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## Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations.

THE year 1641 A.D. is one of the great dates in English constitutional history. The old feudalism and the Stuart pretensions were soon to be destroyed. Parliamentary government was to become a reality. Not only was civil liberty to be a fact, there was also to be religious equality, for one of the first and greatest achievements of the Long Parliament was to place on the Statute Book Acts abolishing the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission, and thus destroying the chief instruments of regal and ecclesiastical tyranny, and declaring, in a practical way that "the civil power has no right to make and impose ecclesiastical laws."

One result of this was that Baptists began to declare themselves. Pastors and elders itinerated, evangelised, and formed churches in many counties. A steady stream of tracts and books came from the press. Many of the preachers were cultured, and some had received University training. Naturally, many opponents disliked their increased activities, and in pamphlets and sermons, endeavoured to hinder the propagation of Baptist beliefs. Hence it is not surprising that this was an age of public disputation. The Anabaptists—as the Baptists were then called—welcomed these disputations, since they drew attention to the truth, gave the opportunity for declaring the Gospel to large crowds of people, and sometimes led

to conviction amongst the hearers; also to the formation of churches on New Testament lines. Subjoined is a list of one hundred and nine disputations, and from these we may gather facts concerning the origin, position, distinctive practices and tenets of the English Baptists.

The dates of ninety-one of these disputations are known, and it is significant that the first took place in 1641, on the village green at Westerleigh, seven miles from Bristol, and the consequence was the formation of Broadmead Church, Bristol. From 1641 to 1650 inclusive, twenty-six were held; from 1651 to 1660 there were fifty-three; and after 1660 to the last, in 1698, only twelve more. The total for the Commonwealth period itself is sixty-one, demonstrating that Baptists exercised their liberties to the full in that critical, yet formative, period. Twelve took place in 1655, the year Cromwell secured liberty of worship for the Vaudois.

The ground covered is significant. We know the places where 105 were held. Of these Scotland claims four, Wales three, Ireland two, and Italy one. This leaves ninety-five for England, and of these twenty-four were held in London, and altogether twenty-seven counties were the scenes of these wordy combats. Kent had eight, Warwickshire six, Leicestershire, Worcestershire, Sussex, and Bedfordshire five each; Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire four each; and there were three in each of the counties of Essex, Bucks., Cambridge, and Hereford. It is significant that we have only three for the northern counties of England, and they were all in the West.

Over sixty Baptists took part as disputants, for most of the leaders participated in this warfare of tongues. The most active was John Tombes, M.A., B.D., of Magdalene Hall, Oxford; he held nine, apart

from that one in 1642 at Bristol, which led to his becoming a Baptist. Other notable converts through them were Henry Jessey, M.A., F. Cornwell, M.A., and Christopher Blackwood. Another notable protagonist was William Kiffin—merchant, pastor, army officer—who appeared in six contests. The most popular appears to have been Jeremiah Ives, who held at least eight. He seemed always ready to meet any antagonist. His prowess in this harmless kind of conflict became so famous that he was sent for by King Charles II. to dispute with a Romish priest. Ives appeared before the King habited like a clergyman. The priest, according to custom, began to vaunt upon the antiquity of his church; but upon this point Ives pressed him very closely, showing that, whatever antiquity the Roman Catholics claimed, their doctrine and practice could by no means be proved apostolic, since they are not to be found in any writings which remain of the apostolic age. The priest, after much wrangling, in the end replied that this argument was of as much force against infant baptism as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. To which Ives replied that he readily granted what he said to be true. The priest thereupon broke up the dispute, saying that he had been cheated, and that he would proceed no further; for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the Establishment, and it was now evident that this was an Anabaptist. John Bunyan held six disputations, but they were all, except one, with Quakers.

The opponents were chiefly clergymen, who numbered twenty-five, mostly university men, and including eleven Doctors of Divinity. Thirteen of these were afterwards ejected from their livings. The most famous were Drs. Gunning and Featley. It is worthy of note that at least thirty-two disputations were with

Quakers, and of these George Fox himself held sixteen, of which three were in Scotland and the rest in no less than nine different English counties. Young James Parnell was the next most active Quaker. Richard Baxter crossed swords on three occasions. Very few Independents, Presbyterians, or Unitarians are in the list of antagonists.

What were the subjects of dispute? Naturally, often the question of the subjects and mode of baptism. We have records of twenty-six such disputes. In every case where the mode was mentioned the Baptists maintained that it was immersion. It is never suggested that they had ever changed. If they had, as is sometimes stated, you would have expected a reference. On the other hand, the report of the dispute in November, 1658, at St. Clement Dane's Church, Strand, London, between Henry Denne and Dr. Gunning, gives us a clear guidance. It is called "A Contention for Truth," and Denne answered a question which is often asked—Is immersion injurious to the person baptised?—in the negative, and in his answer there is a passage which is of great importance, because it gives us a landmark in the history of infant sprinkling. Denne says that, "It is easy to prove that dipping of believers is not so dangerous, as dipping of infants; yet dipping of infants is not only commanded by the Church of England, but also generally practised in the Church of England till the year 1600; yea, in some places it was practised until the year 1641, until the fashion altered."

The most famous disputation was held on October 17th, 1642, in the Borough of Southwark, between Dr. Daniel Featley, M.A., and four Anabaptists, of whom one appears to have been W. Kiffin. There is Featley's own biased account of this. It is our earliest report of a disputation, and it possesses a scandalous frontis-

piece in which fifteen different sorts of Anabaptists are supposed to be depicted. Notwithstanding the writer's animadversions, he makes some important admissions. Apparently he had been informed of forty-seven Baptist Churches that existed, and he considered them to be "the most dangerous and pestilent enemies" to the State. He tells us that "this fire in the reignes of Queen Elizabeth and King James, and our most gracious soveraigne, till now, was covered in England under the ashes; or if it brake out at any time, by the care of the Ecclesiasticall and Civill Magistrates it was soon put out. But of late, since the unhappy distractions which our sinnes have brought upon us, the Temporall Sword being other wayes employed, and the Spirituell locked up fast in the Scabberd, this sect, among others, hath so far presumed on the patience of the State, that it hath held weekly Conventicles, re-baptised hundreds of men and women together in the twilight in Rivulets, and some armes of the Thames, and elsewhere, dipping them over head and eares. It hath printed divers Pamphlets in defence of their Heresie, yea, and challenged some of our preachers to disputation."

Other subjects discussed covered almost every conceivable theological topic, i.e., "The Trinity and the Church"; "The Person of Christ"; "The Second Coming of Christ and the Resurrection of the Body"; "Universal Redemption"; "Election"; "The right of private persons to take upon them public preaching"; "Church government and discipline"; "Original Sin"; "Ye Business of the Reformation and ye duty of Separation from ye Worship of Antichrist"; "The immortality and immateriality of the soul"; "The Diety of Christ"; "Admission of Jews into England"; "Socinianism"; "Whether the Heathen, who want the ministry of the Gospel, have not

sufficient means to believe unto Salvation?" "The Validity of the Ministry." When the Quakers were the disputants it generally meant considering the question of "The Inner Light." The Baptists had their own differences, and they debated between themselves the questions of the laying on of hands, the Seventh Day Sabbath, the practice of singing, as well as the distinctions between Generals and Particulars. Ordinary buildings proved too small and inconvenient for the excited and eager crowds who attended, and the largest accommodation being afforded by the parish church, to the parish church they commonly hurried. In those days the rights of parishioners were greater than now. At Cambridge they met in the Shire Hall. Some took place in prison, and others in orchards, or other places, with the blue canopy of heaven as their roof. The victory, as in all such public discussions, was usually claimed by both sides. As early as 1645 A.D., the authorities would only permit such meetings by means of a licence, but oftentimes the disputants took risks and ignored the question of licence altogether.

#### LIST OF DISPUTATIONS.

The names of Baptists are the first when known.

1641. *At Westerleigh, Near Bristol.*

Between John Canne and Richard Fowler, who was ejected from his living in 1662, and died in 1684, being at the time the Presbyterian minister at Newbury.

"They debated ye business of the Reformation, and ye Duty of Separation from ye Worship of Antichrist." This was one of the things that led to the formation of Broadmead Church, Bristol. But it has been questioned in these pages that Canne himself was ever a Baptist; see *Transactions*, vol. iii., p. 212.

1642. Oct. 17th. *At Southwark.*

Between William Kiffin and Dr. Daniel Featley, M.A. The latter published his account of this in 1645, in his "Dippers Dipt, or the Anabaptists duck'd and plung'd over Head and Eares, at a Disputation at Southwark." This passed through six editions in as many years. The debate covered a wide ground; the Trinity, the Church, the Sacraments, Lay Preaching, and other subjects were considered.

1642. *At Bristol.*

Between John Tombes, M.A., B.D., of Magdelene Hall, Oxford, and an ingenious Baptist. The subject was infant baptism, which he had practised as being based on i. Cor. vii. 14. This led to Tombes becoming a Baptist, and he became a great power in the land, and was one of the Triers. He held many disputes, and died 1676, in his 73rd year.

1642. *At Wickham, Essex*

There is no record of this, but we know that John Stalham was invited to be present by Enock Grey, and Thomas Lowry, the incumbent, was present. Lowry was subsequently ejected from his living at Harborough, Leicestershire.

1643. January 11th. *At Terling, Essex.*

Between Timothy Batt and Thomas Lambe, for the Baptists, and John Stalham, M.A. (Oxon), a man of strict Congregational principles. The last named published in 1644 a record of this, entitled: "The Summe of a Conference." Lambe was one of the first to encourage females preaching.

1643. January. *At London.*

Between John Tombes and Dr. N. Holmes, Messrs. Stephen Marshall, M.A., B.D., Thomas Blake, M.A., and Henry Scudder. The question proposed was, what Scripture there was for infant baptism.

1643. *At Coventry.*

Between Benjamin Coxe, M.A., and Richard Baxter, on "Infant Baptism." Baxter issued the challenge, but as the outcome of it Coxe was imprisoned. See *Transactions* of the Baptist Historical Society, vol. vi., 52.

1643. *At London.*

Between Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin and Henry Jessey, M.A. See *Transactions*, vol. i., 237. This led to Jessey becoming a Baptist.

1644. *In the prison at the Lord Peter's house, London.*

Between Henry Denne and Dr. Featley. Denne had so much the best of the argument that Featley, under the excuse of the danger of publicly disputing without a licence, declined to proceed with it.

1644. *In Kent.*

Between Edward Barber, Thomas Lambe, on the one side, and William Kiffin and Thomas Patient on the other. Barber was strong for the practice of laying on of hands when receiving new members, and his congregation was the first to practice it. See *Transactions*, vol. i., 119.

1644. *At Cranbrook, Kent.*

Between William Jeffery, of Sevenoaks, and the clergy. This was the outcome of a sermon by the Rev. F. Cornwell, M.A., preached on March 7th, and led to Mr. Christopher Blackwood becoming a Baptist. The subject of debate was infant baptism. Cornwell introduced amongst Baptists the practice of the laying on of hands.

1644. *'In the stone-house' (i.e., the parish church),*  
Warboys, Hunts.

Between Henry Denne and Eusebius Hunt, the parish teacher. Denne maintained that infant sprinkling was of human tradition, and there was no ground for it in the Scriptures.

1646. Jan. *At the Spital, near Norton Falgate,*  
*London.*

"Upon the day of public thanksgiving for the taking of Dartmouth by the Parliamentary Forces."

Between Thomas Lambe and a Mr. Batty, a teacher in the same church, namely, Bell Alley, Coleman Street. The subject of the dispute was, the immortality and immateriality of the soul. The Lord Mayor, it appears, had private notice of the meeting, and sent his officers to prevent it.

1646. *At Trinity Church, Coventry.*

Between Hanserd Knollys and W. Kiffin on the Baptist side, and the Rev. John Bryan, D.D., Vicar of Trinity Church, and the Rev. Obadiah Grew, M.A., D.D., Vicar of St. Michael's, Coventry. The last two were both ejected in 1662.

1646. *Before the Synod of Ministers (Presbyterian),*  
*London.*

Between Vavator Powell and Stephen Marshall, M.A., B.D. It was proposed that Powell should receive Presbyterian ordination, but he maintained that they had no authority without the concurrence of the church to which he was to become pastor. The result was that, on September 11th, the necessary certificate was given, signed by eighteen of the divines, that he should be allowed to exercise his gifts. Powell was baptised at the end of 1655.

1647. January 11th. *In St. Mary's Church, Oxford.*

Between William Erbury, B.A., and Francis Cheynell, M.A., D.D. This was a debate on Socinianism. R. Baxter considered Erbury one of the chief of the Anabaptists, but Neal describes him as a turbulent antinomian. He held some curious views, his leading tenets were that about the end of the Apostolic times the Holy Spirit withdrew itself, and man substituted an external and carnal worship in its stead; that when apostasy was removed the New Jerusalem would descend, so that certain men could already see it; that baptism consisted in going ankle deep only into the water, and that none had a right to administer that ordinance without a fresh commission from heaven.

1647. *At Newport Pagnell, Bucks.*

Between John Gibbs and Richard Carpenter.

"A scholasticall Discussion of the much-agitated controversie concerning Infant Baptisme."

1648. *At Leicester.*

George Fox's first dispute with Baptists. This was the first mention of his speaking in a "steeple-house," when "Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Common-prayer men" all took part. The debate came to an abrupt termination, but was resumed at an inn.

1649. Jan. 14th. *At All-Hallows-the-Great, in Thames Street, London.*

Between John Simpson and John Goodwin, M.A., Messrs. William Ames and John Griffith acting as moderators. The subject was "that Jesus Christ died intentionally, to save all the posterity of Adam." Griffith was a G.B., Simpson came to dwell on the Fifth-Monarchy,

1649. *Feb. 11th. At the same place, the same disputants* discussed whether the heathen who want the Ministry of the Gospel have not sufficient means to believe unto salvation?" Simpson said no; Goodwin said yes. Messrs. James Cranford, M.A., and John Griffith acted as Moderators.

1649. *At Barrow-upon-Soar, Leicestershire*

Between Samuel Oates and George Fox, on "Faith and Baptism."

1649. *July 27th. At Ashford, Kent.*

Between Samuel Fisher, M.A. (Oxon), and several clergymen, in the presence of two thousand people, on infant baptism.

1649. *December 31st. At Coleman Street, London.*

Between Vavasor Powell and John Goodwin, M.A., on Universal Redemption, in the presence of divers ministers of the city of London, and thousands of others. Messrs. J. Cranford, M.A., and D. Lowdell acted as moderators. Lowdell is a name well known in G.B. circles.

1650. *January 1st. At Bewdley, Worcestershire.*

Between John Tombes and Richard Baxter, who disputed from the infants' rights to church-membership to their right to baptism. There was a crowded audience, and the debate lasted from nine in the morning until five at night.

1650. *At Axbridge, Somerset.*

Between Thomas Collier and J. Smith, of Badgworth, concerning the person of Christ, the Trinity, etc.

1650. *August 20th. At Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire.*

Between Lawrence Williams, Samuel Oates (Baptists) and Thomas Hall, B.D. Subject was "the right of private persons to take upon them public preaching."

1651. *At Petworth, Sussex.*

Between Samuel Fisher and Dr. Channel.

Fisher engaged in eight other disputes within three years. He had been a clergyman, but in 1643 returned his licence to the bishop and joined the Baptists. In 1654, through the influence of William Caton and John Stubbs, he became a Quaker. He continued to hold disputations, and in 1660 held three with Thomas Danson, M.A., at Sandwich.

1651. *At Cowbridge, Glamorgan.*

Between William Erbury and Henry Nicholls.

1652. March. *At Antrim.*

Between Andrew Wyke, assisted by a Mr. Taylor, an Independent minister, and some Presbyterian ministers, on church government and discipline.

1652. July 23rd. *At New Chappel, in Montgomeryshire.*

Between Vavasor Powell and Dr. George Griffith, M.A. The subject was church government, and Griffith received the Bishopric of St. Asaph for the part he took in this debate in particular, and in traducing Nonconformists in general.

1652. September 11th. *In the Parish Church of Watlington, Oxon.*

Between John Pendarvis, B.A., Exeter College, Oxon, and Dr. Jasper Mayne, M.A., of Christ Church, Oxford, on infant baptism. There was an innumerable company of people on each side.

1652. October 25th. *At Cupar, Fife.*

Mr. Brown, chaplain to Colonel Fairfax's regiment, disputed with one James Wood, a Scotch minister, upon the question whether infant baptism was grounded upon the Word of God.

1652. *At Oxford.*

Between John Tombes, M.A., B.D., and Henry Savage, M.A., B.D.

1652. *In the Parish Church, Kendal, Westmoreland.*

Between Thomas Taylor and three neighbouring ministers. It led to Edward Gathorne becoming a Baptist. It was a dispute on baptism. Soon after Taylor met George Fox and became a Quaker.

See *Transactions*, vol. v., 168.

1652. *In London.*

Between Dr. Peter Chamberlen and Mr. James Cranford, M.A. (Oxon), on the question of ordination. The dispute occupied four days in March and April, and took place "at the house of Mr. William Webb, at the end of Bartholomew Lane, by the old Exchange." Chamberlen was M.D., of Padua, but afterwards was incorporated both at Oxford and Cambridge. Also a F.R.C.S.

See *Transactions*, vol. iii., 180.

1653. 26th May. *At Cork.*

Dr. Harding, the pastor at Bandon, challenged Dr. Edward Worth, of Cork, and Mr. John Murcot, of Dublin, to a public discussion on baptism, which was held on the above date.

1653. September 2nd. *London.*

Before the Committee of Tythes.

William Erbury, M.A., disputed with Dr. Lazarus Seaman, M.A., and Dr. Anthony Burgess, M.A., on "Ministers for Tythes."

1653. September 5th. *At Abergavenny (St. Mary's Church), Mon.*

Between J. Tombes, M.A., B.D., and Henry Vaughan, M.A., and John Cragge, M.A. The two last named tried to refute the necessity of dipping and maintain infant baptism.

1653. October 12th. *At Lombard Street, London.*

[Between a Mr. Webster, and three others, a Presbyterian, an Independent, and an Anabaptist. The last was W. Erbury, and he issued an account of what he termed this "monstrous dispute, because it had neither head nor taile."

1653. *At Carlisle.*

Between George Fox and the Anabaptist Pastor.

1653. Nov. 6th. *At London.*

Between Dr. Chamberlen and W. Kiffin (now a Captain in the Army), on "the imposition of hands."

1654. July. *At Broadmead, Bristol.*

[The Baptists and two Quakers from Kendal, John Audland and Thomas Airey, on "the inner light."

1654. Aug. 16th. *At Broughton, Kent.*

Between George Hammon, pastor of Biddenden, and Matthias Rutton, on "original sin."

1654. Sept. 27th. *At Harlaston, Staffs*

Between Richard Farnworth, a Quaker, and the Baptists.

1654. *At Swanington, Leicestershire.*

Between George Fox and the Baptists.

1654. *At Baddesley Ensor, near Atherstone,  
Warwickshire.*

Between George Fox and the Baptists.

1654. *At Theobald's House, near Waltham Abbey,  
Herts.*

Between Major William Packer and George Fox.  
See *Transactions*, vol. iv., 58.

1655. March 30th. *At Fennystanton, Hunts.*

"in the house of a Mr. Ashen."

Between Richard Elligood, a Baptist Pastor, and James Parnell, a young Quaker, who died in Colchester Gaol on May 5th, 1656, in his twentieth year "for conscience sake." This disputation was the result of Parnell dispatching a paper of forty-three queries to the Baptists of the place, inviting them to come and answer it publicly. It was a discussion on "the letter and the spirit." The meeting was not the last of the matter, for several disputatious letters were afterwards exchanged, which are to be found printed in the collection of Parnell's writings.

1655. April 20th. *At Cambridge.*

In the Shire Hall, in the Castle yard, where the Baptists were waiting, "sitting upon the Bench like judges."

Between Joseph Doughty and James Parnell, on the invitation of Mr. Hind, a tanner of the city. A great number of university men, and clergy, were present.

1655. May. *In an orchard at Littleport, Isle of Ely.*

Between John Ray, of Wichelbrook, in Suffolk, and James Parnell.

1655. June 24th. *At Horsham, Sussex.* At Sedgwick Lodge, in the house of Bryan Wilkinson.

Between Matthew Caffin and George Fox.

1655. Sunday, July 4th. "*In the French School,*"  
*at Colchester, Essex.*

Between William Archer, the town lecturer, Thomas Tillam, a Seventh Day Baptist, and James Parnell.

1655. December. *At Rosse, Herefordshire*, "in the steeple-house."

Between John Skinner, from Weston, who wrote a book against infant baptism, and Thomas Goodayer. See *Transactions*, vol. iii., 117.

1655. *At Kenilworth, Warwickshire.*

Between John Onley, a farmer and Baptist preacher of Lawford, and Dr. John Bryan, of Coventry. (The account of this discussion was criticised by J. Ley, Prebendary of Chester, in 1658.

1655. *At Sibley, Leicestershire.*

Between George Fox and several Baptists, one of whom said that "he had baptized thirty of a day, and came by the Lord's teachings by his spirit and power."

1655. *At Romney, Kent.*

Between George Hammon and George Fox.

1655. *At Dorchester, Dorset.*

Between George Fox and the Baptists.

1655. *In St. Paul's Cathedral, London.*

Between John Griffin and John Biddle, M.A. (Oxon), a Socinian, the subject being "Whether Jesus Christ be the Most High and Almighty God." As a result of this Biddle was banished to the Scilly Islands, on Oct. 5th of the same year, where he remained until 1658, when some Baptist ministers interceded for his release. Subsequently he died in prison.

1655. *At the Quaker's Meeting-house, Crawley, Sussex.*

Between Matthew Caffin and two Quakers, Thomas Lawson and John Slee. They discussed the second coming of Christ and the Resurrection of the Body. It was adjourned to Caffin's house at Southwater, where it was resumed Sept. 5th. Continued for seven

years by means of printed pamphlets, with such quaint titles as these, viz.: "An Untaught Teacher Witnessed Against," and "The Deceived and Deceiving Quaker Discovered." Caffin was assisted by W. Jeffery, of Sevenoaks, and Joseph Wright, of Maidstone. The Quaker disputants were George Fox, J. Naylor, H. Woolrich, and George Whitehead.

1656. April 30th. *Ellesmere, Salop.*

Between Henry Haggar, of Stafford, and Thomas Porter, M.A., of Whitchurch, who was afterwards ejected. The subject of debate was infant baptism, and Mr. Francis Tallents was moderator.

1656. *At Bristol, in an orchard.*

Paul Gwin, "ye rude Jangelinge baptist," and George Fox, who also "went to ye meetinge in Broorde Mede."

1656. *At Edge Hill, Warwickshire.*

George Fox and the "ranter baptists."

1656. *Thomas Collier and the Quakers.*

Collier defended the admission of Jews into England.

1656. *At Pavenham, Bedfordshire.*

Between John Bunyan and the Quakers.

1656. May 23rd. *In Paul's Steeple House Bedford.*

John Bunyan, John Burton, and the Quakers.

1656. *At the Market Cross, Bedford.*

John Bunyan and the Quakers.

Bunyan's antagonists included both male and female Quakers. On one occasion Mrs. Anne Blackley bid him "to throw away the scriptures," to which Bunyan replied, "No! for then the devil would be too hard for me."

These disputes led to Bunyan publishing his first

work, the same year, entitled, "Some Gospel Truths Opened," in which there was a denunciation of the tenets of the Quakers. It elicited an immediate reply, written by Edward Burroughs, entitled "The Gospel of Peace, contended for in the Spirit of Meekness and Love." In a postscript to it we read, "And now seeing we have taken in hand to discover and lay open the deceits of the Deceivers, that all men may come to the knowledge of the Truth, and be saved, and led out of the snare of the crafty Fowlers; these things further we shall add, which are contrary to the knowledge of the true Gospel.

"First. John Burton said in a Discourse with some Friends, 'That Christ had two bodies, and one of the bodies was out of the fight of the Saints.'

"Secondly. John Bunyan said, 'Christ's second coming is not his coming in spirit, for his coming in Spirit is no comming.'

"Thirdly. John Bunyan said, upon Discourse of the Word of God being in the heart, in the presence of divers People, 'That there was nothing in him, nor in any man to be taken notice of.'

"Fourthly. One of their Brethren said, 'That Christ and the Word of Life were too things.'

"Fifthly. Some others of the same members, in the Market of Bedford, said, 'That they scorned that Light which we (meaning the Quakers) speak of, which is the Light that convinceth of sin, which Light they confessed to every man, in the same discourse, which was with some of them called Quakers.'

Within a few weeks, early in 1657, Bunyan replied in "A Vindication of the Gospel Truths opened." He tells Burroughs that he is censorious and useth many words without knowledge.

1657. Jan. 30th *At Bedford.*  
John Bunyan and the Quakers.

1657. Nov. 23rd. *At Bedford.*

John Bunyan, John Child, John Fenn, and the Quakers.

1657. *At Leith.*

George Fox and an Anabaptist.

1657. *At Edinburgh.*

George Fox and an Anabaptist.

1657. *At Stirling*

George Fox and Anabaptists, "vain Janglers and disputers."

1657. *At Leominster, Herefordshire.*

John Tombes, M.A., B.D., and George Fox, who was assisted by Thomas Taylor, now a Quaker, formerly the Baptist protagonist at Kendal. They disputed on "The Light that enlightens every man that cometh into the world."

1658. *June 3rd.*

Between George Hammon and Mr. S. Hendon, and his son John, on "the good ancient laws and statutes of King Jesus."

1658. November 19th and 26th, *in St. Clement Dane's Church, Strand, London.*

Between Henry Denne and Dr. Peter Gunning, a celebrated divine of the day, who received his D.D. by royal mandate, afterwards bishop, successively of Chichester and Ely. This was attended by some thousands of people, and five days afterwards Denne baptized the lady at whose instance it took place.

1658. *Henley-on-Thames, Oxon.*

Joseph Coate (Quaker) a very young man, of Reading, got a dispute "with ye Baptists at the house of Wm Waters."

1659. Jan. 6th to Feb. 2nd. *In the Stone Chapel by St. Paul's, London.*

Jeremiah Ives had disputes about the seventh day Sabbath with three leaders of the Seventh Day Baptists, viz: Thomas Tillam, Dr. Chamberlen, and Mr. Coppinger. There were four days of discussion, and on the last day Ives was assailed by Henry Denne and John Gosnold.

1659. May. *In Daniel Angier's barn at Toft, Cambridgeshire.*

Between John Bunyan and Thomas Smith, M.A., B.D., Professor of Arabic, Lecturer at Christ Church, and Keeper of the University Library, Cambridge. The dispute followed a sermon by Bunyan on i. Tim. iv. 16, and was on the right of lay preaching and calling most of his hearers unbelievers. It led to Smith issuing a pamphlet to which Henry Denne, himself a Cambridge man, replied.

1660. November 27th. *At Leominster, Herefordshire.*

Between John Tombes and Edward Hayes (Baptists), and two Quakers named John Scaff and Alexander Parker. Also another between John Tombes and two Quakers named Thomas Kellam and John Moore.

1660. *At Southwark.*

Between Baptists and Quakers. This Samuel Bradley refers to in his "A reply to a Scandalous Paper," which was answered by the Quaker, George Whitehead.

1662. *At Lincoln.*

Between Thomas Grantham and a Roman Catholic.

1664. *At Lancaster Castle, Lancashire.*

Between Major John Wigan and George Fox, who were both prisoners, on "The Inner Light."

1670. *At High Wycombe, Bucks.*

Between Jeremiah Ives and William Penn, the Quaker.

1671. Feb., 12th and 26th. *In London.*

Between Jeremiah Ives and Thomas Danson, M.A. The subject was, "Whether the doctrine of some true believers, final 'Apostasy, be true or not."

1671. *Between Jeremiah Ives and Thomas Grantham*  
on the subject of "the laying on of hands."

1672. *John Miller, pastor of Minthenton, Dorset,* had several disputes with divers clergymen. The most remarkable was that he had with Dr. Beach, and four more, before a multitude of people. The time and place appointed, having been publicly published in three market towns. The subjects to be debated were baptism, the church, and the ministry. The clergy retired defeated after Miller had dealt with the first one.

1673. 18th Sept. *At Blyton, Lincolnshire.*

Between Thomas Grantham and W. Fort, minister of the parochial congregation. It arose out of Fort visiting the baptized Christians' meeting and saying that they were foolish.

1674. October 9th. *At the Barbican, London.*

Between J. Ives, W. Kiffin, Thomas Hicks, T. Plant, Robert Ferguson, all Baptists, and the Quakers named W. Penn, G. Whitehead, Stephen Crisp, and G. Keith.

The subjects were the Person of Christ and the Inner Light, and thousands were present.

1692. *At Pen-y-lan, Pembrokeshire.*

Between John Jenkins, pastor of Rhydwilim, and John Thomas, of Llwyngrawys, Independent pastor of Llechryd. After many private debates both parties agreed to hold a public meeting. One day, Thomas preached on Paedobaptism, the succeeding day, Jenkins preached on adult baptism. The two sermons, so far from ending the dispute, proved to be only its beginning in earnest. There was a war with pamphlets. Mr. James Owen published, in 1693, a small duodecimo volume of 200 pages, entitled, "Bedydd Plant o'r Nefoedd," i.e., "Infant Baptism from Heaven." This was the first work which appeared in the Welsh language on the baptismal controversy. It was specially translated into English for Mr. Benjamin Keach, so that he could write a reply. This he did in 1696, and his work was published in English, and soon afterwards in Welsh. It is full four times the bulk of Mr. Owen's book, and was entitled, "Light broke forth in Wales expelling darkness."

1692. May 24th. *In London.*

On whether the praises of God should be sung in public assemblies? Many churches were distracted on this subject, and many pamphlets had appeared. The protagonists included B. Keach, Isaac Marlow, George Barrette, Hercules Collins, Richard Allen, and Thomas Hollowell. John Bunyan advocated singing in 1688. The General Assembly of Particular Baptists intervened and referred the subject to the consideration of Andrew Gifford, Bristol; Edward White, Eversholt; Henry Austin, Norwich; Robert Keate, Wantage; John Wills, Allesbrey; Samuel Buttell, Plymouth; and John Scott. They were directed to consider the question "only respecting reflections and matters of fact." They reported on the above date,

a truce followed, and the practice of congregational singing more and more prevailed.

In 1689 the General Baptist Assembly, following the lead Thomas Grantham gave in 1678, sanctioned the singing of praises in the church by a soloist, but forbade congregational psalmody. The same year the Particular Baptist Assembly was asked to take action, but refused until 1692.

1698. Feb. 22nd. *At Portsmouth*, in the Presbyterian meeting-house, High Street. The last with His Majesty's licence.

This arose out of the preaching of Samuel Chandler, a Presbyterian minister of Fareham, who had established a fortnightly lecture at Portsmouth. In it both General and Particular Baptists united. For the Baptists had as champions William Russell, M.D. the G.B. minister of London, who was assisted by two P.B. ministers, viz.: John Williams, of East Knowle, John Sharpe, of Frome, the latter acting as Moderator. The Presbyterians selected Samuel Chandler; Mr. Leigh, of Newport; and Mr. Robinson, of Hungerford, the last named acting as moderator for their party. The assembly was worthy of the occasion, and the debate lasted for nine hours. The governor, the lieutenant governor, the Mayor, and magistrates of Portsmouth were present. The theme of the dispute was, the subject of baptism, and the manner in which it is to be performed.

There were many other disputations, but the dates of the following are uncertain, viz:

*At Maidstone Gaol, Kent*, between Wilson, of Ottham, and F. Cornwell, M.A.

*At Dover, Kent*. Between John Finesse and Luke Howard, who was formerly a Baptist, and says in his Journal that he was the "first receiver of

Friends, and his wife the first baptized person in Kent."

*At Sarden, Kent.* Matthew Caffin and three London ministers disputed.

*At Henfield, Sussex.* Between Matthew Caffin and a Mr. Rothwell, who over-rating his own powers, issued the challenge.

*At Waldron, Sussex.* Matthew Caffin debated with the minister in the Parish Church.

*At Agmondesham, Bucks.* Richard Baxter disputed with the Baptists.

*In London.* Vavasor Powell debated with a Mr. Price on Election and Redemption.

*At Hereford.* John Tombes and another disputed.

*At Rosse, Herefordshire.* John Tombes debated with Tirer and Smith.

*At Portsmouth, Hants.* Dr. Peter Gunning had a dispute with the General Baptists.

*At Newbury, Berks.* Jeremiah Ives debated with Benjamin Woodbridge, M.A. (Oxon), who was afterwards ejected.

*In London, before the King.* Between Jeremiah Ives and a Romish priest.

*In Leicester Castle.* Between Samuel Oates and William Sheffield, M.A. Sir Thomas Beaumont acted as Moderator.

*From the "Journal" of the Friends' Historical Society* we learn that Isabel Hacker, of Withcote Hall, the widow of Colonel Francis Hacker, the Regicide, shared in a noted local dispute with the Baptists.

*At Genoa, in Italy.* Dr. Peter Chamberlen disputed with six Jewish Rabbis at the house of Rabbi Abraham Athias. In it he sets forth the fulfilment in Christianity of Old Testament promises and prophecies, and concluded with an appeal to the Jews to accept the Messiah. This was before 1682, and is referred to in a single sheet tract Chamberlen issued that year, entitled, "The Sons of the East: being an epistle written in English by old Dr. Chamberlen (Eldest Scarlet of Europe, Senior to all Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, and Doctors now living). To the Synagogue of the Jews in London." Chamberlen was now eighty-one years of age.

*In Evans' "Early English Baptists" (ii., 136)* we read that Spelman mentions two disputations between Mr. B. C., an Anabaptist, against Mr. W. J. of Chr., and another against Mr. J. Cr. This appears to be Benjamin Cox.

Sometimes disputations were arranged but not held, e.g., John Tredwell and William Burkitt were to have disputed at Lavingham; B. Keach, at Gravesend. Sometimes the licence was withdrawn, as was the case with one issued by the Lord Mayor for a disputation to be held at the church at Aldermanbury, on December 3rd, 1645, between Edward Calamy and Benjamin Coxe, M.A.

Occasionally the Baptists were challenged to a debate, but, on coming to the place of meeting, they found that their opponents would not listen to arguments, and instead of being properly treated, they were mobbed. Thus Edward Barber suffered, on February 14th, 1648, at the parish meeting-house of Benetfinch, London, when he had come in response to an invitation to meet Edward Calamy.

Oftentimes the Baptists issued a challenge and there was no response, as was the case, in 1670, at Lincoln, when Thomas Grantham tried to get a Robert Wright, who had left the Baptists, and afterwards obtained a living in the Established Church, to debate. Wright had delivered some violent sermons in the city of Lincoln, in which he cast some severe reflections upon the tenets and practices of his former associates. Five copies of the challenge were written, signed by Grantham, and posted in the most conspicuous places in the city during the assizes. It was not accepted, but the writer was threatened that he should answer for it before the council, and it is probable that one of the ten imprisonments endured by Grantham was the result of this.

Henry Haggar and James Brown issued a challenge at Stafford, but no Paedobaptist would face them in a public dispute. It led to a war of pamphlets, the most famous of which was "The Font Uncover'd for Infant Baptisme," by William Cook, of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, which appeared in 1651.

The last recorded disputation of the century, took place on February 22nd, 1688, at Portsmouth, "with His Majesty's licence," between Baptists and Presbyterians. Both parties claimed the victory, but much bitterness and angry recrimination on both sides resulted. It had its good fruit. Henceforth such controversies were discouraged.

The only public disputation recorded afterwards took place on March 5th, 1717, at Burton Latimer, in Northamptonshire, between Baptists and Quakers. On the first of the same month Baptists and Quakers meeting in the Hanover Coffee House, Finch Lane, London, resolved to send a letter earnestly entreating their friends to abandon their intentions to hold the same. The letter was sent, signed by five Particular Baptists

and four Quakers, but it proved ineffectual. Possibly the reason was that the local Baptist disputants were all General Baptists, and the letter was conveyed by Quakers. A great number were present at the disputation, and at the conclusion of this meeting they appointed another, to dispute on some points of difference which they had not time to debate then. The date fixed was June 4th, but before it came another letter was sent to the disputants. It read as follows:—

“London, the 22d of the 3d month,  
called May, 1717.

“To our friends in Northamptonshire, who go under the denomination of Baptists and Quakers.

“We are informed that notwithstanding the advice sent in a former letter, there was a dispute held betwixt several of you on the 5th day of the first month, called March last; and that, as the effect of that, there is another proposed to be had on the 6th of the 4th month next, called June; of which we declare our dislike, as well as of the former; for tho' we hope we have the same zeal for our principles, and love to whatever we have embraced for truth, as any of our brethren; yet we think such public disputes don't tend to promote it, they usually being followed with very ill consequences, as well as that the present state of public affairs renders them at this time more especially unseasonable. The event of the former meeting doth shew, that the consequence is like to be worse; for, from contending, we perceive some or both sides are grown hot, which we fear, if not watched against, will destroy mutual love, arise to strife and envy, be a means to exasperate those who are of a different persuasion from us, give a handle to the enemies of both to misrepresent us to the government, and at last end in an unChristian strife and trouble.

We do earnestly entreat you, as well as on the one side, so the other, to forbear at the intended meeting, and not to insist upon such public ways of striving with each other, seeing there are other methods, which will be less offensive, and more informing to those who are in search of truth. We hope you will take us, in this affair, to be what we really are,

Your friends and well-wishers,

— Benj. Stinton,	}	Your brethren of the the Baptist persuasion.
— John Gale,		
— Lewis Douglas,		
— Joseph Burroughs,		
— Joseph Jenkins,	}	Your friends called Quakers.
— Geo. Whitehead,		
— John Knight,		
— Tho. Pitslow,		
— Wm. Armistead,		
— Simeon Warner,		

The advice was taken, and thus ended the age of disputations.

ARTHUR S. LANGLEY.