published in 1582, and A True and Short Declaration, 1584. From these works, combined with Browne's An Answere to Master Cartwright His Letter (1585?), we find a clear exposition of the Separating Congregationalist position of church government.

Toward the end of his life Browne experienced a change of attitude concerning the Anglican Church which has puzzled historians. When the church excommunicated him it seemed to bring a shock that made him cease being a disturber of the establishment. He accepted episcopal ordination and signed a pledge promising good behavior, serving as Master of Stamford Grammar School and then as Rector of a church in Northamptonshire.

Whatever was the cause of Browne's change, the works that he produced in his glorious years as a Separatist remain valuable as a source representing the main emphases of Elizabethan Congregationalism.

b) Other sources.

Robert Harrison, Browne's co-worker in the Middleburg Church, produced a number of valuable statements and works which are valuable for the study at hand. Like Browne, he was an educated man, receiving his training at Cambridge. The impact of his scholarly works is evidenced by the Queen's Royal Proclamation of 1583 against the books that he and Browne had written.

Another primary source for the study of Congregationalism is the group of confessions of faith produced by the London-Amsterdam congregation. Francis Johnson, the pastor, and John Greenwood, the teacher, along with others in the congregation wrote in full their beliefs. Their first confession was written in London in 1589. Having moved to Amsterdam because of persecution they produced a second and fuller one in 1596. The nature and the government of the church are expounded in these documents, well footnoted with Scripture references.

2. The Separatist View on Authority  
and Use of Holy Scripture

The Separatists held the Bible as the only source where God's truth could be found. The London congregation of Separatists stated their faith in this way:



As there is but one God and Father of all, one Lord over all, and one Spirit: So is there but one truth, one Faith, one Salvation, one Church, called in one hope, joyed in one profession, guided by one rule, even the Word of the Most high.<sup>1</sup>

This faith in the Bible as the "Word of the most high" is the cornerstone of all Separatist thinking. What has been said about the Presbyterian Puritans' regard of the Bible can be applied also to the Separatists. Though these two parties violently disagreed on other issues, on this matter they were of one mind.

## B. Matters of Ecclesiology

### 1. The Nature of the Church

It was the disagreement concerning the nature of the church of Christ that split the Separating Congregationalists<sup>2</sup> from the Puritan party. Some have speculated about the possible events in England had these two forces been united, but such a union would have been impossible. One of the cardinal tenets that created the Separatist party was a complete contradiction of the basic theory which formed the Puritan ranks. While the Puritans' main goal was to bring

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<sup>1</sup>Williston Walker, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1960 [originally 1893]), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>There was a wing of the Congregationalist movement which did not like the idea of separation from the church of England. They considered themselves non-separating Congregationalists. The basic difference between the separating and non-separating wings of the party was concerned with the nature of the church; particularly whether or not the Church of England could be considered a valid church by congregationalist standards.

For a further treatment of the differences see the Appendix on p. 122

a sick Anglican Church to health, the Separatists' object was to establish true churches in a land where the so called Church of England was only a name; certainly not the body of Christ.

In the Separatist view, what constituted the church of Christ? Robert Browne expressed the opinion "that the kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, were they never so few."<sup>1</sup> The clear implication here is that a national church concept is foreign to the Word of God. Years before Browne penned these words there were groups of people in England who practiced the truth therein contained. The Plumber's Hall congregation began to hold separate meetings from the local Anglican Church in 1567. Separation was their answer to the problem of a partially reformed national church which enforced sin and popery in its ranks. Browne's exposition on the nature of the church stressed the idea of a gathered church rather than a national. To him being an Englishman was not identical with being a Christian. In A Booke Which Sheweth he gave a most lucid expression of the congregational idea about the nature of the church. He said,

The Church planted or gathered, is a companie or number of Christians or beleeuers, which by a willing couenant made with their God, are vnder the gouernment of God and Christ, and kepe his lawes in one holie communion: because Christ hath redeemed them vnto holines & happines for euer,

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Peel, A Brief History of English Congregationalism (London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1931), p. 34.

from which they were fallen by the sinne of Adam.<sup>1</sup>

Notice the exclusive nature of the definition as a contrast to the all-inclusive concept of the Anglican and Presbyterian national church idea. The exclusiveness is based on a willingness to serve God. Thus anyone in the nation who is not willing to serve Him excludes himself automatically from the possibility of church membership. The visible church is recognized as the body of people who have entered directly into a covenant with God and thus with each other. Plainly, the covenant forms a central basis for church membership. Here is an example of a covenant taken by church members, found several times in the literature of the Separatists:

I have now joined myself to the Church of Christ wherein I have yielded myself subject to the discipline of God's Word as I promised at my baptism, which if I should now again forsake and join myself with the traditioners I should then forsake the union wherein I am knit with the body of Christ and join myself to the discipline of Antichrist.<sup>2</sup>

With such a view of the nature of the church one can see the deep rooted contradiction between this and the national church idea.

As John Whitgift viewed the Church of Rome, so did the Separatists view the Church of England. To them both Rome and England were seats of Antichrist. Such a view of

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Harrison and Robert Browne, The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne, ed., Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson, (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1953), p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>Marshall M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 212.

the English Church is not hard to imagine when one considers the persecution that came from the hands of the bishops and Queen Elizabeth. Men who wanted to worship Christ in the purity of their conscience, unstained by associations with Roman corruption, were dragged to prison. Some were killed. To view his executioners as representatives of the body of Christ in the world was difficult for a man being hanged.

Both the positive and the negative aspects played an important role in Separatist thinking. Not only did these men and women covenant to live for Christ together, but they also affirmed that they would separate from the church of Antichrist. The scriptural basis for their position was the passage which said, "Come out from among them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."<sup>1</sup> Browne made reference to this verse when he asked, "Howe must the church be first planted and gathered vnder one kinde of gouernment?"<sup>2</sup> His answer was three fold, indicating the necessary conditions for the formation of a visible church of Christ.

First, a church is formed "by a couenant and condicion, made on God's behalfe."<sup>3</sup> This refers to the covenant that God

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<sup>1</sup>II Cor. 6:17,18.

<sup>2</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 254.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

makes with the people who separate themselves from evil and unto Him. Second, it is formed "by a couenant and condicion made on our behalfe."<sup>1</sup> This is the covenant made by the individual. Browne further defines this covenant as

Our agreement and partaking of conditions with God, that he shalbe our God so long, as wee keepe vnder his gouernment, and obey his lawes, and no longer.... Our profession and submission to his lawes and gouernment, is the keeping of our couenant, by leading a godly and Christian life.<sup>2</sup>

The third important step in forming a visible church is by "vsing the sacrament of Baptisme to seale those condicions, and couenants."<sup>3</sup> Browne interpreted Baptism as a "Sacrament or marke of the outwarde church."<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the three visible entities that combined to form a Separatist congregation were (1) the Bible, containing God's promise, (2) the covenant, wherein a man expressed his obedience to Christ, and (3) baptism, serving as an outward mark that a man was a Christian.

In the document, "An Answere to Master Cartwright,"<sup>5</sup> Browne gives this definition of a true visible church:

For we knowe that euen two or three agreeing together in the trueth, & separate from wickednesse, if none other will joyne with them, euen they are an outwarde and visible Church, and haue this power of Christ, euen to binde men on earth, and to loose them on earth, that they may be bound or loosed in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

The contrast between the ideas of the gathered church and the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 254.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 431.    <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 442.

national church appears all the more distinct. One does not need a nation in order to have a church. Two or three people out of a nation can form a church, though the rest of that nation be against them.

Henry Barrow was extremely concerned about the prevalent national idea of the church in England. In his writings, for which he was imprisoned, he denounced the idea as follows:

All the profane and wicked of the land, Atheists, Papists, Anabaptists, and heretics of all sorts, gluttons, rioters, blasphemers, perjurers, covetous, extortioners, thieves...witches, conjurers, etc., and who not, that dwelleth within this island, or is within the Queen's dominion...all without exception or respect of person are received into, and nourished in the bosom of this Church, with the Word and sacraments.... All this people, with all these manners, were in one day, with the blast of Queen Elizabeth's trumpet, of ignorant Papists and gross idolators, made faithful Christians and true professors.<sup>1</sup>

Woven into the very fiber of the national church idea is the concept of the magistrate as the head, or at least as the protector of the church. This relationship will receive further treatment in a later section on the political relationship between the church and the state.

It was upon the conception of the nature of the church that the Separating Congregationalists formed their ecclesiastical political ideas. The nature of the church played a large part in determining for them what its polity would be.

Stressing the idea of a gathered church put the Congregationalists under the obligation of explaining how the

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<sup>1</sup>Peel, op. cit., p. 39.

church universal related to the local gathered congregation. Basically the unity of the visible church in the world was created by an agreement concerning true doctrine and faith. It was a unity of willingness and spirit rather than a unity of conformity and coercion. A congregation had been formed by English refugees in Frankfurt, Germany, along the lines of congregational polity. Unfortunately there was a dispute which arose in the group, but out of that dispute came an expression of world wide church unity which presented the Congregational view:

The congregation thus assembled is a particular (distinct) visible church, such as may be in divers places of the world very many. And all these particular churches joined together, not in place (for the that is not possible) but by the conjunction of true doctrine and faith in the same, do make one church in this world.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Rites and Ceremonies

The concept of separation from the wicked had direct implications for the theory concerning the church's rites and ceremonies. In Browne's Answer to Master Cartwright, he expressly stated that the sacraments could not be lawfully administered nor profitably received when the priest involved was a non-preaching, wicked man. To the Separatist, such a one represented the organization of Antichrist. Thus no Christian could partake of the sacraments in an Anglican Church and keep from being contaminated. He argued that Christians are enjoined by the Lord to have no fellowship or

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<sup>1</sup>Knappen, op. cit., p. 157.

communion with the representatives of darkness. This being so, the deepest form of fellowship, the Lord's Supper, could not be a thing in which to participate with non-Christians. Consequently the sacraments would have to be performed in a gathered congregation, under the leadership of a preaching minister.

Browne referred to the non-preaching Anglican clergy as "dumbe dogges which could not bark."<sup>1</sup>

Congregational churches in England had their beginning over the issue of "popish remains" in the worship service of the Anglican Church. The Plumbers Hall congregation separated from the Church of England because they desired the true preaching of the Word of God, the right administration of the sacraments, and the discipline prescribed in the Word of God whereby vice would be suppressed and virtue nourished.<sup>2</sup> They said if these things were to be found in the Anglican church it would not have been necessary to form their own congregation. Blame was put on the Queen and her bishops for enforcing the popery incorporated in the Prayer Book and vestments.

### 3. The Government of the Church

#### a) Separatist determinants in establishing polity

There was no significant difference between the

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<sup>1</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 492.

<sup>2</sup>Peel, op. cit., p. 20.



Puritans and the Separatists regarding the source of their church polity. Both held that a description of right government was to be found in the Scriptures. They did vary however in the interpretations derived. The original title of the Separatist document referred to as The Confession of 1589 was A Trve Description Ovt of The Word of God, of the Visible Church.<sup>1</sup> Here is proof, implicitly stated, that the writer considered the Word of God as the source of true church polity. The document abounds with Scripture references to substantiate the truths expressed.

The London congregation of Separatists which produced The Confession of 1589, met with much trouble from the civil authorities. Their pastor, Francis Johnson, was imprisoned along with fifty or more of the church members. The rest of the congregation with their teacher, John Greenwood, moved to Amsterdam for religious freedom. While there, they produced another confession, giving more pertinent details than were included in the first. It is known as The Confession of 1596. In it is found a more expanded reference to the Bible as the pattern for proper church polity. Though the following statement is made particularly about the ministry, the general principle underlies all their thinking about polity: "Wee beleeeue with our hearts & confes with our mouths,"<sup>2</sup>

That this ministry is exactly described, distinguished, limited, concerning their office,

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 59

their calling to their office, their administration of their office, and their maintenance in their office, by most perfect and playne lawes in Gods Word, which lawes it is not lawfull for these Ministers, or for the wholl church wittinly to neglect, transgresse, or violate in anie parte; not yet to receiue anie other lawes brought into the Church by anie person whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

From this statement it is plain that all aspects of church polity must be limited to the pattern revealed in the Scriptures. Not only must polity be thus limited but it must seek as well to fulfill the complete revealed pattern. Failure to do so would be a sin. Consequently, polity must be neither more nor less than the pattern given us. Congruency with Scripture is the principle.

Like the Puritans, the Separatists claimed that a pattern for church government could be found in the Scriptures. They left little room for the use of human reason as did the Anglicans. To bring laws to bear on church polity which did not have their source in Scripture would be a sin as mentioned above.

#### b) Description of Separatist polity

Since the most distinct feature of the Separatist party was their emphasis on the place and power of the local congregation in church government, first consideration is given to that area of polity.

##### (1) The congregation

a) Its power.--In the teachings of Robert Browne, and in subsequent documents by other Separatists, the con-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 65, article No. 20.

gregation held supreme ecclesiastical authority, second only to the Word of God. The power of the congregation's agreement on any subject was greater than the authority of ministers, elders, or bishops. Browne expresses this in his True and Short Declaration.<sup>1</sup> After stating that Christ is complete Lord of all and head of the church he says,

Novve next vnder Christ, is not the bishop of the dioces, by vvhōe so manie mischiefes are vvrought, nether anie one vvhich hath but single authoritie, but first thei that haue their authoritie together:<sup>2</sup> as first the church, vvhich Christ also teacheth....<sup>2</sup>

For scriptural substantiation he then quotes the Lord's teaching on the subject in Matthew 18:17. "If he vvill not vouchsafe to heare them tell it vnto the church, & if he refuse to heare the church also, let him be vnto the(e), as an heathen mā & a publican."<sup>3</sup> Based on this reference to the church Browne claims that therefore the church is called "the pillar & ground of trueth."<sup>4</sup> He also refers to I Timothy in which Paul calls the church "the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth."<sup>5</sup> Then Browne makes the strongest claim for the power of the congregation found anywhere in his writings. He says, "... the voice of the Vvhole people, guided bie the elders and forwardest, is saied to be the voice of God."<sup>6</sup> It is upon this central claim that all congregational thinking hinges.

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<sup>1</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 399.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. <sup>3</sup>Ibid. <sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>I Timothy 3:15.

<sup>6</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 399

Psalm 149 is cited as further proof of the claim, with this comment: "And that 149. Psalme doth shevve this great honour, Vvhich is to all the saints."<sup>1</sup> Browne brings forth his conclusion: "Therefore the meetinges together of manie churches, also of everie Vvhole church, & of the elders therein, is above the Apostle, above the Prophet, the Evangelist, the Pastor, the Teacher, & everie particular Elder."<sup>2</sup>

Browne substantiates his position on the basis of reason as well as Scripture. He says that the joining and partaking together of many churches and the authority which many have are greater and more weighty than the authority of a single person. Browne is here making reference to the bishops of England as the single persons having invalid authority.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that the power of the congregation in church polity is based on the principle of democracy. "The Agreement of men"<sup>4</sup> is the central phrase in Browne's treatment of polity in A Booke which sheweth the life and manners.<sup>5</sup> Under the topic of church governors he indicates that ecclesiastical authority has its origin in the agreement and consent of the governed. No church officers can be duly placed in office unless they are received and called to their office "by due consent and agreement of the church."<sup>6</sup> In Browne's thinking the democratic principle is basic to both civil and ecclesiastical authority. In church affairs Browne defines

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 335.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 222.    <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

the agreement of men as "the willingnes or glad consent both of the Governors to rule, & the people or inferiors to obey, for the assurance they have in God, of welfare by eche other."<sup>1</sup>

In The Confession of 1589,<sup>2</sup> the London Separatist congregation which produced it says concerning church offices,

Here is no intrusion or climbing vp an other way into the sheepefolde, then by the holy and free election of the Lord's holy & free people, and that according to the Lordes ordinance, humbling themselves by fasting and prayer before the Lord, craving the direction of his holy Spirit, for the triall and approving of giftes, &c.<sup>3</sup>

This congregation expressed its belief in the democratic election of the Lord's holy & free people. It is important to note how the election idea must be preceded by the gathered congregation concept. To have true church officers, and to truly be the voice of God, as Browne claimed, an election would have to include only voters who were God's people. If a segment of the congregation were not the Lord's they might swing the elections in favor of Antichrist. This is clearly implied.

The power of receiving new members as well as disciplining old members by excommunication was the privilege of the congregation acting as a whole. No segment of the congregation, such as the elders alone, could take these responsibilities upon themselves.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 337

<sup>2</sup>Walker, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 35.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

(b) The relationship with other congregations.---An inherent danger in Separatist thinking was the possibility of congregations being separated not only from the national church but also from each other. The London-Amsterdam congregation was aware of this possibility and stated their belief on co-operation among congregations:

[We believe] that though Congregations bee thus distinct and severall bodyes, every one as a compact Citie in it self, yet are they all to walke by one and the same rule, & by all meanes convenient to have the counsell and help one of another in all needfull affayres of the Church, as members of one body in the common Faith, vnder Christ their head.<sup>1</sup>

This is an expression of Co-operative Congregation-  
alism. Three manifestations of this concept are seen in Browne's mention of the synods, prophecies, and elderships. A synod, according to A Booke which sheweth, is the meeting of a number of local congregations called into being by the need of weaker churches to receive help from the stronger, or else because the stronger looked to the weaker churches for redress of certain matters.<sup>2</sup> The synod was empowered by the fact that each congregation voluntarily joined its local authority with the authorities of the many other churches involved. This joint authority would then be used for the deciding or redressing of matters which could not very well be handled on the local level.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

The gatherings referred to as prophecies were meetings for the exercise of spiritual gifts. The teachers of the congregations were to attend these conferences. Each man was to have the opportunity to use his gift "in talk or reasoning, or exhortation and doctrine."<sup>1</sup> Along with the use of their gifts they were to make judgments on matters concerning the churches.<sup>2</sup>

An eldership was the joining together of the elders into one body along with the "forwardest and wysest" from various congregations. They were to meet together in a peaceable meeting to perform much the same function mentioned in connection with synods. Part of their function was to give counsel to the individual churches, based on their wisdom and progress in the faith.

In none of these three joint ventures does Browne's exposition indicate that decisions were binding on local congregations in any other way than through a willing and co-operative spirit mingled with a faith in the men who were chosen to these offices. Thus the term Co-operative Congregationalism is a very fitting title for this type of church polity.

(2) The Congregational ministry

(a) The ministry described.--The Separating Congregationalists had definite views concerning the nature of the Christian ministry. They were vehement in their charge that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 270.   <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

the existing Anglican ministry was not in harmony with the Word of God. Their vehemence is quite understandable when at every turn persecution was directed at their congregations by the English bishops. The London-Amsterdam congregation believed that the forms of the ministry retained and used in the Anglican Church were "a strange & Anti-Christian ministerie & offices;"<sup>1</sup> and were "not that ministerie...instituted in Christs Testament, or allowed in or ouer his Church."<sup>2</sup>

As the Presbyterian Puritans, the Congregationalists believed in a parity of ministers. They held as the two ordinary kinds of ministers the offices of pastor and teacher. These men, though both equally ministers of the church, had their assigned areas of responsibility.

The pastor's work was to exhort and to move men's hearts and minds. In line with his preaching he was to give the accompanying guidance so necessary for the lives of the sheep.<sup>3</sup> The Confession of 1589 states the duties of the pastor in this beautiful way:

The Pastours office is, to feed the sheep of Christ in green and wholesome pastures of his word, and lead them to the still waters, even to the pure fountaine and river of life. Hee must guyde and keep those sheep by that heauenly sheephooke & pastorall staffe of the word, thereby drawing them to him, thereby looking into their soules, even into their most secret thoughtes: Thereby discerning their diseases, and thereby curing them: applying to every disease a fit and cōuenient medicine, & according to the qualitie & danger of the

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 275.



disease, give warning to the Church, that they may orderly proceed to excommunication. Further, he must, by this his sheepphook watch over and defend his flock from rauenous beastes and the Wolfe, and take the little foxes. &c.<sup>1</sup>

Notice how important to the Separatist is the ministry of the Word of God. It was by this means that the pastor was to control and guard the church.

Keeping the church free from error and advancing it in the truth was the main job of the teacher in the congregation. He was to build upon the groundwork of the truth in God's Word, seeing to it that nowhere in the church was there any construction going on with wood, hay and stubble, but only with the precious stones and metals of revealed truth. Browne explained that a man with "lesse gifte to exhort and applie"<sup>2</sup> but with a special gift of teaching, given by God, was to be found in the office of the teacher or doctor.

Though Browne referred to both pastors and teachers as "hauing office and message of God"<sup>3</sup>, thus indicating their equality, he showed that differences in types of ministers were based on the gift that they had received from God. The man who received the gift of exhorting and moving may not have had the gift of teaching, and vice versa.<sup>4</sup> Gifts were a matter of degree. Both men may have had at least some of each gift, but more of one than another. There is no indication

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, op. cit., pp. 36,37.

<sup>2</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 275.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid.

that a man who had been serving as a teacher could not in his next charge fulfill the office of pastor if he were needed in that capacity.

The overall understanding of the ministry was not to be limited to the special group of men called into this service. The Separatists claimed that just as Christ had placed these special men over the church to govern, oversee, visit and watch, so likewise he had given authority and laid duty upon all the members to watch over one another. Here is found then not only the priesthood of all believers, but also their calling into the pastoral ministry.<sup>1</sup> Among other Bible references given to substantiate this claim, there is listed Hebrews 10:24 and 25.

(b) The ministry chosen.--The choosing and appointing of ministers was the first area in which Browne collided with the Anglican authorities. He was continually in trouble in the early days of his experience because he refused to obtain a bishop's license in order to preach. He considered the use of such a license a complete contradiction of the plan of Christ. All the Separatists felt the same way. They would not cease preaching God's Word at the command of a mere man. The moral fire and spiritual calibre of the Separatist preachers is evident in this magnificent reply which a Mr. Pattison made to the Bishop of London:

The Archbishop of Archbishops hath not suspended me from preaching, but continueth his commandments to me

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, op. cit., p. 67.

still: and besides that, I praise Him for it, He hath not decayed in me the gift of preaching, but rather increased it; and hath also given me a congregation; therefore I may not disobey Him to obey you.<sup>1</sup>

The Separatists believed that the power to call a minister to a particular preaching post was resident in the congregation to which he was being called. The agreement of men is again the main principle here. When prayer, fasting, common consent, and ordaining take place a proper choice can be made. This sequence of activity is viewed by Browne as partaking of both divine and human elements. A minister is properly chosen for a church when first of all he is authorized and sent by God. This refers to the subjective call that the man experiences in his life with God, coupled with the spiritual gifts which are evident in his personality. Having been divinely authorized and sent, and second element is his reception by the congregation, as a confirmation of the authority that God has given. Browne, in his systematic way of presenting the material in A Booke Which Sheweth, breaks down the human element into two parts. The reception by the congregation is manifested 1) "by gathering voyces," and 2) "by ordaying."<sup>2</sup> This two-fold activity of the congregation is related to Browne's principle that "the voice of the Vwhole people, guided bie the elders and forwardest, is saied to be the voice of God."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Knappen, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>2</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 399.

(c) The ministry ordained.--The Separatists stated that "every Christian Congregation hath povvre and commandment to elect and ordeine their ovvn ministerie according to the rules prescribed...."<sup>1</sup> This was a solemn operation requiring the greatest of care. Preceding any ordination the people were to humble themselves by fasting and prayer before the Lord, earnestly desiring the direction of the Holy Spirit concerning the examination and approving of gifts in the individual being considered for the ministry.<sup>2</sup> With this approach every person in the congregation was encouraged to have an interest in the election and ordination of their leaders.<sup>3</sup>

Basically, Separatists viewed ordination as a pronouncement and public recognition that the candidate for the ministry has been called and authorized by God, and that he has been received by the congregation into the charge of the local ministry. Browne said it was to be performed by "some of the forwardest & wisest" of the congregation; in other words, the elders. The pronouncement was to be made with a combination of prayer and thanksgiving accompanied by the laying on of hands.<sup>4</sup> Browne did not ascribe any special power to the act of laying on of hands. To him it was an outward symbol of a power that had already been received by

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35. <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 341.

the person being ordained. Thus he was careful to warn his readers that the imposition of hands should not be turned into pomp or superstition, obviously referring to the Anglican and Roman Catholic practices.

(3) Church officers

Much of what has been said about the ministry applies to the other officers of the church; particularly the facts about ordination. Elders, deacons, and relievers all received their gifts for their particular responsibility from God and thus were to be ordained in the same manner as the ministers.

(a) Elders.--Next to the ministers of the church, the elders held the position of greatest authority. It was their duty to assist the pastors and teachers, "helping to beare their burden, but not intruding into their office."<sup>1</sup> Browne indicates in his Booke Which Sheweth that the office of elder need not necessarily be filled by an older person but by one who is "more forward in gift;" that is, by a person who has grown in his faith in Christ so that he is one of the more spiritually advanced people in the congregation. Neither age nor spiritual maturity, however, is sufficient requirement without the God-given ability for oversight, counsel, and redressing of things that are wrong in the group. Having this ability, he can be chosen by the congregation to fill this office.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 275.

(b) Deacons and relievers.--The last class of non-ministerial church leaders are the deacons. At times they are classified in a category separate from the offices of relievers and widows, and at other times all these offices are grouped into one thought. Browne equates deacons with relievers as those people who, having their office from God, are to provide, gather and bestow the gifts and liberalities of the church as the need arises. These persons must pass the trial of requirements and be publicly accepted by the church as being fit for the responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

The widow is a person who is officially tried and received by the church. Her responsibility is to pray for the church and minister to those of the membership who are afflicted and distressed.<sup>2</sup>

All these offices of the church were looked upon as complementary functions each contributing to the service of the saints and the edification of the body of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

c) The political relationship between church and state: none

In A Booke Which Sheweth Browne states his belief about the magistrate's place in the church. He claims that her power is supreme in the land and that all should obey her in the sphere of her dominion. But he clearly indicates that this sphere is civil alone and not religious. Her power is from God and therefore all must obey. That much he agrees

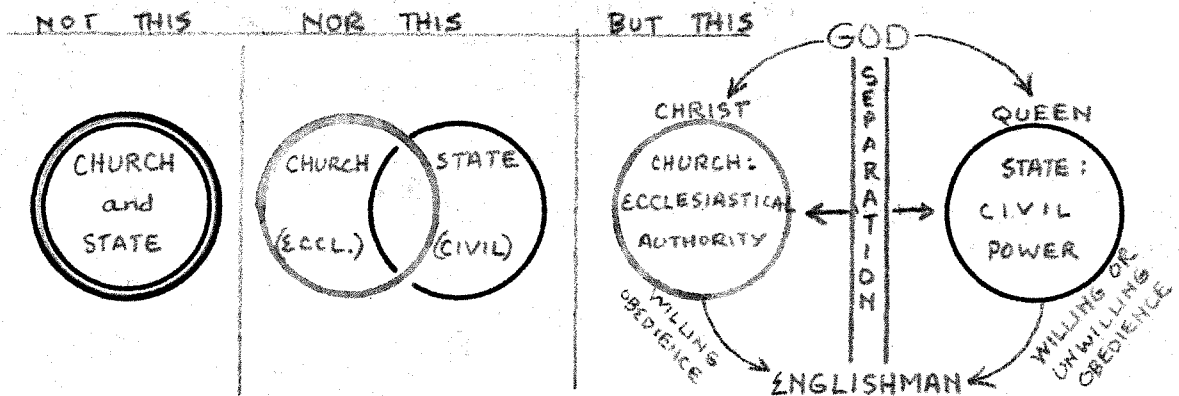
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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Walker, op. cit., p. 38, I Cor. 12:12; Ephes. 4:11 ff.

with and thus cannot understand why he has been accused of being an evil-willer to the Queen.

However, he does not agree with those accursed preachers and teachers who will not do the duties of pastors and teachers until the magistrate forces them to it. He was referring to the non-separating Puritans and particularly to Thomas Cartwright. These Puritans say the time has not come to build the Lord's house. They would rather wait for the Queen and Parliament to do it.<sup>1</sup> He believed in the complete separation of church and state as illustrated by the following diagram:



Therefore he feels that it is even a slander to the magistrate to say that spiritual reform is his responsibility. The sphere of the civil ruler is completely different from that of the church.

Browne pointed out the lack of harmony between the Puritans' goal and the means by which they were going about to achieve it. Basically he said that spiritual ends cannot be attained by physical or civil means. Thus he charged the

<sup>1</sup>Harrison and Browne, op. cit., p. 153

Puritans with having broken their spiritual sword and taking up the powerless replacement of the civil sword. He also accused them of placing the magistrate above Christ in authority, by staying church government on this civil rather than spiritual office. He claimed Christ's statement that his kingdom was not of this world, therefore it should not be governed by rulers of this world.<sup>1</sup>

C. Summary of Separating Congregationalist  
Ecclesiology

The Separatist congregations were formed on the belief that a true Christian church is a gathering of believers in Christ, who covenant with God and with each other that Christ shall be the Lord of their life, individually and corporately. Three visible things can be detected in such a church formulation. First, there is the Word of God, representing the promises that God has made to man. Second, there is the spoken or written covenant which represents the promise that an individual has made to God. Last, there is the sacrament of baptism, which serves as an outward mark that a man is a Christian.

Polity to the Separatist was a matter to be decided by the pattern revealed in the Bible. For a true description of the visible church, one must derive it from the Word. Congruency with that revealed pattern was a moral obligation. To come short of it, to make substitutions, or to add to it would be a sin.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.155; Colossians 1:18.



The basic unit of ecclesiastical authority was the congregation. Elections held by God's holy and free people, guided by the wisdom of the ministers and elders, was virtually equal to the voice of God in spiritual affairs.

Co-operation between individual congregations was an important matter to the Separatists. Such meetings as synods, prophesyings, and elderships were designed in order to confer together, sharing the best wisdom from the Word of God that each congregation was able to contribute.

Ministers in Separatist churches were called pastors and teachers. Though their areas of responsibility differed they were of the same ministerial order. The pastor was a minister whose main gift from God was that of exhorting and applying, while the teacher was an equal minister whose special gift was that of teaching. Along with the special group of men called ministers, each member of the congregation had a pastoral responsibility to every other member.

The choosing of a minister was a function of the local congregation. It was their prerogative to examine a man concerning his gifts, ascertaining to their own minds whether they thought the man was fit for the ministry. If they decided to receive him as their minister, this reception served as an outward confirmation of the man's inward divine appointment. The reception of the minister was performed by "the gathering of voices."

The Separatists looked upon ordination as a public pronouncement and recognition that the candidate for the

ministry had been called by God to preach or teach. This announcement was made by a prayer of thanksgiving with the laying on of hands by the elders.

Church officers played a very important role in the life of the Congregational church. The elder was a man gifted and chosen by God to help the ministers in the work of caring for and overseeing the church. The deacons and widows were to care for the poor and afflicted. Together, the ministers and the members all contributed to the common edification of the gathered body of Christ in their particular locality.

CHAPTER IV

A COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF THE UNIQUE FEATURES  
OF THE ANGLICAN, PRESBYTERIAN AND  
CONGREGATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS  
OF ECCLESIOLOGY

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UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE ANGLICAN,  
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ECCLESIOLOGY

A. Views Concerning the Nature of the Church

1. Concepts of the Visible and Mystical Church

The basic issue involved in thinking about the nature of the church is to be found in the contrast between the national church idea and the gathered church. Anglicanism and Puritanism stood together on this issue in opposition to the Separatist churches which propounded the idea of the gathered church.

Having studied the teachings of the three parties, it is the conviction of this writer that the idea of the gathered church is closest to the truth presented in the New Testament.

Underlying the main issue is the two-fold idea of the visible and invisible church. All three parties recognized that at least in theory such a distinction was valid. Hooker referred to the invisible church as the mystical body of Christ composed of those individuals who truly have faith in him. With this Puritans and Separatists agreed. The difference

in the teachings and practice of the three parties was based on the degree of similarity that a visible church should seek between its real membership list and that of the ideal invisible church.

Hooker explained that God alone is able to know who truly is a member of the mystical body of Christ. Thus, no attempt at all should be made to discern whether a person is truly a member of Christ's body. As a result the Anglican practice of accepting members into the visible church did not include spiritual regeneration as a requirement. For all practical purposes, such a consideration was an impossible question. Rather, the church is the visible group of people, having existed since Jesus came, which has embraced the Christian religion. By having embraced Christianity, Hooker meant three things: (1) that each individual has confessed Jesus Christ as the Lord of his life, (2) that he has embraced the faith which Christ published into the world (correct scriptural doctrine), and (3) that he has entered the visible church "by the door of baptism."

There seems to be an inconsistency between Hooker's emphasis on side stepping the issue of spiritual experience and his requirement that a person confess Christ as Lord. He separates the two while they seem always to go hand in hand. A further inconsistency arises in his teaching regarding morals. He specifically stated that holiness of life was not required for church membership. But how can a person fulfill the requirement of confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and at the same

time neglect his commandments about moral living? According to Hooker, even heretics were to be considered members of the church, though maimed.

Because Hooker held to the national idea of the church he was forced to say some of the things he did about the inclusion of heretics and profligates in the membership of the church. This is one of the main weaknesses of the national church concept. There was little room for the disciplining of church members for their spiritual good, and for the health of the church.

Basically, as long as an individual professed to be a Christian and had been baptized, Hooker considered him a member of the church. It seems that Hooker's concept of the church was a product of trying to make the church harmonize with his one kingdom theory.

The Puritans believed in a less extreme concept of the national church, convinced that such an idea could work in harmony with spiritual discipline. However, to make every person in the nation a Christian in name creates more problems within the church than any amount of discipline is able to cope with. It seems to be a backward way of working. To at one moment declare everyone in the nation a Christian, and at the same time expect them to fulfill the standards of the Christian life is asking a little too much of human nature. Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, said that the flesh is weak, unable to fulfill the requirements of the law. The Bible recognized that spiritual standards are not accomplished

by regulation but by regeneration.

The Separatist concept of the church seems to be most congruent with the idea of the church presented in the writings of the New Testament. This concept of the church is built on the foundation of individual willingness, in contrast to the national concept which is built on external regulation. The Separatists taught that the church is composed of those persons who willingly and individually desire to belong to the flock of God. Having this desire, they join themselves to the local organization of people owning similar desires. This concept is more conducive to attain-  
ing congruency with the membership list of the mystical body of Christ.

## 2. Exclusiveness and Inclusiveness

While the Anglican and Puritan concept of the church tended to be inclusive by nature, the Separatists concept was extremely exclusive. The Bible indicates two aspects about the nature of the church. Positively speaking the church is a group of people called into fellowship with the heavenly Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. In itself this is sufficiently exclusive. But the church has also been called out of the world to be separate from sinners, particularly in its worship. The national church concept had not place for the idea of separateness from the wicked as taught in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

## 3. Spatial and Organizational Aspects

Hooker's objection to a strict concept of the gath-

ered assembly is justifiable in the context in which he used it. He said that a Christian church does not cease to be the church when the assembly disperses. The church is a society, he said, a society of people who exist as such whether gathered together or not. The Separatists had no quarrel at this point. To them the church was gathered in the sense that they together formed an organization of individuals from various parts of a town or slightly larger area. This gathering into an organization did not mean that the organization ceased to exist when the people dispersed bodily. The emphasis, though it was strongly on gathering together spatially, equally stressed the gathering together organizationally. The resultant organization was the church.

#### 4. Contrast by Congruencies

Simply speaking, the Anglican practice consisted in making the membership of the visible church congruent with the citizenship list of England, while the Separatists wished to have the congregations' membership congruent with the citizenship list in Heaven.

#### B. Views Concerning the Government of the Church

##### 1. Determinants for Establishing Polity: Revelation and Reason

##### a) Opposing views: revelation versus reason

As in the question concerning the nature of the church, this subject breaks down into two divisions. But instead of the Puritans siding with the Anglicans, on this issue they



are in whole hearted agreement with the Separatists. The two latter groups believed that all the details of the church government were prescribed in the Bible for men to fulfill. The Anglicans, though they had a high regard for the Holy Scriptures, did not feel that the government and structure of the church in their age need necessarily be limited to the directives found in Scripture. Neither did they feel it essential to copy the practices indicated, since the circumstances in England were different from the situations of the Apostles' day.

All the parties had helpful emphases to contribute to the total picture. The Anglicans primarily stressed reason as the determinant, while the other two parties stressed revelation. Reason and revelation somehow combine in finding a description of true church government.

(1) Anglicans: the reasoned polity

Hooker seemed to definitely be a rationalist while the others were biblicists. He had a philosophical mind, which greatly directed the style of his thinking on church matters. The framework of his thoughts was constructed out of reason. The revelation of God fit into his structuring of truth as he saw it. Rather than holding the Bible as the central source of truth, he viewed it as a part of the whole.

Consequently, he saw the determinants for establishing a framework of church government as consisting of a combination of reason and revelation, both being manifestations of God's divine order found in all of creation. On this basis

Hooker, along with Whitgift, claimed that the type of church polity to be used was to be found by applying divinely ordained laws (principles) of reason to the particular circumstances in which a group of Christians find themselves.

In Hooker's emphasis on reason he neglected to consider the binding nature of the practices and offices mentioned in Scripture. In relation to polity he viewed the Bible as containing mostly limited and temporal truths pertaining only to the time of the Apostles.

(2) Non-conformist: the revealed polity

The Puritans and Separatists considered the facts of polity revealed in Scripture as timeless and transcultural, ordained by God for all eras of the church's history.

Anglicans objected saying that Scripture does not give a complete description of primitive church practice. Besides that, they claimed that a developing polity can be detected. Thus, subsequent Christians could not look to this source for a picture. Cartwright admitted that some things in the Scriptures are not fully explained. On these uncertain things Cartwright gave four principles out of the Word of God to follow in making the decision.

Thus far it seems that a slightly incomplete pattern is shown in Scripture concerning church polity. What Scripture does not show, the Christian must construct, guided by certain general principles found therein. Such considerations as the hour of church services come in this category of unmentioned things.

The Puritans and Separatists were right in saying that the things shown in the Scriptures could not be dismissed as inconvenient or unfitting for their age or any other age. One truly must be careful when he begins to decide that certain things in Scripture are not intended for every culture, consequently dropping them from his thinking and moral responsibility. The Anglicans took this dangerous step and wandered too far. Cartwright was correct in charging them with treating God's invariables as variables, taking freedom where it is not man's to take.

b) Combination of views: revelation and reason

In summary, then, there is a partial pattern of church government revealed in Scripture. A person must seek out all the revealed truths and compile them into a structured view of the church. If then there are certain aspects necessary to employ, but which have not been mentioned in the Scriptures, he is to use his best reasoning ability guided by the general principles revealed in the Scriptures. This is the best way to determine proper church government.

2. Views on the Various Aspects  
of Church Polity

a) Ecclesiastical authority

(1) Its source

If one were to look at the setup of various churches he would notice a graduated scale beginning with the extreme power of the ministry and extending to the extreme power of

the lay congregation. The Anglicans on one side placed ecclesiastical power in the hands of the ministry while the Separatists placed the ultimate power in the unified voice of the congregation. In the middle stood the Presbyterian Puritans who sought a balance of power between the ministers and the laymen in the church. The bishop in the Anglican church was fully authorized to make commands in the parishes of his jurisdiction. Not only was he vested with authority concerning spiritual affairs, but he also had at his disposal the civil power of the Queen to back up his commands. Such power vested in one man is certainly conducive to trouble.

The question of authority in the church should not really be considered in relation to one man or many. Church government should be neither a dictatorship by a bishop nor a democracy expressing the will of the people. Ideally, it should be a christocracy in which each individual seeks to know the will of God on any particular question or problem by finding an answer through God's revealed Word. Thus, none of the aforementioned types of governmental set-ups would be of any value if the people involved were not concerned about finding and doing God's will as revealed in his Son and in his Word. The Bible is the ultimate authority in spiritual affairs. Thus any valid system of ecclesiastical authority must be directly linked to a sound understanding and application of the Scriptures, guided by the Holy Spirit.

(2) Its enforcement

Practically speaking, the means of enforcing authority

is the most crucial and significant issue regarding the visible church. The three groups under question, based on the nature of their structure, used different means to enforce the authority they claimed. An authority which is not enforceable is not effective. Many various means can be used to enforce the decision of the authoritative source or group. These means can be categorized as follows: (1) Spiritual, (2) Psychological, (3) Social, and (4) Physical. The Physical means of enforcement can be sub-divided into economic, civil, and military categories. Clearly, not all these means of enforcement are in harmony with the purposes of the church. Yet differences existed among the Anglicans, Puritans, and Separatists regarding the number of ways that ecclesiastical authority could properly be enforced. History indicates repeatedly that the established Church of England did not hesitate to use physical force in bringing ecclesiastical authority to bear. Perhaps at this point it is most clear that the daily practice of that church was a manifestation of its underlying ideas concerning the nature of the church and its source of authority. The Puritans objected to the use of the civil authority in persecuting non-conformists. But they did not hesitate to admonish the civil authority (parliament) to bring about spiritual changes by civil means. The Separatists, because of their concept of the gathered church, had no place for the use of physical force in regulating the affairs of the church. Browne particularly stressed that it was wrong to use the civil sword in spiritual affairs. He accused the

Cartwrightian Puritans of having broken their spiritual sword against a stone wall, and of taking up with the civil sword in their lack of spiritual power. Browne then keenly pointed out that spiritual concerns could only be treated by spiritual means. He had the wisdom to see that there must be a harmony between the task and the tool, the goal and the means. To Browne it was not a matter of the civil power being unjustifiable, but rather a case of its inability to accomplish the desired objective. The Separatists thus stressed the direct use of the Bible to each individual in bringing about conformity to the will of God and to the will of the congregation (hoping that the congregation had properly interpreted the will of God.).

Those who support the national church idea find themselves entangled in the use of the same means of enforcement as is used by the state. By nature the kingdom of God is different from the kingdoms of this earth. It is necessary to keep nations functioning according to law and order by the use of any humane force available. Whether human beings in a nation like it or not they must cooperate with others and conform to rules and regulations. If certain persons are obstinate, the ultimate means of dealing with them would be excommunication from the society of living men; in other words, capital punishment. But the nature of the kingdom of God is different. The first qualification for citizenship is a willing submission to the will of God. Thus there is no point in using civil power to discipline the man who will not do

the will of God. No amount of external force can cause him to change his heart and will within. In the church the only thing to do with such a person is to excommunicate him from the society of the Christians. Paul says that Christians are to count him as a heathen until he is willing to repent. Thus it can be seen that social ostracizing is part of the spiritual law enforcement which the Scriptures prescribe.

There is an internal enforcement of order which is the most effective of all and most in harmony with the spirit and purpose of the kingdom of God. The person who has made his covenant of faithfulness and obedience to God finds within his life the Holy Spirit influencing him toward a conformity to the Son of God. It is a conformity that has an internal cause. The result of the Spirit's work is a conformity to Christ on the part of the individual which affects both his inner and outer life. Thus, when a church is completely open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, not limiting Him in either mind, will, or emotion, that church will find discipline and authority at work within. Of all the writings of the three major parties in this study, the Separating Congregationalists had most to say about the church's sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit in its practical affairs. Being rid of so much top-heavy hierarchy and dictation from civil authority, the Separatist churches were more able to receive directly the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

b) The ministry: spiritual affairs

## (1) Its nature and function

(a) Anglican orders.--The Ordinal of the Church of England claims: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."<sup>1</sup> It is not as evident to all men as the authors of The Ordinal might wish. Though bishops are mentioned frequently in the New Testament, the scriptural picture of this office is not the same as the image presented to the mind of the Anglican. It is difficult to give a clear cut exposition of all the bishop's privileges and responsibilities in the church since the references are limited. There is not found in the New Testament a clear description of his duties as one might find for the offices of the priests and Levites in the Old Testament. However in the remarks made there is much information available.

The basic idea of a man having the responsibility of guardianship and oversight of a flock of God's people is both scriptural and Anglican. The problem of interpretation lies in the definition of the flock. How large a flock should a bishop be responsible for? Should the flock be taken to mean the Christians of the local congregation, or should the flock include a whole diocese, a state, a nation or even a world? A hint to the limit of the flock's size is found in Paul's statement to the Ephesian Elders. He said, "Take heed to

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter I, p. 28.



yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians [episkopous, bishops], to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood."<sup>1</sup> The flock should be no larger than the group of people a man can effectively feed and guard in a personal way. To make a man the overseer of an area larger than a particular congregation does not harmonize with this passage. The residency of the bishop in the area of his responsibility is implied by the phrase, "in which," and by the fact that all the elders came from Ephesus where the church was located.

The Anglicans claimed that the flock over which the bishop has charge includes other presbyters as well. Thus they say that the bishop is a pastor unto the pastors. It was to this that the Puritans objected. They claimed a parity of ministers, each caring for one another, but none having authority over another. The parity of ministers seems more in harmony with the accounts of Scripture than does the three-fold concept of the Anglican Church.

One finds in Scripture an interchange of words when referring to the ministry. In the book of Acts the leaders of the church in Ephesus were referred to as elders and bishops; all in the same passage. It is significant that all the presbyters were addressed as bishops, and not just one leading presbyter among them.

It can definitely be said that the hierarchical system

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 20:28

of the Anglican Church is a framework having little trace in the Bible. Rather than describing a bishop as a man of greater authority than a presbyter, the New Testament shows the two names as being synonymous. The lack of harmony between the Anglican theory and the biblical picture is apparant.

(b) Puritan parity.--The Presbyterian concept is at this point in greater harmony with the correct interpretation of Scripture. They correlated the synonymous use of bishop and elder with the listing of offices in the church; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Through this correlation they derived an interpretation which used the last two in the list as ordinary ministers in the local church. Along with them the lay elders were to help in ruling. The distinction they make between clergy and laity within the eldership is not easily perceived in Scripture, but can be seen through implication.

(c) Congregational gifts and callings.--The Separatists concurred with the Puritans on the nature of the ministry and its relationship to the elders in general. They made their distinctions within the eldership according to the gifts that a man had received, combined with his spiritual calling. Being one of the "forwardest" in the congregation, a man would be placed in the office of a special teaching and preaching elder if he manifested the requisite abilities. If he had only the gift of ruling then he would remain as a lay ruling elder. This accords with the distinction made in Scripture that elders who rule well be doubly honored, "especially those

who labor in preaching and teaching."<sup>1</sup> Thus a difference between a ruling and a preaching elder is clear.

(2) Examinations

Because of the emphasis on distinguishing a man's gifts and capabilities before he takes the office of teaching, preaching or ruling, the practice of examining a candidate became logical and necessary. Both the Puritans and Separatists stressed that the individual parish or congregation should be involved in the examination. They felt it was wrong for the bishop alone to examine a candidate and then appoint him to a charge. The consent of the governed was important for the receiving of the governor. However, Paul's practice of appointing elders for congregations, and of directing Timothy to do likewise does not seem in all instances to fit the pattern of examinations by the congregation. By observing the Greek words used one finds that Paul's appointing, at times inferred election by the people, and thus, congregational examination of leaders. In other instances Paul clearly chose the leaders for them. The congregations he dealt with were missionary churches, newly formed. Thus it may be necessary at times to appoint leaders in order to get a group of Christians established. Once settled in the Word of God they are ordinary congregations and can choose their own leaders in the ordinary way. Nowhere is it indicated that Paul appointed leaders to long established

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<sup>1</sup>I Timothy 5:17.

churches.

### (3) Ordination

Ordination was performed in varied ways according to New Testament accounts. The most ordinary way was to lay hands on a person by a group of presbyters. The Apostles, as presbyters, did this.<sup>1</sup> Timothy was the subject of such an ordination by elders.<sup>2</sup>

The idea underlying ordination varied between the Anglicans and the Non-conformists. The Anglicans saw it as the induction into the order of the priesthood. It bestowed the authority and right to administer the sacraments and the Word of God. In this the Anglicans were not different from the Puritans. But they were different in claiming that only the bishop, one man in an area, could validly perform the ceremony of ordination. Their thinking was based on the reasoned structure of Anglican polity. Such a position could not be supported in Scripture, and thus the Anglicans did not attempt to support it from that angle. At the time of Elizabeth the theory of apostolic succession had not taken root in the church. Their concept of ordination was strictly pragmatic in nature.

Underlying the practice of laying on hands is the idea of impartation. Laying on hands was employed in the early church to impart healing, authority and the Holy Spirit's

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 6:6

<sup>2</sup>I Timothy 4:14

power. The concept of ordination employs the laying on of hands in order to impart the authority to preach, teach, and rule in the church. It is an outward symbol of the authority given to the individual by the elders representing the congregation. Both the Puritans and the Separatists saw ordination as the human recognition of and consent to the authority that God has placed upon the man being ordained. This concept of ordination is meaningless without examining the man concerning his gifts.

c) The diaconry: practical affairs

The office of deacon in the church is clearly a position of serving in practical affairs. The Puritans and Separatists both were very accurate in describing this position according to the pattern revealed in the Bible. Though hands were laid on deacons their ordination was not considered an impartation of authority to rule, teach, or preach, but rather an authority to officially represent the church in dispensing its material goods to those in need.

The Anglicans again were far from the scriptural description of this office, making deacons a part of the ministry in the church. They left no place for lay leadership at all. This one office which should have been filled by laymen was taken out of their hands. The very purpose of the diaconry from its inception was to relieve the pastoring servants of the time-consuming duties involved in the temporal affairs of the church. Of course the Anglicans did not feel bound to devices and offices used in the early church. This

diversion from biblical practice was another manifestation of their principle of patternlessness.

d) Units of group authority

In Separatist thinking the congregation held supreme authority in church affairs while in Puritan thought representative authority was placed in the hands of the consistory. There was only a slight degree of difference between the two. Indirectly the congregation was supreme in the Presbyterian set-up since they elected "assistants" to the pastors who together formed the consistory. On most affairs, this body represented the church and made the decisions for it. When the consistory met with the larger body of combined consistories the congregation was indirectly in control in that they had the opportunity to elect the representatives.

With the Separatists, direct authority was in the hands of the congregation as a whole. They claimed its power to be above that of any apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher and every particular elder. This extreme position, stated by Browne, can easily be construed into dangerous practices. But understood in its main purpose it is a safeguard against the dictatorship of any strong willed individuals.

Government by elders was the basic theme both of the Puritans and the Separatists. Such a system of government is clearly presented in the New Testament, wherein Christians are told to respect, honor,<sup>1</sup> and obey their leaders.<sup>1</sup> However,

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<sup>1</sup>I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17.

in these two parties, in extreme cases of discipline such as excommunication, the consent of the congregation was necessary in order to authorize any move of the elders.

According to the Separatists no outside authority could dictate to a congregation what to do or to refrain from doing. Always the willing consent of a congregation was basic to inter-church affairs. Such willingness would be basic to Puritan thinking, if they had not entertained the national concept of the church. With a national church the decisions of the conferences and synods could be enforced on individual parishes regardless of their desires. Clearly the willing consent of a congregation harmonizes best with the nature of the kingdom of God. An outward enforcement of spiritual matters could not produce a Christian church.

### C. Summary and Conclusions

There is a partial pattern for church government revealed in the Scriptures. Therefore they hold primary importance in a structured presentation of polity. Though some leading men have felt free to create a system of government by the use of reason, Christians today are under a spiritual obligation to seek in the Scriptures all the available information concerning God's plan for the orderly and abundant life of the church. In order to achieve a well rounded and full picture of church life, particularly in those areas where the Scriptures are silent, there must be an interplay of reason with revelation. Reason is necessary in the application

of God's general principles when the specifics are missing.

The Scriptures indicate that before a church can properly be governed it must properly be a church. Only the gathered congregation of regenerated individuals can begin to approach a valid form of biblical government.

The comparisons and evaluations of the foregoing chapter serve as guidelines for producing a system of polity usable today.



APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### The Position of the Non-separating Congregationalists

In the sunset years of Elizabeth's reign a small group of men began to form along the principles of Non-separating Congregationalism. Their main thrust came during the reign of King James, and thus they do not properly fit into a treatment of polity in Elizabethan England. Nevertheless a look at their position is helpful in order to understand better the position of Congregationalists.

The one man around whom the group turned was William Ames. Accompanying him in the position of Non-separatism were Henry Jacob, Robert Parker, William Bradshaw and Paul Baynes. They were definitely Congregationalists in their understanding of the church's nature and polity. The writings of all the men held firmly to the two-fold Congregationalist emphasis on (1) the restriction of church membership to the proved elect, and (2) the autonomy of particular congregations.

After comparing the positions of these two wings of Congregationalism one finds agreement on all points but a few. Actually they did not disagree on any basic Congregational principles of ecclesiology, but only on whether these principles could be found existent in the Anglican Church.

The position of these Non-separatists was the result of an attempt to harmonize two dissonant ideas. The party wanted to be completely Congregational in their thinking and at the same time view the Anglican Episcopal churches and ministers as true and valid according to Congregational principles. Perry Miller considers their position as attempt "to reconcile irreconcilables."<sup>1</sup> They had learned the political suicide of a Separatist position and wanted to avoid the inconveniences attached to such a stand.

In three areas of thinking the Non-separatists manifested their attempt at a harmony between Congregational principles and the Anglican Church. These areas were (1) the question of the true substance of the church, (2) the idea of a covenant, and (3) the ministry.

Ames and Bradshaw saw Congregational assemblies existent within the framework of the Church of England. To the extent that these assemblies existed one could claim the substance of the true church. That is, when the elect, who happened also to be members of the Church of England, met together to worship Christ voluntarily, that meeting could be considered a true congregation of the elect. As long as the Church of England allowed opportunity for such meetings, along with their regular schedule of meetings of enforced attendance of both reprobate and elect, the Anglican Church could be viewed

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<sup>1</sup>Perry Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts: 1630-1650 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959 [Originally Harvard University Press, 1933]), p. 84.

as true but decayed assemblies yet retaining the possibility of repair. The act of separating from the Church of England was wrong, in their thinking, because in so doing one would cut himself off from the elect who were members of that organization.

The Non-separatists had to harmonize the necessity of a covenant in the founding of a church with the apparent absence of such in the Anglican Church. They considered the visible desire of the elect ones to serve Christ as a sufficient substitute for a formal public covenant. Robert Parker said:

There wants not that reall and substantiall coming together, (or agreeing in Covenant, though more implicate then were meete) and that substantiall profession of Faith, which (thanks be to God) hath preserved the essence of visible Churches in England unto this day.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the difference of motive between the elect and the reprobate, the elect could disregard the presence of reprobates, who were constrained to be present, and think only of the elect as having gathered to covenant with God.<sup>2</sup> Thus the necessary separation from the unregenerate was accomplished by a mental attitude rather than a physical separation.

The Non-separatists seemed to have a simple solution to the problem of calling episcopally ordained and installed ministers Congregational ministers. All that was necessary

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Parker, cited by Perry Miller, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

was for a sincere Anglican clergyman to look with tongue in cheek upon the bishop's function, counting his real validity as a minister in the fact that the parish assembly agreed together to accept him as their pastor.

Though the Non-separatists claimed their position in theory, they actually practiced Separatism. In spite of all their circumlocutions about the Anglican Church they still formed independent congregations separate from the local Anglican parishes.

One point of basic difference between the Separatists and Non-separatists concerned the place of the magistrate in church affairs. While the Separatists said that he had authority in civil affairs alone, the Non-separatists claimed the magistrate's royal supremacy even over the churches. Henry Jacob, in his petition of 1610, informed King James that the power to oversee the churches belonged to the king. But the king objected with this question, "Quhy, then, do ye not obey the kinges lawes that are already moide, quhome ye grawnte to be your supreme magistrate?"<sup>1</sup> Even King James saw the inconsistency between the theory and the practice of the Non-separatists.

In the long run, the Separatists were looked upon with greater favor by the authorities (in the reign of King Charles) than were the Non-separatists because a professed enemy is preferred above a pretended friend.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 96.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 98.

In summary, the Non-separating Congregationalists were thoroughly Congregational in their basic beliefs and practices, but ran into great difficulty when they attempted to superimpose their Congregational interpretation of ecclesiology upon a religious organization it did not actually fit.

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