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THE RAPPAHANNOCK BAPTISTS

(1770-1870)

The Baptist Church and Baptist Society in the
Rappahannock Area as Depicted in Association
and Church Records, 1770-1870

by

Elizabeth Gault Hudson

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
College of William and Mary
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
in the
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Dedicated

to

Dr. Richard L. Morton, College of William and Mary

and

Dr. Garnett Ryland, University of Richmond

whose ready interest and encouragement have been

invaluable.

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Preface

This study was undertaken because of an interest in the people of the Rappahannock Association and a curiosity concerning how the Baptists arose in this area. It has proven an interesting study, one which brought many of the social problems mentioned in secondary histories, but seldom discussed, into reality.

Dr. Garnet Ryland has been very helpful as a guide in selecting the most useful sources in the Library of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. His aid, his advice, and his friendly interest have been most valuable in the preparation of this thesis.

Dr. Richard L. Morton has been a most patient and helpful advisor in the selection of material, in guiding the study of Virginia history. Without his help it would have been most difficult to bring this study to its present form.

The encouragement and the suggestions given by Dr. Willard Bliss, and Dr. Lyman H. Butterfield, and Miss Jane Carson have been most valuable.

Foundations

To the Twentieth Century Baptists of the Rappahannock Association of Virginia,¹ the year 1770 has great significance although its importance to others resident in that area or to the rest of the world is probably unknown. For the majority of people in this part of Tidewater Virginia, life moved on as usual in spite of the fact that two Baptist preachers, John Waller of Spotsylvania and John Burrus, came to preach in Middlesex in November 1770 at the request of James Greenwood and John Mullen; but, to the latter and their friends in their community, life had a new meaning.

By the time Baptists came into Middlesex, the Virginia colony was well established. The successful conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763 had decreased the menace of the Indians. Virginians could pursue their usual manner of life with little interruption except for the unrest over taxes imposed by England.

From the beginning Virginia society had been established upon the pattern of English society. The great

¹The Rappahannock Association is comprised of the Baptist churches located in the counties of Essex, Gloucester (in part), King George, King and Queen, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland which lie on the north and south sides of the Rappahannock River.

planters of Virginia tried to maintain the manner of life which had characterized the life of their social class in England. The white indentured servants who also emigrated to Virginia recognized the social distinctions; yet, unlike the yeomanry of England, they refused to accept their station in society as permanent. As soon as their time of servitude should expire, each hoped to acquire for himself sufficient land to attain for himself and his descendants a better place in society. Many aspired to, and some attained, the social recognition accorded the descendants of the gentry of England who had emigrated to Virginia.

During the eighteenth century great changes came to Virginia. The social distinctions based on the principle of gentry, yeomanry, and servants passed. The servant class was predominantly Negro. Rural life promoted the spirit of independence; color, not rank or wealth, became the fundamental distinction in society. Every free white man was master of his own actions, and in a certain sense, the poorer the man the more independent he was. Men like Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson promoted the rise of the common man.

During the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries in Virginia, the Established Church

of England dominated the religious life of the colony. It had been established in Virginia with the founding of the colony at Jamestown in 1607 and had grown and expanded as the colony grew and expanded. It experienced periods of growth and periods of recession as did the colony. As the settlers moved up the rivers in search of new lands on which to cultivate tobacco, the basis of Virginia's economy, the Established Church moved also. Between 1607 and 1624 thirteen parishes are recorded as having been established.² Others were probably in existence. Through the efforts of the ministers serving these parishes, and the vestrymen who were chosen to execute the affairs of the church, the religious life of the colony took shape and form. Some of the parish ministers were men of the highest integrity, morality, and character, while, as is true in all denominations, others were not of such quality.

The laws which governed the Established Church in Virginia were derived to a great extent from the laws governing the church as established in England. The laws were frequently strict and very harsh in their punishments, a characteristic of the civil laws of that era as well. The laws governing the church required,

²George M. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, (Richmond, 1947), 47-48.

among other things, the support of the clergy by public taxation and attendance upon church services. Punishments were provided both for non-payment of tithes and for non-attendance.³ The requirement that every one attend his parish church was still on the books in 1721, but it was disregarded by both Anglicans, the members of the Established Church, and Dissenters.⁴ By 1744 the laws were so modified that although an individual was still required to attend church regularly, permission was expressly given that one might attend any place of worship he chose whether Anglican or Dissenter.⁵

Virginia required dissenting ministers to register before the respective county courts of their residence and enter upon court records the points at which they proposed to preach and erect meeting houses, thus

³As one of the prerequisites to entrance into the colony it was required of every one that he take the Oath of Supremacy and the Oath of Allegiance, thereby declaring the ruler of England's supremacy in the spiritual as well as in the political realm. The Act of Uniformity prohibited the use of any but the Established form of divine worship, fined those who absented themselves from service, and required every one to pay taxes to support the clergy. The Act of Toleration (1689) was the outgrowth of the Puritan Movement in England. This act permitted the Dissenters, as they came to be known, to form congregations of their own under very restricted conditions. W.W. Hening, Virginia, The Statutes at Large (Richmond, 1823) I, 166.

⁴Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 43-44.

⁵Ibid., II, 43-44.

placing themselves and their congregations under the protection of the laws. In a real sense a license was issued to them by legal authority, giving an assurance to the governing body that they were not itinerant ministers without definite credentials.⁶

Neither the dissenting minister nor the Anglican might preach or officiate lawfully in any parish except his own without official permission from the proper ecclesiastical authority. The thing most feared was the coming of irresponsible men claiming to be ministers who might teach doctrines subversive to the accepted Christian faith or teach Romish doctrine and worship, or who might be representative of groups suspected of disloyalty to the government or the sovereign.⁷

The law requiring each titheable to pay annually a certain amount for the support of the clergy was under constant attack. As early as 1696 there were revisions of the law. At that time the salaries of the clergy were settled at sixteen pounds of tobacco annually. This law became a matter of dispute whenever prices of tobacco were low or the tobacco crop failed.

⁶Ibid., II, 45.

⁷Ibid., II, 46.

The most publicized dispute was over the "Two Penny Act" which allowed the payment of officers' fees and other dues in tobacco at the rate of sixteen shillings eight pence for each hundred pounds of tobacco or in cash at the option of the payer. Thus, when the price of tobacco was above the set value, the clergy could be deprived of a portion of their income as established in 1696. The Two Penny Act, so called since it set the evaluation of tobacco at about two pence per pound, was protested vigorously by the clergy. The leader of the opposition was Reverend John Camm, yet the case of Reverend James Maury (1762) was more publicized than others because of Patrick Henry's eloquent appeal made when the jury was summoned after the hearing of the suit on a writ of inquiry to settle the damages.⁸

The Established Church, though dominant in the religious life of Virginia from the foundations of the colony, by 1770 had had its authority challenged upon numerous occasions.

The Quakers were the first religious dissenters known to have challenged the authority of the Established Church in Virginia, although Roman Catholics

⁸ P.A. Bruce, History of Virginia (6 Vols., New York, 1924); II, 61-72.

had sought admittance prior to 1642. In 1657, Josiah Coale of Bristol and Thomas Thurston, a Quaker preacher from Gloucestershire, England landed in Virginia. They spent six months or more in the colony, a part of the time in jail. Since the early laws of Virginia insisted on uniformity, and neither Roman Catholics nor Quakers were inclined to conform, laws were enacted to compel them to depart from the colony. The Quakers continued visiting in the colony, preaching their doctrines wherever they could gain a hearing, and, after leaving, corresponding with the converts, until, in 1660 a specific act against Quakers was passed in Virginia. The objection to Quakers was primarily based on the supposition that they were a menace to the stability of social life and civil government. Another act (1662) was passed which concerned them since it stated that "Quakers who, out of non-conformity to the church, totally absent themselves, are liable to a fine of twenty pounds for every month's absence from church. And all Quakers, for assembling in unlawful assemblies and conventicles, shall be fined and pay, each of them there taken, two hundred pounds of tobacco for each time."⁹

⁹Rufus M. Jones, The Quakers in the American Colonies (London, 1911), 265-271.

With the passage of the Toleration Act in England and its adoption in Virginia, these severe laws lapsed and after 1705 the preachers representing the different sects were permitted, on license obtained, to preach in the colony. By 1737 the Quakers were satisfied with the treatment accorded them in Virginia.¹⁰

The Quakers established a few congregations, but the Presbyterians (1736) were the first non-Anglican religious group to come into Virginia and make their influence felt. Their early leader, Francis Makemie (1658-1708) and their later leader, Samuel Davies, brought the Presbyterians into Tidewater Virginia and secured for them a place in the colony. They came peaceably, with only a few of their preachers openly criticizing the clergy of the Established Church. Their ministers were trained, and most of them complied with the Act of Toleration which had been enforced in England and was now applied to the Presbyterians in Virginia. The notable exceptions were untrained evangelists such as the Reverend William Robinson and the Reverend John Roan who so inveighed against the supineness of the Established Church clergymen that the latter, in their resentment, brought John Roan into a court of

¹⁰ Bruce, History of Virginia, II, 255.

law. Governor Gooch, himself a Presbyterian, charged both Robinson and Roan with preaching without a regular license and with being unable to show any testimonial that would prove that they had received the proper education for their sacred calling.¹¹

In their bitter antagonism to the establishment the Presbyterians joined with the Quakers and the Baptists and supported all the bills for the divorce of the church from the state. After the Revolution, when the legislature of Virginia passed an act incorporating the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterians of Hanover Presbytery (established by Samuel Davies) were implacable and protested against the act and assisted in accomplishing its repeal.¹²

Other Dissenters, German Reformed (1717-1719), the Lutherans (1725), and the Moravians (1769) entered Virginia, but left little imprint upon the religious life of the colony as a whole. Some of them organized congregations and registered their preaching places, while others failed to do so.

The largest and most influential group of dissenters to invade Virginia was the Baptists. The first known record of a Baptist preacher in Virginia appears in the

¹¹Bruce, History of Virginia, I, 327-328.

¹²Ibid., II, 539-540.

journal of Thomas Story, the noted Quaker, who made his initial visit to Virginia in 1699 and while in the vicinity of Yorktown in York county stayed at the home of one Thomas Bonger, a preacher among the "General Baptists". Nothing whatever is known today of the work of Thomas Bonger and the places where he preached. There seems to be no record of any organization of the Baptists at that time, nor has any record appeared of preaching places registered by him.¹³

The fact that a group of Baptists existed in Isle of Wight is revealed by their petition which the General Baptists in London received and acted on in 1714. Two men, Robert Nordin and Thomas White, were ordained to go to Virginia, but only one, Robert Nordin, arrived safely. He organized a Baptist congregation in Prince George county, at a place called Burleigh, and seems to have preached also in Isle of Wight and in Surry counties. There was a Baptist congregation of about thirty or forty members in Isle of Wight county in 1729 and other congregations in Surry which died out, to a certain extent at least, when their members removed to North Carolina before the coming of the Separate Baptists into Virginia.¹⁴

¹³Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 259-260.

¹⁴Ibid., I, 260.

About 1743 another group of Baptists came from Maryland across the Potomac to Frederick County and organized a congregation called Mill Creek on Opeckon Creek. From this congregation a colony went across the Blue Ridge Mountains into Loudoun county and established Ketoctin church in 1751; later a third congregation in Rockingham and a fourth united with these first two others to form the Ketoctin Association in 1766, the first association of Baptist churches in Virginia: This association was later absorbed by the Separate Baptists who came between 1760 and 1775, and overspread the colony.¹⁵

The real life and growth of the Baptists in Virginia came under the impetus of the Great Revival with the incoming of the Separate Baptists from North Carolina after 1760. These Separate Baptists had originally come from New England under the leadership of Shubal Stearns, a convert of the Reverend George Whitefield

¹⁵Ibid., I, 260.

and a member of a group of New Lights¹⁶ known as Separates who were converted to the Baptist faith in 1751.¹⁷ Shubal Stearns, fired with the zeal and enthusiasm of George Whitefield, felt a call to carry the Gospel to the frontier. He, with a few of his converts left New England in 1754, halted first at Opeckon, Berkley county, Virginia, where he found a Baptist church under the care of the Reverend John Garrard. Here he met his brother-in-law, the Reverend Daniel Marshall who had just returned from his mission

¹⁶The New Light Stir was an extensive movement whose adherents, believing that the parish congregations, with few exceptions, were far from the purity of the Gospel, determined to form churches of their own. Into these none were admitted who did not profess "vital" religion, that is, were consciously aware of an experience called conversion at which time they felt a sense of exaltation and dedication. Having thus separated themselves from the Congregational Church, they were called Separates. The Separates took their name about the year 1744. Their church government was entirely upon the plan of the "Independents", the power being in the hands of the church. They permitted unlearned men to preach, provided they manifested such gifts as indicated their future usefulness. Stearns believed in the immediate teachings of the Spirit. Mr. Stearns, listening to some of these instructions of Heaven, conceived himself called by the Almighty to move far to the westward to execute a great and extensive work. Incited by his impressions, he and a few of his members took their leave of New England. Robert B. Semple, A History of . . . the Baptists in Virginia, revised by G.W. Beale (Richmond, 1894), 12.

¹⁷Landon C. Bell, The Old Free State (Richmond, 1927), I, 377.

among the Indians to Opeckon where he had become a Baptist. The two, with their companies, settled for a while on Cacapon, in Hampshire county, about thirty miles from Winchester. Being not too successful here, and restless, Stearns moved on to Sandy Creek in Guilford county, North Carolina,¹⁸ carrying with him many of the Puritanical ideas from New England. Daniel Marshall went out into the neighboring county, and into parts of Virginia adjacent to Sandy Creek and Abbott's Creek where he baptized several during his first visits. Among those baptized was Dutton Lane under whose pastoral care the first Separate Baptist church in Virginia was constituted in August 1760.¹⁹

The Baptists met opposition in Virginia for several reasons: their doctrine, their methods of evangelizing, and their leaders. By law the Episcopal form of worship was established: the king of England was decreed the head of the church; every baptized person living within the realm was considered a member of the church; every head of the household was taxed to support the clergy; the Bishop of London was responsible for the governing clergy; the clergy must be ordained in England before

¹⁸ Semple, a History of . . . the Baptists in Virginia, 13-14.

¹⁹ Ibid., 27-28.

they could be eligible for a "benefit" in the colony. Nothing could be more opposed to the doctrines and the practices of the Baptists, especially the Separate Baptists.

The Established Church expected every child born within its realm to be baptized into the church soon after birth and to be reared in the church by his family and the parish clergyman. To them there was no occasion for evangelizing, except among heathens.

The ministers of the Established Church, educated in England and accustomed to the supervision of the higher church officials, were trained to serve closely knit communities where tradition played a great part; but in Virginia there was little supervision. The parishes they served extended over wide geographic areas and independence was the keynote of life. Consequently there was neglect of large parts of Virginia society and opposition in Virginia to the rules and regulations of the Established Church.

When the Baptists first appeared in North Carolina, they were viewed by the civil authorities and the clergy as beneath their notice; "None," said they, "but the weak and the wicked join them. Let them alone. They will soon fall out among themselves and come to nothing."²⁰

²⁰ Ibid., 29.

The clergy and the civil authorities were complacent. However, when the Baptist ministers began travelling up and down the colony preaching like John the Baptist of old, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"²¹ the people came in crowds to hear; some were converted and in turn set out to preach. Such a wide-spread movement, stretching from the mountains to the sea, aroused both the clergy and the civil authorities. It threatened the established order. Prior to the Toleration Act the law stated that no form of worship other than the established should be permitted. The Baptists came accepting no established creed, laying claim to the Bible as their only source of doctrine. The custom of the Established Church was to have as ordained ministers only those who, upon the completion of their education, were selected by the Bishop and properly ordained according to prescribed rites and ceremonies. The Baptists came accepting no authority for their call to the ministry except "the call of God to go into all the world to preach". The civil government and the Established Church government were so woven together it was difficult to know where one ceased and the other began. The Baptists accepted no church

²¹John Leland, The Virginia Chronicle (Fredericksburg, 1790), 22.

government, each congregation being an autonomous unit governing its affairs as it saw fit, declaring that church and state should be separate in all things. They preached freedom wherever they could get a hearing, and freedom as they preached it was in direct opposition to the church as established by law in Virginia since the foundation of the colony at Jamestown in 1607.

The Separate Baptists preached freedom of conscience, declaring that every man had the right to interpret the Bible for himself, repudiating the belief that the laity must depend upon the educated clergy for an interpretation of the teachings of the Bible. This brought freedom to the common man who had depended for years on the Episcopal clergy to interpret the Bible for him. However, the members of a Baptist church agreed among themselves to conform to the beliefs adopted by the majority of the congregation.

The Baptists preached the separation of church and state, declaring that no civil authority could dictate to a man's conscience in religious matters or force him to support by tithes or by his attendance any particular church. They rejected the right of the civil authorities to collect tithes for the support of

the clergy and to present before the court any person for non-attendance upon the services of the Established Church. Also, since the Baptists believed in adult baptism following conversion, they refused to accept infant baptism. When two opposing forces met, it was but natural in that age, at least, that one must try to destroy or supplant the other.

The method of evangelizing used by these early Separate Baptists was directly opposed to the customs of the Established Church. In the Established Church a child was born, and soon thereafter baptized into the church. From that point on, the church and his family were responsible for educating him in religious matters. How much instruction he received depended on the religious zeal of his elders in his family and the efforts of the clergy. That the latter were frequently inadequate was due not so much to the lack of interest as to the tremendous physical obstacles in the way of regular visits to all parts of what were exceptionally large parishes. The Baptists, both Regular and Separate, believed in adult conversion and baptism following conversion. They believed that no person baptized in infancy and reared in the church was necessarily a converted person; therefore they went from house to house preaching and exhorting; urging that each individual seek

an "experience of conversion." Many were alarmed by the teaching of these Baptists, and sought to put a stop to their wild ideas. Frequently when one of the Baptist preachers had gathered a crowd around him, a band of enraged citizens would arrive intent upon breaking up the meeting. Sometimes they would yell and make such a noise that the people could not hear the speaker; sometimes they would have a warrant served upon the preachers present; and sometimes they would toss a nest of hornets on the improvised platform.

The house to house method of preaching was not the only thing that was obnoxious to the Established Church and the educated portion of society. Many of the Baptist ministers were unlearned men, mechanics, and laborers. To the Established Church this was unthinkable, and to the educated class it was ridiculous. What made it even more offensive, the preachers appealed so successfully to the laborers that, when the Baptists were in the neighborhood, the planters were unable to keep their men at work. When news came that a Baptist preacher was in the vicinity, the common people would frequently pack up enough food for several days and go and camp near the preaching place. This was exasperating to their employers.

Then too, the manner of preaching used by these early Baptist ministers made them the object of ridicule and censure by the Established Church and the educated class. What some of the ministers lacked in learning, they made up for in their manner of preaching. They used "intoning," loud whoops, wild gestures, and other noises which helped to produce mass hysteria so that many of their meetings were accompanied by strange phenomena such as groaning, writhing, contortions, and great shouts of ecstasy. In Colonial Virginia the preaching of the unlearned Baptist ministers was to the Established Church almost blasphemy and, to the educated, foolishness. Consequently every penal law in the Virginia code was strained to suppress these Baptists. The most frequent charges made were preaching without a license and disturbing the peace.

The early leaders of the Baptists, such men as Dutton Lane (1758), Elijah Craig (1764), and Lewis Craig (1767), who preached throughout Virginia, frequently following a regular itinerary, were uneducated men of the laboring class. Dutton Lane,²² upon his conversion by the preaching of Daniel Marshall, was so

²²James B. Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers (Richmond, 1838), Second Edition, 27-28.

²²James B. Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers (Richmond, 1838), Second Edition, 27-28.

fired by zeal to tell others of his experiences that he set about preaching to any one who would listen. Elijah Craig²³ gathered his fellow laborers together in his tobacco house at night and exhorted them to seek salvation. His work was chiefly in Orange and Culpeper. His brother Lewis²⁴ spent most of his time after conversion travelling constantly, preaching wherever he could gain an audience, going down even to Middlesex in the Rappahannock Association.

Of the early preachers in Virginia, Samuel Harriss²⁵ (ordained 1769) and John Waller²⁶ (ordained 1770) came of the educated class. Samuel Harriss was a man of recognized position in his community at the time of his conversion, having served as church warden, sheriff, justice of the peace, burgess for the county, colonel of the militia, captain of Mayo Fort, and commissary for the Fort and army. John Waller came of an honorable family and was destined for the law, but circumstances and his own inclination prevented that. At one time he was among the fiercest persecutors of the Baptists, serving on a jury which presented Lewis Craig

²³Ibid., 62-64.

²⁴Ibid., 84-88.

²⁵Ibid., 28-35.

²⁶Ibid., 77-84.

for preaching in his neighborhood. However, he was so impressed by Craig's demeanor that he began attending Baptist meetings. By the time Harriss and Read came on their next tour Waller had become a candidate for Baptism. He was baptized by Read in the year 1767 and was ordained pastor of a newly formed church in his neighborhood in 1770. Then he, too, extended his labors, becoming an itinerant preacher going as far as Middlesex.

II

Opposition in the Rappahannock Association

The men of the Rappahannock Association were of different social position and education, but united in their ardent service to the new faith as were the men who served Virginia at large. James Greenwood (born 1749), Theodoric Noel (baptized 1778), Lewis Lunsford (born 1753), and others were of the less educated class. Theodoric Noel¹ was known as an exhorter. His exhortations, uttered with a deep-toned loud voice, in tuneful modulation, had a powerful effect and induced paroxysms of emotion accompanied by crying out and falling down on the ground, sometimes in a semi-conscious state. Lewis Lunsford² was the remarkable boy preacher of his day, beginning his preaching at the age of seventeen. His fluent speech and pungent manner of address excited astonishment and drew crowds from every direction. He, however, was not spoiled by his popularity and became a diligent student, laboring by day to earn a living and studying by firelight at night to gain knowledge. James Greenwood³ lived such a blameless life that it is said of him that his example exerted

¹James B. Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers (Richmond, 1838), Second Edition, 228-229.

²Ibid., 137-146.

³Ibid., 125-126.

more influence than any of his sermons.

Iverson Lewis⁴ (born 1741, baptized 1770), unlike his fellow ministers just noted, was educated in the established religion of his day. He was an Episcopalian, very pious, very observant of the rules and regulations of the Established Church, feeling it unnecessary to do more to obtain eternal life. However, upon hearing an itinerant preacher proclaim, "Ye must be born again," he was stirred to the point of going to hear John Waller. He was converted and began to exhort those around him. He, like William Mullen, went to visit relatives, conversed with them concerning his recent conversion, and so impressed them that they invited in their friends and neighbors to hear him. Much to his embarrassment they asked him to preach, and so began his career as a preacher. He was instrumental in establishing three churches in Mathews.

One of the most prominent ministers of the Rapahannock region, though not a founder of any of the churches, was Robert Baylor Semple⁵ (born 1769, baptized 1789), eminent historian of the Virginia Baptists.

⁴Ibid., 229-232.

⁵Ibid., 269-320.

He, like Waller, studied law and once was contemptuous of the ministers of the Baptist faith who were men of limited attainments. He argued frequently with an aged member of the Baptist church near his home, and although his purpose was to convince his neighbor of the foolishness of Baptist beliefs, he himself became convinced of their truth. Thereafter he spent the remainder of his life serving the church of which he was so scornful in his youth.

These early leaders, both educated and unlearned, went about preaching wherever they could gain a hearing. Because of their criticism of the clergy, their social status, their manner of preaching, or because of their success in converting many people to their faith, they were persecuted. Of the ministers previously mentioned, John Waller suffered persecution as much as any.

When James Greenwood and John Mullen were converted through conversations with William Mullen, they were anxious to hear further. As a result John Waller and John Burrus came down from Spottsylvania to preach in Middlesex in November 1770. James McKan presented a petition to the county court in the spring of 1771, asking to have his house licensed as a place of worship for the Protestant dissenters according to the requirements of the Act of Toleration. Since the Established Church and

the civil authorities were apposed to allowing the Baptists to gain a further foothold in Middlesex, the petition was rejected. When William Webber (born 1747) and John Waller arrived in that county at the home of James McKan in August, 1771 - the Baptists were not deterred by the lack of a licensed preaching place - the adherents of the Established Church went into immediate action. A warrant, issued by Phillip Montague, was placed in the hands of an officer. While Webber was preaching, on the very first day of their arrival, two sheriffs executed the warrant. The sheriffs were accompanied by the parson of the parish and a posse, although when Waller and Burrus had come in 1770 to preach and a magistrate had attempted to pull Waller off the stage, it was a clergyman present who had prevented it.⁶ On the same day, Webber, Waller, and others were taken before James Montague, another magistrate of the county. Webber, Waller, and two others, declaring "they had no power or authority for that which they had done but from above," were committed to jail until they should be discharged by due course of law.⁷ From the records of Middlesex county we find them charged with "unlawfully

⁶ Probably Samuel Klug, minister Christchurch parish. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 611.

⁷ J.D. McGill, Sketches of History of the Baptist Churches Within the Limits of the Rappahannock Association in Virginia (Baltimore, 1850), 16.

assembling themselves at the house of James McKan . . . and taking upon themselves to teach or preach the gospel under the pretense of the exercise of religion in other manner than according to the Litturgy of the Church of England, they not having Episcopal Ordination . . . according to the canons of the said Church of England⁸

Not all of the inhabitants of Middlesex were in sympathy with this move on the part of the clergy and the civil authorities. Some of the citizens, in a petition dated September 19, 1771, requested that the case of the Baptist preachers be reconsidered and that they be released from their imprisonment to return to their distressed families.⁹ It is supposed that John Waller had to remain in the jail for the full period of six months since the record does not show he was ever discharged.¹⁰

⁸James Montague, Letter (photostatic copy) preserved in the Library of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society located at the University of Richmond, Virginia.

⁹Taken from a copy of the petition as presented to the court of Middlesex, September 19, 1771 preserved in the Library of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

¹⁰Letter - related to grand jury proceedings in Saluda, Middlesex county, April 28, 1873 - preserved in the Library of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

Other instances of persecution in the Rappahannock Association followed. John Waller, John Shackelford, and Robert Ware had a warrant served upon them when they were constituting Piscataway church in 1774. They were imprisoned on many occasions, sometimes for as long as sixteen days at the time. Upon one occasion James Greenwood preached from the cell windows, with such success that his foes judged it politic to open the prison doors and let him go free.¹¹ Other ministers were attacked in public debate. In the Upper Zion neighborhood two laymen, James Ware and James Pittman, were imprisoned for sixteen days for allowing preaching in their houses. In 1775 Younger Pitts was taken up to be carried before a magistrate for preaching, although after some abuse, he was set at liberty. This was the last instance in the Upper King and Queen community of an attempt at suppression "under color of the law."¹² The era of persecution in the Rappahannock Association lasted approximately five years. Of course opposition continued, but it was not conducted through the channels of the law - rather through threats and pranks such as Theodoric Noel suffered when he baptized a young woman.

¹¹ McGill, Sketches, 20-23.

¹² Semple, A History of . . . the Baptists in Virginia, 156.

It is told that the convert's brother threatened to dip any person who should dip her. In fulfillment of his word he made the attempt, but failed to get Mr. Noel under water before he was chased away by some present who did not like this treatment of the preacher.¹³

The Baptists met opposition, suffered persecution under the law, endured many indignities, but they persevered and succeeded in establishing the Baptist faith permanently in the Rappahannock area.

¹³Ibid., 164.

III

Organizations

The coming of the Baptists into the Rappahannock area was followed by the organization of churches in each community where there were baptized believers. The first three churches organized, Glebe Landing, Lower King and Queen, and Upper Essex, were located in three adjoining counties: Middlesex, King and Queen, and Essex. Although these churches were in different counties, they were not widely separated geographically. As the number of believers increased and spread over a wider geographical area, each church established meeting houses which were convenient to the people. A congregation might have four or five meeting houses, to one of which each member would be expected to come. Each meeting house had a special time for preaching and a special time for business sessions so as to make it possible for the pastor to be present. To fulfill his engagements, the pastor would set out from home on horse back or in some horse-drawn vehicle to meet with the congregation in their business session on Saturday and to preach on Sunday. If distance to the next appointment demanded it, he would continue on his journey; if not, he would return home until time to go to the next engagement. An urgent need for his services in a locality

would cause him to tarry in that community a while to meet the needs of his congregation. While in a locality he would be "invited out" by his members, staying in a different home each night, or sometimes he would prefer to go to one place to be "entertained." In either case he was able to meet his people and know them better. To "entertain" the preacher was considered a great privilege.

The establishment of churches entailed the settling of many problems. The Baptists were in revolt against the established form of worship. That form of worship they would not use, therefore they must agree on some other. The matter was brought up and discussed at business sessions of the local church until at last the members arrived at an agreement. This agreement was recorded in the minutes and was later referred to as the covenant and rules of order. Each church decided on the wording of its own covenant, although the content of most of the covenants was about the same: the purpose of the church, the acknowledgment of the Holy Scriptures as the only standard by which they would live, and a prayer for God's blessing on the church.¹

¹See Appendix B.

Here the similarity of their agreements almost ceased. The Rules of Order set up by each church were the direct expression of the opinion of the Baptists of that locality as to what was the proper conduct of a Christian. Some stipulated certain forms of dress; others forbade the use of music in the homes; others stated whether one should stand or kneel during prayer. Since these Rules of Order were subject to change usually on a two-thirds vote of the members present, there were fairly frequent revisions.

The Rules of Order became the criterion by which the church judged each member and the pastor. Should a member fail to live up to any one of these rules, he was called before the church to give an account of himself. If he refused to comply with the Rules of Order, he was "dealt with", meaning that the other members sat as a body to hear the case and decide what verdict should be rendered. If found guilty, a member could be suspended until he changed his conduct or he could be excluded. Exclusion was considered the severest and was used only in extreme cases.

Since the Baptists did not believe church membership essential to salvation, exclusion from church would not have the same meaning for them as it did to Roman Catho-

lics. Yet it entailed such severe ostracism, not only by the members of the church but by the community as well, that it was a powerful deterrent to misconduct on the part of the members.

For an erring pastor there was a special punishment "silencing", meaning that he would no longer be permitted to preach in that church although he might be allowed to retain his membership as a lay-member. Exclusion was also used when the church felt it was needed.

Each church chose its own pastor. Prior to 1824 the congregation was the sole judge of the qualifications which the man it chose should have. As indicated previously, the early ministers were for the most part uneducated. Their best qualification was usually an intense desire to tell others of their own conversion and to urge them to seek a similar experience. Some of the men could read and study the Bible for themselves and presented its teachings as they understood them. Others depended on "divine inspiration," believing that if they stood on their feet before a congregation and prayed, God would put the words into their mouths as the disciples were told God would do when they had to defend themselves before a court upon arrest.

The form of service was a question for debate. Congregational singing was one of the chief features of

public worship, yet each church had to determine whether an instrument should be used to accompany the singing. Some churches were bitterly opposed to having musical instruments in the church, or for that matter in the home. The proper position of the body during prayer was another point of difference. Some felt that the only attitude of prayer, whether public or private, was kneeling; others felt that in public prayer it was proper to stand with bowed head; still others felt the head should be raised toward God in the heavens. Each congregation decided exactly what it would do and the members of that church were expected to abide by the decisions or be "dealt with."

There were many points of difference concerning the administering of the ordinances of Baptism and communion, but in several respects the Baptists were in accord: all agreed that immersion was the only form of Baptism, that it could be administered only by an ordained minister of like faith and order, and that communion could be served only to baptized believers of like faith and order. These practices brought about a great deal of friction between the Baptists and other dissenters as well as between the Baptists and the Established Church.

The idea of an Association among the Baptists was derived from England, where such organizations had been formed as early as 1683.² The earliest association in the American colonies was the Philadelphia Association, 1707; the earliest in Virginia, the Ketocin Association, 1776.³ As the Baptists grew in numbers in Virginia they separated into four districts: two on the south side of the James and two on the north side. One of the latter was the Dover Association which included the Baptist churches in the counties of Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, Charles City, New Kent, James City, York, Warwick, Elizabeth City, Caroline, King William, King and Queen, Essex, Middlesex, Gloucester, Mathews, King George, Westmoreland, Richmond, Northumberland, and Lancaster.⁴

As the Baptists grew in numbers and became more widely scattered, it was deemed expedient, because of the great distances from the Rappahannock area to the usual meeting places of the Dover Association to which the Rappahannock Baptists belonged, to form a separate

²William Cathcart, editor, The Baptist Encyclopedia (Philadelphia, 1881), 46.

³Ibid., 47.

⁴Semple, A History of . . . the Baptists in Virginia, 118, 119, 120.

association. The year 1873 is the accepted date of the organization of the Dover Association; the year 1843, of the Rappahannock Association.⁵

The Associations as developed in England were composed of elected delegates from each local church. The Association, upon assembling, disclaimed all power to prescribe or impose anything upon the faith or practice of any of the churches, even though they were represented in the gathering; neither should anything done by the association be binding upon any one church except with the consent of that church by a majority vote of the male members. The messengers, composing the assembly, brought letters from the churches commending them to it. These letters also contained many questions concerning which members of the local church disagreed and about which they wished the opinion of the assembled churches. Sometimes they wished to know how another church handled the same question. The assembly's minutes were recorded and a copy sent to each church.⁶

Since each Baptist congregation was an independent organization, fiercely jealous of its independence, the associations could only recommend certain policies. Out of these discussions there emerged a church policy and a church government recognized by member congregations.

⁵See Appendix A.

⁶Cathcart, The Baptist Encyclopedia, 46.

Should a congregation disapprove any action taken by the association it could withdraw, and then remain independent or apply for membership in another association.

A certain amount of discipline was exercised by the association over both the churches and the pastors, but due to the large degree of freedom of the local churches, such cases were rare. If a church departed too far from the accepted teachings of the denomination, it was "waited upon" by the association. Such action was taken in regard to several churches after the arrival of Mr. Alexander Campbell,⁷ later the recognized founder of the Disciples of Christ denomination, in the Association through the invitation of Mr. Henley, the pastor of Upper Essex Church. The ensuing dissension was the occasion for much discipline, not only of the churches, but of the ministers also.

The church first called Kingston (later, Mathews) was among those which were disciplined because the pastor and some of the church members followed the teachings of Mr. Campbell. Some of the members of Mathews Church were among the earliest adherents of the peculiar views (from a Baptist point of view) of Alexander Campbell. When Peter Ainslie accepted these views, he and five others who followed him were excluded by the Dover

⁷See Appendix C.

Association in 1832. In spite of the action taken by the Association, others in this region continued to turn from the Baptist doctrine to that of Mr. Campbell. Consequently a committee from the Association visited Mathews Church in May 1834, attempting to turn the people back to their former point of view, but without much success. At the fall session of the Dover Association held at Upper King and Queen in 1834, the Association moved to exclude Mathews Church. The motion was withdrawn at the request of the Mathews delegate, Mr. Hudgins, and another committee was appointed to visit the church. In November, 1835, they met with the church, at which time all the members then known to have avowed the heretical sentiments of Mr. Campbell, including Dr. Daingerfield, the pastor, were excluded from membership. In 1836 Mathews Church disavowed the act of its pastor in 1835, declared that the connection had been dissolved without its consent and petitioned the Association that it be again attached to the Association.⁸

Bruington Church also suffered from disturbance because of the adherence of some of its members to Mr. Campbell's views, but not to the extent that the Association felt it necessary to take action.⁹

⁸McGill, Sketches, 35-39.

⁹Ibid., 53.

The Association would formally disband any church which had disintegrated. Such action was taken in respect to the church at Gloucester, sometimes called Ware or Patsworth. Under its first pastor, Robert Hudgins, it had eighty-eight members. From 1791 to 1801 William Lemon served the church, followed by William Leigh (1801-1828). By 1844 the church had failed to correspond with the Association for so long that a committee was sent to visit it in 1846. They found the church without a pastor, without regular preaching, and almost without members, only two white male members remaining. The committee recommended that its constitution be dissolved.¹⁰ Thus, although the member churches enjoyed many attributes of independence, they accepted some control by the Association.

¹⁰Ibid., 58.

IV

Rules of Order and of Conduct

Since the largest and most active group of Baptists in Virginia had come from New England, the land of the Puritans, they brought with them many of the Puritanical concepts as to the proper conduct of a Christian. Some of these practices may have originated in their determination to distinguish themselves from those around them. Some very radical ideas are recorded in the local Rules of Order and in the queries sent by the local churches to the Association. On some questions there was a slow evolution of thought from extreme radicalism to moderation; other questions were dismissed as of no great importance; on others the church as a whole maintained its original stand.

The evolution of the pastor-church relationship from the arrival of Shubal Stearns (1754) to the close of the first century of Baptists in Virginia was state-wide, and in the Rappahannock Association certain phases of it occurred. Because of Baptist opposition to legal taxation for the support of the clergy, Samuel Harriss advocated during the early years of his ministry that the church assume no financial responsibility toward the pastor. He recommended this policy wherever he went not only to the laymen but also to the young men whom

he ordained. Few of the young men who felt called to the ministry were men of the means enjoyed by Samuel Harriss and obedience to his policy worked a tremendous hardship upon them. Engaging in some trade or farming as best they could between itineraries was their only possible means of livelihood. Harriss revised his opinion when he observed the extreme poverty and suffering of the families of the poorer men who felt called to serve as ministers. From then on he advocated that the church should make some contribution to the income of the minister other than to "entertain him" while he was in the community.

From the Rappahannock churches queries were sent to the Dover Association asking the opinion of the Association concerning the obligation of a minister to serve a church which did not support him. The Association's emphatic "NO!" indicated a decided alteration in opinion from that of Harriss at the beginning of his ministry.¹ A later inquiry, "Is it consistent with the Apostolic mode and the direct command of our Lord and Master, that ministers of the Gospel should preach for a sum previously contracted for?" received the answer,

¹Minutes of the Dover Association, 1790 - Preserved in the Library of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

"The scriptures require churches to support their preachers, the mode of doing it is left to the prudence of the churches."² The matter was brought up again in 1835, at which time the Association expressed the opinion that since efficient and active ministers had moved from the state or were engaged in secular work to support themselves, the churches should make a greater effort to raise funds to support pastors.³

As indicated, the manner of raising the funds necessary to support the pastors was left in the hands of the local church. Some churches depended solely on voluntary donations by the members. Whether these donations were adequate frequently depended on the popularity of the minister. Sometimes the prejudice against paying the clergy, which had been aroused when the law required each titheable to be taxed for their support, still existed in the community. Some churches followed the practice in Mathews Church where in raising money, the amount needed was apportioned among the male members according to their "several ability."⁴

²Ibid., 1818.

³Ibid., 1835.

⁴McGill, Sketches, 31-38.

In addition to the question of pastoral support, there was another: "Can a church silence a preacher without depriving him of his membership?" At times the church felt that the minister needed to be deprived of his right to express his views publicly with the sanction of the church. The Association believed that a church had the right to silence a minister and that his offering to preach or to discharge any ministerial duty before he was expressly restored to the free exercise of his gifts was disorderly.⁵

A few instances are recorded when the churches of the Rappahannock felt called upon to silence their ministers. One such instance arose from the failure of the minister to hold "family worship" in his home. The Baptists believed strongly that the reading aloud of the Bible and prayers by the family was very necessary to proper Christian growth. The opinion of the Association in this case was that the minister should be called upon to give his reason for such gross neglect of his duty, and if satisfaction could not be had, he should either be prevented from preaching or be given any further censure the church might think proper. It stated that laymen also should be proceeded against in the same manner.⁶

⁵Minutes of the Dover Association, 1832.

⁶Ibid., for 1794.

Another cause for silencing a minister was disorderly conduct. What "disorderly" meant was discreetly left to the imagination. In one case the minister asked to be dismissed from the pastoral care of the church. His request was referred to a church meeting for the church to decide what action to take. Apparently some of the members were dissatisfied with the minister and wished him to leave. A vote was taken to see how many opposed the man as pastor. When only five voted against him, the church excluded them and retained the pastor. Within the year the five asked to be restored to church membership. However, the next year the same pastor was again charged with disorderly conduct for neglecting the work of the ministry and the care of the church "while himself falling into many evil and hurtful lusts." The church at this time dismissed him as their minister, but upon his repentance continued him in fellowship as a private member.⁷

Still another cause for silencing a minister was a difference of opinion in doctrinal matters. During the Alexander Campbell episode quite a number of ministers were relieved of their pastoral duties because of their adherence to his views. The manner in which the local church took action against a minister of different

⁷Upper King and Queen Church Records, 28-29.

views is well illustrated by the following entry in the Upper Essex Church Records, (1819-1837):

A matter of grievance existing in the church between the same and its pastor, the following named persons of other churches were selected as assistants to associate with the members of this church for the purpose of settling the grievance. . . . After the discussion, the question was put whether in the opinion of the church Brother _____'s preaching continued useful; when it was negative, Brother _____, being considered no longer the pastor, was granted the privilege of preaching at the meeting house whenever he chose, provided the church was not interrupted as to monthly meetings.⁸

(I have omitted names here and elsewhere, as indicated when records are quoted.)

The next year this same man was alleged to have written a letter charging other ministers with preaching a doctrine which, if believed, would carry many souls to Hell. He was then ordered to be cited to answer charges. After considerable debate, the minister requested a letter of dismissal which would expressly exonerate him from all charges touching immoralities. Other churches in the Association were opposed to this church granting a letter of dismissal on the grounds that it was "orderly" to grant letters of dismissal only to members of good standing; therefore, the granting of

⁸The church did not require of the dismissed pastor that he cease to express his views; he was even allowed the use of the church building at times when the congregation did not use it, but he was not allowed to serve the congregation as pastor. 163-173.

a letter of dismissal to him would place upon him the stamp of approval of the church which dismissed him. Since he was being dismissed because of doctrinal differences, to do this would place the church in a false position.⁹

Active participation in political life also brought about dissension and action against pastors especially when the slavery question and disunion became the heated topics of the day. The pastor of Morattico Church found himself the center of such action when he chose to champion the cause of the Union Party in 1861. After learning of his decision, the church offered the following resolutions:

Whereas a portion of the citizens of Lancaster and Northumberland known as the Union Party did on January 21, 1861 in public meeting nominate Elder _____ as their candidate for the state convention, and whereas he accepted the nomination, canvassed the counties and occupied a seat in the convention without consulting the wishes of the members of the Morattico Church - therefore be it resolved; That the relative duties of pastor and members imposed a corresponding obligation upon each; consequently we repudiate the doctrine that the pastor may at pleasure, regardless of the wishes and feelings of the church, absent himself to attend to the affairs of government.

Resolved: That it is humiliating to this church to see their pastor enter the arena of debate upon questions of State or Federal policy, as it tends to impair his usefulness as a minister and to bring reproach upon the cause of Christ.

⁹Upper Essex Church Records, 1819-1837, 163-173.

Resolved: That whilst we cherish Brother with feelings of Christian affection and are adverse to severing relations that exist between us as pastor and people, yet we totally dissent from him as to the propriety of his becoming a candidate for a seat in any political assembly, believing that such a position is incompatible with his calling as a Christian minister.

These resolutions were adopted by the church and the minister immediately tendered his resignation, but asked for the privilege of defending himself before the public in the church meeting house. At this public session he explained that he had attended a convention which made every effort to preserve the Union even after several states had already seceded. The next year this pastor was reinstated and resolutions of apology were passed and recorded in the minutes of the church.¹⁰

Rivalry between two churches was a matter which sometimes caused questions to be sent to the Association. Several times it was asked whether it was right for another minister to come within the bounds of a church to preach and baptize without the invitation of that church. Then, too, there was the matter of an individual moving his church membership from the church

¹⁰ Morattico Church Records, May 1861. No explanation was recorded in the minutes of the change of attitude toward the pastor's participation in political affairs. It may be supposed that, since he owned and operated a farm in that area, the congregation decided to forgive his error and reinstate him as pastor.

nearest him to one farther away for personal reasons. In spite of the Baptists' determination to remove themselves as far as possible from the practices of the Established Church, here is an indication of the feeling that within a geographical area only one church of a given denomination should attempt to serve the community and no other has a right to enter.¹¹

Since one of the greatest criticisms which the Baptists and other Dissenters made of the Established Church was its laxity in regard to the discipline of its members, the Baptists set up a strict code of conduct by which their members were to live. The church kept an especially close watch on the morals of its members. Any infraction of the accepted moral code of the church was promptly reported and dealt with. Instances of exclusion for such moral vagaries as pregnancies before marriage, lewdness, inconstancy, adultery, and the like are found scattered throughout the church records.¹² Upon repentance and good behavior, many of

¹¹It had been customary in the Established Church for the clergyman of one parish not to exercise his ecclesiastical duties in another.

¹²The Episcopal Church frowned upon such vagaries, also. The laxity referred to seems to concern dancing, drinking, card playing - the fashionable customs of the day.

these offenders were restored to their fellowship with the church from which they had been excluded.

Other moral issues were brought before the Association. "Is it lawful for a man to marry his wife's sister?" "Is it censurable for a member of the Baptist Church either to marry or be aiding or assisting in marrying a child under age without the consent of the parent or guardian?" "Is there any case in which the Word of God will allow a man and his wife to separate and yet continue in society, they being lawfully married?" "Will the Scripture justify a man who has been divorced from his wife (for fornication) in marrying another?" The Association condemned without reservation the marriage of a man to his sister-in-law as incestuous. Concerning the aiding and abetting the marriage of children under age, the Association felt it was an act displeasing to God. The church was advised to take up the matter of separation and exclude one or both as they judged them censurable. The matter of the divorcee remarrying must be handled carefully, the slave to be dealt with differently from the free man. In the case of slaves, if the church judged the fornication clearly proven, it could pronounce them divorced and permit remarriage; but for free men, only those legally

divorced could be justified in remarriage.¹³

The Baptists were equally severe in their code for social behavior. Much of the Puritanical attitude was incorporated in the Rules of Conduct as set up by the churches. To judge by the questions put to the Association, many Baptists believed that all music and dancing should be eliminated from Baptist society. This was indeed a contrast to the socials and balls which were customary among the wealthy, the quilting parties followed by dances of the less well-to-do, as well as the usual round of parties and dances enjoyed by all. The fact that music played a very important role in the services of the Anglican Churches of Virginia and Maryland affected the Baptist attitude toward the use of musical instruments in the church services. The Baptists were in revolt, hence they looked askance at the music and the dancing which were so much a part of life under the regime of the Established Church.

¹³Minutes of the Dover Association, 1807, 1819. A legal divorce could be obtained in Virginia in 1788 if one partner had continually absented him or herself, the one from the other, for seven years, the one not knowing the other to be living in that time. In 1789 grounds for divorce were extended to cruelty, in 1790 to desertion or adultery, in 1791 to incompatibility. A legal divorce could be obtained in Virginia through court action and trial by jury. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography VII (1899-1900), 175.

In 1801 this question was put to the Association: "Is a member of our order justified in having instrumental music in his family?" Such a question probably reflects the argument which went on in some local church between those who favored instrumental music and those who felt it must be the work of the devil himself. Such arguments were usually very heated, resulting in hard feelings and sometimes voluntary withdrawals from church membership. The Association, knowing this, was usually very careful in its condemnation or approval; but in this particular instance it was emphatic. The Association felt that since music was usually associated with "Carnal and Idolatrous purposes," they hoped that none of the brethren would admit music into their houses or in any way encourage it. However, they felt it necessary to exclude the possession of instruments of war music from their ban.¹⁴

The question of military music was brought up again in 1806 with the Association approving its use as required by military duty, but not encouraging it on other occasions.¹⁵

That same year some brave soul again pleaded in

¹⁴Minutes of the Dover Association, 1807, 1819, 1801.

¹⁵Ibid., 1806.

some local church for the instruction of children in music and dancing and the matter was referred to the Association, whose answer was a very emphatic "NO" written exceptionally large by the recorder. Of course, children loved music and dancing and the matter was brought up again and again in 1818, in 1824, and in 1838. Each time the answer was less emphatic than before.¹⁶ In 1824 the Association felt that the matter of permitting children to play and keep musical instruments in their houses was merely a matter of expediency and should be dealt with with forbearance.¹⁷ By 1838 the Association could see nothing objectionable in the private use of instrumental music, provided it was not "abused to unchristian purposes."¹⁸

In spite of the growing leniency of the Association toward the use of musical instruments, the local churches were not so quick to relinquish their disapproval of dancing. Since dancing usually was a part of wedding festivities, the members of Upper King and Queen Church asked the church to tell the parents exactly what restraint they should exercise in regard to allowing their

¹⁶ Ibid., 1813.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1824.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1838.

children to attend wedding parties. This question had first been presented sometime between 1774 and 1815.¹⁹

In 1848 Union Church added to its Rules of Order the resolution: "We as a church regard circuses and dancing parties as directly opposite to the Christian character and Church of Christ. We as a church consider all who cannot give up such carnal pleasures hereafter be considered no longer members of this body."²⁰

In 1856 Zoar Church added an article to its Rules of Order condemning dancing to music under any guise, forbidding any member to so much as open his house to such "plays as those called 'Going to Boston' or 'Perpetual Motion'."²¹

Scattered throughout church records until 1866 and even much later are records of exclusion of members for dancing. The procedure of dealing with church members who insisted on dancing varied. Sometimes committees were appointed to "wait on" the offending member. These committees would usually attempt to extract a promise not to engage in dancing again, but, failing in this, they would bring the member up before the church where

¹⁹Upper King and Queen Church Records (1774-1815). 178-179.

²⁰Union Church Records.

²¹Zoar Church Records.

the member was required to listen to the counsel of the church or be excluded. Some chose exclusion, others obeyed the church and refrained from dancing.

In 1866 Upper Essex felt the need of more explicitly interpreting a rule against "revelling" which had previously been recorded in its Rules of Order. The following preamble and resolution were presented for the consideration of the church and were unanimously adopted:

Whereas some of the members of this church have suffered themselves, under worldly influence, to be led away into the practice of worldly dances, and whereas doubt seems to be entertained by some as to such practice being in violation of any rule of the church, therefore be it resolved: that, in our estimation, such conduct is in violation of the spirit of that rule which forbids all revelling; and that any member of this church who shall hereafter participate in such practice, or shall attend public dancing parties or halls shall be subject to the discipline of the church.²²

Although in time instrumental music came to be accepted as a part of family living, it was only much later that it was accepted as a part of the worship service. Dancing as a pastime was even longer delayed in gaining a foothold in Baptist society. A ban against it is still on record in some churches, although it is not enforced.

²²Upper Essex Church Records (1863-1892) February 1866, 207.

An article, published in the Religious Herald in 1864, entitled "Dancing Baptists in Our Times," reflects the ideas of that day. The question was posed: "Is there any harm in dancing?" The author, answering his own question, said that there was, since it was not healthful as an exercise, and as an amusement it was void of any permanent pleasure. Those who engaged in it became excessively fond of it and, in time, it diverted their attention from spiritual interests, created a love of the world, and might have deleterious effects on unregenerates who followed the example, if not on the soul of the professing Christian himself. Furthermore, this was not a time to dance, but a time to mourn.²³

The matter of proper dress for Baptists occupied the attention of a few churches. It assumed sufficient importance in the minds of the members of Union Church that they included a brief regulation of it in their Rules of Order: "We discountenance extravagance and superfluity in dress and pomp and vain parade in life, and renounce those amusements and pursuits which appear inconsistent with the Christian Character."²⁴

²³"Dancing Baptists in Our Times," Religious Herald, April 21, 1864 (Richmond, 1864), X, Number 7, New Series.

²⁴Union Church Records.

Questions of dress were even put before the Association! One question mentioned such details as wearing silks, gold, rings, necklaces, and powdering the hair. The Association replied that the Bible did not lay down any specific regulations as to dress. Therefore the Association would not give a definite answer but the church was urged to use "every prudent degree of tenderness and forbearance."²⁵

Probably the problem occupying more space in the church records and presenting more questions to the Association was that of intemperance. From the beginning of each church record to its end, there was written across its pages the story of men, sometimes women, both white and Negro, overindulging in strong drink and therefore being brought before the church for action. It is a tedious journey through "Brother _____ was called before the church to answer a charge against him for being often intoxicated with spirituous liquors who acknowledged the charge to be true; that he had been convinced of the impropriety thereof and hoped that he had received pardon for the same; whereupon the church consented to retain him in fellowship,"²⁶ and

²⁵Minutes of the Dover Association, 1801.

²⁶Bruington Church Records, April 1812.

"Brother _____, charged with intoxication, and did not deny the charge, and did not ask pardon. The church voted he no longer be considered a member of this church."²⁷

Now and then one finds a little variation in such comments as "sundry persons had frequently during divine worship been engaged in selling spirituous liquors at or near the spring near the meeting house whereby some of the congregation had become intoxicated. The church set a watch to discover the persons thus engaged."²⁸

In the case of individuals enslaved by the habit of drinking spirituous liquors, the story remained about the same: drunkenness, repentance, abstinence for a while, then, upon repetition of the pattern, exclusion from church fellowship. Within the Association opinion varied. In some churches there was a feeling that every man had the right to drink in moderation, and that only excessive drinking should be dealt with; in others there was a strong disapproval of any use of spirituous liquors on the part of their members.

Zoar Church, at its constitution, wrote into its Rules of Order: "We will not retain in fellowship any one who shall hereafter retail, or traffic in ardent

²⁷ Ibid., April 1812.

²⁸ Ibid., April 1812.

spirits or intoxicating liquors except for medicinal purposes."²⁹ In 1858 was added this article: "Any member engaged in partnership with a dealer in ardent spirits and dry goods (though he receives no benefit from the sale of liquors) is a violation of article 19 (cited above) of the constitution."³⁰

The temperance movement had its origin in this country late in the eighteenth century and had made great progress before 1840 when the Washingtonian Temperance Society was formed in Baltimore.³¹ The problem of excessive drinking had been so disturbing to the local churches that as early as 1801 a circular letter was prepared by the Dover Association on the subject. The author deplored that man had perverted such a blessing as spirituous liquors to a curse. He felt that spirituous liquors might sometimes be beneficial if temperately used. He referred chiefly in this portion of his letter to the use of wine, which is not a spirituous liquor unless fortified, but the writer of the letter apparently put all wine in that class, since the minister quoted Proverbs 31:6 as a

²⁹Zoar Church Records.

³⁰Ibid..

³¹Henry William Blair, The Temperance Movement (Boston, 1888), 435.

part of his discourse on spirituous liquors. He also made reference to Paul's advice to Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach's sake. The minister mentioned three beneficial uses: to promote health, to obviate the mischiefs which may arise from over-exposure, and its religious use, where a small portion of wine is received by each communicant at the Lord's Supper.

From its benefits the minister then proceeded to enumerate the consequences of its abuse: diseased bodies, ruined estates, distressed families, and numberless quarrels among friends and neighbors. He continued by listing the causes of drunkenness, bad company, intemperance acquired by drinking small quantities.³² (The latter probably referred to social drinking which led to the cultivation of a taste for liquor, hence to drunkenness.) In conclusion he stated that Christians becoming drunk involved the church in shame and distress.

In 1802 a local church sent in a query: "Is it according to the Gospel to retail liquor on the Lord's Day?"; to which the Association replied: "By no means, unless in cases of urgent necessity."³³ This same

³²Minutes of the Dover Association, 1801.

³³Ibid., 1802.

question was posed again in 1813. R.B. Semple, in the circular letter for 1822, expressed the feeling that drunkenness should be abhorred, especially in the home. Never should "a drink" be offered or taken in the name of politeness, civility, or hospitality. Outside the home, all grog shops and groceries selling spirituous liquors should be avoided.³⁴

The question of intemperance had become so urgent by 1827 that the query was made: "Can the Association suggest any mode to suppress intemperance?" To this the Association replied that it was highly necessary to extirpate the evil, even encouraging all associations or combinations of good men to discountenance and put down this horrid practice, and that the ministers should take frequent opportunities to warn saint and sinner against the evils of this destructive vice.

The association took a further stand on the topic in 1840 when it passed a resolution expressing the opinion that the use of intoxicating drinks except medicinally is inexpedient and dangerous. The churches were recommended to request their members to abstain altogether from the use of ardent spirits. Again in 1841 the Association spoke against the use of intoxicating liquors and recommended that the publication,

³⁴Ibid., 1822.

The Tee-Totaller, be placed in the hands of the young people. In 1842 total abstinence societies were recommended for each church. Prior to this, four churches, Enon (1832), Exel (1833), Bruington (1834), and Clark's Neck (1842), had organized temperance societies which grew to such influence that a report of them was included in the accounts of the churches to the Association.³⁵

The report of the Committee on Temperance reiterated the obligation resting on Christians to foster temperance. The same committee reported in 1845 a less enthusiastic support of the temperance movement than before.³⁶ Again in 1847 the question was raised: "Should those who engage in traffic of spirituous liquors be subjects for church discipline?"³⁷ By 1856 the Association felt justified in introducing a resolution to the effect that no church could maintain her standing while she held fellowship with those who made, sold, or used intoxicating drinks as a beverage.³⁸ As a result of this resolution and action taken on it,

³⁵ McGill, Sketches, 29-31, 52-55, 74-76, 87.

³⁶ Minutes of the Dover Association, 1845.

³⁷ Ibid., 1847.

³⁸ Minutes of the Rappahannock Association, 1856.

a split occurred in Hanover Church which resulted in the establishment of Shiloh Church.³⁹ Still not satisfied in detail, in 1857 a church put the question: "Is it consistent for members of a Baptist church to make or sell brandy?" The answer - "Except for medicinal or mechanical purposes it is injurious to morals, therefore inconsistent" - shows the pressure brought to bear upon individual churches by the Association to oppose the use of spirituous liquors as beverages.⁴⁰ Yet with all that the Associations could say and do to discourage the use of alcoholic beverages, the church records continued to be filled with instances of members who over-indulged in the use of alcoholic beverages.

The use of tobacco was not questioned as was the use of spirituous liquors. No mention of it was made in the early records of the Dover Association nor of the Rappahannock Association. No action of the churches was taken relative to its use in their sessions for the purpose of the discipline of their members. That it became a subject of discussion later is evidenced by an article in the Religious Herald, "Shall We Smoke?" (1875). The question was followed by the writer's

³⁹Ibid., 1856.

⁴⁰Ibid., 1857.

personal opinions concerning the matter which he wished to air through the denominational organ. Because the article censured the Reverend Charles Spurgeon, it received editorial comment. The writer of the article had argued that a recent remark by Mr. Spurgeon would influence small boys to use tobacco. The editor replied that Mr. Spurgeon's approval of the use of tobacco had no direct influence on small boys' use of it.⁴¹ The question was of insufficient importance to be carried further, except for minor articles by a few people who apparently wished to get in the public eye by appearing in print.

As the Baptist denomination grew in strength it modified its views in many respects. In Mathews Church and also in Upper Essex Church, prior to 1837, the Baptists felt that the church was the proper arbiter of disputes between its members, especially disputes over debts. Such matters do not appear in the later records of those or other churches in the Rappahannock Association. It may be presumed that the Baptists gradually turned to the civil courts for the settlement of such disputes as did other denominations.

⁴¹"Shall We Smoke?", Religious Herald, January 21, 1875 (Richmond, 1875), X Number 3, New Series.

Although the Baptists were much opposed to many of the customs and practices of the Established Church, there was one of which they soon felt the need, namely, the instruction of their children in matters of religion. In 1793 the question "Shall we form rules for family discipline and the instruction of youth?" was introduced before the Association. That body appointed Elder Robert B. Semple, with whomever else he should choose, to compile a suitable catechism to be presented to the next general committee for inspection.⁴² When the question was raised again in 1796, the Association ordered Semple and four others to prepare a catechism for the next Association.⁴³ Since no further mention of the matter is made, we may assume that the catechism was prepared by Mr. Semple to the satisfaction of the Association and was used in the churches and homes effectively.⁴⁴

The Baptist position on such questions as the support of the pastor by the church, the prohibition of

⁴²Minutes of the Dover Association, 1793.

⁴³Ibid., 1796.

⁴⁴Semple published a catechism in 1809 in conformity with the resolution. James B. Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers (Second edition), Series I and 2 (Richmond, 1838), 317. No comment was made concerning whether it was used.

the use of musical instruments in the family, and the settling of disputes over debts by the church veered from radicalism to moderation. In respect to morality and temperance there was continuous effort to improve conditions, through the efforts of the local church by the discipline of its members, and through the Association in their urging the local churches to continue their efforts. The question of slavery and its attendant problems occupied so much of the attention of both the church and the Association throughout the era of the growth and expansion of the Baptists in the Rappahannock area, that it deserves special consideration.

V

Negro Baptists and Slavery

When Negro slavery was introduced into Virginia, seventeenth-century slave owners felt some hesitancy in having their slaves baptized because there was a question in their minds as to whether the baptism of a slave released him from bondage. In 1667 a law was passed which stated that baptism in no way altered the condition of the recipient in respect to his bondage or freedom.¹

The Negro in the seventeenth century was not regarded in some circles as having much higher mentality than a brute.² A foreign observer, Morgan Godwyn, writing in 1681, expressed this sentiment when he said that "Their conversion was thought so idle and unmeaning that the reputation for good sense of the man who suggested it [Negro conversion], was seriously impaired."³ The Established Church became increasingly interested in the religious training of Negroes. Quakers and Presby-

¹Hening, Statutes, II, 260.

²W. H. Brown, The Education and Economic Development of the Negro in Virginia (Charlottesville, 1923, Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Papers, University of Virginia, Number 6, 15).

³P. A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century (New York, 1896) II, 95.

terians were very active in their efforts to teach and convert the Negro. The Baptists, when they came to Virginia, also believed in the worth of each individual whether white or black. Hence the Baptists preached to both white and colored and converted both. The question of the church membership of the Negro slave was not troublesome since Established Churches baptized Negro slaves and reserved a small section of the seats in the sanctuaries for such of them as wished to attend services, and the Baptists followed the same practice. Not only the slaves belonging to the members of the Baptist churches, but the slaves belonging to the members of the Established church sought baptism and Christian fellowship with the Baptists.

As early as 1793 questions regarding the welfare of the slaves arose in local Baptist churches. When the local church was unable to reach a decision as to the proper action to be taken, the question was referred to the Association for discussion and a recommendation. At the meeting of the Dover Association in 1793 the question was brought up: "What is advisable in the case of a separation among slaves, between man and wife, which is forcibly made by their owners?"⁴

⁴Minutes of the Dover Association, 1793.

According to civil law then existing there was no problem because marriage among slaves was not legally recognized, but to the Baptists it posed a problem since they were trying to teach the slaves the sanctity of the marriage relationship. The reply of the Association avoided the issue by placing the responsibility for the decision on the local church as indicated by this excerpt from the minutes of the Dover Association:

"Resolved where men and their wives, being slaves, are so far removed from each other, as not to have it in their power to discharge the mutual duties of man and wife, that in all such cases, churches act discretionarily."⁵

In spite of the Civil Law forbidding the marriage of a white person with a negro or mulatto under penalty of a prison sentence of six months and a fine of ten pounds of current money, and a penalty on the minister for performing such a marriage,⁶ a few white persons did marry Negroes or mulattoes. Hence the fitness for church membership in a Baptist church of a white man and a Negro slave woman between whom marital relations existed raised the question: "Are they fit subjects to be

⁵Ibid., 1793.

⁶Hening, Statutes, VI, 361-362.

received into church?" The emphatic "NO" of the Dover Association left no doubt as to the disapproval of the Baptists of the intermarriage of the two races.⁷

The Negro members of the churches, like their white brothers, were frequently called before the church to answer charges made against them, sometimes by their masters, sometimes by their fellow slaves, sometimes by their white fellow church members, for such offenses as drunkenness, stealing, and immorality. Since exclusion from the church was the severest punishment the church could give, expulsion was reserved for repeated offenders or immoral acts. "Brother Solomon, a man of color, upon being charged with leaving his wife and living with another woman, was found guilty and excluded."⁸

"William _____'s Ancy is excluded for drunkenness. Caroline, belonging to R.B. _____ is excluded for adultery."⁹ The excluded member suffered social ostracism as well as the displeasure of the church.

When a member of the church was accused of some offense, the church did not allow the offending member to be excluded without some effort to restore him to

⁷Minutes of the Dover Association, 1805.

⁸Morattico Church Records, April 1820.

⁹Bruington Church Records, July 1813.

true repentance first. A committee was appointed to "wait on" the accused to ascertain the truth of the matter, to advise the culprit as to what he must do in order to retain his membership in the church.

"Negro Isaac was reported whipped for stealing a horse, bridle, and a saddle at Northumberland court-house.

A committee was appointed to investigate, to report to the church, and if it were found to be true Isaac was to be excluded."¹⁰ If the accused could vindicate himself, he was pardoned and sometimes action was taken against the person who reported him. "Brother _____ stated to the church that it had come to his attention that a charge had been made against a member of the church of stealing by another member which was denied, and the informant of being guilty of telling a falsehood. Whereupon it was agreed that the parties appear on Saturday at the meeting house there to be solemnly charged in the presence of the church there to declare the truth, the whole truth" The trial was held, conflicting witness given, and one of the accused was discharged and restored to full fellowship. Two others were suspended and not admitted to full fellowship of the church until further hearing on the

¹⁰Morattico Church Records, 1782.

subject.¹¹

Although the scheme of church discipline was not planned as a means of controlling the Negro, since both white and Negro members were subject to it, yet it served to strengthen the authority of the white race because usually only the white members voted on exclusion or even heard the defense of the accused member. However, when the masters were unjustly cruel the church sometimes intervened. In 1796 the question, "Is there no restriction on believing masters in the chastisement of their servants?" was brought before the Dover Association. As in the matter of remarriage of slaves separated by their masters, the Association evaded responsibility and advised the churches asking the question to "Take notice of such as they may think proper and deal with the transgressor as they would with offenders in other crimes."¹² In reply to the same question posed again in 1813, the Association gave the same answer, thus reflecting no change in attitude toward a cruel master in those several decades.¹³

The idea of Sabbath observance in the question, "Is it according to Gospel order for professors of religion

¹¹Bruington Church Records, July 1813.

¹²Minutes of the Dover Association, 1796.

¹³Ibid., 1813.

to trade with slaves on the Sabbath day?"¹⁴ indicated the existence of a feeling that it might be wrong for one white man to trade with another on the Sabbath day, but to trade with a slave on the Sabbath was of no consequence. The Dover Association in its reply expressed the view that Sabbath trading, whether between members of the same race or between members of white and colored races, was to be dealt with as "offending against the laws of God and Man."

After Virginia banned the importation of slaves from Africa in 1778, there grew up a big business in buying and selling Virginia slaves to traders in other slave states. Much speculation went on. Slave traders bought up surplus slaves in Virginia and then sold them at a good profit further south where there was an increasing demand for slave labor in the rice and cotton fields. The Baptist belief that each man is responsible for the welfare of his brother opposed this traffic in slaves. In 1844 Piscataway Church asked: "Is it consistent with the Christian religion for a member of the Baptist church to buy and sell Negroes for speculation?" The Rappahannock Association answered emphatically: "We think the traffic referred

¹⁴Ibid., 1816.

to is inconsistent with a profession of religion of Jesus Christ - a member persisting in it should be excluded."¹⁵

Emancipation was thought of by the Baptist Church in Virginia and considered possible as early as 1797. The question: "Would it not seem a good policy for the Baptists to form a plan for the gradual emancipation of slavery among themselves?"¹⁶ was presented to the Dover Association. The reply of the Association reflects the feeling that caution was necessary in approaching such a problem. The Baptists, as well as others, realized the momentous effects such a move would have on the economy as well as on the social life of the state. The Dover Association replied:

We sincerely sympathize, both as Christians and citizens, with those unhappy people and although we think it a delicate matter, we would not wish to be backward in promoting their happiness and liberty, upon cautious ground we would therefore recommend to our brethren to unite with the Abolition Society in proposing a petition to the General Assembly for a gradual emancipation upon some rational plan but as the Abolition Society do not refer to slaves now in existence we would take occasion further to testify our disapprobation of that evil by recommending them to improve it wherever it may exist with propriety.¹⁷

¹⁵Minutes of the Rappahannock Association, 1844.

¹⁶Minutes of the Dover Association, 1797.

¹⁷Ibid., 1797.

By 1835, after the long debate of January 1832 in the Virginia Assembly and the rise of the radical northern abolitionists, the matter of abolition became a bone of contention between the Virginians, many of whom had previously been sympathizers with abolition. The following extract from the minutes of the Dover Association gives an insight into the feelings of the Baptists:

We view with feelings of deep regret and decided disapprobation the course which has been pursued by the Northern Abolitionists as being calculated in our esteem to excite discontent and insubordination among the slaves, to destroy the peace of the community, even to injure the interests of those for whose welfare those misguided men profess to be laboring.¹⁸

As the tide of public opinion turned from pro-abolition to anti-abolition in Virginia at large, there was an increase in the feeling of responsibility for the welfare of the slave in order to maintain the slave economy intact. At the sessions of the Dover Association and later of the Rappahannock Association a special committee was formed to study the slave question and to report to the Association at each session on the state of the colored population. In 1841 the committee on the state of the colored population reported:

¹⁸ Ibid., 1835.

The pastor of the several churches could greatly promote good morals and religion by giving to the colored community religious instruction once a fortnight on the Sabbath, provided the service be exclusively for them and the instruction be of the plainest kind. The churches and the ministers in this association could do much good in the organization of temperance societies among the colored parts of the congregation. It would be better if all unnecessary labor on the Lord's day were dispensed with and the servants persuasively urged to attend the public worship. The master of the house should require all servants to be present at "family worship."¹⁹

In 1845 the report complained that the colored population was very sinful. It proclaimed it the special duty of the church to explain right living, to encourage it and to consider it folly to give the Negroes ordinary instruction in the rudiments of education such as to be had in schools. A fear of teaching them to read because of the hazards of the printed material from the North was expressed, hence instruction must be confined to oral instruction. It proposed to divide the counties into sections, to send out whites able to give oral instruction to meet with the Negroes and give the religious education they felt it necessary that the Negroes have to keep them docile and satisfied. Because Virginia was a border state, the committee urged that it was necessary to proceed with caution in any work among the Negroes.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid., 1841.

²⁰Minutes of the Rappahannock Association, 1845.

Within the bounds of the Rappahannock Association in 1846 there were 23,727 white and 23,671 colored persons; of these, 5,803 white and 8,164 colored were members of the Baptist denomination. The committee felt it was the express duty of the whites to give the colored people religious instruction since the state legislature had found it necessary to interdict preaching among the Negroes by their own preachers. The committee felt that the comparison in the number of white and the number of colored people might be "held before those whose maddened zeal has made the worst enemies of the slave, as one of the many proofs that this is the happiest laboring class in the world, here are nearly 15,000 in our midst - endeared to us by a tie which we consider one of the relations sanctioned by our Master." The idea of slavery being sanctioned by the teachings of Christ was being fostered to check the movement toward the abolition of slavery which engendered so many economic as well as social problems. In this report Clark's Neck Church was commended for having licensed a "Brother well qualified to labor among the colored population." He had two regular appointments and preached to a very large congregation composed entirely of Negroes.

²¹Ibid., 1846.

Each year there were additional reports on the necessity for religious instruction among the Negroes. It was suggested in 1847 by the committee that "colored people properly trained here can be sent to Africa as missionaries to teach their own people."²²

In connection with the religious instruction of the Negroes it is timely to explain that the Baptists of fourteen states had organized home missionary work which was carried on among the frontier people, the Indians, and the Negroes. In Virginia such an organization was formed in 1822. The fourteen organizations merged in 1832 to form the American Baptist Home Mission Society.²³ When the Society was formed the subject of special missionary work among the colored people was not considered. No organized missionary endeavor was made among the Negroes between 1832 and 1862 on account of the general situation throughout the nation.²⁴ The Baptists of the Rappahannock Association wished to keep a watchful eye on this organization which they supported. The Association ordered a committee to investigate the alleged relation of the

²²Ibid., 1847.

²³Charles L. White, A Century of Faith (Philadelphia, 1832), 30.

²⁴Ibid., 102.

American Baptist Home Mission Society to slavery. The committee reported:

No funds known or suspected to be the avails ~~the~~ profit from slavery have been received into the treasury of the society since the adoption of the new constitution in 1846. Since that time no slave-holder has been employed by the Board as a missionary. No missionary employed by the Society since the adoption of the new constitution has been known to administer the ordinance of the Gospel in a slave-holding church.²⁵

At this same session of the Rappahannock Association a committee on the religious privileges of the Negroes reported that:

The committee appointed to petition the legislature for such modification as will permit of their assemblage at any time, by permission of their owners in the presence of white persons and will admit their engaging in all proper religious exercises, provided they may be conducted in the presence and under the supervision of a committee of the white members to which they belong, reported that no action was possible at that time.²⁶

The Committee on the Religious Privileges for the Colored People in 1850 decided to refrain from petitioning the legislature because of the excited state of mind on the questions of abolitionism, free-soilism, and so forth.²⁷

Again in 1853, a committee was appointed to inquire into the expediency of employing a missionary to labor among the colored people within the bounds of the Rappa-

²⁵ Minutes of the Rappahannock Association, 1849.

²⁶ Ibid., 1849.

²⁷ Ibid., 1850.

were the whites, by confession of faith and baptism or by church letter; they were "given the right hand of fellowship"; they were gathered with the whites around the communion table, they were, in many instances, given the courtesy titles "Brother" and "Sister" in church matters; and, if in good standing, they were dismissed by letter, whether being sold south or moving with their masters. In recognition of their special status the Negroes were assigned to sit in the gallery or were restricted to a designated portion of the church. Although excluded from voting on general questions as were the white women of the church, the colored members of some congregations took pride in making their modest contributions for current expenses and foreign missions. A rare colored member, a pious and faithful leader, in the freer days before the restrictive statutes of 1832 might be encouraged to preach not only among his own people, but before the entire church. A case of this is William Lemon of Gloucester, concerning whom Robert Semple comments: "Though not white as to his natural complexion, he had been washed in the laver of regeneration; he had been purified and made white in a better sense."³¹

³¹ Semple, A History of . . . the Baptists in Virginia, 29.

hannock Association. The committee concluded that the employment of a missionary would be abortive since numerous other means of giving religious instruction were within reach. Men acceptable for that work should be employed by their own communities, and societies should be formed by young white men to privately instruct the colored and to hold public services for them whenever possible.²⁸

As feeling over the slavery question grew, the tenor of the reports of the committee on the colored population changed. In 1858 the committee reported they thought it could be shown easily that the institution of domestic slavery had been the most powerful missionary engine ever brought to bear upon the world. They recommended the organization of domestic colored missionary societies whose object should be to raise the means to have the Gospel preached to the colored population.²⁹

In the typical Baptist church, master and servant worshipped together. In a number of churches of the Rappahannock Association, the Negroes outnumbered the white communicants.³⁰ The Negroes were received, as

²⁸Ibid., 1853.

²⁹Ibid., 1858.

³⁰See Appendix D for a list of members as given in 1849.

Most of the colored Baptists in Virginia claimed membership in congregations made up of both white and colored, but in 1860 almost eleven thousand, one out of every five, belonged to "African" Baptist churches, institutions for the exclusive use of Negroes, both slave and free, which were usually dominated by the free Negro group. Williamsburg, Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk were centers of the independent church movement.³² The African churches enjoyed a maximum amount of autonomy before the Southampton Insurrection. Later they were subjected to closer regulation and were required to have white pastors. In 1859, when the question of the organization of separate churches was brought up, it was considered practicable and the First African Church in Richmond was cited as a successful example. Yet, when the question of whether it was expedient was put, the members of the Rappahannock Association felt that danger was involved in assembling large crowds of slaves together for any purpose. It was recommended to the churches in Gloucester that they employ a separate minister whose services should be devoted exclusively to the colored population under the

³²Joseph C. Robert, "Excommunication, Virginia Style," The South Atlantic Quarterly, XL (1941), 244.

direction of the churches, without a separate organization.³³

In reply to a question asked by a church in 1863, the Association expressed the opinion that the church was right, because of existing conditions, in recommending the exclusion of all servants who had deserted their masters, letting the faithful remain. They added further that they did not think it prudent under the circumstances to permit the assemblage of such persons apart from the white and under the direction of colored instructors. The churches should still have white pastors.³⁴

The committee on colored population reported in 1864 that:

The subject of the instruction of the colored population just at the present time is one of some difficulty. Many of this class of our membership have been excluded from the churches and others will be joining our enemies, and in some instances, entire congregations have been broken up. Must then all efforts among them be relinquished? We are of the opinion, that while due care should be exercised, yet the duty remains the same. It will not do to censure and punish those of our servants who remain faithful because others prove traitors. On the other hand they should be encouraged and rewarded. We think it is for the interest of the masters to continue their labor in love. We advise churches to continue their committees for the instruction of servants, and our brethren in the ministry to preach to them as much or more than usual. We recommend that special instruction relative to the

³³Minutes of the Rappahannock Association, 1859.

³⁴Ibid., 1863.

Christian obligation of faithfulness to their masters be given them. We also recommend that the colored members be purged in accordance with the resolution of last session: namely, the exclusion of all servants who had deserted their masters.³⁵

Morattico Church in 1865 wanted to know whether the Association felt it wise to encourage the colored members of the churches to withdraw for separate organization. The Association, through its Committee on Colored Population, felt that the white people should labor to preserve kind feelings between the two races, should try to preserve religious influence over them, and should continue scriptural instruction for the colored people.³⁶ By 1866 was added the statement: "Where separation is necessary, aid them in organizing their own church." The remainder of the report was summed up as follows: We have a responsibility to the colored population though the relation has changed. We should encourage Sunday Schools among them, impress the importance of obedience to the law, the importance of adhering strictly to civil contracts. We believe we should send the Gospel to them. We still cannot recommend separate church organization. However, when it is requested by colored members, grant it.³⁷ A similar feeling had been expressed in the report of 1865.

³⁵Ibid., 1864.

³⁶Ibid., 1865.

³⁷Ibid., 1866.

c.

From available church records of this period we find the manner in which the colored members withdrew and organized separate churches. As early as 1865 the question came up in Union Church, Gloucester County: "Elder W.S. Hawkins consulted Brother J.W. _____, Robert _____ and R.S. _____ in reference to the colored members having the church to hold worship in and it was agreed that they should have it." This was discussed at the next meeting and it was decided that the colored members should have the use of the house until January 1866. At the July business meeting in 1869 it was voted by the same church on application of the colored members to allow them to separate from the white members by granting them "letters of dismissal."³⁸

At Morattico the following letter was recorded in the church Minutes:

Dear Brethren:

Since our last meeting, we have at the request of our colored members dismissed them all from our church save one man only, who professes for the present at least, to retain his membership with us. This separation was made with mutual kind feelings and although the colored members have not formerly been constituted into a church they are building a house of worship and will, we presume, form themselves into a regular church. We are ready and willing to aid them in any way we can that they may desire, but think it best not to obtrude our advice or assistance.³⁹

³⁸ Union Church Records, October 1865, July 1868.

³⁹ Morattico Church Records, July 1867.

In the Zoar Baptist Church Records of June 1867

we find:

The resolution proposed that a letter of dismissal from Zoar Church be prepared in order that the colored members may form a church for themselves was discussed, and after due consideration of the subject, a motion was made to grant the letters of dismissal.⁴⁰

Slavery and the ensuing emancipation brought its problems to the church as well as to the civil government. The colored members of the churches withdrew and established churches of their own. In almost every community a colored Baptist church is to be found not far from the white Baptist church. In 1946 there were 113 colored Baptist churches in the ten counties of the Association with an approximate total membership of 24,000. These churches have their own Association and conduct their work independently of the White Association.⁴¹

⁴⁰Zoar Church Records, June 1867.

⁴¹Taken from a letter received from Walter White written in response to my question of how many Negro Baptist churches are in existence in the Rappahannock Association. Reverend Walter White, a Negro Baptist, is employed by the Virginia Baptist Board of Missions and Education as Secretary of Inter-Racial Work.

VI

Interests Beyond the Local Church

During the years of the establishment and growth of the Baptists in Virginia, the Baptists were not concerned solely with the affairs of the local church. They had many interests, one of which was the separation of church and state. When the Baptists encountered the opposition of the Established Church of Virginia and suffered persecution as a result, they grew in numbers to such an extent that by 1776 they were able to wield considerable political influence. They first petitioned for toleration in 1774 through their associations. The dissolution of the Assembly by Dunmore prevented legislative action being taken then, but the petitions continued coming in. As one step was gained, another was petitioned for: equality of the clergy, exemption of dissenters from tithes, dissolution of the vestries as civil bodies, marriages by dissenting ministers allowed, until finally religious freedom was established in Virginia. The battle was not over. Though there still remained to be settled the disposal of the glebe lands and other matters, the essential freedom had been won. Only one mention is made of this prolonged battle, carried on by all dissenters as well as Baptists, in the accounts of the early churches

in the Rappahannock Association. Mathews Church decided that its membership should take concerted action instructing each member to vote for a certain representative to General Assembly since the Baptists were petitioning the legislature for entire religious freedom.¹ The reaction of the individual members to this decision is not recorded. There were probably some dissenting votes.

Another of the interests of the Virginia Baptists was missions, both foreign and domestic. The Baptists have had as one of their chief tenets of belief that Jesus directed his disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. Emphasis on this has stimulated their growth. Those Baptists who have refused to believe and act upon this belief have found themselves decreasing rather than increasing in influence. For the most part the Baptists of Virginia have been missionary in spirit.

Baptist missions in the English-speaking world had their origin in the Monthly Concert of Prayer recommended in 1784 by the Nottinghamshire Baptist Association in

¹McGill, Sketches, 31-38. John Leland, a Baptist minister in Virginia was especially active in leading his congregations to petition for and vote for religious freedom to be incorporated in the Constitution of Virginia and also in the national constitution. Lyman H. Butterfield, Elder John Leland, Jeffersonian Itinerant American Antiquarian Society Proceedings LXII (1952) 242.

England. This resolution called upon all Baptist churches to observe one stated hour every month in earnest, united prayer for the support of pure religion to the ends of the earth. This was the inspiration for the organization of the Baptists' Missionary Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen formed in Kettering, England, in 1792 in response to the demands of William Carey to be sent as a missionary. This was the first Foreign Mission Board.²

The activities of this Mission Board and the news of William Carey's work in India interested the American Baptists, some of whom corresponded with William Carey and sent contributions to Serampore Mission for his support.³ The publication, Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine, organ of the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society, Boston, contained letters from William Carey which disseminated information concerning his work and led to the organization in 1812 of the society of American Baptists called the Salem Bible Translation and Foreign Missionary Society whose purpose was to aid in the translation of the Bible by William Carey and to assist in sending financial aid

²T.B. Ray, Southern Baptist Foreign Missions (Nashville, 1910), 10, 11, 29.

³Edmund F. Merriam, A History of American Baptist Missions (Philadelphia, 1900), 6.

and a missionary from this country to India.⁴

Just prior to the establishment of the Salem Bible Translation and Foreign Missionary Society, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed in Boston at the urgent request of students of Andover Theological Seminary who demanded to be sent to the heathen. Two of these men, Luther Rice and Andoniram Judson, set sail under the auspices of the interdenominational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, each on a separate ship. En route they studied the Bible very carefully and each was convinced that he must be baptized by immersion; therefore, upon reaching Calcutta, each asked for baptism and each sent in his resignation to the Board. Judson wrote a letter asking whether the Baptists would form a Foreign Mission Society which would undertake the support of his work in India. Rice returned to America to interest the Baptists in supporting a mission project in India. As a result the Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel in India and other Foreign Parts organized in 1813 and undertook to support Judson.⁵

⁴Ibid., 8.

⁵Ibid., 9-11.

In spite of the fact that both transportation and communication were slow, the Virginia Baptists organized a Baptist Missionary Society at Richmond that same year, 1813. Similar organizations were formed at Philadelphia, Savannah, New York, and Baltimore. Until the organization of these foreign missionary societies, the Baptists in America were widely scattered. There were islands of Baptists in Boston, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia, each centering its attention on its own small territory.

The formation of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1813 led to the formation of the missionary society and a general committee of twenty-six clergymen and seven laymen from eleven states and the District of Columbia. R.B. Semple and Jacob Grigg were delegates from Virginia. This committee formed what is known as the Triennial Convention which functioned as the meeting ground and clearing house for Baptist activities in America until the slavery question brought about a division in 1845.

Under the auspices of the Triennial Convention the Baptists worked together on many different projects: The Baptist Missionary Magazine, the organ of the convention; the establishing of the Seminary, Columbian University, Washington, D.C. to educate the young men

for the ministry; the establishing of a stated time called the "Season of Prayer" for the benefit of missions and the collection of contributions for that purpose; the opening of missions among the Indians; and the sending of missionaries to new settlements.⁶

The American Baptist Home Mission Society, formed in 1832, and the American Foreign Bible Society, formed in 1836, worked under the direction of the Triennial Convention secretary; but when the Southern Baptists separated from the Triennial Convention in 1845, they set up separate boards for each phase of the work and found that each thrived better.

The Augusta (Georgia) Convention, called by the Virginia Foreign Mission Society, 1845, to organize the Southern Baptist Convention, provided for two boards, one for foreign missions located in Richmond, Virginia, and one for Home Missions finally located, after several moves, in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Foreign Mission Board was composed of twenty-one members resident in Richmond, Virginia, and a Vice-President in each Southern state. Reverend James B. Taylor of Virginia was chosen as secretary. Under the auspices of this board, mission fields were opened in

⁶Ibid., 12, 12, 29.

many places. The first mission field to be opened was China, to which J.L. Shuck, I.J. Roberts, Samuel C. Clopton, and George Percy were appointed.⁷ The Rappahannock Association in Virginia contributed two of her daughters, Henrietta Hall and her sister, Mrs. Tobey, from Morattico Church to this cause. Henrietta went to China as the wife of J.L. Shuck. Her sister went after Henrietta's death. The cause of missions found much more ardent support in Morattico Church than did the support of the pastor since the members in 1841 contributed two hundred dollars to the support of missions while they gave their pastor only one hundred seventy-five dollars. (Possibly the pastor was responsible for the extra twenty-five dollars as Henrietta was his daughter and she had been working in China with her husband since 1835 under the auspices of the Triennial Convention.)⁸

Other missions were established, in Africa, in Europe, in South America, in Mexico, and in Japan. To these the Virginia Baptists contributed along with those of other Southern States. In 1845 the Foreign Mission Board received \$11,689.05 and in 1870 it received \$21,938.03.⁹ Of course, between those years

⁷T.B. Ray, Southern Baptist Foreign Missions, 33.

⁸McGill, Sketches, 39-43.

⁹T.B. Ray, Southern Baptist Foreign Missions, 273.

there were lean times when the missionaries supported by the Board were scarcely able to subsist, but they kept up and gradually increased the extent of their work. The churches of the Rappahannock gave their share. It was customary in that area to have "Missionary Days" at which time a speaker, preferably a missionary just returned from some field, would come to the local church and tell the people about his work and the needs of his particular field. There would be an all-day meeting with dinner provided by the members of the church, and friends from neighboring churches would be invited to come and hear the speaker. One big feature of the day would be a collection which would be given to the speaker for the expansion and support of his particular work. The China Missions and the Brazilian Missions received a great deal of support from the Rappahannock Association in this since the Hall family and the Bagby family were represented in these fields and the relatives and friends of these families were interested in supporting them and hearing their reports concerning their work.

The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention had its beginning in the work of the itinerant preachers, followed by the appointment of special ministers who would work within the bounds of the Associa-

tion. The Rappahannock Association employed a number of such men as has already been mentioned. In 1814 Samuel Straughan was chosen by the Missionary Society of Richmond to travel into certain parts of Maryland where it was supposed there was a great need for evangelical preaching.¹⁰ Some of the men of the Rappahannock Association, as Lewis Lunsford, made several visits in Kentucky preaching wherever they could. There was some effort made to send special workers among the colored congregations also, but all of this work was sporadic and local since the American Baptist Home Mission Society did very little work in the South prior to 1840, and after 1840 the South did not want them to do any because of the slavery question. It was not until the organization of the Home Mission Board under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Convention that any organized work was done. From 1845 to 1860 there were four lines of endeavor: building up a spirit of denominational loyalty and cooperation, evangelism, giving especial attention to the work among the Negro slaves, and taking over and enlarging the work carried on heretofore by the Foreign Mission Board and later by the Home Mission Society of the Triennial Convention. There were forty missionaries doing work among the colored

¹⁰Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers (2nd ed.) 403-418.

slaves during this period, and the work among the Indians was given special impetus by the union of the Indian Mission Association with the Southern Baptist Convention in 1855.

During the decade 1860-1870 the Home Mission Board put 137 missionaries to work in the army, lent a helping hand in saving organized work in the older states which were devastated by war, and made a sincere and worthy attempt to help the recently freed Negroes who had left the white churches to find their place and work in their own churches.¹¹

While the Home Mission Board spent a great deal of time and money in aiding weak churches in the support of pastors and in assisting in the erection of church buildings, they put forth a great deal of effort in evangelizing in the cities where preaching services were held, Sunday Schools were established, and weekly prayer meetings were conducted. The yellow fever plague of 1853-1854 slowed up Home Mission work, but the work in California, begun in 1850, was kept up. After the Civil War New Orleans became a great center for home mission effort. These activities of the Home Mission Board did not reach the Rappahannock area as that was altogether a rural section in Virginia, having no cities within its bounds and having only a few small

¹¹E.P. Alldredge, Southern Baptists Working Together (Nashville, 1925), 72-77.

towns.

However, the mission work among the Negroes did reach into the Rappahannock Association. After 1867 missionaries were employed to labor among the freedmen. There was a widespread recognition of the need for the education of the Negro, especially the Negro ministry. To accomplish this the Home Mission Board arranged for prospective Negro ministers to enter the Augusta Institute of Georgia. Since they found that this did not meet the immediate need, institutes were held for the instruction of Negro ministers at convenient times and accessible places. In 1879, the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention made arrangements with the American Baptist Home Mission Society for the Society to appoint a superintendent of missions among the colored people whose duty it would be to organize institutes at such times and places as practicable, to be conducted by the superintendent assisted by resident pastors.

Missions were established by the Home Mission Board among the Chinese in California, where J.L. Shuck was employed after his return from China, and also in Baltimore. Mission stations among the Germans were set up in St. Louis, Louisville, Southern Missouri, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Texas.

Missions among the Indians were carried on prior to 1845 under the auspices of the Indian Mission Association. In 1855 this Association merged with the Home Mission Board and continued the Missions already established and organized schools among the Cherokees, the Creeks, the Choctaws, the Chicasaws, and the Seminoles. John Jumper and Joseph Islands were great Indian leaders among the Seminoles and Creeks. The missions to the Indians almost went out of existence during the Civil War, but were resumed thereafter.¹²

The Southern Baptist women were not to be ignored in the denominational work. From 1810 to 1840, in eleven of the eighteen states there were organized women's societies. South Carolina led, with North Carolina and Virginia close seconds. These societies found opportunities at hand in training the children, teaching the Negroes, and contributing to mission work among the Indians. In Virginia the women of the First Church of Richmond founded an active Female Missionary Society in 1870 whose chief business was to appoint teachers to travel into new places where the Gospel was

¹²Mary Emily Wright, The Missionary Work of the Southern Baptist Convention (Philadelphia, 1902), 283-340.

likely to flourish. However, the women of the Rappahannock Association had preceded them by many years. In 1837 at Mattaponi a Woman's society was started and has been in continuous operation.¹³ Its founder and first president, Priscilla Pollard, made many journeys in her buggy to get women of her community interested. After she was assured of their interest, she set about trying to interest the women of nearby churches. So the women's societies spread in the Rappahannock Association. They were interested in both home Missions and the Foreign Missions. The women were not interested in separating their work from that of the men, but they wished to augment it by their efforts. It was not until 1888 that the women of the Southern Baptist Convention felt the need of a southwide organization for themselves, and even then they continued as auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, overlapping the work of the convention slightly, but for the most part contributing to its program.

In the matter of Sunday Schools, the Baptists were among the leading pioneers of the modern Sunday school movement in England and America. Luther and Knox both established schools about 1530 which gave instruction in secular subjects during the week and religious topics

¹³Mrs. H.M. Wharton, Fruits of the Years (Atlanta, 1938), 9-10.

on Sundays. Robert Raikes established a school (1780-1785) in which paid teachers gave instruction in secular topics on Sundays to the poor and un-schooled children of the community. But neither of these types of schools gave rise to modern Sunday Schools. In America there were catechetical schools which gave religious instruction to the children on Sundays as early as 1689 in the Old Pilgrim Church at Plymouth, Massachusetts. There were others such as Dr. Belamy's school in Connecticut (1740), one in Hanover, Virginia in 1793 and one in New Jersey in 1794. Ministers of the Anglican Church regularly taught the youth; but William Fox, a wealthy Baptist deacon of London, England, launched a school for the study of the Bible in 1783 which led to the development of the whole modern Sunday School movement. Although at first this school met on week-days, only the Bible was taught - except that those unable to read were given spelling books. In 1785 the school began meeting only on Sundays and thus became the first regular Sunday school in the world.

The first general Sunday School organization in America was called the "First-day" or Sunday School Society and was established at Philadelphia in 1791. In the South little progress was made in the Sunday School movement in the early days.¹⁴ Bruington, which was con-

¹⁴Allredge, Southern Baptists Working Together, 119-121.

sidered a very well organized church, reported a Sunday School in 1834. In 1831 Enon Church was organized from a revival in a Sunday School, and in 1832 had a Sunday School both in winter and in summer. In 1842 Providence Church reported a small Sabbath school, having forty-five scholars, not more than five of whom had any other means of acquiring an education.¹⁵ These early Sunday Schools were supposed to exist mainly for the children, especially the younger ones. Through these Sunday Schools in the South, in Virginia, and in the Rappahannock Association many received not only religious instruction but also were taught to read. These little schools made the people hungry for more. In 1845 there were 468 Sunday Schools reported with an enrollment of 27,924; in 1875 there were 5,085 Sunday Schools with an enrollment of 289,768 in the territory of the Southern Baptists.¹⁶ In the Rappahannock Association report to the Virginia Baptist Association, 1953, sixty-three Sunday Schools were listed with an enrollment of 10,479.¹⁷

The story of the Baptist Sunday School Board is one of constant fluctuations. Sometimes it worked as a separate organization, sometimes in conjunction with the Home

¹⁵McGill, Sketches, 52-55, 74-78, 83-84.

¹⁶Allredge, Southern Baptists Working Together, 123.

¹⁷Virginia Baptist Annual (Roanoke, 1953), 295.

Mission Board, but its work persisted and gradually each church had its Sunday School, as did Bruington, Enon, and Providence Churches of the Rappahannock Association.

Baptist publications have a long and confused history. The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine, 1802 was among the first Baptist publications in America.¹⁸

There were numerous Bible Societies, among them the Virginia and Foreign Bible Society of 1846-1849, whose purpose was to publish translations of the Bible and tracts to be distributed among the people of foreign lands, as well as among the Indian and foreign populations of America. The widespread interest in the publication of the Bible in other languages is attested by the organization in Bruington Church, under the leadership of Robert B. Semple, a Burman Bible and Educational Society, the purpose of which was to support the publication of the Bible in Burma and the distribution of religious tracts not only on the mission fields, but at home too.

The Baptists of Virginia in 1828 founded their denominational organ, The Religious Herald, which has had

¹⁸Merriam, A History of American Baptist Missions, 6.

continuous existence since that time and has wielded a tremendous influence on Baptist life and growth in Virginia. It became the means of individuals expressing their views, radical or otherwise, and has enabled the Baptists to become informed as to the policy of the organizations and to cooperate better. Its pages contain an interesting account of the life and thought of Baptists in Virginia. Dr. R.H. Pitt, a native of the Rappahannock Association, was an outstanding editor of this organ for a number of years.

In spite of the fact that the early ministers of Virginia, such as Dutton Lane, Elijah Craig, and Lewis Craig were uneducated men, the Baptists showed an interest in having educated men in their ministry. In 1783 or thereabouts, Counsellor Robert Carter, a member of Bruington Church, King and Queen County, at his own expense sent young Henry Toler to Pennsylvania to be educated for the ministry.¹⁹ Upon his return, Henry Toler served his community well for many years.

Brown University, Rhode Island, was the first Baptist educational institution in America. As early as 1802 the Georgia Baptists were developing plans to establish a system of Christian schools. In 1817 the

¹⁹
Taylor, Lives of Virginia Ministers, 2nd ed., Series 1 and 2, 300.

Triennial Convention authorized the establishment of Columbian University at Washington, D.C. for the training of young men for the ministry.²⁰ This institution thrived for a time, and then became so burdened with debt that it was on the point of being abandoned. Robert Semple was appointed to take it over and try to establish it on a firmer foundation, but his death occurred before he was able to complete that task. (1827-1831).²¹

In 1826 Furman Academy was established in South Carolina, and in 1851 Furman University and the Woman's College were established at Greenville, S.C.. Within the next nine years after the establishment of Furman Academy, seven other Baptist schools and colleges of the South had their beginning, among them the Virginia Baptist Seminary at Richmond, later the University of Richmond, in 1832.²² From these early beginnings a great number of schools of all kinds, universities, colleges, academies, manual training schools, and mission schools have appeared. As the Baptists grew in numbers the need for education increased. Rappahannock assumed her share in the development of this vast edu-

²⁰Merriam, A History of American Baptist Missions, 29.

²¹Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers, 2nd. ed., Series 1 and 2, 346.

²²Allredge, Southern Baptists Working Together, 105-108.

cational program through her gifts and through her two men, Robert B. Semple and Robert Ryland, both of Bruington Church. As already mentioned, Robert Semple gave the declining years of his life to Columbian University, while Robert Ryland became the President of the Virginia Baptist Seminary at Richmond.

Although the Baptists met with opposition when they entered the ten counties now comprising the Rappahannock Baptist Association, they brought with them a zeal and earnestness which stimulated their growth and expansion within that territory until in their report to the Virginia Baptist Association for the year 1953, they listed sixty-four churches with a total membership of 14,359, a phenomenal growth which has not been continuous, but which has increased rapidly at times when revivals swept through, then lagged for a period of years.

The Baptists, considered a very backward people by some, became a forward looking people in their extended interests. In spite of their insistence on a completely democratic form of church organization in which each church is an autonomous unit, the Baptists cooperated within the Association, within the state, within the nation until the slavery question divided them North and South. They have extended their interests from the neighboring community to the uttermost parts of the earth.

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W.W. Hening's Statutes at Large is a collection of all the laws of Virginia, 1619-1792. Volume 1 contains the laws which are the background for the legal persecution of dissenters in Virginia.

The most valuable reference on the Baptists in Virginia is Robert Semple's A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia revised and extended by the Reverend G.W. Beale. Almost all other writers on the Baptists in Virginia quote from this work or refer to it. The earlier edition, prepared by

by Mr. Semple, was published in 1810. Its purpose was to preserve the record of the Baptists in Virginia. The Reverend Mr. Beale's revision was published in 1894. With the exception of the biographical sketches which appear in condensed form in the revision, the latter is a reproduction of the original. The annotations supplied were designed to throw light on points in the narrative which had become somewhat obscure, the other matter added indicates briefly the lines of subsequent development in the history of the Baptists. Mr. Semple and Mr. Beale trace the rise of the Baptists from the origin of the Separate Baptists in the New Light Stir movement of New England through the great revival of 1785-1792. This general discussion is followed by a history of the organization of the General Association; the formation of the four subdivisions of the Association, one of which was the Dover Association from which the Rappahannock Association was later formed; a record of some of the questions brought before the Association, which in turn is followed by a brief sketch of the organization and history of the individual churches within each association as they came into being. These sketches of these earliest churches are the oldest extant record of some of them since fire has destroyed so many of the oldest records. The account of each association is prefaced by a table of statistics giving the name of the church, the year constituted, the number of members at

constitution, the present number (1910), and the counties where they are located. The index in this book was a great help in finding the exact material needed for a discussion of the Rappahannock Baptists.

Richard B. Cook's The Story of the Baptists in all Ages and Countries gives a general history of the Baptists, not going greatly into detail nor giving many bibliographical references. Chapter XIX is devoted specifically to the Baptists in Virginia. This account is almost a condensation of Mr. Semple's fuller account. It was useful in this study for a comparison of details in the account of the coming of the Baptists into Virginia.

Landon C. Bell's The Old Free State gives a history of the Aborigines of Lunenburg, some account of the early pioneers, the first settlers, characteristics of the county at the time of the first settlers, traces the growth of the section, the legislative history, its original creation and its subdivision into ten counties, a glimpse of early institutions, the courts, the vestries, the churches, and a description of their offices and functions. Volume I, chapter 9 is useful in the study of the Baptists in Virginia. Again this account was useful for comparison with Semple's account of the same material.

James B. Taylor's Virginia Baptist Ministers, Series I, went through two editions before it was revised a third time and published in two volumes. The first edition gave biographies of nearly one hundred ministers. The second edition was enlarged to include forty more. In the third edition the work was divided into two volumes, the first including the ministers who had died prior to the publishing of the second edition; the second those who had died between the publication of the second and third editions. These biographies were gleaned from obituaries, private correspondence, the Religious Herald, and still the biographies are incomplete because the material was so difficult and not all the ministers are included because it was impossible to get information on some. This series of books gives the best available information on the ministers of the Baptists from 1706-1859. Reverend George Braxton Taylor, at the request of the General Association of Virginia, took up the task of compiling the biographies of the Baptist ministers of Virginia. He has published three additional series, the last of which brings the biographies up through 1934. Mr. Taylor also found it difficult to make the list complete, but the works of these two men are the best source of information on the Baptist Ministry that has yet been prepared.

William Cathcart's The Baptist Encyclopedia, a dictionary of the doctrines, ordinances, usages, and confessions of faith, sufferings, labor, successes, and general history of the Baptist Denomination in all lands, includes biographical sketches of distinguished American and foreign Baptists. William Cathcart edited the work of many people who helped him gather material. There are several volumes. Only one volume was available for this study. This volume was useful in checking some biographical data quickly. It was useful in giving a brief account of associations as the term applied to Baptists. Its alphabetical arrangement makes it easy to use. Sources of the information contained in this volume are not given.

J.D. McGill's Sketches of History of the Baptist Churches Within the Limits of the Rappahannock Association in Virginia was compiled by a committee of the Association and edited by J.D. McGill. The purpose of this volume was to gather accounts of the churches before the records or knowledge of the churches was lost. The accounts in this volume are brief, some of them like Mr. Semple's. This is the best source of the history of the churches, except the records of the individual churches. Since many of these records have been lost or burned, the account given by Mr. McGill and the account

given by Mr. Semple are the only extant information on some of the churches. This volume is an excellent source for data on the Baptist churches of the Rappahannock Association.

Frank Adkins' Disciples and Baptists was useful in the preparation of this topic chiefly for the biographical data on Mr. Campbell given in the introduction. The book is designed to present the resemblances and differences in belief and practice of the Disciples and Baptists.

W.H. Brown's The Education and Economic Development of the Negro in Virginia was used to get a secular account of the background for a study of the religious development of the Negro. It contained a well written account of the education and economic status of the Negro.

William Meade's Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia and Jennings C. Wise's Index were used in this study chiefly for the identification of certain names. Bishop Meade's book is very interesting. It gives an account of the old churches, the vestry, the ministers, and others connected with the Established Church.

Charles L. White's A Century of Faith gave an interesting account of the Home Mission activities of the American Baptists. It was used for a study of the extended interests of the Baptists.

William Henry Blair's The Temperance Movement was referred to in connection with this study for background material to supplement the source material being used. It gave rather clearly the information needed.

Edmund F. Merriam's A History of American Baptist Missions gave an account of the Mission activities of all the Baptists in the United States, whereas T.B. Ray's Southern Baptist Missions stressed the Foreign Mission activities of the Southern Baptists. Both accounts were interesting. Mr. Ray's account of the work prior to 1845 was more concise. Again, these volumes were used for background material.

Mary Emily Wright's The Missionary Work of the Southern Baptist Convention and Mrs. H.M. Wharton's Fruits of the Years were used to gather background material particularly on Home Missions and Woman's Missionary work. Miss Wright wrote more fully, but Mrs. Wharton supplied some details that were of especial interest in this study of the Rappahannock Baptists.

E.P. Alldredge's Southern Baptists Working Together was a clear, concise presentation of the extended interests of the Southern Baptists. It was prepared to inform the Baptist people of the origin

of these branches of their work in order to obtain their cooperation in the support of them. This work was especially useful in securing information on the topics: Home Mission, Foreign Missions, Education, Sunday School, and Woman's Missionary Union. This little volume contains material on other topics and discusses these mentioned much farther chronologically than was needed for this study.

The Virginia Baptist Historical Society Library, housed at the University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia, contains the most extensive collection of source materials as well as secondary materials on Virginia Baptists. This material has been collected over a number of years. It contains many of the extant church records; almost all of the extant associational records; almost a complete series of the Religious Herald, a Baptist organ in continuous publication since 1828; as well as a large collection of secondary materials.

The two articles from the Religious Herald were important to this study as illustrative material chiefly. The articles were anonymous and expressed the views of some persons of that era. They did not necessarily express the views of the majority. The article "Dancing Baptists in Our Times" more nearly expressed the views of the majority than did the article "Shall We Smoke."

The Religious Herald contains many such articles on a variety of topics as well as historical material of interest to the Baptists.

The article, "Excommunication, Virginia Style," in the South Atlantic Quarterly XL no. 3, July 1941 was especially interesting in its style and handling of the subject matter. The historical facts contained therein are found in many other places, but are not so interestingly presented.

The Virginia Baptist Annual, 1954 was referred to in this study for comparative data only. It contains much useful material for a contemporary account of Baptist work in Virginia.

The references discussed thus far, with the exception of Semple, McGill, and Taylor, were used to obtain background material for the presentation of the source material which was found in the manuscript church records, letters, and minutes of the Dover and the Rappahannock Associations. These records contain a wealth of material. Bruington, Lower King and Queen, Morattico, Union, Upper Essex, Upper King and Queen, and Zoar records were used in this study because they were among the oldest records extant and because they were located in fairly representative parts of the Association. Morattico is the oldest Baptist Church of the Northern

Neck, the other churches represent three counties of the counties on the south side of the Rappahannock River. The minutes available from the other churches contain approximately the same ideas, with a few local variations.

In addition to the books cited and already discussed in detail, a number of other books were read wholly or in part. McIlwaine's The Struggle of Protestant Dissenters for Religious Toleration in Virginia and Thom's The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Virginia present two phases of the struggle, while Eckenrode's Separation of Church and State in Virginia discusses the conclusion of the matter. Brydon in Virginia's Mother Church and The Established Church in Virginia and the Revolution championed the cause of the Established Church against all comers. To me he seemed very partisan, as partisan as Little in his Imprisoned Preachers and Religious Liberty in Virginia. Each presented his topic as though the other did not have any foundation of truth in it. Eckenrode, McIlwaine, and Thom presented the same ideas from almost the same sources, but in a much more balanced manner.

P.A. Bruce's Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Social Life in Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, and The Plantation Negro were read

to get an understanding of the early background in Virginia. Robert Beverley's The History and the Present State of Virginia along with Hugh Jones' The Present State of Virginia, Russell's The Free Negro in Virginia 1619-1865, and references looked up in William and Mary Quarterly and Tyler's Quarterly Magazine gave a setting in which to place the source materials which were being studied.

W.W. Sweet's Religion in Colonial America and his The Story of Religion in America offered a general background in the field of religion comparable to the social and institutional background gained from such men as Bruce, Beverly, and Jones. Howell in his The Early Baptists of Virginia joined with Little in presenting a defense of the Baptists, especially their social standing, their intolerance of a state church. Gewehr's The Great Awakening was not concerned wholly with the Baptists, but he mentioned them incidentally in relation to the revival which swept the United States under the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield. Brydon felt that he was partial to the Baptists, especially in his presentation of the struggle with the Established Church in Virginia.

The references to the Quakers, Lloyd's Quaker Social History 1669-1738, and Rufus Jones' The Quakers

in the American Colonies were examined to get the Quaker point of view and comments on the civil laws of Virginia which restricted them in their activities in Virginia.

Alfred Bagby's book, King and Queen County, was read to get the local point of view concerning The Established Church and its relation to the development of the Baptist churches in that area.

These secondary references were interesting, but served only as background material from which to get a setting for the source material since the topic of this study is very provincial and would not attract the notice of a person who had not lived in the Rappahannock Association. Few of the Baptists of that area have succeeded in making the headlines except among their own denomination.

Appendix A

Chronological Table

Year	Church	County	Founder
1772	Glebe Landing	Middlesex	John Waller
1772	Lower King and Queen	King and Queen	John Waller
1772	Upper Essex	Essex	Lewis Craig
1774	Piscataway	Essex	John Waller
1774	Upper King and Queen	King and Queen	Lewis Craig
1775	Exol (extinct)	King and Queen	John Waller
1775	Mathews	Mathews	Ivison Lewis
1778	Morattico	Lancaster	Lewis Lunsford
1786	Nomini	Westmoreland	Henry Toler Lewis Lunsford
1789	Hanover	King George	James Shackelford
1789	Hermitage	Middlesex	John Waller
1790	Gloucester	Gloucester	Ivison Lewis
1790	Bruington	King and Queen	James Greenwood
1790	Farnham	Richmond	James Greenwood
1801	Abingdon (Union)	Gloucester	Ivison Lewis
1804	Wicomico (Coan)	Northumberland	Henry Toler Bryant Philips
1807	Poroporone	King and Queen	Robert Ware
1808	Zoar	Middlesex	John Mullen
1812	Pope's Creek	Westmoreland	
1820	Round Hill	King George	
1828	Mattaponi	King and Queen	
1832	Jerusalem	Richmond	
1837	Menokin	Richmond	

Year	Church	County	Founder
1839	Providence	Caroline	
1839	Rappahannock	Richmond	
1840	Gibeon	Northumberland	
1841	Lebanon	Lancaster	
1842	Olivet	King and Queen	
1842	Saluda (Clark's Neck)	Middlesex	
1843	Ephesus	Essex	
1843	Fairfields	Northumberland	
1846	Corrotoman	Lancaster	
1854	Mount Zion	Essex	
1856	Howerton	Essex	
1856	Shiloh	King George	
1859	Harmony Grove	Middlesex	
1871	Totusky	Richmond	
1874	Gwynn	Mathews	
1874	Spring Hill	Mathews	
1874	Westville	Mathews	
1875	Beale Memorial	Essex	
1875	Oak Grove	Westmoreland	
1875	Potomac	King George	
1876	Welcome Grove	Richmond	
1877	Providence	Northumberland	
1878	Bethany	Richmond	
1878	Beulah	Gloucester	

Year	Church	County	Founder
1881	Petsworth	Gloucester	William E. Wiatt
1882	Currioman	Westmoreland	
1884	Beulah	Westmoreland	
1885	Oakland	King George	
1886	Macedonia	Mathews	
1888	Cobham Park	Richmond	
1888	Urbanna	Middlesex	
1889	Montague	King George	
1890	Irvington	Lancaster	
1893	Norwood	Lancaster	
1895	Mountain View	King George	
1895	White Stone	Lancaster	
1897	Colonial Beach	Westmoreland	
1908	Fairport	Northumberland	
1912	Claybrook	Lancaster	
1913	Wicomico	Northumberland	
1915	Kilmarnock	Lancaster	
1915	Mooreland	Northumberland	
1921	Smithfield	Richmond	
1921	Warsaw	Richmond	

Appendix B

Church Covenant of Zoar Church

We, whose names are hereunto subjoined (Baptized upon profession of faith, having satisfactory knowledge of one another, in regard to our Christian experience and character; and being persuaded that it will all conduce to the Glory of God and our own spiritual prosperity; and therefore, that it is both our duty and our privilege to be formed into a Gospel Church;) do resolve, in the fear of God and in the name of Jesus Christ, thus to unite ourselves together in one body, under one head jointly to live and act as a church according to the spirit and precept of the Gospel of Christ.

We own and acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as the only standard by which all principles and practices in religion are to be tried, and Jesus Christ as the only supreme head and law-giver of his church. We desire therefore to surrender ourselves in Soul and body, to him to his keeping, his government and his service; and to be guided by the direction of his Holy Word, both in our faith and practices as far as we may be able, according to the light afforded us to ascertain his mind and will. And with respect to one another we do hereby Covenant and agree (reserving to ourselves

respectively the rights of conscience and Christian liberty in general) that we will give ourselves mutually to each other as members of the same body, that we will endeavor to be subject one to another in the Lord; to bear each others burdens; to promote, as far as we may be able, each others well being, and to unite our efforts in the common cause of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

While thus we would devote ourselves jointly and severally, to the name and the control of the Great King in Zion, we implore his condescending regard, in the acceptance of our persons and services, and his efficacious grace, to aid us in the toils and duties of our earthly pilgrimage; and thus we may be blessed of him, both in our individual and social capacities; and finally, that we may exchange the Church Militant for the Church Triumphant - to the praise of the glory of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.¹

¹Zoar Church Records.

Appendix C

Alexander Campbell of Bethany, Virginia (now West Virginia) was the recognized founder and organizer of the distinct body of religious people who now call themselves "Disciples of Christ." He sought to institute a reformation of primitive Christianity. He was a Presbyterian, but when he rejected infant baptism and adopted immersion, he sought connection with the Baptist denomination, which resulted in widespread distraction and dissension until in 1832 the Baptists in Virginia withdrew fellowship from individuals and churches holding his views.

Frank Adkins. Disciples and Baptists, Philadelphia, 1896, 5-7.

Andrew Broaddus felt that the great error in Mr. Campbell's views lay in his interpretation of the meaning of baptism. Mr. Broaddus understood that Mr. Campbell believed there was the actual forgiveness of sins in Baptism, with which belief Mr. Broaddus heartily disagreed.

Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers, 250-251
Second Series.

Appendix D

List of Churches and Their Membership as of 1849

Name of the church	membership		Total
	white	colored	
Bruington	212	300	512
Clark's Neck	---	---	237
Enon (no record)	---	---	---
Exol	68	120	188
Ebenezer	---	---	---
Farnham	61	49	110
Gibson	109	15	124
Glebe Landing	---	---	---
Hanover	265	603	868
Hermitage	---	---	---
Jerusalem	183	169	352
Lebanon	104	36	140
Lower King and Queen	120	138	258
Mattaponi	---	---	---
Menokin	114	9	123
Morattico	179	265	439
Nomini	306	582	888
Olivet	141	270	311
Piscataway	---	---	---
Pocorone	83	195	278
Petsworth	---	---	---
Pope's Creek	---	---	---
Providence	---	---	188
Rappahannock	209	29	238
Round Hill	15	155	170
Saint Stephens	27	38	65
Salem	---	---	---
Union	---	---	288
Upper King and Queen	---	---	580
Upper Essex	255	486	741
Zoar	222	114	336
Wicomico	545	266	811
Upper Zion	202	163	365