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## Baptist M.P.s in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

THE primary purpose of this article is not to give full studies or even biographical outlines of early Baptist M.P.s, but rather to attempt to identify which M.P.s were Baptists.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the chief detail in the lists of M.P.s at the end refers to their religious allegiance. Each entry includes a man's dates of birth and death, where known; a list of the occasions on which he sat in parliament; a few general biographical data; an assessment of the evidence for his Baptist convictions; and often reference to a place where fuller information on his career may be found. The entries are arranged in two lists for each century. The main list includes those who were certainly or probably Baptists. The supplementary list includes those who were certainly not Baptists (although they have previously been supposed to be) and those who were probably not Baptists.

The criteria for determining who is and who is not a Baptist are notoriously problematic in our own day. How do we classify an unbaptized member of an open-membership Baptist church? What do we call someone who has been baptized as a believer in a Baptist church but worships elsewhere? The problem is aggravated for the seventeenth century by the fluidity of denominational identity. Churches were often still moving towards a Baptist position. Individuals might change their convictions, especially in the 1650s, with bewildering frequency. In consequence the attempt to decide which M.P.s should be called Baptists verges on treating men anachronistically. The task is eased if the search concentrates on establishing who was baptized as a believer—for of course in seventeenth-century Britain there were no Christian groups separate from the Baptists who practised believer's baptism. The chief criterion for inclusion in the main list is that the man should probably have been baptized as a believer before he became M.P. Two subsidiary criteria are used because they constitute presumptive evidence that a man had undergone believer's baptism. If he is known to have advocated believer's baptism or if he was a member of a church where he would have been baptized, he is treated as a Baptist. In addition there is the important condition that a man should not have changed his convictions about baptism before entering parliament. Those who appear in the supplementary list include men who were members of churches where baptism was treated as an open question; some who were simply

associated with Baptist churches; others who were certainly or probably baptized after their service as M.P.s; men whose close relations were Baptists; and some who were merely labelled "Anabaptist". In all these cases a man is relegated to the supplementary list rather than the main list if, on a balance of probabilities, he appears not to have been baptized as a believer before he sat in parliament.

A stricter definition could have been adopted. If the only test of admission were whether or not we have fully convincing evidence of a man's Baptist allegiance, the main list would be a short one. There are only six M.P.s in the seventeenth century who can be set down as certainly Baptists (Nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, 9 and 10 in the main list). But the paucity of evidence for the seventeenth century (relative, at least, to the nineteenth century) would suggest that so exclusive a test is too stringent. Several whom we know to have been Baptists in later life are likely to have been baptized before their time in parliament. Many did not advertise their convictions. To be a Baptist, even during the Commonwealth, was to risk obloquy or worse. That is why the main list includes not only certain Baptists but probable Baptists. The degree of probability is indicated in the notes. Of the "probables", two are listed despite the evidence being less than wholly trustworthy (Nos. 2 and 7). Three others are put in the main list even though there is no certainty that they had been baptized before 1653, when all three sat in the Barebones parliament (Nos. 5, 8 and 11). These are the instances that could with almost equal justification be demoted to the supplementary list. Each of these three, however, was definitely a Baptist by 1659. It seems marginally more likely that they were Baptists six years earlier than that they were not.

Of those in the supplementary list for the seventeenth century, seven only just fall short of the main list. Among these "possibles", one (No. VII) is the most borderline of all. He was, like Nos. 5, 8 and 11, a member of the Barebones parliament; but, unlike them, he has left no trace of a Baptist allegiance from the 1650s—or from the 1660s. We know only that he was a Baptist by 1672. The lapse of time seems too long to treat him as having probably been a Baptist in 1653. The only suggestion that two other "possibles" were Baptists also occurs at a point after they had been M.P.s (Nos. V and VI). In addition, one of these, like another M.P., was only described by others as an Anabaptist, and the word may have been applied imprecisely as a term of abuse (Nos. I and VI). In one case the chief problem is over identification. A known Baptist should probably not be equated with the M.P. of the same name (No. V). The other three "possibles" were in churches whose practice would not compel them to be baptized—in one case probably, in the others certainly (Nos. II, III and IV). It remains a possibility that any of this group of seven might have been a Baptist, although the members of the last batch of three (Nos. II, III and IV) are rather less likely candidates than the others.

Another twenty-four are in the supplementary list for the seventeenth century. These are the men who have sometimes been supposed

to be Baptist M.P.s, but who were almost certainly not so. In some cases we can be confident that their allegiance was to other principles. That is true, for instance, of Praise-God Barbone, whose name has been given to the parliament of 1653, for he wrote anti-Baptist literature. Others turn out to have been Independents, Presbyterians or even (in the case of Robert Danvers) an apparent crypto-Catholic. In several instances, however, we are reduced to an argument from silence: John Jones, for example, showed no signs of being a Baptist, but we cannot be absolutely certain that he was not one. Some in this category may in time be discovered to have been Baptists after all. Perhaps the most intriguing case is that of John Hutchinson—the Colonel Hutchinson of Lucy's memoirs. He certainly arrived, in the wake of his wife, at the belief that infant baptism lacks scriptural warrant. Yet, apart from refraining from christening an infant, he seems not to have acted on his conviction. He could, if the definition of Baptist were broad enough, be included in the main list. If, however, the fact that he did not seek believer's baptism is assessed as an indication of a lack of full Baptist convictions—as it is here—Hutchinson has to be put in the supplementary list. The decision has to be based on a purely conceptual analysis of who counts as a Baptist.

Only eleven M.P.s turn out to have been likely Baptists in the parliaments of the seventeenth century. This is a very small group for examination and so generalisations about them may have small significance. Yet it does seem worthwhile to subject them to social analysis. Of the eleven, six were drawn from the ranks of the gentry (Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 10 and 11). Three were primarily merchants (Nos. 3, 4 and 8). Another, William Packer, rose from obscurity through military service (No. 9). John Lilburne, the Leveller leader, commented that Packer had been lifted by his army career from the "dung-hill".<sup>2</sup> John Manley, the eleventh, may also have been primarily a soldier. Perhaps the most interesting point to emerge here is the large number of gentry. They constituted a majority of the group. Baptists whose social position depended on landed property were to be extremely rare in later centuries. No nineteenth-century Baptist M.P., for instance, was drawn from this group.<sup>3</sup> Baptist gentry M.P.s were a phenomenon of the seventeenth century. It was acceptable during the Commonwealth, as it was not later, for men of social standing to press Puritanism to what they regarded as its logical conclusion, a Baptist position.

Analysis by parliament can usefully be presented in tabular form. In Table 1 each M.P. in the main list is represented by his Arabic numeral, and each of the "possibles" in the supplementary list by his Roman numeral. "Possibles" are analysed as a check on the significance of those in the main list as well as for their own sake. The totals at the foot of the columns and the end of the lines keep the likely and the possible Baptists separate. The "possibles" are preceded by a plus sign.

TABLE 1

*Analysis of seventeenth-century Baptist M.P.s by parliament*

Long Rump	1653	1654	1656	1659	...	1679	...	1689	No. of parliaments attended
	1	1		1					4
	2								1
						3			1
			4						1
6	5								1
	6	6	6						4
				7				7	2
	8								1
			9						1
		10	10	10					3
I	11								1
	II	II	II						+1
	III								+3
		IV		IV					+1
	V								+2
VI									+1
	VII								+1
1+1	1+1	6+4	3+2	4+1	3+1	1		1	

The total Baptist membership of the various parliaments given at the foot of the columns deserves first comment. Each of the parliaments of the 1650s had Baptist representation, but the parliament of 1653 was outstanding for its six Baptist M.P.s (out of 144 altogether). No subsequent parliament included so many Baptists until 1885 (out of 670). The 1653 parliament was, of course, exceptional. This was the Barebones parliament, "the parliament of saints", to which members of gathered churches were nominated.<sup>4</sup> After the Restoration there was a dearth of Baptist M.P.s. The years of persecution meant that Baptists were excluded from even the nominal share in power that fell to the M.P.s of that period. It is remarkable that any Baptists should have been elected to parliament under Charles II, but the man who was, John Eyles, seems to have been a man of considerable standing in the City of London. Perhaps surprisingly, only one Baptist was elected after the Glorious Revolution. It must have given this man, John Manley, who had sat in Richard Cromwell's parliament, great satisfaction to join in passing the Toleration Act of 1689. The contrast between the periods before and after 1660 is striking. Before 1660, Baptists sat in parliament eighteen times, and possible Baptists sat another ten times. After 1660, Baptists sat only twice. This reflects the difference between times of opportunity and times of repression for Dissenters. The 1650s were a decade of revolutionary government, and Baptists were among those who enjoyed the fruits of revolution.

The figures in the final column of Table 1 show the number of

parliaments each man attended. Of the eleven Baptists, only four attended more than one; of the seven "possibles", only two attended more than one. Two Baptists attended four times. These were the men who played the most prominent part in the politics of the day. Both Bennet and Lawrence were members of Cromwell's Council of State, and Lawrence was its president from 1654. One Baptist attended three times, beginning in 1654. This was Sir Hierome Sankey, who rose in the service of Cromwell later than Bennet or Lawrence. Similarly the "possible" who sat in three parliaments, Samuel Highland, had attained prominence by acting as negotiator between the Levellers and the army in the late 1640s.<sup>5</sup> Most Baptist M.P.s, however, were not specially active in politics and so did not appear consistently in parliament. They were primarily gentry-turned-soldiers or merchants, rather than politicians.

These M.P.s can also be analysed according to the constituencies they represented. Table 2 sets out the results. Each seat represented by a Baptist or a "possible" in each parliament is assigned to one of five regions in England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland. The five English regions are the south-west, the south-east (including London), the south midlands, the north and east midlands (including East Anglia, although it was not represented) and the north. There is an interesting imbalance in the representation. A line drawn from east to west across Britain with Bedfordshire to the north and Hertfordshire to the south separates the first three regions from the other five. Baptists sat for constituencies to the south of that line fifteen times, and for constituencies to the north five times. "Possibles" sat seven times for southern seats, three times for northern. Baptists were returned to parliament overwhelmingly from the south of England. The eight times that the south-west was represented is especially noteworthy, even though on four occasions the M.P. was Lawrence. The disproportion would be greater had not Scotland and Ireland been included, and the only reason why each was represented was the presence there of an English soldier on active service. The imbalance reflects relative Baptist strength, not of course in the electorate, but in the background of the M.P.s. Seventeenth-century Baptist M.P.s were chiefly southern Englishmen.

Eighteenth-century M.P.s have been much more thoroughly researched than their seventeenth-century predecessors. The History of Parliament project has published full biographical catalogues of M.P.s for the period from 1715 to 1790.<sup>6</sup> These supply nearly all the information given below in the main and supplementary lists for eighteenth-century Baptist M.P.s. The number is remarkably low. Using the same criteria as before, two M.P.s seem to have been Baptists and two are "possibles". Both the Baptists were London men, one a merchant, the other a banker. The presence of two in the Commons illustrates that Baptists were not, as is sometimes believed, excluded from parliament. The Test and Corporation Acts were supposed to keep Dissenters out of local corporations, although they were normally negated by annual

indemnity acts. They were never intended to have an effect on parliament. Social prejudice against Baptists on the one hand and the paucity of prominent Baptists on the other achieved their virtual exclusion without legislation. Consequently in the period from 1660 to 1847, when Sir Morton Peto entered parliament, there were only four Baptist M.P.s. For over sixty years between the death of Frederick Bull in 1784 and the arrival of Peto there was no Baptist in the Commons. Baptists were only on the fringe of national politics.

TABLE 2

*Analysis of Constituencies represented by seventeenth-century Baptist M.P.s*

SW	SE	S Midlands	Wales	N and E Midlands	N	Scotland	Ireland
1 1 1 1				2			
3	4						
5	6 6		6		6		
7	8		7				
10		9 10					10
	11				I		
	II II II	III		IV		IV	
	V	VI					
	VII						
8	5+5	2+2	2	1+1	1+1	+1	1

#### Abbreviations used in the following Lists

- BARNARD T. C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English government and reform in Ireland, 1649-1660*, Oxford, 1975.
- B.Q. *The Baptist Quarterly*.
- BROWN L. F. Brown, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men in England during the Interregnum*, London, 1912.
- CAPP B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: a study in seventeenth-century English millenarianism*, London, 1972.
- CROSBY Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 4 vols., London, 1738-40.
- D.N.B. *The Dictionary of National Biography*, London, 1921-22 edn.
- DODD A. H. Dodd, *Studies in Stuart Wales*, Cardiff, 1971 edn.
- D.W.B. *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940*, Oxford, 1959.
- FLETCHER Anthony Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex, 1600-1660*, London, 1975.
- HAYDEN Roger Hayden, ed., *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640-1687* (Bristol Record Society's Publication 27), Bristol, 1974.

- H. OF P. Unpublished files of History of Parliament project, Institute of Historical Research, London.
- IVIMEY Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, 4 vols., London, 1811-30.
- LACEY D. R. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661-1689*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1969.
- LIU Tai Liu, "The Calling of the Barebones Parliament reconsidered", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 22, 1971.
- NAMIER AND BROOKE Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, London, 1964.
- SEDGWICK Romney Sedgwick, *The House of Commons, 1715-1754*, London, 1970.
- T.B.H.S. *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*.
- THURLOE A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe . . . , 7 vols., London, 1742.
- TOLMIE Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: the separate churches of London, 1616-1649*, Cambridge, 1977.
- UNDERDOWN David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: politics in the puritan revolution*, Oxford, 1971.
- UNDERHILL E. B. Underhill, ed., *Records of the Churches of Christ, gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys and Hexham, 1644-1720* (Hanserd Knollys Society), London, 1854.
- UNDERWOOD A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, London, 1947.
- WATTS M. R. Watts, *The Dissenters: from the Reformation to the French Revolution*, Oxford, 1978.
- WHITLEY W. T. Whitley, *A Baptist Bibliography*, 2 vols., London, 1916.

### List of Seventeenth-Century Baptist M.P.s

1. ROBERT BENNET(T)  
1605-83  
M.P.: 1651 for West Looe (Rumper in Long Parliament)  
1653 for Cornwall  
1654 for Launceston  
1659 for Launceston  
Gentleman. Colonel in parliamentary forces. Member of Council of State, 1653.  
Baptist by 1656, when was expected to attend meeting of western Baptist churches (B. R. White, "John Pendarves, the Calvinistic Baptists and the Fifth Monarchy", *B.Q.*, 25, 1974, p. 258), and probably by 1655, when in circle of Baptist leaders (B. R. White, "Early Baptist Letters (1)", *B.Q.*, 27, 1977, pp. 142ff).  
*D.N.B.* Underdown pp. 308f.
2. HENRY DANVERS  
c. 1622-87  
M.P.: 1653 for Leicestershire  
Gentleman. Colonel in parliamentary forces. Active in support of Monmouth, 1685.  
"Mr. D'anvers was governour of *Stafford*, and a justice of the peace, sometime before *Oliver's* usurpation, and well beloved among the people. Here he first embraced the opinion of the *Baptists* . . ." (Crosby, 3, p. 97). Later elder of Edmund Chillen-



- den's General Baptist Church. By 1682 head of Fifth Monarchist congregation (Capp p. 248). Thus if Crosby is to be trusted, Danvers was probably Baptist when M.P.; but we cannot be certain.  
*D.N.B.*
3. SIR JOHN EYLES  
 d. 1703  
 M.P.: 1679 for Devizes  
 London merchant. Lord Mayor briefly in 1688. Knighted 1687. Certainly Dissenter and referred to more than once as "Anabaptist" (Lacey pp. 390f). Left £100 to Baptist chapels in Devizes and London (H. of P.).
4. WILLIAM KIFFIN  
 1616-1701  
 M.P.: 1656 for Middlesex  
 London merchant.  
 Pastor of Devonshire Square Baptist Church, 1643(?) - 92.  
*D.N.B.* B. R. White, "William Kiffin, Baptist Pioneer and Citizen of London", *Baptist History and Heritage*, 2, 1967. B. R. White, "How did William Kiffin join the Baptists?", *B.Q.*, 23, 1970. But cf. Tolmie pp. 192-95.
5. FRANCIS LANGDEN (*LANGDON*)  
 d. 1658  
 M.P.: 1653 for Cornwall  
 Gentleman.  
 According to Capp p. 254, baptized 1651. But Capp refers to W. T. Whitley, "Loughwood and Honiton, 1650-1800", *T.B.H.S.*, 4, 1914-15, p. 135 as his source for this event. Whitley cites no source but must be relying on the Cheare MS. This gives no year (H. M. Nicolson, ed., *Authentic Records relating to the Christian Church now meeting in George Street and Mutley Chapels, Plymouth*, London, n.d., p. 13). Langden may therefore have been baptized either before or after being M.P.  
 Capp p. 254.
6. HENRY LAWRENCE  
 1600-64  
 M.P.: 1646 for Westmorland (purged in 1648)  
     1653 for Hertfordshire  
     1654 for Hertfordshire  
     1656 for Caernarvonshire  
 Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657  
 Gentleman. Cromwell's landlord in Huntingdonshire. Commissioner for Ireland, 1652. Lord President of Council of State, 1654-59.  
 Elder in Thomas Goodwin's Separatist church at Arnhem. Probably joined Goodwin's congregation on his return to London in 1645, since baptism was not a bar to membership (Tolmie pp. 105, 120). Baptist pamphleteer. Wrote: *Of Baptisme*, Rotter-

dam, 1646; *A Plea for the Use of Gospell Ordinances*, London, 1652.

*D.N.B.* J. E. Bailey, "President Henry Lawrence and his Writings", *Notes and Queries*, 5th ser., 11, 1879, pp. 501-03.

7. JOHN MANLEY

c. 1625-99

M.P.: 1659 for Denbigh Boroughs

1689 for Bridport

Captain in parliamentary army. Joined Monmouth, and later William III.

Apparently only evidence that Baptist was that c. 1643 stated infant baptism to be unlawful. Also declared Church of England clergy to be un-Christian and himself to be as much an apostle as St. Paul (Lacey pp. 420f, H. of P.).

8. SAMUEL MOYER

d. 1683

M.P.: 1653 for London

London merchant. Head of the Customs, 1649-54. Member of Council of State, 1653. Judge of Probate, 1659.

Signed address as Baptist in *Mercurius Politicus*, 10-17 Feb. 1659. Sister Moyer who buried at Bristol in 1682 possibly his wife, although no evidence of Bristol link (Hayden pp. 245, 300). Later was member of church which until 1650 had Thomas Goodwin as pastor and which had Baptist members (Tolmie p. 105 and n.). But no firm evidence that was or was not Baptist when M.P.

9. WILLIAM PACKER

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1656 for Woodstock

1659 for Hertford, but unseated on petition.

Major in Cromwell's regiment. Joined Lambert against parliament 1659.

Cromwell ordered in 1644 that Packer should be reinstated even though he was Baptist (Whitley 6-644). Packer later disputed with George Fox as a Baptist (*T.B.H.S.*, 6 1918-19, p. 229).

*D.N.B.* "Theobalds and Colonel Packer", *T.B.H.S.*, 4, 1914-15, pp. 58-63. Capp p. 256.

10. SIR HIEROME SANKEY

d. 1687?

M.P.: 1654 for Tipperary and Waterford

1656 for Marlborough

1659 for Woodstock

Gentleman. Colonel in parliamentary forces.

Baptized Sep. 1652 by Thomas Patient (Shirren, below, pp. 434f). Sent by Cromwell to Ireland in 1655 "to temper and mollifie those of his principles . . .", that is, Baptists (Thurloe, 4, p. 343). 1674, Baptist preacher at Dublin (Barnard p. 109). "Col. Sir Jerome Sankey, M.P., Ph.D.", *B.Q.*, 4, 1929. J. E.

Auden, "Sir Jerome Zankey of Balderstone", *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 50, 1940. A. J. Shirren, "'Colonel Zanchy' and Charles Fleetwood", *Notes and Queries*, 198, 1953.

11. WILLIAM SPENCE

1621-77

M.P.: 1653 for Sussex

Gentleman.

Signed minutes of London General Baptist Assembly as elder, 1656 (W. T. Whitley, ed., *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, London, 1909, 1, p. 9). Probably inherited radical Puritanism from father (Fletcher p. 300). Likely to be Baptist when M.P.

**Supplementary List of Suggested Seventeenth-Century Baptist M.P.s**

THOMAS BAMPFIELD

c. 1623-93

M.P.: 1654 for Exeter

1656 for Exeter

1659 for Exeter

1660 for Exeter

Gentleman. Speaker of House of Commons, 1658-59.

Listed as Baptist (*T.B.H.S.*, 7, 1920-21, pp. 185f), no doubt because his brother, Francis, was minister of Seventh-Day Baptist Church. Thomas, however, was "an active Presbyterian until his death and was among those who contributed towards the building of a dividing wall in Exeter Cathedral to separate Presbyterians from Independents during the Interregnum" (H. of P.).

*D.N.B.*

PRAISE-GOD BARBONE (*BAREBONE*)

1596(?) - 1679

M.P.: 1653 for London

London leather dresser.

Member of Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey church at Blackfriars before forming own congregation in 1640 (Watts p. 71). But in 1642 and 1645 wrote defences of infant baptism (Liu p. 225). Never Baptist.

*D.N.B.*

JOHN CAREW

1623-60

M.P.: 1647 for Tregony (Rumper in Long Parliament)

1653 for Devon

Gentleman. Regicide. Member of Council of State, 1651 and 1653. Fifth Monarchist. Executed at Restoration.

Baptized early 1658. Had previously helped Exeter Particular Baptist Church (*T.B.H.S.*, 4, 1914-15, p. 134). Not Baptist while M.P.

*D.N.B.* Capp p. 244.

**HUGH COURTNEY**

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1653 for Wales

Gentleman. Fifth Monarchist.

Baptized early 1658 (Capp p. 247). Not Baptist while M.P.

**JOHN CROFT(S)**

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1653 for Gloucestershire

1656 for Gloucestershire

Career unknown.

Mentioned, apparently as Baptist in April 1660, by Crosby, 2, p. 28. But earlier, perhaps in 1658, was signatory on behalf of William Beale's Independent Church at Stow-on-the-Wold of a representation to Cromwell (John Nickolls, ed., *Original Letters and Papers of State . . . found among the political collections of Mr. John Milton*, London, 1743, p. 146). Not Baptist while M.P.

No further reference known.

**ROBERT DANVERS (alias VILLIERS, WRIGHT AND HOWARD, AND VISCOUNT PURBECK)**

1624-74

M.P.: 1659 for Westbury, but expelled for delinquency.

1660 for Malmesbury

Illegitimate son of wife of Viscount Purbeck. Recognised as his son. Adventurer.

Brought up as Roman Catholic in France. Became Presbyterian. Expressed sympathy for Anabaptists before Venner's revolt in 1661. Died a Roman Catholic (H. of P.). No evidence that Baptist by conviction.

*D.N.B.*

**JOHN DESBOROUGH**

1608-80

M.P.: 1654 for Cambridgeshire

1656 for Somerset

Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657

Trained as attorney, but kept farm. Rose through parliamentary forces.

Married Jane, sister of Cromwell.

Desborough's father James was member of Fenstanton General Baptist Church in 1651 (Underhill p. 8). Desborough himself joined John Owen's Independent Church in 1659 (Brown p. 176). No evidence that was Baptist at any time.

*D.N.B.*

**I JOHN FIENNES**

1582-1662

M.P.: 1645 for Morpeth (purged in 1648)

Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657

Son of first Viscount Saye and Sele. Colonel in parliamentary forces.

Certainly sectary. Said to have been Anabaptist in 1648 (Richard

Deane, *A Copy of a Brief Treatise of the Proper Subject and Administration of Baptism*, London, 1693, pp. 12f). No other evidence of Fiennes being Baptist, and so this late reference probably reflects loose use of "Anabaptist" to mean "sectary".

*D.N.B.*

CHARLES FLEETWOOD

d. 1692

M.P.: 1645 for Marlborough (Rumper in Long Parliament)

1654 for Oxfordshire

1656 for Norfolk

Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657

Gentleman. Rose through parliamentary forces. Member of Council of State, 1651 and 1654. Lord Deputy of Ireland, 1654-57. Major-general. Commander-in-chief, 1659.

Favoured Baptists and attended their meetings in Ireland, but not because accepted their principles (Brown pp. 140, 146). Member of John Owen's Independent Church (*Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, 1, 1901, p. 27).

*D.N.B.*

JOHN FOWKE (*FOULKES*)

d. 1662

M.P.: 1661 for London

London merchant.

Called "Anabaptist" by Pepys (*Diary*, ed. H. B. Wheatley, London, 1913, 1, p. 362). Though originally regarded as Presbyterian, managed to be on winning side throughout changes of Interregnum. Some described him as Independent when M.P., but according to a London Dissenter he was "not much noted for religion, but a countenancer of good ministers and deeply engaged in bishops' lands". (H. of P.). Not Baptist.

*D.N.B.* Lacey p. 398.

WILLIAM GOFFE

d. 1679(?)

M.P.: 1654 for Great Yarmouth

1656 for Hampshire

Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657

Apprenticed to salter. Rose through parliamentary forces. Regicide. Major-general.

Said to be Baptist (Underwood p. 80). But reported as major-general on Baptist support for a petition in 1655 as though not himself Baptist (Fletcher p. 303). Joined John Owen's Independent Church in 1659 (Brown p. 176).

*D.N.B.*

THOMAS HARRISON

1606-60

M.P.: 1646 for Wendover (Rumper in Long Parliament)

1653, co-opted

Son of grazier. Rose to be major-general in the army. Regicide. Prominent Fifth Monarchist.

Baptized early 1658 (Brown p. 132). Not Baptist while M.P.  
*D.N.B.* Capp p. 251.

SIR JOHN HEWSON

d. 1662

M.P.: 1653 for Ireland

1654 for Dublin

1656 for Guildford

Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657

Shoemaker. Regicide. Commander of foot in Ireland and governor of Dublin. Knighted 1657.

Noted as Baptist without evidence by Barnard p. 146. His son-in-law, Richard Lawrence, and Richard's brother Henry (q.v.) were Baptists (*T.B.H.S.*, 3, 1912-13, p. 253). His daughter, the wife of Dr. Philip Carteret, was a General Baptist (Thomas Ashton, *Satan in Samuel's Mantle*, London, 1659, pp. 4f). Hewson himself favoured Baptists in Ireland, but joined John Roger's Independent Church in Dublin, 1651 (Edward Rogers, *The Life and Opinions of a Fifth-Monarchy-Man*, London, 1867, p. 29). Not a Baptist.

*D.N.B.*

## II SAMUEL HIGHLAND

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1653 for Surrey

1654 for Southwark

1656 for Southwark

Apparently distiller in 1673. Leveller organiser. Member of Southwark militia committee, 1647. Magistrate in 1650s.

Presented by churchwardens for non-attendance at communion, 1638 (*Notes and Queries*, 7th ser., 5, 1888, p. 456). Hence presumably sectary by then. Said to be member of John Simpson's open-communion Fifth Monarchist/Baptist Church (*T.B.H.S.*, 2, 1910-11, p. 246), but in fact he was merely asked to be adviser to one side in a dispute in this church (Humphrey Hathora *et. al.*, *The Old Leaven purged out*, London, 1658, p. 22). He was pastor of another church, a congregation of unidentified principles in Southwark (Liu p. 232). In the absence of any evidence that this was a Baptist Church, the presumption must be that it was not. Despite Highland's inclusion in a list of "men who were clearly Baptists" (Watts p. 144n), he was probably not one.

Tolmie p. 67.

DENNIS HOLLISTER

d. 1676

M.P.: 1653 for Somerset

Grocer. Member of Bristol Council from 1645.

Elder of the Bristol congregation that became Broadmead Particular Baptist Church, 1647-54. Hollister seceded to the Quakers following his time in London as M.P. The secession probably led to the baptism of several Broadmead members. Before 1653 no members were baptized. Hence Hollister, who was also averse to the observance of

the Lord's Supper as an outward ordinance, will not have been baptized (Hayden pp. 15, 28f, 98n, 294).

JOHN HUTCHINSON

1615-64

M.P.: 1646 for Nottinghamshire (Rumper in Long Parliament)

Gentleman. Governor of Nottingham Castle. Regicide.

Hutchinson and his wife were convinced of believer's baptism in 1646 and so their infant was not christened; but "they forsooke not their assemblies" (Lucy Hutchinson, below, p. 169). Hutchinson was not baptized, and cannot be treated as a Baptist.

*D.N.B.* Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Col. Hutchinson*, ed. James Sutherland, London, 1973 edn.

### III JOHN JAMES

c. 1610-81

M.P.: 1653 for Worcestershire

Gentleman. Member of Council of State, 1653.

Listed as Baptist by Brown p. 33n. Elder in Vavasor Powell's church (A. J. Woolrych, "The Calling of Barebone's Parliament", *The English Historical Review*, 80, 1965, p. 507). Powell himself remained an Independent even after rejecting paedobaptism, and may not himself have been baptized (Watts p. 160 and n). It is unlikely that James was ever baptized, and extremely unlikely that he was baptized before he was M.P. James should not be confused with his namesake who was executed for treason in Venner's revolt in 1661 and whose widow was a member of Mill Yard Seventh-Day Baptist Church (*D.N.B.*, Capp p. 252f).

JOHN JONES

1597(?) - 1660

M.P.: 1647 for Merionethshire (Rumper in Long Parliament).

1656 for Merionethshire.

Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657.

Gentleman. Colonel in parliamentary forces. Regicide. Commissioner to assist Lord Deputy of Ireland, 1650. Married Catherine, sister of Cromwell. Executed at Restoration.

Baptist according to Underwood p. 79. Certainly a Puritan. In Ireland lamented but did not quieten baptism controversy (Barnard p. 101). Corresponded with Vavasor Powell (*D.W.B.*). No evidence of Baptist convictions.

*D.N.B.* *D.W.B.* Dodd pp. 101-07, etc.

PHILIP JONES

1618(?) - 74

M.P.: 1650 for Brecon (Rumper in Long Parliament)

1653 for Monmouthshire

1654 for Monmouthshire

1656 for Glamorgan

Member of Cromwell's Upper House, 1657

Gentleman. Colonel in parliamentary forces. Member of Council of State, 1653. Controller of Cromwell's household. Sheriff of Glamor-

gan, 1671.

Baptist according to Underwood p. 79. Brother-in-law of John Price of Gellihir, a Baptist. A "Phillip Jones" was a member of Ilston Baptist Church, but this was probably a namesake rather than the M.P. (T. M. Bassett, *The Welsh Baptists*, Swansea, 1977, p. 19).  
*D.N.B.* *D.W.B.* Dodd pp. 121f, etc.

ROBERT LILBURNE

1613-65

M.P.: 1654 for Durham

1656 for East Riding of Yorkshire

1659 for Malton, but unseated on petition.

Gentleman. Brother of John Lilburne, Leveller leader. Regicide. Military commander in Scotland, 1652-54.

Referred to as Baptist (*T.B.H.S.*, 3, 1912-13, p. 152). Favoured Baptists while in Scotland and elsewhere (Underhill pp. 307, 311, 318, 328, 329; *D.N.B.*). No evidence that was one.

*D.N.B.*

EDMUND LUDLOW

1617(?) - 92

M.P.: 1646 for Wiltshire (Rumper in Long Parliament)

1659 for Hindon.

1660 for Hindon, 3 to 18 May, after which impeached.

Gentleman. Regicide. Member of Council of State, 1649 and 1650. Commissioner for the civil government of Ireland, 1650-55. Republican.

The leader of the Anabaptists in Ireland in the opinion of Richard Baxter (*Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ed. Edmund Calamy, 2nd edn., London, 1713, 1, p. 74). According to Barnard p. 101, "admitted to a Baptist congregation in Dublin". But Barnard's source is more precise: Ludlow has been cried up lately by the Anabaptists, "and ever since admitted to the private weekly meetings, which before was denied him" (Mr. Lloyd to Secretary Thurloe, 13 Mar. 1653, Thurloe, 2, p. 163). Thus, although he was on close terms with the Baptists in Ireland, there is no suggestion that he became one of them.  
*D.N.B.*

#### IV JOHN OKEY

1606-62

M.P.: 1654 for Linlithgow Burghs

1659 for Bedfordshire

London merchant. Colonel in parliamentary forces. Regicide. Republican. Executed following Restoration.

Reported in 1656 to attend regularly Henry Jessey's church, which practised open membership (Thurloe, 4, p. 621). Left messages at his death to Presbyterian and three Baptist churches, which the pamphlet calls Congregational (*The Declaration of Coll. Okey left at his dying hour . . .*, London, 1662). Thus Okey may have been a Baptist when he was M.P., but there is no evidence that he was baptized.

*D.N.B.* H. G. Tibbutt, *Colonel John Okey, 1606-1662* (Publications



of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 35), Streatley, Bedfordshire, 1955.

RICHARD PRICE

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1653 for Wales

Captain in parliamentary forces. Commissioner for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales.

At least closely allied with Baptists according to *T.B.H.S.*, 4, 1914-15, p. 254. "A steadfast disciple of [Vavasor] Powell" (Dodd p. 129), and so an Independent (cf. entry for John James). No evidence of Baptist leanings.

JOHN PYNE

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1625 for Poole

1626 for Poole

1628 for Poole

1640 for Poole (Rumper in Long Parliament)

1653 for Somerset

Gentleman and lawyer. Active in Civil War and Somerset politics. At least closely allied with Baptists according to *T.B.H.S.*, 4, 1914-15, p. 254. But named elder in Presbyterian classis, 1648. Probably unusually militant Presbyterian who encouraged more extreme men. D. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum*, Newton Abbot, 1973, pp. 121f, etc.

#### V WILLIAM REEVE

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1653 for Hertfordshire

Career unknown.

Liu (p. 234) identifies Reeve as subject of Francis Stanley, *A Servant of Christ: a sermon preached at the funeral of Mr. William Reeve* (1696). This man was a General Baptist messenger in the Yorkshire area, "a great Traveller about his Lord and Master's Business" (p. 25). Crosby probably refers to the messenger: "Mr. William Reeve, a minister of considerable parts, and a great disputant. All I can obtain concerning him is, That a little before, or after the Revolution, a public dispute was appointed between him and a clergyman of the church of *England* about *baptism*, at or near *Leicester*" (4, p. 249). Whether a messenger active in Yorkshire and Leicestershire should be identified with the M.P. for Hertfordshire is doubtful. Whether he was a Baptist as early as 1653 is even more doubtful. No further reference known.

#### VI NATHANIEL RICH

d. 1701

M.P.: 1649 for Cirencester (Rumper in Long Parliament)

Gentleman. Colonel in parliamentary forces. Fifth Monarchist.

Kept conventicles after Restoration (Capp p. 260). "Anabaptist" according to list in *State Papers Domestic* 187 no. 173 (*T.B.H.S.*, 7, 1920-21, p. 146), but the term may be used loosely. It is therefore

uncertain whether Rich was ever a Baptist, and less than likely that he was one when he was M.P.

*D.N.B.* Capp p. 260.

JOHN ST NICHOLAS

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1653 for Warwickshire

Career unknown.

Later became Baptist minister at Lutterworth (Ivimey, 2, pp. 257ff).

But while M.P. was Independent (Watts p. 144n).

No further reference known.

THOMAS SANDERS (SAUNDERS)

Dates of birth and death unknown.

M.P.: 1653 for Devon

Colonel in parliamentary forces. Fifth Monarchist. As a likely supporter of Monmouth, his house was searched for arms in 1684.

Thomas' wife Silvester joined Broadmead Particular Baptist Church, Bristol, in 1666. Thomas is not listed as a member, and in 1682 signed a petition for the improvement of prison conditions for Quakers. (Hayden pp. 122, 303). He was probably never a Baptist.

## VII ARTHUR SQUIBB

d. 1680

M.P.: 1653 for Middlesex.

Son of Teller of Exchequer. Sequestrator. Fifth Monarchist.

Had gathered church at house by 1649. (Capp p. 263). Licensed to hold meetings in Surrey as Baptist, 1672 (*T.B.H.S.*, 7, 1920-21, p. 230). Although Watts (p. 144n) lists as Baptist M.P., there is apparently no other evidence for the precise nature of his religious convictions. His allegiance when M.P. remains dubious.

Capp p. 263.

WILLIAM STEELE

d. 1680

M.P.: 1654 for London

Barrister. Lord Chancellor of Ireland, 1656-60.

A Baptist according to Underwood p. 78. Whitley 46-656 suggests that Baptists expressed satisfaction at Steele's arrival in Ireland, but in his source (Thurloe, 1, p. 731) the satisfaction of the Baptists and Steele's arrival are separate topics. Steele was apparently not identified with the Baptists (Thurloe, 7, p. 199).

*D.N.B.*

JOHN WILLIAMS

d. 1681

M.P.: 1653 for Wales

Small squire.

Elder in Vavasor Powell's Independent Church (cf. entry for John James). Remained Congregationalist until death (Capp p. 268).

### List of Eighteenth-Century Baptist M.P.s

FREDERICK BULL

c. 1714-84

M.P.: London, 1773-84

London tea merchant. Lord Mayor, 1773-74. Collaborator with John Wilkes. Made significant anti-Catholic, anti-government speech in Commons at time of Gordon Riots, 1780. Linked with Wellington, Somerset.

Member of Little Prescott Street Particular Baptist Church. 1752, deputed by congregation to visit potential pastor. 1770, contributed £150 to Bristol Education Society. (Ivimey, 4, p. 42n.) Left legacy of £1,000 to same society (Namier and Brooke, 2, p. 129).

SIR GEORGE CASWALL

d. 1742

M.P.: 1717 for Leominster, but unseated for bribery

1717-21 for Leominster

1722-41 for Leominster

Banker. Sheriff of London, 1720-21. Heavily involved in South Sea Bubble.

Baptist according to Sedgwick, 1, p. 534.

### Supplementary List of Suggested Eighteenth-Century Baptist M.P.s

JOHN CASWALL

1701(?) - 42

M.P.: 1741-42 for Leominster

Banker. Son of Sir George Caswall (q.v.).

No evidence that was Baptist (Sedgwick, 1, p. 535).

RICHARD FULLER

c. 1713-82

M.P.: 1764-68 for Steyning

1768-74 for Stockbridge

Banker of Dorking, Surrey.

Son of Joseph Fuller of Harwell, Berkshire, Baptist minister.

No evidence that Richard himself was Baptist (Namier and Brooke, 2, p. 477).

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I am very grateful for extensive help with this article to many people, including the following: Mr. John Ferris and Professor Basil Henning of the History of Parliament project at the Institute of Historical Research, Dr. Anthony Fletcher, the Rev. Roger Hayden, Dr. John Morrill, the Rev. Dr. E. A. Payne, C.H., Mr. H. G. Tibbutt and the Rev. Dr. Barrie White.

<sup>2</sup> John Lilburne, *The Upright Man's Vindication* (1653), p. 2, quoted by Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: the separate churches of London, 1616-1649*, Cambridge, 1977, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the article on nineteenth-century Baptist M.P.s to be published later in this journal.

<sup>4</sup> A. J. Woolrych, "The Calling of Barebone's Parliament", *The English Historical Review*, 80, 1965. Tai Liu, "The Calling of the Barebones Parliament reconsidered", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 22, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints*, p. 179.

<sup>6</sup> Romney Sedgwick, *The House of Commons, 1715-1754*, London, 1970. Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, London, 1964.