ENTHUSIASM IN ENGLAND DURING THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

by

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Religious Enthusiasm in England During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Abstract

Several studies have been made of "enthusiasm," but I have found none which attempts to give a comprehensive account of the subject from the point of view of those who lived with "religious enthusiasts." This dissertation is an attempt to bring together for the first time the varied views on enthusiasm held by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Englishmen as found in their sermons, polemical writings, pamphlets, periodicals, and journals, among other works. Using a thematic approach, I have presented the ideas of many writers, allowing one writer to speak, however, when his opinions are characteristic of the general attitude.

I have found that the term "enthusiast," originally meaning "an inspired individual," developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into a term of abuse attached to people who claimed that they received special revelations from the Holy Spirit; that religious enthusiasm reached its highest peak in England during the Civil War and Interregnum, when religious toleration led to a proliferation of extreme Puritan sects such as Ranters, Seekers, Muggletonians, Familists, and Quakers, among others; and that the first decade of the eighteenth century saw the rise of new enthusiasts, the French and English prophets, and the seventeen-thirties introduced the Methodists, led by John and Charles Wesley and
George Whitefield.

My findings indicate that the religious and political activities of the Puritan sects (especially the Fifth Monarchists, Baptists, Independents, Levellers, and Presbyterians) during the Revolution and Interregnum so alienated anti-Puritans that for more than a hundred years, they associated religious ardour with political and social evils destructive of all established systems of order. Anti-Puritans saw in enthusiasm a disease either arising from or leading to melancholy, which eventually unsettled the victim's senses, leaving him insane. Believing that the Holy Spirit no longer inspired men as He inspired the apostles, prophets, and the writers of the Scriptures, critics of enthusiasm dismissed the enthusiasts' claims to special revelation as mere pretense or as the fancies or imagination of an over-heated brain. In fact, many people firmly believed that enthusiasts were either madmen possessed by the Devil or hypocrites who manufactured mechanically what they called "the Spirit."

Many Anglican clergymen believed that in the church, enthusiasm led to disrespect of authority, to quarrels over vestments, ceremonies, doctrines, and discipline, and ultimately to schism, the destruction of the Church, and the growth of atheism and infidelity. They insisted that the enthusiasts' belief in the sufficiency of the Spirit and their extreme views on faith and assurance of salvation caused them to slight or deny the necessity of good works, the sacraments, set forms of prayer, and academic training for the clergy.

In the state, enthusiasm supposedly expressed itself either in
active opposition to the duly appointed "magistrates" or in a pacifism which left the country to the mercy of its foreign enemies. Because of its basic irrationality, enthusiasm allegedly unfitted the individual for a balanced and productive life. It was also considered to be destructive of property and the national economy, of morality and virtue, and inimical to the laws and traditions which ensured the safety and authority of rulers, the order of society, and the deference due to the upper-classes.

The reaction to enthusiasm contributed to the demand for a plain prose style; enthusiasm also influenced the growth of a large body of literature, including sermons, devotional writings, polemical and satirical works, autobiographies, and journals. But it was in the hymns of the Nonconformists and Methodists that enthusiasm expressed itself most significantly in poetry.
The harsh criticisms hurled at "enthusiasts" by Dryden, Butler, and Swift made me curious to discover who were the "enthusiasts" and why they were so hated. But I began working in earnest on "enthusiasm" to explore the possibility that Christopher Smart was declared insane by his contemporaries, not because he was mad (as we understand the term), but perhaps because of his unconventional habits of religious devotion. In obedience to the biblical command to "pray without ceasing," for example, Smart frequently fell on his knees in the street and prayed, sometimes calling on others nearby to join him. Shortly after beginning my inquiry, it became evident that I had to limit myself to discovering what really was "enthusiasm" and why seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Englishmen hated "religious enthusiasm" so passionately.

Although several studies have been made of "enthusiasm," I found none which attempted to give a comprehensive view of the subject from the point of view of those who lived with "religious enthusiasts." This dissertation therefore attempts to bring together for the first time the variety of ideas associated with "enthusiasm" in the minds of those who ardently opposed it. I have tried to give the attitude of as many people as possible, taking a thematic approach, presenting, however, the opinions of a select few when they were characteristic of the general attitude. The final chapter differs from the previous ones in that I present in it my comments on the contribution of religious enthusiasm to English literature.
This work represents the efforts of many individuals who of necessity will remain unnamed. But I must make special mention of Professors P. G. Stanwood and David Macaree, and as well of the staff of the Interlibrary Loan Department of the Library of the University of British Columbia. I am particularly grateful to my director, Professor Stanwood, for contributing unstintingly of his time towards the reading and criticism of my work. His constant guidance saved me much time and undue worry, and his suggestions were always timely and constructive. During my periods of anxiety he invariably had a reassuring word. Professor Macaree kindly supervised my work when Professor Stanwood was absent on study leave. His knowledge of the eighteenth century protected me against superficiality and stimulated me to work more diligently.

Without the support, forbearance, and indulgence of my wife, Mary, I could not have completed this work. She cheerfully endured my moods and complaints, and for seven months gave me exclusive rights to her precious table which I used as my writing desk.
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During the second half of the seventeenth century and all of the eighteenth, most English clergymen would have felt insulted if they had been called "enthusiasts." John Wesley, to name only one, spent much time and spilled much ink attempting to prove that he was no enthusiast. And many an Augustan churchman, proud of his orthodoxy and reasonableness, smeared his dissenting foe or his too-zealous fellow cleric simply by charging him with "enthusiasm." Strangely enough, however, it was not until the middle of the seventeenth century that the pejorative elements in the word "enthusiasm" came into popular usage.

Coming from the Greek word *enteos*, meaning "possessed by a god," the word "enthusiasm" originally meant inspiration by a divine afflatus or by the presence of a god; and the Greeks used the word to describe manifestations of divine possession by Apollo or Dionysus. They used the same word in a transferred or figurative sense to describe the inspiration of poets. The individual professing possession by a god betrayed several unique patterns of behaviour which in time became associated with the term "enthusiasm." According to the anthropologist Frazer, the individual whom the god supposedly entered became violently agitated and worked himself up into what appeared to be a high pitch of frenzy, and with muscles convulsed and body swollen, his visage became "terrific," his features distorted, and eyes wild and strained. As if

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labouring because of the power of the divinity in him, the individual rolled on the earth, foaming at his mouth, and uttering shrill cries or violent indistinct sounds which contained the communication of the god to him.² Arendzen reported that members of an heretical sect living in Mesopotamia during the fourth century were called "enthusiasts" because they believed that the Holy Ghost dwelt in them and inspired or possessed them. These individuals claimed that they received the indwelling of the Spirit by their exercise of the spiritual power of prayer, and through their possession by the Spirit achieved a union with God which perfected them to the extent that they were no longer troubled by the passions.³

English usage of "enthusiasm" and "enthusiast" showed no change from the Greek usage until the Interregnum (1649-1660). In his study of the semantic changes of "enthusiasm" Persky found that no dictionaries prior to Blount's Glossographia (1656) carried an entry for the word.⁴ Blount restricted the meaning of "enthusiast" to the name of


⁴ Abraham Phillip Persky, "The Changing Concepts of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries," Diss. Stanford University 1959, p. 19. All dictionary definitions cited in this chapter are from Persky's work, unless otherwise indicated. Persky's work attempts to show that "enthusiasm," once contemptuously denounced as unworthy of a rational being, became fully accepted as in good taste, largely through the influence of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Gerard. Persky's primary concern, however, was with that enthusiasm that was identified as strong feeling, passion, and delight in nature, not with enthusiasm viewed as a religious phenomenon.
an Anabaptistical sect in Europe who thought themselves inspired with a
divine spirit and so having "a clear sight of all things they believed"
(p. 21). "Enthusiasm" he defined in the same way as the Greeks, "an
inspiration, a ravishment of the Spirit, divine motion, poetical fury"
(p. 21). After Blount's Glossographia lexicographers tended to define
"enthusiasm" as "poetical fury" and "inspiration," while "enthusiast"
was defined as a "religious fanatic." But this pejorative usage of
"enthusiast," though widely used in polemical writings, first appeared
in dictionaries in John Kersey's Dictionarium Anglo-Britannium (1708).
Kersey's definition recorded what was to be a trend in English usage for
most of the eighteenth century. "Fanatic" and "enthusiast" were to be
used synonymously. "Fanatic" he defined as "inspired," "possessed,"
"frantic," and "a fanatic" was one who pretended to receive revelations
and inspirations, while "the fanatics" was a reproachful title commonly
given to Quakers and Muggletonians, among others (p. 26).

It was the anonymous Glossographia Anglicana Nova, published
in 1707, the year before Kersey's Dictionarium, which first defined
"enthusiasm" in a manner suggesting that the inspiration which the term
represented might be false. That dictionary defined "enthusiasm" as "an
inspiration, whether real or imaginary" (p. 25). Bailey's Dictionarium
Britannicum (1730) was the first to define "enthusiasm" in terms of its
effect on the mind and the imagination, and not until 1755 when the
Johnson and the Scott and Bailey dictionaries were published was
"enthusiast" defined to show its relationship with the imagination: "of a hot imagination" or "elevated fancy" (p. 19).

No dictionary reflected the acrimony associated with the term "enthusiasm" as did the Dyche and Parson's New General English Dictionary (1735). That dictionary defined "enthusiastic" in a manner that indicated for the first time that one charged with "enthusiasm" or with being "an enthusiast" was viewed as a menace to society and fit for the lunatic asylum. Perhaps the definitions mirror the widespread feeling of outrage aroused by the presence and practices of the French prophets and their followers in "respectable" London society, practices which raised the spectre of the numerous and extreme religious sects rampant during the Interregnum. Whatever the source of the antipathy, the New General English Dictionary of 1735 defined "enthusiasm," "enthusiast," and "enthusiastic" as follows:

Enthusiasm ... A Prophetick or poetic rage, spirit, or fury, which transports the mind, enflames and raises the imagination, and makes it think and express things extraordinary and surprizing, but the word is generally applied to those who pretend to have divine revelation, to support some monstrous, ridiculous, or absurd notion in religious matters, and thereby takes away both reason and revelation, and substitutes in the room thereof the groundless fancies, and obstinate results of self-willedness, by using extravagant gestures and words, pretending to things not only improbable, but also impossible.

Enthusiast ... Commonly means a person poisoned with the notion of being divinely inspired when he is not, and upon that account commits a great number of irregularities both in words and actions.

Enthusical or Enthusiastick ... Wild, irregular, something belonging to, or acted by the spirit of Enthusiasm, delusion, or madness. (p. 28)
When Dr. Johnson published his dictionary in 1755, just as Scott and Bailey had done in their dictionary of the same year, he brought together many of the accepted meanings of the terms up to the middle of the eighteenth century. It was left for Barclay to include another usage which showed the influence of literary critics in the growing acceptance of enthusiasm as a legitimate attribute in creative functions. In part, Barclay defined "enthusiasm" as a "transport of the mind, whereby it is led to imagine things in a sublime, surprising, yet probable manner. This is the Enthusiasm felt in poetry, oratory, music, painting, sculpture, &c. . . ."\(^5\) Barclay's definition completes the usages of the three terms, "enthusiasm," "enthusiast," and "enthusiastic," as they were recorded in the dictionaries of the period from Blount's (1656) to Barclay's (1774); but the dictionaries, besides lagging considerably behind current usage, failed to reflect many of the discrepancies and overtones of usage found in various works and sermons against religious enthusiasm during the period.

Several writers of the period complained that "enthusiasm" was used so carelessly that it was becoming a matter of concern, especially because the current bandying of the word was causing indifference, even aversion, to important religious matters. John Wesley charged that though the word was frequently used, it was "exceedingly rarely understood,

even by those who use it most," different people understanding it differently and often in ways "quite inconsistent with each other." John Byrom (1692-1763) was more outspoken in his complaint against the abuse of the word. Enthusiasm, he protested, was grown into a fashionable term of reproach that usually came uppermost when anything of a deep and serious nature was mentioned. Through indolent custom people applied the word just as readily to sober and considerate assertors of important truths as to wild and extravagant contenders about them. He declared that such indiscriminate use of the word had a bad effect, causing "the present" general indifference to matters of the highest concern to proceed into downright aversion. Some citations from the general literature of the period will help to explain Byrom's concern by showing some of the inconsistencies and overtones in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century usage of the term "enthusiasm."

Meric Casaubon's *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme* (1665) was the first work which discussed at length the subject of enthusiasm. Casaubon's concern was to show that what was popularly called enthusiasm was a misnomer, that in fact there were two general types of


8 Robert Burton had discussed religious enthusiasm in his chapter on religious melancholy in *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).
the phenomenon, the supernatural and the natural, and that the second was often mistaken for the first. Supernatural enthusiasm, he said, was a true possession by some power outside of the individual, a divine or a diabolical power, which produced such supernatural effects as divination and speaking in strange languages, but natural enthusiasm was an extraordinary, transcendent, though natural fervency, or pregnancy of the soul, spirits, or brain, producing strange effects that might be easily mistaken to be of supernatural origin.² Few people in the century bothered to observe Casaubon's distinctions. As mentioned before, it was not until the first decade of the eighteenth century that the Glossographia Nova noted the possibility of inspiration being real or imaginary.³

Writing in his Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, which was published in 1656, the year following the publication of Casaubon's Treatise, Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, did not recognize the possibility of one's being inspired by an evil power. For More, to be inspired "is to be moved in an extraordinary manner by the power or spirit of God to act, speak, or think what is holy, just and true."⁴ Accordingly, More defined


³ See, however, Charles Leslie, Snake in the Grass in The Theological Works (London, 1721), II, 144, where the author, in the late seventeenth century, acknowledged that "inspiration" might be either real or imaginary, but because of numerous false pretenses to inspiration, "enthusiasm" was most frequently used in the "worst sense."

enthusiasm as a "full, but false, persuasion in a man that he is inspired." But More later proves inconsistent by claiming that a "true and warrantable Enthusiasm" does exist, that of devout and holy souls who are strangely transported in their love towards God.\textsuperscript{12} It was More's former definition and view which exercised greatest influence on most writers in the century following the publication of the Enthusiasmus.

The third earl of Shaftesbury complicated the usage of "enthusiasm" when he said that "inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence, and enthusiasm a false one," though the passion raised by both is very much alike.\textsuperscript{13} When More spoke of a "warrantable enthusiasm," he was probably thinking of the feelings of the enthusiastic individual and not of the claim to inspiration which was usually associated with the enthusiast. Shaftesbury was, however, primarily concerned with feeling, and so decided that enthusiasm is a false feeling of the divine presence. However, he too contradicts himself by declaring that "inspiration may be justly called divine enthusiasm."\textsuperscript{14}

The next step in the progress of the definitions takes one from feeling to the imagination or fancy. Thomas Morgan, doubtless writing with the memory of the French prophets and John Locke's essay on

\textsuperscript{12} More, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{13} Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, ed. John M. Robertson (New York, 1964), I, 37.

\textsuperscript{14} Shaftesbury, I, 38.
enthusiasm in mind, defined enthusiasm in terms of its irrationality. He said that enthusiasm "is a strong persuasion, grounded upon the Conceit of some inward, secret, divine impulse, or Testimony of the Spirit to the Heart and Conscience, without any rational objective Evidence, or clear and sufficient Proofs . . ."\(^{15}\) By this definition emphasis moves from inspiration to one's force of conviction based on his irrational belief that he is inspired. In an article published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, an anonymous writer took enthusiasm out of the merely religious realm by declaring it "any exorbitant monstrous appetite of the human mind" that hurried "the will in pursuit of an object, without the concurrence, or against the light of Reason and common sense."\(^{16}\) John Wesley, himself charged with being an enthusiast, took the final step, which had been hinted at from as far back as 1665, and declared the enthusiast a veritable madman, and enthusiasm "a religious madness arising from some falsely imagined influence or inspiration of God; at least, from imputing something to God which ought not to be imputed to him, or expecting something from God which ought not to be expected from him."\(^{17}\)

Much of Wesley's definition was most uncharacteristic of his age; yet that portion of the definition dealing with false imputations served


\(^{16}\) "Enthusiasm Catching as the Plague," *Gentleman's Magazine*, 5 (April 1735), 203.

Bishop Warburton well in his attempt to discredit Wesley and Methodism. Replying to a query in Wesley's *Journal*, whether it be enthusiasm to see God in every benefit which we receive (as Wesley's critics seemed to conclude), Warburton said that it is enthusiasm to believe that the benefits received were miraculously conferred through a change in the normal course of nature. In the same year that Bishop Warburton published his *Doctrine of Grace* (1763), James Duchal published an article on enthusiasm in which he introduced the new element of "fanatical zeal" into the usage of the word. In his "Nature of Enthusiasm," Duchal said that "Enthusiasm, in general, may be understood to signify a man's acting under an apprehension of a present divine energy upon his mind, to which all his powers are supposed to be subjected, and by which he is carried on, without attention to anything else as his guide."  

So far, all definitions cited have either stated or implied that the enthusiast is the victim of irrationality, or of the imagination or fancy, but Archibald Campbell, in a definition reminiscent of Jonathan Swift's description of the mechanical production of the Spirit, defined an enthusiast as one who, among other things, mechanically works himself up into such a frenzy that he becomes the dupe of his own fiction. We are here facing the hypocrite who sets out to deceive others and succeeds


meanwhile in effectively deceiving himself. "An Enthusiast," Campbell said, "is one, who in the course of his devotion keeps not within the compass of his reason, but having given up himself to the power and influence of an overheated fancy, is mechanically wrought up into such extraordinary heats and fervours, that he verily believes he is immediately under the benign emanations of Heaven, and has divine revelations made to him; whilst there is nothing really in his case, but pure mechanism and fiction."\(^{20}\)

Enthusiasm, then, is a phenomenon associated with poets and religionists in particular; it is a feeling resulting in extraordinary transports of the mind, which allow it to imagine things sublimely; in the case of certain deluded people enthusiasm may cause physical violence and irregularity of behaviour. This irregularity may, in fact, be evidence that the individual is insane. The various definitions have shown that there was little agreement on precisely what enthusiasm is, and that the word developed into an epithet of abuse which tended to increase in virulence until about the middle of the seventeen-sixties, a time when the Methodist movement was at its height and when Moravianism, an influence on the origins of the Methodist evangelical movement, was beginning to recover from a period of scandalous moral turpitude.

Different writers of the period classified enthusiasm variously, Casaubon mentioning two large and several lesser categories, and More discussing only three. Most writers, however, without pretending to discuss all forms of the phenomenon, restricted themselves to a consideration of the one form that was endemic in English society, religious enthusiasm. Both Casaubon and More wrote at a time when the results of enthusiastic behaviour were greatly in evidence in English society. Concerned with defending the cause of true religion against all counterfeits, Casaubon decided that there are but two basic groupings of enthusiasm, supernatural and natural, the first being a true possession of the individual by some external power, whether divine or diabolical, producing such supernatural effects as divination and speaking in tongues; and the second, natural enthusiasm, being an elevation and pregnancy of spirits producing strange effects closely resembling those from the supernatural type, but of purely natural origins. Considering religious enthusiasm to be the Christian and proper form of enthusiasm, Casaubon declined discussing it further, focussing solely on natural enthusiasm, which, depending heavily on his classical sources, he divided into eight types: contemplative or philosophical, rhetorical, poetical, supplicatory or precatory, musical, martial, erotic or amatory, and mechanical. The Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, spoke of enthusiasm in general as a

21 Casaubon, Treatise, p. 22.
misconceit of being inspired, but later mentioned the existence of two types of enthusiasm, political and philosophical, which he implied are mere forms which religious enthusiasm sometimes takes. Remembering that both writers set out to deal with enthusiasm as a natural phenomenon which results in an elevation of spirits and some extraordinary effects easily mistaken to be supernatural, one needs little additional information to appreciate what the various types of enthusiasm just listed entail. Briefly, the names given to the different types indicate the areas from which that extraordinary elevation of spirits comes or in which the infected individual expresses himself with such facility and unusual effectiveness that he thinks himself inspired. Apart from poetic enthusiasm, the other forms never claimed much attention during the period under discussion.

Poetic Enthusiasm and Literary Style

As mentioned earlier, the ancients used the word "inspiration" in a figurative sense to describe the lofty flights, heats, and fervours felt by their poets while in the act of composition; but perhaps the true situation was not as simple as the explanation implies it was. Casaubon said that

22 Both Casaubon and More have long sections dealing with philosophical enthusiasm but nothing on musical, martial, erotic, or mechanical enthusiasm. I believe that the last form represents essentially what Swift discusses in his Mechanical Operation of the Spirit. This mechanical operation will be discussed in a later chapter. More deals briefly with political enthusiasm. See Enthusiasmus, pp. 22-36.
many of the ancients, especially the common people, received their knowledge of divinity and their belief in the gods from the writings of their poets. These writings also provided the people information on how the gods were to be worshipped and appeased. In time the works of the poets achieved such importance in the national religion that they were regarded as sacred records; accordingly, the poets themselves came to be esteemed as truly inspired, for the people believed that none but he who is divinely inspired could be a poet. This belief in the poet's inspiration, Casaubon imagined, was encouraged by the poets' claims of inspiration and by their published accounts of strange visions, raptures, and apparitions.23

There is little evidence suggesting that English poets believed themselves to be literally inspired, but much evidence that their claim to inspiration was a mere gesture in favour of an accepted and flattering poetic tradition. Casaubon's attitude to poetic inspiration reflects what most critics would have readily conceded: "... though I allow not any reall inspiration to any Poet (as Poet) more than to an Orator: yet of all kinds of naturall Enthusiasme, I allow to Poets that which is the purest, and hath most of heaven in it."24 Shaftesbury expressed the idea in a slightly different fashion. He believed that the imagination of a divine presence was what effectively enabled the great poet to write as well as he did: "No poet ... can do anything great in his own way without the

23 Casaubon, Treatise, pp. 10-11.  
24 Ibid., p. 270.
imagination or supposition of a divine presence, which may raise him to some degree of this passion we are speaking of [enthusiasm or inspiration]. That reputable poets of the period did not seriously claim literal supernatural inspiration may be grasped from Dryden's statement ridiculing Settle:

Mr. Settle having never studied any sort of learning but poetry, and that but slenderly, as you may find by his writings, and having besides no other advantages, must make very lame work on 't; he himself declares, he neither reads nor cares for conversation so that he would persuade us he is a kind of fanatic in poetry, and has a light within him, and writes by an inspiration; which (like that of the heathen prophets) a man must have no sense of his own when he receives; and no doubt he would be thought inspired, and would be reverenced extremely in the country where Santons are worshipped. 

Enthusiasm did, however, attract much attention from poets and critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because of its influence on literary style. Paul Hale and Sister Mary Whelan have described in their doctoral dissertations the ferment of discussion which led from a rejection to an acceptance of enthusiasm in English poetry and criticism in this period. And Abraham Persky's dissertation has attempted to show that enthusiasm, once damned and viewed with contempt, came to

\[25\] Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, 36.


be accepted as in good taste by the middle of the eighteenth century, largely through the influence of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Gerard. But many critics of the period saw enthusiasm, apart from its religious and philosophical implications, as a threat to the language because of the strong connections between enthusiasm, the passions, and the imagination. Various scholars have remarked the eighteenth-century distrust of the imagination and the prosaic quality of Neoclassic literary style. But it was left to Bond to show the extent of this distrust and to Williamson to indicate somewhat of the role of enthusiasm in it.

The reaction to enthusiasm came to affect English literary style in a somewhat indirect fashion, stemming from the influence of science and from a suspicion of the flowery rhetoric characteristic of certain

28 See Abraham Phillip Persky, "The Changing Concepts of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," Diss. Stanford University 1959. Persky was not primarily concerned with religious enthusiasm but with enthusiasm as espoused by Shaftesbury, a strong feeling, a passionate delight in nature.

29 George Saintsbury: "Fancy, provided she knows her place, is tolerated; but Imagination is kept well at a distance; a flight is perdition, a conceit at best danger." A Short History of English Literature (1898), p. 565; Woodhouse spoke of "the reduction of imagination to mere 'imaging' and its function to the adornment of actual fact or of reason's concepts, in strict subordination to judgment." From "Collins and the Creative Imagination," Studies in English by Members of University College, Toronto (Toronto, 1931), p. 77. Both are quoted in Donald Bond, "Distrust of the Imagination in English Neoclassicism," Philological Quarterly, 14(1935), 54.

30 Bond, "Distrust of the Imagination."

classical rhetoricians whose methods would have influenced university men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The growing scientific attitude led men to suspect the vagaries of subjectivity and to trust in what is demonstrable and rational, not in the fruits of a fertile imagination. As Williamson puts it:

After years of intense introspection, haunted by the chimeras of Enthusiasm, men turned gratefully to science as an extraverting influence upon the mind. Science, which offered them a criticism of reality, was the opposite of Enthusiasm; it embodied notions of truth and reality that were objective rather than subjective in character.32

To arrive at truth men needed to use language that attempted to represent exactly what was being spoken about, language that appealed to the reason rather than to the imagination. Croll believed that the growing interest in a bare prose style during the period was the result of the diffusion of Cartesian ideas and the progress of the scientific method as well as a reaction to enthusiasm. He said that "the temporary success of Puritanism and Quietism, the rapid progress of the scientific method, and the diffusion of Cartesian ideas, all in their different ways helped to create a taste for a bare and level prose style adapted merely to the exact portrayal of things as they are."33 But Croll also held that the


drive for exactness stemmed from a revolt against the tyranny of the oratorical style over literature.  

Scholars of the seventeenth century who were educated in the classics were aware of a classical oratorical style which was distinguished by its use of similarities or repetitions of sound employed as sensuous devices to give pleasure or to aid the attention. These scholars also knew of the essay styles which at times subtly appropriated some of the devices of the oratorical style, adding to them metaphor, aphorism, antithesis, paradox, and figures of wit or thought, known as **figurae sententiae**. These essay styles were classified as the **genus grande** or nobile and the **genus humile**. Seventeenth-century critics frowned upon the **genus grande** as being too ornate and empty, having too elaborate a form and studded with too many ornamental figures. One studied it merely to be aware of its charm. The **genus humile**, according to Croll, was favoured to replace the **genus grande** because the former was thought to be a flexible, subtle style, capable of great variation to meet the needs of differing situations. This **genus humile** was the "Attic" style greatly striven after in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the style that was associated with philosophy, while the **grande** was associated with oratory. Because metaphors, paradoxes, and various figures of wit when used in writing or speech tended to appeal to the senses and

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34 Croll, p. 64.  
35 Croll, p. 54.  
36 Croll, pp. 59-60.  
37 Croll, p. 54.
the passions rather than to the intellect of the audience, and because the ability to persuade an audience by flowery speech that possessed more passion than reason was seen to be the *forte* of enthusiasts, enthusiasm took much blame.

To many men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the passions were not to be cultivated but suppressed because they linked man with the beasts; the fancy or imagination was repressed, at worst, or controlled, at best, because its products stimulated the passions. Eloquence was greatest and most effective when the speaker was himself under the spell of an over-heated imagination (enthusiasm) which caused him to indulge in language that appealed to the irrational rather than the intellectual powers of his audience. It was thought that when the passionate or animal powers of the soul are aroused, reason, the god-like power in man, is dethroned and man is reduced to the beastly, thus becoming a threat to himself and society. Such was the complex of associations that seemed to cluster around fancy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Following Aristotle, the seventeenth century considered the soul as having three divisions or estates: the vegetal, in which it is much like the plants; the sensitive, characterized by the imagination or fancy, in which it is like the beasts; and the rational, characterized by the understanding, in which it approaches the dignity of the angels.\(^{38}\) Whichcote

showed the limitations of the imagination and the great value of the understanding as follows:

I say, a Man is a Compound of different and several things; he hath several sorts of Faculties, which we are wont in our Philosophy to call his upper and lower Powers; and by these he doth converse with things of a very different order. By the higher Powers, he is able to converse both with God and things Spiritual and Coelestial; and by the lower Powers, with Terrene and Earthy. As to Instance: By Mind, and Understanding, and Will, he hath intercourse and communion with God, and things invisible; and by these he is fitted to the improving all the lower Objects to Heavenly Ends and Purposes. But then, by Sense, Imagination and brutish Affection, we can only maintain Acquaintance with this outward and lower World. 39

In his famous Spectator papers on the pleasures of the imagination, Addison removed the imagination from the level of the beasts where it was traditionally placed and put it in a position midway between the sensitive and the rational because, as he said, the pleasures of the imagination are not so gross as those of the senses nor so refined as those of the understanding, while the pleasures of the imagination are every whit as transporting and great as those of the understanding. 40 Nevertheless, Addison continued to insist, as Locke did earlier, on the ease with which one's assent is gained by an appeal through the imagination. In effect, by appealing to his imagination, one is duped into accepting ideas which reason would reject. Warning the reader that he was using "fancy" interchangeably with "imagination," Addison wrote:

39 From "The work of reason" (1660), quoted in Bond, "Neo-classical Psychology," p. 252.

40 Spectator No. 411.
It is but opening the Eye, and the Scene enters. The Colours paint themselves on the Fancy, with very little Attention or Thought or Application of Mind in the Beholder. We are struck, we know not how, with the Symmetry of anything we see, and immediately assent to the Beauty of an Object, without enquiring into the particular Causes and Occasions of it.  

Much earlier in the seventeenth century Walter Charleton had remarked the reason for the imagination's gaining the individual's assent so readily. By imagination, Charleton said, we conceive resemblances in objects which are really unlike and "pleasantly confound them in discourse: Which by its unexpected Fineness and allusion, surprising the Hearer, renders him less curious of the truth of what is said."  

Partly because of the ability of the imagination to anesthetize the reason, writers and orators were advised to suppress it, but the matter which benumbed reason was itself produced by the active (enthusiastic) imagination, hence another reason to keep it controlled. Among the productions of the imaginations are figurative language, a florid, elevated style, fables, and forced phrases. In his preface to "Religio Laici" Dryden noted the power of the productions of the imagination on the passions, implying that when the writer intends to instruct, he should

41 Spectator No. 411. Addison is here clearly remembering Locke: "Its beauty appears at first sight, and there is required no labour of thought to examine what truth or reason there is in it. The mind without looking any further, rests satisfied with the agreeableness of the picture and gaiety of the fancy. And it is a kind of affront to go about to examine it, by the severe rules of truth and good reason." Quoted in Bond, "Distrust of the Imagination," p. 58.

42 From Two Discourses (1669), quoted in George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt Against Enthusiasm," p. 235.
use a style that appeals to the reason rather than to the passions, a style that shows things exactly as they are:

The florid, elevated, and figurative way is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul by showing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life or less; but instruction is to be given by showing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reasoned into truth.43

William Pemble, a seventeenth-century clergyman, expressed the prevailing distrust of a florid style when he declared that good speech is the "garment of truth," who is so "glorious within" that she needs no further ornamentation. Yet should she "appeare in a rayment of needle-work, it's but for a more majestick comelinesse, not gawdy gaynesse. Truth is like our first Parents, most beautifull when naked."44

The strictures of the age against metaphors and allegories, besides showing a distrust of the productions of the imagination, reflected the onward march of science towards a greater exactness and objectivity in the use of language intended to inform or instruct, as opposed to language used primarily to delight. Censuring the manner in which some philosophers used language inexacty, Samuel Parker showed the limitations of metaphors in situations where exactness or accuracy of representation is necessary:


Now to the Discourse of the Natures of Things in Metaphors and Allegories is nothing else but to sport and trifle with empty words, because these Schems do not express the Natures of Things but only their Similitudes and Resemblances, for Metaphors are only words, which properly signifying one thing, are apply'd to signify another by reason of some Resemblance between them. When therefore any thing is express'd by a Metaphor or Allegory, the thing it self is not expressed, but only some similitude observ'd or made by Fancy . . . All those Theories in Philosophie which are expressed only in metaphorical Termes, are not real Truths, but the meer Products of Imagination, dress'd up (like Childrens babies) in a few spangled empty words. . . . Thus their wanton & luxuriant fancies climbing up into the Bed of Reason, do not only defile it by unchaste and illegitimate Embraces, but instead of real conceptions and notices of Things, impregnate the mind with nothing but Ayerie and Subventaneous Phantasmes.45

In trying to accomplish its design to "make faithful Records of all Works of Nature, or Art," the Royal Society found that it had to "separate the knowledge of Nature, from the colours of Rhetorick, the devices of Fancy, or the delightful deceit of Fables."46 Rhetoric employed ornaments of speaking which in the hands of wise men, when used to describe goodness, honesty, and obedience in "larger, fairer, and more moving Images," were well used as admirable instruments. But those ornaments of speaking were often ill-used and thus hurt the cause of learning, as Sprat said:

But now they [the ornaments of speaking] are generally chang'd to worse uses: They make the Fancy disgust the best things, if they come sound, and unadorn'd: they are in open defiance

45 From Censvre of the Platonic Philosophie, quoted in Bond, "Distrust of the Imagination," p. 57.

against Reason; professing, not to hold much correspondence with that; but with its Slaves, the Passions; they give the mind a motion too changeable, and bewitching, to consist with right practice. Who can behold, without indignation, how many mists and uncertainties, these specious Tropes and Figures have brought on our Knowledg?\textsuperscript{47}

In the interest of exactness and truth the Royal Society decided to combat the spread of the use of metaphors, tropes, and other ornaments of speech which destroyed the integrity of the language by deciding resolutely to "reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many things, almost in an equal number of words."\textsuperscript{48} According to Tuveson, Locke's new epistemology gave the eighteenth century added reason for depreciating metaphor. Locke had shown that metaphor may be confusing and is, in fact, unnecessary for accurate thought.\textsuperscript{49}

Whereas it is true that the imagination (excited by enthusiasm) was suspect in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because of the excesses to which it led, during the entire period poets and critics alike viewed the fancy or the imagination as perfectly in place in works

\textsuperscript{47} Sprat, pp. 111-112. \hfill \textsuperscript{48} Sprat, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{49} "Metaphor would be reduced in importance, because, in Lockian epistemology, it is unnecessary for accurate thought and may be confusing. Locke had eliminated the concept of the 'intelligible'--apprehensible by the mind only, 'mind-stuff' into which physical impressions are transmuted. Metaphor had seemed useful because it was one way of solving a practical problem: it enabled the mind to apprehend, in a limited way at least, pure truth, with the aid of sensory equipment." Ernest Lee Tuveson, \textit{The Imagination as a Means of Grace} (Berkeley, 1960), pp. 73-74.
intended to delight or please an audience, providing the poet was careful to use judgment to curb the excesses to which fancy was liable. Indeed, by the time we get to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, reason, once enthroned as the God-like element in man, will take second place to imagination, which will then be viewed, in Tuveson's phrase, "as a means of grace," a means of reconciling man and God.

Bond has shown that Neoclassic strictures against the free play of the imagination were aimed primarily at intellectual literature: eloquence, philosophy, and science, not against imaginative literature, for the imagination was always given a place in tragedy, epic, and lyric poetry. While the poet was expected to employ his imagination to provide the poem with life and spirit, he was also expected to exercise his judgment in the selection and use of materials in his poem. Thus a writer in the Weekly Miscellany criticized some poets for allowing the imagination great freedom "at the Expense" of judgment and truth:

When the Imagination and Invention are so busy, Reason and Judgment are seldom allowed Time enough to examine the Justness of a Sentiment, and the Conclusiveness of an Argument. Many of our own Poets, the most celebrated for their Ingenuity, have been very incorrect and injudicious, as well as irreligious and immoral, in their Sentiments. They seem to have studied rather to say fine things than just ones, and have often shewn their Fancy at the Expense of their Understanding, which is buying Reputation at a very extravagant Price.

50 "Distrust of the Imagination," pp. 54-55.

As in many other areas of concern, so in poetry, the eighteenth century counselled moderation and balance. The fancy may be allowed to range like a spaniel to bring home the ornaments that would beautify a poem, but judgment must be duly exercised to put all the parts of the poem and the ornaments in their true order.\(^2\) Or as Henry Felton said in his *Dissertation on reading the classics, and forming a just style* (1713), "Our thoughts must be conformable to the Matter and Subject that lye before us, but we have full Liberty to range, provided we can command our Fancy and bring it home to the Purpose."\(^3\)

Although the poet was, within certain limits, allowed the exercise of his imagination, the crusade for reason and against imagination was so far successful that by the last decades of the seventeenth century, according to Sutherland, everything that could comprehensively be called "the supernatural" had disappeared from English poetry.\(^4\) Within the first quarter of the eighteenth century Addison noted the disappearance of "the faery way of writing" (a term he got from Dryden. See *Spectator* No. 419), a way of writing which gives existence to many characters


\(^3\) Quoted in Bond, "Distrust of the Imagination," p. 69.

\(^4\) Sutherland, *Preface*, p. 2.
and things which do not really exist except in imagination and legend. As Addison's papers on ballads led to a renewed interest in ballads and folk poetry, so his articles calling for more of "the faery way of writing" may have reinforced his efforts towards the rehabilitation of that aspect of the imagination which created poetry dealing with the supernatural. Addison fully recognized the falseness of representations of spirits in poetry, though he believed that there are other beings and spirits in the world, which are subject to different laws from mankind; yet Addison declared of fairies and such spirits: "We have all heard so many pleasing Relations in favour of them, that we do not care for seeing through the Falsehood, and willingly give our selves up to so agreeable an Im-
posture."^55

Later in the century Richard Hurd reopened the same question of the supernatural in English poetry. As late as the 1760's Hurd found that the interests of philosophy and reason had rid English poetry of some of its desirable creatures of fancy. He agreed with the philosophers' complaint that poets through their use of the fanciful succeeded in having men believe what in fact revolts their reason, but in praise of the poet of fancy he declared: "A legend, a tale, a tradition, a rumour, a

55 Spectator No. 419. Note that Addison underscores here the general belief that the representations which appeal primarily to the imagination gain acceptance by anesthetizing reason. For a discussion of the relationship between the use of the "Supernatural" and "Wit" in Restoration poetry, see George Williamson, The Proper Wit of Poetry (Chicago, 1961), pp. 84-96.
superstition; in short, anything is enough to be the basis of their air-form'd visions." And reminiscent of Addison, he asked "Does any reader trouble himself about the truth, or even the credibility of their fancies?" His reply: "Alas, no; he is best pleased when he is made to conceive (he minds not by what magic) the existence of such things as his reason tells him did not and were never likely to, exist." Speaking of the success of the drive against fancy, Hurd conceded: "What we have gotten by this revolution . . . is a great deal of good sense. What we have lost, is a world of fine fabling." 57

Even while Hurd was lamenting the loss of the creatures of fancy, the silent process towards their reinstatement was going on. Though in his age identified with the cold "Attic" style, Addison, perhaps more than any other critic of the time, in his subtly incisive Spectator papers on poetry, taste, and the imagination, had undermined the hallowed Neoclassical virtues, giving occasion for fresh sallies into the realm of the primitive, the supernatural, and the strange. Strongly supporting Addison's influence was that of Shaftesbury, the philosopher of enthusiasm. 58 Shaftesbury took a detested concept, enthusiasm, and by dint of constant repetition and refurbishing succeeded in enthroning it as a


57 Hurd, p. 154.

vital means of strengthening the human spirits. He looked upon Nature as a picture of her Creator and professed to find in her ample scope for a devotion which ultimately was focussed on God:

"O glorious Nature! supremely fair and sovereignly good! all-loving and all lovely, all-divine! whose looks are so becoming and of such infinite grace, whose study brings such wisdom and whose contemplation such delight, whose every single work affords an ampler scene and is a nobler spectacle than all 'which ever art presented! O mighty Nature! wise substitute of Providence! impowered creatress! ' Or thou impowering Deity, supreme creator! Thee I invoke and thee alone adore. To thee this solitude, this place, these rural meditations are sacred; whilst thus inspired with harmony of thought, though unconfined by words, and in loose numbers, I sing of Nature's order in created beings and celebrate the beauties which resolve in thee, the source and principle of all beauty and perfection. . . ."59

This rapturous ecstasy in his response to Nature is what Shaftesbury called enthusiasm; the ecstatic expression arose from his love and admiration for Nature, and from his devotion to her. That enthusiasm which was characterized by a single-hearted devotion, zeal, and rapture akin to madness and feared as being ruinous to society, Shaftesbury transformed into something less detestable, to many, admirable, and thus provided an innocent outlet for the starved emotions of a people schooled in emotional repression. And to underscore the validity of his response he showed that the same passions which his devotion was indulging were the very ones allowed to poets, musicians, heroes, adventurers, and such admired people: "The transports of poets, the sublime of orators, the

rapture of musicians, the high strains of the virtuosi—all mere enthusiasm! Even learning itself, the love of arts and curiosities, the spirit of travelers and adventurers, gallantry, war, heroism—all, all enthusiasm!"  

Shaftesbury's influence lived on, and his work was continued by critics like Francis Hutcheson and Thomas Blackwell, and through them by later Scottish critics, besides numerous European philosophers and critics. But it was the influence on English poets such as the Wartons which leavened the new poetry, gaining expression in literature of the sublime landscape and aesthetic idealism. By the second half of the eighteenth century the learned Elizabeth Carter was able to declare to a friend that "it is true, that the philosopher who examines the wonderful internal construction of natural objects, must discern the power and wisdom of the Supreme Being; but the superficial Spectator who, with a refined imagination, and sensible heart, surveys the external beauties of the universe, feels his goodness." The Shaftesbury enthusiasm had borne fruit. Men agreed that it was possible to use the imagination and the sensibilities, not only the reason, to gain from Nature a knowledge

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60 Chapman, p. 220.


62 Chapman, p. 207.

63 Quoted from a letter of Mrs. Carter's, in Tuveson, p. 158.
of the Creator; and the imagination was no longer viewed as inferior to
the understanding, capable only of maintaining acquaintance with this
outward and lower world. The new attitude to the imagination would find
its finest literary expression in the works of the Romantic poets.

Unlike poetic or philosophic enthusiasm of the Shaftesbury type,
religious enthusiasm never found a champion to make it popularly accepted
by the respectable in society. It is ironic that the form of enthusiasm
which came to be fully accepted sprang in part from the work of one who
had written against religious enthusiasm. But, as the following chapter
will show, popular censure never succeeded altogether in suppressing
religious enthusiasm.

64 Shaftesbury's "Letter Concerning Enthusiasm" was written be-
cause of the strong feelings aroused in London by the activities of the
French Prophets and their followers (1708).
Chapter II Enthusiasm in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England

Enthusiastic groups in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England invariably sought to justify their existence and practices by an appeal to the Bible, especially to the life and teachings of Christ and to the record of the Christian Church in the New Testament.¹ Most enthusiasts saw the early Church as the ideal, the finest example of what Christ's Church was meant to be. It does not matter that they tended always to see the primitive Church through rose-tinted glasses; what matters is what they thought they saw. When the enthusiasts looked around them, they saw an established Church controlled by the temporal power, whose wishes often determined the course of religious life for all; they saw what they considered worldliness or, at best, morality void of the true religion of the heart; they saw practices for which they could find no scriptural authority; they saw everywhere a Christian religion so sophisticated and cold that it bore little resemblance to the simplicity and warmth of the primitive Church they read about in the New Testament.

These seventeenth- and eighteenth-century enthusiasts declared the Bible and the Bible only to be their guide to worship, belief, and practice. Accordingly, they refused to identify themselves with doctrines

¹ In this and succeeding chapters I use the term "Enthusiasts" in its widest signification, in keeping with the practice of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. All Protestant groups who separated or dissented from the established Church were unceremoniously termed enthusiasts.
which they believed owed their existence to tradition rather than the
Word. Remembering that Christ promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples
and that this Spirit was to guide them into all truth (St. John 16.7-15),
and recalling what power attended the Apostles when they received the
gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, these enthusiasts believed that
as Christians they too were included in the promises of the Spirit, and so
they might expect to be guided into all truth and to receive the special
gifts that came with the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit.

The history of the early Church as recorded in the book of Acts
and in the writings of St. Paul showed the enthusiasts what they should
ordinarily expect if they lived as devoutly as the early Christians did.
They might expect gifts of tongues, interpretations of tongues, discern­
ment of spirits, prophecy, and healing, among others. Their reading of
chapters twelve to fourteen of the first epistle to the Corinthians showed
them that the early Church ordinarily received many gifts which the Angli­
can Church lacked. Many of these enthusiasts believed that Christ's
promise of the Spirit meant that individuals would have the Spirit dwelling
in them bodily, and having such a divine presence abiding within, none
would need to depend on any human supports, like academic learning and
set forms of prayer, in their performance of the duties of the Church—
preaching and praying, for example. Christ promised that the Spirit will
guide each individual into all truth; having this divine light of the Spirit,
then, one would need no other light or assistance, and one could be
certain that all his actions would be acceptable to God.

In Church organization the enthusiasts frequently adhered strictly to the pattern of the primitive Church, having no hierarchy among the leaders, who might be called elders, bishops, or presbyters; the deacons (and widows, in some cases) were the only other group of officers recognized as biblical. Some enthusiasts (for example, the Quakers) refused to have a clergy, considering each individual, man and woman alike, as of equal rank in the assembly of the saved. Continuing in the pattern of the early Church, many of the groups of enthusiasts who formed separate congregations allowed each congregation to be autonomous. And some enthusiasts sought to establish the Kingdom of Christ on this earth, appealing to the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John for their warrant and to the books of the Pentateuch for their laws.

Because these enthusiasts characteristically desired to return to the supposed purity of the primitive Church, they always posed a threat to the unity of the Church to which they belonged; it is therefore almost a truism that enthusiasts are schismatic. Indeed, most enthusiasts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries desired a charismatic rather than an institutional church. The initiative for the founding, control, and discipline of the church should come from the Spirit, they believed, not from man. What follows in this chapter will be an attempt to give in barest outline only an indication of the more important enthusiastic groups in England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; however,
reference will first be made to earlier examples of enthusiasm in the Christian Church simply to suggest that enthusiasm was not restricted to England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but was, in fact, an old and frequent, though often unwelcome, presence in the Christian Church.

Father Knox has shown that those elements which later became associated with enthusiastic groups were present to some extent in the Church at Corinth to which St. Paul sent two epistles, those elements being antinomianism, sectarianism, perfectionism (or, in Knox's phrase, "indefectibility of grace"), violent emotional experiences accompanying conversion of individuals formerly living in degradation, trusting in private feelings over the authority of tradition, and greediness over the gifts of the Spirit. At its very beginnings the Church, still blessed with extraordinary evidences of divine guidance, was nevertheless reflecting its human composition by the weaknesses its leaders were called upon to rectify or reprove. Later, during the middle of the second century, the Church was faced with the challenge of the Montanists. Their leader, Montanus, a convert to Christianity, declared that he was the Paraclete, and that he was initiating a new era. He is reported as having seizures, during which he would fall in a trance and then start raving in his speech, would speak in strange tongues at some times and at other times prophesy, though not in the traditional manner of the prophets. Associated with

Montanus were two of his female converts, Priscilla and Maximilla, who seemed to have shared his prophetic abilities; in addition, Maximilla said that she was "the word, and the spirit, and the power." Like Joachim of Fiore later, they taught that there were three separate dispensations, corresponding with the persons of the Trinity. The Montanists called for a very strict way of life, a life demanding much more moral rigour than was found in the Church of their day. As Knox put it:

> The history of Montanism is not to be read as that of a great spiritual revival, maligned by its enemies. It is that of a naked fanaticism, which tried to stampede the Church into greater severity, when she had not forgotten how to be severe.  

Lee believed, however, that the Montanists were reacting to spiritual laxity in the Church, protesting its growing organization, and its spirit of accommodation towards pagan practices. The Montanists eventually became a schismatical group, having Tertullian as their greatest and most influential apologist.

Following the eruption of Montanism, several other enthusiastic groups appeared in the Church right down to the seventeenth century.

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5 Believing that Tertullian became a Montanist because he thought Montanus genuinely endowed with the Holy Spirit, Casaubon said, "Tertullian had never been a Heretick, had he been a better Naturalist." *Treatise*, p. 13. Casaubon believed that the case of the Montanists was one involving what he called "natural" enthusiasm.
The Donatists of the fourth century were moral rigorists reacting to what they termed laxity among ordinary Catholics and to the Catholics' loss of zeal for martyrdom. The Donatists, like the Montanists, became schismatic, and so were the Albigensians, Waldensians, and the Cathari, enthusiasts of the Middle Ages who advocated a return to the simplicity and purity of the Apostolic Church. Rigorous in their moral standards, they were anti-sacerdotal and charismatic in outlook. Joachimism, an enthusiastic movement started by Abbot Joachim of Fiore (d. 1201), taught that there were three dispensations, corresponding to the three persons of the Trinity. Another enthusiast, Wilhelmina of Bohemia (d. 1282), claimed to be the Holy Spirit incarnated to inaugurate a new era in which a new gospel would be preached, with women being in positions of leadership. The fourteenth century contributed the Lollards and Hussites, the Jansenists and the Quietists. In the sixteenth century with the coming of the Protestant Reformation, thanks to the printing press and the translators of the Bible, individuals claimed their liberty to study and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. A new day had dawned for the Christian Church; and to the dismay and chagrin of its spiritual and temporal leaders, the Church in England, busy with purifying itself into the Church of England, was to be dismembered by the zeal of those clamouring for yet greater simplicity and purity of discipline, ceremony, and government than the

6 On the Donatists and the others following, see Knox, pp. 50-70, and on "Religious Enthusiasm," see New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967.
sovereigns and bishops allowed.

The main developments of enthusiasm in England can be divided into three periods: the years of Puritan ascendancy in government (1641-1660), the early years of the eighteenth century which saw the activities of the French prophets in London, and the period of the Methodist revival (from 1738 and on to the end of the century). But the elements which led to the fury of the Puritan revolution were long present in the English Church. If the Puritans of the Civil War period and the Commonwealth must be remembered as enthusiasts, as many of the clergy of the Restoration period declared they were, the Puritans of the preceding three quarters of the century should also be classified as enthusiasts, because what Puritans of the Elizabethan years demanded was precisely what those of the Stuart period were asking for. They were all acting by the same principles. The hallmark of the enthusiasm of the Puritans of the Commonwealth, in the eyes of the Restoration Anglican clergy, was their studied attempt, under the guise of extraordinary zeal and spiritual insight, to stay in the Church and reform it out of existence by destroying its episcopal system of government, or to separate from the Church, setting up rival meetinghouses of their own, and by their defections and constant extemporary prayers and sermons cause many to be disaffected, thus weakening and eventually destroying the Church from without. The very nickname, Puritan, was a derisive reminder of the Puritan's desire to have the Church purified according to his wishes.
Various historians and critics hold that the fragmentation of the English Church began during the reign of Mary Tudor. Frere and Douglas declare that the Puritan faction in the Church began as a result of the Marian persecution of clergy favourable to the reforms initiated during the reign of Edward VI. The persecution, they claim, forced English reformers into exile in various European cities, to Zürich, Basle, Frankfurt, Geneva, and Strassbourg. There the exiles found other reformers who had broken away completely from the "ancient continuity of church organization" and who were violently opposing all externals in church worship. Differences arose among the English churchmen when many of the more conservative found themselves unable to accept the levelling attitudes of the advanced European reformers. When the exiles returned to England at the accession of Elizabeth, the more extreme party remained in sympathy with the attitude of the foreign reformers, while the others became a part of the main body of English reformers, thus beginning that cleavage which developed into conformist and sectarian Puritanism. Lewis Berens, in more general terms, says that in the reign of Elizabeth the Church of England occupied somewhat of a middle ground between the Roman Catholic, on the one hand, and the Reformed Churches of the Continent, on the other hand. The attempt of the Church and Sovereign to enforce conformity to the religious settlement forced the extremists on both sides to separate.

the Roman Catholics a persecuted body on one side, and on the other side the extreme Protestants, who formed various independent and separatist groups, agreeing only in their hatred of outside ecclesiastical control. According to Berens, "Within the Church the Catholic sentiment crystal-lized into the Episcopalian, the Protestant sentiment into the Presbyterian section of the Church of England."\(^8\) In an attempt to differentiate clearly among Puritan, Presbyterian, and Independent, Clark, while agreeing that all Nonconformity was Puritan, still divides Nonconformity within the Church into Presbyterian and Puritan, and all Nonconformity without the Church he calls Independent. Clark shows that Puritans, that is, one group of Nonconformists within the Church, accepted in its main outlines the reformed settlement of the English Church, granting that the "existing episcopal doctrine and method of Church government with its adjuncts was right and wise and valid,"\(^9\) but desired that certain unreformed elements be removed because they hindered the spiritual ministry of the Church to its members and the spiritual impression the Church made on the world. The Puritan interest in further reform was therefore particularly concerned with the spiritual ministry of the Church. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, did not accept the reformed settlement, holding that it was no refor-mation at all; they clamoured above all else for a particular form of Church order. The Presbyterians were so dissatisfied with the condition of the


Church that they wished and worked, in Clark's words, "with a passion that was fiery and bigoted indeed—to substitute for the national Church as it existed a national Church wherein government by the presbytery should have superseded government by the episcopal bench."¹⁰

The Puritan, for his part, was constantly seeking to attain that ideal state he termed "godliness." Richard Rogers expressed this ideal in his diary: "And this is mine harty desire that I may make godliness ... to be my delight through my whole life ..."¹¹ And Knappen described the Puritan character as "an attitude predominately [sic] ethical, involving the individual in a methodical struggle for the Pietistic delight in a correct state of mind resulting in the fulfillment of all duties, both contemplative and active."¹² Particularly concerned with the quality of spiritual or religious life, the Puritan sought further reforms in the Anglican Church which would remove practices having no Scriptural warrant for their existence, that is, all practices originating with the Roman Catholic Church. At first the objections were to ecclesiastical vestments: surplices, tippets, copes, and gowns. One may question the relationship between spiritual ideals and the wearing of certain ecclesiastical vestments, but Laurence Humphrey and Thomas Sampson (both Elizabethan clergymen) felt that the vestments were a real danger to

¹⁰ Clark, I, 210.


¹² Knappen, Diaries, p. 16
true piety. The robes were too closely connected with the religion of Rome
to be completely innocuous if adopted by the Church of England. As Clark
put it, the vestments had "become the settled symbols of a settled system,
and could not be separated from the thing they had symbolised for so long;
and the fear was lest the mass of the people . . . should fail to realise
that although the garments of Rome were retained, the doctrines of Rome
were banned."\textsuperscript{13}

These Puritan leaders also complained that the ministers and
priests who were appointed were so "dumb" that they could do no more
than read out of a printed book to their congregations. Sampson declared
that the Church needed pastors who could feed the people "with knowledge
and understanding." Such were the teachers that St. Paul and the Apostles
sent out (note the appeal to the primitive Church), men who were able to
teach, "rightly dividing the word of truth."\textsuperscript{14} Besides showing concern
for the quality of the clergy, the Puritan leaders desired a stronger spirit­
ual tone among the parishioners. They accordingly asked for reforms by
which the ministers would be expected to ensure that prior to the Com­
munion Service, members wishing to communicate were spiritually fit; and
members who absented themselves from the Service were to give good
reasons for their neglect. The Puritans also wanted special services for
the exposition of the Scriptures and more opportunities than they formerly
had had for preaching. They therefore began holding weekly or fortnightly

\textsuperscript{13}Clark, I, 222. \textsuperscript{14}Clark, I, 222.
"prophesyings," as these special services were called. Though sometimes used for disputes on matters of church discipline and government, these "prophesyings" were primarily religious rather than polemical, for the benefit of both clergy and laity.\textsuperscript{15}

Though it is clear that on occasions there was a community of interests and ideals among Puritans and Presbyterians within the Church, especially before 1571 (the date of the final Church settlement), after that date Presbyterians and Puritans tended to part, each developing along separate lines.\textsuperscript{16} The "Admonition to Parliament" (1572), whether the work of Puritan or Presbyterian, shows what reforms men in the Church desired even after the Elizabethan Church settlement had been complete, at least, according to the wishes of the sovereign. The "Admonition" constantly contrasted current practice in the Church of England with the practice of what the writers, John Field and Thomas Wilcox, called "the olde church," obviously the early Christian Church. The "Admonition" was a clear appeal to take the Anglican Church back to the practice of the biblical Church and away from Romish practices which had no scriptural basis. The writers divided their work into three sections dealing with reforms needed in the

\textsuperscript{15} Clark, I, 228.

\textsuperscript{16} Clark views the "Northern Model" (1571) and the "Admonition to Parliament" (1572) as documents showing the true goals of Puritans and Presbyterians, respectively. See Clark, \textit{History of English Non-conformity}, I, 216-234.
ministry, in the ministration of the sacraments, and in ecclesiastical discipline.¹⁷

Concerning the ministry of the word, the writers said that the substance of the doctrine of the Church of England was good, but the ministers were not elected, called, or ordained, nor their work observed as closely as the Scriptures outlined they should be. Ministers should be elected by the common consent of the whole Church and should not be placed in any congregation without the call and consent of that congregation; ministers should be admitted to the ministry only after they proved their ability to function effectively and received the laying on of hands from the elders only; they were to be preachers, not merely readers:

"Then ministers were not tyed to any forme of prayers invented by man, but as the spirit moved them, so they powred forth hartie supplications to the Lorde. Now they are bound of necessitie to a prescript order of service, and booke of common prayer in which a great number of things contrary to Gods word are contained . . . patched . . . out of the Popes Portuis" (pp. 9-12). To reform the situation, among other things implied in what is given above, the leaders requested that authorities appoint a learned and diligent preacher to every congregation and see that godly ministers preach the word continually, not merely quarterly or monthly.

¹⁷ The enumeration of some of the contents of the "Admonition" which follows is from Puritan Manifestoes, ed. W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas (London, 1954); all page numbers given within the text will be to this work, unless otherwise indicated.
In the matter of the ministration of the sacraments, the complaints were largely against what the writers called Popish practices. Among other demands, they called for Communion of both kinds, for the use of common bread at the Communion table, for a sitting, not a kneeling, posture when receiving the Communion. Kneeling has somewhat of a superstition in it and the outward show of evil, they said; sitting "according to the example of Chryst . . . signifye rest, that is a full finishing thorow Chryst of all the ceremonial law, and perfect worke of redemption wroght that geveth rest for ever" (p. 24). The reformers wanted nothing to be done at the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism for which the Scriptures did not give "expresse warrant."

To restore the Church to its ancient practice in ecclesiastical discipline, all ministers must be made equal, having no Lord Bishop or Archbishop, and instead of Chancellors, Archdeacons, Summoners, Churchwardens, and such, each congregation should have a "lawful and godly seignorie." Deacons and ministers should not usurp each other's offices, nor should there be any more officers of the Church than the Ministers, Deacons, and Seniors. The reformers also insisted that the discipline of excommunication should not be exercised for trifles but for "notorious crimes," as it was in the early Church; and this final punishment of the offender should be by the consent of the congregation and in the hands of many, not of one man. As if intimating that what was already done in the Church as a settlement was no reformation, the writers appealed:
You may not do as heretofore you have done patch and piece, nay rather goe backeward, and never labour or contend to perfection. But altogether remove whole Antichrist, both head body and branch, and perfectly plant that puritie of the word, that simplicitie of the sacraments, and severitie of discipline, which Christ hath commanded, and commended to his church. (p. 19)

Such in bare outline were the contents of the "Admonition," a document "singularly free," say the editors, "from the distortion and recklessness which has often characterized puritan polemic." The reforms in the system of worship demanded in the document were to be standard for many years to come. In the words of Douglas and Frere, "The whole of the ensuing century of liturgical controversy added little or nothing of importance to this enumeration." Hence, if Puritans under Charles I were enthusiasts, so had been Puritans under the later Tudors, especially Elizabeth. It was only that the later Puritans were more powerful, being more numerous and in positions of greater influence than were Tudor Puritans; yet both groups were schismatical.

Schism has ever been the nightmare of church leaders. The leaders of the Anglican Church from Elizabeth to the Georges saw all sectaries as potential revolutionaries, opposers of both Church and State. Any attempt to set up a separate communion from that of the established Church was, from the point of view of authorities in Church and State, an attempt to destroy the Government. Such a conclusion was easily deducible from

18 Frere and Douglas, Puritan Manifestoes, p. xxv.
19 Frere and Douglas, p. xxvi.
the position held by a Sovereign who ruled as head of both Church and State. To rebel against religious laws enacted by a ruler who combined supreme authority in the political and religious realms is indeed to rebel against that ruler in his capacity as temporal head, and thus to subvert the entire system, political and religious. The sectaries, however, steadfastly expressed their loyalty to the Crown, and just as firmly indicated repeatedly that they wanted no separation of Church and State; they recognized the right of the magistrate to enforce obedience to the laws, but in recognizing this right they also enunciated their right to disobey the magistrate and suffer the consequences when his demands were contrary to the Word of God.21

In the interest of fidelity to Scripture, as they saw it, many Puritans chose to separate from the established Church and set up congregations of their own where they could worship according to their wishes. In the view of the orthodox, it is in this willingness of the sectaries to separate for worship according to their understanding of the Bible that their enthusiasm resides. Those sectaries were at once declaring that they had a right as individuals to read and interpret the Scriptures and to disagree with their rulers in this interpretation; such a view, of course,

21 See William P. Holden, Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572-1642 (New Haven, 1954), p. 34: "A Clergyman's refusal to follow instructions on vestments or the manner of administering Communion began in qualms of conscience; a persistent refusal to obey instructions from his superiors simply applied the pre-Calvinist principle that the Crown, when it persisted in violating God's instructions, ought to be defied."
implied that the sectaries had greater light and more accurate spiritual
guidance than their rulers, a claim that would appear preposterous, con-
sidering that many of the separatists were often allegedly uneducated.
All sectaries did not contemplate making a complete and perpetual sepa-
reration from the Church. For some, separation was an act of faith repre-
senting their belief that one day those of the established Church would see
the light and join them, thus once more making one great reformed body.
As Knappen puts it, "Though an occasional congregation is equipped with
a fully developed constitution, on the whole the movement was merely a
fleeting release for reforming zeal, designed, if there was any plan at all,
to give way to the thoroughly purged state church when the long-awaited
day of victory should come."\textsuperscript{22}

The separatist movement began somewhat in earnest during the
reigns of Edward VI and Mary Tudor. Sectaries were found holding meetings
in the home of one Upchard of Bocking in Essex and at Faversham in Kent.
Some of these people were opposed to the doctrine of predestination and
had qualms about communicating with sinners, and some had questions
about the proper attitude one should adopt in prayer, about children and
original sin, some of them objecting to infant baptism by the Roman Catho-
lic clergy.\textsuperscript{23} According to Clark, most of these sectaries were "unlearned
and ignorant men," cowherds and clothiers; but many of them had no

\textsuperscript{22} Knappen, \textit{Tudor Puritanism}, p. 305.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., pp. 149-150.
complaints on matters of doctrine, nor did they neglect the regular Church services or ordinances; they simply met for worship on times not legally appointed. Undoubtedly, separatism during the reign of Mary was for the most part a reaction to the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism as the state religion after the important reforms initiated under Edward.

Certainly the great incidence of separatism under Elizabeth was in reaction to that monarch's insistence on uniformity of practice and worship in the Church, but especially because that uniformity was to be based on models which reformers claimed were unscriptural and Romish in many respects. Knappen indicates that the rebirth of independency under Elizabeth was a by-product of the vestiarian controversy. It was an extreme measure made necessary when petitioning and tract-writing were proving unfruitful in wringing either reform or compromise from the authorities. In June of 1567 most of the one hundred people who met for worship in a conventicle at Plumber's Hall were arrested. These sectaries indicated in their testimony that they wanted a simple administration of the Sacraments, free preaching, and firm discipline for


those deserving it.\textsuperscript{27} It was the contention of many Puritans that discipline in the Church was lax, unfair, or unbiblical. A letter of Archbishop Grindal's indicated the existence of another group of separatists:

Some London citizens of the lowest order, together with four or five ministers, remarkable neither for their judgment nor learning, have openly separated from us; and sometimes in private, sometimes in the fields, and occasionally even in ships, they have held their meetings and administered the Sacraments. Besides this, they have ordained ministers, elders, and deacons after their own way, and have even excommunicated some who had seceded from their church.\textsuperscript{28}

Almost a thousand people were involved in this movement of independency.

The practice of referring to enthusiasts as "of the lowest order" and lacking in learning and proper judgment was a favourite design of anti-enthusiasts used to discredit their opponents.

The man who is usually credited with being the father of congregationalism or independency, Robert Browne (1550?-1633), was no uneducated man of the rabble. Browne, a relative of Lord Burghley, received

\textsuperscript{27} The writers of the "Admonition" described prevailing disciplinary practices in the Elizabethan Church and compared them with those of the early Church as follows: "In the primitive church it [excommunication] was in many men's hands; now one alone excommunicateth. In those days it was the last censure of the church, and never went forth but for notorious crimes; Now it is pronounced for every light trifle. . . . Then for great sinnes, severe punishment, and for smal offences, little censures: Now great sinnes either not at all punished, as blasphemy, usury, etc. or else sleightly passed over with pricking in a blanket, or pinning in a sheet, as adulterie, whoredome, drunkennes, etc. Againe, such as are no sinnes . . . are grevously punished, not only by excommunication, suspention, deprivation and other . . . spiritual coertion, but also by banishying, imprisonyng, revyling, taunting, and what not?" Frere and Douglas, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{28} Quoted in Clark, I, 176.
his B. A. from Cambridge in 1572. After losing his job as a schoolmaster because of the extreme Puritan ideas which he held, Browne returned to Cambridge to study divinity. There he came under the influence of Richard Greenham, a very earnest Puritan clergyman of conspicuous ability. Browne began preaching without a license from the bishops because he thought it hateful to be licensed, authorized, or ordained by any human being. In fact he believed that ordination, whether Episcopal or Presbyterian, was an abomination; that the whole system of ecclesiastical government was in need of radical reform; and that the whole parochial structure of the Church was so bad as to be harmful to religion, and was a form of bondage from which one needed to be freed. "The Kingdom of God," he said, "was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather by the worthiest, were they ever so few," and the Church should be, not a comprehensive body to which all may belong, but a society for the privileged and miraculously gifted few.

When Browne's brother got him a license for preaching, Browne threw the document into the fire. Prohibited to preach by the Council, he nevertheless linked up with Robert Harrison (d. 1594) and began preaching at Norwich, where they organized a separatist church, whose members were called Brownists. Browne had such a large following that Edmund Freake, Bishop of Norwich, charged him before Lord Burghley with teaching

29 See DNB, "Robert Browne."

30 Ibid. See also Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, pp. 303-310; Clark, I, 177-181.
corrupt doctrine and with being contentious, seducing the vulgar sort of
people, assembling a hundred at a time in private houses and conventicles.
Browne's zeal made him the object of great harrassment; he was imprisoned
several times and even emigrated to Middleburg. Though he eventually con­
formed, the principles he enunciated in his published works lived on and
were taken up by others, some suffering execution for propagating them.
The Brownists continued increasing beyond the reign of Elizabeth, and in
London other sectarian groups numbering several hundreds grew up. Other
important separatist leaders like John Greenwood, Henry Barrow and Francis
Johnson (all of Elizabethan times) continued guiding their own little flocks
until the authorities silenced them by imprisonment and execution or banish­
ment.  

Desiring heartily to be rid of the rash of separatist activity, the
Elizabethan government passed the Conventicle Act in 1593, condemning
separatists to banishment (and death for those who returned). Sir Walter
Raleigh, speaking in favour of the bill, claimed that England had up to
twenty thousand Brownists, a figure that historians agree was an exag­
geration; but it indicates the flurry of activity involving sectaries at this
time. After the passing of the bill, many separatists emigrated, but
enough remained in England to be the nucleus of other groups. Though
different groups organized separatist movements for differing reasons,

they all expressed the need for further reform towards purity of doctrine or church government. Clark summarized the ideals of the sectaries as follows:

... it was not, in fact, on distinctively doctrinal questions that the Independents struck out their own particular line. The principal concern with them was the question of the Church, its constitution and order; and on this topic their primary contention was that the appointment of constitution and order by human authority, by the State, was an essentially un-religious thing, and a practical denial of the Lordship of Christ. The true order of things was that Christ Himself should, through the individual members of His Church, bring about whatever system was required: every association of Christians was, in immediate contact with Christ, to receive its instruction directly from His lips. 32

The attitude of the sectaries as expressed here by Clark was, of course, entirely characteristic of those who would later be dubbed enthusiasts.

One should note, however, that in spite of the extreme Puritans' separation from the established Church, they invariably expressed their loyalty to the Crown and their submission to the magistrates or rulers, because they believed that it was the office of the secular rulers to protect the true religion and suppress the false. 33 The fact is that the Puritans hoped that one day they would be strong enough in Parliament to have a decisive voice in the matter of Church reform. Haller notes: "The main body of the Puritan preachers, it is important to remember, never surrendered the hope of taking over the establishment and running it according

32 Clark, I, 196-197.

to the scheme of the Book of Discipline. These men became known in time as the presbyterians and composed the majority of the Westminster Assembly. As an alternative the reformers hoped that a ruler would come who would be favourable to the reformed religion and so lead them to victory against those who were either too conservative or too timid to root out from the Church the remnants of Romish practices and what they saw as the corrupt system of Episcopal government.

The hope for a Christian monarch favourable to the wishes of the reformers were dashed, because neither James I, who prided himself in his learning and knew Presbyterianism firsthand, nor Charles I, who favoured Catholics over Puritans and had Laud as his advisor, shewed any sympathy with men whose policies seemed destined to undermine all authority. The policies of both monarchs involved a firm suppression of all Nonconformity. But far from destroying Nonconformity, those policies bred dissent and united with the religious dissenters those informed men in the nation and in Parliament who were contending for civil liberties.

Nonconformist Puritan clergymen within the Anglican Church were frequently suspended and deprived, though many of them made their peace with the Church later. But many others refused to come to terms with the Church, seeking refuge, rather, among separatists, as Haller indicates:


35 Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 328.
"Independency and separatism in all their organized forms developed only as the authorities at successive stages placed more and more serious impediments in the way of the reformers' efforts."^36 Though hounded by the Bishops' "pursuivants," separatist groups multiplied apace, biding the time when they could operate freely. The reigns of the first two Stuarts saw the formation of distinct separatist bodies like General and Particular Baptists, Anabaptists, and Independents; while Brownists and Barrowists were increasing rapidly.^37

In the hope of purifying the Church from within, those reformers who remained as Anglican clergymen silently worked to build up a force of preachers fully committed to a programme of reform. Isabel Calder's Activities of the Puritan Faction of the Church of England, 1625-1633, notes that twelve London Puritans formed themselves into an unincorporated self-supporting group of trustees to raise money "with which to acquire ecclesiastical revenue in the hands of laymen to be used for the maintenance and relief of a godly, faithful, and painstaking ministry."^38 At their trial these men insisted that they had no plans to change the government of the Church of England, but it is clear that they hoped to

^36 Haller, p. 53.


reform it along their lines when they became strong enough. Seeing no hope for a reformation from within the Church, and noting the clear Roman Catholic sympathies of King Charles I (who had a Catholic Queen with her priests at Court) and that conversions to Rome were increasing, many of the Puritan clergy departed during 1629 and 1630 for friendlier shores, joining separatists who had earlier fled to the Continent and North America. Laud's religious tyranny from the last years of Archbishop Abbot's rule and during his own period of office drove more of the Puritan clergy to join the emigrants of 1630 or to join the ranks of Independency. What was more, Laud even tried to stop the emigration.

Laud's religious policy and the emigration are important factors in the study of the enthusiasts because it was the Archbishop's attempts to carry out in Scotland those policies that he thought were successful in England which led to the political debacle of the 1640's, and the emigration of Puritan and Independent clergymen left the increasing numbers

39 See Haller, p. 81: "If Gouge, Sibbes and their associates had been permitted to continue their work uninterrupted, it is possible, if not highly probable, that the English church, which had so long successfully resisted Puritan reform, would have been reformed by the spiritual brotherhood from within, bishops or no bishops."

40 Clark, I, 256-257.

41 "So strongly did he [Laud] object to emigration, that there were edicts in at least four different years prohibiting it to all except soldiers and sailors unless the King's permission or that of six members of the Privy Council had been obtained. The edicts were evaded, nevertheless, and the emigration went on." Clark, I, 283; see also Gardiner, History of England, VII, 317-318.
of Puritans and sectarians in the country without learned and effective pastoral control. Lacking adequate pastoral care, many of the more articulate lay Puritans were forced to become preachers and teachers, naturally appealing to the doctrine of the sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching as warrant for their practices. Of course, it was from their ministers that the lay Puritans first heard that the Spirit could "lead them into all truth" and "teach them all things." The humble preachers simply carried the teaching to its logical extreme. The titles of their tracts and pamphlets tell the story clearly: Samuel How published *The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching Without Human Learning: or, a treatise tending to prove humane learning to be no help to the spirituall understanding of the Word of God* (1639); and John Spencer, *A Short Treatise Concerning the lawfullness of every mans exercising his gift as God shall call him thereunto* (1641). In these works and in the lack of clergy to serve the people one finds in part the cause for the proliferation of sects during the period of Puritan ascendancy.


43 See Haller, pp. 262, 267. "The older and more respectable preachers, many of them silenced or banished after 1632, had repeatedly assured the people that common folk possessed all the wit and knowledge necessary to understand and believe the gospel. They had insisted that academic learning, though indispensable for the preacher, should never be obtruded in sermons. . . . If the spirit could directly teach the soul of a child [like the child Jesus in the temple] or of any simple man, and if that teaching were all that was needed for the soul's good, what need any other, what need the teaching of schools?" (p. 267)
Other causes for the increase of sectarian activity included the temporary removal of restraints from the press during the early 1640's and the relative freedom to express religious opinions that prevailed during most of the period 1641-1659. Charles I and Laud had followed a policy, at times impartial, of repressing the publication or expression from the pulpit of ideas on controversial religious and political topics, but at the meeting of the Long Parliament and the lessening of the influence of both Charles I and Laud, those restraints were removed, and a flood of literature poured from the press. Freer speech and a less bridled press helped men to get a truer picture of the state of religious and political thinking in England. It was not the Commonwealth regime that created these dissident voices. They already existed, nurtured by the repressive policies in Church and State; the arrest of the strong hand of repression allowed the floodgates to be removed, and the flood poured over the land. The titles of the pamphlets of the times indicate conditions existing in the religious underworld of the Laudian period: **A Discoverie of Six women preachers, in Middlesex, Kent, Cambridgeshire, and Salisbury; A Nest of Serpents Discovered or, a Knot of old Heretiques revived, Called the Adamites; Religions Enemies, With a brief and ingenious Relation, as by Anabaptists, Brownists, Papists, Familists**,  

Atheists, and Foolists, sawcily presuming to tosse Religion up in a Blanquet; and from the pen of John Taylor the water-poet, A Swarne of Sectaries, and Schismatiques: Wherein is discovered the strange preaching (or prating) of such as are by their trades Coblers, Tinkers, Pedlers, Weavers, Sow-gelders, and Chymney-Sweepers. All these pamphlets were from opponents of the sectaries, supporters of the orthodox establishment. The fact that tradesmen and women are included among the preachers is significant because it indicates the widespread acceptance of the belief that with the Spirit's assistance the unlearned may qualify as teachers and preachers of the Scriptures. As already noted, this unusual claim of guidance and control by the Holy Spirit was what was looked upon by the orthodox as the badge of the enthusiast.

Given the uncertain state of affairs in religion and politics existing in England during the decade following the meeting of the Long Parliament, and given a mass of humble people, Bible in hand, believing that they are possessed of the Holy Spirit, add to these a lack of clergy-men to temper and control the enthusiasm of these new and zealous students of Daniel and the Apocalypse, one can conceive of a flurry of apocalyptic prophecies hitherto unknown in England. Referring to the years of Puritan ascendancy, Lee says that during the periods when there was a temporary lack of restraint and when the country was in turmoil,

46 See Haller, pp. 262-264.
many claimed prophetic powers and the ability to work miracles. And Williamson claims, furthermore, that "the religious effort to attain stability, to reach a truth outside of man, arrived at an unprecedented chaos during the Commonwealth, when men found themselves more than ever tumbled up and down in their own speculations and conceits."

Theophilus Evans, the anti-enthusiast, declared that the entire period of the Interregnum (1649-1660) seemed "to be one continued Scene of Enthusiasm, of pretended Sanctity and open Wickedness."

In the eyes of the Restoration clergy of the Anglican Church one of the strongest arguments that the enemies of the Church were enthusiasts was the repression and near destruction of the Church of England during the period from 1644-1659. They believed, as King Charles I is reported to have said, that the Anglican Church was the best of the reformed Churches; therefore those who deliberately set about to alter anything in it must certainly be in league with evil, or must be enthusiasts. Of course, whatever befell the Anglican Church was predictable, considering the political and religious alignments during the Civil War and the programme of reform frequently sought by Puritan and Presbyterian

47 Umphrey Lee, Backgrounds of Methodist Enthusiasm, p. 46.


reformers from the days of Elizabeth. Presbyterians desired the removal of Episcopacy and the substitution of a new system resembling that developed and maintained successfully in Geneva by Calvin; Puritans within the Church and Independents without desired further revisions in the Prayer Book and changes in vestments and ceremonies to remove all resemblance in practice and usage between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. The question of political loyalties complicated matters further, all conspiring against the peace of the Anglican Church. Simply put, the Anglican clergy, understandably, supported the King's cause against Parliament's (grounds enough for Parliament's suspicion and retaliation), while the sectaries, Presbyterians, and Puritans largely supported Parliament against the King. This pattern of loyalties and desires largely dictated the fate of the Anglican Church during the period of Puritan control.

All clergymen supporting the King's cause within areas controlled by Parliament were ejected systematically, and those who failed to conform to ordinances passed by Parliament had their properties sequestrated. According to Hardacre, about thirty per-cent of the ministers were ejected, all told, the remainder conforming or finding some way to avoid sequestration. 50 The dignitaries of the Anglican Church suffered more than the

50 Critics differ on the number actually ejected. Paul Hardacre, The Royalists During the Puritan Revolution (The Hague, 1956), p. 40 says between 3,000 and 3,600; Clark says under 2,000, in vol.I, 389; and Robert Whittaker, editor of John Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy, says up to 7,000, in Sufferings, pp. ccxiv-ccxxvi.
ordinary clergymen; nearly all were reduced to poverty. All the titles and offices of the Anglican Church (Archbishop, Bishop, Dean, Chapter, etc.) were abolished and their properties sequestrated. The Book of Common Prayer was banned and the Directory for Public Worship, prescribed by Parliament, was ordered to be used in all churches. In practice, however, many of the conforming clergy continued to use the Prayer Book undisturbed, though it was known that they were breaking the law; and many of those who were ejected later regained their churches. Many of the bishops lived quietly in the country, some of them ordaining new clergymen and conducting private services. Thus although it was true that the policy of religious toleration adopted by the Commonwealth did not extend to Roman Catholics and Anglicans, in practice the Anglicans enjoyed toleration so long as they did not engage in Royalist activities.

51 See Hardacre, pp. 40, 44; Clark, I, 321, 340, 355.
52 Hardacre, p. 43; Clark, I, 338.
54 "Even in the heart of reformed Oxford John Owen, the vice-chancellor, permitted three hundred Episcopalians to meet every Sunday and follow Anglican rituals: and although he was often urged, he never disturbed them." Hardacre, p. 89.
55 "In response to popular demand . . . Anglican ministers, conformist and ejected alike, continued to be active under Cromwell's rule. . . . Anglican tradition was strong in the nation at large, and Cromwell himself favoured liberty of worship for all peaceable persons." Hardacre, p. 116. See also Nuttall, p. 128, and Irene Simon, Three Restoration Divines, I (Paris, 1967), 13.
These matters concerning the fate of the Anglican Church and its clergy during the revolutionary period are important in this study of enthusiasm because they largely account for the bitterness of Anglicans towards those they dubbed enthusiasts and for the Anglican policy of repression of all sectarian activity after the Restoration.

To take the place of Episcopacy, the Presbyterians, then in the ascendant, secured agreement that a Presbyterian form of Church government should prevail. But the Independent idea of separate, autonomous congregations prevailed in areas where Independency was strongest. The policy of religious freedom for most religionists followed by authorities during the revolutionary period caused a rash of religious sects to come to the surface and caused others already strong to multiply profusely. Independency, represented by Baptists and Congregationalists, strongest in the New Model Army, had large congregations in Yarmouth, Norwich, Worcester, Bishopsgate Street, and Fleet Street, to mention only a few concentrations. But the sectaries were legion. John Bastwick reported that John Lilburne, on returning to London from the wars of the Rebellion, "met forty new Sects, and many of them dangerous ones; and some so pernicious, that howsoever, as he said, he was in his judgment for

56 Clark, I, 340; the system never got fully organized throughout England, though London and Lancashire, Presbyterian strongholds, were divided into Presbyteries. See Clark, I, 346.

57 For further indications of the growth of religious groups, see Clark, I, 329, 344-346, 384-387.
toleration of all Religions; yet he profest, he could scarce keep his hands off them, and had no patience to hear them; so blasphemous they were in their opinions." One Thomas Edwards (1599-1647), a Presbyterian controversialist, claimed that there were 176 sects in England during the 1640's. These, he found, could be put into sixteen categories, as follows:


But the groups most active on the political and social scene during the revolutionary period were the Levellers, the Diggers, the Fifth Monarchists, and the Quakers. Though the Levellers are remembered chiefly as a political party, the basis of the political activities of the party was primarily religious. Speaking of the Leveller party, D. B. Robertson said that it "was not a religious movement, strictly speaking, but the movement got its impetus and much of its sustained strength from the Christian faith." Having no special theology of its own, the Leveller movement,

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58 Quoted in Umphrey Lee, *Backgrounds of Early Methodist Enthusiasm*, p. 44.

59 Quoted in Lee, p. 45.

in so far as it was religious, shared the left-wing beliefs of the extreme Puritan party in respect to the Church and its government, and the importance of the Bible and the Holy Spirit in men's life. In his Answer to Nine Arguments, Lilburne, the chief voice of the Leveller party, declared concerning the form of the Church:

The forme of a true Church is for a company of beleevers who are washed in the blood of Christ by a free and voluntary Consent or willingnesse to enter into that heavenly and holy State, City or Kingdome, which is plentiously described, and by the power of Christ to become a constituted or Polytique Body or Corporation, . . . and then by virtue of their combination uniting & joyning themselves together each to other & so unto the Lord . . .

This statement enunciates the characteristically charismatic view of the Church usually held by enthusiasts; and the enthusiast's ideal of a Church governed by officers chosen according to the Scriptural pattern was also the goal of the Levellers. They held that the officers of the Church were to be only those sanctioned by the Bible, namely: Pastor, teacher, elder, deacon, and widow; and, of course, the Bible only was the guidebook for Leveller religious life and the basis for their chief political doctrines.

It was John Lilburne who enunciated the Leveller political doctrines. As he stood in the stocks before the public gaze, being punished for publishing what the authorities called controversial material, Lilburne felt the Holy Spirit fall on him, confirming, at least for him, that the gift of the Spirit is "not based on merit, learning, or position."

61 From Answer to Nine Arguments (1645), quoted in Robertson, p. 24.
Lilburne was no educated minister or gentleman but a mere apprentice. So he concluded that to get the Spirit a man needed only to desire it truly and fervently: "The Lord hath promised his enlightening Spirit unto all his people that are laborious and studious to know him aright."62 If the Spirit makes no distinction among men, concluded Lilburne, then all men are of equal importance, levelled. Lilburne carried over this idea of equality into politics, consistently demanding government with the consent of the people. Devoted to the establishment of constitutional democracy in England, Lilburne and the Levellers constantly opposed tyranny whenever and wherever it appeared from the later years of Charles I to the end of the Interregnum. They opposed the bishops of the Church, the King, Parliament, all undemocratic institutions, and leaders who forgot that absolute sovereignty resided in God only. Speaking for all Levellers, Lilburne declared his reason for opposing those in authority:

Not because they were Powers, but because they left and forsooke that declared and knowne Rule, by which they themselves were to bee ruled and guided, in the exercise of that power, for . . . I say no Power on earth is absolute but God alone, and all other Powers are dependents upon him, and those Principles of Reason and Righteousnesse that hee hath endowed man with, upon the true Basis of which all earthly Majestracy ought to be founded, and when the power or Majestracy degenerates from that Rule, by which it is to be Ruled, and betakes it selfe to its crooked and innovating will; it is to be no more a Power or Majestracy, but an obnoxious Tyranny to be resisted by all those that would not willingly have man to usurp the Soveraigntie of God to Rule by his will and pleasure.63

62 From A Worke of the Beast (1638), quoted in Robertson, pp. 14, 15.

63 From Strength out of Weaknesse (1649), quoted in Robertson, pp. 10-11.
The chief representatives of the Leveller party, John Lilburne, Richard Overton, and William Walwyn, worked unrelentingly amidst great obstacles at a time when any suggestion of democratic rule was seen as levelling and an invitation to anarchy and disrespect of private property; yet, preaching their basic belief in the equality of all men, they formed a party that in its brief existence (from 1646-1649) was an important influence on English political life. In the words of Robertson, the Levellers "spoke the need and interest of their own social and economic group, and this interest comprehended not only religious freedom . . . but free trade, freedom of the press, freedom from political power exercised contrary to the 'spirit of the law' as well as the letter. And they sought not only 'freedom from' various things, but they sought 'birthrights,' rights which God Himself bestowed upon man."64

Like the Levellers, the Diggers, another short-lived religio-economic group, based their teaching chiefly on Scripture. Gerard Winstanley, the chief Digger voice, claimed that God gave him a vision, filling his heart with beautiful thoughts, and revealing to him things of which he had never before heard or read. Among the revelations he received was one indicating that the earth should be the "common treasury for all men without distinction of person."65 In the thinking of most

64 Robertson, p. 70.

Restoration Anglican divines both Winstanley's claim to visions and the substance of the visions were enough evidence of his enthusiasm, for he was claiming a special relationship with God and at the same time undermining one of the accepted bases of order in his society: individual ownership of private property. Nevertheless, fully believing his visions were valid, Winstanley and about fifty of his followers began digging and cultivating the common land on St. George's Hill. The cultivation of the common land was not permitted to continue, but the goals of the Diggers were constantly publicized in numerous pamphlets. Firmly denouncing the idea of private property, Winstanley spoke out against buying and selling and against hiring out oneself. Society's ills—poverty, theft, social rank, etc.—can all be traced back to private ownership or property, he said. To remedy these ills, Winstanley declared that the original spirit of unrighteousness, covetousness or Adam, must be subdued, and this is possible only when man allows the King of Righteousness to rule in all hearts; when He rules, the earth will be a common treasury for all:

A man shall have meat and drink and clothes by his labour in freedom, . . . Pride and Envy likewise are killed thereby; for everyone shall look upon each other as equal in the Creation, every man, indeed, being a perfect Creation of himself. And so this second Adam, Christ the Restorer, stops or dams up the running of those stinking waters of self-interest, and causes the waters of life and liberty to run plentifully in and through

the Creation, making the Earth one Store House, and every man and woman to live in the Law of Righteousness and Peace, members of one household.67

The unusual application of biblical material, characteristic of the economic thought of Winstanley, curiously resembles later Quaker usage of Scripture. And like the Quakers later, Winstanley refused to take his hat off in the presence of dignitaries, and Diggers refused to defend themselves by a resort to arms. Great idealists as they were, they looked forward to the day when there would be a community of mankind and a community of the earth; then men would all work voluntarily and willingly and would give up all lands, submitting to the community, which would provide all with food, clothing, and the necessities of life.68 But Englishmen were not ready to live in the Utopia of the Diggers; the Digger socialistic movement, born hundreds of years before its time, quickly died in the withering blast of popular censure.

Of the politico-religious movements to which the Puritan revolution gave birth, the Fifth Monarchists were among the most formidable. This largely militant band of "saints" (as they were derisively termed by their detractors) were mostly members of the Baptist and independent groups, the largest contingent in the Model Army. But Fifth Monarchists never formed a Church of their own, proudly boasting that one did not have to belong to


68 Holorenshaw, pp. 20, 31.
a special church to become a member of their party. From their study of the prophecy of Daniel 2, these men agreed with the traditional interpretation that the four kingdoms represented by the various segments of the image were Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome; and the fifth kingdom, represented by the stone that was to destroy the kingdoms before it, was a kingdom which God himself was to set up on earth to be ruled by His saints forever. But going boldly beyond traditional interpretation of the fifth kingdom, the Fifth Monarchy men taught that the time had come for the setting up of the fifth monarchy in England. Their refusal to be content with the traditional interpretation of Scripture, their tacit claim to special spiritual insight, and their zeal in a destructive and bloody cause that led to the death of the King and the destruction of the national Church were enough to identify Fifth Monarchists as enthusiasts. These Fifth Monarchy men were most active in the fearful New Model Army. L. F. Brown has shown that many of the leaders of the Parliamentary forces along with the ordinary soldiers in the Civil War felt that they were actually fighting the wars of Christ in preparation for the setting up of His Kingdom.


70 "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Daniel 2.44.

71 See Brown, pp. 13-19.
Archer expectantly looked forward to the conversion of the Jews between 1650 and 1656 and for the coming of Christ in 1700, while John Owen, in his sermon before the House of Commons in 1649 confidently spoke of the destruction of monarchy as a sign that the Kingdom of Christ was about to be set up. Owen was seconded by Thomas Goodwin; but the most explicit enunciation of the role of Englishmen in this new kingdom came from John Eliot in New England. Eliot saw the wars in England as the blow to the clayey feet and toes of the image in Daniel 2. The next King on the English throne should be Christ, he said: "Christ is the only right Heir of the Crown . . . and he is now come to take possession of his Kingdom, making England first in that blessed work of setting up the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus." In preparation for the establishing of this kingdom, Englishmen were admonished to be careful to arrange their government so that its working agreed as closely as possible with the divine original; only righteous men were to be admitted to offices, and existing laws were to be replaced by the law of God; citizens should goad the government into the right path, consistently calling attention to all failures to follow the divine order. With the kingdom established, men could expect a time of peace and plenty; oppression, complaint, and taxes would cease,

72 Haller says John Archer. See Rise of Puritanism, p. 270.
73 From Collections, quoted in Brown, pp. 16-17.
and Trade and industry should abound. . . . The poor should have
bread, and the Army no more in Arrears. Prison doors should be
open and Debtors satisfied without arrests . . . then peace and
safety, plenty and prosperity, should overflow the land.  

From their petition to the Council of Officers in 1649 to Venner's
second plot in 1660, the Fifth Monarchists, under the leadership of men
like Christopher Feake, John Rogers, John Simpson, and Thomas Harrison,
were a thorn in the side of those in authority. Though some of their goals
were directly contrary to the ideals of the Levellers (the Fifth Monarchists
were for government by the saints, while Levellers desired a completely
democratic government), both groups at times united in demanding com­
plete liberty of worship, the reform of the legal system, and the abro­
gation of laws making tithe-paying mandatory on all (all being demands
which struck at the roots of civil and religious government as established
up to that time).  

Beginning with their entrance in matters of state in 1652, the Fifth
Monarchists constantly agitated for various reforms. Their particular
interests were in having godly men at the helm of government. But when
they had an opportunity to influence national policy through their band of
twenty-eight or thirty men in the Little Parliament (or Barebone's Parlia­
ment, after Praise-God Barbone, a notable Baptist member), they destroyed

74 From Peter Chamberlen, *Legislative Power in Problems*, quoted
in Brown, p. 25.

75 See Brown, pp. 37-38 and Gardiner, *Commonwealth*, II,
314-315.
their usefulness by their obduracy. As Brown put it: "The attempt to rule England by means of a body of men chosen for their godliness was a failure because those men were unwilling to temporize, to accept half measures when the complete attainment of their ideals was plainly impossible, to agree upon what was expedient instead of insisting upon what they believed to be right." Because of their uncompromising tempers in Parliament, the Fifth Monarchy men never again succeeded in being an important positive force in national affairs. Angry at Cromwell for ejecting the "saints" from Parliament and for assuming the title of Protector, the Monarchy men dubbed him the Little Horn of Daniel 7. But Cromwell expressed his view of the politics of the Fifth Monarchy men in his speech to the first Protectorate Parliament. Speaking of the Fifth Monarchists, Cromwell said:

But for men to entitle themselves on this principle, that they are the only men to rule kingdoms, govern nations, and give laws to people . . . truly, they had need give clear manifestations of God's presence with them, before wise men will receive or submit to their conclusions . . . when they come to such practices, --as to tell us, that liberty and property are not the badges of the kingdom of Christ, and tell us that instead of regulating laws,

76 Brown, pp. 42-43.

77 "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. . . . And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High . . . But the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion . . . And the kingdom and dominion . . . shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High . . . " Daniel 7.21-27.
laws are to be abrogated, indeed subverted, and perhaps would bring in the Judaical law instead of our known laws settled amongst us,—this is worthy every magistrate's consideration.78

Trying diligently but failing always to attain their coveted goals, these men of the sword inexorably hastened their own doom and destroyed all hopes of the founding of the kingdom of the saints in England by actively taking part in all the political wranglings and changes of government that hastened the return of the Stuart monarchy. "Refusing to barter with evil," says Brown, "they stood for the ideal of a perfect state, and in the struggle to realize that ideal they succeeded only in contributing to the failure of the compromise represented by the Protectorate, and in aiding the re-establishment of the absolutism of the Stuarts."79 Venner's abortive rising was the death gasp of Fifth Monarchy men's attempts to set up a kingdom to be ruled by the saints, but the passing of the violent Fifth Monarchists left the field clear for the witnessing of the passive yet potent Quakers.

Among the enthusiastic sects which mushroomed during the period of political and religious unrest which historians call the Interregnum, the Quakers easily stand out as the most significant because of the singularity and longevity of their witness. When other Nonconformists concerned themselves with doctrines and institutions, the Quakers were crusading

78 From *Speeches of Cromwell*, quoted in Brown, p. 62.
79 Brown, p. 205.
for a richer spiritual witness to the Light within them; and when others blenched in the face of opposition, the "children of light" meekly endured beatings, raillery, imprisonment, and deportations, defiantly continuing their witness under all conditions, even to death. The Quakers stood starkly apart from all other religious groups of the time by the radical nature of their witness. In religion their claim to be guided by an indwelling inner light, which many interpreted as being the Holy Spirit, left them open to the charge of enthusiasm, because if each Quaker possessed the Spirit dwelling within, technically he could do no sin, and in fact, could be viewed as literally sharing the divine nature. At least, this was how opponents of Quakers interpreted the Quaker claim to the light within. When James Nayler allowed himself to be hailed as the Son of God by women accompanying him through the streets of Bristol, he was taking the claim to possession of the Spirit to a logical extreme, though, as Nayler did, one can explain away the action as a sign. One can easily grasp the theological and social significance and the daring of the Quaker claim to the inner light. Misapprehended or abused by unscrupulous people, it could be made to appear as blasphemy and as leading to moral license. Fortunately, the Quakers had strong moral men to guide and anchor the growing movement. On the social level the Quaker testimonies, based on

80 At his trial Nayler said, in reference to his "triumphal entry" into Bristol: "The Lord hath made me a sign of His coming, and that honour that belongeth to Christ Jesus in whom I am revealed may be given to Him, as when on earth at Jerusalem, according to the measure." W. C. Brathwaite, Beginnings of Quakerism, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1955), p. 253; see also pp. 256, 258.
the revelations or "openings" to George Fox, were just as shattering and apparently fanatical as their religious witness. Men and women possessing such unheard-of ideas and reacting to oppression and abuse in such unusual ways had to be classified as enthusiasts by men as firmly committed to custom and traditional forms of religion as were many Puritans and Anglicans.

The guiding human instrument behind the Quaker movement was George Fox, a man respected from early youth for his "honesty and innocency." In his wanderings through England in search of spiritual certainty and peace of mind, George Fox, according to his own claim, heard the voice of God speaking to his soul and sending him on a mission to save England and the world:

Then, some time after, the Lord commanded me to go abroad into the world, which was like a briery, thorny wilderness . . .

Now I was sent to turn people from darkness to the light that they might receive Christ Jesus . . . And I was to direct people to the Spirit that gave forth the Scriptures, by which they might be led into all Truth, and so up to Christ and God, as they had been who gave them forth . . . . And I was to bring people off from all the world's religions, which are vain, that they might know the pure religion, and might visit the fatherless, the widows, and the strangers, and keep themselves from spots of the world. . . . And I was to bring them off from all the world's fellowships, and praying's, and singings, which stood in forms without power, that their fellowships might be in the Holy Ghost, and in the eternal Spirit of God . . . (pp. 33-35)

81 The Journal of George Fox, ed. John L. Nickalls (Cambridge, 1952), p. 2. All page references within this section dealing with Fox and the Quakers are to this work unless otherwise indicated.
Though Fox received his special call in 1648, he had already been testifying and receiving particular directions from God. Many of the characteristic Quaker testimonies developed from the revelations delivered to George Fox. Some of those testimonies made Quakers unpopular in the esteem of civil authorities, nominal Christians (professors), and those accustomed to receiving honour from their "social inferiors."

Sometime during 1646 on a "First-day morning" Fox received the revelation that "being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ" (p. 7). This "opening," which Fox thought quite strange "because it was the common belief of the people," led him to give up church attendance, defending his action by quoting the Scriptures and indicating that "there was an anointing within man to teach him, and that the Lord would teach his people himself" (p. 8). By other revelations concerning "hat-honour," social greetings, and forms of address, Fox was forbidden to take off his hat to any man and was required to "thee" and "thou" all "men and women without any respect to rich or poor, great or small"; he was not to bid anyone "good morrow" or "good evening" or "bow or scrape with my leg to any one" (pp. 36-37). These forms of witness brought on Quakers the full ire of society because by flouting those common courtesies, the Quakers were striking at some of the foundations of social order as conceived in that age. On recalling the sufferings of the Friends for their refusal to grant hat-honour, Fox exclaimed: "Oh, the rage and scorn, the heat and fury that arose! Oh, the
blows, punchings, beatings, and imprisonments that we underwent for not putting off our hats to men!" (p. 37) Yet these devout people were not primarily aiming, like the Levellers, at social reform but were testifying against pride and hypocrisy, pride on the part of those demanding honour and hypocrisy on the part of those who meant nothing of the supposed honour they gave. Speaking of the importance of hat-honour in the seventeenth century, Braithwaite said: "To be uncovered before any one was . . . a distinctive mark of deference," and to use "thou" to inferiors and "you" to equals was the normal custom. 82

Other early Quaker testimonies included their refusal to take oaths and their very common practice of deliberately interrupting church services when the Spirit impelled them to speak. The Quaker refusal to take oaths and bear arms made them suspect in the eyes of authorities; such refusals were interpreted as indicative of a desire to undermine the basis of trust and defense on which governments rely for their protection; but, of course, Quakers appealed to Scripture as their authority. In the matter of interruptions of church services, although it was permissible for one to speak to a church gathering when the minister completed his sermon, the Quakers did not often wait for that opportunity but boldly interrupted services when clergymen said anything contrary to what the Quaker felt was the truth. For example, when a minister told his congregation that the Scriptures

constituted a touchstone by which all opinions, doctrines, and religions were to be tested, George Fox, as he mentioned in his *Journal*, was immediately "made to cry out" that it was not the Scriptures but the Spirit by which holy men gave forth the Scriptures that should be the test of all opinions, doctrines, and religions, for the Spirit "led into all Truth, and so gave the knowledge of all Truth" (p. 40). The testimony of the Quaker was so direct in language and action that it invariably gave offence. On occasions, for example, they would burst into a congregation and begin shouting at the presiding clergyman, "Come down, thou deceiver, thou hireling, thou dog!" 83

Like the Levellers and Fifth Monarchists, Baptists and Independents, the Quakers made the task of the Commonwealth leaders difficult by demanding that tithes be abolished. Priests (all professional clergy-men or preachers) who insisted on being paid for their preaching, according to the Quakers, were preaching for hire although the Scriptures teach that Christ had made an end of tithing (pp. 150, 184). By thus insisting on being paid tithes, priests showed that they were really instruments of oppression, said Fox, serving their own bellies and not Christ, for Christ commanded that the gospel should be given freely (pp. 53, 80). Fox's confrontation with a "great high priest" provides a compelling view of a

83 Gardiner quotes Baxter in *Commonwealth*, III, 259. The government forbade such interruptions by law in 1655. See Gardiner, *Commonwealth*, III, 261
Quaker testimony on tithing. The minister was preaching on the text from Isaiah which urges all who thirst to "come freely, without money and without price," as Fox put it. On hearing the text, Fox records in his Journal, "I was moved of the Lord God to say unto him, 'Come down, thou deceiver and hireling, for dost thou bid people come freely and take of the water of life freely, and yet thou takest three hundred pounds off them for preaching the Scriptures to them. Mayest thou not blush for shame?'" (p. 76).

The Quakers believed that the state should not maintain the ministry, but ministers should be paid without compulsion by those whom they serve: "If any minister of Jesus Christ ... comes to our houses and minister unto us spiritual things, we will set before him our carnal things: and he that soweth unto us spiritual things, it is the least that we minister unto him of our carnal things."^84

Besides their stand on tithing, the Quaker belief and testimony concerning the place and importance of Christ and the Scriptures in the individual life stirred the anger of Puritan and Anglican churchmen. Charles Leslie (fl. late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries), an inveterate enemy of the Quakers, declared them the inheritors of the "hypocrisy as well as Heresy of the Arians and Socinians."^85 Leslie may have been thinking of the claim of some Quakers that "Christ's soul was

^84 Brathwaite, Beginnings, p. 136.

not human, and that his human body was not in heaven." Some Quakers also held that Christ's earthly nature did not share in the Resurrection. Clergymen were not very anxious to come to terms with the simple, unlearned Quaker, who depended fully on his inner light, denying the value of academic learning towards a true appreciation and understanding of Scripture. And though the Quaker could quote text after text to substantiate his position, such quotations meant nothing to people who firmly believed that the illiterate Quakers were either needlessly mystifying the Scriptures or taking them too literally. When the Quaker read that Christ abides within the individual, he took the text literally and based much of his religion on his interpretation; but the orthodox clergyman saw in the same text only a figurative expression, for anyone who had Christ dwelling in him literally and personally must be equal with God—clearly a blasphemous assertion. Such a conception of God's relationship with man, critics would say, was the obvious basis for the extravagant behaviour of James Nayler and the distracted women who accompanied him through the streets of Bristol crying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth."

86 Barbour, p. 146.

87 One frequently debated text on the subject of the indwelling Christ was the following from Colossians 1.26-27: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory . . ."

88 See Brathwaite, Beginnings, pp. 241-278 for further material on Nayler's ministry among the Quakers.
And the fact that Quakers were never known to use the doctrine of the inner light to justify any form of evil would account for nothing. Writing of the Quakers' use and test of the doctrine of the inner light, Brathwaite said:

They refused to admit that unrighteous or immoral conduct could proceed from the light, and ... they tested, in doubtful cases, the reality of spiritual guidance by asking whether it pointed to action which crossed the carnal nature. Righteousness and self-sacrifice were their marks of heavenly-mindedness. 89

Though the Quakers were ardent and diligent students of the Scriptures, their emphasis on the reality of Christ abiding within the individual led them to utter statements which appeared to discredit the Scriptures.

Samuel Fisher, a university graduate and a one-time Baptist preacher, expressed the learned Quaker estimate of the Scriptures and the reaction of other divines to the Quaker stand:

And because we do not with the misty ministers of the mere letter own the bare external text of scripture entire in every tittle, but say it hath suffered much loss of more than vowels, single letters, and single lines also, yea, even of whole epistles and prophecies of inspired men, the copies of which are not by the clergy canonized nor by Bible-sellers bound up, and specially because we own not the said alterable and much altered outward text, but the holy truth and inward light and spirit to be the Word of God, which is living (and) the true touchstone, therefore they cry out against us. 90

It was not that the Quaker repudiated the Scriptures but that he put the testimony of the Spirit first and the witness of Scriptures after. Barclay

89 Brathwaite, Beginnings, p. 278.
90 From Rusticos ad Academicos (1660), quoted in Brathwaite, Beginnings, pp. 289-290.
later said that Scriptures are but "a declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself"; hence they are not to be considered the groundwork or basis of all knowledge and truth nor the "primary rule of faith and manners." Because the Scriptures give a "true and faithful testimony" of the Spirit and God, they may be treated as the "secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty." Thus the Quaker bore his testimony to the primacy of the inner light in his experience; but to the so-called "orthodox," the simple unlearned Quaker was no more than a rank enthusiast who boasted of an intimate relationship with Christ while quaking, disturbing church services, or even going naked through the streets.

From the small beginnings made by Fox in the 1640's, the Quaker ministry spread like wild-fire throughout many parts of England, especially in areas where other forms of Puritanism were weakest; the Quaker movement appealed most to the oppressed and suffering, to farmers and shepherds in the rural areas, and to the working-class groups in towns like London and Bristol. But because the Quakers had a vision of a world kingdom ruled by God, they quite early launched their missionary activities into Ireland, Scotland, and lands beyond the seas. Brathwaite quotes a Quaker document indicating that by 1660 the indefatigable


92 See Barbour, pp. 72-93.
witnesses had travelled with their messages to "Germany, America, and many other islands and places, as Florence, Mantua, Palatine, Tuscany, Italy, Rome, Turkey, Jerusalem, France, Geneva, Norway, Barbados, Antigua, Jamaica, Surinam, [and] Newfoundland," defying all language barriers.93 Unlike the Fifth Monarchists, the Quakers saw themselves as soldiers fighting the Lamb's War, aggressively but without carnal weapons, for the setting up of the spiritual kingdom of the Lamb in the hearts of men everywhere. And although the diligent efforts of men like Fox, Nayler, Edward Burrough, Francis Howgill, Richard Farnworth, John Gamm, among others, met with inevitable failure, their zeal and courage infected many others, impelling them to continue where the leaders left off. Not even the oppressive measures of the Clarendon Code succeeded in dampening the zeal of the indomitable warriors; it took the passing of the years to soften their prophetic ardour and thus restrain many of their violent attacks on society. In time their attention turned primarily to quiet worship in the Spirit, as Barbour says:

As Friends restrained themselves from foolish attacks upon the outside world, most of them turned their attention inward. The discovery of the power of worship was most rich in the gatherings during the persecution years, which were intervals of pure joy to those who had long since passed through their time of inward judgment. The serenity which has ever since been present in the silent meeting, the security and sweetness, as distinct from struggle and exaltation, grew up in England mainly in this time of outward misfortune.94

93 From Extracts from State Papers, quoted in Brathwaite, Beginnings, p. 337.

94 Barbour, p. 236.
At a time when the disturbing public witness of the Quakers was a mere memory and the erstwhile disturbers of the peace had become calm and mostly respectable and productive members of their communities, another group whose behaviour was reminiscent of the tremblings and quakings of the early Friends startled the English public. Members of this new group, the French prophets, were not, like the Quakers, protesting against social inequities, church tithes, or spiritual laxity as such, nor were they particularly attempting to found a new church or religious society more closely modelled after the New Testament ideal; they were merely prophets, mouthpieces of God, as they claimed, sent to proclaim the beginning of a "new prophetic dispensation" that was to originate in England and spread to all the earth within three years. In this claim of being God's mouthpieces lay their enthusiasm, according to the thinking of eighteenth-century men.

The French prophets, called Camisars or Camisards, were from the militant wing of the Huguenot party in France which had been in constant conflict with the Catholic forces in France since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. According to Knox, these visionaries were the spiritual children of Pierre Jurieu, a Protestant pastor and scholar turned

95 Edmund Calamy, _A Historical Account of My Own Life_, ed. John T. Rutt, 2nd ed. (London, 1830), II, 73.

96 From the *camise* or shirt which these people of the Cevennes wore to identify themselves to avoid being mistaken for the soldiers of Louis XIII. See Calamy, _Life_, II, 72n.
prophet after his study of the Apocalypse. Thoroughly dispirited after their repeated defeats on the battlefield, in spite of Jurieu's prophecies to the contrary, the prophets scattered to numerous friendly countries in Europe. One of these prophets, Elias Marion, made his way to England in obedience to a call from God, not knowing the reason for his coming, as he claimed; but the other two, John Cavalier and Durand Fage, went to England while attempting to join military forces to fight against the French King's army. Theophilus Evans, an unsympathetic critic of the Camisars, said that the three prophets associated with the Huguenot Church at the Savoy, pretending that they were refugees, and on finding themselves welcomed, they began their prophetic activities. But the prophets soon aroused enough protest to warrant an investigation. While England was engaged against France in the War of the Spanish Succession, these French citizens were in England branding the "ministers of the Established Church with the most odious names and characters," and uttering "the heaviest judgments against the city of London and the whole British nation." Genuine refugees in London thought that such activities


endangered their stay; accordingly, encouraged by the Bishop of London and by their own concern for safety, the Huguenot Church in London investigated the prophets and extracted a promise from them that they would cease further prophetic activities; but their prophetic performances had attracted so much attention that the prophets found it more profitable to continue their prophesying with unabated zeal. The investigations by the French Church at the Savoy indicated that the famous agitations of the prophets were "the effects of a voluntary habit, of which they are entirely masters," and were unworthy of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit; and, said the investigators, the "way in which they make the Spirit speak is still more unworthy of him," that is, by "perpetual hesitations, childish Repetitions, unintelligible Stuff, gross Contradictions, manifest Lies, Conjectures turned into Predictions already convicted of Falsehood by the Event."  

The English courts made their own investigation and sentenced Elias Marion for "pretending to be an inspired prophet, and printing and uttering many things as immediately dictated and revealed by the Holy Spirit." John Aude and Nicolas Facio, two scribes of the prophets, were also sentenced for "assisting and publishing" Marion's "blasphemies."  

101 Evans, p. 101.  
102 Calamy, Life, II, 75.  
103 They were to pay a fine and stand on a scaffold twice, having a paper stuck to their hats signifying their crimes. See Aikin, "French Prophets," p. 16; Calamy, Life, II, 75.
What caused Churchmen and civil authorities greatest alarm was the success of the prophets in winning to their side two very respectable Englishmen, John Lacey, and Sir Richard Bulkeley. Authorities had long claimed that only ignorant and unlearned people succumbed to enthusiastic impulses and ecstasies; thus the adherence of these two men of learning and property to the cause of the ignorant Frenchmen caused consternation. The eminent Dr. Calamy, a dissenting clergyman, was moved to preach several sermons against the prophets, which he later published as *A Caveat Against New Prophets* (1708); an anonymous writer published in 1707 *Fanaticism Revived; or the Enthusiasm of the Camisars*; Richard Kingston published anonymously his *Enthusiastick Impostors no Divinely Inspir'd Prophets* (1707); and the Earl of Shaftesbury wrote the most noteworthy work against the prophets, his *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1711).

The prophets, for their part, were not silent but marshalled the resources of the press to their aid, publishing numerous volumes of prophecies and warnings, which provoked rejoinders from various Anglican clergymen, among them Hoadley and Spinckes. Kingston's remarks in his dedication to the Bishop of London indicates the seriousness of the defection and influence of Lacey and Bulkeley:

One of the chief Arguments, my Lord, that's constantly staged in favour of these Notorious Impostors, is, that the two English Gentlemen afore-mention'd, who have some time had the Reputation of Men of Learning and Integrity, and consequently could not be easily impos'd on, are fallen in with the Camisars, and seem to exceed them also in their pretended Extasies and Inspirations, which was no small inducement to employ my Pen against them; that their Characters might not influence unsteady Readers.
of their Prophetical Warnings; for the Ignorant and Unthinking ought not to be trusted with these two Gentlemens Failings . . . 104

In spite of the fulminations of their detractors, the French prophets attracted many followers and continued their daily exhibitions of the spirit that was in them. By the laying on of hands, these prophets bestowed on others the spirit that moved them. One report indicates that many men, women, and even children, joined them, especially from the ranks of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists. 105 Samuel Keimer, who had intimate knowledge of happenings among the prophets, having associated with them, but especially because his entire family were prophets,—this Keimer said that when moved by the spirit, the devotee became very violent, having "strange agitations and shaking of the body, loud and terrifying hiccups and throbs, with many odd and very surprising postures." 106 The spirit in these prophets seemed to have specialized in woes and denunciations and startling prophecies which frequently miscarried. On one occasion the spirit warned that every family among the prophets should store enough food for six months because in a few days such a sore famine would be in the land that people would drop dead in the streets from hunger. All were commanded to go to an old French woman to be marked (she marked them by dipping her hand in water and

104 Richard Kingston, Dedication in Enthusiastick Impostors.


making a cross on their foreheads) and to meet by sevens, having seven candles lit. Apart from the prophecy that London was to be destroyed by fire and one concerning the resurrection of Dr. Emes, perhaps the boldest prophecy was that by John Potter declaring that Queen Anne would become a prophetess. The whole prophetic business was thoroughly discredited when the spirit failed to keep his word in the matter of the resurrection of Dr. Emes. By the mouths of John Lacey and John Potter, the spirit had promised to resurrect Dr. Thomas Emes, a Socinian and a prophet, who it was claimed, had died of a severe migraine on December 22, 1707. When May 25, 1708, arrived, none of the prophets were among the throngs assembled to witness the raising. The prophets absented themselves, afraid, they said, that a tumult would be caused. Dr. Emes remained in his grave.

Jonathan Swift had correctly forecast the fate of the prophetic movement in 1708. Among his predictions for that year, Swift noted:

This Month will be distinguished at home, by the utter dispersing of those ridiculous deluded enthusiasts, commonly called the Prophets; occasioned chiefly by seeing the Time come, when many of their Prophecies were to be fulfilled and then finding themselves deceived by contrary Events.


108 See Knox, p. 370; Aikin, p. 19; Calamy, Life, II, 104-105.

The tumult occasioned by the prophecy and expectations of the resurrection of Dr. Emes roused the English government to action against the prophets, especially against the influential Sir Richard Bulkeley. It was only the timely and sage counsel of Edmund Calamy which averted direct government intervention. Left alone, according to Calamy's advice, the prophets soon ceased to inspire wonder, and "by degrees dwindled away, and came to nothing."\textsuperscript{110} The French prophets had staked their reputation on the fulfillment of their predictions, and time and the event took their toll. Queen Anne never became a prophetess; London was not burnt, nor did disastrous famines devastate the city streets, and, thanks to Dr. Calamy, the prophets were not persecuted as witches and conjurors. One may fervently wish, however, that the following prophecy by Sir Richard Bulkeley had been fulfilled:

\begin{quote}
...the whole Creation shall appear in its primitive Beauty, and Man regain the Perfection of Adam in his immediate Communion with God; and that in this glorious State, the Ministry should cease, for the Lord himself would be the Light thereof, and his Law writ in every Man's Heart, so that he should have no more need to enquire of his Neighbours, but that every man should be Priest unto himself.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

Failing in most things, the prophets succeeded in inflaming the smouldering resentments against the schismatic dissenters from the Church of England. Whereas most English critics saw English enthusiasts as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} See Calamy, \textit{Life}, II, 105-110.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Quoted in Evans, pp. 100-101.
\end{itemize}
disturbers of the public order, sectaries, threats to civil and religious government, the case was generally different in the English critics' response to the French prophets and their followers. English critics inveighed against the prophets merely as impostors, mechanical purveyors of the spirit, deceivers who do a disservice to true religion by making it evil-spoken of. Critics took pains to dissect the prophecies of the group to show that they were contradictory, unworthy of the majesty of heaven, unrepresentative of the character of God and the spirit of the gospel, and disorderly, though ostensibly sent from a God of order and good government. The prophets themselves were represented as evil men, intent on drawing praise to themselves and making a good living in England at the expense of a credulous and ignorant people. Though many of the critics hoped to expose the supposed imposture of the prophets, some few charged the prophets with being in league with the Jesuits or in the pay of the French King. These last charges were almost stock responses of many Englishmen in the face of a threat from enthusiasts.

Critics were far more violent in their response to the Methodist movement than they were to the French prophets. Doubtless, memories of the prophets still rankled in the minds of many churchmen, and the large following gained by the Methodist preachers roused professional jealousy and certainly raised the spectre of schism and of the excesses

of enthusiasts of the previous century. People who knew of Wesley's connections with the Moravians fully expected repetitions in England of the eccentricities of Count Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravians; and the fits, swoons, and shoutings in the Methodist meetings must have been irresistible reminders of the early Quaker movement and of the more recent ecstasies of the French prophets, who were still somewhat active in some parts of England. Far more telling than those reminders of the past, however, were the unorthodox practices of the Methodist leaders, who invaded other clergymen's parishes and preached in the open air or in make-shift shacks.\footnote{113}

Wesley engaged in his strange crusade because he felt that many in England lacked true religion of the heart, "an inward, vital religion, even 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost'" (II, 68). And numerous writers testify to the religious lukewarmness of the age. Lecky characterized the theology of the early eighteenth century as "cold, passionless, and prudential," one which "regarded Christianity as an admirable auxiliary to the police force, and a principle of decorum and of cohesion in society, but which carefully banished from it all enthusiasm, veiled or attenuated all its mysteries, and virtually reduced it to an

authoritarian system of moral philosophy. During the reign of Queen Anne, says Crofts, Englishmen, "generally speaking, had no real Christianity." And Jonathan Swift, avowing that he was writing without exaggeration or satire, said:

Hardly One in a Hundred among our People of Quality, or Gentry, appears to act by any Principle of Religion. Nor is the case much better among the vulgar, especially in great Towns; where the Prophaneness and Ignorance of Handicraftsmen, small Traders, Servants, and the Like, are to a Degree very hard to be imagined greater. Then, it is observed abroad, that no Race of Mortals hath so little Sense of Religion as the English Soldiers.

Even the Dissenters, with few exceptions, shared in the pervading dread of spiritual daring. The security from persecution brought by toleration drew the sting from nonconformity, some Dissenters being almost capable of passing as "half Churchmen," as one critic put it. The moral deterioration of the age increased apace in spite of the earnest moral discourses of the divines of the established Church. Men understood that their evil course of living would inevitably lead to ruin. Their preachers


116 Fairchild said that putting aside Doddridge and Watts and those disciples who were like Watts, Nonconformity was "hardly less smug and sleepy than Anglicanism." Religious Trends in English Poetry, II (New York, 1942), 51.

117 "Nonconformity had decreased alike in power and in hostility to a quite extraordinary degree. As for Presbyterians, . . . they might almost be considered as half Churchmen." Charles J. Abbey, The English Church and its Bishops, 1700-1800 (London, 1887), I, 93.
told them so. But they found that a change from the old habits required more than understanding, and their religion did not provide them further assistance. With abundant evidence that the traditional methods of the Church failed to move men to an effective change of life-style, Wesley thought it time to try a new method.

Though brought up in a very godly clerical family, educated for the clergy, and ordained to minister to the spiritual needs of others, at a crucial moment in his life, John Wesley found that the emphasis in his spiritual experience was wrongly placed. He had once fully expected to be saved because he did his duty as any Christian should do it; he had expected to be justified because of his rigorist principles in eating, in the use of time, money and material goods, and in his moral inclinations. But his fear of death when caught in an Atlantic storm while on his way to America and the calm assurance of some uneducated Moravians in the same situation awoke him to his need. He needed a personal assurance of salvation by faith alone. Peter Boehler's counsels, Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, and Wesley's personal perseverance in his search for evidences of assurance and salvation, all worked together to bring Wesley the warming of the heart, the calmness, and the joy he felt were unfailing signs of personal salvation.118 This change in his view of the means of obtaining salvation marked the turning point in his entire

ministry, which from this time (1738) on was beset by a progressive deterioration of relations between him and the clergy of the established Church.

The new emphasis in Wesley's preaching alarmed his friends and fellow clergymen and began that gradual process which led him and his followers to be branded as enthusiasts and schismatics. Following Peter Bohler's advice, John Wesley preached justification by faith and salvation by grace alone; he also counselled his auditors to seek assurance of salvation. When, after years of preaching and other forms of clerical activity in England and America, Wesley, in his characteristically forthright manner, announced to his friends that prior to his Aldersgate experience on May 24, 1738 (the date when he received the assurance of salvation), he was no Christian, they promptly rebuked him and declared such notions to be "madness"; his brother Samuel added: "Falling into enthusiasm, is being lost with a witness... What Jack means by 'not being a Christian till last month' I understand not... I heartily pray God to stop the progress of this lunacy."\(^{119}\) Wesley's visit in 1738 to the Moravian centre in Europe worsened his relations with the Anglican clergy, for the Moravians were becoming notorious for their strange practices and notions, and it was from them that Wesley had learnt the doctrine of assurance and justification by faith alone.\(^ {120}\) On his return to England


from his visit with the Moravians, Wesley found, to his keen disappointment that church pulpit after church pulpit was closed to him.

Having tasted of a love which he felt was unknown to many in England, and possessed of a message which the regular clergy did not preach, if they knew it, Wesley yearned to reach as many as possible with the news of salvation by faith alone, with the doctrine of assurance, and of peace and joy and perfection in God. But in the eyes of most of the Anglican clergy these doctrines smacked of enthusiasm. Thomas Green, vicar of Wymeswold, expressing what was almost a consensus among the established clergy, said that "as to that absolute assurance of salvation, which some pretend to, ... it seems to be a sufficient motive and encouragement to a holy life ... But when persons affirm, that they are absolutely sure of their own salvation in particular, and look on others, who fall short of their confidence, as in a dangerous way; --this is a mark of spiritual pride; a persuasion rather proceeding from the spirit of delusion than the infallible Spirit of God." Further, Green believed that this matter of absolute assurance was usually associated with other extreme and dangerous views such as "absolute perfection or living without sin." People having such notions (like the Quakers) usually refused to fast, pray, or receive the sacraments, depending only on the internal grace of the Spirit, neglecting all external actions. What was more, Green found that some Methodists threw away

their Bibles, claiming themselves good enough, and others refused to be taught by men further because they had God as their teacher. But Wesley was careful to point out to his detractors that he did not preach absolute assurance. He wrote in his Journal: "We speak of an assurance of our present pardon; not . . . of our final perseverance" (II, 82-83). And when he and Charles met with Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, and answered the charge that they taught absolute assurance of salvation, the Bishop admonished them: "If by 'assurance' you mean an inward persuasion, whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of God, and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation, and acceptable to God, I don't see how any good Christian can be without such an assurance." The Wesleys replied that such was their persuasion and teaching (II, 93n).

Churchmen were especially afraid of perfectionism and antinomianism, doctrines they usually associated with enthusiasts. These doctrines, some of the clergy believed, were usually held by those who emphasize justification by faith alone. Accordingly, John Wesley had constantly to clarify his teachings on justification and perfection. In a sermon preached at Oxford in June of 1738, Wesley declared that the "salvation which is through faith" is salvation from sin and from the consequences of sin, which, he said, is justification. This justification, Wesley continued, "taken in the largest sense, implies a deliverance

122 Green, pp. 141-142.
from guilt and punishment, by the atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner now believing in him, and a deliverance from the power of sin, through Christ formed in the heart." And to clarify further that the matter of Christian perfection involves a process of growth, he added that the one who is thus justified "is born again of the Spirit," feeds on the word of God, and keeps on growing "from faith to faith, from grace to grace, until, at length, he comes unto 'a perfect man ...'"

Such individuals who have been saved by faith do not "make void the law" but in fact "use all the ordinances" which God outlined. They are not antinomians but keepers of the law, he said, though it is not their keeping of the law that saves them: "Neither is salvation of the works we do when we believe: For it is then God that worketh in us." Wesley admitted that some individuals presume upon this grace of God and become true antinomians; some may even despair of salvation, but their despair should be "of being saved by their own works, their own merits, or righteousness."

In spite of Wesley's frequent affirmations to the contrary, many critics charged that he taught antinomianism and perfectionism. Green, for instance, in obvious reference to Wesley and his followers, spoke of "many who seem to have a mind to get to heaven by an easier way than


124 Works, V, 14; see also "Thoughts on Salvation by Faith" (1779), in Works, XI, 486-489.
that of obedience; for which reason they cry up faith, and run down works . . . not considering that obedience is one necessary part of the Christian faith."125 Since all of the Methodist preachers did not agree on the doctrine of perfection, Wesley was forced eventually to discuss the subject with his helpers in one of their yearly conferences and to publish a pamphlet for the benefit of his teachers and the public. In his thirty-page pamphlet he said that Christian perfection is "the loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength," which implies that all one's "thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love," but does not exclude the possibility of mistakes of ignorance and of infirmities. Wesley did not subscribe to the view that a saved man could never fall from grace into sin.126

In substantiation of the charge of enthusiasm brought against Wesley and his work, the emotional manifestations which occurred in many of his meetings were more important than the doctrines Wesley preached. Beginning sometime during 1738, some of the people attending his meetings would suddenly fall as though dead or would scream as if in the throes of death. Day by day Wesley carefully recorded in his Journal the new and fascinating occurrences in his meetings. These swoonings and fits, tremblings, screams and quakings, however, were not peculiar

125 Green, pp. 149-150.

126 "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as believed and taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley from the year 1725-1777" in Works, XI, 366-446; this tract was revised and enlarged several times, the final date being appropriately changed with each revision. See also L. Tyrerman, The Life and Times of Wesley (London, 1870-1871), II, 346-347.
to the Methodist revival. To some degree they were earlier found among the Quakers and the French prophets, but the circumstances were somewhat different. The Quakers tended to see these quakings as clashes between rival spirits striving for the mastery of the individual. Speaking of the Quaker experiences, Barclay said:

... sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting, and there will be such an inward travail, while each is seeking to overcome the evil in themselves, that by the strong contrary workings of these opposite powers ... every individual will be strongly exercised as in a day of battle, and thereby trembling and motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all, which as the power of truth prevails, will from pangs and groans end with a sweet sound of thanksgiving and praise.127

The phenomena were absolutely important for the French prophets because such quakings signalled the coming of the power of the spirit on the individual, indicating the prophet's readiness to deliver his message. Among the Methodists, however, the preachers themselves never seemed to have got the convulsions, and auditors of few of the ministers had the fits. John Wesley's meetings were disturbed much more than Whitefield's, and the scenes occurred in Wesley's meetings for only a comparatively short time in his many years of preaching.128 It appears that on occasions the manifestations began after the preacher gave a cue. But this does not mean that the fits were pre-arranged. John Wesley described the scene in one meeting on Baldwin Street. After preaching from the fourth chapter


of Acts, Wesley said, "We called on God to confirm His word."

Immediately one that stood by (to our no small surprise) cried out aloud, with the utmost vehemence, even as in the agonies of death. But we continued in prayer till 'a new song was put in her mouth, a thanksgiving unto our God.' Soon after, two other persons (well known in this place, as labouring to live in all good conscience towards all men) were seized with strong pain, and constrained to 'roar for the disquietness of their heart.' But it was not long before they likewise burst forth into praise to God their Saviour. The last who called upon God, as out of the belly of hell, was J(ohn) E(llis), a stranger in Bristol. And in a short space he also was overwhelmed with joy and love, knowing that God had healed his backslidings. (II, 180)

Not all cases of paroxysms involved penitents or individuals favourable to the work of the Methodists. On some occasions it appears that the seizures were a form of judgment against the individual in vindication of the work of the preachers. At least, so they appeared to Wesley, who recorded such cases as evidence of God's judgment on men; such conclusions, of course, drew cries of "enthusiasm!" from his critics. The famous case of John Haydon is an outstanding example of what to Wesley was a judgment. Haydon, a weaver, was a zealous Anglican and against all Dissenters, according to Wesley's report. Hearing of the "strange fits" at the Methodist meetings, Haydon attended the Baldwin Street meeting and then left, going from home to home until one o'clock in the morning attempting to convince his acquaintances that the fits were "a delusion of the devil." While on his way home, Wesley was told that John Haydon was "raving mad." The record in Wesley's Journal continues:

It seems he had sat down to dinner, but had a mind first to end a sermon he had borrowed on 'Salvation by Faith.' In reading the last page he changed colour, fell off his chair, and began
screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground. The neighbours were alarmed, and flocked together to the house. Between one and two I came in, and found him on the floor, the room being full of people, whom his wife would have kept without; but he cried aloud, 'No; let them all come; let all the world see the just judgement of God.' Two or three men were holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes upon me, and, stretching out his hand, cried, 'Aye, this is he who I said was a deceiver of the people; but God has overtaken me. I said it was all delusion; but this is no delusion.' He then roared out, 'O thou devil! thou cursed devil! yea, thou legion of devils! thou canst not stay. Christ will cast thee out. I know His work is begun. Tear me to pieces, if thou wilt; but thou canst not hurt me.' He then beat himself against the ground again, his breast heaving at the same time, as in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty. (II, 189-191)

Though never caught up in the emotional manifestations himself, Wesley generally equated their occurrence with success in reaching men's hearts, and he missed them when they did not occur. Knox claims that Wesley never regretted or discouraged the manifestations in his meetings. A random selection from Wesley's Journal shows his general attitude to the strange occurrences: Bristol 1739--"At Weavers' Hall a young man was suddenly seized with a trembling all over . . . but he ceased not calling upon God, till He raised him up full of 'peace and joy in the Holy Ghost'" (II, 181-182). "In the evening, at Baldwin Street, a young man, after a sharp (though short) agony, both of body and mind, found his soul filled with peace, knowing in whom he had believed" (II, 183). 1740--While Wesley was preaching on Acts 11 in the Foundery, a

129 Knox, p. 535.
group of men entered and began drowning out his voice, "but," wrote Wesley, "immediately after, the hammer of the word brake the rocks in pieces; all quietly heard the glad tidings of salvation" (II, 386). 1741--

At a lovefeast in Bristol, "A cry was heard from one end of the congregation to the other; not of grief, but of overflowing joy and love. 'O continue forth Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee . . .'" (II, 512)

At a watchnight service "many cried after God with a loud and bitter cry" (II, 519). 1742--

I preached at Weavers' Hall; it was a glorious time. Several dropped to the ground as if struck by lightning. Some cried out in bitterness of soul. I knew not where to end, being constrained to begin anew again and again. In this acceptable time we begged of God to restore our brethren who are departed from us for a season. (II, 528)

1743--This selection presents a contrast which possibly underscores Wesley's disappointment when no demonstrations punctuated his preaching: "I preached to two or three hundred people at Zennor . . . and found much goodwill in them, but no life. It was much the same on Thursday . . . while I preached at Kenneggy Downs . . . on the resurrection of the dry bones. There is not so much as a shaking among them; much less is there any breath in them" (III, 89-90). 1748--While preaching in a Welsh town (Llanfihengel), Wesley recorded: "I have not seen a people so deeply affected since we came into Anglesey; their cries and tears continued a long time without any intermission" (III, 337). 1759--And concerning the revival at Everton, he wrote:

The church was quite filled, and hundreds were without. And now the arrows of God flew abroad. The inexpressible groans,
the lamenting, praying, roaring, were so loud, almost without intermission, that we who stood without could scarce help thinking all in the church were cut to the heart . . . (IV, 342)

Wesley was in the habit of remaining aloof, observing with a clinical detachment the scenes occurring before his eyes. He had got accustomed to the cries and paroxysms and had generally declared them extraordinary evidences of the Spirit of God at work, but he also concluded that at times individuals and even the devil manufactured the responses. On November 25, 1759, noting that people no longer convulsed or fell down, he summed up the meaning and significance of the convulsions as follows:

(1) God suddenly and strongly convinced many that they were lost sinners, the natural consequence whereof were sudden outcries and strong bodily convulsions; (2) to strengthen and encourage them that believed, and to make His work more apparent, He favoured several of them with divine dreams . . . (3) in some of these instances, after a time, nature mixed with grace; (4) Satan likewise mimicked this work of God, in order to discredit the whole work. And yet it is not wise to give up this part, any more than to give up the whole. (IV, 359)

Wesley was therefore fully persuaded that the phenomena was a desirable part of his ministry, so unlike his brother Charles, he took no measures to suppress them.

Wesley's failure to curb the emotional manifestations caused many to criticize his work as being wholly enthusiastic and unscriptural. Green wondered why similar manifestations did not occur in other congregations where the Scriptures were being preached in purity by preachers as qualified as the Methodist preachers were. "Unless," he continued, "they can
give us a more clear proof than they have yet produced, that such opera-
tions are of God, we must look upon them only as the effects of enthusi-
asm, or natural disorders and indispositions of the body . . . "130 Green
went on to instance the cases of Quakers and French prophets involved in
similar convulsions and shakings. Since everyone knew, Green implied,
that neither Quaker nor French prophet was moved by the Spirit of God,
those "quakings and agitations of body are by no means any sure signs
that persons are moved by the Spirit of God." He added:

By the divine assistance or influence on the soul, sinners are
generally brought to a true conviction of mind and hearty sorrow
for sin, without those strange and usual effects upon their bodies.
God can indeed easily produce such, if he sees proper; but this
does not seem to be the usual method of bringing sinners to
repentance.131

Thus Thomas Green wrote off the entire Methodist revival as sheer en-
thusiasm.

Among the strange practices in which the leaders of the Methodist
movement engaged and thus brought against themselves the charge of en-
thusiasm was what one has called bibliomancy, the practice of opening
the Bible randomly and accepting the first text at which the finger points
or on which the eye alights as a providential direction for the moment.
Critics tended to see the practice as a confession by Methodists that they
were the special objects of God's regard, so special as to be provided

130 Green, Dissertation, p. 112.
131 Green, pp. 102, 107.
Wesley and his companions, however, firmly believed and trusted in Bible opening as a sure means of guidance, though they did not always take the results as final. On occasions Wesley opened the Bible to satisfy doubts concerning some subject on his mind. For example, he recorded in his Journal:

In the evening, being troubled at what some said of "the kingdom of God within us," and doubtful of my own state, I called upon God, and received this answer from His word: "He himself also waited for the kingdom of God." "But should not I wait in silence and retirement?" was the thought that immediately struck into my mind. I opened my Testament again on those words, "Seest thou not how faith wrought together with his works? And by works was faith made perfect." (II, 97)

On other occasions he opened at random to decide on which text to preach. Such was the case at Bristol when it was reported that a mob was planning to disturb his meetings. Said Wesley: "The scripture to which, not my choice, but the providence of God, directed me, was, 'Fear not thou, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God...'." The mob came, but no one disturbed the meeting (II, 208). However, this method of guidance did not support John Wesley's vital decision to go to Bristol at Whitefield's call. Whitefield was soon to leave for America and needed a capable individual to carry on his Bristol ministry. Called by Whitefield, John Wesley felt it was not best for him to go, because on turning the Bible, he found that the texts distinctly implied that suffering and death awaited him at Bristol. Nevertheless, he decided

132 Professor Richard Bevis has kindly pointed out to me the case of Daniel Defoe as an example of Puritans who practised bibliomancy.
to go. When Charles Wesley remonstrated against John's decision to proceed to Bristol though it meant death, John again resorted to Bible opening for guidance; again the texts distinctly implied martyrdom. The same implications followed when the case was submitted to "the brethren" and they once more opened the Bible. John Wesley went in spite of the omens. The decision was so momentous for all, especially for the Wesley brothers, that Charles recorded the feelings of those present at the vital meeting:

We dissuaded my brother from going to Bristol, from an unaccountable fear that it would prove fatal to him. A great power was among us. He offered himself willingly to whatsoever the Lord should appoint. The next day he set out, commended by us to the grace of God. He left a blessing behind. I desired to die with him. 133

It is interesting to speculate on what might have been the effect on the Methodist movement if Wesley had not gone to Bristol, for that place became one of the important centres of the movement and was the place at which the emotional manifestations first appeared in John Wesley's meetings.

Among the greatest fears of the leaders of the Anglican Church in the face of what they called enthusiastic groups was the fear of schism. They saw enthusiasm as leading directly to schism and the destruction of the Church. 134 Of course, they had many precedents to point to, among

133 Wesley, Journal, II, 156-158 and note on p. 158.
them the Protestant Reformation and the dismemberment of the Church of
England during the Puritan Revolution. Wesley, for his part, always con-
sidered himself a faithful Anglican clergyman and never intended his move-
ment to be separatist. Over and over again he cautioned his followers
against being anything other than Anglican, and he repeatedly reiterated
his determination to keep his followers and his movement within the pale
of the Church. But plan and determine as John Wesley might, the in-
exorable logic of circumstances forced him step by step closer to the
perilous fact of separation. And back of all Wesley's daring actions
which threatened separation from the mother church was the intransigence
and ill-will of the Anglican clergy; so that it can be shown that Wesley
was forced into taking steps which eventually culminated in what the
Church always feared but which it in fact encouraged by its policy of
ostracism. Some of the actions which progressively threatened separa-
tion included the practice of holding special Methodist meetings in chapels
and licensing such chapels, the calling of laymen to assist in preaching,
and the ordination of clergymen to serve Methodists in North America.

Refused permission to use the pulpits of various churches, Wesley
and his men were forced to use buildings other than churches to preach to
those who wanted to hear them, and eventually they took to the fields, an
unpopular but appropriate site to accommodate the hundreds and thousands
who came to see and hear the famous but irregular clergymen. Whitefield

135 See Wesley, Works, VIII, 35-36, 280-281, 321, 350, 354; Tyerman, II, 244-258.
was the first to preach in the fields under pressure of circumstances. In February of 1739, when refused permission to use a church, he preached his first open-air sermon to a group of about two hundred people. John Wesley soon followed Whitefield's example, though under protest against his strong feelings for the decencies of form. He said of this first attempt: "I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, . . . having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church" (II, 167). Comforting himself with the thought that Christ set the precedent by preaching on a mountain, Wesley went on to be one of the greatest field-preachers, but each new departure from accepted good form was a challenge to his keen sense of propriety, as the following entry in his Journal indicates: "At four . . . I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation . . ." (II, 172) George Lavington, a clergyman, later took note of all these irregularities and cited them as evidence of the enthusiasm of the Methodist leaders, but laymen took sterner measures to curb what they were told were the extravagances of the Wesleys. One Goter, a landowner, secured a judgment to the extent of ten pounds against Charles Wesley for trespassing. Charles had passed through Goter's fields on his way to address a crowd of 10,000 in Moorfields.137

136 See Fitchett, p. 161.
137 See Fitchett, pp. 164-165.
Though Wesley organized societies and built chapels for meeting with his followers, he did not intend that meetings with his societies and in his chapels should be otherwise than complementary to the services of the Church of England. In one of his "Conversations" with his helpers, Wesley affirmed that the Methodist services were public worship "but not such as supersedes the Church Service." Indeed, Wesley confessed that he did not at first form Societies or acquire meeting-houses or chapels on his own initiative, though he fully approved of the idea later. The first Society was formed when some members desired to meet together to confirm each other's faith and to counsel and pray with Wesley. And the Foundery, the first piece of property in London owned by Methodists in which meetings were held, was acquired when Wesley reluctantly followed the advice of two strangers. After meeting for many years in various structures for services, to avoid harrassment by the civil authorities Methodists were forced in 1787 to license their meeting-houses under the Toleration Act, thus tacitly acknowledging themselves Dissenters.

138 Speaking of the Methodist meeting, Wesley said: "If it were designed to be instead of the Church Service, it would be essentially defective; for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving." Works, VIII, 321-322.

139 See Wesley, Works, VIII, 37, 250; see also Journal, II, 36.

140 See Tyerman, III, 511-513. Wesley had always resisted licensing, claiming that it savoured of separation from the established Church. However, such licensing as described here did not immunize Methodists from persecution, so Wesley had to appeal to a member of Parliament to look into the matter.
Just as Methodists were forced to worship in places other than Anglican churches and to tacitly acknowledge themselves Dissenters by licensing their chapels under the Toleration Act, so they were driven by circumstances into appointing lay preachers and ordaining clergymen, acts which some claimed to be schismatic. Wesley's first lay preacher, Thomas Maxfield, actually began preaching before receiving sanction from his minister. Sensing the irregularity of the procedure, Wesley hurried to London from Bristol to silence Maxfield but was himself dissuaded from such a course by his mother's caution: "I charge you before God, beware what you do; for Thomas Maxfield is as much called to preach the Gospel as ever you were!" Wesley later claimed that Maxfield, Richards, and Westell, the first three Methodist lay preachers, all requested permission to be his assistants. But it appears that Wesley condescended to appoint lay helpers only when the press of duties was too much for himself, Charles, and Whitefield to perform satisfactorily. In "A Farther Appeal" (1745) he asserted that he was obliged to enlist the assistance of laymen because few of the regular clergy were willing to aid him in meeting the spiritual needs of those who joined the Societies. And when anyone charged that the men were uneducated, Wesley agreed but added: "Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to

141 Quoted in Vulliamy, p. 106.

go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental
Divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders ... are able to do." Criticized that appointing lay preachers was irregular and tending to separation, Wesley would call attention to the new converts' need for spiritual guidance and, characteristically, to the success of the laymen's efforts in meeting that need.

The layman problem solved, the problem of providing ordained leaders for the American and Scottish Methodist work arose. Amidst grave pressure from his lay preachers to provide enough clergymen to administer Holy Communion to the quickly growing Methodist work in England, Wesley had to beat down continually the wishes of his helpers to separate from the Church of England. Numerous Anglican clergymen had refused to give Communion to Methodists, so that many had gone for months without the sacrament. Yet Wesley, convinced though he was that the arguments for separation from the established Church were unanswerable, refused to sanction separation. An attempt to provide the needed helpers by having them ordained by Bishop Erasmus, the bishop of a Greek Church, proved abortive when the sensitive Charles Wesley refused to countenance such irregular procedures. Exasperated by English bishops who consistently refused to ordain qualified Methodist preachers, and long persuaded that he was

143 John Wesley, Works, VIII, 221.

144 See John Wesley, Works, VIII, 220-226; Tyerman, II, 244-258. Wesley wrote: "In several places, by means of these plain men, not only those who had already begun to run well were hindered from drawing back to perdition; but other sinners also . . . were converted . . ." Works, VIII, 224.
qualified to perform the rite himself, John Wesley decided to ordain men to administer baptism and Communion.\textsuperscript{145} The place to benefit was America, which had recently become independent of Britain. Wesley concluded that since England and the Anglican Church no longer had jurisdiction in America, he had perfect right to ordain men to serve a people sorely in need of ministers to give them Communion and to baptize their children. He persuaded himself that his action was not schismatic because of the peculiar political developments which made America independent of England. Wesley's performance of the act of ordination, of course, drew knowing cries of "separation!" Even Charles Wesley, always sensitive to any action bearing a semblance of separation, declared:

\begin{quote}
I never lost my dread of separation, or ceased to guard our societies against it. \ldots I can scarcely yet believe it, that, in his eighty-second year, my brother \ldots should have assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a bishop, and sent him to ordain our lay preachers in America! \ldots Lord Mansfield told me last year [1784], that ordination was separation. This my brother does not and will not see; or that he has renounced the principles and practice of his whole life; that he has acted contrary to all his declarations, protestations and writings \ldots.\textsuperscript{146}
\end{quote}

Moved by a similar need for ordained clergymen in Scotland, John Wesley again performed the rite of ordination; and when it became apparent that the Societies in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and the West Indies lacked

\textsuperscript{145} See Tyerman, II, 200-211, 485-489, 430; III, 331-333, 432-440.

\textsuperscript{146} Quoted in Tyerman, III, 439-440.
adequate pastoral guidance, Wesley ordained men to fill the need.

Thus without once admitting it, John Wesley had eventually separated himself from the Church of England. As Tyerman put it: "There can be no doubt that, as a minister of Christ, Wesley had as much right to ordain as any bishop, priest, or presbytery in existence; but he had no right to this [sic] as a clergyman of the Church of England; and, by acting as he did, he became, what he was unwilling to acknowledge, a Dissenter, a separatist from that Church."¹⁴⁷ Even if the act of ordaining ministers did not in effect constitute separation from the Church of England, the Methodist Societies could not have remained long within the framework of the Anglican Church without formally seceding. Time has at least shown that. Wesley's organization of the Societies had step by step constituted Methodists a church within a church, and, moreover, a church within an institution which refused to acknowledge or assist the evangelicals in any way. Such a vibrant body as the Methodists could not long remain contented with its status. Without wishing or willing it, John Wesley had been forced into fulfilling the predictions of his detractors that his enthusiasm would lead to schism.

But was the cool-headed unimpulsive John Wesley an enthusiast? Father Knox thinks not.¹⁴⁸ However, in the estimate of many of his contemporaries he was. At least, Wesley had given his critics frequent

¹⁴⁷ Tyerman, III, 448-449.

occasions to suspect him. Did he not praise Montanus warmly? And did he not write approvingly of many another individual popularly viewed as an enthusiast, fraternize with the enthusiastic Moravians, and take as one of his spiritual mentors, William Law, an avowed admirer of Behmen the German enthusiast? He calmly looked on and even appeared to sanction the excesses of those who indulged in ecstasies, fainting spells, and paroxysms; indeed, he claimed such excesses to be the hand of God on penitents; and what was more, he resorted to bibliomancy for guidance in the most trifling situations and attributed ordinary incidents to the extraordinary workings of Providence on his behalf, confessing by such actions that he bore a special and intimate relationship with God; furthermore, when he indulged in irregularities like preaching in other men's parishes and in the fields and streets, he justified such behaviour by claiming that Christ and the Apostles did the same, thereby making himself equal to those who received the extraordinary gifts of God. Wesley might argue and disclaim as much as he could, but in the eyes of many of his contemporaries, he was an enthusiast. It might be true that he attempted to curb violent enthusiasts like George Bell and warned his Societies against the practices of the French prophets and Quakers, but, a critic would say, an autocratic leader such as Wesley had to take measures to protect his Societies that they might preserve the peculiar Methodist spirit. But what could make enthusiasts of talented and educated men like John Wesley, George Whitefield, and many others? This question, and others relating to it, the following chapter will attempt to answer.
Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers found great difficulty in saying anything pleasant about religious enthusiasm, so overwhelmed were they by enthusiasm's baneful effects on English society in general and on the Church and monarchy in particular. Writing before the Puritan Revolution, Robert Burton criticized enthusiasts, but very infrequently were they his prime targets; the "Superstitious Roman Catholics" were. Almost invariably, Burton lumped enthusiasts with numerous other religionists that were to him suspect; for example: "idolaters, ethnics, Mahometans, Jews, heretics, enthusiasts, divinators, prophets, sectaries, and schismatics." After the Revolution, however, enthusiasts claimed first place in the attentions of many, whether divines like Robert South or scholars like Casaubon or Henry More, and they were more feared than the Roman Catholics, for whom enthusiasts were often considered a mask. Critics might concede that there was "a true and warrantable enthusiasm," but they were so engrossed by the false and unwarrantable twin that the good sister suffered from inattention.

To many writers there seemed to have been few evils of which the enthusiast was incapable. However, critics had little that was new to say about the source or causes of enthusiasm; all that was new was an increased virulence in references to enthusiasts. Following Greek and Latin authors, they generally claimed that enthusiasm was the result of possession by a supernatural power; but almost invariably they found that
it was caused by certain physical or mental ailments which ultimately had
their bases in melancholy. Prompted by a desire to discredit enthusiasts,
critics claimed that women and children, as also the ignorant and the poor,
were most prone to enthusiasm.

Casaubon and Henry More, writing in the 1650's, and Jonathan
Swift and Charles Leslie, writing nearly fifty years later, agreed that a
form of enthusiasm had its source in God. Casaubon briefly called such
enthusiasm possession by God; he said little more of it since his chief
concern was with natural enthusiasm, but it is clear that, like Swift later,
he had in mind that supernatural power which apostles and prophets of the
Bible possessed. Swift listed this extraordinary endowment among the
ways of "ejaculating the Soul, or transporting it beyond the Sphere of
Matter," and named it the "immediate act of God called Prophecy or In­
spiration."¹ Charles Leslie agreed, but like most other opponents of the
suspected forms of enthusiasm, he implied that this extraordinary inspira­
tion was no longer present or necessary in the Christian Church. For
Leslie this extraordinary inspiration, which was usually attended with
the gifts of tongues and prophecy, and miraculous cures, was not to be
ardently desired nor prayed for; one should simply wait passively on the
wise God to bestow such a gift when, where, and how He thinks best.²

¹ Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub to which is Added "The Battle of
the Books" and the "Mechanical Operation of the Spirit," ed. A. C.
Guthkelch and D. Nicol Smith (Oxford, 1920), p. 269. See also John

² Charles Leslie, The Snake in the Grass, in The Theological
Works (London, 1721), II, 147.
But Leslie insisted that the Anglican Church did, in fact, recognize another desirable form of enthusiasm or inspiration, that of the sanctifying and saving graces with which all are imbued by the Holy Ghost to enable them to do good. He said: "of ourselves we are not able so much as to think a good Thought . . . this Inspiration is as necessary to our fructifying, or bringing forth good Works, as the influence of the Sun is to the Earth's bringing forth of her Fruits." Of course, Leslie was not alone in seeing man's ability to do or think anything good as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit on man's heart. However, he was daring in calling this operation enthusiasm. When Henry More spoke of "a true and warrantable enthusiasm," unlike Swift or Leslie, he was not thinking of the graces of the Spirit but of an emotion, a surge of strong feeling occasioned by one's love to God. He said that some "devout and holy souls . . . are strangely transported in that vehement Love they bear towards God, and that inexpressible Joy they find in him," but those transports are not reserved for a chosen few, and people who experience them are not moved to make themselves equal with God as other enthusiasts frequently do. Far from claiming the Holy Spirit as the source of such enthusiasm, More declared that it "is but the triumph of the Soul of man inebriated, as it were, with the delicious sense of the divine life."}

3 Leslie, II, 144.

Opposed to the enthusiasm that originates in God is that which has its origin in the devil. Swift said that such enthusiasm "is the immediate Act of the Devil, and is termed Possession." Robert Burton, writing earlier, believed that "those prophesies, and Monks' revelations, Nuns' dreams, which they suppose come from God, do proceed wholly by the Devil's means: and so those Enthusiasts, Anabaptists, pseudo-Prophets from the same cause." And Robert South, in his usually incisive and witty manner, expressed his firm belief that enthusiasts possessed a spirit, but he refused to allow that it was the Spirit of God. "Since we all know that there are spirits good and bad," he said, "it cannot be denied, but that in some sense they might have the spirit, such a spirit as it was, and that in a very large measure." The avowed enemy of Quakerism, Charles Leslie, was certain that many of the early Quakers were largely possessed by the Devil, "and a visible effect of this was that extraordinary shaking and quaking, like fits of Convulsions, which these Quakers . . . either acted, or like the Heathen Priests of old, were posses'd with." Unfortunately for his argument, Leslie was unable to marshall convincing evidence to substantiate his charge, although he

5 Swift, p. 269.


8 Leslie, II, 134.
called witnesses from among many former Quakers. Like Leslie, Richard Kingston, the critic of the French prophets, appealed to the physical phenomena of the prophets as evidence of their demonic possession, though he strengthened his case when he compared the behaviour of the prophets to that of demoniacs in the Scriptures. "What can be said less," wrote Kingston, "than that Men are possess'd with a Devil, when they rave, fight, tear their own Flesh, beat their Heads against a Wall, dash themselves against the Ground, foam at the Mouth, and are seized with all the frightful Symptoms of the Demoniack in the Gospel."9 No one doubted the possibility of demonic possession, but the difficulty was in proving an individual to be so possessed. Leslie indicated this problem when he asserted that the diabolical and the divine enthusiasm "appear sometimes so very like one another, that even the sober and learned Men do mistake the one for the other; and cannot discover Satan through his disguise of Light."10 However, Leslie and several other writers were certain that it was possible to differentiate the true from the false enthusiasm by an appeal both to reason and to "the Law and the Testimony."

The most important single cause of enthusiasm on which almost all critics agreed was melancholy, but just how melancholy worked to affect the entire physical and mental being, few took pains to demonstrate.


10 Leslie, II, 12.
Burton was certain that some form of melancholy was responsible for the behaviour of those who claimed to be prophets or who were disposed to blind zeal, intense religious devotion, and enthusiasms, among other religious disorders; but whereas some earlier authors saw "love melancholy" as the cause of these abnormal conditions, Burton preferred to call it "religious melancholy," because love to God was at its root. Explaining the pattern which led to enthusiasm, Burton said that because of man's basic inclination to evil, he fails to love God supremely, setting his affections on God's creatures instead; prompted by pride, fear of punishment, praise of men, vain-glory, and such weaknesses, man misses the mark:

Some of us again are too dear [he wrote], as we think, more divine and sanctified than others, of a better metal, greater gifts, and with that proud Pharisee, contemn others in respect of ourselves, we are better Christians, better learned, choice spirits, inspired, know more, have special revelation, perceive God's secrets . . . Of this number are all superstitious Idolaters, Ethnicks, Mahometans, Jews, Hereticks, Enthusiasts, Divinators, Prophets, Sectaries, and Schismaticks.11

According to Burton, then, religious melancholy was at the root of the enthusiast's behaviour; that disease seemed to incline the sufferer to love God more intensely than normally, but for various reasons this love was often misdirected, providing a special mark by which the enthusiast, among others, was to be identified. On occasions, however, Burton seemed to think of enthusiasm both as a symptom and a cause of religious melancholy.

11 Burton, p. 873.
Casaubon, writing about forty years after Burton (1655), simply declared that his studies indicated that some people sick of melancholy, epilepsy, and mania, among other diseases, had been known to foretell happenings correctly and to speak in foreign tongues—Greek, Latin, Hebrew—but when healed of their maladies, such people lost their divining and linguistic abilities.\(^\text{12}\) It was Henry More, in a work that influenced most later writers on enthusiasm, who in almost clinical terms delineated the relationship between melancholy and enthusiasm. Though not the only cause, melancholy, as More saw it, was the principal source of religious enthusiasm. When it reached the proportions of a disease, melancholy had the peculiar ability of fixing "some particular absurd imagination upon the Mind so fast, that all the evidence of Reason to the contrary cannot remove it, the parties thus affected in other things being as sober andrationall as other men."\(^\text{13}\) Under the influence of this melancholy, men often imagined themselves to be what they were not. Thus the power of enthusiasm derived from the unholy alliance of melancholy and the imagination.

In his study More had at first declared the enormous strength of the imagination to be the cause of enthusiasm; this imagination, he found to be affected by the changes in the "Blood and Spirits," which were in


turn altered by changes in air and weather, by wine, food, certain potions, and diseases. But seeing that melancholy was the most important factor in affecting the imagination, More quickly switched sides, declaring that melancholy itself led to enthusiasm, especially to that form that caused an individual to imagine himself to be what he is not; for example, a bird, beast, or even God. More found that melancholy naturally inclined one to a religious temper, leading him to tamper with divine matters and rendering him capable of imitating closely, sometimes apparently outdoing, the true spiritual graces. Further, as men are ordinarily inclined to claim supernatural causes for things "great or vehement," so it is with the melancholic, More said:

When he feels a storm of devotion or zeal come upon him like a mighty wind, his heart being full of affection, his head pregnant with clear and sensible representations, and his mouth flowing and streaming with fit and powerful expressions, such as would astonish an ordinary Auditorie to hear, it is, I say, a shrewd temptation to him to think that it is the very Spirit of God that then moves supernaturally in him; whenas all the excess of zeal and affection and fluency of words is most palpably to be resolved into the power of Melancholy, which is a kind of naturall inebriation.  

For More, then, this false enthusiasm was something essentially natural (as Casaubon had said) and the result of a disease; further, this union of disease and imagination led to the individual's being deceived; the enthusiast was, therefore, the dupe of a malady. Several later writers echoed More's analysis of enthusiasm as being something in the very

constitution of the individual, but often the emphasis of these writers was on the role of the imagination or fancy in the matter. Hume came closest to More's blending of both causes in his brief essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm." Describing the conditions that led to enthusiasm, he wrote:

But the mind of man is also subject to an unaccountable elevation and presumption, arising from prosperous success, from luxuriant health, from strong spirits, or from a bold and confident disposition. In such a state of mind, the imagination swells with great, but confused conceptions, to which no sublunary beauties or enjoyments can correspond. Every thing mortal and perishable vanishes as unworthy of attention; and a full range is given to the fancy in the invisible regions, or world of Spirits, where the soul is at liberty to indulge itself in every imagination, which may best suit its present taste and disposition. Hence arise raptures, transports, and surprising flights of fancy; and, confidence and presumption still increasing, these raptures, being altogether unaccountable, and seeming quite beyond the reach of our ordinary faculties, are attributed to the immediate inspiration of that Divine Being who is the object of devotion. In a little time, the inspired person comes to regard himself as a distinguished favourite of the Divinity; and when this phrensy once takes place, which is the summit of enthusiasm, every whimsey is consecrated . . .

Speaking of the power of fancy or imagination in deceiving the individual, More said that the fancy represents images so forcibly on the consciousness that not even the power of reality could force those images into the background; they claim such precedence that the individual is led to consider the images of fancy real, thus believing a lie. More then asked: "And if it be so strong as to assure us of the presence of some external object which yet is not there, why may it not be as effectual in the begetting of the belief of some more internal apprehensions, such as

have been reported of mad and fanatical men, who so firmly and immutably fancied themselves to be God the Father, the Messias, the Holy Ghost, the Angel Gabriel, the last and chiefest prophet that God would send in the world, and the like?"¹⁶ Unlike More, Glanvill did not think the imagination by itself a source of deception, but it was the means of deception when the mind produced ideas from the images provided by the imagination. Glanvill expressed the idea thus:

The imagination, which is of simple perception, doth never of it self directly mislead us; . . . Yet is it the almost fatal means of our deception, through the unwarrantable compositions, divisions, and applications, which it occasions the second Act to make of the simple Images. Hence we may derive the Visions, Voyces, Revelations of the Enthusiast: the strong Idea's of which, being conjur'd up into the imagination by the heat of the melancholized brain, are judged exterior Realities; whenas they are but motions within the Cranium.¹⁷

Archibald Campbell, writing in 1730, emphasized the role of the imagination and what he called the "animal spirit" but recognized the part that atmosphere and subject matter played in the making of the enthusiast. Campbell said that two things were essential to the character of the enthusiast: first, "some inward fervours and commotions in the mind arising from too high a tide of the animal spirits"; by these animal spirits, according to Campbell, the "imagination is greatly chafed and heated," until the mind comes to be filled with a "gloomy awe and reverence" from a

¹⁶ More, Enthusiasmus, p. 4.

sense of what the individual construes to be the divine presence; this sense of the divine presence causes him to feel warmed and strangely moved; he then interprets the warmth and strange movings as "divine emanations" coming directly from God himself. The second essential, said Campbell, is the matter on which the mind exercises its devotion. This matter causes some impressions on the mind which warms and agitates it and

the mind in so melting a frame as it is now under, being very soft and tender; and the things themselves about which it is devoutly employ'd, being such as fall in with its prevailing temper, or some other of its favourite notions, the impressions it receives must necessarily prove deep and strong; and these being accompanied with what is fondly thought to be supernatural joys and raptures, 'tis confidently believed they are immediately derived from heaven . . .

In his analysis of the process by which one became an enthusiast, Edmund Calamy, more innovative and practical than many other writers on the subject, cited the power of admiration and imitation, though the basis of the whole process remained the animal or "natural spirits." Calamy was evidently remembering the case of John Lacy, one of his parishioners who left his congregation to join the French prophets, when he declared that those who became enthusiasts first resorted to certain strangers and believ'd them to be Divinely Inspir'd. Hereupon they admir'd them as the Peculiar Favourites of Heaven; and . . . admiring them, they wish'd they might be like them; wish'd they might be favour'd of Heaven as much as they . . . From wishing they

18 Archibald Campbell, A Discourse Proving that the Apostles Were no Enthusiasts (London, 1730), p. 5.
came to praying to GOD that it might be so: and by Degrees, the Fancy being elevated, and the Natural Spirits strangely Agitated, they first try'd to imitate them, and then fancy'd they were like them, and as much inspir'd as they. ¹⁹

Back of what Calamy called "admiration" was personal pride; indeed, many writers, while agreeing that melancholy and the imagination played important parts in the make-up of the enthusiast, also added pride as the key source. Such critics, of course, robbed the enthusiast of his innocence; he was no longer merely a deceived individual but one whose evil desires precipitated gross evils. I have already cited Burton's view that, moved by pride, some people thought themselves better Christians, better learned, or more choice spirits than others and eventually believed that they were inspired, received special revelations, or perceived God's secrets. Charles Leslie, agreeing with Burton, claimed that without pride there could be no enthusiasm, ²⁰ and John Wesley, himself the target of charges of enthusiasm, declared that enthusiasts were misled by pride and a warm imagination. ²¹ An anonymous writer for the London Magazine (1738) saw the enthusiast as averse to all authority outside himself; to this enthusiast even God is arbitrary, cruel and fantastical, ruling by mere caprice. Enthusiasm, said that writer, came from "pride of heart,


and an excess of imagination." But Hume held that the true sources of enthusiasm were a "presumptuous pride" coupled with hope, a warm imagination, and ignorance; the presumptuous pride of the enthusiast was evident in his confidence that, unlike the superstitious Roman Catholic, he was qualified to approach God without a human mediator.  

Addison, unlike most other writers on the subject, claimed that enthusiasm arose from a devotional craze, resulting from the individual's failure to be guided by "right reason" in applying his mind to "its mistaken duties." During his intense devotions, the individual discovers a feeling which he imagines to be heaven-sent and is thus led away into enthusiasm. Addison described the process thus:

> When the Mind finds her self very much inflamed with her Devotions, she is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up by something Divine within her. If she indulges this Thought too far, and humours the growing Passion, she at last flings her self into imaginary Raptures and Extasies ...  

Basic to Addison's view of the process as given here was the common association of zeal and warmth in any cause with enthusiasm and irrationality. A similar association led Joseph Trapp, in 1739, to write of the folly, sin, and danger of being righteous overmuch, and it later led to Dr. Johnson's commending the disenchanted hermit in *Rasselas* with giving

22 "A Parallel Between Superstition and Enthusiasm," *London Magazine* (March 1738), p. 120.  
a discourse that was "cheerful without levity, and pious without enthu-
siasm." This fear of immoderation or excess led Addison to caution
that "there is not a more Melancholy Object than a Man who has his Head
turned with Religious Enthusiasm. We may however learn this lesson from
it," he continued, "that since Devotion itself (which one would be apt to
think could not be too warm) may disorder the Mind, unless its Heats are
tempered with Caution and Prudence, we should be particularly careful to
keep our Reason as cool as possible, and to guard our selves in all Parts
of Life against the Influence of Passion, Imagination, and Constitution."26

Whereas most critics' analysis of the origins of enthusiasm ulmi-
mately made the enthusiast a diseased and deceived individual, Swift's
analysis indicated that the enthusiast was an arrant knave, a hypocrite
who deliberately set out to manufacture an imitation of inspiration; in time
this artificer grew so adept at manufacturing the spirit that the whole pro-
cess became natural to him. As Swift confessed, he was not the first to
mention the art of manufacturing the spirit. More had earlier declared the
Quaker tremblings and quakings partly the result of artifice, though not
indulged in with intent to deceive.27 However, Swift was the first to at-
tempt a thorough description of the process. With the Dissenters'

25 Samuel Johnson, History of Rasselas Prince of Abyssinia, ed.

26 Addison, Spectator, No. 201.

27 More, Enthusiasmus, p. 20.
conventicles always in mind, Swift emphasized that the production of the spirit was a cooperative venture between the preacher and his assembly: "They violently strain their Eye balls inward, half closing the Lids; Then, as they sit, they are in a perpetual Motion of See-saw, making long Hums at proper Periods, and continuing the Sound at equal Height, chusing their time in those Intermissions, while the Preacher is at Ebb." Continuing his description, Swift added that with the eyes of assembly and preacher properly disposed, the practitioners eventually see the spirit approach as a glimmering light, dancing before the eyes; each one then moves the body up and down in concert until "Vapours" quickly ascend, perfectly dosing everyone; "meanwhile the Preacher is also at work; He begins a loud Hum, which pierces you quite thro'; This is immediately returned by the Audience, and you find your self prompted to imitate them, by a meer spontaneous Impulse, without knowing what you do."28

While admitting that Swift was satirizing Dissenters, one ought to be aware of the accuracy of his general description of the behaviour of preacher and audience in some Puritan conventicles; at least, contemporary writers of notes to Swift's Tale admitted its accuracy.29 The accounts of critics of the French prophets corroborate Swift's basic claim that some individuals deliberately set out to manufacture the spirit and eventually develop the art into a natural skill. Richard Kingston claimed that the


Camisards practised their quakings for several years abroad before performing them in London,\textsuperscript{30} and the findings of the Huguenot church at the Savoy suggested that the motions of the prophets, as Calamy reported, "were only the effect of a voluntary habit, of which they had got the perfect mastery";\textsuperscript{31} but Theophilus Evans, besides claiming artifice as the origin of the stunts of the French prophets, also described the process by which the spirit was invoked. "Before they were under the Operation of the Spirit," he wrote, "they put themselves into several Postures and Agitations, by shaking the Head, and whirling in a violent Manner, 'till a Vertigo seized them, throwing the Hands, and tossing to and fro beyond the wild Pranks of any Mad-man, . . . sometimes whistling, and then singing, laughing, piping, drumming, screaming, &c." Evans added that the prophets performed their contortions "in concert" and put themselves into the frenzied state at will. They practised privately at Montpelier "by Way of Exercise," he charged, "'till they had a better Opportunity of shewing publickly; and by long Use, they came to do surprizing Feats."\textsuperscript{32}

Despite the widely held belief that the enthusiast was the victim of a disease and Fancy and so a deceived person, individuals and even official government policy, consistently implied that he was responsible

\textsuperscript{30} [Kingston], \textit{Enthusiastick Impostors}, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{31} Calamy, \textit{Life}, II, 74.

\textsuperscript{32} Theophilus Evans, \textit{The History of Modern Enthusiasm}, 2nd ed. (London, 1757), p. 100.
for his condition. Accordingly, governments made oppressive laws, like the Clarendon Code, designed to disable Dissenters from the Church of England (and all Dissenters were enthusiasts, some thought) so that they could not hold religious services of their own, educate their children in their own beliefs, or hold government positions in certain towns. The fact is that the enthusiast, though generally believed to be a sick man, was treated as though he were in perfect health but an arrant knave who deliberately worked against the public good for his personal gain. The claim that the enthusiast was sick seemed to have been a clever ruse perhaps deliberately used to discredit the cause of Dissenters as a whole; the facts imply this, and one critic agrees:

... to regard enthusiasm as a physical or mental disorder was a simple means by which the adherents of established order tried to discredit enthusiasm in the eyes of reasonable men. The attempt to reduce enthusiasm to a "hypochondriacal distemper," that put reason to flight and gave wing to chaotic imagination, was a natural weapon of the rational, scientific mind distrustful of abnormality and disorder. 33

When asked who was most likely to suffer from enthusiasm, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century critic gave replies that were just as discrediting as his claim that all enthusiasts were deceived and ill. Burton's catalogue describing the people most prone to become schismatics, heretics, and enthusiasts seems calculated to dissuade one from identifying with such unprepossessing characters. Speaking particularly

of "Papists" but certainly including enthusiasts, Burton declared that in seeking followers they began with

... collapsed Ladies, some few tradesmen, superstitious old folks, illiterate persons, weak women, discontent, rude, silly companions... [and he continued] What are all our Anabaptists, Brownists, Barrowists, Familists, but a company of rude, illiterate, capricious, base fellows? What are most of our Papists, but stupid, ignorant and blind Bayards?34

The common people are first affected, said Burton, because they are "a flock of sheep, a rude illiterate rout," often void of common sense, like beasts willingly following anywhere they are led; such people are gulled because they do not examine what they are accepting but take religion on trust. Corroborating claims like Burton's, Lee indicated that detractors of enthusiasts usually scoffed at Puritans, claiming that many of their preachers were unlearned and were, in fact, tailors, shoemakers, pedlars, and weavers. "Is it a miracle or a wonder," one detractor wrote, "to see saucie boys, bold botching taylors, and other most audacious, illiterate mechanicks to run out of their shops into a Pulpit?"35 It was ironic that critics of enthusiasts should charge that Puritan preachers were ignorant, because during the reign of Elizabeth the Puritans had charged that many of the Anglican clergy were illiterate, and Lord Burghley substantiated the charge in an address to a group of Elizabethan bishops. "You make in this

34 Burton, Anatomy, p. 890.

time of light so many lewd and unlearned Ministers," he said. "It is the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry that I mean, who made lxx Ministers in one day, for Money; some Taylors, some shoemakers and other Craftsmen. I am sure the greater part of them are not worthy to keep horses," he concluded. 36

Nevertheless, it was both true and understandable that many of the preachers among the sectaries were not graduates of the Universities and were, in fact, tradesmen. As was already pointed out in chapter two, the enthusiast's belief that the Holy Spirit, as Christ had promised in St. John 16, was able to supply all his needs, even guiding him into all truth and teaching him all things, gave him enough confidence to mount the pulpit and "hold forth" to any willing audience. It was true, too, that many of the followers of these sectaries were just ordinary tradesmen. Barbour has shown in his study of the beginnings of Quakerism that the early Friends generally came from among the poor, from farm people, town craftsmen, weavers, tailors, and leather workers; but he has also shown that some Friends came from among the "gentry." 37 In his cumbersome diatribe, called by Knox "laborious imbecilities," George Lavington insisted that the followers of the Methodists were injudicious, ignorant, and unlearned people; this conclusion was expected of that critic, for he


was persuaded that Methodists were enthusiasts and that no thoughtful or informed person would sanction Methodism. Lavington claimed that boys and girls were particularly susceptible to enthusiasm because they were easily moved by hopes and fears; women were liable to it because they were the weaker vessel, vain, full of curiosity, loving novelty, and easily deceived by shows of piety. Among others he found likely to become enthusiasts were six groups of people: (1) those of a "fickle and inconsistent humour," who act by fits and starts and are fond of innovations; (2) people who are piously inclined but are of a weak judgment and nerves, easily caught by fine promises and fair speeches, and subject to bodily agitations and convulsions; (3) those disordered by the fumes of hypochondria and vapours of melancholy, among other distempers; (4) those in perfect health but of "lively parts and brisk fancy," lacking in "solid and settled judgment"; (5) those of an amorous complexion; and finally (6) people of bad principles, who will mingle with enthusiasts from hopes of being considered devout so that they may the more easily deceive others.38

In his analysis of the backgrounds of Methodists, Lee studied the autobiographies of thirty-five of Wesley's helpers from volumes called Wesley's Veterans and found much to substantiate the charge that tradesmen performed in the role of clergymen. Of the thirty-five helpers studied,

Lee found that twenty-three represented the following occupations which either they or their fathers followed: miner, clothier, farmer, soldier, carpenter, mason, apprentice in worsted trade, tanner, gardener, cutler, apprentice in china trade, and labourer. Of the remaining twelve, the father of one was manager of a woolen factory; another preacher was a bookseller, one a schoolmaster, another a builder, and another a justice of the peace; none of the remaining seven indicated his occupation. 39

The case of Sir Richard Bulkeley and John Lacy was singular enough to cause great trepidation among critics of enthusiasm. Confirmed in their belief that educated and respectable people were not susceptible to enthusiasm, critics were astounded when the two gentlemen of learning, quality, and property succumbed to the lure of the French prophets. But reasons for their fall were quickly forthcoming. Bulkeley was suffering from a physical deformity for which, some claimed, he hoped to find healing among the prophets. Richard Kingston insinuated that vanity, ambition, and madness were at the root of Lacy's defection. He wrote:

But that which I think comes nearest Mr. Lacy's Case, is a more than ordinary *Vanity* and *Ambition* of being thought wiser and better than the rest of the World, which, join'd with an Affectation of *Singularity*, and having the Glory of starting something that's *odd* and out of the way, and being the *Originals* of his own Opinion, which he thinks is an infallible Proof, that the reach of his own Understanding is above the common Standard. 40

39 Umphrey Lee, p. 128.

40 [Kingston], *Enthusiastick Impostors*, p. 39.
But to discredit Lacy further, Kingston added that Lacy's "nearest Relations and best Friends were apprehensive, that his Brain was somewhat touch'd a little before his closing with the pretended French prophets"; Lacy's former church friends prayed that his sanity might be restored, said Kingston, and concluded: "I am of their Opinion, though he may have had some lucid Intervals, his every days Demeanour confirms that Opinion; for no Man would act as he does, that is Master of his own Understanding." 41

The singular and often extravagant patterns of behaviour characteristic of many enthusiasts reinforced the critics' suspicion that enthusiasm was something abnormal, the result of a sickness that might prove fatal to the sufferer. The feats of strength exhibited by many of the French prophets and their followers amazed several people; but many of their performances, like those of the Quakers earlier, were presented as signs, or so the prophets claimed. Keimer reported that his sister, when agitated by the spirit, flung another prophetess on the floor, "and under the agitations tread upon her breast, belly, legs, ... walking several times backwards and forwards over her, and stamping upon her with violence." This performance, said Keimer, was given as a sign of the fall of the whore of Babylon. 42 Another startling exhibition given for a sign was the Quakers'

41 [Kingston], Enthusiastick Impostors, p. 39.

going naked through the streets. Leslie reported that one Solomon Eccles, a Quaker preacher and prophet, went naked through Bartholomew Fair the year before the great fire of London (1666). Eccles carried a pan of fire on his head, while he cried "Repent! repent!" According to Leslie, such sights were not uncommon or extraordinary in London, because hardly a month passed when some Quaker did not walk through the streets "either naked, or in some exotick figure, denouncing Woes, Judgments, Plagues, Fire, Sword and Famine." And Pepys noted in his diary for 1677: "One thing extraordinary was, this day a man, a Quaker, came naked through the Hall Westminster only very civilly tied about the loins to avoid scandal, and with a chafing-dish of fire and brimstone burning about his head, did pass through the Hall, crying 'Repent! Repent!'."

Particularly exasperating to many orthodox Christians were some of the peculiar claims made by enthusiasts; out of such claims arose some of the charges of enthusiasm, blasphemy, and madness levelled against enthusiasts. Gerard Winstanley, for example, announced that he received his levelling doctrines by direct revelation from God:

As I was in trance not long since [he wrote], divers matters were present to my sight . . . I heard these words--Work together: Eat bread together: Declare this all abroad. . . . Whosoever it is that labors in the earth--for any person or persons that lift up themselves as Lords and Rulers over others, and that doth not

43 Leslie, II, 149.

44 Quoted in Umphrey Lee, Backgrounds, p. 102.
look upon themselves as equal to others in the Creation, the hand of the Lord shall be upon that laborer. I the Lord have spoke it and I will do it. Declare this all abroad.45

George Fox, among others, claimed to have received direct revelations from God. One celebrated instance was the occasion of a strange visit to Lichfield. Fox was walking with other Friends when he saw three spires in the distance. When told that they were in Lichfield, he started across the fields towards the town. On the way he met some shepherds. The story continues in Fox's own words:

I was commanded by the Lord, of a sudden, to untie my shoes and put them off. I stood still for it was winter, and the word of the Lord was like a fire in me, so I put off my shoes and was commanded to give them to the shepherds, and was to charge them to let no one have them except they paid for them. . . .

Then I walked on about a mile till I came into the town, and as soon as I was got within the town the word of the Lord came to me again, to cry, "Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield!" So I went up and down the streets, crying with a loud voice, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!" . . . And no one laid hands on me; but as I went thus crying through the streets, there seemed to me to be a channel of blood running down the streets, and the market place appeared like a pool of blood. . . .46

Fox completed his mission and returned for his boots. To many critics such testimonies were purposeless and trifling and unworthy of the majesty of heaven, and certainly the result of an over-heated fancy. At any rate, Fox's mission to Lichfield was not likely to hurt anyone but himself. The same could not be said, however, of the claims of some other enthusiasts.


46 Fox, Journal, p. 71; see also Lee, Backgrounds, p. 101.
Lee reported that some Ranters taught that the Bible was "a dead Letter," full of contradictions, and "the cause of all the blood that has been shed in the world." One Ranter claimed that he possessed the Spirit just as Paul, so that what he wrote was just as infallible as St. Paul's writings; another, John Robins, called "the Ranters' God," claimed that he was Almighty God and that he had resurrected Cain, Judas, and Jeremiah. Two of Robins' followers, Lodowick Muggleton (1609-1698) and John Reeves, claimed to have received visions which revealed to them that they were the two prophets of Revelation 11 who were to stand and prophesy before the Lord.47

Such were a few of the extreme claims which led many to question the sanity of enthusiasts, but the case of James Nayler, already cited, seemed to many to climax the absurdity or blasphemy of all others. It is clear, however, that many deliberately misunderstood or misconstrued Nayler's testimony at his trial to stick on him the charge of blasphemy.48 In his cross-examination at his trial, Nayler did not claim to be the historical Jesus but Jesus in terms of Quaker thought; that is, as Fox said: "The saints are Temples of God, and God dwells in them, and walks in them."49 It appears that the early Quakers accepted these ideas as

47 Cited in Lee, Backgrounds, p. 55.

48 See Knox's analysis and discussion of the trial in his Enthusiasm (Oxford, 1950), p. 166; see also Brathwaite, Beginnings of Quakerism, pp. 241-278.

49 Great Mistery (1659), quoted in Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, p. 147.
literally true in their experience, though most other Christians saw the teaching of Christ within as a figurative expression. Such differences of views easily gave rise to misunderstanding, especially in a public willing to believe the worst of a group they thought to be ignorant and misguided. Fully convinced that Christ lived within them bodily and that they possessed the Spirit, which made them all one, Quakers were easily capable of addressing one another in terms so endearing and suggestive of divinity that to outsiders they appeared blasphemous or even insane. For example, Thomas Stubbs, writing to William Dewsbury, began his letter: "Deare brother: In the eternall unchangeable love of the Liveing God our heavenly Father in Jesus Christ, with you I have unitie which bonds in body cannot Separate." And Thomas Curtis addressed Fox: "Deare Geo. ff. who art the father of all the faithfull . . . I know thee whome thou art, who was ded and is alive & forever lives . . ."50

The last portion of Curtis's address to George Fox introduced another element which was abhorrent to critics of enthusiasts. Any individual who dared to justify any supposedly extravagant action of his by appealing to the practice of the Apostles or Christ or to certain biblical characters ran the risk of being charged with enthusiasm, since by such an appeal he was intimating his equality with the character with whom he compared himself. Critics held that the Apostles were in a privileged position with God,

50 Great Mistery (1659), quoted in Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, p. 147.
receiving extraordinary revelations from Him and had such privileges as warrant for their writings and claims. No later Christian could reasonably claim a similar authority, critics said, because God no longer dealt with men as He dealt with the Apostles, the need for such extraordinary treatment having been made unnecessary by the completion of the canon of Scripture.  

Curtis's address to George Fox treated Fox as though he were God.  

Bishop Lavington, for example, excoriated Whitefield, charging him with enthusiasm, pride and vain-glory, because Whitefield appropriated certain Scriptural expressions originally used in reference to Christ and other biblical characters. Whitefield had written in his Journal:  

"Though Satan for some weeks had been biting my heel, God was pleased to show me, that I should soon bruise his head." Citing the quotation, Lavington said that it was an example of Whitefield's presuming "to rob our Saviour of his very office of Redeemer." On reading a lesson about the occasion of some people's opposition to Aaron's priesthood, when God determined who was right by causing Aaron's rod to blossom, the other rods remaining bare, Whitefield had said: "So let it happen, O Lord, to me, thine unworthy servant." Bishop Lavington thought that Whitefield,  

52 See Rev. 1.13, 18.  
53 Lavington, Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists, p. 76.
in remarking thus, was making himself equal to Aaron. In 1745, writing in his "Farther Appeal," John Wesley had replied to criticisms like Bishop Lavington's in a fashion which must have incensed his critics further. Wesley declared that the "same God who was always ready to help their [the Apostles'] infirmities, is ready to help ours also. . . . In this respect likewise, in respect of his 'having help from God,' for the work whereunto he is called, every Preacher of the Gospel is like the Apostles: Otherwise he is of all men most miserable." Lavington's charging the Methodists with making themselves equal with the Apostles subsequent to Wesley's clear and cogent reply to a similar charge indicates that he was dissatisfied with the earlier defense.

As offensive as the enthusiast's making himself equal with the Apostles was what the critics called his "familiarity with God." This charge comprehended such practices as using amorous language in speaking of one's relationships with God, appropriating such language from the Bible, or seeing the hand of God in matters relating solely to the individual. Campbell was disturbed that enthusiasts should see themselves always as receiving special tokens of God's love and favour, so that they come to view themselves as holding positions of particular honour with God from which all others are excluded. Swift said it was vanity and

54 Lavington, p. 73.
56 Archibald Campbell, Discourse, p. 9.
pride for the enthusiast to see God's hand in every trifling affair in his daily life. "It is a Sketch of Human Vanity," he said, "for every Individual, to imagine the whole Universe is interest'd in his meanest Concern. If he hath got cleanly over a Kennel," Swift continued, "some Angel, unseen, descended on purpose to help him by the Hand ..." Bishop Lavington saw gross enthusiasm in Wesley's paraphrase of a portion of Scripture in describing the state of his soul in the presence of divine love. Lavington called the following Wesley's "seraphic rhapsody of divine love":

The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and a flame kindled there, with pains so violent, and yet so very ravishing, that my body was almost torn asunder. I loved. The spirit cried strong in my heart. I sweated. I trembled. I fainted. I sung—My soul was got up into the Holy Mount. I had no thoughts of coming down again into the body. --Oh! I thought my head was a fountain of water. I was dissolved in love. My beloved is mine, and I am his. He has all charms. He has raised my heart. --He is now in the garden feeding among the lilies. Oh! I am sick of love.58

Bishop Lavington's censure of Wesley's language may be cited as evidence of that lack of spiritual daring of which one critic spoke in reference to the eighteenth century.59 As Addison and Thomas Green cautioned,60 it was bad to get too caught up in devotion, but it was worse to express in public one's intense religious feelings, and unforgivable to

57 Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, pp. 277-278.
58 Quoted in Lavington, p. 38; see also Songs of Solomon 2.16.
60 See Addison, Spectator, No. 201 and Thomas Green, p. 67.
express those rapturous feelings in amorous language of the type characteristically used in describing nuptial love even though such language might be borrowed from Scripture. Bishop Lavington was outraged, for instance, when he found passages in the published Journal of Whitefield which he could characterize only as "familiar communications and conversations with the Deity; full of the most sweet, tender, amorous sentiments and expressions." He cited the following selections as examples of undue familiarity:

Oh! what sweet communion . . . had I daily vouchsafed from God! I cannot tell how tenderly I am carried by our dear Saviour from day to day:— I lean on Jesus's bosom from morning to night; yea, all the day long. —I sweetly leaned on my Saviour's bosom, and sucked out of the breasts of his consolation.

Early in the morning, at noon-day, evening, and midnight, nay all the day long, did the blessed Saviour visit and refresh my heart. Could the trees of a certain wood near Stonehouse speak, they would tell what sweet communion I and some more dear souls enjoyed with the ever blessed God there.\(^{61}\)

\(^{61}\) Quoted in Lavington, p. 36. Although Lavington alludes to the writings of several Catholic saints (among them Ignatius, Theresa, Catherine, and Francis) as stylistic parallels to the Methodist writings, he gives no indication that he sees in these the characteristic literary style of some mystical writings. However, even if Lavington had recognized that Whitefield's and Wesley's style in those passages were typical of certain mystical writers, possibly he would have made no concessions; rather, the recognition would have reinforced his contention that an unusually close resemblance existed between certain practices of Methodists and Roman Catholics. Since Lavington, like many of his contemporaries, saw Roman Catholicism as a mass of superstition and enthusiasm (and therefore a threat to the English nation and Church), such a close resemblance between Catholics and Methodists augured ill. Note the title of Lavington's book: The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared. Lavington makes no mention of English poets and divines like Donne and Crashaw, for instance, who frequently used the "amorous" or "nuptial" language to which he objected.
If one is surprised that a bishop and a student of Scripture should object to such figurative language descriptive of religious devotion, he should recall that such language as used by Wesley and Whitefield, besides showing great familiarity with God, deliberately imitated King Solomon's; and who were men like Whitefield and Wesley to make themselves equal with Solomon, who, according to Scripture, received a very special gift of wisdom with the promise that none before or after him would surpass his wisdom?62

Thomas Green objected to the use of a similar style, "the nuptial style," in "godly subjects" on the ground that material written in such a style might give "offense to some persons."63 And Doctor John Scott, sometime Rector of St. Giles in the Fields, declared that the enthusiast who addresses Christ in such familiar amorous language was first led by melancholy vapours to imagine himself in love with Christ, but grieved because of the affronts and unkindnesses he offered Christ, he seeks to conquer his Beloved with his passionate endearments; fancying Christ to be a "transported Lover smiling upon him, weeping over him, spreading out his Arms to embrace him," the lover-enthusiast completes the rapture by fancying himself to be "leaping into [Christ's] Arms, and rolling in his

63 Thomas Green, Dissertation, pp. 89-90.
Bosom, and resting, and leaning, and relying upon him."\(^{64}\)

Another consequence of enthusiasm which critics frequently re­marked and greatly feared was zeal. This zeal was seen as the parent of numerous excesses which often boded ill for all within the ambit of the enthusiast's influence; it led to a moral rigour which made no distinctions between expediency and morality. Influenced by this belief, Bishop Lavington censured the enthusiastic Methodists' rejection of fine clothing and rich furniture; he found that Methodists from religious convictions loved "to go dirty, ragged, and slovenly," condemned all recreation and diversion, had a hearty contempt of money and all dangers, pains, and sufferings, mortified the body by fastings and other corporeal severities, and practised a whimsical strictness, making "loud exclamations against some trifling and indifferent things; which are matters of mere discretion; things innocent, and perhaps sometimes useful; and only sinful when carried into excess."\(^{65}\) Burton found little that the enthusiast would not undergo in his zeal. He will "endure any misery, any trouble, suffer and do that which the Sunbeams will not endure to see, driven on by religious fury, all extremities, losses and dangers, take any pains, fast, pray, vow chastity, wilful poverty, forsake all and follow their Idols, die a thousand deaths . . ."\(^{66}\) And in the tale of the three brothers in A Tale of a Tub,

\(^{64}\) John Scott, A Fine Picture of Enthusiasm (London, 1744), pp. 11-12.

\(^{65}\) Lavington, pp. 12, 16, 17, 21.

\(^{66}\) Robert Burton, Anatomy, p. 900.
Swift pictured Jack as the arch-zealot. Jack and Martin have just separated from their brother Peter, and Martin has repaired his coat as best he might without hurting the valuable original; but Jack, in a great dudgeon because of his ill-treatment at Peter's hands, sets to work to remove from his coat every vestige that reminds him of Peter. In language characteristic of a critic of enthusiasm, Swift described Jack's destructive zeal in his task of renovation:

Zeal is never so highly obliged, as when you set it a Tearing; and Jack, who doated on that Quality in himself, allowed it at this Time its full Swinge. Thus it happened, that stripping down a Parcel of Gold Lace, a little too hastily, he rent the main Body of his Coat from top to Bottom; and whereas his Talent was not of the happiest in taking up a Stitch, he knew no better way than to darn it again with Packthread and a Scewer, But the Matter was yet infinitely worse . . . when he proceeded to the Embroidery: for, being Clumsy by Nature and of Temper, Impatient; withal, beholding Millions of Stitches, that required the nicest Hand, and sedatest Constitution, to extricate; in a great Rage, he tore off the whole Piece, Cloth and all, and flung it into the Kennel . . .

The enormity of Jack's behaviour is evident when one realizes that the coat on which he was working (frills excepted) represented the true religion of Christ.

Critics saw the zeal of the enthusiast as particularly dangerous because it had its origin in the enthusiast's conviction that he was doing the will of God. Campbell claimed that the enthusiast's zeal came from his absolute certainty that all his actions are either dictated or sanctioned from heaven; the individual, accordingly, feels himself compelled to do

67 Swift, A Tale of a Tub, pp. 138-139.
his utmost to see that heaven's will be done. As if stunned, Campbell exclaimed: "And how amazingly headstrong and vigorous must a man necessarily be, when his favourite opinions, and commanding passions, are all strongly supported by supernatural light, and a divine impulse!" Henry More, however, believed that the enthusiast's so-called zeal came from his melancholic complexion and was not really zeal but a disease. "The Spirit that wings the Enthusiast in such a wonderful manner," More said is nothing else but that Flatulency which is in the Melancholy complexion, and rises out of the hypochondriacal humour upon some occasional heat, as Winde out of an Aeolipila applied to the fire. Which fume mounting into the Head, being first actuated and spirited and somewhat refined by the warmth of the Heart, fills the Mind with a variety of Imaginations, and so quickens and enlarges Invention, that it makes the Enthusiast to admiration fluent and eloquent, he being as it were drunk with new wine drawn from that Cellar of his own that lies in the lowest region of his Body, though he be not aware of it, but takes it to be pure Nectar, and those waters of life that spring from above. Aware of the potential for destruction in religious zeal, Green cautioned that a firm persuasion that one was divinely sent was not enough warrant for action, because "religious and good men may have been sometimes imposed upon, or led into mistakes, by taking their own private fancies for divine admonitions or instructions." One should see, said Green, that his persuasion is founded on "a fair and strict examination, rational grounds, and good evidence."
Because the enthusiast was deluded by fancy, as many believed, he was capable of becoming enthusiastic about anything; no scale of values dictated or controlled his dedication. He could go into raptures over anything to which he took a fancy, and would willingly give his life for things in themselves indifferent; even when indulging in the grossest vices, he would still consider himself doing the will of heaven. Enthusiasm, by its very nature, made him fickle and inconsistent; he was restless, changing as the humours changed within him, now cold and careless, now animated and punctilious; zealous today but hopeless and faithless tomorrow. Bishop Warburton, however, saw the enthusiast as a rigorous and obstinate fellow whose spirit, heated by a fiery nature, "retains the property of his congenial Earth, which grows harder and more intractable as it burns." And Sterne saw hypocrisy in the enthusiast's inconsistency. Ostentatiously clothed with an outward garb of sanctity, said Sterne, the enthusiast seeks to attract the eyes of the vulgar; his face is clouded with despondence and melancholy gloom because he studiously avoids cheerfulness as something criminal; he incessantly pours forth pharisaical ejaculations as he journeys or walks the streets, and boasts of his extraordinary communications with the God of all knowledge in

71 See Campbell, *Discourse*, pp. 7, 8.


language indicative of his ignorance of the common rules of grammar and usage; he lacks commonsense, is proud of his own sanctity, and sees himself as the elect and all others as lost souls. 74

It is not surprising that most critics, after appraising the demeanour of the enthusiast decided either that he was mad or that he would end his career in madness. Some saw the madness as something very mild, characterized by slight deviations from the behaviour patterns of the mass of mankind; others considered the enthusiast as fitter for Bedlam than for anywhere else. As was true in the study of the origins of enthusiasm, so it is here; the critics were strongly dependent on the authority of the ancients, though they sometimes attempted to show independence in delineating the process which led ultimately to the enthusiast's madness.

Writing in the eighteenth century, James Duchal called enthusiasm "a dangerous distemper of the mind; Joseph Addison said that "enthusiasm has something in it of madness"; but Langhorne declared that since enthusiasm "precluded the use of reason," it is a "species" of madness; and John Wesley was certain that "every enthusiast is properly a madman" who is plagued by a religious madness; that is, his madness has religion as its object. 75

74 Laurence Sterne, "On Enthusiasm," The Sermons of Mr. Yorick (New York, 1904), II, 282-283.

Claiming the authority of the ancients, Casaubon said that the ecstasy of the enthusiast involved a violent though temporary alienation of the mind, as is common with one in a fit of anger; but he went further, claiming that every man is mad or possessed in some degree when he sins: "No man doth sin, but he is possessed in some degree; it is good Divinity: and best Philosophers have maintained, that there was no vice, but was the fruit of madnesse; and I believe that too to be good philosophy." For Burton, the insanity of the enthusiast was evidenced in his extreme claims: "What greater madness can there be, than for a man to take upon him to be God, as some do? to be the Holy Ghost, Elias, and what not?" He continued, delineating further evidence of madness and the causes of it:

We are never likely seven years together without some such new Prophets, that have several inspirations, some to convert the Jews, some fast forty days, go with Daniel to the Lion's den; some foretell strange things, some for one thing, some for another. Great Precisions of mean conditions and very illiterate, most part by a preposterous zeal, fasting, meditation, melancholy, are brought into these gross errors and inconveniences. Of these men I may conclude generally, that howsoever they may seem discreet, and men of understanding in other matters, discourse well, they have a diseased imagination, they are like comets, round in all places but only where they blaze, otherwise sane, they have impregnable wits many of them, and discreet otherwise, but in this their madness and folly breaks out beyond measure. They are certainly far gone with melancholy, if not quite mad, and have more need of physick than many a man that keep his bed, more need of Hellebore than those that are in Bedlam.

76 Meric Casaubon, Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme, p. 81.

77 Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy, pp. 918-919.
Laurence Sterne agreed with Burton that the enthusiast suffered from a disorder of the head rather than the heart, thus needing the assistance of a physician "who can cure the distempered state of the body, rather than one who may soothe the anxieties of the mind."  

Characteristically, the enthusiast's madness was traced either to a diseased imagination preyed on by religious excesses or to the dominance of the passions. Henry More blamed the "enormous strength and vigour" of the imagination, which, though controllable by a man's power, will work nevertheless without his leave, so that the unfortunate victim will become mad and fanatical whether he wills or not. Hobbes, however, saw strong passions as the cause of the enthusiast's madness. For him there are as many kinds of madness as there are passions; and that man is mad who has stronger and more vehement passions than are ordinarily seen in other men; though the madness or vehement passions might not be evident in one man's behaviour, should several people suffering from identical passions come in a group, their madness would be very evident. To illustrate his idea, Hobbes cited the case of enthusiasts with whose behaviour he was familiar during Commonwealth times. He said:

Though the effect of folly, in them that are possessed of an opinion of being inspired, be not visible alwayes in one man, by any very extravagant action, that proceedeth from such Passion; yet when many of them conspire together, the Rage of the whole multitude


is visible enough. . . . And if there were nothing else that bewrayed their madness; yet that very arrogating such inspiration to themselves, is argument enough.\textsuperscript{80}

Discussing the case of the learned astronomer in his \textit{Rasselas}, Dr. Johnson declared that "all power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity," but one who allows his fancy too much freedom is not declared insane until his behaviour is affected by his imaginations; when fancy becomes so despotic that the individual treats its phantasms as realities, "false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish."\textsuperscript{81}

Johnson's learned astronomer was the madman of Rasselas; he had so long imagined himself in control of the seasons and the weather that he eventually came to believe that he actually did control them; but the madman of Swift's \textit{Tale of a Tub} was Jack, who, Swift said, was "a Person whose Intellectuals were overturned, and his Brain shaken out of its Natural Position." According to Swift, when the brain is in its natural position and in a state of serenity, a man remains sober and orthodox, "But when a Man's Fancy gets astride of his Reason, when Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses and common Understanding, as well as common Sense, is kickt out of Doors," that man is mad and first deceives himself and then goes on to deceive and make proselytes of others.\textsuperscript{82} Such was


\textsuperscript{81} Johnson, \textit{Rasselas}, pp. 140-141.

\textsuperscript{82} Swift, Digression on Madness, \textit{A Tale of a Tub}, pp. 162, 171.
Jack's case; but individual expressions of enthusiastic madness differed as critics differed. Charles Leslie, the arch-critic of the Quakers, was certain that George Fox and other enthusiastic Quakers were mad and so better suited for the asylum than the prison. The example of insane behaviour which Leslie gave provides an insight into one eighteenth-century norm of sanity. While visiting at Oliver's Court, Leslie saw the porter, a Quaker, preaching to a number of women, his followers; the women were busy leafing through their Bibles, trying to locate the texts of Scripture which the porter alluded to in his harangue; as the women turned the pages, said Leslie, they sighed and groaned and "shew'd as strong emotions of Devotion as could be seen at any Quaker-Meeting." This picture led Leslie to reflect that "there were several sorts of Madness; and what ill luck some mad Folks had to be clos'd up, while others went about the streets."  

Joseph Trapp and George Lavington, critics of the Methodists, thought the Methodists were mad and made others mad by their doctrines. Trapp, with his eyes on Wesley and Whitefield, declared that pride and folly akin to madness infects one who undertakes tasks too great for him, pretends that he possesses great knowledge in things that he really knows nothing of, or criticizes those better than himself and undertakes to teach his teachers.  


Methodist doctrine was capable of driving men into madness, according to Trapp. He felt there was a real danger that one who attempted to do extraordinary works of righteousness as demanded by the Methodists would despair and eventually go **stark mad** when he found himself unable to perform those extraordinary deeds. In fact, Trapp claimed that some enthusiasts had already despaired, gone mad, and been put into Bedlam. Bishop Lavington cited the testimony of Dr. Mead, an authority on madness, as corroborating the charge that some Methodists were mad. Dr. Mead had said that some madmen, because of their great physical strength, were able to endure inconceivable hardships, whether in fasting, or in enduring the cold, and inclement weather. As an example of the truth of the Doctor's statement, Bishop Lavington described the case of one Periam, who was sent to Bedlam because he fasted for nearly two weeks, prayed so loud as to be heard "four stories high," and sold all his clothing and gave the money to the poor. In Bedlam, Periam stripped himself to his shirt and prayed to get his body accustomed to the cold of the place. Such behaviour, said the bishop, betrayed "sufficient symptoms of madness." Earlier, in 1744, (Lavington wrote around 1748-1749), alluding to the Periam case as evidence, John Wesley declared that people were often hurried to Bedlam when they were not at all insane. He added, significantly, that some people may have been sent to Bedlam simply because

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85 Trapp, pp. 36-37.

they followed the Methodists; that is to say, only madmen would follow the Methodists. The experience of Christopher Smart reflects the antipathy of some eighteenth-century Englishmen to demonstrations of excessive religious devotion. Smart was declared insane and committed to an insane asylum because he was in the habit of kneeling and praying "in the streets, or in any other unusual place"; but Dr. Johnson, believing one's refusal to pray to be greater madness and not persuaded that Smart deserved such treatment, declared:

I did not think that he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else.

One might recall here that although Dr. Johnson's contemporaries did not question his mental health, believing him to be of a sound mind, Johnson constantly feared, and suspected, that he was touched by insanity.

In summary, then, critics of enthusiasm in England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries followed the ancients in declaring the enthusiast a deceived victim of melancholy and an over-heated fancy or imagination; because of his peculiar illness, the enthusiast was subject to unpremeditated changes of behaviour which in the judgment of some people rendered him guilty of hypocrisy and uncharitable zeal; but he was just as capable of moral rigour and transports of religious ecstasy which


showed him able to endure incredible physical hardships or to indulge in
excesses of divine love. Duped by his imagination, the enthusiast saw
himself in an intimate relationship with the Deity, sometimes receiving
special visions and particular guidance in trifling matters, sometimes
identifying himself with prophets or even with the Almighty or the Paraclete.
In the view of many writers, the enthusiast, seldom identified with any-
thing good, might even be demon-possessed, or he might be an evil indi-
vidual who deliberately set out to deceive others by mechanically manu-
facturing symptoms characteristic of those truly inspired. In the final
analysis, many believed that, no matter how innocent in the beginning,
the enthusiast succeeded not only in deceiving others but also in deceiv-
ing himself; his end was commonly thought to be insanity, and an insanity
most insidious because evident only in religious affairs, all things else
remaining normal. Although the enthusiast was, in fact, a threat to his
own social well-being, most people feared him because, as the following
chapters will show, they considered him a grave menace to peace and
order in Church and state.
Chapter IV Enthusiasm Versus Government and Social Order

In one of his sermons Robert South affirmed that the safety of government is founded upon the religion of the state (it mattered not whether that religion was true or false), and anything or anyone who assailed the state religion was in fact destroying the state; indeed, he asserted that the most effective and surest way to destroy the civil power is to destroy the worship of God as rightly established in the state. 1

South's sermon was, of course, primarily directed against enthusiasts, who, without intending any evil, had begun that process which culminated in the Civil War and the Interregnum by agitating for more thorough reform in the state religion than had been made by the authorities in Church and state.

Many critics of enthusiasm before and after South agreed that enthusiasm was a threat to all government. But whereas some saw the threat in the enthusiasts' great stress on individualism, others saw it either in some enthusiasts' willingness to take up arms against their lawful rulers or in others' reluctance to engage in war to protect the threatened state; yet other critics suspected enthusiasts of engaging in treasonable activities under the guise of religion, and others saw in enthusiasm an economic threat because thousands of workers presumably absented themselves from work to listen to Methodist preachers; and finally, many viewed the

1 See Sermon 4, Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions (Oxford, 1842), I, 68-93.
enthusiasts' claim to be above all earthly laws as the ultimate threat to law and order and the very existence of government. Even in the social realm, critics saw enthusiasm as a pernicious influence. They charged enthusiasts with being profligate and destructive of those traditional practices which ensured proper subordination in the social order.

Jeremy Taylor believed that if enthusiasts were not checked, they would lead to a "direct overthrow of order and government," and Charles Leslie accused enthusiasts of being unprincipled and "inconstant as the Wind," and so "as dangerous in any Government as Elephants in an Army," while a correspondent for the Gentleman's Magazine, inveighing against George Whitefield, cited the civil disorders of the previous century as "melancholy proof" of the true nature of enthusiasm. However, it was an anonymous author of an article published in 1738 who detailed the dire threat which enthusiasm posed in a society. Enthusiasm, he said, destroys its victim's fear of death, renders him contemptuous of danger, and disposes him to be cruel in prosecuting his designs and tyrannical in controlling those under his power. And when the intoxication of enthusiasm


3 "Who if they turn their heads, fall foul upon their Leaders." Snake in the Grass, in Works, (London, 1721), II, 56.

actuates a multitude, like a raging river, it carries everything before it, opposition serving only to increase its fury; but what is worse, according to that author, even when enthusiasm fails to achieve its goals, the miseries, confusion, and devastation occasioned by its attempt are enough to make "sober men" afraid of the consequences of what even an abortive attempt can produce. Another writer declared that though enthusiasm "intoxicates" only a few, to those it imparts such irresistible power that they influence and triumph over many.

The ultimate basis of all the foregoing statements concerning the threat enthusiasm poses in the state was the belief that the individual who felt certain that he was controlled directly by the Spirit of God disregarded all direction and control from lesser authority and decided for himself what to do or not to do. Critics felt that abundant evidence had shown that individuals are no longer guided directly by God, and people who claimed to be led by the Spirit often deliberately disregarded civil laws, thus threatening chaos to society. Thomas Hobbes, for example, listed "pretence of supernatural Inspiration" as one of the things that weaken a commonwealth, because such a claim, justified or not, left one free to ignore the laws of his country in favour of his inspiration. Hobbes also disallowed the plea to conscience as justification for one's obeying

6 "Superstition and Enthusiasm," London Magazine (March 1738), p. 120.
or disobeying a law, because such a plea makes the individual the judge of good or evil, whereas the law truly is that judge. "Otherwise in such a diversity, as there is of private Consciences, which are but private opinions," Hobbes said, "the Commonwealth must needs be distracted, and no man dare to obey the Soveraign Power, farther than it shall seem good in his own eyes." And the declaration of certain of the French prophets many years later indicated the general accuracy of Hobbes' assumption that enthusiasts would ignore all laws and obey what they believe to be inspiration. During the height of the activities of the French prophets in London, authorities were aghast because the prophet Durand Fage, whom they dubbed "a compleat villain," declared that if the Spirit commanded him to kill his own father, he would obey. And other French prophets agreed with Fage, insisting that they were bound to obey what the Spirit bade, and that "a Crime ceases to be a Crime when once he [the Spirit] commands . . .".

The role played by enthusiasts in the Civil War of the 1640's earned them a name which more than one hundred years did not erase, for numerous critics frequently alluded to the events of that civil war to justify their accusations against enthusiasts. But even before the Civil War Burton had

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declared that enthusiasts would stop at nothing but "will set all in a Combustion," and Dryden, in "The Medal," declared that whether it was the Jesuit or the French Puritan who laid the plan to destroy the King,

Our sacrilegious sects their guides outgo,  
And kings and kingly pow'r would murder too.  

(II. 201-204)

And as late as 1682, writing in the preface of "Religio Laici," Dryden complained that the "sectaries" used the Scriptures, "the greatest security of governors, as commanding express obedience to them," to justify rebellion. He noted, further, "that the doctrines of king-killing and deposing," originally espoused only by the most radical "Papists," were taken up, "defended, and are still maintained by the whole body of Non-conformists and Republicans."

The Presbyterians frequently took greatest blame for the events which culminated in the death of the king. Samuel Butler gave his view of Presbyterians in his description of the religion of the knight in Hudibras:

For his Religion it was fit  
To match his Learning and his wit;  
'Twas Presbyterian true blew,  
For he was of that stubborn Crew  
Of Errant Saints, whom all men grant  
To be the true Church Militant:  
Such as do build their Faith upon  
The holy Text of Pike and Gun;  
Decide all Controversies by  
Infallible Artillery;

And prove their Doctrine Orthodox
By Apostolick Blows and Knocks;
Call Fire and Sword and Desolation,
A godly-thorough-Reformation . . . (I.L. 187-200)

But the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men were particularly notorious for their bloodthirstiness, though some of the odium attached to the former came with the name, because of the remembrances it brought of the massacre perpetrated by Anabaptists led by John of Leyden in Münster.

Though the extreme militants under John of Leyden represented only a small number of Anabaptists, all who bore the name shared the taint.

Reporting on Baptists in England in A Short History of the Anabaptists of High and Low Germany, the anonymous author commented:

I am afraid that Anabaptisme is very rife in England, though not perhaps in one entire body, but scattered . . . here one tenet . . . and there another: yet not so scattered but they meet in one head, which is the hatred of all rule.10

To allay public fears and give the lie to reproachful statements made concerning Baptists, General Baptists in England published a confession of their faith, which declared, among other things, that magistracy was ordained of God, and that it was a fearful thing to despise government and to speak evil of those in positions of authority. Particular Baptists published their Confession in 1644, declaring magistracy an ordinance of God and adding that it was lawful for churchmembers to take oaths and hold civil office, but they added that it was the duty of the magistrate to allow

liberty of conscience; however, obedience to the magistrate should not include things contrary to conscience.\textsuperscript{11}

Nevertheless, as Brown has shown, during the Civil War and Interregnum the Baptists constituted the largest segment of the Fifth Monarchy Men; Baptist ministers were often implicated in treasonable speeches and publications; and Baptists were, in fact, in the centre of much of the difficulty authorities had to encounter in ruling the country effectively. And central to the troubles they caused was their belief that Christ was about to set up His visible kingdom in England, and they were obliged to prepare for this kingdom, even by force of arms. A section of the Baptist community did disavow the use of force, however, preferring to depend on prayers to assist in bringing in the kingdom. Nevertheless, according to Brown, when Cromwell was offered the Crown, "it would not be far from the truth to say that in every Baptist soldier there was an opponent of monarchy." And many soldiers were Baptists.\textsuperscript{12} The attitude of the Fifth Monarchists to governments has already been described, but one might add here that apart from the militant element, which felt called upon to resist earthly governments by force to set up Christ's kingdom, another more pacific group existed, which believed in the importance of supporting earthly kingdoms, submitting peaceably, while testifying

\textsuperscript{11} Brown, pp. 6-7.

\textsuperscript{12} Brown, p. 124. See also pp. 195-198.
against evils and awaiting the day when such kingdoms would be incorporated into the kingdom of the saints.  

All religious groups, apart from the Anglicans, which flourished during the Interregnum were implicated in or blamed for the disestablishment and spoliation of the Anglican church and for the political evils perpetrated during the period. Hence, speaking of the religious groups of Civil War times, South was able to say:

There is no sort of men breathing who taste blood with so good a relish, and who, having the power of the sword to second the power of godliness, who would wade deeper in the slaughter of their brethren, and with the most savage, implacable violence, tumble all into confusion, ruin and desolation.

And the activities of the religionists during the Civil War and Interregnum so far impressed opponents of enthusiasm that almost one hundred years later, a writer for the Gentleman's Magazine, seeing in Methodism a sinister threat, cautioned his readers to recall the happenings of the previous century:

Whoever will be at the trouble of comparing the first rise of those troubles which at last overturn'd the constitution, and ruin'd the nation, will see too great a similitude between them and the present risings of enthusiastick rant, not to apprehend great danger that, unless proper precautions be taken in time, the remote consequences of them may be as fatal.

13 See Brown, pp. 103-104.

14 South, Sermons, IV, 52.

If detractors of enthusiasts did not blame enthusiasts for actively engaging in civil strife to destroy their own nation, they charged them with a lack of patriotism, evidenced by their refusal to defend their country by force of arms. But one critic saw the basic religious rigorism of one so-called enthusiastic group inimical to "civil freedom." Of course, the charge concerning a lack of patriotism based on the refusal to bear arms was aimed primarily against Quakers, though some other enthusiastic groups shared similar ideas on war. Even before the Quakers began their public witnessing, Gerard Winstanley, a leader of the Diggers, had counselled his followers into non-violence and pacifism. Faced with public disfavour and violence because of their taking over common land for their agricultural pursuits, Diggers needed some means of fighting or a hope for the future. Winstanley counselled patience, justice, and love. "Wait patiently upon the Lord," he said; "for it is not revenge, prisons, fines, fightings, that will subdue a tumultuous spirit; but a soft answer, love and meakness, tenderness and justice, to do as we would be done unto: this will appease wrath." And Winstanley looked forward to the time when "the Sun of Righteousness and Love" should arise in both rulers and people to put an end to "tumultuous national storms."16 He wrote boldly: "Victory that is gotten by the sword is a victory slaves get one over another; but victory obtained by Love is a victory for a king."17

17 Ibid., p. 140.
The Quaker contribution to non-violence was anticipated by Winstanley's Diggers.

Some Baptists (as indicated earlier) were averse to bearing arms, though numerous others filled the ranks of the Parliament's armies. The General Baptists were the ones who most frequently refused to take part in war. In the troubled years just prior to the Restoration, the General Baptists decided at a quarterly meeting that though in some cases it might be lawful for a Christian to fight, "as the affaires of the nation now standeth and is like to continue till the appearing of the Lord Jesus we account it exceeding dangerous." They considered it "altogether unlawfull," however, for officers of the churches to enlist either as private soldiers or commissioned officers. That such conclusions were not made binding on individual members appears evident from the facts of Baptist involvement in wars during the period.

Though many who later became Quakers fought in the armies of the period, when soldiers became Quakers, many frequently refused to continue killing others, some leaving the armies immediately; some Quakers, however, seemed to have had no qualms and so continued to fight. It was not until the Restoration that Quakers enunciated clearly their official policy, renouncing violence and the use of "carnal weapons." In hope of receiving toleration from Charles II, Quakers gave the following testimony against war and fighting:

18 Brown, p. 9n.
We know that wars and fightings proceed from the lusts of men . . . out of which lusts the Lord hath redeemed us . . . . We do utterly deny . . . all outward way & strife. . . . That Spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move to do it. . . . The Spirit of Christ will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the Kingdoms of this World.

Charles Leslie, attacking the Quaker refusal to engage in warfare, charged Quakers with duplicity. He argued that Friends were not truly averse to fighting, because they stoutly supported and fought for Parliament during the Civil War, but they refuse to fight when they do not like the quarrel. From his perusal of numerous Quaker writings, Leslie collected evidence that statements which showed Quaker approval of war during the Commonwealth period were assiduously edited after the Restoration, portions being omitted to give a new and false image of Quakers. Leslie felt that Quakers were simply biding their time, waiting for the propitious moment to strike again to set up the kingdom of the saints:

They will not yet take Arms, not for the present, not till they see their time. But they have enter'd a Caveat to secure their Right and Title to it, till they think fit to set up their Claim for their Heirship to the uttermost parts of the Earth.

Theophilus Evans, in combatting what he considered Methodist Enthusiasm, discussed Quaker non-violence and found Quakerism to be the brain-child of Roman Catholics. Evans claimed that the Quaker doctrine of


non-resistance and their refusal to take oaths were especially thought out to ensure that any foreign Catholic power (France or Spain, for example) could invade and take England without having to strike a single blow. So that once Englishmen embraced Quaker views the conquest of their country by a Catholic power was a foregone conclusion.\(^\text{21}\)

In an attack on Presbyterians in 1733, over their agitation for the repealing of the Test Act, Jonathan Swift argued that Presbyterians, the chief Dissenters, were unpatriotic in that they had decided that in the event of an invasion, if the Pretender should enter those parts of the kingdom where the greatest number of Dissenters and their estates lay, "they would sit still, and let us fight our own Battles; since they were to reap no Advantage, whichever Side should be the Victors." Swift felt certain that Presbyterians were only able to decide on such a plan in connivance with the Pretender himself: "I desire to know, how they could contrive safely to stand Neuters, otherwise than by a Compact with the Pretender and his Army, to support their Neutrality, and protect them against the Forces of the Crown?"\(^\text{22}\) One should note the significant difference

\(^{21}\) See Theophilus Evans, p. 80.

\(^{22}\) "The Presbyterian's Plea of Merit," in Irish Tracts, 1728-1733, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1964), p. 272. See also "Queries Relating to the Sacramental Test," Ibid., pp. 259-260: "When an artificial Report was raised here many Years ago, of an intended Invasion by the Pretender, . . . the Dissenters argued in their Talk . . . after this Manner, applying themselves to those of the Church. Gentlemen, if the Pretender had landed, as the Law now stands, we durst not assist you; and therefore, unless you take off the Test, whenever you shall happen to be invaded in earnest, if we are desired to take up Arms in your Defence, our Answer shall be, Pray Gentlemen fight your own Battles . . ."
between the basic pacifism of the Quakers and the Presbyterian's refusal to fight against the forces of the Pretender. The Quakers refused to engage in any warfare that called for the destruction of human life, but the Presbyterians were not prepared to fight in a cause from which they had nothing to gain. Whereas the stand of the Presbyterians was based on their opposition to the penal laws which discriminated against Dissenters, the decision of the Quakers originated from their conviction that the Spirit which led them wanted them to save life, not to destroy it.

One critic of enthusiasm charged that the very teachings of some enthusiasts predisposed a believer to slavery and unpatriotic behaviour. Referring to the Methodists, this writer charged that the doctrines they taught could lead the country into slavery, because they rob one of his love for his country and of a spirit of liberty. The anonymous writer found that the "odd notions" of the Methodist leaders would inevitably lead to "ruin and loss to the publick" of all the young people who fall into their clutches. "For can there remain any love for one's country, and true spirit of liberty," he queried, "when such abject doctrines have once possessed the mind? Slavish principles in religion," he added, "will carry along with them the principles of civil slavery."\(^{23}\) Unfortunately, the writer failed to indicate exactly what were the "slavish principles in religion" to which he was objecting.

Some critics saw in the schools Dissenters maintained a danger to the state, and others recognized a treasonable intent in the Quakers' refusal to take oaths. Robert South, for instance, considered schools run by Dissenters to be the breeding grounds of traitors to the government, and so he urged that those "lurking subterraneous nests of disloyalty and schism be utterly broken up and dismantled" to "secure the government" against those who once destroyed it. And one judge revealed that the Conventicle Act was one means used to forestall conspiracies against the government, because in their religious gatherings Quakers "met to consult to know their Numbers, and to hold Correspondency, that they may in short time be up in Arms." Judge Keeling, appealing to a grand jury for the indictment of Quakers, urged that the Quakers be not pitied because they were a "stubborn Sect" who taught dangerous principles, that it is unlawful to take an oath, for example. The judge warned that Quakers refused to swear subjection to the government because "they have an Interest to carry on against the Government . . . their end is Rebellion and Blood." Illustrating the extent to which English society depended on oaths, the judge demonstrated the enormity of the Quaker refusal to swear. Failure to swear tends to subvert the government, said the judge, in that


26 In J. West, *The Quaker Reader*, pp. 119-120.
it denies the "King the Security he ought to have of his subjects for their Allegiance." Furthermore, it subverts the government, because without swearing "we can have no justice done, no law executed, you may be robbed, your Houses broke open, your Goods taken away, and be injured in your Persons, and no Justice or Recompense can be had, because the Fact cannot be proved. The Truth is," the judge added, "no Government can stand without Swearing." The Quakers refused to swear simply because when they said "Yes" or "No," they were being absolutely honest, and because they felt that the Scriptures gave them warrant not to swear, as Barclay stated in his fifteenth proposition:

That it is not lawful for Christians to swear at all under the gospel, not only not vainly, and in their common discourse, . . . but even not in judgment before the magistrate.

The records of the imprisonment of Quakers for contempt of court tell a portion of the story both of the importance the Friends attached to their

27 The Quaker Reader, p. 120.


Oaths were not purpos'd more then Law,  
To keep the Good and Just in awe,  
But confine the Bad and Sinful  
Like Moral Cattle in Pinfold.  
A Saint's of th' heavenly Realm a Peer:  
And as no Peer is bound to swear,  
But on the Gospel of his Honor  
Of which he may dispose, as Owner . . .  

(II. ii. 197-204)
testimony against oath-taking and the serious view legal authorities took of the recalcitrance of the Quakers.  

Among the evils which many critics saw in enthusiasm, one ingenious writer for the Gentleman's Magazine listed an economic threat. His charge was aimed primarily at the Methodists, whose preaching often attracted hundreds and thousands of workers. "The industry of the inferior people in a society is the great source of its prosperity," the writer said; but if one preacher, like George Whitefield, "should have it in his power, by his preaching, to detain 5 or 6 Thousands of the Vulgar from their daily Labour, what a Loss, in a little Time," he exclaimed, "may this bring to the Public! For my Part," he continued, "I shall expect to hear of a prodigious Rise in the Price of Coals, about the City of Bristol, if this Gentleman proceeds, as he has begun . . ." The vast numbers who attended the meetings was not the only source of economic threat, as the writer saw the situation; the teachings of the Methodists also contributed to the problem, for he added that a love of labour and industry "can never be well supported by the pious discipline of a Methodist." Wesley might speak of men changed from drunkenness and

29 See Barbour, pp. 207-226 for accounts of thousands of Friends who suffered for their witnessing.


31 Ibid.
dishonesty to industriousness and dependability, but his contemporaries were not convinced. It was left to later critics to recognize the contribution of Methodism to the stability of English society.  

In the thinking of several critics of enthusiasm, one of the greatest threats enthusiasts posed to English society lay in their claim to be above the laws of the land. The attitude of seventeenth-century Quakers to their country's laws gives the stand of extreme enthusiasts on the subject. According to Barbour, "Early Quakers conceded nothing to majority agreement, social contract, or the divine right of rulers; the only basis for law they recognized was God's righteousness." They were therefore committed to disobey or ignore any law that the Spirit told them was ungodly, and neither imprisonments nor banishments would induce them to do otherwise. Edward Burrough's statement given to clarify the attitude of Quakers to the Restoration government indicates the importance of the leadings of conscience in Quaker response to civil laws:

For Conscience sake to God, we are bound ... to yield obedience ... in all matters actively or passively: that is to say,

32 Lecky claimed that "the new and vehement religious enthusiasm" represented by Methodism saved England from the "contagion" which threatened "the foundations of society and of belief" and which gained such full expression during the Revolution in France. He believed also that the Methodist revival "opened a new spring of moral and religious energy among the poor, and at the same time gave a powerful impulse to the philanthropy of the rich," thus girding English society against the divisive influences of the industrial revolution. W. E. H. Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, Cabinet ed. (London, 1910), III, 145-148.

in all just and good laws of the land, we must be obedient by doing . . . but . . . if anything be commanded of us by the present Authority, which is not according to equity, justice, and a good conscience towards God . . . we must in such cases obey God only, and deny active obedience . . . and patiently suffer what is inflicted upon us for such our disobedience.  

For the devout Quaker it was the inner light which ruled on the justness of particular laws. The Quakers' thus assuming the right to decide on the justness of a law was a constant source of frustration to civil authorities, who saw laws as made to be enforced for the comfort of all society. Concerning the Quakers and their attitude to the law, Barbour declares:

They exasperated puritan judges, who could not believe that any law which convicted Quakers was ipso facto [sic] unjust. Thus, for instance, a law against men who maliciously, or with evil purpose disturbed public preachers obviously could not apply to Quakers, whose intentions were good.  

Basic to the thinking of the Quaker in respect of laws was the idea that a just man is above all laws. Controlled by the Spirit, the just man can and will do nothing inimical to the good of society; he is therefore not really subject to man's laws. According to Barbour,

Quaker and puritan ideas emphasized man's thorough conversion to saintly conduct. Even Paul and Luther had said that Christian love will fulfill the law by causing many actions that achieve its purposes: thus, wherever love is present, Christians have no need to be compelled by laws. Friends and radical puritans extended this "Christian liberty" to all areas of a Christian's life: "If thou art such an one that canst do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth, then mayest thou safely be left to thy Freedom,

34 From Burrough, Works, quoted in Barbour, pp. 222-223.

but if thou pleadest thy freedom against . . . good and wholesome and requisit things, thy Freedom is Nought, Dark, Perverse, out of Truth.\(^{36}\)

It was in the light of such thinking that Friends and Puritans claimed that only righteous men should make laws and rule. Fox had warned Cromwell and his Protectorate Parliament: "That which invents a Law or an Act which doth oppresse, . . . it is made by that which has transgressed the pure in his owne particular. . . . Therefore take heed all ye Law Makers."\(^{37}\)

Some writers saw property, liberty, and even life, threatened by enthusiasm. Enthusiasts, these writers said, see themselves only as God's peculiar children and all others as reprobates, miscreants, and infidels who truly have no rights in a society ruled by God's children; hence these enthusiasts will invade and usurp the just rights of others and reduce them to misery and ruin. Further, these enthusiasts look forward to the time when they will be the sole rulers in society and will then deal "justly" with the wicked by confiscating all their possessions and subjecting all to slavery and oppression, or by putting all to death.\(^{38}\)

Early in the year 1652 several gentlemen, justices of the peace, clergymen, among other citizens from Lancaster county, petitioned the

\(^{36}\) Barbour, pp. 219-220; the quotation is from William Penn's Works.

\(^{37}\) To the Protector and Parliament, quoted in Barbour, p. 219.

\(^{38}\) Archibald Campbell, A Discourse Proving that the Apostles Were no Enthusiasts (London, 1730), p. 13; see also South, Sermon 3, Sermons, I, 65; Knox, Enthusiasm (Oxford, 1950), p. 3.
Council of State against George Fox and James Nayler, claiming that the two Quakers were "disaffected" to the "wholsome [sic] Laws" of the nation and had "broach'd opinions tending to the destruction of the relation of Subjects to their Magistrates, Wives to their Husbands, Children to their Parents, Servants to their Masters, Congregations to their Ministers, and of a People to their God; and have drawn much People after them . . ."39 As was often the case, the "villains" of the piece were the Quakers (whom Hume later called "the most egregious" and "the most innocent enthusiasts that have yet been known").40 Critics saw the various Quaker testimonies as assaults against the social traditions largely responsible for maintaining due order among classes. Refusing to recognize distinctions in social standing, the Quakers, according to William Penn, "affirmed it to be sinful to give flattering titles or to use vain gestures and compliments of respect, though to virtue and authority they ever made a difference, but after their plain and homely manner, yet sincere and substantial way . . ."41 Quakers, therefore, refused to bow or take their hats off to anyone; they used "thee" and "thou" to address all individuals alike, and not "you" to persons of distinction and "thou" to the inferior, as was the custom; and when elements of dress implied differences in social rank, Quakers wore simple clothing. For addressing his


father with the pronouns "thee" and "thou" instead of "you," young Elwood was often thrashed, and on one occasion threatened, as he reported: "he gave me a parting blow, and in a very angry tone said: 'Sirrah, if ever I hear you say 'thou' or 'thee' to me again, I'll strike your teeth down your throat.'" 42 William Penn reported that some people were so incensed at being addressed with "thee" and "thou" that they would say: "Thou me, thou my dog! If thou thouest me, I'll thou thy teeth down thy throat." They were forgetting the language they use to God in their own prayers, Penn said. 43

The testimonies of the Quakers in their practice of simple speech and their refusal of hat-honour and of "bowing and scraping the knee" to anyone indicated their firm belief in the equality of all men before God; such testimonies were also calculated to rebuke man's pride, as Barbour said: "Every protest in regard to equality was meant fundamentally as an assault on pride and a means of conversion, not as social reform." 44 These testimonies against social inequities contained the seeds of the later Quaker witness against slavery. But in the early days the authorities saw in these testimonies the spectre of levelling, for Englishmen of


43 The Witness of William Penn, p. 24. To teach the English people grammar, Fox, with the help of John Stubbs and Benjamin Furly, compiled and published in 1660 a volume with the expressive title: "A Battle-Door for Teachers and Professors to learn Singular and Plural, etc."

44 Barbour, p. 163.
that age were firmly persuaded that subordination was vital to the order and peace of society. One Quaker, George Whitehead (1636?-1723), reassured authorities that Quakers recognized that by God's "ordinance" some bear rule, such as civil authorities ("for punishment of evil-doers"), husbands over wives, parents over children, and the King over his subjects, but he added that the inferiors honour superiors, not by "vain ceremonies" as bowing, uncovering the head, and making vain compliments, but in "speedy Obedience to all just commands." And he concluded: "We design to level nothing but Sin." 45

Another grave threat that critics saw in enthusiasm concerned sexual immorality. They found that all enthusiasts strongly appealed to women, and eventually developed doctrines permitting sexual promiscuity of some type. Henry More found that enthusiasts had a natural tendency to descend into immoral practices with women, either having one woman illegally or demanding freedom to have several wives. He argued that Simon Magus, Montanus, Menander (a Samaritan), and the German Anabaptists were all guilty in this respect. 46 Charles Leslie cited the case of Christopher Atkinson,

a Quaker of great Renown in those their early days, an Apostle, Preacher, and Writer for their Cause, and mightily confirmed their Churches: Yet so it fell out . . . that he, even this same


bright Lamp, being in prison in Norwich for the new Faith in the infallible Light, prov'd carnally fallible in Darkness with a dear Sister . . .

Leslie acknowledged, however, that Atkinson's deed was not condoned by the Quakers, who excommunicated the offender and turned him over to the civil authorities after he had submitted a confession of guilt. Ranters were often charged with "moral laxity," and at times critics reported the prevalence of gross immoralities among Moravians and Methodists. Tyerman observed that a Moravian physician who attended to the Moravian community at Leeds and Bedford informed John Wesley "of his own knowledge of sensual abominations practised by the brethren and sisters at Leeds and Bedford," and he indicated that James Wheatley, a Methodist preacher, was dismissed from the ranks of Methodism for moral turpitude. Among the French prophets the famous case of John Lacy's deserting his wife (by command of the spirit) to marry one of the prophetesses became a scandal among the genteel in London.

47 *Snake in the Grass*, in *Works*, II, 35.


49 See Brathwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 22; Tyerman, *Wesley* (London, 1890), II, 96, 121-126. After his dismissal from among Methodists, Wheatley continued to preach, raising up his own congregations, but he was eventually condemned and shamed publicly for his guilt on numerous charges of immorality.

Such instances of moral guilt led critics to inveigh against enthusiasts as morally decadent. Satirizing enthusiasts as being morally depraved Jonathan Swift wrote: "There is one fundamental Point, wherein they [fanatics] are sure to meet, as Lines in a Center, and that is the Community of Women: Great were their Sollicitudes in this Matter, and they never fail'd of certain Articles in their Schemes of Worship, on purpose to establish it."51 And directing his barbs against Methodists, Joseph Trapp charged that enthusiasts often move from being righteous overmuch in doctrine and practice to being immoral and profligate in both doctrine and practice. Methodists, he declared, "pretend to extraordinary strictness in practice," but they "teach doctrines utterly subversive of common Morality."52

Robert South's judgment against enthusiasts represents not only his own bitterness but also the fears of many who saw a dire threat in excesses of religious devotion. Seeing that on occasions enthusiasts proved to be a direct threat to the peace and the very life of the nation and that they were likely to continue to be a pernicious influence on society and an enemy to the church, South suggested that they should be treated as outlaws and, under certain circumstances, exterminated:

He therefore who shall presume to own himself thus led by an inward voice, or instinct of the Spirit, in opposition to the laws


enacted by the civil power, has forfeited all right to any protec-
tion from that power, and has, ipso facto, outlawed himself, and
accordingly as an outlaw ought he to be dealt with; and if by these
impulses and inspirations he shall dare to offend capitally, the
magistrate must assert his rights, and vindicate the prerogative
of his abused laws with the gibbet or the halter, the axe or the
fagot; and this, if anything, will cure such villains of that which
they call the Spirit. 53

53 South, Sermon 56, Sermons, III, 263.
Basic to the enthusiasts' religious life was their firm belief that they were guided by communications from the Spirit of God; and they never doubted their responsibility to be faithful to their heavenly visions. The problem with the Church arose because the Spirit's guidance (as enthusiasts recognized it) did not always lead in the direction which ecclesiastical leaders indicated. Whereas the enthusiasts tended to see themselves as the lone lights in a vicinity shrouded in darkness, the orthodox in society, seeing lasting worth only in the traditional, the reasonable, and the generally accepted values, viewed the enthusiasts as eccentrics at best, madmen at worst. And whereas most enthusiasts tended to value most highly a charismatic church in which each member responds to the leading of the Spirit towards a singularly devout life, church authorities generally appeared to be content with an institutional religion whose emphasis was on a form of worship that was orderly and beautiful but which in satisfying the aesthetic sense sometimes failed to meet the needs of the heart. But the enthusiasts' witness contained the seeds of their undoing. Many people thought that something had to be wrong when scores of enthusiasts claiming guidance and control by the same Spirit differed in significant respects, sometimes even offending commonly accepted standards of moral behaviour. One Spirit that claimed to be the source of all goodness and unity could not be the author of dissension, disorder, and inconsistency. It was to these discordant and destructive elements
in enthusiasm that post-Revolutionary and eighteenth-century England addressed itself in an effort to unmask and discredit the enthusiast.

The Restoration clergyman was proud of his Church and outspoken (at times even boastful and cruel) in its defense. Writing in 1661, Joseph Glanvill expressed sentiments that were characteristic of clergymen then and of succeeding years. He said:

> Our religious foundations are fastened at the pillars of the intellectual world, and the grand Articles of our Belief are as demonstrable as Geometry. Nor will ever either the subtle attempts of the resolved Atheist; or the passionate Hurricanoes of the phrentick Enthusiast, any more be able to prevail against the reason our Faith is built on, than the blustering winds to blow out the Sun.¹

Clergymen were quick to claim Anglican doctrine and discipline to be the purest when compared with the teachings and discipline of other reformed churches, but in the estimate of many, the height of this excellence resided in the solid reasonableness of the Anglican faith. Of course, these clerics called attention to the reasonableness of their faith because they were persuaded of the fancifulness of the enthusiasts' religion. Persuaded of the excellency of the Anglican faith and of its ability to stand any scrutiny, the leaders of the Royal Society, for instance, had no fear of including among the Society's members men of various religious beliefs. In his defense of the inclusion of these non-Anglicans in the Society, Sprat, the Society's historian, expressed his pride in the Anglican faith:

> But yet this comparison I may modestly make; that there is no one Profession, amidst the several denominations of Christians,

that can be expos'd to the search and scrutiny of its adversaries with so much safety as ours. So equal it is, above all others, to the general Reason of Mankind: such honorable security it provides, both for the liberty of Mens Minds, and for the peace of Government: that if some Mens conceptions were put in practice that all wise Men should have two Religions; the one, a publick, for their conformity with the people; the other, a private to be kept to their own Breasts: I am confident, that most considering Men, whatever their first were, would make ours their second, if they were well acquainted with it. ²

And towards the end of the seventeenth century Jonathan Swift wrote his Tale of a Tub, violently attacking enthusiasts and celebrating "the Church of England as the most perfect of all others in Discipline and Doctrine."³

Being so strongly persuaded that the Anglican Church was the purest, most rational, and best of all reformed churches, these Churchmen were unsparing in their attacks on enthusiasts and all others who in any way posed a threat to the unity, stability, or continuity of the Church.

Enthusiasts were viewed as threats to Christianity in general and to the Anglican Church in particular. Men of the seventeenth century


³ Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (Oxford, 1920), p. 5; see also Thomas Green, Dissertation on Enthusiasm (London, 1755), p. 185, where in writing against the Methodists he eulogized the Anglican Church as follows: "And though the true spirit of primitive christianity seems indeed very much decayed in the world; yet I am fully persuaded that it might revive in our church, and recover its former strength and lustre, if the members of it would be careful, by the divine assistance, to live according to its sound doctrines and the wise and pious directions these given; as it is blessed with as true, full and rational a knowledge of the christian religion, as was ever enjoyed since the times of the Apostles; and in it is taught all things pertaining to life and godliness; . . . and there wants nothing but a suitable practice to make it the glory of the reformation, and the ornament of christianity."
commonly objected to enthusiasm as being an "enemy to truth, contrary to reason, and a disrupter of society, contrary to order." Henry More, for instance, claimed that he attacked enthusiasm because he was thoroughly persuaded of the truth, solidity, and reasonableness of the Christian religion. Observing also "that the whole business of enthusiasts is to decry reason as an impure and carnal thing," he felt compelled to "look upon enthusiasm as the only sleight and effectual engine to unhinge Christendom." Glanvill saw dogmatizing as the basic evil from which arose the destructive singularity and zeal of enthusiasts. He wrote in his *Vanity of Dogmatizing*:

Dogmatizing is the great disturber both of our selves and the world without us: for while we wed an opinion, we resolvedly ingage against every one that opposeth it. Thus every man, being in some of his opinionative apprehensions singular, must be at variance with all men. . . . Besides, this immodest obstinacy in opinions, hath made the world a Babel; and given birth to disorders, like those of the Chaos. The primitive fight of Elements doth fitly embleme that of opinions, and those proverbial contrarieties may be reconcil'd, as soon as peremptory Contenders. That hence grow Schisms, Heresies, and anomalies beyond Arithmetick, I could wish were of more difficult probation. 'Twere happy for a distemper'd Church, if evidence were not so near us. 'Tis zeal for opinions that hath fill'd our Hemisphear with smoke and darkness, and by a dear experience we know the fury of those flames it hath kindled. Had not Heaven prevented, they had turn'd our Paradise into a Desert . . . .

4 Truman Guy Steffan, "The Social Argument Against Enthusiasm (1650-1660)," *Studies in English* (July 8, 1941), p. 44.


Charles Leslie, though writing almost forty years after Glanvill, agreed with him in seeing the spirit of enthusiasm as inimical to order in Church and state. Leslie said that "enthusiasm has been the Root of the greatest Evils that have befallen the Church"; he claimed that even Dissenters, once settled into a system of order, recognized the baleful propensity of enthusiasm and so threw it off. Grasping the essential subjective and individualistic quality in enthusiasm, Leslie declared that it "is a perfect opposition to all Rule and Government; . . . there can be no order where it is admitted." And a writer for the London Magazine claimed that enthusiasm destroys religion by paying more attention to the sovereignty of God than to ideas of divine justice, wisdom, and goodness. But a contributor to the Gentleman's Magazine, remembering the revolution of the 1640's and fearful of the outcome of Methodism, declared that both religion and virtue suffer from the bad effects of the enthusiastic spirit. It is a threat to the Church of England and to the "purity of her doctrine," he said, adding that not even the Libertine is as dangerous as the enthusiast, for the Libertine might be brought to see the evil of his ways and so repent, but not so the enthusiast, because his behaviour is based on the supposed certainty of divine guidance. "He acts upon notions, wild as they are, which to him appear as certain as revelations


8 "Parallel Between Superstition and Enthusiasm," London Magazine (Jan.-Dec. 1738), p. 120.
from the Deity, nay, which he oftentimes is positively persuaded in him­self are revelations. How then," he queried, "can we expect a change in this man, who shelters his errors under the pretext of infallibility, and pretends to act by the immediate influence of Heaven?"  

Robert South, however, saw the enthusiasts' employment of the unlearned as clergymen to be one of the most nefarious plots to destroy the Church. He claimed that to achieve their goal, enthusiasts attempted to show that the Church did not need an educated and prepared ministry, hence their practice of managing affairs so that cobblers, bricklayers, and other tradesmen should harangue "the senseless and unthinking rab­ble" in the streets, churches, or barns, and from pulpits or tubs; their aim was to show that if such humble and uneducated people could preach effectively, there was no need to prepare and maintain a learned ministry at public expense. By thus robbing the Church of its learned clergymen, enthusiasts and their Roman Catholic masters would ensure its destruction.  

As noted earlier (in Chapter one), some enthusiasts objected strongly to the episcopal system of church government, while others were violently opposed to certain of the Church's ceremonies and vestments, especially to those which retained resemblances to Roman Catholic


10 Robert South, Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions (Ox­ford, 1842), Sermon 24 in II, 53; Sermon 37, II, 363.
practices, and yet others desired further changes in doctrine towards a
greater faithfulness to biblical teaching. When church authorities refused
to bow to the demands of those they considered extreme reformers, some
of the latter refused to compromise, choosing rather to separate from the
main body; others, however, chose to remain within the Church, hoping in
time to grow powerful enough to effect the desired changes from within.
Anglican leaders, however, viewed all of these dissident elements within
and without the Church as threats to its unity and so sought to legislate
all groups into conformity or out of existence, a measure which simply
hardened nonconformity. It was this seemingly ingrained incorrigibility of
enthusiasts which frightened Church authorities; and the near destruction
of the Anglican Church during the years of Puritan ascendancy gave Angli-
can leaders greater reason to fear dissident elements within and without
the Church. The memories of the sufferings of the clergy and the Church
were very evident fully one hundred years after the Revolution when Metho-
dism betrayed within the Church some of the signs of the hated enthusiasm.
Critics of enthusiasm were therefore untiring and unsparing in their denun-
ciation of every appearance of the enthusiastic spirit in the Church, and
among the objects of their attack was the enthusiasts' attitude to cere-
monies and episcopal government.

Hume confidently asserted, and quite rightly, that enthusiasts
were contemptuous of ceremonies, forms, and traditions, but Robert South
saw the enthusiastic spirit as essentially reactionary, opposed to tradition
as of equal value to the Scriptures, and going to the extreme of accepting
the bare letter of Scripture, disregarding or slighting the judgment of an-
tiquity; but what was more, the enthusiast, said South, asserts that the
Spirit (that is, either his own humour or his reason) is the only infallible
judge of all in Scripture.\textsuperscript{11} But it was Robert Burton who, in passages of
exquisite humour, detailed the catalogue of exceptions characteristically
taken by enthusiasts, schismatics, or Precisians to the practices of the
Church. The Devil will never permit the Church to rest, said Burton; so
he planted the tares of schismatics and Precisians in the well-tilled field
of the Church; and these

out of too much zeal in opposition to Antichrist, human traditions,
those Romish rites and superstitions, will quite demolish all, they
will admit of no ceremonies at all, no fasting days, no Cross in
Baptism, no kneeling at Communion, no Church-musick, &c., no
Bishop's-Courts, no Church-government, rail at all our Church-
discipline, will not hold their tongues, and all for the peace of
thee, O Sion. No not so much as Degrees will some of them tol-
erate, or Universities, all human learning (\textquoteright\textquoteright tis the Devil's Sewer),
hoods, habits, cap and surplice, such as are things indifferent in
themselves, and wholly for ornament, decency, or distinction sake,
they abhor, hate, and snuff at, as a stone-horse [stallion] when he
meets a Bear: they make matters of conscience of them, and will
rather forsake their livings, than subscribe to them. They will ad-
mit of no holy-days, or honest recreations, as of hawking, hunt-
ing, &c., no Churches, no bells some of them, because Papists
use them: no discipline, no ceremonies but what they invent them-
selves: no interpretations of Scriptures, no Comments of Fathers,
no Councils, but such as their own phantastical spirits dictate or
right reason . . . Brownists, Barrowists, Familists, and those
Amsterdamian sects and sectaries, are led all by so many private
spirits.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} David Hume, \textit{Essays Moral, Political, and Literary}, ed. T. H.
Green and T. H. Grose (London, 1912), I, 148; South, Sermon 51, \textit{Sermons},
III, 146.

\textsuperscript{12} Robert Burton, \textit{Anatomy of Melancholy}, ed. Floyd Dell and
Paul Jordan-Smith (New York, 1955), pp. 917-918.
To counter the enthusiasts' argument that they sought reforms sanctioned by Scripture, Anglican clergymen variously affirmed the validity of tradition, the biblical basis of episcopacy, or the right of the state to determine church polity in the absence of specific biblical directives. Always sensible of the sufferings and the dangers of the Church, Robert South repeatedly cautioned Anglicans against making any concessions to Dissenters, amongst whom he made no distinction; for him they were all enthusiasts and enemies of the Church. When at the accession of William III moderate Churchmen sought to find ways of including in the Anglican Church those Dissenters who stood firmly against the overtures of James II, South warned against taking steps which by weakening the discipline of the Church would lead to the erosion of its doctrines. In dedicating a number of his sermons to the University of Oxford (November 1693), he cautioned that the rights and constitution of the Church were to be jealously preserved and not treated as "little things," because "I can account nothing little in any church, which has the stamp of undoubted authority, and the practice of primitive antiquity, as well as the reason and decency of the thing itself, to warrant and support it." South was certain that the innovative spirit back of attempts to accommodate enemies of the Church was being encouraged by the Pope, whose ultimate goal was the complete destruction of the Church; so he cautioned:

... new experiments ... though in philosophy ... commendable, yet in religion and religious matters are generally fatal and pernicious. The church is a royal society for settling old things, and not for finding out new. In a word, we serve a wise and
unchangeable God, and we desire to do it by a religion and in a church (as like him as may be) without changes or alterations. 13

And in a sermon preached before the University of Oxford in October 1692, South dealt at length with the attitude of "those of the separation" to the ceremonies of the Church. He disallowed the Separatists' appeal to conscience against conforming to the ceremonies, rites, and Liturgy of the Anglican Church on the ground that conscience cannot rightly object to anything unless there is some divine law which enjoins or forbids it, and nobody could find any Scriptural authority forbidding one to pray by a set form, to kneel at sacrament, to hear divine service read by someone in a surplice, or to use the cross in baptism. But South marshalled biblical injunctions enjoining "obedience and submission to lawful governors in all not unlawful things" and commanding that God's worship be carried on in decency and order. And he affirmed by authority of Scripture that the Liturgy, rites, and ceremonies of the Church of England were necessary, and "that all pretence or pleas of conscience to the contrary, are nothing but cant and cheat, flam and delusion. In a word," South continued, "the ceremonies of the church of England are as necessary as the injunctions of an undoubtedly lawful authority, the practice of the primitive church, and the general rules of decency, can make

them necessary. " Enthusiasts were being self-willed and rebellious, then, when they refused to obey the lawful demands of their governors; and no Restoration Churchman, nor any cleric of the succeeding century, had any doubt concerning the goal and outcome of the intransigence of enthusiasts, if enthusiasts were permitted to run their course.

As early as the last decade of the sixteenth century many apologists of the Church of England, spurred by Presbyterian charges that episcopacy as practiced in England was unbiblical, diligently studied the subject and concluded that episcopacy was of apostolical origin and thus was the only legitimate system of church government. The conclusion seemed to have been so well received, at least among Anglicans, that Joseph Hall declared during the early years of the seventeenth century that "to depart from the judgment and practice of the universal church of Christ ever since the apostles' times, and to betake ourselves to a new invention, cannot but be, besides the danger, vehemently scandalous," since "that Government whose foundation is laid by Christ, and whose fabric is raised by the Apostles is of Divine institution." Laud, however, though granting that the bishop's calling was unquestionably divine, argued that bishops could be "regulated and limited by human laws, in those things which are but incidents to their calling." The fact is that the attacks on episcopacy

14 South, Sermon 24, Sermons, II, 49, 50.

15 From Works, IX, quoted in Anne Whiteman, "The Restoration of the Church of England," in From Uniformity to Unity, p. 45

16 Works, IX, quoted in Anne Whiteman, p. 45.
had led Anglican Churchmen to a clear statement of the validity of the system and to the determination never to surrender or compromise it; hence all attacks on episcopacy were to be viewed either as patently reactionary and unbiblical or as downright rebellious. Richard Baxter did not, however, accept the view that Anglican episcopacy conformed to biblical usage. He declared that he would subscribe only to that form of church discipline and government described in Ignatius and Cyprian because that form was the usage of the early Christian Church; he found the diocesan system in England unacceptable, and he charged that it was responsible for the corruption of the clergy and churches and for the ruin of the true Church discipline.  

As some Anglican apologists believed episcopacy to be biblical or at least according to the practice of the primitive Church, so Jeremy Taylor claimed the authority of Scripture and tradition for the Liturgy of the Church of England. Taylor, in effect, held that the Anglican Liturgy was in proper succession from apostolic times and thus inspired in the best sense. "When the Holy Ghost came down in a full breath and a mighty wind," Taylor said, "He filled the breasts and tongues of men, and furnished the first Christians not only with abilities enough to frame excellent devotions for their present offices, but also to become precedents for liturgy to all ages of the church, the first being imitated by the

second and the second by the third, till the church being settled in peace, and the records transmitted with greater care and preserved with less hazard, the church chose such forms whose copies we retain at this day."  

Most churchmen were content, however, with defending the liturgy and ceremonies as providing that decency and order requisite in the worship of God. Along with Burton and numerous others, South conceded that the controversial usages of the Church were not vital to salvation but were matters indifferent; they could not even be considered the worship of God; nevertheless, he affirmed that divine worship could not be without such usages at some time or other.  

Many opponents of enthusiasts persuaded themselves that the enthusiasts were not really interested in reform but used reform demands as a disguise for their less attractive goals, namely, personal gain and property. Such conclusions were undoubtedly based on the practice of Parliament during the Revolution. The revenue of the higher clergy of the Anglican Church was sequestered, and Royalists and all refusing to cooperate with Parliament also suffered sequestration, many losing their properties if they could not compound for them.  


Parliament were largely occasioned by their political sympathies. Nevertheless, critics of enthusiasts were not often given to making allowances for political considerations. In his satire against enthusiasts in *Hudibras*, Butler used Ralpho as the mouthpiece for extreme enthusiast views. Ralpho asserts, in effect, that wicked people have no right in a state, and the property they hold really belongs to the saints:

Yet as the wicked have no right
To th' Creature, though usurp'd by might,
The property is in the Saint,
From whom th' injuriously detain't;
Of him they hold their Luxuries, . . .
All which the Saints have title to,
And ought t' enjoy, if th' had their due.
What we take from them is no more
Then what was ours by right before.21

And in his "Astrea Redux," Dryden supported the same view. Of the enthusiasts of Revolution times, he wrote:

Religion's name against itself was made: . . .
Like zealous missions, they did care pretend
Of souls in show, but made the gold their end.

(ll. 191, 193-194)

Robert South, for his part, repeatedly charged that enthusiasts were primarily interested in church property: "So short sighted are some in their politics," he said, "as not to discern all this while, that it is not the service but the revenue of our church which is struck at; and not any passages of our Liturgy, but the property of our lands which these reformers

would have altered." And in another sermon, answering the question, "What are we to reform from?" South replied, "from popery and superstition." "But where is this popery and superstition?" he asked, and replied:

Why, I will tell you: there are certain lands and revenues which the church is yet possessed of, and that with as full right as any man does or can hold his temporal estate by, which an old, surfeited avarice, not well able to gorge any more, either for shame or satiety, thought fit to leave remaining in the church still. And this is the popery that with men of a large and sanctified swallow we stand guilty of, and ought by all means to be reformed from. For with a certain sort of men there can be no such thing as a thorough reformation till the clergy are all clothed in primitive rags, and brought to lick salt at the end of their table, who think the crumbs that fall from it much too good for them.

Jonathan Swift did not, as South and others, underscore the cupidity of enthusiasts but their antipathy to peace and goodwill. No overtures by the Church of England would satisfy the ill-will of those opposing her, Swift warned; not even a modification of her ceremonies would mollify them, though that would be an easy price to pay for peace. "There is a Portion of Enthusiasm assigned to every Nation, which if it hath not proper Objects to work on," Swift said, "will burst out, and set all in a Flame. If the Quiet of a State can be bought by only flinging Men a few Ceremonies to devour," he continued, "it is a Purchase no wise Man would refuse." 23

22 South, Sermon 24, Sermons, II, 53.


But, of course, enthusiasts were far too cross-grained and revolutionary to be satisfied with ceremonies. Given ceremonies, Swift added, enthusiasts would find other demands more damaging than the first, and yet others, until Church and state are again embroiled and destroyed as happened during the Puritan Revolution.

Detractors of enthusiasts found that the "reformers" were a danger to the Church, not only because of their antipathy to its rites, ceremonies, Liturgy, and discipline, but also because they often used the instruments of the Church (praying and preaching) in the service of destruction. Preaching at the consecration of Dr. Seth Ward as Bishop of Oxford, Robert South bemoaned the fact that Church and state were "robbed and plundered in scripture phrase" when the Puritans were in control of affairs. "We have seen men preached into schism," he said, "lectured into sacrilege, and prayed into rebellion; the very pulpit has been made to undermine the church." Should one read the sermons of those enthusiasts, South insisted, especially those preached at their "bloody thanksgivings, and their blood-thirsty humiliations," he would find them to be "so many satires against government, so many declamations against the church; every line and period almost spitting poison against monarchy, against discipline and decency," to the reproach of preaching and of the ministry, and "to the blot of Christianity."25 As if catching the very spirit of South's sermon, an anonymous author compiled and published in 1739 a number of prayers offered during

25 South, Sermon 4, Sermons, IV, 50.
the early years of the Puritan Revolution; this author was attempting to
discredit Methodism by declaring it to be identical in spirit with the en-
thusiasm of a century earlier. He significantly titled his work, Enthu-
siasm no Novelty: Or, the Spirit of the Methodists in the Year 1641 and
1642. Many of the prayers in the collection are crude and very personal,
possessing that familiarity which many critics saw as characteristic of
the enthusiast's attitude to God, but most significant was the number of
prayers which were either contemptuous or critical of the godliness of the
King. "Lord," someone petitioned, "convert or depose, reforme or over-
throw our King, who sides with, and patronizes all Papists." Another
person prayed: "I pray the [sic] help me to pray for thy Churches abroad
. . . (and) in this our Nation. . . . Lord discover, prevent, timely over-
throw the Kingses Conspiracys, Counsells, Treasons, Treacherys, against
our Parlement, our Brethren in Ireland, this our Church and Kingdome."26
The opponent of the enthusiast was, of course, incapable of granting the
enthusiast the credit of having a sense of loyalty for the party whose cause
he espoused in a complicated conflict. The fact is that the enthusiast was
fighting against his King and destroying the established church in the pro-
cess, and that was more than enough reason to discredit him altogether.

Besides its success in temporarily destroying the organization of
the Church, enthusiasm and the preaching of the enthusiasts had other
baleful results on the character and religious life of citizens, lasting many

26 Enthusiasm no Novelty (London, 1739), pp. 6, 7-8.
years after the Puritans lost political power. South found (1685) that some Puritans of fifty to eighty years old were unable to give a reason for their faith, whereas before the Revolution children of nine or ten years were able to. He attributed this lack to the preaching of the enthusiasts, which was not intended to teach but to "please and pamper a proud, senseless humour, or rather a kind of spiritual itch" then common in the greatest part of the nation. In the same sermon, preached to former students of Westminster School, South declared that the numerous conspiracies and plots against the King between the years 1679 and 1683 and the general disobedience of children to parents, of servants to masters, and the badness of both husbands and wives were all the results of the rebellion of 1640-1660. "Neither are men so good husbands, nor women so good wives, as they were before that accursed rebellion had made that fatal leading breach in the conjugal tie between the best of kings and the happiest of people," South insisted. He asserted further that the rebellion brought a "general dissolution of order, and a corruption and debauchment of men's manners" as evidenced in the behaviour of the greatest number of those under fifty years old in the nation; indeed, the confusion of the rebellion "perfectly changed and new modelled, or rather extinguished the morality, nay, the very natural temper of the English nation." 

27 South, Sermon 49, Sermons, III, 89.

28 South, Sermon 49, Sermons, III, 72.
Joseph Trapp, writing against the enthusiasm of the Methodists, charged that the doctrines taught by Methodists did great mischief in society, setting at variance those who were dearest to each other, disturbing the quiet of families, throwing whole neighbourhoods and parishes into confusion, and weakening and impairing the regular and well-ordered Church. By weakening the ordinances and laws of the Church, the enthusiasts also weaken the Church's inward power and consequently dilute the piety and godliness of its members. "Now that the weakening of our pure, primitive, Apostolical Church, as a Society, must needs weaken the inward Power of Godliness, is evident," Trapp said, "because the Ordinances of the Church are the Outworks and Fortifications of inward Christian Piety and Vertue." Basing his argument on the idea that impure hands can make holy things unclean, and truth, which ordinarily inspires wisdom and promotes peace, can be a source of discord even when espoused by reasonable and peaceable men, Bishop Warburton argued against the Methodists, insisting that a fanatic manner of preaching even the Apostles' doctrine can do society more harm than can old and new speculative heresies. The fanatic way of preaching, Warburton claimed, "tends tobewilder the imaginations of some, to inflame the passions of others, and, in the state of things, to spread disorder and disturbance.

throughout the whole Community."\(^{30}\)

John Wesley often answered critics of his preaching and doctrine by calling attention to the number of people who began leading a new and better way of life after being converted by Methodist preachers; many detractors, however, were unwilling to allow the possibility of genuine conversions among enthusiasts. They argued that enthusiasm by nature was inconsistent, hot and zealous at one time and at another time cold, phlegmatic, and careless. Arguing from the idea that the enthusiast's conversion is the result of the deception of the passions and not the outcome of intellectual assent, Dr. Scott declared that once the enthusiast's body returns to its former temper, the man reverts to his former way of life; "after the pangs of Regeneration are over, their Converts grow \textit{cold}, and \textit{careless}, and \textit{remiss} in Religion; and so like to what they were in the State of Nature, that you would hardly believe they had ever been \textit{converted}."\(^{31}\) But Bishop Warburton, though finding similar results among converts to enthusiasm, attributed those results to the power of fanaticism. Fanaticism, he said, shakes and agitates the mind, instigating those faculties which most influence the will and forcing the Manners from their usual pattern, sometimes effacing or obscuring the strongest impressions of custom and nature. "But this extraordinary fervour," he continued, "tho' always violent, is rarely, lasting: never so long as to


establish the new System into a habit." When the rage of the fervour subsides, the bishop added, all the old patterns of behaviour return, while the new ones progressively disappear, leaving the enthusiast where he was originally. To underscore the difference between the enthusiast's conversion and true Christian conversion, Warburton described the results of true conversion. "But now if we look into the history of those early converts," he said, "we shall find that their Virtue, from the very first impression of it, had all the ease, sobriety, and moderation of a settled habit: in this they persevered; and adding grace to grace, they went on, thro' life, in one constant tenor, from the first baptismal profession of their faith by water, to the last awfull confirmation of it in their blood."32 No extremes of heats and fervours satisfied the eighteenth-century anti-enthusiast; all must be calm, sober, rational, and abiding by the commonly accepted norms.

When the Methodists resorted to field-preaching because they were refused the pulpit, numerous critics charged them with destroying the order, laws, and ordinances of a well regulated Church. Preaching thus in the fields and streets was seen as the direct result of the enthusiastic spirit. Green condemned the practice as an abuse of Christian liberty destructive of the peace and order of the Church of Christ "publicly established and wisely designed, as a means of promoting religion,

32 Warburton, *Doctrine of Grace*, pp. 92, 93.
and preserving peace and order." And Joseph Trapp, fulminating against the innovations of the Methodist field-preachers, could find no warrant for such practices except the enthusiastic or blasphemous claim that Christ preached in the same manner. But, he retorted, "If it be alleged . . . that Christ, and his Apostles, prayed and preached in the Fields, on the Mountains, on the Sea-Shore, &c. I ask, have these Creatures the same Spirit and Power that they had? They seem to say they have indeed; But if they directly say so, do they not blaspheme?"

Reflecting the outrage many Englishmen felt at the highly irregular practice of the Methodist preachers, Trapp affirmed that "for a Clergyman of the Church of England to pray, and preach, in the Fields in the Country, or in the Streets in the City, is perfectly new, never heard of before"; and he added, "To pray, preach, and sing Psalms, in the Fields, is worse, if possible, than intruding into Pulpits by downright Violence, and Breach of the Peace; and then denying the plain Fact with the most infamous Prevarication." And an anonymous writer for the Gentleman's Magazine condemned open-air preaching as dishonouring God and making a farce of religion, a "great offence to all sober Christians, the occasion of


impious merriment to the scornful infidels"; further, he found in it a "tendency to unsettle and pervert weak minds."  

But one of the evils which clergymen found most difficult to endure was the enthusiasts' attacks on the clergy. In his *Caveat Against New Prophets* Calamy, himself charged with enthusiasm, recited the activities of numerous so-called prophets (enthusiasts), among them Hackett, of Elizabethan times, and Doomsday Sedgwick, of a later date, besides numerous other European prophets, and asserted that all such enthusiasts, including the French prophets, poured contempt on the ministry of the Church and on church officials.  

The Methodists, Green charged, uncharitably attacked and censured the clergy of the established church, representing them as wicked and careless, "as if they did not either understand or else kept from the people the knowledge of several gospel truths." He believed that the practice could hurt religion; but he was certain that the practice was one of the evil consequences of the revolution of 1641-1660. At that time, he said, "many sober and religious ministers were . . . reckoned as scandalous, ignorant and malignant," such measures being one of the means enthusiasts used to discredit the


36 Calamy, *Caveat*, p. 47.

37 Green, *Dissertation*, p. 165.
clergy among the people.38 On this matter of disparaging the established clergy, as noted in Chapter two, the early Quakers made themselves notorious for challenging ministers in their own pulpits and debating with them in public, so that even the Puritan ministers took offence and charged that the Friends were bent on destroying "the most godly order in church and state that England had ever seen."39

This propensity of enthusiasts to disparage the clergy and those with whom they disagreed pointed to a persecuting spirit which critics pronounced to be characteristic of enthusiasts. Enthusiasm "works up the mind to fierceness and to every barbarity which is contrary to the natural affections of men," said a correspondent of the London Magazine.40 The writer was seconded by Bishop Warburton, who pointed out the existence of a dangerous persecuting potential in Methodism and in all zealous sects. This persecuting spirit of Methodists was kept in abeyance, the bishop felt, by the watchfulness of the strong national government. To see the true persecuting spirit of enthusiasts, Warburton

38 Green, Dissertation, p. 167; Green also quoted Whitgift, who was writing in response to supporters of the Admonition to Parliament: "It is their manner, unless you please their humour in all things, be you never so well learned, never so painful, so zealous, so virtuous, all is nothing with them; but they will deprave you, rail on you, backbite and invent lies on you, and spread false rumours, as though you were the vilest person on earth" (p. 167).


40 "Superstition and Enthusiasm," London Magazine (Jan.-Dec. 1738), p. 120.
claimed, one need only see enthusiasm in all its fortunes, and this the history of England provided for amply. He was certain that the Methodists were the spiritual descendants of the Precisians of the days of Elizabeth and of the Puritans of the times of Charles I; and if one would only read the proper books, the bishop hinted, one would find ample proof of the truth of his assertion:

Whoever reads the large accounts of the *Spiritual State of the Regicides* while under condemnation (written and published, at that time, by their friends, to make them pass, with the people, for Saints and Martyrs) and compares them with the circumstantial Journals of the Methodists, will find so exact a conformity in the frenzy of sentiment, and even in the cant of expression, upon the subjects of Faith, Grace, Redemption, Regeneration, Justification, &c. as may full satisfy him, that they are both of the same Stock; and ready, on a return of the like season to produce the same fruits. 41

Robert South and other critics of enthusiasm had charged that the Puritans of Revolution times used their prayers and sermons to support rebellion and oppression. The Methodists of a century later were also charged with undermining public morals and virtue by their preaching. It was not that Methodists directly inculcated immorality in their members but that the doctrines they taught, in their extreme emphasis on goodness, led to a reaction contributing to moral laxity. Joseph Trapp, attacking William Law, John Wesley, and the Methodists, thought it outrageous that men should represent the Christian religion as being so abstemious and strait-laced that a man should be called upon to renounce absolutely

"all the possessions and enjoyments of the world, and have nothing at all to do with them." Trapp was unable to appreciate the religious value of that utter emptying of self for which Law called when he wrote that "not only the vices, the wickedness, and vanity of this world, but even its most lawful and allow'd concerns, render men unable to enter, and unworthy to be receiv'd into the true state of Christianity"; and to say that "the wisdom from above condemns all labour, as equally fruitless, but that which labours after everlasting life" was, in Trapp's thinking, to condemn all trades and secular concerns. Fasts, abstinence, shunning of worldly pleasures, and other similar duties, though good in themselves, may be misused; and Trapp thought that enthusiasts, by their emphasis on such duties, tended to make the good things they forbade on such occasions appear as evil in themselves. But the greatest evil is that people who are led to treat vices of excess as though they were virtues are the most difficult people to draw away from their errors and vices; they are even harder to save than bad men, because "in their own imagination their Errors are the Height of Wisdom, and their Sins and Vices the most perfect Vertues." Thinking themselves the greatest of saints, they


are in fact the very reverse.  

Bishop Lavington saw an incitement to "immorality and vice," not only in the Methodists' emphasis on abstemiousness, but also in their claims that God impressed on them the things they were to do. Lavington insisted that people who are taught to believe that their impressions and impulses are inspirations and revelations from God will believe and become confident both in right and wrong practices, and some will neglect all the means of salvation, all gradual improvement and growing in grace, from an expectation of instantaneous calls and conversions, as the Methodist enthusiasts taught them to expect.  

One of the favourite arguments of anti-enthusiasts denounced enthusiasm as a greater enemy of the Church than atheism. More saw both atheism and enthusiasm engaged in a joint conspiracy against the

44 Trapp, Righteous Overmuch, p. 33. In 1745, about six years after the appearance of Trapp's work, John Wesley published his "Advice to the People Called Methodists" in which one may find some of the religious regimen of the Methodists which might have raised the ire of Trapp and others critical of the new evangelicals. In admonishing his followers, Wesley declared that their strictness of life as a whole might be considered something new; and he went on to describe without apology some of the elements of that strictness: "I mean, your making it a rule, to abstain from fashionable diversions, from reading plays, romances or books of humour, from singing innocent songs, or talking in a merry, gay, diverting manner; your plainness of dress; your manner of dealing in trades; your exactness in observing the Lord's day; your scrupulosity as to things that have not paid custom; your total abstinence from spirituous liquors (unless in cases of necessity) . . ." Works, VIII, 354.

true knowledge of God and religion, each helping the other. The atheist's pretence to wit and natural reason secures the enthusiast in his belief that reason is no guide to God, while the enthusiast's boldly dictating the careless ravings of his own "tumultuous fancy for undeniable principles of divine knowledge" confirms the atheist's claim that all religion and the notion of a God is no more than the result of a disease of the mind. But Charles Leslie believed that enthusiasm was more dangerous than atheism, because the one "steals away many devout and well-meaning people," while the other captures only the "unthinking and the debauched." According to Leslie, both evils conspire to waste and destroy Christianity, atheism by open enmity but enthusiasm "by betraying and exposing to the utmost contempt the Authority of Divine Revelation"; however, though apparently opposites, both evils assist each other, enthusiasm naturally begetting atheism when the former's pretences are exposed as false, and atheism deriding all revelation, whether true or pretended. Using almost the same argument as More and Leslie, Dr. Scott found that deism was produced in proportion to the spread of enthusiasm.


47 Charles Leslie, Snake in the Grass, Works, II, 3; In his Apology for the True Christian Divinity, Barclay, the Quaker apologist, gave an interesting and ironic twist to the common argument that enthusiasm bred atheism. He declared that the "many and varied opinions of God and religion, being so mixed with guessings and uncertain judgments of men, have begotten in many the opinion, that there is no God at all." Barclay was, of course, referring to the numerous views concerning God current among the so-called orthodox Christians (p. 17).
This must be expected, he averred, "since, if Men are educated in such
close to religious Principles as will not bear an Examination, and also
find them to be the growing opinions of the most warm and zealous pro-
fessing Christians, it is great Odds, but they view Christianity as the
same absurd thing, and without any more to do, directly study how to
form the most ridiculous Idea of it; and then renounce it, with all imagi-
nable Contempt or Disdain."48

Other critics, however, saw enthusiasm leading elsewhere than
into atheism; it might lead to a calm, uniform superstition, and that was
to say Roman Catholicism; or it might cause one to lapse into libertinism,
as Trapp thought. People who are sincerely religious could by enthusiasm
be made to believe, Trapp declared, that they are lax in their religious
duties when they are not; even the wicked and profane are hardened and
forced to denounce Christianity as irrational and impracticable; and when
they see the "highest professors" of religion teaching absurd doctrines
and following their teaching with an absurd way of life, the lewd and de-
bauched, vicious and profane are encouraged in their evils and confirmed
in their "libertinism and dissolute course of living, in their profaneness
and infidelity," flattering themselves that religion is an absurdity.49

Laurence Sterne, however, fully expected that Methodist enthusiasm

48 Scott, Fine Picture of Enthusiasm, p. vi.

49 "Righteous Overmuch," in Gentleman's Magazine, p. 291. See also "Superstition and Enthusiasm," London Magazine, p. 120.
would eventually convert its followers into "popery," for they have only to say "that the spirit which inspired them, has signified, that the pope is inspired as well as they, and consequently is infallible. After which," he added, "I cannot see how they can possibly refrain going to mass, consistent with their own principles."  

Schism was perhaps the greatest evil to which enthusiasm could lead, in the view of several writers. By its very nature enthusiasm emphasized what was private and divisive in men, and, according to one writer, "carried to its logical extreme, might end in a cry for 'one man, one religion.'" This essentially subjective quality in enthusiasm was truly the cause of much of the opposition to it. Most clerics saw enthusiasm as placing a premium on irrationality and as implying that Christianity was not amenable to reason, whereas they were quite certain that the Christian religion was reasonable and as such capable of comprehension by all men. According to South, each man "brings such a degree of [reason] into the world with him, that though it cannot bring him to heaven, yet, if he be true to it, it will carry him a great way; indeed so far, that if he follows it faithfully, I doubt not but he shall meet with another light, which shall carry him quite through."  

Reason, then, is a unifying


51 M. V. DePorte, intro. to Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, p. i.

52 South, Sermon 23, Sermons, II, 31.
quality, and enthusiasm a divisive one. In South's view, since all truths absolutely necessary to salvation are so clearly revealed that none can err in them, men who continue to doubt or dispute these truths must be prompted by "curiosity and singularity," the "faults of a diseased will." And, of course, in the thinking of many critics, enthusiasts were diseased, deluded by sickness, or even insane. Certainly, they were a singular group. Jeremy Taylor, in picturesque imagery, expressed the singularity and doom of the enthusiast in contrast to the unity, reasonableness and hope of true "saints." Speaking of enthusiasts, Taylor said:

... to have a fungus arise from the belly of mud and darkness, and nourish a glow-worm that shall challenge to outshine the lantern of God's word ... is to annul all the excellent established, orderly and certain effects of the Spirit of God. ... He therefore that will follow a guide that leads him by an extraordinary spirit, shall go an extraordinary way, and have a strange fortune, and a singular religion, and a portion by himself a great way off from the common inheritance of the saints, who are lead by the Spirit of God, and have one heart, and one mind, one hope, and the same baptism, and the helps of ministry, leading them to the common country, which is the portion of all that are sons of adoption, consigned by the Spirit of God, the earnest of their inheritance.

If one is guided by the Spirit of God, then, according to Taylor, he cannot be singular or strange, but must essentially be one in heart, mind, and hope with all others who are led by that Spirit. But in the view of many Anglican clerics, enthusiasts within the Church of England had

53 South, Sermon 3, Sermons, I, 50.

54 From Sermon 22 in Twenty-Seven Sermons, quoted in Steffan, "Social Argument Against Enthusiasm," pp. 56-57.
always been at odds with the leaders of the Church, always tending to schism. Some Churchmen preferred that these enthusiasts remain within the Church, attempting by exhortations and admonitions to purify it of corruptions, if they were truly interested in reforming; but others, bitter against all who caused a "rent" in Christ's seamless coat, the Church, were more contented to hound the schismatics from Church and state.

Among those Churchmen who abhorred schism was Charles Leslie the Nonjuror. Leslie insisted that the Church is a single body, unified, and the choicest spiritual gifts lose all their virtue and "become hurtful and pernicious to those who had them" if they were used to cause a schism in the Church. To preserve the unity of the Church, he added, all members, no matter how eminent, should be subject to their spiritual governors, the bishops, among others, who truly are the "Principles of Unity in the Body, next and immediately under Christ" and "immediately" representing Christ.

"Corruptions in the Church," Leslie continued,

are better amended by living in the Communion of the Church; and there, by exhorting, admonishing, and shewing good example to reclaim, than by open desertion to set up opposite Factions, which heightens the Animosities, embitters the Spirits, renders them deaf to one anothers Advices, and oft proceeds to Blood and slaughter; which lays waste whole Kingdoms, and gives the Enemy the greatest opportunity to sow his Tares in the heat and confusion of Schism and Rebellion, which we sadly experienc'd in the late bloody Revolution of Forty One; wherein . . . there arose thirty or forty different and opposite Sects and Heresies, more abhorrent to the Presbyterians (who begat them, and begun that Rebellion) than Episcopacy it self, against which they first took Arms. 55

Whereas Leslie would have had enthusiasts remain within the Church to preserve its unity, some other clerics preferred to see the hateful group kept out of all civil or military employment, or hounded out of the Church and society, and even damned. Jonathan Swift, professing to represent the general wishes and desires of a majority of Englishmen, declared that the civil government should ensure that the Church of England be "preserved entire in all her Rights, Powers and Privileges; All Doctrines relating to Government discouraged which she condemns; All schisms, Sects and Heresies discountenanced and kept under due Subjection, as far as consists with the Lenity of our Constitution. Her open Enemies (among whom I include at least Dissenters of all Denominations) not trusted with the smallest Degree of Civil or Military Power . . ." 56 Swift was undoubtedly voicing the sentiments of the High Church party in Parliament, at least. The Test Act had restricted most civil offices and members of corporations to those people who took Holy Communion according to the rites of the Church of England; but though it succeeded in keeping all Roman Catholics from positions of trust, power and dignity, it was not effective in excluding moderate Dissenters, who found no difficulty in attending their own religious services and occasionally accepting Communion from an Anglican minister. Indeed, most Independents and Baptists refused to conform to hold offices, but many moderates among Presbyterians and

Independents conformed, with the blessing of respected divines like Baxter, Bates, Howe, Archbishop Tenison, and Burnet. Against such occasional conformity the High Church party crusaded and succeeded in 1711, when the Tories were swept into power. The Bill against occasional conformity stipulated that all persons in places of profit or trust, and all common councilmen in corporations, who attended Nonconformist meetings, should lose their offices until they could prove that for a whole year they had refrained from attending Conventicles. Offenders were to pay a fine of forty pounds. Denied opportunity to hold offices providing one with wealth, influence, or dignity by the provisions of the Occasional Conformity Act, schismatics received another stunning blow when a very unsympathetic Parliament passed the Schism Act in 1714, the very year during which Swift wrote his "Thoughts upon the Present State of Affairs." This Act (which never went into effect because of the death of Queen Anne) was intended to crush the schismatics by closing all their seminaries and academies, thus depriving the children of enthusiasts education in the faith of their parents. 57

Robert South, believing that enthusiasts were given up by God to "confound and lose themselves in an endless maze of error and seduction," insisted that they brought a scandal upon religion and so should not on any terms be endured in the Church. Enthusiasts, said South, are a greater reproach to the Church than are drunkards, swearers, or highway robbers because the latter do not lay claim to some religious dispensation for their sins, whereas the enthusiasts claim that the evils they do are no sin because they are done by authority of the Spirit. "So that," South continued,

their killing is no murder; their plundering their neighbour, no robbery; their violating his bed, no adultery, for the Spirit, by an inward voice or motion, dissolving the bonds of those laws which tie up other men from these actions, does in the mean time authorize and empower them to act all these things innocently, piously, and perhaps meritoriously too; than which it is impossible for the wickedness of man to utter or conceive any thing more highly opprobrious to God and to religion.

South considered it an outrage that enthusiasts should use the pulpit against the Church; they preached men into schism, lectured them into sacrilege, and prayed them into rebellion. Accordingly, he would never

58 South added, describing the "maze of error and seduction": ". . . so that, as soon as they had broke off from the church, . . . they first ran into presbyterian classes, from thence into independent congregations: from independents they improved into anabaptists; from anabaptists into quakers; from whence being able to advance no further, they are in a fair way to wheel about to the other extreme of popery . . . ." Sermon 45, Sermons, II, 550.

59 South, Sermon 56, Sermons, III, 261

60 South, Sermons, IV, 50.
consider sanctioning efforts at adjusting the discipline and practice of
the Church to achieve comprehension of enthusiasts (Dissenters) within
it, especially since the Anglican Church now had the upperhand of the
enthusiasts. "Does it become a man, with a sword by his side, to be­
seech?" South asked, "or a governor, armed with authority, to entreat?"
And he insisted, "He that thinks to win obstinate schismatics by con­
descension, and to conjure away those evil spirits with softer lays and
music of persuasion, may, as David in the like case, have a javelin flung
at his head for his pains, and perhaps escape it as narrowly."61 The
quintessence of hatred some men bore schismatic enthusiasts is evident
in a remark made by one Howell and quoted by Lavington's editor. Howell
thought enthusiasts the fittest men for Hell. "I rather pity, than hate a
Turk or Infidel," he said, "for they are of the same metal, and bear the
same stamp as I do, though the inscriptions differ. If I hate any," he
continued, "it is those schismatics, that puzzle the sweet peace of our
Church; so that I could be content to see an Anabaptist go to hell on a
Brownist's back!"62 Many moderate Anglican divines (Latitudinarians)
made several attempts at removing some of the causes of disagreement
between Dissenters and the Church of England in the hope of healing the
breach and uniting English Protestants, but the extremists in both camps

61 South, Sermons, IV, 49.

62 Quoted in Lavington, Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists
Considered, p. xxv.
doomed such well-meaning efforts to failure. 63

Enthusiasts in England suffered greatly in public esteem because many of their detractors played on popular sentiment against Roman Catholics by charging that enthusiasts were actively in league with Jesuits or were in some mysterious manner linked with Roman Catholic forces intent on destroying the Church of England. Leslie believed that enthusiasm in England was a Catholic plot to destroy the Anglican Church by schisms and to bring back men to the Church of Rome and its belief in infallibility. He claimed that Rome set up numerous enthusiastic sects in England during the Interregnum with the purpose of dividing and confounding the Anglican Church. Speaking of the Roman Catholics, Leslie declared, "They dress'd Enthusiasm in several shapes and forms, of Presbyterian, Anabaptist, Independent, Quaker, Muggleton and a long &c. which differ only in degrees." 64

Jonathan Swift, however, charged that "papists" disguised themselves as members of the sectarian groups and stirred up trouble to destroy the Church of England. "We know," he said, "it hath been the constant Practice of the Jesuits to send over Emissaries, with Instruction to personate themselves Members of the several prevailing Sects amongst us. So it is recorded," he continued, "that they have at sundry Times appeared in the Guise of Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Independents, and

63 For an account of attempts at comprehension, see Abbey and Overton, The English Church, pp. 147-182; Roger Thomas, "Comprehension and Indulgence," in Nuttall and Chadwick, From Uniformity to Unity, pp. 190-253.

64 Leslie, Snake in the Grass, in Works, II. 94.
Quakers, according as any of these were most in Credit . . ."\(^\text{65}\) Swift also claimed that Toland, author of the deistic treatise, *Christianity not Mysterious*, was himself an Irish priest and the son of an Irish priest.

Theophilus Evans, writing against the Methodists in the middle of the eighteenth century, essentially repeated the commonly held belief that emissaries of the Roman Catholic Church infiltrated the ranks of enthusiasts during the years of the Puritan Rebellion. The disguised "Papists," Evans declared, took advantage of the unsettled conditions in the nation to use the "rebels" as tools for the abolition of Episcopacy and the Liturgy and the murder of Archbishop Laud and the King.\(^\text{66}\) Indeed, critics of enthusiasm found Roman Catholics responsible either for founding or infiltrating every important group of enthusiasts in England. Evans insisted that the Quakers were an invention of Roman Catholics to subvert the Anglican Church and reduce it to Roman Catholicism. He quoted a Sir J. Ware as declaring that he was credibly informed that a Jesuit from St. Omer maintained that Jesuits spent 20 years "hammering out the Sect of the Quakers" in an attempt to perfect a sect most likely to produce "Popery." And according to Evans, William Penn, the influential Quaker, was


\(^{66}\) Evans claimed that the Presbyterians and Independents became tools of the "Papists" to perpetrate a plot against Charles I and Laud; this Catholic plot, afoot in Rome since 1640, he said, was discovered by Sir William Boswell, the King's agent at the Hague. See Evans, *The History of Modern Enthusiasm*, 2nd ed. (London, 1757), pp. 23-25.
known by Quakers to be a "Papist." It was not difficult for a fertile mind to find in Quaker practices and doctrine evidence suggestive of an alliance between Quakers and Roman Catholics, because Quakers refused to take the oath against recognition of the doctrine of transubstantiation and the authority of the Papacy in England. Further, some people saw in the Quaker doctrine of the inner light a claim to infallibility similar to the Pope's, and Baxter, as others, noted that "the Papists make the Scripture a dead letter, no sufficient Rule of Faith, or Judge of Controversies; and so do they (i.e. the Quakers)." In an attempt to discredit the Quaker cause, Leslie declared that Quaker doctrine came from Rome, that it was set up in Holland by a Jesuit named Labbade, that Robert Barclay, the Quaker apologist, was bred in a Roman Catholic convent at Paris, and that one Vaughton and a William Southby, both Quaker preachers, were Roman Catholics. To bolster his charge that Quakers were dupes of Rome, Leslie showed that Quakers, like the Roman Catholics, went to great lengths to vilify all other Protestant groups, especially the Church of England; they used the same terms of reproach against the Anglican Church as Catholics use against her; they pretended to miracles, and,

67 Evans, *Modern Enthusiasm*, pp. 80, 81.


like the Catholics, they damned all the world except themselves.  

Surprisingly, even the moderate Baxter, himself branded with enthusiasm, believed in the existence of a sinister relationship between Roman Catholics and Quakers. Baxter noted that a George Cowlinshaw of Bristol affirmed under oath that an Irishman called Coppinger informed him (Cowlinshaw) that while in Rome he came into close intimacy with Quakers. "And being at a Meeting of the Quakers he there met with two of his Acquaintance in Rome . . . (of the same Franciscan Order . . .) that were now become chief Speakers among the Quakers."  

The French prophets and the Methodists were also tainted with Roman Catholicism, according to some of their critics. Evans found that the three principal French prophets (Elias Marion, John Cavalier, and Durand Page) were all Catholics, though they claimed to be convinced of the errors of Rome and professed conversion to Calvinism. Cavalier was tutored by the Jesuits, Evans said. Even Methodist leaders were suspected of connivance with Roman Catholics. In his dedication to Edmund,  

70 Leslie, _Snake in the Grass_, in _Works_, II, 95-96.  


72 Evans, _Modern Enthusiasm_, pp. 97-99; see also Francis Hutchinson, _A Short View of the Pretended Spirit of Prophecy_ (London, 1708), pp. 5-6, 8-9, where Hutchinson levelled similar accusations at the prophets: Elias Marion was a "Papist" until he was 23 or 24; Cavalier studied with the Jesuits for seven years; and Marion was long employed to betray Protestants into the hands of Roman Catholic rulers in France.
Lord Bishop of London, a writer who signed himself "Eusebius" hinted that one of the Methodist leaders was connected with the Jesuits. Eusebius said: "I am, indeed, apt to suspect the Jesuit is masked, at least in one Character, and cannot but think it will prove so in the Issue. But, be this as it will," he continued, "it is certain, my Lord, that a passionate, mechanical Religion is the most sublime and pure Spirit that there is in Popery . . ." And Bishop Lavington wrote several ponderous volumes, not to accuse the Methodists of being "Papists," he said, but to show that they were "doing the Papists' work for them, and agree with them in some of their principles." Lavington found a uniformity of plan and principle between Methodists and Roman Catholics which took him several volumes to delineate. He found that both groups begin their work by preaching in the fields; both abuse the clergy, put on an appearance of sanctity, teach sudden conversion, assurance of salvation and perfection, but they were especially alike in their claim to inspiration. "Here we have the true Spirit, and very essence of Enthusiasm," he declared, "that ungrounded pretence to Inspiration; which of course makes men peremptory and pertinacious, sets them above carnal reasonings, and all conviction of plain Scripture, and obligeth them upon their

73 In Scott, Fine Picture of Enthusiasm, p. iv.

74 Lavington, Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists, pp. 6-7.
own Principles to assume an Infallibility."\textsuperscript{75} So common was the belief that the Methodists were linked with Roman Catholics against the best interests of England that during the threatened rising of the Young Pretender in 1744 when all Roman Catholics were ordered to leave London and Westminster, John Wesley felt compelled to prepare an address to present to the King, denying any connection between Methodists and Roman Catholics.\textsuperscript{76} In a work concerned with penal laws against "Papists" in England Wesley supposedly found statements connecting his movement with Roman Catholicism. One statement ran:

> The Popish party boast much of the increase of the Methodists, and talk of that sect with rapture. How far the Methodists and Papists stand connected in principles I know not; but I believe it is beyond a doubt that they are in constant correspondence with each other.\textsuperscript{77}

So great was the English Churchman's fear of Roman Catholicism that many years after the separation from Rome and after the futile attempt at a Spanish Catholic invasion in 1588, one of his greatest apprehensions was for the safety of his Church against foreign plots for its subversion; however, even greater dread attended his visions of the increase of enthusiasm. Robert South noted that though the Roman Catholic Church

\textsuperscript{75} Quoted in Umphrey Lee, \textit{Backgrounds of Methodist Enthusiasm}, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{76} He never delivered the address because Charles dissuaded him. See Umphrey Lee, \textit{Backgrounds of Methodist Enthusiasm}, p. 130; L. Tyerman, \textit{Life and Times of Wesley}, I, 485-488, describes Wesley's relations with a Roman Catholic priest.

\textsuperscript{77} Quoted in Lee, \textit{Backgrounds of Methodist Enthusiasm}, p. 130.
had made unwarrantable additions to the foundations of the Christian faith (the divinity of Christ, the history of His nativity, life and death, His earthly ministry and sufferings, and His resurrection and ascension), it had never destroyed any of those articles. However, South complained, enthusiasts, especially the Familists and the Quakers, had reduced the entire gospel to allegories and figures and turned the history of Christ's life and sufferings into "mystical and moral significations of some virtues to be wrought within us, or some actions to be wrought by us," thus striking at the vitals of the Christian religion, even destroying the religion itself. South firmly believed that if enthusiasm were not thwarted, it would "send Christianity pacing out of the world."78 For Jonathan Swift, however, enthusiasts were worse than "Papists," because the latter aimed merely at destroying the Christian religion, while the former succeeded in destroying King, Monarchy, and Church. "The Sectaries," Swift said, "attempted the three most infernal Actions, that could possibly enter into the Hearts of Men, forsaken by God; which were the

78 South found popery to be preferable to enthusiasm because the first did produce men of accomplished learning and morals, men of sublime wit and excellent parts and endowments, but enthusiasm could boast nothing save monstrous productions arising from unhappy associations of melancholy and a diseased mind; further, enthusiasm was more intractable and pernicious in the double sense that it claimed infallibility for each individual member, whereas Catholicism claimed it for the pope only, and though both enthusiasm and Catholicism detract from the Scriptures, the former by making tradition equal to the Bible, the latter was worse in that it claimed the immediate guidance of the Spirit without the rule of the Scriptures. See Sermon 51, Sermons, III, 148-151.
Murder of a most pious King, the Destruction of the Monarchy, and the Extirpation of the Church; and succeeded in them all.  

The English cleric's fear for the safety of his Church made him apprehensive of enthusiasm because he had learned from history and from bitter experience that the charismatic religion of the enthusiast was a powerful, and frequently destructive, force when pitted against an institutional religion. The important controversies in the Church since the days of Elizabeth and the very near destruction of the institution during the period of Puritan ascendancy had taught him as much, and he never forgot those bitter lessons. On the contrary, the Churchman was more likely to over-react to enthusiasm, sometimes to the point of being neglectful of his Christian charity, as his behaviour subsequent to the Restoration showed. As the Churchmen well recognized, however, the threat to the Church's survival lay not merely in the enthusiast's attack on its ceremonial vestments, discipline, and organization; the very heart of the threat resided in the enthusiast's understanding and claims concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church, how the Spirit makes its will known, how extensive its present ministry is, and how this ministry affects the Scriptures and the individual member. To counteract the influence of enthusiasm, many clerics took pains to outline carefully their understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Some of their conclusions on this topic will be the subject of the following section.

Chapter VI  Enthusiasm and the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

During the Protestant Reformation many individuals exhibited particular interest in the function and value of the Holy Spirit in Christian faith and experience. This new interest was, of course, encouraged by the dissemination of the Scriptures in the vernacular; and it coincided with the pervasive spirit of self assertion and individualism characteristic of the Renaissance. In England, it was the so-called enthusiasts (Puritans) who showed greatest interest in the role of the Holy Spirit in individual faith and experience. To these enthusiasts the doctrine of the Spirit was more than a theological truth to which one should give a mere intellectual assent; it was a practical doctrine which affected a man's daily experience.¹ But even some clergymen of the established church, who opposed enthusiasts, confessed to the importance of the Holy Spirit in the individual's everyday life. Charles Leslie, for example, insisted that without the Holy Spirit's assistance a man cannot even think a good thought; the Spirit is as valuable and necessary to individual life as the sun is vital for growth and fructification in plant life.² Where enthusiasts and the clergy of the established church often disagreed was in their

¹ See G. F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1947), pp. 3-4. Nuttall sees the neglect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit prior to Reformation times as arising from a "dominance of Hellenic modes of thought" which were unfavourable to an essentially Hebraic doctrine; from the settled establishment of Christianity, and from the hierarchical structure of the Church, a structure that would and did oppose individualistic tendencies.

² Charles Leslie, Snake in the Grass in Theological Works (London, 1721), II, 144.
answers to the questions: how does the Spirit work in the individual? how can the workings of the Spirit be distinguished from those of fancy? and which takes precedence as a means of testing for truth, the Spirit or the Scriptures? to what extent is the Spirit still at work among individuals and in the Church?

Thomas Hobbes, for instance, was unsure how God indicated His will to the prophets. God did not appear to them in His own nature, because to do that would be to deny His "Infiniteness, Invisibility, Incomprehensibility." And to say that God infused the prophets with His Spirit is to make them equal with Christ, the one in whom alone the Godhead dwells bodily. Hobbes concluded that God spoke to the prophets by the Holy Ghost, but he meant that the Spirit communicated to the men certain special graces, not that the Spirit came upon them physically. Such communication was in no way supernatural. Referring to Moses, Hobbes said: "To say he spake by the Holy Spirit, is to attribute nothing to him supernaturall. For God disposeth men to Piety, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Faith, and all manner of Vertue, both Morall, and Intellectual, by doctrine, example, and by severall occasions, naturall, and ordinary." Hobbes claimed that whenever a prophet is described as speaking in the Spirit, no more is meant than that he speaks according to God's will. "For the most common

acceptation of the word Spirit, is in the signification of a man's intention, mind, or disposition. The supernatural means of communication from God Hobbes restricts to visions and dreams, but even these might at times be natural. It was important, therefore, for one to be particularly careful to distinguish between communications from God and the productions of the fancy. Hobbes took pains to show that the process of communication between man and God is either by a mysterious and inexplicable means (a method rarely used) or by ways altogether natural (the more common means).

Without bothering to attempt a close analysis of the precise method of communication, most other writers assumed or implied that the heavenly assistance to prophets, apostles, and writers of Scripture was supernatural and extraordinary. Bishop Warburton claimed that "the Holy Spirit ... directed the pens" of the men who wrote the Scriptures. The Spirit enlightened them with "his immediate influence in all such matters as were necessary for the instruction of the Church." But this guidance did not destroy the humanity of the writers; it merely saw to it that no errors were made in vital matters. "In a word," the Bishop concluded, "by watching over them incessantly; but with so suspended a hand, as permitted the use, and left them to the guidance of their own faculties, while they kept clear of error; and then only interposing when,

without this divine assistance, they would have been in danger of falling."

But whereas all agreed that this extraordinary assistance was provided the writers of the Scriptures, few claimed that such guidance was still given to man. Robert South appeared to be undecided on the question, for on one occasion he insisted that God still speaks to man immediately; yet on another occasion, barely a year later, he contradicted his earlier declaration. In a sermon preached at Christ-Church, Oxford, on November 1, 1691, South, after carefully warning his audience that he was not sanctioning enthusiasm, declared that if the evil spirit might and often did suggest wicked and vile thoughts to men (as in the cases of Judas and Ananias), it could not be doubted that God's Spirit, whose power and influence for good is greater than the wicked spirit's for evil, "does frequently inject into, and imprint upon the soul many blessed motions and impulses to duty, and many powerful avocations from sin." Such biblical expressions as "being led by the Spirit" and "being taught by the Spirit," South continued, must mean that "God sometimes speaks to, and converses with, the hearts of men, immediately by himself."

But in a second sermon on the measures of conscience, speaking at the same place (Christ-Church, Oxford) on October 30, 1692, South claimed


that God speaks to man today only by the dictates of "right reason" and
by "God's revealed word: (for these two are all the ways by which God
speaks to men nowadays)." And believing that God no longer communi-
cates with man immediately, Hobbes argues that no one is now obliged
to accept the word or teachings of any man who claims to be sent of God.

Unlike South and Hobbes, Bishop Williams declared (in Lecture
No. IX of his Boyle's series) that it is still possible for a man to have
personal or occasional revelations that "serve to a more spiritual Mani-
festation" of the revelation already given in Scripture. And John Wesley
insisted that individuals are still inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit
infuses into man what he could not have of himself, and so all inspiration
is immediate and of exactly the same type as that enjoyed by the apostles:

All inspiration [Wesley said], though by means, is immediate.
Suppose, for instance, you are employed in private prayer, and
God pours his love into your heart. God then acts immediately
on your soul; and the love of him which you then experience, is
as immediately breathed into you by the Holy Ghost, as if you
had lived seventeen hundred years ago. Change the term: Say
God then assists you to love him. Well, and is not this imme-
diate assistance? Say, His Spirit concurs with yours. You gain
no ground. It is immediate concurrence or none at all.

7 South, Sermon 24, in Sermons, II, 49.
9 Sampson Letsome and John Nicholl, ed. A Defense of Natural
and Revealed Religion (London, 1739), I, 244.
10 John Wesley, "Farther Appeal," Works, ed. Thomas Jackson,
Wesley was, of course, simply re-stating in radical fashion a doctrine taught and believed by many of the clergy of the Anglican Church. Wesley was speaking of what most writers referred to as the ordinary graces of the Spirit, those which all enjoy who are inclined to do good. Sometimes the Spirit "acts on the wills and affections of men," Wesley said, "withdrawing them from evil, inclining them to good, inspiring (breathing, as it were) good thoughts into them: . . . it is certain that all true faith, and the whole work of salvation, every good thought, word, and work, is altogether by the operation of the Spirit of God." 11 That John Wesley was speaking of the ordinary graces of the Spirit is evident from his statement to Bishop Butler in 1739. He said: "I pretend to no extraordinary revelations, or gifts of the Holy Ghost: none but what every Christian may receive and ought to expect and pray for." 12 Wesley differed from his Anglican opponents in claiming that the ordinary helps of the Spirit are communicated to men "immediately." But though one might be inspired as the apostles were, this does not necessarily mean that he was granted the extraordinary graces or gifts of the Spirit as those the apostles received when they were inspired. Nevertheless, Wesley's claiming "immediate" inspiration for himself and other Christians exposed

11 John Wesley, "Farther Appeal," Works, VIII, 49.

him and his movement to the charge of enthusiasm, especially because he equated his inspiration with that received by the apostles.

The orthodox view often set the inspiration of the apostles apart as being extraordinary and immediate, while the graces of the Spirit which later believers may receive come to them "mediately," that is, by the ministry of the Spirit through the Scriptures, or conscience, or reason—all ordinary means. Many writers were cautious about claiming immediate inspiration for men other than the apostles and writers of the Scriptures because such claims bore implications of infallibility. Baxter, accordingly, represented orthodox opinions on the subject when he declared that "the Holy Spirit, by immediate inspiration, revealed unto the apostles the doctrine of Christ, and caused them infallibly to indite the Scriptures. But," he insisted, "this is not that way of ordinary illumination now."

Other enthusiasts, however, believed that the Spirit could continue to dwell in men now as He did in the apostles. If He did not dwell in man, man's own falling away was to blame. Nuttall shows that both John Saltmarsh (d. 1647) and William Erbury (1604-1654) believed in the possibility and even the necessity of the Spirit's dwelling in contemporary

13 South declared that man's conscience has an immediate commission from God; this conscience is, therefore, God's vicegerent in man. Nevertheless, only such dictates of conscience as are supported by divine precepts carry divine authority. See Sermon 24, Sermons, II, 45-47.

But Erbury believed that man, not the Spirit, was to blame if the Spirit no longer dwelt in him. Erbury wrote:

Will ye say of this . . . as ye do of the gifts of the Spirit, that 'twas extraordinary onely for those Apostolique Churches? this indeed is the Popish distinction, which Protestants have learnt from them . . . . If those gifts were ordinary, are Gospel-graces so? for their Faith you cannot show, nor their Love we cannot see, not a shew of it . . . . This shews, the falling away is come upon you and the Apostacy foretold by the Apostles is come upon you in perfection, having no gift of the Spirit, nor yet the grace of it.16

But there were others who believed that the Spirit could and did dwell in them as He did in the apostles of the primitive Church. One writer of the middle seventeenth century said:

It was brought in, that it was the same Spirit I now felt, that Spirit that did write the Scriptures . . . . I did see, and could not doubt of it, that the very administration was given to me, which was given to the Apostles and Saints of old.17

These extreme voices were the ones which troubled contemporary Church leaders, for such extremists were the individuals who posed a threat to the order of the Church system. As a group the Quakers were the most outspoken on this question of the indwelling Spirit. Accordingly, they were frequently attacked on the subject. George Fox distinctly claimed inspiration of the same type received by the apostles and writers of the Scriptures. Of his "openings" he wrote:

15 Nuttall, p. 29.
16 From Testimony, quoted in Nuttall, The Holy Spirit, p. 29.
17 S. Petto, Roses From Sharon, quoted in Nuttall, p. 29.
These things I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter, though they are written in the letter; but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His immediate spirit and power, as did the holy men of God by whom the Holy Scriptures were written. Yet I had no slight esteem of the Holy Scriptures, they were very precious to me, for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth: and that the Lord opened in me, I afterwards found was agreeable to them.18

And Robert Barclay (1648-1690) showed why the Spirit must still dwell in man: Christianity cannot subsist without such an indwelling. "They then that do suppose the indwelling and leading of his Spirit to be ceased," Barclay said, "must also suppose Christianity to be ceased, which cannot subsist without it." He continued: "Christians are always to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God dwelling in them . . . the same is a standing and perpetual ordinance . . . to the church in general in all ages . . . [and] to every individual member in particular."19 This claim of Quakers that the Spirit literally dwells within man was branded as blasphemy by their detractors, because such indwelling implied, for many, infallibility and equality not only with the apostles but also with God. Thus Charles Leslie felt outraged at what he called the blasphemy in the statement of Francis Howgill (1618-1669) to Edward Dobb, his opponent:

The first thing thy dark mind stumbles at . . . is, that some have said, that they that have the Spirit of God, are equal with God.


He that hath the Spirit of God, is in that which is equal—And he that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit, there is unity, and the unity stands in equality itself.²⁰

Enthusiasts as well as the orthodox, then, believed that God still communicates with man, but whereas moderate writers saw that communication to be of a different type from that enjoyed by the apostles and the writers of the Bible, extreme enthusiasts, especially the Quakers, believed that God inspires man today in the same way as the apostles were inspired.

How the Spirit Dwells in Man

As Nuttall has shown, radical Puritans, and Quakers especially, confessed to a great sense of the immediacy of the Spirit of God in their experience. For them God was not someone far away in the skies. He was a being with whom they had a direct personal experience through the Holy Spirit in the heart.²¹ It is not strange, therefore, that many of these men conceived of a literal indwelling of the Spirit. Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), representing the radical strain in Puritan views on the subject, said that the Spirit dwelt in him just as it dwelt in Christ: "Now for


²¹ See pp. 135–137. "God may be out of sight, and out of ken, and yet you may be Saints: but there is a more glorious life, when a man walks in God's sight, God seeing him, and he seeing God ... there be Saints that live gloriously, that are fond of God, that are always with Him, sleeping and waking, at bed, and board, they are never out of his sight." From Walter Cradock, Divine Drops Distilled, quoted in Nuttall, p. 137.
the manner of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost's person; it is no error to affirm that it is the same in us and the man Christ Jesus."  

And Samuel Petto (1624-1711) declared that the Spirit may witness by proxy, but for it to dwell in a man requires its "immediate presence." But the moderate Baxter, while not denying the possibility of an immediate presence, tempered the claim to leave another possibility open. "The Spirit itself is given to true believers, and not only grace from the Spirit," he said; but he continued: "The Spirit itself is present as the immediate Operator; not so immediate as to be without means, but so immediate as to be no distant agent."

On this subject, too, the Quakers represent the extreme Puritan attitude. Rather than speak of the Spirit, Quakers variously spoke of the inner light, the light within, the seed, Christ, grace, vehiculum Dei, the gospel, the word, the inner voice, among other appellations. George Fox consistently spoke of the light, the Spirit of God, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in all men. And his emphasis left little doubt that he was referring to a literal indwelling of the Spirit. In one debate with "false

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22 From Works, II, quoted in Nuttall, p. 50.

23 From The Voyce of the Spirit, quoted in Nuttall, p. 50.

24 Works, quoted in Nuttall, p. 50.

25 For a more comprehensive list of the various names Barclay, and Quakers generally, used to represent Christ and the Holy Spirit, see Leif Eeg Olofsson, The Conception of the Inner Light in Robert Barclay's Theology (Lund, 1954), pp. 71-72; see also Hugh Barbour, The Quakers in Puritan England, p. 110: "Friends spoke of the Light, the Spirit, and Christ within, so interchangeably that no uniform distinction can be made clear."
teachers and priests" he insisted that the "light and the Spirit of Christ [was] in them, and that God that made the world dwelt not in temples made with hands, but their bodies were the temples of the Holy Ghost." And in a warning to the people of Ulverston, he declared that the Lord God alone will teach his people, and he is coming to teach . . . God hath given to every one of you a measure according to your ability . . . you have all this measure in you. This is the measure of the spirit of God that shows you sin . . . Therefore love the light which Christ hath enlightened you withal who saith, "I am the light of the world. . . . And this light will teach thee, if thou loveth it, it will teach thee holiness and righteousness . . . but hating this light, it is your condemnation . . . The Lord is coming to teach his people himself . . . Therefore to the light in you I speak . . . Your teacher is within you; look not forth; it will teach you lying in bed, going abroad, to shun all occasion of sin and evil.

In his enunciation of the manner of the indwelling of the Spirit, Robert Barclay, more cautious than Fox, differentiated between the real presence of God in man and an influence representing God in man. Clarifying his usage of certain theological terms, Barclay said:

By this seed, grace, and word of God, and light wherewith we say every one is enlightened, and hath a measure of it, which strives with him in order to save him, . . . we understand not the proper essence and nature of God precisely taken, which is not divisible into parts and measures, as being a most pure, simple being, void of all composition or division, and therefore can neither be resisted, hurt, wounded, crucified, or slain by all the efforts and strength of men; but we understand a spiritual, heavenly, and invisible principle, in which God, as Father, Son, and Spirit, dwells; a measure of which divine and glorious life is in all men as a seed, which

26 Fox, Journal, p. 76.

27 Ibid., pp. 142-143; see also pp. 155, 174-176, 188.
of its own nature, draws, invites, and inclines to God; and this some call *vehiculum Dei*, or the *spiritual body of Christ*, the flesh and blood of Christ, which came down from heaven, of which all the saints do feed, and are thereby nourished unto eternal life.  

In a later passage Barclay explained that as the seed contains, poten-
tially, the tree with its increase, so the kingdom of God or Christ dwells
in man. He wrote:

As the whole body of a great tree is wrapped up potentially in the
seed of the tree, and so is brought forth in due season; and as the
capacity of a man or woman is not only in a child, but even in the
very embryo, even so the kingdom of Jesus Christ, yea Jesus Christ
himself, Christ within, who is the hope of glory, and becometh
wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, is in every
man's and woman's heart, in that little incorruptible seed, ready
to be brought forth, as it is cherished and received in the love of
it. 

Thus, for some Quakers, it was not a literal Christ or Spirit that
dwelt in man but a principle representing the real God. Nevertheless, the
loose and dogmatic manner in which the simple and often unlearned Quaker
often asserted the presence of Christ within him left little doubt in the
minds of many (who were most anxious to find something to cavil at) that
enthusiasts blasphemously claimed to be God, or claimed infallibility.
Charles Leslie, for instance, found the Quaker belief in the light within
to be arrant blasphemy. For Leslie the Quaker light within was "not only
an inspiration or illumination sent from God" but the very God and Christ;
thus Quakers were asserting that all men were equal with God. "This


29 Ibid., pp. 176-177.
monstrous Notion of the light Within is the ground and foundation of all their other Errors and Blasphemies," said Leslie; "hence they assume the name of Christ to themselves, and say, that it belongs to them, to every Member, as well as to Christ the Head, as well as to that Man Jesus: They make themselves equal with God, infallible, and perfectly sinless, as he is." 30

The Quaker claims for the inner light led Robert South frequently to discuss in his sermons the nature and identity of that light. He did not deny that man had a light within him, but he denied that that light was the immediate Spirit of God. Speaking from the text in Luke 11.35, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness," South asserted that the light within is none other than "that intellectual power or faculty of the which every one is naturally endowed with," a power which informs or enlightens the soul, commanding and obliging it to do something. That power is none other than the conscience, according to South. 31

But South considered the light to be a natural endowment in man, whereas Quakers insisted that the light was neither conscience nor a natural endowment. Barclay said that the light was not man's natural


31 South, Sermon 26, *Sermons*, II, 96; see also Sermon 23, *Sermons*, II, 29: "There is an innate light in every man, discovering to him the first lines of duty, in the common notions of good and evil which by cultivation and improvement may be advanced to higher and brighter discoveries."
conscience, because conscience arises from the natural faculties in man and may be defiled and corrupted; whereas the inner light "can never be corrupted nor defiled"; further, it never consents to evil in any form but rather witnesses "against every unrighteousness in man." Barclay defined conscience as "that knowledge which ariseth in man's heart from what agreeeth, contradicteth, or is contrary to any thing believed by him, whereby he becomes conscious to himself that he transgresseth by doing that which he is persuaded he ought not to do." 32 Conscience, according to Barclay, presupposes a belief and then a violation of that belief; thus the conscience might err, because the belief might have been erroneous to begin with. The central difference between man's natural conscience and the inner light, then, in Barclay's view, resides in the consistent witness of the latter against all sin, and the possibility of error in the former. South agreed that the conscience is capable of misleading one; hence he warned his hearers that "conscience . . . must be rightly informed" before its testimony concerning the state of the soul could be regarded as authentic; and this right information is possible only from "the two grand rules of right reason and scripture." 33 When rightly informed, however, conscience becomes the voice of God to man; so that what conscience binds on earth will be bound in heaven, and therefore, "it were a great vanity to hope or imagine, that either law or gospel will

32 Barclay, Apology, pp. 145-146.

33 South, Sermon 23, Sermons, II, 27, 28.
absolve what natural conscience condemns."

The conscience is God's light within man, according to South, but it is not the Spirit of God, because that Spirit does not dwell in man. For South many of those scriptural portions which speak of the Spirit dwelling in man are to be understood metaphorically, not literally as Quakers seemed to consider them. George Fox might quote 1 Cor. 6.19 to prove that God dwells in man through the Holy Spirit, but South would quote the same text and show the expression concerning the indwelling Spirit to be no more than a metaphor. Speaking of the statement that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, South declared that the expression means only that one should be as wholly devoted to the use or service of God as a temple is, and that as it is sacrilegious to profane a temple after it has first been dedicated to God's use, so it is sacrilege and impiety for the Christian to give himself over to sin, the adversary, or the world, once he has dedicated himself to the Spirit. And when St. Paul declared in Romans 8.11 that the Spirit dwells in man, and in Col. 3.16 that the word of Christ

34 South, Sermon 23, *Sermons*, II, 32. South seems to be inconsistent in his views on the conscience. Though distinctly declaring at one time the possibility of one's being misled by conscience, at another time he implied that only the mind of man speaking with the support of divine authority can be rightly termed conscience: "For Conscience never commands or forbids any thing authentically, but there is some law of God which commands or forbids it first. Conscience (as might easily be shewn) being no distinct power or faculty from the mind of man, but the mind of man itself applying the general rule of God's law to particular cases and actions. This is truly and properly conscience." Sermon 24, *Sermons*, II, 49.
dwell in one, he simply meant that "these things reside as constantly and familiarly there, as an inhabitant does in the house where he dwells."35

The Spirit does not literally dwell in man, South affirmed, but it might be said to be in man in several ways: first, substantially; because God is by nature infinite, omnipresent, and indivisible, He must be totally wherever He is. Accordingly, the Spirit of God is in all men and all things equally; thus no one can say he has more of the Spirit than another. Next, the Spirit might be said to be in someone by the effect He produces on that one; in this sense God might be in a particular place or in one individual in a greater measure than in another place or individual; so that it could be said that He is in His sanctuary more than in an ordinary home, and when He instills in an individual certain habits and dispositions which enable that one to perform some task with greater facility than another person could, as in the case of Saul or Solomon, such an individual could be said to have more of God's Spirit than another. A third

35 South, Sermon 55, Sermons, III, 232-233. Richard Hollingworth, a Puritan (enthusiast), saw the indwelling of the Spirit to be figurative: "When I speak of the Spirit's being, or dwelling in a Saint: I mean not an essential or personal in-being or in-dwelling of the Spirit, as he is in God, or the third Person of the Holy Trinity:

"This Scriptural phrase of in-being and in-dwelling, doth import only inwardness, meer relation and close union. Hence God is said to be in Christ, as well as Christ in God, and Saints are as well said to be in the Spirit, as Christ or the Holy Spirit are said to be, or dwell in them; and therefore this phrase doth no more evince personal in-habitation, on the one side then on the other.

"The Spirit by a Metonymy, may be said to dwell in us . . . when we partake of his Gifts and Graces, though these be not the Spirit it self; . . . as when we say the Sun comes into a house, we mean not the body of the Sun . . . but the Beams of it . . . " From The Holy Ghost on the Bench, quoted in Nuttall, p. 49.
way by which the Spirit could be in a man is by a personal indwelling in believers in a fashion different from the two means last mentioned, but South declared this to be an enthusiastic notion.\textsuperscript{36} The Spirit never shows itself to the soul immediately in its own substance, South believed; it shows itself only by its operations and effects, which are susceptible to proofs and tests. Should the Spirit show itself in its own substance to man, that would constitute the beatific vision, and such a soul would then know God here and now as well as he would know Him in the hereafter. But Scripture does not support such a possibility, South said. It is evident, he concluded, "that the Spirit of God not shewing itself to the soul immediately by itself and in its own substance, as light does to the eye, but by the mediation of its operations and effects upon the soul, it follows, that it is not discernible by itself, as light is, but by its operations; which operations are triable and distinguishable by certain rules."\textsuperscript{37}

How to Discern the Spirit

The claim among extreme enthusiasts that they possessed in themselves the Holy Spirit, as the inspired writers of the Bible and the apostles experienced Him, naturally led men to ask how one could discern whether he really had the Spirit or was the dupe of a misguided fancy. And as was the case with responses to earlier questions concerning the Spirit, most

\textsuperscript{36} South, Sermon 55, \textit{Sermons}, III, 231.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 245.
writers agreed on certain general rules, but the radical enthusiasts tended to be more subjective than their opponents in the rules they proposed. Many writers either equated the Spirit with reason or affirmed that the revelations of the Spirit are compatible with sound reason. John Locke, discussing the grounds of assent, disallowed enthusiasm since its claims were not susceptible to proof. Enthusiasm, Locke said, throws out reason and attempts to set up revelation without it, but enthusiasm really takes away both reason and revelation. Locke made reason and revelation almost synonymous. God communicates truth to man through "reason," also called "natural revelation." And "revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives that they come from God."38 Locke was not speaking of the manner of discerning whether one has the Spirit but of ascertaining whether propositions originated with God or the fancy. However, it is clear from his argument that one can discern whether the Spirit of God was the source of his proposition. If what one takes for a revelation from God can be arrived at on rational grounds, that proposition cannot be a revelation from God but an ordinary truth; the Spirit gave the revelation when the proposition is conformable both to reason and to the Word of God; for the latter has already been proven by reason to be revelation. If, however, the

proposition be not attested by both reason and revelation, the proposer must be able to muster signs as proof of his divine calling.  

John Locke was not the first to appeal to reason as a means of discerning the voice of God or the Spirit from the vagaries of deluded fancy, but his status as a leader of philosophic thought gave great weight to his opinions. Henry More preceded Locke in calling reason a test of authenticity for revelations. There is nothing, More said, that the Holy Spirit suggests to any man "but it was agreeable to, if not demonstrable from, what we call reason." And More went on to clarify what he meant by reason:

By Reason I understand so settled and cautious a Composure of Mind, as will suspect every high flown and forward fancy that endeavours to carry away the assent before deliberate examination; she not endurmg to be gullied by the vigour or garishnesse of the representation, nor at all to be borne down by the weight or strength of it; but patiently to trie it by the known Faculties of the Soul, which either the Common notions that all men in their wits agree upon, or the Evidence of outward Sense, or else a clear and distinct Deduction from these. Whatever is not agreeable to these three is Fancy, which testifies nothing of the Truth or Existence of anything, and therefore ought not, nor cannot be assented to by any but mad men or fools.

39 "If this internal light, or any proposition which under that title we take for inspired, be conformable to the principles of reason or to the word of God, which attested revelation, reason warrants it and we may safely receive it for true and be guided by it in our belief and actions; if it receive no testimony nor evidence from either of these rules, we cannot take it for a revelation or so much as for true, till we have some other mark that it is a revelation. . . . When they [holy men of God] were to convince others, they had a power given them to justify the truth of their commission from heaven, and by visible signs to assert the divine authority of a message they were sent with." (Essay, II, 439)

Following in the steps of both More and Locke and writing against the enthusiastic Methodists, Langhorne advised his correspondent that enthusiasm precludes the use of reason and is therefore a species of madness and thus could not proceed from God, a "pure and dispassionate Being, whose harmonious and consistent works teach us a rational adoration of their Divine Creator."\(^{41}\)

But anti-enthusiasts were not alone in valuing reason as the touchstone of the validity of revelation. John Goodwin, himself classified as an enthusiast, decided that

> unless these discoveries, which are pretended unto and held forth with the greatest confidence, shall commend themselves for truth into the judgments and understandings of sober and judicious men, such versed and exercised in the Scriptures, either from their own light and evidence, or else shall be made out by light of argument and demonstration whether from the Scriptures, or clear principles in reason, to be real truths . . . they are not to be looked upon as exertions and puttings forth of a spirit of vanity and delusion in men.\(^{42}\)

While it is true that many men of the Enlightenment regarded reason as the common property of all men, thus constituting an excellent norm by which to test the validity of claims made in the name of the Spirit, some thinkers were not optimistic about the possibility of reason's being


\(^{42}\) Quoted in Nuttall, p. 43.
the sole judge of truth. The poet Dryden, in his "Religio Laici," saw reason merely as a dim light that guides but does not assure the way to a better day:

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers
Is Reason to the soul: and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.

(11. 1-11)

Dryden had seen the harvest that private spirit or private reason had provided England during the years of Puritan rule, and he grew more and more cautious as he became older, preferring to get the word of certainty from revelation, at least, or from the Church. And John Wesley, himself opposed to the enthusiast who denounced all reason as useless, declared that the Christian religion is altogether reasonable. Furthermore, he counselled his followers not to decry reason, because that "candle of the Lord" directs the Christian in every point of faith and practice and guides him in every branch of inward and outward holiness. Nevertheless, Wesley cautioned that reason has its limitations. It cannot produce

43 Fairchild wrote: "The Enlightenment regarded reason as a universal faculty lodged within the human breast, a sort of 'Inner Light' which enabled all men easily to comprehend the few simple axiomatic truths which constituted the groundwork of nature." Religious Trends in English Poetry, II (New York, 1942), 9.
faith, hope, love, virtue, or happiness.\textsuperscript{44} Richard Baxter steered a middle course, appealing both to reason and to the testimony of experience. He asserted that the Spirit was not given to make the Christian religion reasonable, but to make sinners reasonable once they believed it; and the Spirit does not force one to believe without reason, "but he works on man as man, and causeth him to believe nothing but what is credible."\textsuperscript{45}

Some writers found great difficulty in distinguishing between the operations of the Spirit of God and those of false spirits, since the physical manifestations attending both spirits are so similar.\textsuperscript{46} In one of his Boyle lectures Bishop Williams (1636?-1709) gave a long list of rules to assist one in discriminating between imagination and revelation, because he found a close affinity between the two, and because imagination works to such an extent in inspiration that it is difficult for one to discern the limits of each.\textsuperscript{47} One means of discerning between true and false spirits on which many enthusiasts and their opponents agreed was the Scriptures. Since, as they believed, it was the same Spirit that inspired both saints and Scriptures, there should be no discrepancy between the testimonies

\textsuperscript{44} Sermon LXX, "The Case of Reason Considered," in \textit{Works}, VI, 350-360.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Works}, quoted in Nuttall, p. 47.


of both. Because there was such agreement between many enthusiasts and their critics on this test of truth, one illustration from an enthusiast should suffice to convey the basis of the rule. Thomas Higgenson wrote concerning the tests of spirits:

The Spirit and the Scriptures together . . . are . . . the perfect judge for ending all differences about spiritual matters, and the perfect rule for trial of all spirits and ways of religion: the Scriptures as the lantern, and the Spirit as the candle therein . . . either of these if set up as under without the other, brings forth a two-fold error, both perilous and hurtful.

I. Imposing the letter of Scripture without the light of the Spirit, whether by churches or council, may be an opposing the Scriptures against the Spirit, and sets up another dominion over the conscience, which is subject to Christ alone.

II. Imposing anything for vision or spirit without liberty of appeal, or reference to Scripture, whether by an angel from heaven or an apostle, is a shaking mens mends from off the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone.

Recognizing the difficulty of discerning the voice of God from that of conscience (which might sometimes be misleading), Robert South cautioned his hearers to pay special attention to the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Natural conscience is to be listened to, he insisted, but revelation alone is to be relied upon. And he added, "Nothing that contradicts the revealed word of God, is either the voice of right reason or of the Spirit of God; nor is it possible that it should be so, without God's contradicting himself."

Not all enthusiasts, however, relied upon the Scriptures as the

48 From *A Testimony to the True Jesus*, quoted in Nuttall, p. 31.

final test of the Spirit. The Quakers, the extreme left-wing of enthusiasm, while valuing the Scriptures highly, esteemed the Spirit within them yet higher. They agreed with radical Puritans that the same Spirit which was in them inspired the Scriptures, but, unlike the Puritans, Quakers concluded that the Spirit within them took precedence over the Scriptures. They claimed that in order to understand the Scriptures aright, the reader must first be enlightened by the Spirit who inspired them, as George Fox put it: "I saw that none could read John's words aright and with a true understanding of them, but in and with the same divine Spirit by which John spoke them, and by his burning, shining light, which is sent from God." The Quaker was certain that one unable to comprehend the Scriptures aright could not be a good judge to decide whether the spirit in another was the Spirit of God. In a confrontation with a minister who had admonished his parishioners that the Scriptures were the "touchstone and judge" by which all doctrines, religions, and controversies were to be tried, Fox disagreed vehemently, asserting, rather, that the Holy Spirit, which gave forth the Scriptures, should be the touchstone. He argued that the Jews had the Scriptures and rejected Christ and persecuted His apostles after first testing their teachings by the Scriptures. The Jews

50 Journal, p. 32. The argument holds, of course, for all the Scriptures. "They could not know the spiritual meaning of Moses', the prophets', and John's words, nor see their path and travels, much less see through them and to the end of them into the kingdom, unless they had the Spirit and the light of Jesus; nor could they know the words of Christ and his apostles without his Spirit." Ibid.
erred in judgment because they tested without the Holy Spirit, Fox insisted. But Richard Baxter did not agree with the Quaker view. He cautioned against the dangers of testing the Scriptures by the Spirit:

We must not try the Scriptures by our most spiritual apprehensions but our apprehensions by the Scriptures: that is, we must prefer the Spirit's inspiring the apostles to indite the Scriptures, before the Spirit's illuminating of us to understand them, or before any present inspirations, the former being the most perfect; because Christ gave the apostles the Spirit to deliver us infallibly his own commands, and to indite a rule for following ages; but he giveth us the Spirit but to understand and use that rule aright. This trying the Spirit by the Scriptures, is not a setting of the Scriptures above the Spirit itself but is only a trying of the Spirit by the Spirit; that is, the Spirit's operations in ourselves and his revelations to any pretenders now, by the Spirit's operations in the apostles, and by their revelations recorded for our use. For they and not we are called foundations of the church. 51

The Quakers' refusal to give primacy to the Scriptures did not necessarily mean that they undervalued or scorned Holy Writ. One writer declared of Fox:

As far as I know, Fox never actually claims that the direct inspiration has revealed to him any religious beliefs, doctrines, or principles that he thinks are not recorded in the Bible. Certainly Fox never claims that the direct inspiration has revealed anything to him that supersedes New Testament teaching. 52

Fox, proverbial for his knowledge of Scripture, untiringly defended his views and teachings by constant appeal to the Scriptures. Robert Barclay, speaking on behalf of all Quakers, insisted that the inward revelations of

51 Fox, Journal, p. 40. See also p. 103; the Baxter quotation is taken from his Works, quoted in Nuttall, p. 32.

52 R. H. King, George Fox and the Light Within, 1650-1660 (Philadelphia, 1940), p. 45.
God to men (including Quakers, presumably) "neither do nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or right and sound reason." Nevertheless, he continued, "from hence it will not follow, that these divine revelations are to be subjected to the test, either of the outward testimony of the scriptures, or the natural reason of man, as to a more noble or certain rule and touchstone," because, he said, "this divine revelation, and inward illumination, is that which is evident and clear of itself, forcing, by its own evidence and clearness, the well-disposed understanding to assent, irresistibly moving the same thereunto, even as the common principles of natural truths do move and incline the mind to a natural assent." 

Barclay claimed that to a person of "well-disposed understanding" it will be self-evident if and when he possesses the Spirit. Such a claim might have satisfied the qualms of one who wanted to know how he could discern whether the spirit within himself was of God, but that knowledge could not serve the needs of one who was doubtful of the spirit in another. Nevertheless, Quakers were not alone in their appeal to personal experience of the movings of the Spirit as a means of discerning the spirits. Puritans generally laid great stress on experience, just as the growing interest in science was reflected in a greater emphasis on experimentation and reasonableness. They realized that some truths struck one so forcibly as to demand instant acceptance without recourse to a series of

53 Barclay, Apology, pp. 18-19.
inductions and deductions. As Nuttall puts it, some radical Puritans recognized that it was "possible to avoid the charge of dependence upon something irrational by pointing out that reason has an intuitive aspect as well as a discursive."^54 Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) spoke for many enthusiasts when in answer to the question, "How do you know the word to be the word?" he replied:

> It carrieth proof and evidence in itself. It is an evidence that the fire is hot to him that feeleth it, and that the sun shineth to him that looks on it; how much more doth the word ... I am sure I felt it, it warmed my heart, and converted me.55

Another enthusiast, Walter Cradock (1606?-1659), used the same imagery and line of argument in defense of the view that one can have an intuitive awareness that the Holy Spirit is in him.56

> Even Robert South, the outspoken opponent of enthusiasts, insisted that the Spirit of God strikes one with sudden insight. Speaking concerning the means of discriminating between the voice of the Spirit and that of conscience, South said that he knew no "certain" way by which to distinguish between them, except that "such as proceed immediately from

54 *The Holy Spirit*, p. 38.


56 From *Gospel-Holinesse*, quoted in Nuttall, p. 40. "For as in natural things, you know, that by the same light whereby I see the Sun, by the same light I know that I see him: So there is in the very manifestation of God to the soule, it carries a winnesse in it selfe, it is so clear, that when I have it, though I never had it before, and I cannot demonstratively speak a word what it is, yet I know as it is Gods sight, so I know as I see him."
God, use to strike the mind suddenly, and very powerfully." South quickly added, however, that such distinctions are "nice and difficult" to make and really "not necessary" in practice. "But let a man universally observe and obey every good motion rising in his heart, knowing that every such motion proceeds from God, either mediately or immediately; and that whether God speaks immediately by himself to the conscience, or mediately by the conscience to the soul, the authority is the same in both, and the contempt of either is rebellion."  

Granted the possibility of one's having an intuitive awareness that he possesses the Holy Spirit, one must also concede that man is subject to error and, what is worse, he is so perverse as, on occasions, to pretend to having the Spirit when he does not have it. This knowledge that unscrupulous individuals could fabricate counterfeits and make false pretences caused many writers to be skeptical of all claims of direct leading by the Holy Spirit. The mere appeal to personal experience was not enough to satisfy their qualms. Enthusiasts claimed to see a light from God and to feel the hand of God or the impulses of the Spirit working within them, but Locke demanded: "This seeing, is it the perception of the truth of the proposition, or of this, that it is a revelation from God? This feeling, is it a perception of an inclination or fancy to do something, or of the Spirit of God moving that inclination?" The philosopher believed that one can receive knowledge of the truth of a proposition without

57 South, Sermon 23, Sermons, II, 34.
perceiving that that knowledge was an immediate revelation from God; and one can have a strong assurance or persuasion without that assurance being a perception from God, or even true. Hence, Locke appealed to reason and to the testimony of the Scripture as proof of divine enlightenment.\(^{58}\)

Lacking the testimony of reason and the Scriptures, one should demand signs of any individual who claimed to be an instrument of God, Locke advised. And many other critics of enthusiasm believed that the appeal to miracles would remove doubts concerning the authenticity of one's call from God. Bishop Williams justified his call for a sign by declaring that the messenger might be imposed on by his imagination or by the machinations of evil spirits, or he might want to impose on others. The Bishop did not consider signs enough, however; so he added to his proofs of heaven's calling a long list of qualifications, among them, that the message should be worthy of God and for the happiness, advantage, and satisfaction of mankind; it should be agreeable to the dignity and perfection of God's nature, and should be related in a manner that observes proper decorum. He concluded:

> When the Subject is great, noble, and sublime, thus worthy of God, and thus beneficial to Mankind: When there is an exact concord between the Principles of Nature and Reason, and that all falls in with the true and just Notion we have of Things: Where there is Harmony through the Whole, we have good Reason to say,

This, if any, is the Revelation.\textsuperscript{59}

Hobbes declared that apart from an appeal to reason, one can distinguish between true and false prophets by two marks, which must always go together: the supposed prophet must teach no other religion than that "which is already established," and he must perform miracles; which ought to be confirmed immediately, not far in the future.\textsuperscript{60}

Some critics refused, however, to consider miracles a valid criterion of divine calling. Henry More discounted miracles performed by enthusiasts, because he did not think such miracles genuine, but the results of natural causes:

The Spirits of Melancholy men being more massy and ponderous, when they are so highly refined and actuated by a more than ordinary heat and vigour of Body, may prove a very powerful Elixir, Nature having outdone the usual pretences of Chymistry in this case.\textsuperscript{61}

South refused to consider miracles as proof of direct communication with God because he believed such communication was impossible, considering "God's nature and his word":

\textsuperscript{59} Lecture III, in \textit{Defense of Natural and Revealed Religion}, I, 179, 183.

\textsuperscript{60} Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 61, 201-202. Hobbes, of course, believed that the times of miracles had passed: "Seeing therefore Miracles now cease, we have no sign left, whereby to acknowledge the pretended Revelations, or Inspirations of any private man; nor obligation to give ear to any Doctrine, farther than it is conformable to the Holy Scriptures . . . " p. 202. See also "Conduct of Rev. Whitefield," \textit{Gentleman's Magazine}, 9(1739), 240; E. Calamy, \textit{A Caveat Against New Prophets}, p. 51; Leslie, \textit{Snake in the Grass}, in \textit{Works}, II, 40.

\textsuperscript{61} More, \textit{Enthusiasmus Triumphatus}, p. 41.
If any one should pretend an inward voice of the Spirit suggesting such things to him, and, to prove that inward voice, should shew a sign or miracle, neither the pretence of one nor the authority to the other ought to be admitted, as being brought to confirm a thing directly contrary both to God's nature and his word.\textsuperscript{62}

And Langhorne, who, like Hobbes, believed that miracles have ceased, decided that should one perform a miracle, it would still not prove him inspired, because the scriptural canon is complete, and Scripture itself declares its completeness in that it pronounces an anathema on any one who should add to it or subtract anything from it.\textsuperscript{63}

The Duration of the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit

This concept of the completeness of the scriptural canon accounted for much of the disagreement between enthusiasts and their critics on the matter of the function of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Implicit in the enthusiasts' claim to immediate direction from God is the belief that the Holy Spirit is still at work among men and in the Christian Church, conferring on certain individuals particular gifts. After reading the New Testament accounts of the functions of the Spirit in the primitive Church, most enthusiasts no doubt believed that the blessings of direct guidance which

\textsuperscript{62} South, Sermon 55, \textit{Sermons}, III, 244.

\textsuperscript{63} John Langhorne, \textit{Letters on Religious Retirement}, pp. 63-64. Barclay, the Quaker apologist, insisted that there was no need for one to work miracles to prove his calling, especially since no new gospel was being preached: "We need not miracles, because we preach no new gospel, but that which is already confirmed by all the miracles of Christ and his apostles; and that we offer nothing but that which we are ready and able to confirm by the testimony of the scriptures . . . " \textit{Apology}, p. 296.
the apostles enjoyed and the gifts which both apostles and ordinary members received were meant for Christians of all times, and not just for the early leaders. If the general body of believers did not receive that immediate guidance, it was simply because they cut themselves off from the Spirit by their departure from the purity of the primitive Church. Once believers returned to primitive holiness, many enthusiasts implied, the same power which attended the early Church would come to them. Other enthusiasts, however, concurred with the general belief in the established church that one should make distinctions among the gifts of the Spirit, separating the ordinary from the extraordinary, those open to all believers and those peculiar to the primitive Church. The radical's failure or refusal to make a difference between himself and the members of the early Church rendered him a threat to the stability of the established church and earned him the opprobrious title, enthusiast.

Distinguishing between the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, Robert South said that ordinary gifts were bestowed on man by the mediation of his own powers; that is, he works towards achieving the gifts, and God rewards his efforts with success. "God ordinarily gives them to none, but such as labour hard for them," South said; and he listed philosophy, oratory, and divinity as examples of these acquired gifts. Extraordinary gifts, however, are absolutely and entirely from God, the recipient being only a vessel into which the gift is poured. Among such extraordinary gifts, South listed the gifts of healings, miracles, prophecy,
and speaking in tongues. In his *The Spirit of Enthusiasm Exorcised*, George Hickes (1642-1715) differed from South in listing ordinary gifts to be attributes such as faith, hope, charity, and humility, which are really moral virtues insensibly wrought in human hearts by the Holy Ghost. Hickes called the extraordinary gifts either "pure intellectual habits" as the gift of tongues or the discerning of spirits, or "bodily virtues and powers," as the power of healing. According to Hickes, none of these virtues makes one a better man than he was before possessing them; they simply make him a "more eminent man or minister"; and they were given more to the ministers than to the laity, never to children, and very infrequently to women.

Many of these critics treated inspiration in the same fashion as the gifts, classifying it as ordinary and extraordinary, or mediate and immediate. Baxter, firmly on the side of the critics of enthusiasm in this respect, claimed that "there are two sorts of the Spirit's motions; the one is by extraordinary inspiration or impulse, as he moved the prophets and apostles, to reveal new laws, or precepts or events, or to do some actions without respect to any other command than the inspiration itself. The other sort of the Spirit's working," Baxter continued, "is not to make new laws or duties, but to guide and quicken us in the doing of that which is our

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64 Sermon 35, *Sermons*, II, 292-293. South also made a distinction between these gifts on the basis of their permanency in the recipient. See *Sermons*, II. 293.

65 Cited in Umphrey Lee, *Background to Methodist Enthusiasm*, p. 60.
duty before by the laws already made. "66

Concerning the duration of these gifts in the Church, most critics of enthusiasm agreed that the extraordinary gifts and the extraordinary inspiration or revelations were limited to the early Christian Church, ceasing when the Church was strong enough to stand against its enemies, when the leaders were intellectually fitted to perform their responsibilities satisfactorily, or when the canon of Scripture was complete. However, the ordinary gifts, necessary for the Christian's daily growth in grace, still continue in the Church. Robert South, for instance, claimed that the exact period during which the extraordinary gifts remained in the Church cannot be ascertained, but the writings of the Church Fathers indicate that some of the gifts, like the ability to cast out devils, continued long after the time of the apostles, even to the fourth century. The conferring of these gifts, South said, was for "the establishment of a church, and the settling of a new religion in the world"; their duration was accordingly "proportioned to the need which that new religion had of such credentials and instruments of confirmation." The extraordinary and miraculous powers are now ceased, South decided, since for them to continue would be to destroy their efficacy as a means of confirmation and wonder, because by such long continuance they would cease to be miraculous and grow cheap and common. 67

66 From Works, quoted in Nuttall, p. 51.

Writing of the extraordinary bestowal of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Warburton indicated that the extraordinary function of the Spirit was for the comfort and instruction of the young Church. The apostles were rude and uninformed men, innocent of knowledge in heavenly truths and "prejudiced in favour of a carnal Law, and utterly averse to the dictates of the everlasting Gospel." So, Warburton continued, the Spirit enlightened their minds, leading them gradually into a knowledge of all the truths Christians ought to know. Further, what was revealed to them was necessary, to be recorded for the later periods of the Church when the extraordinary functions of the Spirit would no longer be essential. According to the bishop, "a rule of Faith not being yet composed, some extraordinary infusion of his Virtue was still necessary, both to regulate the Faith of him who received it, and to constitute the Authority of him who was to communicate, of what he had received to others." Warburton concluded that a portion of the task of the Spirit passed on to the Scriptures when the canon of Scripture was established from the authentic collections of apostolic writings.  

But though Warburton claimed that the extraordinary infusion of the Spirit was limited to the primitive Church because of its special needs, he conceded that one of the extraordinary gifts might still be in the Church:

The virtue of Charity is to accompany the Christian Church thr'out all it's [sic] stages here on Earth; whereas the gifts of prophecy, of strange tongues, of supernatural knowledge, are

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only transitory graces, bestowed upon the Church during it's infirm and infant states, to manifest it's divine birth, and to support it against the delusions and the powers of darkness. 69

John Evelyn recorded the details of a sermon preached by String-fellow on John 16.13. 70 The clergyman claimed that the special endowment of the Spirit was given to the apostles and disciples that they might acquire "supernatural knowledge of the Scripture & abilitys"; and to enable them to do extraordinary miracles, "confirm their commission, & convert the ignorant world." These special abilities along with the gift of tongues remained in the Church only until the canon of Scripture was established, ceasing when men grew skilled in the knowledge and use of the Scriptures, thus no longer needing supernatural gifts; and miracles ceased, men no longer being non-believers. 71

69 Ibid., p. 100. Warburton used 1 Cor. 13.12-13 as his key text. I found no other critic of enthusiasm who lists charity as an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, or who concedes that any extraordinary gift remains in the Church.

70 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

71 John Evelyn, Diary, ed. E. S. DeBeer (Oxford, 1955), V, 331-332. In his Doctrine of Grace, p. 113, Warburton said: "... the nature and genius of the Gospel were so averse to all the religious institutions of the world, that the whole strength of human prejudices was set in opposition to it. To overcome the obstinacy and violence of these prejudices, nothing less than the power of the Holy One was sufficient. He did the work of Man's Conversion; and reconciled an unbelieving world to God. At present, whatever there may be remaining of the bias of prejudice, ... it draws the other way. So much then of his task was finished, and the Faith, from thenceforth had a favourable hearing." Sterne in Sermons of Yorick, II, 272ff. declared speaking of the disciples of Christ: "Unless this want [of skill in the arts and acquired ways of
Even some of those men charged with enthusiasm agreed with anti-enthusiasts that certain extraordinary functions of the Spirit ceased when the canon of Scripture was established. Speaking of the Spirit, John Owen (1616-1683) declared that in continuing his work, "he ceaseth from putting forth those extraordinary effects of his Power which was needful for the laying the Foundation of the Church in the World." And Richard Baxter said that Christians ought not now to expect those extraordinary infusions of the Spirit which enabled the apostles and prophets of old "to reveal new laws, or precepts, or events," because experience has shown that they have ceased. But Baxter was willing to grant the possibility of individuals still being led by the Spirit "in some things otherwise indifferent" and in the "prediction of events," but he was very certain that no significant new direction for the Church was still possible:

Yet it is most certain that it is ceased as to legislation; for the Spirit itself hath already given us those laws, which he hath

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persuasion] had been supplied,---the first obstacle to their labours must have discouraged and put an end to them for ever.---As they had no language but their own, without the gift of tongues they could not have preached the gospel except in Judea;--and as they had no authority of their own,--without the supernatural one of signs and wonders,--they could not vouch for these extraordinary gifts, in the most literal sense of the words, they could do nothing." See also Langhorne, Letters, pp. 62-63.

72 Quoted in Nuttall, p. 28.
declared to be perfect, and unchangeable till the end of the world. 73

Infallibility, Perfectionism, Antinomianism and Enthusiasm

Besides the matter of the presence of the Spirit and the duration of His extraordinary ministry in the individual and the Church, certain other beliefs and practices of enthusiasts, some of their critics thought, posed a threat to the purity and power of the witness of the Church. Some of these allegedly dangerous beliefs and practices were related to the enthusiasts' claim of guidance by the Spirit, but others concerned their solicitude for a biblical doctrine and for a witness untainted with what enthusiasts considered to be Roman Catholic superstitions. Among these causes of dispute were subjects like infallibility and antinomianism, the sacraments (or ordinances, as the Puritans preferred to call them), extemporary prayers, and the sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching.

Many critics of enthusiasm understood the enthusiasts' teaching concerning the role of the Spirit in the life of the Christian as maintaining the possibility that men can be infallible, as perfect as God is, and totally exempt from sin in this world. The Quakers and the Methodists were

73 From Works, quoted in Nuttall, p. 51. Baxter also wrote on the same questions: "It is possible that God may make new revelations to particular persons about their particular duties, events, or matters of fact, in subordination to the Scriptures, either by inspiration, vision, or apparition, or voice; for he hath not told us that he will never do such a thing. . . . Though such revelation and prophecy be possible, there is no certainty of it in general, nor any probability of it to any one individual person, much less a promise." Quoted from Baxter, Works, in Nuttall, p. 56.
among the groups of enthusiasts most frequently criticized for teaching these doctrines of infallibility and perfectionism. Charles Leslie understood the Quaker teaching on the inner light to imply that all Quakers were infallible and hence incapable of making mistakes of any sort; further, infallibility rendered them perfectly knowledgeable, to the point of knowing "all Mens hearts, and all things in the world, by their inward Light, without being told by any."\(^7^4\) Leslie, accordingly, in page after laborious page of his *Snake in the Grass* attempted to show how unfounded such a claim of infallibility was.

Besides the charge that Friends claimed equality with God, and hence infallibility, Quakers were criticized for teaching that man is capable of moral perfection or sinlessness. Of course, Quakers were often extreme and naive in expressing their beliefs concerning the benefits one enjoyed from abiding in the Spirit; hence much of the controversy over Quaker teachings arose either from misconstructions of ambiguous statements made by Quakers or from misrepresentations of other statements. It is clear, however, that much of the opposition which Quakers experienced was prompted by a reaction to radical enunciations and representations by the Friends. Brathwaite remarked concerning the result of the Quaker sense of union with Christ:

Fox, and others of the early Friends, had a vivid sense of personal union with their living Lord, but they coupled this experience of the indwelling Christ with a doctrine of perfection that betrayed

them, during the first exhilaration of the experience, into extremes of identification with the Divine. They believed that inspiration gave infallibility, a belief that men have often held with respect to the writers of scripture, and they had to learn, with the help of some painful lessons, what we are learning today about the writers of scripture, that the inspired servant of God remains a man, liable to much of human error and weakness.

Quaker claims concerning their personal moral condition were perhaps radical enough to provoke the orthodox to angry retort, but their teachings concerning perfection as represented in Fox's *Journal* and Barclay's *Apology* should not necessarily have caused the great consternation they aroused, considering their premises. The basic premise was that Christ or His Holy Spirit was abiding in the individual, prompting, or being totally responsible for, his behaviour; if Christ is all pure, and all claim that He is, then that individual's behaviour must necessarily be pure as long as Christ remains in him. Doubtless, many of the misunderstandings arose from the failure of the opposing parties to differentiate between moral imperfections and other types of human failures. Bewildered by the lack of clarity in the Quaker statement concerning infallibility, Leslie complained:

For they turn and wind this Infallibility of theirs at such a rate, that no Man can (I am sure I cannot) know what they mean by it. Sometimes it makes them as infallible as the Apostles, nay, as Christ himself: But at other times, when they are pres'd, they bring down this Infallibility to mean nothing in the world that does distinguish them from other Men.


Critics like Leslie fully expected that the Quaker perfection rendered them incapable of making any mistakes, whereas it appears that men like Fox and Barclay were speaking of moral imperfections. Fox's insistence that man is capable of attaining that perfection which Adam and Eve enjoyed before the fall was no doubt one of the causes of opposition to his view of perfection:

Now Christ saith, "Learn of me, I am the way to God, I am the Truth, and the Life, and the Light." So that man and woman come up again to God, and are renewed up into his image and righteousness and holiness by Christ, by which he comes up into the Paradise of God, as man was before he fell; and into a higher state than that, to sit down in Christ that never fell. So the Son of God is to be heard in all things, who is the Saviour and the Redeemer; and hath laid down his life, and bought his sheep with his blood.77

Unfortunately, Fox never indicated how man's unfallen state differed from that of Christ. John Wesley, discussing the same question of Christian perfection, decided that in his unfallen state Adam was as pure and free of sin as the holy angels; his understanding was as clear as the angels', so that he always judged right and was always able to speak and act right.78 If Wesley's view of man's pre-lapsarian state was shared by Anglican churchmen of a century before, one can appreciate the consternation that Fox's statements such as those last cited would have caused.

Robert Barclay's enunciation of Quaker doctrine on perfection was much clearer than Fox's brief declarations. His eighth proposition, which

77 Journal, p. 665; see also, pp. 18, 32, 216, 166, 367-368.
dealt with perfection, declared:

In whom this pure and holy birth is fully brought forth, the body of death and sin comes to be crucified and removed, and their hearts united and subjected to the truth; so as not to obey any suggestions or temptations of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect perfect; yet doth this perfection still admit of a growth; and there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning, where the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord.\textsuperscript{79}

Although this statement still needs further clarification (for example, what is meant by "the body of death and sin . . . crucified and removed"?), there is little doubt that Barclay is speaking here of moral perfection and nothing more. And the sinlessness of which he speaks is conditional, dependent on the individual's continuing with a heart "united and subjected to the truth" and with a mind watchfully and diligently attending unto the Lord. The perfection of which he speaks, as he later indicated, does not render the individual "as pure, holy, and perfect as God in his divine attributes of wisdom, knowledge, and purity; but only a perfection proportionable and answerable to man's measure, whereby [he is] kept from transgressing the law of God, and enabled to answer what he requires of us." In this state man still retains in himself the possibility of falling from grace.\textsuperscript{80} If Barclay's enunciation of Quaker doctrine represents the characteristic Quaker view, it is clear that either the Friends were grossly misunderstood, or that on the basis of their concept of the inner light they

\textsuperscript{79} Barclay, \textit{Apology}, p. 241.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 243.
made such extreme claims for themselves in their everyday pattern of living that their doctrine of perfection proved a threat to the society's moral stability. The latter is unlikely since the frequent imprisonments Quakers suffered resulted chiefly from their witness against such social and legal matters as hat-honour and oath-taking and not from moral turpitude.

Just as the Quakers received severe criticisms for their assertions of moral perfection, so the Methodists were inveighed against as claiming themselves incapable of sin once they experienced instantaneous conversion. John Wesley, of course, spared few pains to expose the falsity of the charge. But he did teach human perfection and sinlessness. However, unlike the early Quakers, Wesley was careful to qualify his declarations on perfection so that he was easily able to refute charges against him. For John Wesley, Christian perfection "does not imply . . . exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations," but is another term for "holiness." "Everyone that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect." Nevertheless, Wesley quickly adds, absolute perfection is not attainable on this earth, but one might be perfect in a certain degree and thus be capable of growth:

There is no perfection of degrees, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect,

he hath still need to 'grow in grace,' and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour. 82

After a long analysis of numerous portions of Scripture, Wesley concluded that the Bible teaches that man is in this life capable of living a sinless life:

It remains, then, that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. 83

This perfection, Wesley emphasized, does not render man as pure as Adam was prior to his fall. 84 And a man remains sinless only so long as he continues to receive in his soul "the breath of life from God." Defining sin as a wilful transgression of the "revealed, written law of God," Wesley affirmed:

One who is so born of God . . . who continually receives into his soul the breath of life from God, the gracious influence of his Spirit, and continually renders it back; one who thus believes and loves, who by faith perceives the continual actings of God upon his spirit, and by a kind of spiritual re-action returns the grace he receives, in unceasing love, and praise, and prayer; not only doth not commit sin, while he thus keepeth himself, but so long as this "seed remaineth in him, he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 85

So perfection for John Wesley, as for Barclay, was a conditional matter,


83 Ibid., p. 19.


dependent on the continual presence of the Spirit within the individual. However, carefully guarded as Wesley's statements were, many clerics still found occasion to accuse Methodists, as they did Quakers, of doing violence to the teachings of the Church, of making gods of men.

In the thinking of critics of enthusiasm, antinomianism was closely linked with the enthusiasts' claim to immediate guidance by the Spirit. And much evidence indicates that the critic's fear that antinomianism could lead to corrupt practices was justified in many instances. The Ranters seemed to have been notorious for their immoral practices which they defended by claiming that since they were redeemed by Christ and were being led by His Spirit, they could do no wrong. Some went even further, saying that "no man could be freed from sin until he had committed that sin as if it were not a sin." Knox reports that contemporary information indicates that the seventeenth-century Ranters held meetings which were a "kind of witches' sabbat," in which "they danced naked together." Ranters were openly immoral and obstinately blasphemous, says Knox. They believed that there was no need for them to keep the moral law any more, because Christ had fulfilled it. The Familists, a religious sect which had its origins on the Continent, also held the antinomian doctrine that permitted what "ordinary souls" call libertinism. They believed and taught that God


pays no attention to the actions of the "outward Man" but to those of the heart, and, further, to those who are "pure all things are pure (even things forbidden)." The stigma of antinomianism did not taint Ranters and Familists only but was passed on to all enthusiasts, French prophets and Methodists included.

South was outraged that some people would claim the liberty of the Spirit to sanction actions which in other people would be sinful: "Actions . . . in other men . . . unlawful," he said, are in them "sufficiently warranted by the Spirit's dispensing with his own laws in their behalf, and much more with the laws of men." The antinomian doctrine was particularly reprehensible, of course, because it threatened the whole basis of order and decency in a community. This threat moved South to remark that enthusiasm is a "powerful engine" against law and society, "a principle of that diabolical malignity, that it sets men beyond all reach of the magistrate, and frets asunder the very nerves of all government and society." By the principle of enthusiasm, South continued, enthusiasts "are empowered to shake off laws, invade the rights and properties of all about them, and, if they please, to judge, sentence and put to death kings; because the spiritual man . . . judgeth all things, but himself is judged of none." 

88 See Robert A. Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 141.
89 South, Sermon 51, Sermons, III, 147.
90 Ibid. See also Sermons, IV, 102-104, and IV, 66-68, where South declared that antinomianism "is so broadly impious, that it does not undermine a good life, but directly blow it down."
Certainly no antinomian himself, John Wesley found his work disturbed by antinomians. He weeded them out of the ranks of his followers as quickly as he could; nevertheless, he was constantly accused of teaching the doctrine, possibly a consequence of his great emphasis on the primacy of faith as opposed to works in the process of salvation. In an encounter with one antinomian who was corrupting Methodist converts at Birmingham, John Wesley quizzed him as follows:

Wesley: Do you believe you have nothing to do with the law of God?
Ant.: I have not: I am not under the law; I live by faith.
Wesley: Have you, as living by faith, a right to everything in the world?
Ant.: I have: all is mine, since Christ is mine . . .
Wesley: Have you also a right to all the women in the world?
Ant.: Yes, if they consent.
Wesley: And is not that a sin?
Ant.: Yes, to him that thinks it is a sin; but not to those whose hearts are free.91

Such attitudes as expressed in this exchange were enough to bring into disrepute both enthusiasts and those who emphasized faith in Christ's sacrifice as the prime requirement for salvation.

Theophilus Evans claimed that most Methodists, as all Moravians and French prophets, maintained antinomian beliefs that give encouragement to all manner of vices and immoralities; he charged, further, that they held that "Sin in a Child of God should never trouble him, inasmuch as God imputed no Sin to his Elect, tho' the same Action in the same Circumstances is a Sin in a Reprobate." Evans also added that Methodists believed that

if any of them in a state of grace should sin by committing murder or adultery, God would not hold such against them as sin.\textsuperscript{92} It is well known that John Wesley resolutely fought against all antinomian tendencies in the Methodist movement, even publishing tracts exposing the evils of the doctrines, but perhaps what is of greatest importance is not whether Methodists did in fact hold such beliefs, but that important church leaders, among others, claimed that they (Methodists) did.

Enthusiasts and the Sacraments

Though Methodists were lumped together with all other enthusiasts in the charge of antinomianism, they could not properly be accused of slighting the sacraments of the Church as many other enthusiasts were. As was the case in attitudes to the Holy Spirit in the Church, so in the matter of the sacraments; among Puritans there was a variety of views, some orthodox, others extreme. Nuttall has shown that fundamentally Puritans held that the Word and the ordinances (the sacraments) were the two instruments God used to work on men's hearts to effect salvation. The Spirit of God works on human hearts through the ordinances, and though it might work without or above the Word and the ordinances, it never works against them.\textsuperscript{93} But because these sacraments had become the badge, as it were, of priestly power in the Roman Catholic Church,

\textsuperscript{92} Theophilus Evans, \textit{The History of Modern Enthusiasm}, 2nd ed. (London, 1757), p. 118.

\textsuperscript{93} Nuttall, \textit{The Holy Spirit}, p. 91.
Puritans tended to lessen their emphasis on them, considering them "outward things" by which one could receive grace but having no grace in themselves. Further, the Puritans' emphasis on a charismatic Church and immediacy in religious devotion naturally led them either to suspect or to deemphasize symbolism in their observances.

Nevertheless, most Puritans held very orthodox views concerning the role and administration of the sacraments; yet, ironically, it was the Puritans' firm orthodoxy in relation to the administration of the sacraments which led gradually to a lack of vital interest in them. Nuttall has shown that the insistence of some Puritans that only ordained pastors administer the sacraments resulted in some congregations going without those services for many years, thus automatically suggesting that the ordinances were "not essential for the possibility of Christian life or for the being of a church." In fact, some Puritan pastors taught as much, according to Nuttall. He has also indicated that a further falling away from the sacraments was occasioned by the insistence of some Puritans, especially Separatists and Congregationalists, that the "Sacraments, being seals of God's Covenant, ought to be administered only to the faithful, and Baptisme to their seed or those under their government." 

To the Puritans, the posture in which one took the wafer during the Communion Service was important, not as having any significance in itself,


95 [F. Johnson and H. Ainsworth], Defense of . . . Brownists, quoted in Nuttall, p. 94.
but as a reaction to the Roman Catholic practice of kneeling. Puritans thought, too, that the Roman Catholic clergy made more of a mystery or miracle of the Eucharist than the Scriptures gave warrant for, so they felt compelled to be "peculiar," or at least different from them. Many Puritans therefore followed the Zwinglian practice of either standing or sitting in the pew while receiving the wafer. When this privilege was denied them, some refused to communicate, and others emigrated to America after abstaining from Communion for several years. 96

Of course, many of the leaders of the established church considered the matter of one's posture when communicating something indifferent, important only for the preservation of order, decency, and regularity in the solemn service. Robert South, for instance, conceded that ceremonies (kneeling at sacrament, or using the cross in baptism) were only "circumstances, modes, and solemn usages, by which God's worship is orderly and decently performed," but he added that although they were not "parts of divine worship," such ceremonies were, nevertheless, so vital that "in some instance or other divine worship cannot be without" them. 97

The Baptists were the enthusiasts who subjected the sacrament of Baptism to its most trying scrutiny. They abandoned the traditional affusion of infants for the more scriptural immersion of believers (largely

96 See Nuttall, p. 95.

adults). This change, as Nuttall argues, contributed to a weakening of the sacramental idea, because many people did not regard adult immersion as satisfying the ordinance of baptism. In time some Puritans viewed the sprinkling of infants merely as a commitment by parents that they were responsible for bringing up the child in the "fear and admonition" of the Lord. Some believed so little in the supposed cleansing function of infant baptism as to affirm that "the children of the faithful that are holy are holy before Baptism." Others valued more highly baptism by the Spirit. Taking one step further, some enthusiasts renounced water baptism altogether as being nugatory since the inception of baptism by the Holy Spirit. As William Dell (d. 1664) put it, "Christ's baptism put an end to John's water-baptism, and Spirit-baptism to creature-baptism."

The Quakers, always representing the most radical wing of Puritanism, repudiated the sacraments altogether for reasons resembling those given by their Puritan counterparts. William Erbury, the radical Puritan, speaking of the Ordinances, declared:

the Lord's Ordinance ... is the Spirit's presence and power from on high; this was the first Gospel-Ordinance, the Baptism of the Spirit and of Fire; ... in breaking of bread, they drank into one Spirit ... all outward Ordinances of the Gospel were but the Ordinances of man, though appointed by God, the appearance and power of the Spirit was the Ordinance of God.

98 See Nuttall, pp. 95-96.

99 J. Rogers, Ohel or Bethshemesh, cited in Nuttall, p. 96.

100 Select Works, quoted in Nuttall, p. 99.

101 Testimony, quoted in Nuttall, p. 99.
Speaking for Quakers, George Fox explicitly denied the validity of infant baptism, affirming that the true baptism is "in Christ with one spirit into one body"; and of the Lord's Supper he said, "the bread that the saint's break is the body of Christ and the cup that they drink is the blood of Jesus Christ."¹⁰² And Barclay, discussing the subject of baptism at great length, declared that as there is only one Lord and one faith, so there is only one baptism: the baptism of Christ, which is "not the washing with, or dipping in water, but a being baptized by the Spirit." The baptism of John, Barclay added, was but a figure of the true baptism, and so John's baptism gave place to the "substance," which is to continue. The baptism of John was a mere water baptism, which washed away the filth of the flesh, Barclay said, but that of the Spirit is "the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." To insist on water-baptism, he added, is to set up legal rites and ceremonies that are carnal and thus to detract from the new covenant dispensation, which is pure and spiritual.¹⁰³

Barclay's view of the Lord's Supper might be briefly expressed from his thirteenth proposition:

The communion of the body and blood of Christ is inward and spiritual, which is the participation of his flesh and blood, by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells. Of which things the breaking of bread by Christ with his disciples was a figure, which even they who

¹⁰² Fox, Journal, p. 134; see also pp. 528-529.

¹⁰³ Barclay, Apology, pp. 413-414; 418-424.
had received the substance used in the church for a time, for the sake of the weak . . .104

Barclay declared that the breaking of literal bread, a "shadow" of better things, ceased with the coming of the "substance." With their great emphasis on the immediacy of the Spirit in the believer, Quakers saw rites and ceremonies as mere symbols of the perfect Spirit, symbols which Christians need no longer to observe during this dispensation of the Spirit.

Among Methodists, however, the sacraments were very important. Their leader, John Wesley, was attached to High Church principles all his life, and though he might at times vary slightly from the traditional views of the Anglican Church, he always held the sacraments in high esteem. According to Davies, John Wesley was always a "high sacramentalist," at times partaking of the Lord's Supper nearly one hundred times in a single year.105 In spite of the difficulties his followers faced in the parish churches, Wesley urged those having a desire to please God, or a love for their souls, to communicate as often as they could. Since his followers were prevented from approaching the Communion table in many parish churches, Wesley was eventually forced to ordain men to administer the sacraments to Methodists.

Though he greatly valued the Lord's Supper as a means of grace, John Wesley seemed not to consider Baptism essential to salvation. He

104 Barclay, Apology, p. 445.

rarely baptized anyone himself, because most of his followers were already baptized in infancy, and he tended to deemphasize the matter of baptismal regeneration in the interest of the new birth, the work performed by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the penitent. Horton Davies sums up John Wesley's attitude to Baptism as follows:

It would not be unreasonable to conclude that Wesley holds to "regeneration" as a formal principle, but his primary interest in the development of a theology of experience was in the subsequent "new birth" of conversion. He did not deny that there was an interior change wrought by the Holy Spirit in the child, in ridding him of the effects of original sin, but he was more interested in the reality of the adult experience of Christian rebirth with its attendant sense of "assurance."106

Extemporaneous Prayer, Academic Learning and Enthusiasm

Among the vexed questions which generated many heated exchanges between Puritans and their critics, those concerning extemporaneous praying were often most prominent. Because many Puritans viewed God as a Father and themselves as His children, prayer was especially significant to them as a means of communicating with their Father, though in imperfect language or in unuttered thoughts or groans. They believed that the Holy Spirit "helped their infirmities," making intercession for them according to the will of God, a claim based on St. Paul's statement.

in Romans 8:26-27. The enthusiasts' profound consciousness of the operations of the Spirit in their life led them to be very suspicious of set forms of prayer in worship. They saw no blessing or edification coming to the supplicant from such "stinted" prayers, which they viewed as man's devices, prompted by idleness. One should pray as the Spirit grants him utterance; reading prayers muzzles the Spirit of God in the supplicant so that he cannot pour out his soul to God. Walter Cradock's complaint represents the feelings of many Puritans who favoured extemporary prayers:

And for Prayer, when it may be the poore Ministers soule was full of groanes, & he would have rejoyned to have poured out his soule to the Lord, he was tied to an old Service-Booke, & must read that till he grieved the Spirit of God, and dried up his owne spirit as a chip, that he could not pray if he would . . .

Some Puritans felt such a strong urgency to give vent to their deepest private feelings and desires in prayer that they at times refused to use the Lord's Prayer, considering it merely a model; and extremists concluded that only those prayers prompted by the immediate movings of the Spirit were spiritual. One Puritan declared:

Prayer is rather a work of the Spirit than of any form, and . . . no set form ought to be put upon the Spirit of God, but what it freely breathes and speaks, and all constant speakings to God in this

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Glad Tydings from Heaven, quoted in Nuttall, p. 67.
(as they call) a conceived way, or impremeditate, or extemporary way is taken commonly amongst Christians for prayer in the Spirit.\textsuperscript{109}

But he added that if the extemporary prayer is chiefly dependent on man's reason, wit, affections, and memory, it is even worse than formal prayer.

Of course, not all Puritans found extemporary prayer acceptable; some, like Baxter, saw merit in both formal and extemporary prayers, but others sanctioned only set forms. Baxter believed that set forms could be as valuable an aid to the minister as spectacles are to dark sight, provided that such forms were kept subordinate to the Spirit:

\begin{quote}
It is a great Error [he said] to think, that the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit may not be exercised, if we use the same words, or if they be prescribed.

I doubt you lay too much on words; . . . Words must be used and weighed: but the main work is heart work, and God knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, when we have but groans, which we cannot express, and cry but Abba, Father.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

The characteristically Anglican view of the value of extemporary prayers was adequately expressed in the writings and sermons of Jeremy Taylor and Robert South, who dealt at length with the subject on different occasions. Taylor found extemporary prayers to be both unreasonable and unbiblical; unreasonable, because every one desiring to speak wisely and well considers the occasion and takes great pains to be orderly and seasonable; and unbiblical because the Scriptures say expressly that one should not be rash with his mouth or be hasty to utter anything before God. He believed that the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures teaches one how and what

\textsuperscript{109} John Saltmarsh, \textit{Sparkles of Glory}, quoted in Nuttall, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Account}, quoted in Nuttall, p. 72.
he ought to pray; beyond this help one needs no other grace except to be
stirred to desire to pray, and even for that Scripture gives enough argu-
ment and invitation. 111 Taylor, of course, did not believe that the extra-
ordinary assistance of the Spirit continued in the Church after the times
of the apostles, so he held that though the Holy Spirit is given to the
Church to be a fountain of graces and gifts, it never does more than as-
sist man's natural efforts. The gifts of the Spirit only improve and help
man's natural parts, "a subliming of what God gave us in the stock of
nature and art, to make it a sufficient order to an end supernatural and
divine." 112 Accordingly, in the gift of prayer the Spirit does not inspire
one but simply assists him in improving his natural faculties, ennobling
his abilities of art and industry. Prayer in the Church, a public form of

111 "An Apology for Authorized and Set Forms of Liturgy," in Works,
ed. R. Heber, rev. C. P. Eden, V (London, 1849), 256-257. It is evident
that many Puritans valued some set prayers, but apparently only for their
private devotions. The frequent new editions of certain collections of
prayers and devotional aids written by Puritans underscore their popular-
ity. Thomas Becon (fl. 1560), the prolific Puritan writer of devotional
works, published several popular collections of prayers, among them The
Pomander of Prayer (1558; 5th ed. 1578) and The Sycke Mans Salve (1561;
17th ed. 1632). Becon's Pomander of Prayer is not to be confused with an
earlier collection of prayers by the same title but published anonymously.
Becon provided prayers for the special functions and needs of "all differ-
ent orders of society." Arthur Dent's Plain Mans Pathway to Heaven
(1601) went through twenty-seven editions by 1648 and thirty-one by
1682; and Lewis Bayly's Practice of Piety (3rd ed. 1613) reached forty-
five editions by 1640. See Helen C. White, The Tudor Books of Private
Devotions [Madison], 1951).

263, 266.
worship, must be properly regulated by church authorities if disorder and confusion, accidents and scandals are to be avoided. Further, the reverence man owes to God does not allow him to offer the Almighty a sacrifice which he would not dare to give to a prince or a prudent governor. These considerations moved Taylor to assert that

unless religion be the most imprudent, trifling, and inconsiderable thing, and that the work of the Lord is done well enough when it is done negligently, or that the sanctuary hath the greatest beauty, when it hath the least order, it will concern us highly to think our prayers and religious offices are actions fit for wise men, and therefore to be done as the actions of wise men use to be, that is, deliberately prudently, and with greatest consideration.113

Taylor refused to consider extemporary praying to be praying in the Spirit, because he found that some men through such prayers promoted "spiritual crimes," and the "Spirit cannot dictate false, heretical, rebellious, blasphemous, or ignorant propositions"; further, if extemporary prayers were in fact prompted by the Spirit, they would constitute authoritative Scripture just as the Psalms and the Epistles. Such a consequence no one, of course, would admit. Taylor's summing up presents his view of what properly constitutes praying in the Spirit:

But if we will take David's psalter, or the other hymns of holy scripture, or any of the prayers which are respersed over the Bible, we are sure enough that they are the words of God's Spirit, mediately or immediately, by way of infusion or ecstacy, by vision, or at least by ordinary assistance. And now then what greater confidence can any man have for the excellency of his prayers and the probability of their being accepted, than when he prays his psalter, or the Lord's prayer, or any other office which he finds consigned in Scripture? When God's spirit stirs

113 "An Apology for Authorized and Set Forms of Liturgy," p. 263.
us up to an actual devotion, and then we use the matter He hath
described and taught, and the very words which Christ and Christ's
spirit, and the apostles and other persons full of the Holy Ghost,
did use; if in the world there be any praying with the Spirit, I mean
in vocal prayer, that is it.\textsuperscript{114}

Robert South, for his part, saw the whole matter of extemporary
praying as a Roman Catholic plot to destroy the English government and
Church. He declared emphatically that a "Popish priest and Dominican
friar, one Faithful Commin by name" posed as a Protestant zealot and in-
troduced this "new spiritual way of praying, with a design to bring the
people first to a contempt, and from thence to an utter hatred and disuse
of our common prayer; . . . to distract men's minds, and to divide our
church." For South, extemporary prayer was the "devil's masterpiece
and prime engine to overthrow the church by."\textsuperscript{115} He believed that such
prayer was prompted by pride and ostentation and was used by some en-
thusiasts for seditious and schismatic purposes. South found nothing
worthy of commendation in extemporary prayers; as used by the enthusi-
asts, they were long and tedious, full of irreverent and blasphemous ex-
pressions, "endless repetitions" and "insufferable nonsense"; incoherent
and confused, so rambling and inconsequential as to partake of the quality
of a dream.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{114} "An Apology for Authorized and Set Forms of Liturgy," p. 278.

\textsuperscript{115} South, Sermon 15, \textit{Sermons}, I, 327-328, 332.

called such prayer "extemporall effusions . . . irkesome and undigested."
\textit{A Collection of Private Devotions} (1627), ed. P. G. Stanwood (Oxford,
One can appreciate South's dislike of extemporary prayers on learning that, unlike those Puritan enthusiasts who thought of God as a Father to whom they as children can approach boldly with humble, incoherent petitions, South saw the Almighty as a great and glorious Being, infinite and "all-searching" in knowledge, possessing a "great, . . . fiery, and . . . implacable jealousy . . . for his honour," and having "no further use of the whole creation, but to serve the ends of it . . . ." Accordingly, South views prayer as man's most important duty as well as "one of the greatest and the hardest works" that he "has to do in this world." A man is, therefore, most fit to pray to God when a sense of his own unworthiness makes him "ashamed even to speak to him" (God). And prayers that are devout, pious, and acceptable require "premeditation of thought" and "brevity of expression" from the suppliant. Extemporaneous prayers would not therefore suffice.

To find proper words and expressions for prayer is the work of the brain and the invention, South said; and to find devotion and "affection" to accompany those expressions is the work of the heart. Now, since devotion and affection are indispensable as providing the spirituality of the prayer, he argued, it should be evident that one cannot pray in the best form possible extemporarily, for then the brain is more involved than


118 Ibid., p. 322.
the heart. The minister praying extemporarily "is wholly employing his invention, both to conceive matter, and to find words and expressions to clothe it in . . . it is certain, that while the head is so much employed, the heart must be idle and very little employed, and perhaps not at all." 119

South did not disagree that one should pray by the Spirit, but he refused to allow that the "saucy, senseless, extemporary way of speaking to God" was praying by the Spirit; for to pray by the Spirit, he insisted, "signifies neither more nor less but to pray knowingly, heartily, and affectionately for such things, and in such a manner, as the Holy Ghost in scripture either commands or allows." And if one should reply that to pray by the Spirit "is to have the Spirit immediately inspiring them," South would reply, "let them either produce plain scripture, or do a miracle to prove this by." 120

The enthusiasts' reluctance to depend on human wit, memory, or reason in their prayers to God, preferring that the Spirit influence their utterances, was also reflected in their attitude to preaching, one of the most important religious exercises of the Puritan minister. As they believed the Holy Spirit was both necessary and sufficient for meaningful prayer, so they claimed the Spirit's assistance adequate for the needs of

119 Sermon 15, Sermons, I, 329.

120 Ibid., p. 327. See also Langhorne, Letters on Religious Retirement, p. 86, where the author declares that one cannot derive a conclusive argument for extemporary prayer by citing the example of the Corinthian church in St. Paul's day, because then "they really prayed by Inspiration; and now that Inspiration no longer subsists."
a godly ministry. When a godly minister is taught by the Spirit, they believed, he does not necessarily need any further academic learning; furthermore, academic learning could be a hindrance to a successful ministry. Anglican clerics, opponents of enthusiasts, of course, disagreed vehemently with such conclusions; and some poured contempt on enthusiasts for using such professions as a means of cheapening the minister's calling and destroying the established church. When tradesmen and illiterates began preaching, firmly convinced that the Spirit supplied all the learning they needed, their critics charged that they (the enthusiasts) were demeaning the ministry. These unlettered preachers became the butt of many a writer's virulent satire.

Even before the enthusiasts of the Interregnum came into national prominence, Puritan ministers were admonishing their flocks concerning the value of the Spirit to the individual believer. In 1639 or 1640 Samuel How wrote a sermon which he significantly titled, The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching, Without Humane Learning. Or, a Treatise, Tending to Prove Humane Learning to be no Help to the Spiritual Understanding of the Word of God. Defining "learning" as "knowledge of the Arts and Sciences, divers Tongues, and such reading," How claimed that "the unlearned are more likely to receive the Spirit's aid in understanding than are the learned." And he added that learning was fit for statesmen, lawyers, gentlemen, and physicians, to be used in worldly employment.121

121 Cited in Lee, Background to Methodist Enthusiasm, pp. 65-66.
Gerard Winstanley held that after an individual has the light of God abiding in him, he would have no need of books, writings, or teachers:

None shall need to turn over books and writings . . . to get knowledge. But everyone shall be taken off from seeking knowledge from without, and with an humble quiet heart shall wait upon the Lord, till He manifest Himself: for He is a great king, and worthy to be waited upon. His testimony within fills the heart with joy and singing. He first gives experiences; and then power to set forth these experiences. Hence you shall speak to the rejoicing one of another, and to the praise of Him who declares His power in you. But he that speaks his thoughts, studies, and imaginations, and stands up to be a teacher of others, shall be judged for his unrighteousness, because he seeks to honor flesh, and does not honor the Lord. 122

It is ironic that enthusiasts should consider as proud those who attempt to preach or teach without being first taught by the Spirit, whereas anti-enthusiasts declared pride to be the cause of enthusiasts' extemporary praying and preaching. 123

John Smith, the founder of the English Arminian Baptist Church, believed that whereas it was lawful for penitent Christians to preach, pray, and sing with the aid of a book, a man who is regenerate "is above all bookes and scriptures whatsoever, seeing he hath the spirit of God within him which teacheth him the true meaning of the scriptures." Without this


123 See South, Sermon 15, Sermons, I, 331: "I do not in the least question, but the chief design of such as use the extempore way, is to amuse the unthinking rabble with an admiration of their gifts; their whole devotion proceeding from no other principle, but only a love to hear themselves talk. And I believe it would put Lucifer himself hard to it, to outrive the pride of one of those fellows pouring out his extempore stuff amongst his ignorant, whining, factious followers . . ."
Spirit to guide one in the understanding of the Scriptures, the latter are but a "dead letter" that would be misconstrued and perverted into contradictions. Clinching his argument, Smith declared: "to bind a regenerate man to a booke in prayinge, preachinge, or singinge, is to sett the Holy Ghost to school . . .".\(^{124}\)

One of George Fox's important "openings" concerned this matter of the true preparation for the ministry. Fox declared that the Lord opened to him that "being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ." And when his relatives expressed concern that he would not accompany them to church, Fox replied: "Did not the apostle say to believers that they needed no man to teach them, but as the anointing teacheth them?".\(^{125}\) Consonant with their belief in the transcendent role of the Spirit in their lives, Quakers, claiming the Spirit within them to be omniscient, relegated reason and book-learning to a subservient position. Fox seemed to believe that by the Spirit's teaching one can become omnipotent and omniscient: "Neither are Omnisciency and Omnipotency themselves as to all those things that are to be known and done . . . so altogether incommunicable to spiritual men as our Academical Animals imagine."\(^{126}\) And Nayler made fun of ministers who had to study at the universities to qualify them to understand the Scriptures: "so many

\(^{124\text{ }}\text{Quoted in Lee, p. 42.}\)

\(^{125\text{ }}\text{Journal, p. 7.}\)

\(^{126\text{ }}\text{Quoted in Barbour, p. 151, from Fox's Great Mystery.}\)
Years at Oxford and Cambridge... to know what unlearned men, Fishermens, Ploughmen and Herdsmen did mean when they spoke forth the Scriptures. "127

Speaking of one of the grounds for the enthusiasts' rejection of academic learning as a certain means of learning of God, Barclay said that Christianity "is become as it were an art, acquired by human science and industry, like any other art or science"; men have thus called themselves Christians without really being so, and have even "procured themselves to be esteemed as masters of Christianity, by certain artificial tricks, though altogether strangers to the spirit and life of Jesus."128

Barclay believed that one can gain what he called a "literal" or "uncertain" knowledge of God through numerous means, but a "certain," "spiritual," or "saving heart-knowledge" of God can only be had by the "inward immediate manifestation and revelation of God's Spirit, shining in and upon the heart, enlightening and opening the understanding";129 hence the insufficiency of mere academic learning and therefore the vital necessity of the Spirit's teaching. Even an anti-enthusiast, Richard Kingston, in inveighing against Facio, the learned scribe of the French


128 Barclay, Apology, p. 25.

129 Ibid., p. 20. See Richard Hofstadter, Anti-intellectualism in American Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), for an extensive analysis and appraisal of the form that this anti-academic attitude has taken in both secular and religious affairs in contemporary American society.
prophets, declared that "Wit and Learning are noxious Ingredients till corrected by Grace. A Heathen may be learned," said Kingston, "an Atheist witty, and a Devil may be both in great abundance . . . ."

One might be tempted to conclude that enthusiasts were putting a premium on ignorance, but the facts seem to suggest otherwise. Many were deeply concerned that the clergy be first godly, led by the Spirit, before being anything else. William Dell, Master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, preached at Great St. Mary's in 1653, insisting that the Scriptures cannot be learned through the pains and efforts that one would ordinarily use to study arts and sciences under the guidance of a human teacher. God and the Holy Spirit must teach any who would truly learn. In fact, Dell called for the abolition of the universities as a place for training ministers of the gospel. He recognized, however, their role in preparing men for temporal callings by providing instruction in languages, in the liberal arts and sciences, "but if they will exalt themselves above themselves and place themselves on Christ's very throne," Dell added, "then let them . . . descend into the darkness out of which they first sprang."

Barbara Lewalski, writing on Milton's place in the controversy over a learned ministry, indicates that Milton was among those who


believed that a university training, instead of assisting the minister better to fulfill his responsibilities as a clergyman, served rather, as he said, to "perplex and leaven pure doctrine with scholastical trash." He believed, further, that the minister might get from above that true learning which no university training, no human learning, can afford him. He said:

It is a fond error, though too much believed among us, to think that the universities makes a minister of the gospel; that it may conduce to other arts and sciences, I dispute not now; but that which makes a fit minister, the scripture can best informe us to be only from above; whence also we are bid to seek them. . . . the Gospel makes no difference from the magistrate himself to the meanest artificer, if God evidently favor him with spiritual gifts, as he can easily and oft hath don, while those batchelor divines and doctors of the tippet have bin passd by. . . . Christendom might soon . . . be happie, if Christians would but know thir own dignitie, thir libertie, thir adoption, and let it not be wonderd if I say, thir spiritual priesthood, whereby they have all equally access to any ministerial function whenever called by thir own abilities and the church, though they never came near commencement or universitie.132

In fact, enthusiasts were not the only ones who spoke of the inadequacy of the training ministers received in the universities. As re-doubtable an opponent of enthusiasts as Eachard, in inquiring into the basis of the current contempt of religion and the clergy (1670), indicated that future ministers of the Church were harmed by disputations and other academic exercises which encouraged disputatiousness and levity, weaning one from sober sense, and inclining him to trifling and jingling. With

particular vehemency, Eachard inveighed against punning, quibbling, joking, and other delicacies of wit greatly admired in some academic exercises. He found wit to be of no practical value either in law or physic but declared it the bane of the pulpit:

And as for Divinity, in this place I shall say no more, but that those usually prove Jack Puddings in the Pulpit. For he that in his youth has allowed himself this liberty of Academic Wit; by this means he has usually so thinned his judgment, becomes so prejudiced against sober sense, and so altogether disposed to trifling and jingling; that, so soon as he gets hold of a text, he presently thinks he has catched one of his old School Questions; and so falls a flinging it out of one hand into another! tossing it this way, and that! lets it run a little upon the line, then "tanutus! high jingo! come again!" here catching at a word! there lie nibbling and sucking at an and, a by, a quis or a quid, a sic or a sicut! and thus minces the Text so small that his parishioners, until he rendez-vous [reassemble] it again, can scarce tell, what is become of it.133

Irène Simon believes that the abuses Eachard attacked accounted largely for the Puritans' antipathy to university training for ministers and for their insistence on godliness over learnedness in a clergyman.134

However, not all Puritans dismissed academic excellence as useless towards a successful spiritual ministry. Baxter seemed at one time to have extolled the Spirit unduly at the expense of education, but he afterwards came to recognize that education, like the preaching of the Scriptures, might be one of God's ordinary means of conveying grace to


134 Ibid., p. 21.
the soul and so should not be put in opposition to the Spirit. Nevertheless, Baxter thought it important that all man's aids and capabilities be kept subordinate to the Spirit. Books, methods, forms, rather than being quenchers of the Spirit, according to Baxter, are, in fact, so necessary in their places that if ever one would expect help from the Spirit, he must use them. "He that hath both the Spirit of sanctification, and acquired gifts of knowledge together," Baxter concluded, "is the complete Christian, and likely to know much more than he that hath either of these alone." 

In general, as Mrs. Lewalski has shown, Presbyterian Puritans strongly supported the idea of an educated ministry, for they believed that the university training was essential to prepare the minister to interpret the Scriptures properly and to prevent heresy (Not many Presbyterian leaders believed that the Holy Spirit was present to assist later Christians as He assisted the early apostles). The Congregationalists, on the other hand, held that though learning could prove useful to the minister, it was not essential. Congregationalists did not believe that the active role of the Spirit ceased in the Church at apostolic times; rather, they felt certain that God would communicate additional light to man at any time; hence


136 From *Works*, quoted in Nuttall, p. 84.

they were readier than the more conservative Puritans to concede that God can effectively use the unschooled and unlearned as ministers in the Church. The more extreme sectarians believed that academic training, or human learning, was useless and, moreover, absolutely harmful to the minister and to those ardent searchers after truth, because God could best use those who are unlearned and ignorant in the ways of the world as He used the apostles. Representing the views of these extreme Puritans, John Canne, a Fifth Monarchist, said: "That which I aym at is, to persuade Christ's Little Flock, in all places to renounce their own reason, judgment, and understanding, and to be poor, blinde, and naked worms in the highways and hedges: for such now will be taught of God, in things appertaining to the Times and Kingdom." 138

Many of the clergy of the established church and some critics of enthusiasts were, of course, very unsympathetic to the claim that learning and a Spirit-filled ministry did not go together. In a sermon preached in 1646, Jasper Mayne attacked what he considered the "dangerous error that universities, books, studies, and learning" are not necessary for one's preparation for the ministry, and the error that any layman feeling the promptings of the Spirit may take upon himself the office of a preacher of the Gospel. Nevertheless, Mayne did not deny the possibility that God did, in fact, inspire those who claimed to possess such inspiration. He defended the Anglican clergy, who was being charged with a lack of

the Spirit, by calling attention to the style of preaching common among those reputedly filled with the Spirit:

Some pulpits have been thought unsanctified because the preacher was not gifted, because he has not expressed himself in that light, fluent, running, passionate, zealous style, which should make him for that time appear religiously distracted, or beside himself. Or because his prayer, or Sermon hath been premeditated, and has not flown from him in such an ex-tempore loose career of devout emptiness and nothings, as serve only to entertain the people, as bubbles do children, with a thin, unsolid, brittle, painted blast of wind and air.139

In his battle against Methodists, the new enthusiasts who employed laymen in the preaching of the gospel, Theophilus Evans harked back to happenings during the previous century, feeling, undoubtedly, that the Church and the Gospel were dishonoured by such humble preachers. He quoted Dr. Hacket, Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, who wrote of happenings in religion during the period when the Puritans were in power:

Ignorant Laicks, ... preach privately and publicly to the Corruption and Dishonour of the Gospel: Nay, all would be Teachers in the Gatherings of the Sectaries; scarce a Mute in the Alphabet of these new Christians, but all vowels. ... It is a lame excuse to say, in the Behalf of some of these Upstarts, that they are gifted Men. Who reports this, but such as are blind themselves? They have bold Foreheads, strong Lungs, and talk loud. An empty Cask will make a great Sound if you knock upon it.140

And Butler left little doubt of his sentiments concerning the enthusiasts' claims to the sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching. Ralrho's learning, he

139 A Sermon Concerning Unity and Agreement, preached at Carfax Church in Oxford, quoted in Irène Simon, Three Restoration Divines, I, 36-37.

140 Evans, History of Modern Enthusiasm, p. 122.
said, was not far behind Hudibras' education in logic, philosophy, and rhetoric (which he obviously got from the university), but Ralphe's education was "of another kind,"

And he another way came by 't:
Some call it Gifts, and some New light;
A Liberal Art, that costs no pains
Of Study, Industry, or Brains.

(I, i, 475-478)

Jonathan Swift later, satirizing enthusiasts under the title of Aeolists, concluded that the Spirit which filled them was nothing more than wind.141

South dealt at length with this subject of the qualifications for the clergy, attacking meanwhile the views of radical Puritans. He felt that one way of debasing the ministers of the Church and destroying religion is by "admitting ignorant, sordid, illiterate persons to the ministry."

"This is to give the royal stamp to a piece of lead," and though God truly has no need of a man's learning, South said, "he has much less need of his ignorance and ill behaviour."142 For those who termed the preaching of the established or educated clergy "vain philosophy," or "the enticing words of man's wisdom," calling instead for "the simplicity of the gospel," South had little comfort. He thought that such people "set a jus divinum upon ignorance and imperfection, and recommended natural weakness for divine grace."143 South was, of course, thinking of happenings among

141 See Section VIII of A Tale of a Tub.
142 Sermon 4, Sermons, I, 85.
143 Ibid., p. 87.
enthusiasts, who cried down learning, claiming the Spirit's gifts enough to fit one to preach. He showed his contempt for such attitudes in bitter satire:

With them the best preachers were such as could not read, and the ablest divines such as could not write. In all their preachments they so highly pretended to the Spirit, that they could hardly so much as spell the letter. To be blind was with them the proper qualification of a spiritual guide, and to be book-learned, as they called it, and to be irreligious, were almost terms convertible. None were thought fit for the ministry but tradesmen and mechanics, because none else were allowed to have the Spirit. Those only were accounted like St. Paul, who could work with their hands, and in a literal sense drive the nail home, and be able to make a pulpit, before they preached in it. 144

South saw the minister as a divine ambassador, one representing the greatest power in earth and heaven; hence anyone who in any way failed to adorn himself with the choicest ornaments (of learning, for example) necessary for heaven's ambassador, automatically disqualified himself for such a calling. God is the "father of lights" just as He is the giver of grace, South said; "he neither admits darkness in himself, nor approves it in others. And therefore," he concluded, "those who place all religion in the heats of a furious zeal, without the due illuminations of knowledge, know not of what spirit they are; indeed of such a spirit as begins in darkness, leads to it, and ends in it." 145 Thus South dismissed the claims of those who felt that the Spirit of God is able to equip one fully for the ministry. His scorn of the humble tradesmen who quoted

144 Sermon 35, Sermons, II, 310.

145 Ibid.
biblical precedent to justify their qualifications for preaching was soundly based on the widely accepted view that the Spirit of God no longer worked immediately in men as it did in the apostles and writers of the Scriptures.
Religious enthusiasm has influenced the growth of a large body of literature, stretching from the *Admonition to Parliament* (1572) and the Martin Marprelate *Tracts* (1583–1589) through the pro- and anti-enthusiastic satires, sermons, and polemics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the great evangelical hymns of the Methodist movement. To appreciate the true extent of that literature, however, one needs to differentiate between works written by a religious enthusiast and works bearing the unmistakable stamp of enthusiasm (as men of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England defined it), or works written in reaction to that enthusiasm (polemical literature and satire, for instance). A writer might be a religious enthusiast without his works revealing that fact. Milton the poet is no more an enthusiast than, say, Thomson of *The Seasons*, but Milton the spokesman against "hireling" clergymen is undoubtedly an enthusiast of the darkest dye, while Cowper of *The Task* is not (except as we consider all Romantics and moralizers enthusiasts in spirit).

The enthusiasts of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were largely concerned about worshipping God in what they considered "the right way." For many of them that "right way" involved a renunciation of everything that savoured of Roman Catholicism or that failed to satisfy the test of Scripture as they understood it. The fiercely combative
temper, unorthodox religious beliefs, religious ardour, and almost preternatural gloom of these enthusiasts joined with their opposition to the practices of the established church in matters relating to vestiary, liturgy, and church polity to make them the favourite butts of satire for ballad writers, pamphleteers, poets, and dramatists. Writers such as Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, John Marston, Thomas Dekker, and John Taylor satirized Puritans (enthusiasts) for their (supposed) immorality, hypocrisy, and deceit. They charged that the wishes of Puritans for Church reform were only a pretense, their real aim being to overthrow the Church establishment and abolish good works. In his Troia Britanica (1609), Thomas Heywood described the Puritan as being "precise, sour, hypocritical, ignorant, and overbearing. He hates all learning, all beauty in Church service, and all pastimes which may give pleasure."\(^1\) And when Puritans denounced the theatre as fostering wickedness and causing the desecration of the sabbath, the dramatists struck back, criticizing the enthusiasts as religious eccentrics and extremists who constantly disturbed the peace of Church and state. The dramatists had nothing new to say of the Puritans, but because of the greater possibilities for imitation offered by the stage, playwrights laughed at and denounced the Puritans more effectively than pamphleteers did. The speech, clothing, manners, and morals of Puritans were the favourite subjects of satire. But particularly

\(^1\) See William Holden, AntiPuritan Satire 1572-1642 (New Haven, (1968), pp. 44-144. I am indebted to Holden for much of the material in this paragraph.
vulnerable were the mannerisms of their preachers, as were their worship, prayers, and sermons (especially sermon titles). Holden reports that "according to the stage writers, noise, and confusion were the basic elements of any Puritan service. Prayers, sermons, and psalms were delivered in a high, nasal tone, and the overpious manner enforced the delivery."\(^2\)

During the Interregnum both Meric Casaubon and Henry More attempted, as indicated earlier, to discredit enthusiasts by showing them to be pathological cases. When the Restoration effectively wrested power from the Puritans, the enthusiasts again found themselves the butt of numerous attacks. Samuel Butler grew famous because of the success of his *Hudibras* in which he satirized Presbyterians and other enthusiastic sects, represented by Hudibras and Ralphe.\(^3\) John Dryden also attacked the enthusiasts in several of his better-known poems: "Absalom and Achitophel," "Religio Laici," "The Medal," and "The Hind and the Panther." But in none of these works do the writer's attacks on religious enthusiasts reveal much more than a striking felicity of satiric technique. Butler's octosyllabic couplets, deliberately clumsy rhythms, colloquial language, and comic rhymes worked effectively with the mock-heroic style and grotesque imagery to deflate the objects of his satire. His method

\(^2\) Holden, pp. 102-103. For anti-Puritan satire in early seventeenth-century drama, see especially Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* and *The Alchemist* and Thomas Middleton's *The Family of Love*.

succeeded so well that numerous writers imitated him, though never achieving his success. It was left to Jonathan Swift to express the supreme contempt with which men of the seventeenth century viewed enthusiasts. Because he combines the common anti-enthusiast charges with a virulence and myth-making vitality unknown to earlier anti-Puritan satirists, Swift is used here to represent all literary opponents of enthusiasm.

Swift stands apart from most English writers for the incisiveness and pungency of his satire against enthusiasts. The savageness of his attacks is the more remarkable considering that he wrote at a time when most Dissenters (enthusiasts) had relinquished their extreme claims of inspiration, becoming respectable citizens and leaders in industry. It is true that during his short period of service as a priest in Kilroot he was surrounded by Presbyterians, but the picture of enthusiasts painted in Swift's satires owes very little to Irish Presbyterianism. The fact is that Presbyterians reminded Swift (as they reminded many other Englishmen) of the political and religious chaos of the years of the Civil War and Interregnum. So indelibly were the experiences of those years imprinted on the memories of ecclesiastical and political leaders of Restoration times and of the hundred years following that they reacted violently to any behaviour reminiscent of the supposed irrationality of that earlier period. During the years when Swift was at work on *A Tale of a Tub*, there was
still widespread dissatisfaction over the granting of toleration to Dissenters. This displeasure was later expressed in the Schism Act, which miscarried because of the death of Queen Anne. All his life Swift was an outspoken opponent of enthusiasts, but the origin of his opposition cannot be traced to much more than the spirit of the age. He was reflecting the general disposition of many ecclesiastical and political leaders of his times.4

Swift’s attack on enthusiasts is largely contained in his celebrated A Tale of a Tub, which was written sometime during the last five years of the seventeenth century and published in 1704. In the "Authors Apology," published for the first time in the edition of 1710, Swift declared that the allegory in the Tale was intended to satirize the "Corruptions in Religion," while the digressions exposed corruptions in learning. But considering the distribution of the satire on religion, one agrees with Quintana that though Swift might have set out with a far different purpose, by the time he got to the "final version of the Tale he desired more than anything else to deal ferociously with Jack."5 Jack, of course, is the father of enthusiasts and is made to represent them all in various portions of the Tale.

The satire against enthusiasts begins in the Introduction with

4 See Ricardo Quintana, The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift (Oxford, 1936), pp. 21, 68. Herbert Davis thinks that the attack "may have been influenced by his own experience among Presbyterians in Ireland." Jonathan Swift: Essays on his Satire and Other Studies (New York, 1964), p. 122.

5 Quintana, Mind and Art of Swift, pp. 92–93.
reference to the three oratorical machines that men use who desire to be heard in a crowd. Of the three machines—the pulpit, the ladder, and the "stage Itinerant"—the pulpit ranks first in place of dignity, according to Swift. The pulpit represents the several sorts of enthusiasts in England, but Swift indicates from the outset that he intends to focus on the Presbyterians, those enthusiasts most suited to the English climate. In Section II where the allegory of the three brothers begins, the stage is set, with Peter, Jack, and Martin (as yet unnamed) receiving almost equal attention. Section IV describes Peter's seizing complete control of his father's will, depriving his brothers of all access to it and eventually kicking them out of doors when they dare to copy it. Peter, who represents Roman Catholics, fades completely out of the Tale soon after the beginning of Section VI, and Martin (Anglicans) appears as the son who most faithfully represents his father's wishes in connection with the will and the manner of preserving his coat (the Scriptures and the doctrine and faith of Christianity); while Jack (Calvinists) looms into prominence as the father of a race of madmen (enthusiasts). All of Section VIII is devoted to the Aeolists, the descendants of Jack; and, relentlessly pursuing his quarry, Swift again devotes both Section IX (the famous Digression on Madness) and Section XI to enthusiasts. Not yet satisfied that he has done justice to Jack and his descendents, Swift again attacks them in the fragment called The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit.

Besides the animus of Swift's satiric thrust against enthusiasts,
there is little that is new in the attack. The charges he brings against
the enthusiasts show that he shared with the men of his times a distaste
of anything abnormal and irregular; his charges also show that like many
of his contemporaries he saw in enthusiasts a potent threat to the stability
and peace of society. Robert Burton, Meric Casaubon, Henry More, and
Robert South, among numerous others, had already brought similar charges
against the dissident religious sects. However, most of Swift's predeces-
sors had contented themselves with exposing the faults and weaknesses
of enthusiasts and the threat they posed to society. Swift covered the
same ground, but with a difference: he presented his charges in a manner
calculated to appeal to a wide audience and at the same time to excite
public contempt for the unfortunate objects of his indignation. It was a
similar grasp of the qualities that appeal to the public that motivated
Swift's happy choice of the travel-adventure motif and the dominant fairy-
tale images for Gulliver's Travels. The continuing appeal of these works
to the general reader has vindicated the wisdom of Swift's choice.

Swift's means of eliciting contempt for his satiric object and si-
multaneously fascinating his reader is evident in the manner in which he
exposes Jack's irrational zeal. Most writers of the seventeenth and eight-
eenth centuries frequently inveighed against enthusiasts for their zeal, but
A Tale of a Tub, unlike most other writings, allows one to appreciate the
savagery of that zeal and the passions which undergird it. Both Martin
and Jack, for example, have decided to restore their coats to their original
Such a restoration requires the removal of vast quantities of "Points," "Fringes," and "Lace." Both boys are angry, but each exhibits a different attitude:

**Martin** laid the first Hand; at one twitch brought off a large Handful of Points, and with a second pull, stript away ten dozen Yards of Fringe. But when He had gone thus far, he demurred a while: He knew very well, there yet remained a great deal more to be done; however, the first Heat being over, his Violence began to cool, and he resolved to proceed more moderately in the rest of the Work.6

In removing the gold lace, Martin "pickt up the Stitches with much Caution, and diligently gleaned out all the loose Threads as he went," and such things that he could not remove without damaging the original fabric of the Coat, "he concluded the wisest Course was to let [them] remain, resolving in no Case whatsoever, that the Substance of the Stuff should suffer Injury; which he thought the best Method for serving the true Intent and Meaning of his Father's Will" (pp. 136-137).

But with Jack the case is different. He begins his work of reform, according to Swift, obsessed with other thoughts than reforming in accordance with the will. With him his father's commands are secondary to his hatred and spite against Peter and anything associated with him.

"Brimful of this miraculous Compound [zeal], reflecting with Indignation upon PETER'S Tyranny, and farther provoked by the Despondency of Martin," Jack sets about the work of reformation and in three minutes accomplishes

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more than Martin had done in as many hours. In the process he tears his coat from "Top to Bottom," but unsatisfied, he keeps on tearing:

Beholding Millions of Stitches, that required the nicest Hand, and sedatest Constitution, to extricate; in a great Rage, he tore off the whole Piece, Cloth and all, and flung it into the Kennel. (Meanwhile he urged Martin): Do as I do, for the love of God; Strip, Tear, Pull, Rent, Flay off all, that we may appear as unlike the Rogue Peter, as it is possible; I would not for a hundred Pounds carry the least Mark about me, that might give Occasion to the Neighbours, of suspecting I was related to such a Rascal (pp. 138-139).

Moved not by passions but by reason, Martin, of course, refuses to comply, thus preserving his coat. The contrast between Martin's lovely coat and Jack's tatters and shreds drives Jack out of his wits.

The graphic contrast between Jack and Martin and the drama of the reformation process blend effectively with the bold personification of Zeal and the utter simplicity of the narration, imparting to the whole episode a power akin to that found in, say, a Greek or a Norse myth. In a much more complicated situation Swift achieves the same success in the sections dealing with the enthusiasts as Aeolists and madmen. Beginning with the simple assumption that spirit and wind (as well as inspiration) are synonymous, Swift constructs a huge system, sometimes deliberately using repugnant imagery, to create in his audience a revulsion against enthusiasts and to make a big joke of the enthusiasts' claim to inspiration. Of the section of the Tale dealing with the Aeolists, one critic says:

The aspects of the Aeolists myth which are most memorable are those whose correspondence with the historical manifestations of Enthusiasm are impossible--and unprofitable--to establish. Thus the bellows-pumping, flatulating, bladder-carrying priests,
the argument for wind as a first cause, and the solemn inclusion of superstitions concerning the Laplanders are instances in which the fiction created by Swift has moved along of its own force into conceits which, while eminently amusing and appropriate developments of the fiction itself, are satirically irrelevant with respect to vulnerable aspects of Puritan doctrine or practice.  

Rosenheim is right, of course; Swift is certainly not concerned here so much with historical facts or with the method of receiving inspiration as with ridiculing the whole claim to inspiration by showing that the divinity to which enthusiasts owe their spiritual influence is the wind. He will describe the method of receiving inspiration later in an equally memorable fiction. Swift's building a fantastic superstructure with the accepted facts as the base partly accounts for the lasting quality of his satire. Other writers had already ridiculed the enthusiasts' esteem of the Spirit's teaching over human learning, but none had accepted the claims underlying such an esteem and at the same time shown the whole affair to be just wind. Swift did:

All Learning was esteemed among them to be compounded from the same Principle [wind]. Because, First, it is generally affirmed, or confess'd that Learning puffeth Men up. And Secondly, they proved it by the following Sylogism; Words are but Wind; and Learning is nothing but Words; Ergo, Learning is nothing but Wind. (p. 153)

His choice of the wind as a central image in dealing with the

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8 Cf. Francis Bacon: "Words are but images of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture." *Works*, ed. James Spedding et al. VI (Boston, 1863), 120.
Aeolists allowed Swift ample opportunity to ridicule and belittle enthusiasts by associating their inspiration with the emission of gases from the human alimentary system. The same central image helped him to account for the vacillations of spiritual ardour often remarked among enthusiasts, for the important role of women among them, and for facial contortions supposedly characteristic of many of their preachers. The picture Swift gives of the "Priest" and his auditory is particularly remarkable:

And the Wind in breaking forth, deals with his Face, as it does with that of the Sea; first blackning, then wrinkling, and at last, bursting it into a Foam. It is in this Guise, the Sacred Aeolist delivers his oracular Belches to his panting Disciples; Of whom, some are greedily gaping after the sanctified Breath; others are all the while hymning out the Praises of the Winds; and gently wafted to and fro by their own Humming, do thus represent the soft Breezes of their Deities appeased. (p. 156)

This is Swift's way of expressing the general claim that the Puritan minister preached with earnestness, and his congregation listened intently, some meanwhile humming and rocking themselves. Swift's judicious blend of fact and fiction invests his attack with that amazing vitality which characterizes much of his finest satire.

The famous "Digression on Madness" (Section IX) actually grows out of Jack's experience, but Swift succeeds in universalizing his treatment by claiming at the outset that madness is responsible for the "greatest Actions that have been performed in the World, under the Influence of Single Men." Though enthusiasts receive rough handling in this section, they share the place of dubious honour with representatives of learning and government, like the Royal College of Physicians, Descartes, Wotton,
and certain eminent members of Parliament. Perhaps this is Swift's way of reminding his readers that besides religious enthusiasts there are others: for example, political and philosophical enthusiasts. Henry More had already shown this. But what Swift attacks particularly in this section (indeed, in the whole of the Tale) is the propensity of enthusiasts of all types to draw disciples after them. He had a peculiar dislike of proselytizers, especially of those who drew men away from the established church. He believed that men who hold ideas differing from those which society generally accepts should simply keep their new ideas to themselves and not disturb the public peace. Swift says as much in his sermon "On the Martyrdom of King Charles I":

If he [any church member] hath any new visions of his own, it is his duty to be quiet, and possess them in silence, without disturbing the community by a furious zeal for making proselytes. This was the folly and madness of those ancient puritan fanatics: They must needs overturn heaven and earth, violate all the laws of God and man, make their country a field of blood, to propagate whatever wild or wicked opinions came into their heads, declaring all their absurdities and blasphemies to proceed from the Holy Ghost.9

Swift repeats the same idea in his sermon "On the Testimony of Conscience."10

He viewed with grave suspicion everything that failed to conform to the commonly accepted usages, and he distrusted all speculations


10 Ibid., p. 121.
which attempted "to reach beyond what is immediately obvious to the en-
lightened, everyday reason."\textsuperscript{11} In his view, to differ from the rest of
mankind is to be mad, and it is madness to hold religious views different
from those taught in the established church; for without the help of "Mad-
ness" the "World would not only be deprived of those two great Blessings,
Conquests and Systems, but even all Mankind would (un)happily be re-
duced to the same Belief in Things Invisible."\textsuperscript{12} The truth of this obser-
vation is evident, Swift implies, because the more a man "shapes his
Understanding by the Pattern of Human Learning, the less he is inclined
to form Parties after his particular Notions; because that instructs him in
his private Infirmities, as well as in the stubborn Ignorance of the Peo-
ple."\textsuperscript{13}

Section XI adds nothing to the general beliefs about enthusiasts,
nor does it show those qualities of "invention" so apparent in most other
sections. Swift simply reiterates many of the usual charges against the
hated sects, and accounts for their aberrant behaviour in his character-
istically fanciful manner. Among the practices and belief he singles out
for satirical treatment are the enthusiasts' constant use of the Scriptures
and scriptural language, their refusal to kneel at Communion, their aver-
sion to church music, to pictures and paintings in churches, and their

\textsuperscript{11} Quintana, \textit{Mind and Art of Swift}, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Tale of a Tub}, p. 169.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 171.
belief in predestination.

It is not until one reads the fragment called *A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, published with the *Tale of a Tub*, that one meets again with Swift the myth-maker. In this fragment Swift attempts to ascertain the means by which the gifted preacher arrives at his gifts and his inward light, and he explores the methods the preacher uses to cultivate and support the light and gifts between himself and his audience. But Swift's contribution on this subject, as shown earlier, is his detailed analysis of the method enthusiasts allegedly use to manufacture the spirit. Essentially Swift repeats here what he said in Section VIII, that the spirit of the enthusiasts is self-induced and is not amenable to reason. As usual he repeats many of the commonplaces of the seventeenth century regarding enthusiasts: they are ignorant, they stock their memories with Scriptures and pass themselves off as possessing an inward light, and they are sexually promiscuous.

If we may judge from the testimony of his writings, Swift's antipathy to enthusiasts never changed. He consistently opposed all attempts by Dissenters and their sympathizers to repeal the Test Act (which prevented Nonconformists from holding public offices), and he refused to consider making any concessions that would permit the comprehension of Dissenters in the established church. He believed that experience had proved that enthusiasts could not be trusted with power and that granting them comprehension would be inviting a return of the disasters of the Civil War
Many of the Puritan and Methodist leaders were prolific writers. Thousands of polemical pamphlets and numerous volumes of sermons and devotional works attest to their zeal and fervency. Richard Baxter alone wrote more than one hundred and thirty books and pamphlets, and John Wesley’s Works fill more than a dozen large volumes. But most of these writings no longer interest the general reader. Some people, however, have felt unusually moved while reading in George Fox’s Journal of his confrontations with “professors,” “priests,” and judges, of his frankness, honesty, and intense religious fervour, and of his incessant travels, sufferings, and imprisonments. The publication of spiritual autobiographies and Journals was a favourite method sectarians used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to encourage their followers, especially during periods of hardships and persecution. In these autobiographies the writer gave an account of the interpositions of Providence in his life, the crises attending his conversion, and the workings of grace in his soul. In some cases, especially among Quakers, the author would end his story with an account of his sufferings and imprisonments for his beliefs and practices. John Wesley’s Journal informed his critics and others of his personal

religious experience and beliefs, of his attitude in the face of suffering and mob rule, of the progress of the Methodist work, and of his reactions to the phenomena frequently accompanying his preaching. However, it also incidentally provided many opponents with an excuse to attack him. Among the important prose works by enthusiasts, John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* and *Pilgrim's Progress* still hold considerable interest for scholar and general reader alike, both for their general human interest and their literary excellence.

In 1666 during a period of imprisonment John Bunyan published his spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. Nonconformists were then experiencing difficult times under the restrictions of the Clarendon Code. To avoid persecution some congregations gave over holding public religious services. It appears that Bunyan's church was one of these, for there are no records that his congregation met during the years 1664-1668. Bunyan therefore published his *Grace Abounding* for the encouragement of "the weak and tempted people of God." His members needed the consolation his story could give, a story of intense spiritual battles, more devastating than persecution of the body.

The book shows the intensity of Bunyan's religious life. From childhood he was troubled by fears that he had offended God. Those fears were realized as dreams and "dreadful visions."\(^{15}\) In adulthood he saw

\(^{15}\) All references to *Grace Abounding* are to the edition by Roger Sharrock (Oxford, 1962).
those dreams and visions as visitations from an offended God who sought to "scare and affright" and even "terrifie" him into giving up his life of "cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming the holy Name of God."

Bunyan saw the definite hand of God in many daily incidents in his life. He believed that by various "Judgments" tempered with mercy, God was attempting to guide him towards a life of piety. On two occasions he narrowly escaped drowning, and once a man who took his place in a siege was killed by a shot in the head. But the providences to which Bunyan paid most attention were those occasions when he heard voices directing him to passages of Scripture to resolve his doubts and quiet his fears of damnation. *Grace Abounding* gives unmistakable evidence that Bunyan, like many another Puritan, placed great emphasis on one's gaining an assurance of salvation or election and on maintaining an intense daily religious experience guided by the Spirit of God.

I think, however, that *Grace Abounding* is particularly valuable as a literal representation of those religious struggles which later appear in *Pilgrim's Progress* in allegorical form. The Giant Despair, the Slough of Despond, and the Doubting Castle of *Pilgrim's Progress* have their literal counterparts in Bunyan's despair, in his doubts, and fears for his own salvation. In fact, *Pilgrim's Progress* is largely an imaginatively heightened version of *Grace Abounding*. But even in the latter work one can find the happy rendering of deep feeling as well as arresting images, many of them being bold developments from biblical imagery. Thus Bunyan represented his alternating periods of doubt and peace by a pair of scales
within his mind which went "sometimes up, and sometimes down, now in peace, and anon again in terror"; and he likened his freedom during periods when he gained assurance to chains falling off his legs, and loosing from the irons of afflictions (like the demoniac of Mark 5:1-16); temptations and periods of doubt and despair were for him "storms" and "tempests," or a "pit." But perhaps the most striking picture is that in which Bunyan describes his "vision" contrasting the blessed condition of the people of Bedford who stood on the sunny side of the mountain, refreshing themselves in the sun, with his wretched, lost state as he stood (separated from them by a wall) "shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds" (pp. 19-20). Whereas such striking pictorial effects surprise one periodically in *Grace Abounding*, in the story of Christian they provide constant pleasure.

*Grace Abounding* gives one a good look at some of the ideals of Puritan religious reform. The Scriptures only were the basis of religious faith and guidance. All Bunyan's doubts and fears, for instance, are resolved by comforts received from numerous passages and snatches of Scripture (some of them very oddly twisted out of their setting). Though Bunyan found "some things that were somewhat pleasing" in Arthur Dent's *The Plain Mans Path-way to Heaven* (1601) and in Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* (3rd ed. 1613), if the testimony of *Grace Abounding* is characteristic, he usually sought comfort, strength, and assurance in the Scriptures and in occasional conversation with men like John Gifford, not
from the writings of the Church Fathers. Furthermore, as many other Puritan ministers, he conceived his call to the ministry as coming first from God and then from those who desired his guidance. And when he preached, he allowed the Spirit to guide his choice of subject, so that he often preached sermons which condemned sins in his own life. Other peculiarly Puritan ideals and points of view also characterize much of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Like *Grace Abounding*, *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That Which Is to Come* (1677) was written in prison. Bunyan detailed vividly in this latter work the psychological and spiritual drama of the Christian pilgrim's life from his spiritual birth to his glorious death. The work may be studied in a variety of ways, but one pattern in *The Pilgrim's Progress* develops according to the Puritan stages of conversion: conviction of sin, vocation or calling (when the individual receives evidence of his election), justification or achievement of a saving faith, sanctification

16 See *Grace Abounding*, p. 8: "This Woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be, (not having so much household-stuff as a Dish or Spoon betwixt us both), yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Mans Path-way to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her Father had left her when he died. In these two Books I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me: (but all this while I met with no conviction.)"

17 Critics are uncertain whether it was during Bunyan's first (1660-1672) or second (1677) period of imprisonment that the book was written. For a discussion of known details relating to the writing and publication of this work, see pp. xxi-xxv of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. James B. Wharey, rev. Roger Sharrock, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1960). All subsequent references to *Pilgrim's Progress* will be to this edition.
or a daily growth in holiness, and glorification, which comes at the end of life.18

Christian's story begins with his convictions of sin, which moves him to cry out, "What shall I do?" In characteristic Puritan fashion, the bewildered Christian finds comfort and direction for his religious life in the Scriptures only (Evangelist). Evangelist sends Christian to the Wicket Gate (Christ), but before the Pilgrim reaches the gate, he encounters two typical problems in the progress of conversion: the "Slough of Dispond," and "Worldly-Wiseman." As Bunyan himself explains, the slough represents the "many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions" which oppress the soul under conviction of sin (p. 15). And the advice of Wiseman is the temptation to trust to good works for justification (p. 25). Christian gains his assurance of election when he reaches the Cross and his burden falls from his back into the Sepulchre. However, though filled with joy at the loss of his load, Christian is yet to have numerous disheartening encounters. Nevertheless, his salvation is certain, as his white clothing, mark on his forehead, and roll signify. Bunyan says: "This Roll was the assurance of his life, and acceptance at the desired Haven" (p. 44). Hill Difficulty, Appolyon, the Valley of the Shadow of death, and Vanity Fair tested Christian's courage and fidelity, but protected by the armour given him at Palace Beautiful, he succeeded in overcoming his difficulties.

18 See Roger Sharrock, Grace Abounding, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
The episode at Vanity Fair indicates both that the "World" has nothing of value for the Christian (all is Vanity, as the Preacher of Ecclesiastes says) and that for the Puritan the Christian life involved abstinence from things otherwise indifferent or good if such things would seduce one from the path of righteousness; so that a man, like Christian, must feel compelled to leave silver, houses, lands, trades, and even his family if they should come between him and Celestial City. Christian's refusal to buy anything but Truth in Vanity Fair is paralleled by the denials which John Wesley demanded of Methodists, and by the Quakers' refusal to wear expensive clothing or to become goldsmiths and silversmiths. Furthermore, Vanity Fair shows that Bunyan, though believing in salvation by faith alone, did not as a consequence sanction antinomianism. As Faithful declared to Talkative, the work of grace in the heart is evidenced by "a life of holiness; heart-holiness, family-holiness, ... and by Conversation-holiness." The elect will abhor sin, not practice it (p. 83).

Christian and Faithful's rejection of the philosophy of Vanity Fair leads to their imprisonment and trial and ultimately to Faithful's death. Their religion is no fair weather affair which allows them, like Mr. By-ends, to be most zealous when "Religion goes in his Silver Slippers," but it is a vital matter which often leads directly to death. By contrasting the policies of By-ends and Christian, Bunyan is, of course, pointing his finger at those Puritan ministers who, after St. Bartholomew's day in 1662, conformed to the demands of the Act of Uniformity in order to retain their livings. Christian's success in overcoming all obstacles and his eventual
passage to the Celestial City indicate that he had achieved that saving faith and growth in holiness necessary for glorification.

According to Sharrock, Bunyan first developed the central metaphor of Pilgrim's Progress, the journey through a difficult and dangerous path to a distant goal, in his posthumously published Heavenly Footman (1698). In the latter work Bunyan starts with the Pauline figure of the Christian as an athlete racing for a prize, but finishes by developing the image into a cross-country race which eventually becomes "transformed into a difficult and dangerous journey through rough country." The Heavenly Footman anticipates also some of the incidents of the allegory. Like Christian later, the reader of the treatise is cautioned against wandering into "by-paths," and he is given the Cross as the "standing way-mark" by which he must pass. And as mentioned earlier, the allegory also has numerous echoes from Grace Abounding. One of the most striking is that of the "little doorway in the wall" through which Bunyan dreamed he had to squeeze to get to the people of Bedford who were on the sunny side of the mountain. This "narrow gap" (doorway) becomes the Wicket Gate of the allegory, and the hill develops into Hill Difficulty. And for Christian, as for Bunyan, despair is the greatest evil. Indeed, Bunyan's spiritual struggles and turmoil over the possibility that he had committed


20 Ibid.
an unpardonable sin are heightened and graphically presented in Christi-
tian's and Hopeful's wandering into By-path-Meadow and onto the grounds
of Doubting Castle, whence they are seized and imprisoned by Giant De-
spair. The numerous promises and voices of encouragement which bring
welcome relief to the despairing Bunyan are represented in Christian's ex-
perience by the scroll and the key which he carried in his bosom. That
invaluable key provides Christian and Hopeful the means of escape from
Doubting Castle.

In his masterpiece Bunyan succeeded in producing what Sharrock
calls a "literary hybrid," containing "the forms and language of religious
allegory, the early novel, popular sermon and moral dialogue, [and] ro-
mance and folk story." Bunyan's robust colloquial style retains enough
simplicity to allow even children to appreciate the adventure story that is
Christian's quest for personal salvation.

In 1684 Bunyan added a second part to Pilgrim's Progress, describ-
ing the pilgrimage of Christiana and her children to Celestial City, but
whether in deference to the "weaker sex" or because of a mellowing of
temper brought on by his years of pastoral experience, Bunyan saved Chris-
tiana and her company from the terrors to which he subjected Christian.
In Part II the journey is not so much a pilgrimage as a leisurely guided
tour through scenes made historic by Christian's famous encounters with
fiends, giants, or lesser creatures. Perhaps Bunyan is indicating in the

uneventful second part that with the assistance of a good minister (Great-heart) believers can be saved many of the anxieties and terrors that people like Christian have to endure (Great-heart almost emerges as the hero of the second part); or it might be that the lessening of the pressures of persecution during the later years of the reign of Charles II removed the need for heroism like Christian's. Whatever the reason for the more easygoing pace of Christiana's pilgrimage, Bunyan succeeded in conveying through that portion of his book more of the practical aspects of pastoring to a congregation than he did in the first part.

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Religious enthusiasts have also made significant contributions to English poetry. Milton stands apart as the greatest Puritan writer, but it is to other authors that one must look for the enthusiastic spirit in verse. Through the hymns of Dissenters and Methodists, enthusiasm has made its most lasting contributions to English verse. Indeed, there are other poems, like Edward Young's *Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742-1745) and Robert Blair's *The Grave* (c. 1731), which possess qualities reminiscent of the Puritan spirit, but the authentic enthusiastic spirit, as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries defined it, is more characteristically present in the hymns of the Nonconformists.  

22 Edward Young (1683-1765) was no enthusiast nor did his background prepare him to be sympathetic with anything associated with enthusiasm. His *Night Thoughts*, according to Isabel St. John Bliss, is fully in the eighteenth-century tradition of meditative works on death and
In the eighteenth century, Englishmen showed an unprecedented interest in hymns designed for congregational singing; and at the top of the long list of those who composed hymns stand the names of religious enthusiasts (according to the definition of men of those times). Isaac Watts is often alluded to as the father of English hymnody, and Charles Wesley is certainly one of the world's greatest hymn writers. But apart from these two great hymnodists stand numerous others whose hymns are still sung today. Some of these, like William Cowper and John Newton, never became Dissenters or Methodists, but the evangelical spirit of the Methodists influenced them in some degree and left its mark on their hymns and devotional poetry. Among the lesser hymn writers stand William Williams ("Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah"), Augustus Toplady ("Rock of Ages, cleft for me"), Edward Perronet ("All hail the power of Jesus' name"), John Fawcett ("Blest be the tie that binds"), John Byrom ("Christians, awake, salute the happy morn"), Joseph Grigg ("Jesus, and shall it ever be"), Anne Steele ("Father of mercies, in thy word"), and Phillip Doddridge ("Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve").

in the realm of "rational orthodoxy." For further arguments placing Night Thoughts among orthodox religious writings of the eighteenth century, see Isabel St. John Bliss, Edward Young (New York, 1969), 124-130; "Young's Night Thoughts in Relation to Contemporary Apologetics," PMLA, 49 (1934), 37-70. More than Night Thoughts Blair's The Grave contains numerous echoes reminiscent of Puritanism. Blair paints the horrors of the tomb in a manner calculated to strike one with a fear of death. But the poem says little about the proper preparation for death and the judgement. It is an affirmation of a victory already gained, not a work showing man striving for mastery over sin. The Grave belongs to that type of literature traditionally classified as graveyard poetry because of its frank exploitation of the macabre details associated with death and the grave.
The history of many of these hymns proves the trustworthiness of Dr. Johnson's critical insight. Dr. Johnson firmly believed that "poetical devotion" could not often please. Time and posterity have declared the success of many hymns by the Nonconformists, but much that they wrote did not endure. Edward Bailey, speaking of the "vanishing Dr. Watts" in his *The Gospel in Hymns*, discovered that only fifty-six of Watts' Psalms and hymns found a place in the ten important hymnals he studied; of Anne Steele's one hundred and forty-four hymns only one is widely sung today, and of William Williams' eight hundred (some still untranslated from the original Welsh) only one is still in wide use. Charles Wesley has the greatest number still in the hymnals, but seventy-nine from a total of more than seven thousand is not much to boast of.

The disappearance of so many hymns in a few hundred years undoubtedly underscores the skill demanded by the hymn writer's art. Discussing the difficulty of writing religious poetry, Dr. Johnson said that the few possible devotional topics are so universally known that "they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression." Added to the difficulty Dr. Johnson mentioned are those peculiar problems one must surmount in writing for congregations

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of varied tastes, beliefs, and prejudices. The successful hymn must exclude all dogmas and opinions that would restrict its acceptance among varied religious denominations. According to Jeremiah Reeves, "The good hymn combines in quite remarkable effect the straitest simplicity, clarity, dignity, and melody, rich ideas about the basic matters of life and death, with strong emotion under sure control." Since many hymns by enthusiasts lacked several of these vital qualities, it is little wonder that they have fallen into disuse.

Many of the hymns of the religious enthusiasts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries share certain qualities. Those written by Dissenters of the Calvinistic school often emphasize the eternal decrees of God which elect some people to salvation and others to eternal loss; but those by Wesleyan Methodists who were of Arminian orientation carry no such emphasis. Calvinist and Methodist tend to speak highly of grace, but only the latter (understandably) characteristically include invitations to accept the mercy Christ offers. Most writers tend to make their hymns a fine tissue of biblical allusions. These writers are so steeped in the Scriptures--its themes, images, and symbols--that their poetry characteristically reflect this scriptural influence. It is very unlikely that the intricate variety of allusions in some of Charles Wesley's stanzas, for instance, was consciously interwoven there. Many of the hymns carry the stamp of a living religious experience; they sometimes appear to be so

painfully personal as to be describing the agonies of a soul in travail; others have a confessional quality. This very personal element in many of the hymns of enthusiasts sets them apart from the hymns used in Anglican public worship. The latter tend to be "more objective, more restrained, less intense and personal in their references to the spiritual life." The enthusiasts felt deeply and spoke unblushingly of their religious experience. An unmistakably strong current of genuine emotion frequently undergirds their hymns.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) often wrote hymns to supplement his sermons, but some of his earliest attempts were intended to enliven the singing in his father's church. He believed that the traditional paraphrases of the Psalms did not meet the needs of the illiterate congregations which had to sing them. Furthermore, the imagery and the sentiments of the Psalms were for another people and another time (Israel of Old Testament times). He wanted hymns which spoke of the experiences, the sorrows and joys, of those who sang them. In preparing new paraphrases of the Psalms, Watts accordingly omitted those portions which he thought had little relation to the life of the masses; and he used a language simple enough for the uneducated to understand. Describing what he attempted in his Psalms and hymns, Watts wrote:

The most frequent Tempers and Changes of our Spirit, and Conditions of our Life are here copied, and the Breathings of our Piety

exprest according to the Variety of our Passions, our Love, our Fear, our Hope, our Desire, our Sorrow, our Wonder, and our Joy, as they are refined into Devotion, and act under the Influence and Conduct of the Blessed Spirit; all conversing with God the Father by the new and living Way of Access to the Throne, even the Person and the Meditation [sic] of our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁸

Watts' important contributions to hymnody are contained in his Horae Lyricae (1706), Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1707), and Psalms of David (1719).

In the very first hymn of his Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Watts speaks of the decrees. Of the Son of God, he wrote:

He shall fulfill thy great Decrees,
The Son deserves it well;
Lo, in his Hand the Sov'reign Keys
Of Heav'n, and Death, and Hell.

References to these decrees recur regularly throughout the first two sections of the collection.²⁹ God, Watts says, "orders all his Works of Grace By his own Sovereign Will." In No. XI of Part I, he calls on all to adore God, who dispenses of his graces as "he please" without having to render to man any account of His actions or His decrees. And in No. CXVII of Part I, Watts argues that as the potter forms his clay vessels as "he please,"

Such is our God, and such are We,
The Subjects of his Decrees.

²⁸ Quoted from Psalms of David in Selma L. Bishop, Isaac Watts: Hymns and Spiritual Songs 1707-1748 (London, 1962) pp. xxi-xxii. All quotations from Watts' hymns are from this work.

²⁹ The Hymns and Spiritual Songs has three sections: "I. Collected from the Scriptures. II. Compos'd on Divine Subjects. III. Prepared for the Lord's Supper."
If the workman has complete power over his works, choosing which goes to a noble use and which for meaner services, why

May not the Sovereign Lord on high
Dispense his Favours as he will,
Chuse some to Life while others dye,
And yet be just and gracious still?

Nevertheless, Watts very seldom speaks of God in language suggesting that He is a terrifying Judge. Rather, he frequently refers to God as "Eternal Wisdom," "Mighty Conqueror," "God of Grace," "God of Love," "Lord Jehovah," and "Great All in All." God is terrible in majesty, however, when He sits to judge His "Foes" (I:XLII). Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is distinctly more approachable than God "the Victorious King." Christ is often described as the Christian's lover. He is "Redeemer," "Saviour-God," "King of Grace," "my Jesus," "my Love," "my best-Be­loved." Man, however, is seldom referred to in complimentary terms. Very infrequently men are collectively called God's "Saints," "Saints," "drooping Saints," but on almost all of these occasions those alluded to are partaking of Holy Communion. The more characteristic references to man emphasize his lost condition or his sinfulness: "polluted Worm," "vile race of flesh and blood," "mortal worm," "rebellious Man," "wan­derers," "rebels," "strangers," and "Sinners."

Watts pictures all men as polluted with Adam's sin, but some are elected to salvation while others are doomed. The contrast between the fates of the two groups of men is often painfully distinct, but the pictures Watts draws were originally suggested from Holy Writ. "The Last Judgment,"
for instance, is partly a paraphrase of portions of Rev. 21. God is the speaker:

"The Saint that triumphs o're his Sins,
  "I'll own him for a Son,
"The whole Creation shall reward
  "The Conquests he has won.

"But bloody Hands, and Hearts unclean,
  "And all the lying Race,
"The Faithless, and the Scoffing Crew,
  "That spurn at offer'd Grace.

"They shall be taken from my Sight,
  "Bound fast in Iron Chains,
"And headlong plung'd into the Lake
  "Where Fire and Darkness reigns" (I:XLV)

These grim pictures are, however, the exception in Watts' *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. A distinct note of exultant optimism and praise runs through most of the work. No place is left for dulness. This is not to say, however, that the hymns are all successes as poetry. Far too many of the paraphrases are sluggish, lacking a lilting quality and spontaneity. This lack is compensated for in many of the lyrics of Parts II and III; and it is from these sections that most of Watts' songs are taken for twentieth-century hymnals. Watts' hymns often deal with the very basic and elemental aspects of religious life, sedulously avoiding sectarian doctrines.  

In analysing the literary merit of Watts' hymns, Manning remarks the sublimity of some of Watts' verses, especially of those which have the heavens

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and all nature as their cosmic background. But changes in word usage have affected Watts' diction adversely, rendering some expressions comical and others disgusting. One has difficulty keeping a straight face while singing such lines as the following:

Here every bowel of our God
With soft compassion rolls.

or

The Word descends and dwells in Clay
That he may hold Converse with Worms.

and

His dearest Flesh he makes my Food
And bids me drink his richest Blood.

But Watts has his glories. He knows how to use Anglo-Saxon words to great effect, especially to impart great lucidity to his verses; and he often followed the Hebrew poetic style of repeating and paralleling certain phrases. For instance:

How well thy blessed Truths agree!
How wise and holy thy Commands!
Thy Promises how firm they be!
How firm our Hope and Comfort stands!

Behold the Woman's promis'd Seed,
Behold the great Messiah come;
Behold the Prophets all agreed
To give him the superiour Room.

My Eyes and Ears shall bless his Name
They read and hear his Word;
My Touch and Taste shall do the same
When they receive the Lord.

One of the striking qualities in Watts' hymns is the grand sweep of his

31 The Hymns of Wesley and Watts, pp. 83-84.

32 For further discussion of Watts' diction, see The Hymns of Wesley and Watts, pp. 86-92.
imagery. He moves from the tiny particle of dust through the "whole realm of Nature" to the heavenly land with its "never-withering Flowers."

Moved by the grandeur and power of God, Watts, in Hymn I of Part II, calls on all the universe to sing God's praises:

Nature with all her Powers shall sing
God the Creator and the King.

Nor Air, nor Earth, nor Skies, nor Seas
Deny the Tribute of their praise.

From the earth he moves to Paradise and urges the "Seraphs" to join in praise "and spread the Sound/ To the Creations utmost Bound," and then he sweeps back to earth, bringing "all mortal Things" into the rapture of praise.

With this cosmic sweep Watts frequently blends images of epic grandeur, especially when he contemplates the love of Christ or the majesty of God. In the hymn last mentioned, he calls for "monumental Praises"

To him that thunders thro' the Skie,
And with an awful Nod or Frown
Shakes an aspiring Tyrant down.

In another hymn Watts pictures God as looking from His "high Imperial Throne . . . far down upon the Spheres." Thence

He bids the shining Orbs roll on
And round he turns our hasty Years. (II:XIII)

"Crucifixion to the World by the Cross" (III:VII) presents Watts "surveying" the Cross of Christ, not "contemplating" or " beholding" it. During his "survey" he is so moved by Christ's passion that he finds "the whole
realm of Nature" too small a gift to give in return for Christ's love. Such love demands a "Present" more valuable than all Nature—"My Soul, my Life, my All."

When writing of the attributes of God or of the quality of the heavenly experience, Watts characteristically uses language that implies limitlessness. Thus he declares that God's "boundless years can ne'er decrease"; "Eternity" is God's "Dwelling-place" and "Ever is his Time."

In heaven "endless years" run "everlasting Circles," and there one finds glory that "never dies," "endless" or "boundless joys," "solid mirth," and "immortal Blessings." Watts' happiest poetic expression of the qualities of the heavenly land is found in "A Prospect of Heaven makes Death easy." There he describes heaven as "a land of Pure Delight"

Where Saints Immortal reign;  
Infinite Day excludes the Night  
And Pleasures banish Pain.

He pictures the climate there as being "everlasting Spring"; the fields "Stand drest in living Green," and flowers never fade. Of course, Watts did not depend entirely on his imagination for his grand images or for the qualities of endurance with which he endows the heavenly experience. The Bible was his chief source. But the vast scope and grandeur of his selections indicate his lofty vision.

Watts might have been careless or hasty in choosing some of his rhymes, or his verse might be rough and crude on occasions, but he has virtues, and many of his weaknesses can be excused, considering the limitations under which he worked. Manning describes the difficulties
which Watts had to encounter in pioneering the modern hymn:

In examining what Dr. Watts wrote, we must . . . always remember that he is hewing his way through an almost unexplored territory, and that his successors, not having his rough work to do again, will be able to polish and improve. We must expect him to make many experiments that fail, and to try many arrangements before he finds the best. His book is a laboratory of experiments. Only in a few places can we expect him to bring one off. Another set of conditions hampered him. He was writing for congregations that were often ignorant. His hymns had to be suitable to be announced and sung line by line by illiterates. He had to write in only a few well-known metres, a limitation of which he often complained.  

Watts is still remembered by such famous hymns as "Alas and did my Saviour bleed," "Come we that love the Lord," "There is a land of Pure delight," and by the Communion hymns "Jesus invites his Saints," and "When I survey the wondrous Cross."

When Charles Wesley began writing and publishing hymns for the Methodists, he was fortunate in having the experiments and achievements of Watts as a guide. But from the time of his first publication of hymns in 1739 to the date of the famous collection in 1780, he had ample opportunity to perfect the hymn writer's art. John Wesley had, however, already begun his important task of collecting and editing hymns. In 1737 while in Georgia, he published a *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* containing seventy selections, half from Watts, five from his father, five from his brother Samuel, and six of the remainder from George Herbert.  

According

33 Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, p. 81.

34 Herbert's *The Temple* continued to be popular into the eighteenth century. The respected Richard Baxter had earlier praised Herbert's poems
to Bailey, John Wesley's most important contribution to hymnody was his editing, organizing, and publishing the hymns that Charles Wesley wrote, but he also wrote a few hymns and translated several others from the German. 35

Of the thousands of hymns Charles Wesley wrote, a bare five hundred and twenty-five were culled and published in 1780 as A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People Called Methodists. From the Preface through the table of Contents to the last hymn of the collection, the spirit of evangelical Christianity breathes. John Wesley declared in the Preface that the book contains "all the important truths of our most holy religion." Furthermore, he arranged the hymns very carefully, "according to the experience of real Christians." By John Wesley's testimony, the book represented a "little body of experimental and practical divinity."

The collection is divided into five parts, each part carefully above all others, and when Dissenters wanted "spiritual songs" to supplement the traditional paraphrases of the Psalms generally used in public worship, some of them looked to Herbert's poems, turning thirty-two of them into hymns for congregational use and publishing them as Select Hymns Taken Out of Mr. Herbert's Temple (1697). This volume has been reprinted by the Augustan Reprint Society, Publication No. 98 (Los Angeles, 1962). According to one writer, John Wesley's first hymn book, A Collection of Psalms and Hymns (Charles-Town, 1737), contained six poems rewritten from Herbert's The Temple. The second hymn book (1738) had six more of Herbert's poems, again rewritten to agree with John Wesley's spiritual outlook, and for Hymns and Sacred Poems (London, 1739), John Wesley furnished forty-two poems (modified) from The Temple. See Elsie A. Leach, "John Wesley's Use of George Herbert," HLQ, 16 (Feb. 1953), 183-202.

35 The Gospel in Hymns, p. 81.
graduating into the succeeding one. Part I contains hymns appealing to
sinners to return to God. As an inducement to the sinner, the hymns in
the several sections of this part describe the pleasantness of religion, the
goodness of God, death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Part II presents the
differences between "formal" and "inward religion," while Part III provides
hymns for those praying for repentance, for those convinced of sin (mourn­
ers), for backsliders desirous of returning to God, and for backsliders who
have returned to God. Part IV is designed for the converted (believers);
the several sections supply hymns for numerous activities during the Chris­
tian's progress: fighting, rejoicing, praying, watching, working, suffer­
ing, etc. In Part V one finds hymns for the Society (of Methodists) meet­
ing, giving thanks, praying, and parting. The collection leaves no spir­
itual condition out of consideration.

Many of the hymns carry the unmistakable Arminian Methodist
doctrinal teachings. Salvation is open to everyone (nothing of the eternal
decrees here). The second hymn declares that "not one" sinner need be
"left behind,/For God hath bidden all mankind," and through to Hymn 11
each poem extends the invitation for all to come and be saved through the
merits of Christ. Clearly appreciating the value of first person representa­
tion, Charles Wesley wrote most of the hymns in this collection so that as
each individual sings, he confesses what is supposedly his own exper­
ience. And sometimes when the earlier portion of the hymn is in the second
person, the final stanza of appeal switches to the first person. Hymn 24,
for instance, begins by calling those that pass by to "behold the Man,"
Christ, as he moves to Calvary with His Cross; succeeding stanzas describe Christ's sufferings and then His death. The final stanza repeats the "I's" as though they are resounding hammer blows:

Beneath my load he faints and dies:
 I fill'd his soul with pangs unknown:
 I caused those mortal groans and cries;
 I kill'd the Father's only Son!

Almost every hymn rings with a fervent call for sinners to come to Christ or with emphasis on the Christian's duty in his brief life. And even when death is approaching, the Methodist still sings exultingly, confident that he shall see his Lord. While life lasts, however, there is no time to waste on transitory things:

No room for mirth or trifling here,
 For worldly hope, or worldly fear,
 If life so soon is gone.

And one must be careful to guard against a formal religion that emphasizes "means" and not "truth in the inward parts." Salvation requires only an acceptance of Christ's sacrifice for man's sins; once the sinner has accepted Christ's pardon for his sins, he can approach God with confidence:

My God is reconciled,
 His pardoning voice I hear,
 He owns me for his child,
 I can no longer fear;
 With confidence I now draw nigh,
 And, Father, Abba, Father, cry!

Charles Wesley's "Soldiers of Christ, arise" presents the traditional view of the Christian soldier caught in a spiritual struggle against "Legions of wily friends." But the resoluteness and firmness of commitment apparent in that hymn and many others are more characteristic of the
spirit of Puritans and evangelicals than of more "traditional" Christians. Wesleyan hymns suggest an intensity of devotion and picture a spiritual struggle as keen as Bunyan's in *Grace Abounding*, though the Methodist struggle partakes less of that "interior" quality that is so apparent in Bunyan's autobiography.

Brave though the Christian soldier is, Wesley indicates that he is powerless in the struggle against his spiritual foes as long as he trusts to his own weapons. He can be victorious only when he fights in the power that Christ gives. Accordingly, his most effective weapons, Wesley indicates, are the "shield of faith," belief, and "unceasing prayer." In three successive hymns Charles Wesley develops his theme of the warrior Christian caught in a violent struggle against the powers of hell. The encounter and arsenal of weapons Wesley describes are similar to those St. Paul pictures in Eph. 6.10-18. But while clearly having the apostle's description in mind, Wesley omits some of the Pauline armour—salvation, truth, the gospel of peace, and the word of God—particularly emphasizing others like prayer and faith, and adding his own pieces of armour—fellowship, adoration, and belief. He values belief greatly:

Believe, hold fast your shield, and who
    Shall pluck you from his hand?

Believe that Jesus reigns;
    All power to him is given:
Believe, till freed from sin's remains;
    Believe yourselves to heaven! (Hymn 267)

Whereas Bunyan's pilgrim battles primarily against foes within, the Wesleyan soldier is embattled by foes within and without:
Surrounded by a host of foes,  
Storm'd by a host of foes within. (Hymn 269)

Though he never contemplates the possibility of defeat as long as Jesus is with him, should he waver in battle and be conquered, by once more claiming Christ's strength, the soldier gets assurance of victory over his "threelfold enemy"--the world, the flesh, and the devil (see Hymn 274).

Besides his commitment to an individual struggle in his soul, the Methodist warrior is called to "be a true witness for [his] Lord." A multitude of adversaries might conspire to deter him from witnessing--"mortal's frown," desire for material gain, and human scorn, wrath or hatred--but he would ignore all, willing even to die for his Lord:

No cross I shun, I fear no shame:  
All hail, reproach! and welcome pain!

My Life, my blood, I here present  
If for thy truth they may be spent.

In the true crusader's spirit, Charles Wesley viewed the Christian life as a spiritual struggle that still could lead to a martyr's death.

In the Preface to the Hymns John Wesley speaks with pride of the poetic quality of the hymns. He expresses the certainty that "some" of the selections possess "the true spirit of poetry." And Henry Bett expresses disappointment that the "rare quality, literary and spiritual," of the Wesleyan hymns has passed unrecognized for more than a hundred and

36 See Manning, The Hymns of Wesley and Watts, p. 14. Manning, immoderately, finds the 1780 collection of Methodist hymns "perfect, unapproachable, elemental in its perfection."
fifty years. Bett goes on to show that the Wesleys put the best of their classical scholarship into the making of their hymns, correcting mis-translations of the Authorized Version, alluding to the writings of the Church Fathers, to numerous English and classical authors, and, most of all, leaving on each page of their hymn collection several references to the Scriptures. 37

Charles Wesley was complete master of the numerous metres in which he wrote his hymns. Whereas Watts confined himself to the few commonly used metres, Charles Wesley wrote in common, long, and short metres and went on to use more complicated forms which he called 6-8's, 7's, 2-6's and 4-7's, 8's and 6's, and one which he called "peculiar metre." The well-known "Jesu, Lover of my soul" is written in 7's (seven syllables in each line), and "Wrestling Jacob" uses 6-8's (six lines of eight syllables each). He makes excellent use of his accents or stresses, ensuring that they fall on important words or syllables in each line. But on occasions he inverts the initial iambic foot to achieve a rhythmic effect in keeping with the thought of the line. In "Soldiers of Christ, arise," for instance, the inversion of the foot emphasizes the martial element in the hymn:

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son:

37 The Hymns of Methodism in Their Literary Relations (London, 1913), pp. 1, 2.
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
   And in his mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts,
   Is more than conqueror.

On occasions Wesley weaves intricate patterns in his stanzas. In the second half of the third stanza of "Jesu, Lover of my soul" he alternates references to "I" and "thou" in such a manner as to produce an "a b b a" pattern, where "a" and "b" refer to the "thou" and "I" respectively:

Just and holy is thy name  a
I am all unrighteousness;  b
False and full of sin I am;  b
Thou art full of truth and grace.  a

Even the patterns of reference in lines one and four, and again in lines two and three are further interwoven. In the first and fourth lines references to "thou" come at the end and the beginning of the respective lines, and in lines two and three the mention of "I" comes at the beginning and the end of the lines. If the subject and predicate in each line be represented by "x" and "y," then the pattern which evolves is as follows: y x x y  y x x y, an identical form to the a b b a pattern.

Among other devices which Wesley frequently uses are repetition, parallelism, and climax. In the first example following, both repetition and climax are used to fine effect; and in the second example, one finds an interesting blend of parallel structure, and repetition of words and of "p," "l," "s," and "f" sounds:

I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The greatness of redeeming Love,
   The love of Christ to me!
Let me hear the welcome sound!
Speak, if still thou canst forgive;
Speak, and let the lost be found;
Speak, and let the dying live.
Thy love is all my plea;
Thy passion speaks for me:
By thy pangs and bloody sweat,
By thy depth of grief unknown,
Save me, gasping at thy feet;
Save, O save, thy ransom'd one!

John Wesley claims in the Preface that the hymns give a "distinct
and full . . . account of scriptural Christianity," and Henry Bett has
called attention to the allusiveness of many of these hymns, especially
to the Scriptures. Some of these allusions are so complex that in a single
line one may find echoes of two or three texts of Scripture. In other cases
succeeding lines may be a paraphrase of a single biblical passage. In
moving from stanza one to the end of Hymn 157 ("My sufferings all to thee
are known"), one finds allusions to at least eight passages of Scripture.

Tempted in every point like me Heb. 4.15
Jesus, remember Calvary! Luke 23.33
O call to mind thy earnest prayers,
Thy agony, and sweat of blood,
Thy strong and bitter cries and tears,
Thy mortal groan, "My God! my God!"

Luke 22.41-44

Mark 15.34

Have I not heard, have I not known Isa. 40.28
That thou, the everlasting Lord,
Whom heaven and earth their Maker own,
Are always faithful to thy word?

Isa. 40.26

Thou wilt not break a bruised reed, Isa. 42.3
Or quench the smallest spark of grace

The day of small and feeble things Zech. 4.10
I know thou never wilt despise;
I know, with healing in his wings,
The Sun of Righteousness shall rise.

Mal. 4.2
Wesley's familiarity with the Scriptures is evident in almost every song he wrote. The entire collection embraces the salient doctrines of orthodox Christian theology: the Trinity, Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Redemption. Dignified and unsentimental, most of these hymns ring with passionate, buoyant praise. In only a few can one find evidence of that asceticism with which early Methodists were often charged. The Wesleyan emphasis on the individual and his relationship to God so dominates the hymns that one misses references to the "everlasting hills," the "skies," "the whole realm of nature," and the "flying clouds," which appear frequently in the hymns of Watts. The "streams," "seas," "storm," "tempests," "billows," "waves," and "clouds" reappear in Cowper's Olney Hymns, but they never have the cosmic effect achieved in Watts.

How Cowper came to write the Olney hymns is a story that hardly needs retelling. The evangelical Anglican clergyman John Newton sought to help Cowper forget his religious doubts and anxieties by urging him to compose some hymns. Cowper complied, contributing sixty-seven of the three hundred and forty-eight hymns in the collection known as the Olney Hymns (1779).

Very few of Cowper's contributions qualify as congregational hymns; rather, most of them might better be considered personal poems. This personal quality is largely responsible for the "enthusiastic" element in his hymns. The poet seems at times to be morbidly concerned with revealing the state of his soul. The following selection comes from a hymn
in which Cowper contrasts the perfection of God with his sinfulness:

This heart, a fountain of vile thoughts,
How does it overflow?
While self upon the surface floats
Still bubbling from below.

The image of the last two lines is very difficult to grasp; one wonders whether it is "self" or the "fountain" (heart) that is "bubbling." In "Self-Acquaintance" the following stanza appears among several of a similar confessional quality. The speaker is offering his "sinful heart" to God:

There fiery seeds of anger lurk,
Which often hurt my frame;
And wait but for the tempter's work,
To fan them to a flame.

In spite of the many confessional passages in his poems, and in spite of Cowper's habit of complaining of his loss of innocence, he does not hold the grim view of man that one finds almost everywhere in Watts. Most often men are referred to as "saints," less often as "sinners" or "creatures," and on very few occasions as "rebellious worms." If he occasionally speaks of God's "sovereign will," he more characteristically mentions the evils of legality and the matchless worth of grace. Where the Wesleyan hymns are exultant in praise, Cowper's are generally restrained and low-keyed. He is more at ease with the hymn of prayer or supplication than with expressions of rapture or ecstasy. Even when he deliberately attempts to praise, he fails to achieve much more than a verbal expression of praise. Here is the first stanza of his "Praise for Faith":

Of all the gifts thine hand bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heav'n itself a richer knows,
Than my Redeemer's blood.

Such praise seems uninspired when put beside Charles Wesley's "O for a thousand tongues to sing":

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise!
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

Though Cowper obviously knows the Scriptures well, he seldom achieves the ease of Watts or Wesley in making it a convincingly integral part of his verse. He tends to use various biblical episodes as object lessons, but more frequently he prefers to make a text the basis of an entire poem. His "Jehovah-jireh, The Lord Will Provide" illustrates both of these practices. The hymn is based on Gen. 22.14, where the title of the poem is given, but the illustration of the thesis (the Lord will provide) comes from the experiences of three biblical characters: Abram, David, and Jonah. God provided a lamb just in time to save Abram from sacrificing his son Isaac; David was saved from Saul when enemies suddenly invaded Israel, thus forcing Saul to give up chasing David when he was trapped; and Jonah, thrown into the sea, was saved in spite of himself when God provided a fish to take him to the shore.

But perhaps one of the most prejudicial elements lessening the value of Cowper's poems as hymns is their obtrusive didacticism. One is constantly aware of another "superior" voice attempting to teach him some "moral" or "religious" lesson. Two stanzas illustrate this didactic
quality. The first is from "Vanity of the World," and the second from "Dependance":

God gives his mercies to be spent;  
Your hoard will do your soul no good;  
Gold is a blessing only lent,  
Repaid by giving others food.

Beware of Peter's word,  
Nor confidently say,  
"I never will deny thee, Lord,"  
But "grant I never may."

However, in his greatest hymns Cowper speaks sentiments that many can identify with. The best of Cowper is wrapt up in the first stanza of his "Light Shining out of Darkness":

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

The stresses in some lines might at times be awkwardly placed, but the grandeur of movement and imagery supports the thought effectively. And despite the personal element in stanzas two and three of his "Walking with God," the hymn succeeds because somehow Cowper manages to transcend the personal, expressing the deep longings of many devout souls. A wistful tenderness wafts through the entire hymn, and the images of the lamb and dove quite appropriately come with words like "calm," "peaceful," and "serene." Cowper was not the master craftsman that Charles Wesley was, but on some few occasions he reached a height of excellence that produced such truly great hymns as "Walking with God," "Lovest Thou Me," "On Opening a Place for Social Prayer," and "Light
Enthusiasm may have been the cause of many political, social, and religious problems in England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but out of those evils have come several compensatory gains, not the least of these being a rich literature. It is largely to enthusiasm that England is indebted for many of the sermons of South and several other critics of enthusiasts; for some of the finest satire in Butler, Dryden, and Swift; for the journals of men like George Fox, John Banks, John Whitehead, and the Wesleys, not to mention the voluminous works of enthusiasts such as Richard Baxter, Richard Sibbes, John Owen, George Whitehead, Edmund Calamy and a long train of others. But it is through their hymns that the Nonconformists and Methodists are chiefly remembered (though no longer as "enthusiasts"). Each week millions of people who never heard the word "enthusiasm" used in a pejorative sense lift their voices in song, using the hymns composed by men once branded as enthusiasts. This is as it should be. Enthusiasm is no longer a social evil.
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